#### Cyborg imagery fails to embrace a structural historicist perspective, destroying any attempts at implementing an effective praxis to resist structures of oppression.

Teresa Ebert 95

“(Untimely) Critiques for a Red Feminism” [<http://www.marxists.org/reference/subject/philosophy/works/us/ebert.htm>]

Materialism, in other words, is "invented" in ludic discourses to bring back transcendentalism in a more postmodern and thus convincing rhetoric. Moreover, as I will discuss more fully below, the trope of "invention" and theories of "invention" are introduced in contemporary theory as a means to overcome the impasse of "constructivism." Constructivism effectively combated humanism along with humanist and essentialist notions of the subject, but it also left the subject and subjectivity too determinate: "upper-middle-class" ludic theorists have not been able to accept any theory that circumscribes the freedom of the subject (of capital). However, what is commonly represented, under the guise of invention, as "materialism" in ludic feminism, is merely a re-invention of the very familiar technocratic imagination so valorised in capitalism: materialism as techno-ludism. The most well-known example of techno-ludism — that is, the conjuncture of technocratic fancy, inventionism and spiritual materialism — is Donna Haraway's Cyborg Manifesto which has become for many the manifesto of new, post-socialist ludic materialism. An apt commentary on the writings of Haraway and other feminist techno-theorists is provided by Marx and Engels. In their critique of idealist philosophers, Marx and Engels called them "industrialists of philosophy" who live on "absolute spirit," and this description remains valid for (techno)ludic feminists today (Marx and Engels, The German Ideology 27, Collected Works, Vol. 5). It is necessary to recall that Haraway's essay ends with what Stockton calls the trope of the "Christian Pentecost" ("Bodies and God" 138): Haraway claims that "Cyborg imagery ... is a dream not of a common language, but of a powerful infidel heteroglossia... a feminist speaking in tongues" (Simians 181). This spiritual materialism — this ludic matterism in its various forms from cyborgian techno-ludism to Butlerian "citationality" — is now the dominant theory of materialism in the postmodern knowledge industry. It is a materialism that does not determine the non-material but is, in fact, determined by the consciousness of the subject that infers it and thus constitutes it. ludic materialism, then, whether perceived as the matter of sign/ textuality or as the matter of the body is an invention to overcome the determinism of social constructionism: it is a device to return the freedom of the subject and the contingency and non-necessity of the social with a newly legitimated force to the entrepreneur and patriarchal-capitalism. Materialism, however, is neither a matter of "language" (sign/discourse/ textuality) nor is it an a-historical, inert, "resisting" mass (of the body) whose existence can be inferred by "faith or fiction," by performativity, resignifications and other ludic rituals. In its most radical rendering, ludic postmodern materialism leads to a form of Feuerbachian materialism about which Marx writes: "As far as Feuerbach is a materialist he does not deal with history, and as far as he considers history he is not a materialist" (Marx and Engels, The German Ideology 41). Materialism, is not a matter of inference. It is the objectivity (of "surplus labour"). Moreover it is an active objectivity: a praxis — the praxis of labour through which humans "act "upon external nature" and change it, and in this way simultaneously change themselves (Marx, Capital I, 284). As a praxis, it is historical, and as labour, it is conflictually structured between the owners of the means of production and those who have nothing but their own labour power to sell. Materialism, in short, is a historical praxis and a structure of conflicts that determines other practices. Unlike the Foucauldian and ludic inert non-discursive, it does not simply exist side by side with the discursive: it make the discursive possible; it "explains" the discursive. Explanation is, of course, the very thing that Foucault's theory of the autonomy of discourse is designed to erase. For Foucault all explanations (why) are ideological: only description (how) of discourse is a legitimate form of knowledge. Materialism is not an inert resistance to discourse, that has to be inferred by "fictions and faith." Instead materialism is (as Marx meticulously describes it in Capital, I, 340-416) what confronts the subject of labour in "the working day": the working day is the site in which the material and historical process of extracting surplus labour from the worker by the capitalist takes place.

### Queer theory uses radical subversion as a tactic, which overlooks the way queer subjects are socialized.

Green ‘02

Isaiah, “Gay but not queer: Toward a post-queer study of sexuality.” http://springerlink.com/content/nl111771864u0014/fulltext.pdf

In this article, I have identified two strains of queer theory that are plagued by an underdeveloped analysis of the effects of the “social” on the sexual. The first strain, radical deconstructionism, glosses over the ways in which sexual classifications are embodied in institutions and social roles, and thus under-theorizes their role as a principal axis of social organization. Similarly, the second strain of queer theory, radical subversion, neglects the shared social contexts in which sexual actors are socialized, and thus obscures the complexity of sexual marginality and its attachment to other institutionalized identities and social roles. Yet, even when homosexual practices are perceived to disrupt heteronormativity in the abstract, we would be foolish to think that subjects practicing homosexual desires develop a sexual subjectivity consistent with a radically queer epistemology, or that subversion occurs just because it is theorized from the standpoint of the plus academic arm-chair.

### Queer theory is inconsistent. In some cases it treats the subject as definable, and in others it does not. This contradiction makes queer theory epistemologically schizophrenic and methodologically untenable.

Green ‘07

Isaiah, “Queer Theory and Sociology: Locating the Subject and the Self in Sexuality Studies.” http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1467-9558.2007.00296.x/pdf

Not all queer theoretical work is as faithful to its deconstructionist raison d'etre, however, with the consequence that “the subject”—and by implication queer theory more generally—is rendered conceptually unintelligible. In this stream of queer theoretical work, queer is in one moment a disembodied, nonidentity with no identifiable “foundational logic” (Jagose 1996:96), but in the next moment, a marginal subject position akin to a social cleavage model of ethnicity (Green 2002). Rejecting outright subject positions that possess a classifiable interior in the first instance, but advancing an analysis of subject positions with a classifiable interior in the second instance, this formulation leaves queer theory between a rock and a hard place, epistemologically schizophrenic and methodologically untenable. In fact, as I argue below, if queer theory is to remain faithful to its epistemological premises, it cannot willy-nilly dismantle social contingency in some cases (e.g., homosexual subject positions) while recuperating social contingency in others (e.g., racialized subject positions). Below I revisit three instances of this mixed treatment of the subject in queer scholarship and suggest why these important works actually weaken the analytic promise of queer theory.

### THE EXPERIENTIAL METHOD MISTAKES THE REAL FOR THE TRUTH—ONLY A STRUCTURAL THEORY CAN MAKE SENSE OF THE SUBJECTIVE AND MOVE IT BEYOND EXPERIENCE THAT IS HIGHLY MEDIATED BY THE DOMINANT IDEOLOGY

young 2006

[Robert, Prof Critical Studies at Oxford, “Putting Materialism Back into Race Theory”, Red Critique, Spring 2006, p. online]

However, the experiential, the "real", does not adequate the "truth", as Collins implies. Collins rejects the "Eurocentric Masculinist Knowlege Validation Process" for its positivism but, in turn, she offers empiricism as the grounds for validating experience. Hence, the validity of experiential claims is adjudicated by reference to the experience. Not only is her argument circular, but it also undermines one of her key claims. If race, class, gender, and the accompanying ideological apparatuses are interlocking systems of oppression, as Collins suggest, then the experiential is not the site for the "true" but rather the site for the articulation of dominant ideology. On what basis then, could the experiential provide grounds for an historical understanding of the structures that make experience itself possible as experience? Asante and Collins assume that experience is self-intelligible and in their discourse it functions as the limit text of the real. However, I believe experience is a highly mediated frame of understanding. Though it is true that a person of color experiences oppression, this experience is not self-explanatory and, therefore, it needs to be situated in relation to other social practices. Experience seems local but it is, like all cultural and political practices, interrelated to other practices and experiences. Thus its explanation come from its "outside". Theory, specifically Marxist theory, provides an explanation of this outside by reading the meaning of all experiences as determined by the economic realities of class. While Asante's and Collins' humanism reads the experience of race as a site of "self-presence", the history of race in the United States—from slavery to Jim Crow to Katrina—is written in the fundamental difference of class. In other words, experience does not speak the real, but rather it is the site of contradictions and, hence, in need of conceptual elaboration to break from cultural common sense, a conduit for dominant ideology. It is this outside that has come under attack by black (humanist) scholars through the invocation of the black (transcendental) subject.