

abandons the dualisms which have shaped western culture. But it does not see this in terms of a gynocentric model of the human, or a 'women's culture' grown from women's essential nature. From black, anti-colonialist and socialist feminism, I will argue in the next and subsequent chapters, a critical ecofeminism can draw an understanding of many of the processes and structures of power and domination which are embedded in dualisms. Such an anti-dualist ecological feminism must also be understood then as an integrative project with respect to other liberation struggles, for the dualisms which have characterised western culture, and which are linked philosophically to rationalism, also correspond in important ways to its main forms of repression, alienation and domination, as I argue next.

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Chapter 2

Dualism: the logic of colonisation

For efficient subordination, what's wanted is that the structure not only not appear to be a cultural artifact kept in place by human decision or custom, but that it appear *natural* – that it appear to be a quite direct consequence of the facts about the beast which are beyond the scope of human manipulation or revision. It must seem natural that individuals of the one category are dominated by individuals of the other and that as groups, the one dominates the other.

(Marilyn Frye)

DUALISM AND DIFFERENCE

As we have seen, both feminist philosophy and ecological feminism have given a key role in their accounts of western philosophy to the concept of dualism, the construction of a devalued and sharply demarcated sphere of otherness (Ruether 1975; Griffin 1978; Dodson Gray 1979; Jay 1981; Jaggar 1983; 96; Cixous and Clément 1986: 63; Trebilcot 1986; Plumwood 1986; 1988; 1990; 1991; Warren 1987; 1990; King 1981; 1989; 1990; Hartssock 1990). In this chapter I attempt to sharpen up and further explicate this notion. I show in the following chapters that the western model of human/nature relations has the properties of a dualism and requires anti-dualist remedies. A dualism, I have argued, results from a certain kind of denied dependency on a subordinated other. This relationship of denied dependency determines a certain kind of logical structure, in which the denial and the relation of domination/subordination shape the identity of both the relata.

I use examples from a number of forms of oppression, especially gender, race and colonisation, to show what this structure is, and discuss its logical formulation. By means of dualism, the colonised are appropriated, incorporated, into the selfhood and culture of the master, which forms their identity. The dominant conception of the human/nature relation in the west has features corresponding to this logical

structure. Because of this structure, escape from dualised relationship and dualised identity represents a particularly difficult problem, involving a sort of logical maze. At the end of the chapter I suggest some remedies for overcoming dualised identity, some methods of escaping dualistic traps, and look at some implications for accounts of reason, humanity and nature.

The key exclusions and denials of dependency for dominant conceptions of reason in western culture include not only the feminine and nature, but all those human orders treated as nature and subject to denied dependency. Thus it is the identity of the master (rather than a masculine identity pure and simple) defined by these multiple exclusions which lies at the heart of western culture. This identity is expressed most strongly in the dominant conception of reason, and gives rise to a dualised structure of otherness and negation which I argue corresponds to that of classical propositional logic. If the prevailing power relations of western culture have determined the selection of logical theories, as they have scientific theories and technologies (Latour and Woolgar 1979; Winner 1986), then to reject this classical structure of reason does not imply the rejection of all attempts to structure or systematise reason, but rather the rejection of those which promote dualistic accounts of otherness.

Dualism can also be seen as an alienated form of differentiation, in which power construes and constructs difference in terms of an interior and alien realm. In random tyrannies, beings may be selected for oppression in arbitrary and random ways. But in systematised forms of power, power is normally institutionalised and 'naturalised' by latching on to existing forms of difference. Dualisms are not just free-floating systems of ideas; they are closely associated with domination and accumulation, and are their major cultural expressions and justifications. But I do not mean to imply by this that accumulation, the material sphere, is the real motor and the cultural sphere merely its reflection, as assumed in some forms of Marxist theory. The material and the cultural spheres both do the work of domination and may be thought of as mutually selecting one another, just as particular technologies are both selected by certain social and political arrangements and select them, helping to maintain, strengthen and prepare the ground for certain types of social structures.

The set of interrelated and mutually reinforcing dualisms which permeate western culture forms a fault-line which runs through its entire conceptual system. While the human/nature contrast is one of the more recent of these dualisms, like the others, it can be fully understood only as part of the interrelated set. Each of them has crucial connections to other elements, and has a common structure with other

members of the set. They should be seen as forming a system, an interlocking structure.

Key elements in the dualistic structure in western thought are the following sets of contrasting pairs:

| | | |
|--------------|---|-----------------------|
| culture | / | nature |
| reason | / | nature |
| male | / | female |
| mind | / | body (nature) |
| master | / | slave |
| reason | / | matter (physicality) |
| rationality | / | animality (nature) |
| reason | / | emotion (nature) |
| mind, spirit | / | nature |
| freedom | / | necessity (nature) |
| universal | / | particular |
| human | / | nature (non-human) |
| civilised | / | primitive (nature) |
| production | / | reproduction (nature) |
| public | / | private |
| subject | / | object |
| self | / | other |

I do not claim completeness for this list. Indeed completeness is impossible, since any distinction can in principle be treated as a dualism. But these dualisms are key ones for western thought, and reflect the major forms of oppression in western culture. In particular the dualisms of male/female, mental/manual (mind/body), civilised/primitive, human/nature correspond directly to and naturalise gender, class, race and nature oppressions respectively, although a number of others are indirectly involved. Their development has been a historical process, following a historical sequence of evolution. Thus dualisms such as reason/nature may be ancient, but others such as human/nature and subject/object are associated especially with modern, post-enlightenment consciousness. But even the ancient forms do not necessarily fade away because their original context has changed; they are often preserved in our conceptual framework as residues, layers of sediment deposited by past oppressions. Culture thus accumulates a store of such conceptual weapons, which can be mined, refined and redeployed for new uses. So old oppressions stored as dualisms facilitate and break the path for new ones.

Since they are formed by power and correspond to stages of accumulation, any account of their development would also be an account of the development of institutionalised power. For prehistory, this would necessarily be speculative. Consider Maria Mies's historical

hypothesis, according to which male hunting bands evolve into proto-military forces, first living off women's work as agricultural and subsistence labourers, then acquiring slaves from other tribes (Miles 1986: 64-5). This process would give rise initially to dualisms such as sacred/profane (where power is religiously sanctioned), male/female and master/slave. Later stages of the accumulation process would see the development of new forms, often produced as nuances, new inflexions of older forms. Thus the period of colonial conquest in the west from the fourteenth century onwards brings to the fore civilised/primitive as a variant of reason/nature and of reason/animal and mind/body, and the rise of science brings to the fore subject/object dualism (Bordo 1987).

The exclusions of reason are multiple and not reducible to those of gender. Nevertheless gender plays a key role, since gender ideals especially involve ideals of reason (Lloyd 1984), and male ideals which lay claim to universality for men often invoke the elite male identity of the master. Thus to read down the first side of the list of dualisms is to read a list of qualities traditionally appropriated to men and to the human, while the second side presents qualities traditionally excluded from male ideals and associated with women, the sex defined by exclusion, 'made from the dross and refuse of a man' (Morgan 1989: 121).

THE KEY ROLE OF REASON/NATURE DUALISM

The line of fracture between reason and nature runs deeply through the key concepts of western culture. In the contrast set, virtually everything on the 'superior' side can be represented as forms of reason, and virtually everything on the underside can be represented as forms of nature. A gendered reason/nature contrast appears as the overarching, most general, basic and connecting form of these dualisms, capable of new nuances and inflexions and a great variety of elaboration and development. The structure of reason/nature dualism and its variants is the perspective of power; it represents, as Nancy Hartsock notes, 'a way of looking at the world characteristic of the dominant, white, male Eurocentric ruling class, a way of dividing up the world that puts an omnipotent subject at the centre and constructs marginal Others as sets of negative qualities' (Hartsock 1990: 161). This perspective constructs these others by exclusion (or some degree of departure from the norm or centre) as some form of nature in contrast to the subject, the master, who claims for himself both full humanity and reason. The west's understanding of the key concepts through which it deals with the world, its understanding not only of reason and nature but of their

specific dualistic forms, has been formed from such contrasts and exclusions.

Those dualisms (such as particular/universal or public/private) which cannot immediately be seen as variants of a gendered reason/nature contrast can have their derivation from or connection to this basic form revealed by making explicit further implicit assumptions which connect them. These are *linking postulates*. Linking postulates are assumptions normally made or implicit in the cultural background which create equivalences or mapping between the pairs. For example, the postulate that all and only humans possess culture maps the culture/nature pair on to the human/nature pair; the postulate that the sphere of reason is masculine maps the reason/body pair on to the male/female pair; and the assumption that the sphere of the human coincides with that of intellect or mentality maps the mind/body pair on to the human/nature pair. In the case of public/private, the linking postulate connects the sphere of the public with reason via the qualities of freedom, universality and rationality which are supposedly constitutive of masculinity and the public sphere, and connects that of the private with nature via the qualities of dullness, necessity, particularity and emotionality supposedly exemplified in and constitutive of femininity and the private sphere (Lloyd 1984: 74-85). The civilised/primitive contrast maps all the human/animal, mind/body, reason/nature, freedom/necessity and subject/object contrasts. In the contemporary class hierarchy, the poor are mapped as animal and as children (incapable of deferred gratification), while the working class is mapped as body (Ehrenreich 1989).

The fact that different philosophers and different periods of philosophy have focused on different pairs of these dualisms and have defended different linking postulates has obscured the pervasiveness of dualistic and rationalist influence in philosophy. Thus Hegel and Rousseau emphasise the postulates linking public/private, male/female, universal/particular and reason/nature (Lloyd 1984: 58-63 and 80-5). For Plato the emphasis is mainly on reason/body, reason/emotion, universal/particular; for Descartes it is on mind/body (physicality), subject/object, human/nature and human/animal; for Marx it is on freedom/necessity, culture (history)/nature, civilised/primitive, mental/manual (a variant on mind/body) and production/reproduction. But a philosopher's explicit focus on particular dualisms is often deceptive, for the gendered character of the dualisms may lurk in the background in unexamined and concealed form, as much feminist philosophy exposing phallogocentrism has shown.

In practice these dualisms form a web or network. One passes easily over into the other, linked to it by well-travelled pathways of conven-

tional or philosophical assumption. The concepts of humanity, rationality and masculinity form strongly linked and contiguous parts of this web, a set of closely related concepts which provide for each other models of appropriate relations to their respective dualised contrasts of nature, the physical or material, and the feminine. These concepts and identities are linked by the shared logical structure of dualism inherited from the exclusions of the master identity, as well as by a number of other features.

The connection of the dualisms with the perspective of the master appears plainly in many ancient sources which make clear the role of domination in shaping the relationship between 'superior' and 'inferior' sides in instrumental terms. For example, Aristotle, in a notorious passage in the *Politics* justifying slavery, links together the dualisms arising from human domination of nature, male domination over females, the master's domination over the slave and reason's domination of the body and emotions, and gives his version of each hierarchy's place in a chain of hierarchies.

It is clear that the rule of the soul over the body, and of the mind and the rational element over the passionate, is natural and expedient; whereas the equality of the two or the rule of the inferior is always hurtful. The same holds good for animals in relation to men; for tame animals have a better nature than wild, and all tame animals are better off when they are ruled by man; for then they are preserved. Again, the male is by nature superior, and the female inferior; and the one rules, and the other is ruled; this principle of necessity extends to all mankind. Where then there is such a difference as that between soul and body, or between men and animals (as is the case of those whose business it is to use their body, and who can do nothing better), the lower sort are by nature slaves, and it is better for them as for all inferiors that they should be under the rule of a master. For he who can be, and therefore is, another's and he who participates in rational principle enough to apprehend, but not to have such a principle, is a slave by nature. Whereas the lower animals cannot even apprehend such a principle; they obey their instincts. And indeed the use made of slaves and of tame animals is not very different; for both with their bodies minister to the needs of life. . . . It is clear, then, that some men are by nature free and others slaves, and that for these latter slavery is both expedient and right.

(Aristotle, *Politics*, book 1, chaps 4-5)

'The needs of life' to which slaves and other 'body people' minister are of course not the needs of their *own* lives but those of the master, from whose perspective this statement issues. As the passage shows, reason/

nature dualism provides a basis for a series of further overdetermined hierarchies which it confirms and supports. Thus, as in Aristotle's passage, the gulf between the rational and the non-rational, and the inferiority of the latter, can be used to support the supposed inferiority not just of women, but also of slaves, people of other races and cultures ('barbarians') and those who perform manual as opposed to intellectual tasks. All of these can be treated as less rational and as closer to the sphere of nature, and especially as closer to animality. Virtually the whole set of dualisms can be mobilised for this purpose of inferiorising the sphere of nature and those human-beings who may be counted as part of nature, providing a powerful and all-pervasive model of rational meritocracy which is confirmed and mirrored at every turn.

THE LOGICAL STRUCTURE OF DUALISM

There are a number of important characteristics of the relationship between members of contrasting pairs which make it appropriate to call it a dualism rather than just a distinction or a dichotomy. It is not just the fact that there is a dichotomy, that distinctions are made between two kinds of things, which is the key element in establishing a dualistic relation - indeed it is hard to imagine how anyone could get along without making at least some of the distinctions in the list of dualisms; it is rather the way the distinctions have been treated, the further assumptions made about them and the relationship imposed upon the relation which make the relationships in question dualistic ones. Thus by no means every dichotomy results in a dualism.¹

A dualism is more than a relation of dichotomy, difference, or non-identity, and more than a simple hierarchical relationship. In dualistic construction, as in hierarchy, the qualities (actual or supposed), the culture, the values and the areas of life associated with the dualised other are systematically and pervasively constructed and depicted as inferior. Hierarchies, however, can be seen as open to change, as contingent and shifting. But once the process of domination forms culture and constructs identity, the inferiorised group (unless it can marshal cultural resources for resistance) must internalise this inferiorisation in its identity and collude in this low valuation, honouring the values of the centre, which form the dominant social values. As Albert Memmi puts it, 'colonisation creates the colonised just as it . . . creates the coloniser' (Memmi 1965: 91). A dualism is an intense, established and developed cultural expression of such a hierarchical relationship, constructing central cultural concepts and identities so as to make equality and mutuality literally unthinkable. Dualism is a relation of separation and domination inscribed and naturalised in culture and characterised by radical exclusion, distancing and opposition between

orders constructed as systematically higher and lower, as inferior and superior, as ruler and ruled, which treats the division as part of the natures of beings construed not merely as different but as belonging to radically different orders or kinds, and hence as not open to change. Members of the following family of features are characteristic of dualism.

1 Backgrounding (denial)

Backgrounding is a complex feature which results from the irresolvable conflicts the relationship of domination creates for the master, for he attempts both to make use of the other, organising, relying on and benefiting from the other's services, and to deny the dependency which this creates. Denial can take many forms. Common ways to deny dependency are through making the other inessential, denying the importance of the other's contribution or even his or her reality, and through mechanisms of focus and attention. One way to do this is to insist on a strong hierarchy of activities, so that the denied areas are simply not 'worth' noticing. A related way to solve this problem is through treating the other as the background to the master's foreground. Marilyn Frye explains clearly the essential features and tensions of this backgrounding dynamic:²

Women's existence is both absolutely necessary to and irresolubly problematic for the dominant reality and those committed to it, for our existence is *presupposed* by phallographic reality, but it is not and cannot be *encompassed* by or countenanced by that reality. Women's existence is a background against which phallographic reality is a foreground. . . . I imagine phallographic reality to be the space and figures and motion which constitute the foreground, and the constant repetitive uneventful activities of women to constitute and maintain the background against which this foreground plays. It is essential to the maintenance of the foreground reality that nothing within it refer in any way to anything in the background, and yet it depends absolutely upon the existence of the background.

(Frye 1983: 167)

The view of the other as inessential is the master's perspective. The master's view is set up as universal, and it is part of the mechanism of backgrounding that it never occurs to him that there might be other perspectives from which *he* is backgrounded. Yet this inessentialness which he believes the slave to have in relation to his own essentialness is an illusion. First, the master more than the slave requires the other in order to define his boundaries and identity, since these are defined *against* the inferiorised other (see point 4 below); it is the slave who makes the master a master, the colonised who make the coloniser, the

periphery which makes the centre. Second, the master also requires the other materially, in order to survive, for the relation of complementation has made the master dependent on the slave for fulfilment of his needs. But this dependency is also hated and feared by the master, for it subtly challenges his dominance, and is denied in a variety of indirect and direct ways, with all the consequences of repression. The real role and contribution of the other is obscured in culture, and the economic relation is denied, mystified, or presented in paternalistic terms (Memmi 1965: 21; Waring 1988).

2 Radical exclusion (hyperseparation)

Because the other is to be treated as not merely different but inferior, part of a lower, different order of being, differentiation from it demands not merely distinctness but radical exclusion, not merely separation but hyperseparation. Radical exclusion is a key indicator of dualism.

The relation of radical exclusion has special characteristics. For distinctness, for non-identity or otherness, there need be only a single characteristic which is different, possessed by the one but not the other, in order to guarantee distinctness according to the usual treatment of identity (e.g. in Leibniz's Law). Where items are constructed or construed according to dualistic relationship, however, the master tries to magnify, to emphasise and to maximise the number and importance of differences and to eliminate or treat as inessential shared qualities, and hence to achieve maximum separation. 'I am nothing at all like this inferior other' is the motto associated with radical exclusion. Denial or minimisation of continuity is important in eliminating identification and sympathy between members of the dominating class and the dominated, and in eliminating possible confusion between powerful and powerless. It also helps to establish separate 'natures' which explain and justify widely differing privileges and fates. A major aim of dualistic construction is polarisation, to maximise distance or separation between the dualised spheres and to prevent their being seen as continuous or contiguous. Separation may be established by denying or minimising overlap qualities and activities, and by the erection of rigid barriers to prevent contact.

As Jay (1981) notes, certain ethnologists have seen this radical exclusion relation as important in the distinction between things sacred and things profane in religious thought. They have also noted (although usually not with disapproval) one of its functions: to mark out, protect and isolate a privileged group. Thus Emile Durkheim writes: 'Sacred things are those which the interdictions *protect and isolate*; profane things those to which these interdictions are applied and which

must remain *at a distance* from the first' (Durkheim 1915: 40-1; emphasis added). Profane things are thought of as threatening to sacred things, and to the power they represent. Such a dualism of sacred and profane often occurs in the context of a powerful priesthood or religious ruler, or uses religious symbolism to protect the power of one group and intimidate and repress another.

Thus dualistic construal of difference usually treats it as providing not merely a difference of degree within a sphere of overall similarity, but a major difference in kind, even a bifurcation or division in reality between utterly different orders of things. Dualism denies continuity, treating its pairs as comprising 'two worlds between which there is nothing in common', worlds between which there is a 'vacuum' (Durkheim 1915: 39). Dualistic distinction aims to maximise the number, scope, or significance of distinguishing characteristics. It does not do this in a random way, but usually by classifying characteristics as belonging exclusively, as far as possible, to one side or the other, thus setting up sets of complementary qualities formed through exclusion and denial of overlap. Thus the master claims for himself reason, contemplation and higher pursuits, and disdains the slave's merely manual occupations, while the slave is forced to exclude from his or her makeup the characteristics of the master, to eschew intellect and become submissive and lacking in initiative. These very qualities then confirm the slave's different nature and fate, for she or he is 'a slave by nature'.

Features such as cleanliness may also reflect such polarising construction; Booker T. Washington in *Up from Slavery* (1967) relates how the exaggerated and genteel cleanliness of the slave-owners' establishments served to mark them off from the 'animal-like' slaves, whose enforced filthiness (they were provided with no means to wash) served the joint function of marking and justifying their condition, and of linking them to animals. Thus the slave's being is part of a lower order in which other linked inferiors also have their being - the slave is body, the slave is animal, the male slave is feminised.

The polarising treatment of gender characteristics in western culture provides a good model of such dualistic construal, and of how common or bridging characteristics are ignored, discouraged, or actually eliminated by such conceptual construction. The division of gender characteristics as rigid complements eliminating overlap, noted by feminists (Jaggar 1983: 316), illustrates such polarisation. Thus men are defined as active, intellectual, egoistic, competitive and dominant, while women are defined as possessing the complementary qualities, as passive, intuitive, altruistic, nurturant and submissive. Each has characteristics which exclude but logically require a corresponding and complemen-

tary set in the other. Because of the polarisation and elimination of overlap, dualistic pairs present a false dichotomy, and in a different context it becomes possible to reconceive the items distinguished in less oppositional terms.

Albert Memmi in *The Coloniser and the Colonised* shows how similar distancing is used in colonisation to create the image of separate, discontinuous natures and orders of being. Radical exclusion requires unbridgeable separation, a separation not open to change, in extreme cases rendering conjunction, continuity, or proximity even unimaginable.

The colonialist stresses those things which keep him separate, rather than emphasising that which might contribute to the foundation of a joint community. In those differences, the colonised is always degraded and the colonialist finds justification for rejecting his subjects. But perhaps the most important thing is that once the behavioural feature, or historical or geographical factor, which characterises the colonialist and contrasts him with the coloniser, has been isolated, this gap must be kept from being filled. The colonialist removes the factor from history, time and therefore possible evolution. What is actually a sociological point comes to be labelled as being biological or, preferably, metaphysical. It is attached to the colonised's basic nature. Immediately the colonial relationship between the colonised and coloniser, founded on the essential outlook of the two protagonists, becomes a definitive category. It is what it is because they are what they are, and neither one nor the other will ever change.

(Memmi 1965: 71-2)

Such construction naturalises domination, making it appear to be part of the nature of each and in the nature of things, and yields two hyperseparated orders of being. 'Thus,' concludes Memmi (1965: 75), 'due to a double reconstruction of the colonised and himself, he is able both to justify and reassure himself.' So the master defines himself by exclusion, against the other. For the master, formation of identity by this means leads to a need to maintain hierarchies to define identity. There must always be a class below, whose inferiorisation confers selfhood. The more doubtful or insecure the establishment of such an identity is, the more strongly and vociferously the other's inferiority must be stressed. Such an identity requires constant reassurance of superiority and hence constant reassertion of hierarchy. This is a major factor in establishing certain types of masculinity (Connell 1988; Segal 1990: 181-9). Thus what is stressed as the defining inferior sphere in

white working-class machismo is usually not only the feminine, but also other lower orders such as people of colour and the unemployed.

3 Incorporation (relational definition)

A further important feature of dualistically construed opposites is that the underside of a dualistically conceived pair is defined in relation to the upperside as a lack, a negativity. Simone de Beauvoir writes that 'humanity is male and man defines woman not in herself but as relative to him; she is not regarded as an autonomous being . . . she is defined and differentiated with reference to man and not he with reference to her; she is the incidental, the inessential as opposed to the essential. He is the Subject, he is the Absolute - she is the Other' (de Beauvoir 1965: 8).

Although each is dependent on the other for identity and organisation of material life, this relation is not one of *equal*, or mutual, or equally relational, definition. The master's power is reflected in the fact that his qualities are taken as primary, and as defining social value, while those of the slave are defined or constrained in relation to them, often as negations or lacks of the virtues of the centre (Hartsock 1990: 161). As Memmi writes: 'The mechanism of this remoulding of the colonised . . . consists, in the first place, in a series of negations. The colonised is not this, is not that. . . . He is never considered in a positive light; or if he is, the quality which is conceded is the result of a psychological or ethical failing' (Memmi 1965: 83-4).

The definition of the other in relation to the self as a lack or absence is a special case of incorporation, defining the other only in relation to the self, or the self's needs and desires. Because the other is defined and perceived in relation to the master, he or she is not encountered fully as an independent other, and the qualities attributed or perceived are those which reflect the master's desires, needs and lacks. As Irigaray notes, woman is construed not as occupying a space on her own account, but as enclosing a space for another (1984: 3). Similarly the role of the 'noble savage' is to be a foil: he or she is seen as possessing all the good qualities thought to be missing in 'civilisation', when this is regarded negatively, and as lacking all the social virtues, when it is regarded positively. Since qualities or activities which do not fit into the scheme are ignored or denied, an other so perceived cannot provide resistance or boundary for the self. The other is recognised only to the extent that it is assimilated to the self, or incorporated into the self and its systems of desires and needs: only as colonised by the self. The master consciousness cannot tolerate unassimilated otherness.

Radical exclusion and incorporation have two important corollaries, instrumentalism and homogenisation.

4 Instrumentalism (objectification)

Although the relationship is usually (as in Aristotle's case) presented as being in the interests of the dominated as well as the dominator, it is apparent that those on the lower side of the dualisms are obliged to put aside their own interests for those of the master or centre, that they are conceived of as his instruments, a means to his ends. They are made part of a network of purposes which are defined in terms of or harnessed to the master's purposes and needs. The lower side is also objectified, without ends of its own which demand consideration on their own account. Its ends are defined in terms of the master's ends. The dualising master self does not empathically recognise others as moral kin, and does not recognise them as a centre of desires or needs on their own account. Hence on both counts he is free to impose his own ends.

Since the relationship is seen as that of a superior to a separate inferior order, it is also seen as fitting and natural that the lower side serves the upper as a means to his ends. The upperside is an end in itself, but the underside has no such intrinsic value, is not for-itself but merely useful, a resource. The identity of the underside is constructed instrumentally, and the canons of virtue for a good wife, a good colonised, or a good worker are written in terms of usefulness to the centre. In the typical case this involves setting up a moral dualism, where the underside is not part of the sphere to be considered morally, but is either judged by a separate instrumental standard (as in the sexual double standard) or seen as outside morality altogether.

5 Homogenisation or stereotyping

More than polarisation is needed if a relationship is to be an appropriate one for domination. The dominated class must appear suitably homogeneous if it is to be able to conform to and confirm its 'nature'. In homogenisation, differences among the inferiorised group are disregarded (Hartsock 1990: 160-1). I well remember homogenisation as an Australian teenager of English-speaking background in the post-war years. It was part of the contempt with which non-English 'foreign' immigrants were treated. Their differences denied, they were all dismissed as 'aliens', 'wogs', or 'reffos' (refugees); the multiplicity and dignity of their cultures and languages ignored, they were seen as 'just jabbering away', much like animals. Why couldn't they speak English, a proper language, like us? And white Australians, like colonists everywhere, continue to ignore the multiplicity and diversity of indigenous culture and social organisation. This disregard for or denial of the diversity of Aboriginal nations inspired the forced congregation of

Aboriginal people from different tribes, which has been a major mechanism of oppression, loss of identity and disruption of Aboriginal culture.

Homogenisation supports both instrumentalism, incorporation (relational definition) and radical exclusion. It produces binarism, a division of the world into two orders. As Hartssock (1990) points out, homogenisation is a feature of the master's perspective. To the master, residing at what he takes to be the centre, differences among those of lesser status at the periphery are of little interest or importance, and might undermine comfortable stereotypes of superiority. To the master, all the rest are just that: 'the rest', the Others, the background to his achievements and the resources for his needs. Diversity and multiplicity which are surplus to his desires need not be acknowledged. The other is not seen as a unique individual bound to the self by specific ties. It is related to as a universal rather than a particular, as a member of a class of interchangeable items which can be used as resources to satisfy the master's needs. Elimination of reliance on any particular individual of the relevant kind also facilitates denial of dependency and backgrounding. Instrumentalisation and commodification normally produce relations of this kind.

Homogenisation in gender stereotyping is well known, involving the appeal to homogeneous and eternal male and female 'natures'. The sage (for example, Lucretius) and the popular maxim both appeal to the 'eternal feminine' and assert that 'women are all alike'. The place of homogenisation in the pattern of domination as a supplement to discontinuity is insightfully discussed by Marilyn Frye; to the extent that the demand for the dualism of just two sharply differentiated sexes is a social creation unsupported by any natural order (since sharp sexual dimorphism does not exist in newborn humans or elsewhere in nature) it requires constant vigilance and regimentation, the coercion of individuals in more or less subtle ways, in order to maintain it. Again, such polarisation functions to naturalise domination:

To make [domination] seem natural, it will help if it seems to all concerned that members of the two groups are very different from each other, and this appearance is enhanced if it can be made to appear that within each group, the members are very like one another. In other words, the appearance of the naturalness of the dominance of men and the subordination of women is supported by anything which supports the appearance that men are very like other men and very unlike women, and that women are very like other women and very unlike men.

(Frye 1983: 34)

Homogenisation as a feature of the colonial relationship is remarked

upon by Memmi: the colonised are all alike, and are not considered in personal terms or as individuals. 'The colonised is never characterised in an individual manner; he is entitled only to drown in an anonymous collectivity' (Memmi 1965: 25). Homogenisation supports both instrumentalisation and radical exclusion of the colonised. The colonised is reduced to a function, and the relationship of domination destroys the ability to perceive or appreciate characteristics of the other over and above those which serve this function.

Dualism then imposes a conceptual framework which polarises and splits apart into two orders of being what can be conceptualised and treated in more integrated and unified ways. But dualism should not be seen as *creating* difference where none exists. Rather it tends to capitalise on existing patterns of difference, rendering these in ways which ground hierarchy. The point is important for several later conclusions. The features of dualism also provide bases for various kinds of centredness, the rendering of the world in terms of the views and interests of the upperside, the centre (Hartssock 1990). It provides the cultural grounding for class-centred hegemony as discussed by Gramsci and others, for male-centredness, Eurocentredness and ethnocentredness, and for human-centredness.

THE LOGIC OF DUALISM

This way of being constructed as other, which is shared by a number of marginalised groups, clearly has a logical pattern and corresponds to certain representations of otherness in logical theory. I shall argue that it corresponds closely to features of classical logic, but not to the principles of logic *per se*.⁵ Clarifying the logic of dualism helps to clarify too why a dualism is not the same as a dichotomy, and why we do not have to, and should not, abandon either dichotomy or difference in order to avoid dualism.

Logic has had a worse reputation than most other disciplines among feminists; it is seen as a sphere of unlimited abstraction and contest for mastery of the other (Walkerdine 1988: 199). But such indiscriminate condemnations, as in the case of science, discount the diversity of practices and theories. They also hide rather than expose the politics of reason by obscuring the extent to which the selection of particular practices and types of theories has operated to support hierarchical and phallogocentric world-views. Logic appears as a monolith not only in feminist but also in popular thought; there is just one Logic, one way to order the world, and that one is classical logic, now inculcated early in terms of Venn diagrams and set theory. Since this suits the prevailing power relations (in logic, as well as in the world generally), this view is rarely corrected. But, as in other areas of knowledge, there are

competing and contested accounts of reason, and correspondingly of logical systems. Selection from among them is made in accordance with the principles of theory selection used in other areas, and is influenced by the same sort of social relations.

Choices for the most part reflect the perspectives of those at the centre, and theories which sit comfortably with this perspective are more likely to be successful than those which do not. Despite its notorious problems as an account of reasoning practice (irrelevance and the paradoxes of implication), classical logic is firmly entrenched as 'the Logic' and still manages to get away with representing as 'deviant' more implicationally adequate rivals such as relevant logic.⁶ Thus Quine and others have vigorously defended classical logic as the logic of 'our ordinary' negation. There is, in Quine's view, no alternative to it, for any alternative would, in his revealing phrase, 'change the subject' (Quine 1970: 81). One reason for this logic's entrenched character, I shall argue, may be that 'the subject' is the master. At the level of propositional logic, classical logic is the closest approximation to the dualistic structure I have outlined.⁷ The 'naturalness' of classical logic is the 'naturalness' of domination, of concepts of otherness framed in terms of the perspective of the master.

As work in relevant and paraconsistent logic has shown (Routley *et al.* 1983), negation is the key axis of comparison among implicational systems. If negation is interpreted as otherness,⁸ then the way that negation is treated provides, together with other features, an account of how otherness is conceived in a given system. Classical logic supplies an account of otherness which has key features of dualistic otherness. The negation of classical logic is a specific concept of negation which forces us to consider otherness in terms of a single universe consisting of everything. In classical logic, negation ($\sim p$) is interpreted as the universe without p , everything in the universe other than what p covers, as represented in the usual Venn diagram representing p as a figure surrounded by a square which represents the universe, with $\sim p$ as the remainder (Figure 1). Such an account leads directly to the relevance paradoxes. But what is important for the issue we are considering here is that $\sim p$ can then not be independently or positively identified, but is entirely dependent on p for its specification. Not- p has no independent role, but is introduced as merely alien to the primary notion p (Plumwood and Routley 1985: 217).

This corresponds to the relational definition feature of dualism, to a logic of presence and absence in which the other is specified as the absence of the condition specified by p , rather than as an independent other. Such an account of $\sim p$ specifies $\sim p$ in relation to p conceived as the controlling centre, and so is p -centred. The very features of simplicity which have helped to select classical logic over its rivals are

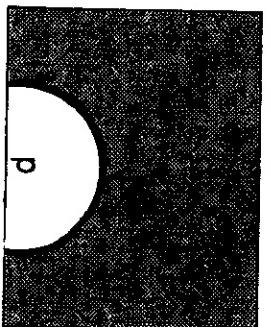


Figure 1

implied here. In the phallic drama of this p -centred account, there is really only one actor, p , and $\sim p$ is merely its receptacle. In the representation of the Venn diagram, p penetrates a passive, undifferentiated, universal other which is specified as a lack, which offers no resistance, and whose behaviour it controls completely. There is no room here for the complexities of the dance of interaction between the one and an independent other. These features also lead to the homogenisation of the other, since the other of p , as receptacle, is indistinguishable from the rest of the universe (Plumwood and Routley 1985). Homogenisation involves binarism, interpreting the other as 'the rest'. These homogenising properties of classical negation are associated with the failure of classical logic to make any finer discriminations in propositional identity than truth-functionality. These are precisely the features which help to make classical logic problematic as a theory of reasoning practice.

The negation of classical logic (which is responsible for its paradoxical character) has features of radical exclusion of the alien other which lies behind distancing and discontinuity, as well as other features which are characteristic of dualism. The radical exclusion aspects of classical otherness are evident in the classical treatment of contradictions as implying everything, for the effect of $p \& \sim p \rightarrow q$ is to keep p and its other or negation at a maximum distance, so that they can never be brought together (even in thought), on pain of the maximum penalty a logical system can provide, system collapse. It is the penalty of merger, of the loss of all boundaries, which threatens when p and its receptacle, $\sim p$, come together in the forbidden encounter of contradiction. Semantically, p and $\sim p$ are treated classically as maximally distant in situational space. The extreme penalty classical logic provides for conjoining p and its other not- p , establishes a maximally strong relation of exclusion between p and this other, in comparison to other logical systems which define much weaker exclusion relationships.

A further feature of classical logic which corresponds to the logic of

dualism is its role as a truth-suppression implication, which permits the suppression of true premises. (Simply, in the Aristotelian notion of suppression, a suppressed premise is an assumption used in arriving at the conclusion but not shown as among the premises.)⁹ The suppression of premises on condition of their truth gives formal expression to the dualistic condition of *backgrounding*, in which the contribution of the other to the outcome is relied upon but denied or ignored.¹⁰ If the major task of logic is about showing (showing everything that has been relied on), a logic allowing truth-suppression is about hiding. Truth-suppression is closely related to another feature of classical logic, truth-interchangeability, in which any truth can be substituted for any other truth while preserving implicational properties. It is also closely related to the feature that material equivalence as a criterion of propositional identity yields just one true and one false proposition. This interchangeability of truths can be alternately viewed as indicating that material implication expresses instrumental or means-ends reasoning, in which conditions as means are interchangeable provided they equally produce equivalent effects or ends. The logic of dualism thus connects with the logic of instrumental reason, which is also expressive of the master identity, and is the dominant logic of the market and the public sphere.

None of these features of dualistic otherness or classical negation is an inevitable feature of logic, negation, otherness, or reasoning. Fully worked-out logical systems which do not have these features are available and in use, and these can point in directions which might be promising for alternative conceptions of otherness and rationality. For example, some of the resulting systems, those of relevant logic, can also claim to be a more adequate expression of actual reasoning practice than classical logic (Routley *et al.* 1983). At the same time, the negation of relevant logic, relevant negation, can be interpreted as expressing a notion of otherness as *non-hierarchical difference*. The resulting concept of relevant otherness avoids radical exclusion, for the conjunction of A and \sim A does not induce system collapse, and \sim A is not homogenised. Relevant negation considers exclusion not with respect to the universe, but with respect to a much more restricted state, so that the negation of A is not just to be specified in relation to A. The resulting concept of otherness can be modelled by a number of natural widely used otherness relations, such as 'the other side', which have no hierarchical features (Plumwood and Routley 1985: 216-20). It is neither a cancellation of nor a lack or absence of a specified condition, but another and further condition – a *difference* – yielding the concept of an other which is not just specified negatively but is independently characterised and with an independent role on its own behalf.

If we mean by 'dichotomy' what is commonly meant, simply making a

division or drawing a distinction, it is essential to distinguish between dualism and dichotomy. Equating them would either cripple all thought (if we were forced to abandon dichotomy along with dualism) or collapse the concept of dualism (if we were forced to retain dualism along with dichotomy). In either case escape from dualism becomes impossible. Both in terms of predicate logic and in terms of propositional logic, a dualism must be seen as a quite particular kind of distinction or dichotomy, one involving the features I have discussed which result from domination. As we have seen, in terms of predicate logic dualism and radical exclusion involve a maximisation of non-shared characteristics, whereas to establish ordinary difference or non-identity we require only that a single characteristic be different. In terms of propositional logic dualism is associated with a quite particular concept of negation or otherness, and the way to escape dualism is to replace it with a non-hierarchical concept of difference. The transition, however, is not straightforward, and residues of dualism are often remarkably persistent.

ROUTES OF ESCAPING DUALISM

There is a strong temptation, once the role of dualism in creating exaggerated separation is perceived, to conclude that the resolution of a dualism requires merger, the elimination of the problematic boundary between the one and the other, the coloniser and the colonised. Thus the colonised may adhere to the culture of the coloniser (Freire 1972: 22), lacking the confidence to affirm a distinct identity. Similarly, the feminism of uncritical equality sees the answer to hyperseparation as the fitting of women to a masculine model. As Paulo Freire writes of the oppressed at this stage: 'Their ideal is to be men; but for them, to be a man is to be an oppressor. This is their model of humanity . . . at this level, one pole aspires not to liberation, but to identification with its opposite pole' (1972: 22). The master also denies difference, but, as we shall see in the Conclusion, for more proprietorial reasons. The denial of difference leads theory to the attempted elimination of the distinction between mind and body (via reductive physicalism, for example), between masculine and feminine (via androgyny), between sex and gender,¹¹ between human and nature, and between self and other (nature), and similarly for other pairs in the list of dualisms. But in general such a merger strategy is neither necessary nor desirable, because while dualism makes difference the vehicle for hierarchy, it usually does so by distorting difference. The attempt to eliminate distinction along with dualism is misconceived on both political and philosophical counts.

But this discussion of the structural features of dualism, expressed especially in classical otherness, clarifies some of the steps which need to be taken in overcoming dualised identity. Dismantling a dualism based on difference requires the reconstruction of relationship and identity in terms of a non-hierarchical concept of difference. An appropriate relationship of non-hierarchical difference will have the following specific features:

- 1 *Backgrounding* (denial): a non-hierarchical concept of difference requires a move to systems of thought, accounting, perception, decision-making, which recognise the contribution of what has been backgrounded, and which acknowledge dependency.
- 2 *Radical exclusion*: a non-hierarchical concept of difference will affirm continuity, reconceive relation in more integrated ways, and break the false choice hyperseparation presents in reclaiming the denied area of overlap.
- 3 *Incorporation* (*relational definition*): a non-hierarchical concept of difference must review the identities of both underside and upside. It can aim to rediscover a language and story for the underside, reclaim positive independent sources of identity and affirm resistance.
- 4 *Instrumentalism*: a non-hierarchical concept of difference implies recognising the other as a centre of needs, value and striving on its own account, a being whose ends and needs are independent of the self and to be respected.
- 5 *Homogenisation*: a non-hierarchical concept of difference involves recognising the complexity and diversity of the 'other nations' which have been homogenised and marginalised in their constitution as excluded other, as 'the rest'.

These remedies correspond to the central conceptual and cultural concerns of various liberation movements. Thus to set out clearly what is involved in dualism is to have seen the signposts which point the ways towards escaping it. But the escape routes are mazes containing mirrors, sidetracks, looped trails and knots. Some of these we have already met in chapter 1 in the feminism of uncritical equality and the feminism of reversal, but there are other traps to turn aside the unwary pilgrim. These feminisms reflect two common problems in the formation of post-colonised identity, the denial of difference and the reversal syndrome. As we shall see later, the same sorts of trap exist for those attempting to escape other dualisms and for human/nature dualism. A closer examination of these traps, and the ways out of them in the case of gender dualism, will provide both a test and an explanation of some aspects of the theory of dualism I have outlined.

TRAPS FOR POST-COLONISED IDENTITY

The logic of colonisation creates complementary and, in advanced cases, conflict subordinated identities in and through colonisation. The reclamation and affirmation of subordinated identity is one of the key problems for the colonised, especially in race, class and ethnic colonisation. The affirmation of women and of the feminine falls within this problematic. A common postmodernist objection (deriving from Derrida) suggests that affirmation involves reversal and must remain within the problematic of binary opposition. Dualism has often been treated as an inevitable part of the human condition, especially within the existentialist tradition (Heidegger 1977, de Beauvoir 1965), which presents its structures as a cursed but inescapable part of subjecthood. One source of the illusion of inevitability is the failure to distinguish the dichotomising from the dualising subject. Hence existentialism has not been concerned with routes around the problematic colonised identity; its subject sits beside the path, cast in bronze like Rodin's *Thinker*, a warning to travellers of the perils of philosophy and excessive consciousness.

I shall contest the claim of inevitability, both in its existentialist form and the postmodernist form which denies the possibility of positive identity. For the colonised who would establish a positive post-colonised identity, there are ways forward, but they require care as well as daring. But first, we must untie the knots created by the logic of colonisation. The Cavern of Reversal, the Desert of Difference and the Swamp of Affirmation must still be negotiated.

THE CAVERN OF REVERSAL

We have seen that reversal results from the attempt to treat dualism as a simple hierarchy, and to reverse value without attending to the identity-forming functions of colonisation.¹² Because the new identity is specified in reaction to the coloniser and still in relation to him, and has accepted wholly or partly the dualistic construction of identity, the idea that the colonised has broken free of dualised identity is an illusion. The colonised is not free to proceed independently, but affirms uncritically whatever the coloniser has made of him or her, or embraces whatever the coloniser despised and excluded. Similarly, the 'worker' who accepts but revalues the identity assigned in the master's terms of production has made only an incomplete escape, and remains tied to the master's productivist framework. These forms of affirmation ignore the way in which the colonised's characteristics are not determined independently but are defined in relation to the master. Reversal reproduces the problem in

a new form, an inadequate or incomplete movement beyond dualistic conception.

In the case of gender colonisation,¹³ we have already met the uncritical reversal syndrome in chapter 1, in the problem of affirming an identity for women as part of nature without reconceiving its dualistic construction. In gender reversal, a new feminine identity comes to be specified in *reaction* to the old. In the most extreme and conservative case this strategy accepts the old identity and reverses its value, excluding from the new 'authentic feminine' qualities such as rationality, thus conceding the male claim to these qualities, and covertly affirming the qualities of subordination. The form of revaluation typical of the feminism of uncritical reversal saw the solution to women's oppression as a matter of rediscovering women's essence¹⁴ (Alcoff 1988: 410), treating gender difference not as constructed within a power relation but as a given, and as problematic only to the extent that it is inferiorised, not adequately recognised, or not authentic.¹⁵ The cultural feminist solution to devaluation is the provision of 'a healthy environment for the female principle' (Alcoff 1988: 408), the fostering of a woman's culture based on female experience.¹⁶ This still falls within the dualistic problematic in being too limiting and uncritical of polarisation and exclusion, in accepting homogenisation through the failure to envisage women's identities as plural, and through serving to obscure major differences in women's situation and politics (Spelman 1988; hooks 1989; Jaggar 1991).¹⁷

DISSOLVING VERSUS RECLAIMING IDENTITY

If a simple affirmation faces difficulties, the attempt to bypass affirmation via dissolution and repudiation of gender identity is also problematic. The choice between simple revaluation and evasion corresponds to the familiar feminist options of cultural feminism and poststructuralism. As Alcoff notes, the poststructuralist strategy of discarding the identity 'woman', or treating it as no more than a permanent site and possibility of disrupted and contested meanings, offers as an alternative a political struggle and a 'feminist practice [which] can only be negative' (Alcoff 1988: 418). To the extent that it evades or rejects all identities, it is unable to provide a basis for validating some forms of women's identity over others. Hence it cannot provide a basis for a politics based on feminist identities, or even for the claim that women are oppressed (Alcoff 1988: 420). The ensuing renunciation of political identity corresponds to the dilemma of the Coloniser Who Refuses (Memmi 1965; Hartsock 1990); he rejects the original identity as coloniser but can establish no positive identity which can serve as a basis for political action in solidarity with others

and for effective resistance. The ex-coloniser lingers by the Abyss of Relativism, unable to proceed further.

Yet in our own time, the identity or 'difference' of woman this strategy would dismantle has presented one of the most important critical vantage points on western systems of domination and one of the most powerful sources of alternative vision and cultural challenge. Can we really afford to lose it?

The attractions of dissolution of identity are said to include 'proliferating gender configurations, destabilising substantive identity, and depriving the naturalising narratives of compulsory heterosexuality of their central protagonists: "man" and "woman"' (Butler 1990: 146). But the problem of dualism, as I have argued, is not binarism, the number two, or the setting of limits to the self by the boundary of otherness. The fracturing of binarism (Butler 1990) is not sufficient for escaping the deep structures of colonisation. The dissolution of gender identity through destabilisation and the definitive act of parody recommended by poststructuralists (Butler 1990: 142) amounts to the formation of anti-identities which become further identities. But these identities are not independent. They are still defined essentially in relation to the objects of parody which originate in the problematic of colonisation. Such an approach not only continues to tie the subject to the master, but still has to face the problem of allowing for a multiplicity of responses to traditional gender identity. The parodic strategy can hardly be universally prescribed as the only possible stance feminists might adopt towards the gender ideals of woman.¹⁸

Nor can the social identity of woman be seen, any more than social life generally, as merely a source of restriction and limitation, calling forth only disruption, parody and destabilisation as appropriate responses (Grimshaw 1986: 141). Social identities are also sources of empowerment and connection, of stability and continuity, which make it possible to draw on and contribute to wide social sources of meaning and practice. They are, to be sure, never unproblematic given the power relations which shape social identities generally and traditional gender identities in particular. But they are capable of liberatory or subversive reconstruction without total demolition and abandonment. Despite the difficulties of the type of affirmation involved in reversal, there is ultimately no viable alternative to a creative and affirmative reconstruction of post-colonised identity. Affirmation is essential to counter the logic of the master subject, who inferiorises women both individually and culturally, backgrounds and devalues their works, and defines them as peripheries to the master's centre. There must be some sort of compensating recognition to correct this devaluation, but it must be a critical and qualified one. The structure of colonised identity

has been a prison; it requires extensive and ongoing renovation before yielding a comfortable structure for free habitation.

BEYOND COLONISED IDENTITY: CRITICAL AFFIRMATION

The current wave of diffidence about endorsing the identity 'woman', or any feminine-associated characteristics and gender ideals, is in part a reaction against the cultural feminist proclivity towards a too sweeping affirmation of the feminine, and its focus on affirming a singular 'authentic' woman identity as a basis for political action. But these alternatives represent a false choice: abandonment of the identity woman is not the only alternative to uncritical reversal. A better route to subversion than that of poststructuralism would treat woman's identity as an important if problematic tradition which requires critical reconstruction, a potential source of strength as well as a problem, and a ground of both continuity and difference with traditional ideals. Such a critical reconstruction can correct the distortions of western culture through the affirmation and empowerment of the areas of culture and life associated with the feminine and with nature, and hence continue the concerns of earlier feminism and ecological feminism in a modified form.

According to Alice Echols, 'the question of whether feminism entails the transcendence of gender or the affirmation of femaleness has become the new feminist fault-line' (Echols 1989: 287). This dichotomy, like the alternatives of demolishing the prison versus inhabiting it as it is, of repudiating versus revaluing feminine identity, represents a false choice: an adequate reworking of gender identity must involve both elements of transcendence and elements of affirmation. A healthy feminist identity, like a healthy personal identity, needs to maintain a good balance between self-criticism and self-affirmation. In the same way, critical reconstruction requires the balancing of conflicting imperatives towards redefinition and revaluing. Critical reconstruction must take account of the way gender identity is imbued with power, and must confront the feminist version of the paradox of power – if feminine character and feminine values are shaped in subordination, how can they become in turn socially valued or socially dominant and still retain their character? These kinds of problem are often taken to rule out any kind of affirmation of the feminine for feminists. Catharine MacKinnon states an objection designed to show that in affirming the feminine we can only be affirming women's powerlessness:

When difference means dominance as it does with gender, for women to affirm differences is to affirm the qualities and characteristics of powerlessness. Women may have an approach to moral

reasoning, but it is an approach made both of what is and what is not allowed to be. To the extent materialism means anything at all, it means that what women have been and thought is what they have been permitted to be and think. Whatever this is, it is not women's, possessive.

(MacKinnon 1989: 51)

The argument would rule out any affirmation of female-associated qualities and areas of culture. But there are several problems in the argument. We can agree that feminine identity, like colonised identity, is not an independent nature only accidentally and inessentially subordinated,¹⁹ but has been shaped in and through colonisation (Memmi 1965; Freire 1972; hooks 1989). Nevertheless, powerlessness does not exhaust its content, and therefore difference does not coincide with dominance. As feminists women are not passive recipients of the identity woman, but are actively engaged in shaping it and in positioning themselves critically in relation to its traditional meanings, often without total abandonment (Alcoff 1988).²⁰ MacKinnon's account leaves out the *content* of gender, those actual characteristics, activities and life-areas which have been devalued and assigned to the background along with the women they have been taken to characterise, and the value they might have in another context. Traditional femininity was devalued and backgrounded but was also the expression of a range of tasks, values and interests, concerns, areas of life and social orientations of real value and importance; they cannot just be dismissed, because of this denial, as powerlessness. We can reject women's powerlessness without also rejecting the entire *content* of women's lives and roles and the areas of culture which have been assigned low status. The argument trades on failing to distinguish between the content and value feminists might now assign to those activities and life-concerns which are allocated to women and the low status or powerlessness which the master culture has assigned to them (usually by treating them as 'nature' rather than as 'culture'). The failure to make such a distinction perpetuates rather than escapes the master perspective by denying the life-concerns, values and knowledge traditionally associated with women and other subordinated groups. Thus it creates the illusion that empowering the feminine must involve a contradiction.

The concern about powerlessness nevertheless has a point. Although it is wrong to see *all* difference and all qualities characteristic of women as inseparably imbued with powerlessness, powerlessness is inherent in some kinds of femininity and is not detachable from *some* characteristics. It is important to distinguish those cases where powerlessness is necessary to, presupposed by, or inherent in, some quality or area

allocated to the feminine, from those cases where it is not. Some apparently innocent characteristics conceal crucial ambiguities of power: for example, 'nurturance' and 'empathy', qualities affirmed by some ecofeminists (Love and Shanklin 1984, Gearhart 1982). These can mean supporting others, being receptive to their needs and being concerned for and skilful in promoting their growth and welfare; or they can mean making powerful others feel good, bolstering masculinity and ego-massaging, the sensitivity of the slave to the needs and moods of the master.²¹ 'Nurturance' in the first sense is not necessarily a product of powerlessness, whereas in the second it is. The first sort of nurturance could be empowered in a society of equality, whereas the second could not, and calling for its empowerment is indeed self-refuting. In the second type of case, correcting inferiorisation cannot take the form of upward reevaluation, for the sorts of reasons MacKinnon's analysis indicates.

A feminist affirmation and reappropriation of the feminine must be actively critical and reconstructive for another reason too: the dualist dynamic does more than writing subordination into the definition of the underside; it also creates via radical exclusion polarised understandings of identity based on subordination/domination. Correcting this requires a movement beyond the old, polarised understandings, redefining the ground and renegotiating hyperseparated identity. What will now be valued positively will not be the original, polarised characteristics, but liberatory analogues obtained by transcending the false choices created by the polarised understandings of dualism. Thus a feminist perspective might affirm relational selfhood as the overcoming of the traditional false choices of egoism and self-abnegation (Miller 1986: 47; Gilligan 1987). To the extent that gender dualism is interwoven with a systematic network of related dualisms, the false choices obtained through radical exclusion (such as reason/emotion, passive/active, public/private) run through the entire network. Resolution of gender dualism must correspondingly be interwoven with resolution of other dualisms. This is another reason why women cannot be liberated in isolation and why linking feminism to other forms of oppression has a powerful subversive potential.

CONTINUITY AND DIFFERENCE

As a structure of self and other, features 1-5 fall into two groups. Features 1 and 2 deny dependency, continuity and relationship of self to other, while features 3, 4 and 5 deny the other's independence of self. Escaping the logic of colonisation thus requires a dialectical movement to recognise both the relationship and continuity denied by back-grounding and radical exclusion, and also to affirm the difference and

independence of the other denied by incorporation and the definition of the other in relation to the self as lack and as instrument. The resolution of dualism requires, not just recognition of difference, but recognition of a complex, interacting pattern of both continuity and difference. Although forms of feminism stressing similarity to men and forms stressing difference are often seen as incompatible, the analysis of dualism suggests that recognition of continuity and recognition of difference are both needed, and are appropriate responses to different parts of the overall problem of escaping dualised gender identity. Thus to the extent that hyperseparation of male and female nature has occurred, and gender dualism has created exaggeratedly different male and female orders of being which conceive the natures and destinies of men and women as utterly different, as worlds apart, feminism would need to emphasise common political rights, stress common humanity and break down the barriers of exclusion which have confined women to a special inferiorised sphere. This is the stage or moment of 'desegregation', which has indeed been the major task of early feminism and of the first wave of the feminist movement of the 1960s and 1970s. On the other hand, to the extent that gender dualism has defined the feminine in relation to the central identity of the master as a lack, that is, in terms of classical otherness, women have needed to stress positive, independent conceptions and sources of feminine identity, and therefore to creatively reinterpret and affirm women's difference. However, critical reconstruction involves much more than the affirmation of women's difference. In the web of oppression, the combined identity in which colonised and coloniser identities are interwoven is the normal case. To the extent that women are not only the colonised in relation to gender, but are also themselves the colonisers (for example, in relation to other races and cultures, classes and species), critical reconstruction of identity normally involves not only affirming and rebuilding subordinated identities, but also reconstructing master identities. Thus western women must also learn to throw off the master identity embedded in the western construction of the human.

Thus this analysis points to the need to replace the concept of phallo(go)centrism as the basis of the affirmation of difference by the more complex concept of the master identity. Much of the stress on affirming women's difference has resulted from an effort to problematise the character of a culture whose central protagonist, the apparently neutral rational subject, is defined in opposition not only to women but to many other oppressed groups and even to nature itself. But focusing exclusively on women's difference as the basis of opposition tries to make women the symbolic and political bearers of the entire domain of exclusion of western culture (Bacchi 1990: 250). Thus

a conception of women's difference has been employed to articulate in a novel way a very powerful social critique and alternative vision, but the attempt to present the alternative entirely in terms of gender in the fashion of much radical feminism (Miller 1986: 88; Chodorow 1979) places on this critique a load which has been too heavy for it to bear alone. The contraction by this feminist critique of the identity of the master to an identity which is simply male tends to obscure the real political issues and the real measures which are needed to bring about change (hooks 1989: 20). To shake the conceptual foundations of these systems of domination we must unmask more fully the identity of the master hidden behind the neutral guise of the human and of the ideals of rationality.

Chapter 3

Plato and the philosophy of death

We should think of the most authoritative part of our soul as a guardian spirit given by god, living in the summit of the body, which can properly be said to lift us from the earth toward our home in heaven; for we are creatures not of earth but of heaven, where the soul was first born, and our divine part attaches us by the head to heaven, like a plant by its roots, and keeps our body upright.

(Plato)

While a Christian is honestly serving God, he is a stranger even in his own state. We have been enjoined as strangers and sojourners to sojourn here but not to dwell here.

(St Cyprian of Antioch)

THE WESTERN HUMAN/NATURE RELATIONSHIP AS A DUALISM

The denials of dualism have defined the meaning of the human/nature relationship in the western tradition. As many writers on environmental ethics have noted, nature in the west is *instrumentalised* as a mere means to human ends via the application of a moral dualism that treats humans as the only proper objects of moral consideration and defines 'the rest' as part of the sphere of expediency. The natural world and the biosphere have been treated as a dump, as forming the unconsidered, instrumentalised and unimportant *background* to 'civilised' human life; they are merely the setting or stage on which what is really important, the drama of human life and culture, is played out. In the dominant view, the biosphere forms the taken-for-granted material substratum of human existence, always present, always functioning, always forgiving; its needs do not have to be considered, just as the needs of other species generally do not have to be considered, except as they occasionally impinge upon or threaten the satisfaction of our own. Systematic devaluation and denial are perceptually ingrained in back-