

GAYL JONES: *CORREGIDORA*

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 - MY BLUES AIN'T THE SAME AS YOURS...
 - 12-BAR BLUES STRUCTURE (49)

LEIT MOTIFS

- **Memory**
 - **Link to the past (8-9)**
 - **Evidence (14)**
 - **Promise to carry the truth into the next generation (22)**
- **What defines a woman?**
 - **wombs (4, 6)**
 - **fucking or "consequences of that fucking" (40-1, 55)**

Postmodern/Postmodernity

Suspicion and rejection of Master Narratives for history and culture; local narratives, ironic deconstruction of master narratives: counter-myths of origin.

Rejection of totalizing theories; pursuit of localizing and contingent theories.

Social and cultural pluralism, disunity, unclear bases for social/national/ ethnic unity.

Skepticism of idea of progress, anti-technology reactions, neo-Luddism; new age religions.

Sense of fragmentation and decentered self; multiple, conflicting identities.

Alternative family units, alternatives to middle-class marriage model, multiple identities for couplings and childraising. Polysexuality, exposure of repressed homosexual and homosocial realities in cultures.

Subverted order, loss of centralized control, fragmentation.

Some features of postmodern texts found in *Corregidora*

SAÏD, "THE POLITICS OF KNOWLEDGE" (1991)

- "Is all that matters about the issue of exclusion and misrepresentation the fact that names were left out" (372)?
- "...intellectual work, is worldly,... it is situated in the world, and about the world" (373).
- "...we ought then to reconsider the ties between the text and the world in a serious and uncoercive way" (379).

Walter Benjamin on the non-neutrality of history

- "Where are the empathies [of traditional historicism?]. The answer is inevitable: with the victor. Hence empathy with the victor invariably benefits the rulers. Historical materialists know what that means. Whoever has emerged victorious participates to this day in the triumphal procession in which the present rulers step over those who are lying prostrate. According to traditional practice, the spoils are carried along in the procession. They are called cultural treasures, and a historical materialist views them with cautious detachment... They owe their existence not only to the efforts of the great minds and talents who have created them, but also to the anonymous toil of their contemporaries.
- "There is no document of civilization which is not at the same time a document of barbarism... [A historical materialist] regards it as his task to brush history against the grain."
- "For every image of the past that is not recognized by the present as one of its own concerns threatens to disappear irretrievably." (From "Theses on the Philosophy of History" in *Illuminations*, ed. Hannah Arendt)

"THE WITNESS & THE HISTORIAN" FRANÇOIS HARTOG

- "Carried along by the deep swell of memory, the witness, understood as the bearer of memory, has little by little become essential to our public sphere."
- "...from the beginning, the Nazi Plan for extermination foresaw the need to eliminate all witnesses and traces of their crime."
- "The impossibility of witnessing.... There is a gap between what was suffered and the ability to speak about it."

MORE HARTOG...

- "From here, we discover the recurrent theme of 'lesson giving' where the witness is in the role, not of the lesson giver, but--being a victim--of the bearer of the lesson."
- "Whoever wants to reflect on the phenomena of witnessing can only do so with the recent centrality gained by Auschwitz in mind, or of the Holocaust as the Americans have named it."
- "The interest in memory that has seized the West ...is not separable from, or comprehensible without the dominant reference to Auschwitz."