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Postmodern, Poststructural, and Critical Theories

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What Are the Principles of Postmodern, Poststructural, and Critical Theories?

In this chapter, we explore postmodern, poststructural, and critical theories and discuss how they affect feminist research. These labels are sometimes taken to refer to the same thing and are sometimes taken up in oppositional ways. Further, what each of these names refers to is not an orderly, agreed on, and internally consistent set of ideas. What they mean depends on the vantage point from which the speaking or writing is being done. Among those who wear each of these labels there are many interesting and productive divisions, which are ignored when they are lumped together under one collective noun. Butler (1992) points out,

> A number of positions are ascribed to postmodernism, as if it were the kind of thing that could be the bearer of a set of positions: discourse is all there is, as if discourse were some kind of monistic stuff out of which all things are composed; the subject is dead, I can never say "I" again; there is no reality, only representations. These characterizations are variously imputed to postmodernism or poststructuralism, which are conflated with each other and sometimes understood as an indiscriminate assemblage of French feminism, deconstruction, Lacanian psychoanalysis, Foucaultian analysis, Rorty's conversationalism and cultural studies. (p. 4)

Postmodernism is a term often used by critics who believe postmodernism is undermining the most fundamental assumptions necessary for social science and feminist research. Against this monster they try "to shore up the primary premises, to establish in advance that any theory of politics requires a subject, needs from the start to presume its subject, the referentiality of language, the integrity of the institutional description it provides" (Butler, 1992, p. 3).

Through exploring these commonalities and oppositionalities, we will make visible some of the ideas and practices that emerge in the writing and research to which these names are given. We will extract a set of principles that characterize these paradigms and set them apart from different understandings of research and the world. Our

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account of these perspectives is written neither from a distance, informed by a positivist ideal of objectivity, nor as if they can be defined once and for all. Every definition creates exclusions that might (and should) be contested. Among feminist concepts, for example, sisterhood was an important concept for feminist activism for much of the 20th century, but it underpinned the policing of behavior and the exclusion of those who did not display appropriate sisterhood: "As bad as it is for a woman to be bullied into submission by a patriarch's unitary truth, it is even worse for her to be judged as not a real feminist by a matriarch's unitary truth" (Tong, 1998, p. 279). We will, with this caveat on categorizing, attempt to create some coherent storying of the interconnections of postmodern, poststructural, and critical theories as they are taken up by feminist researchers. *It is a principle of critical, poststructural, and postmodern approaches to feminism that objectivity must be carefully rethought. An account, from these perspectives, is always situated. It is an account from somewhere, and some time, and some one (or two in this case), written for some purpose and with a particular audience in mind. It is always therefore a partial and particular account, an account that has its own power to produce new ways of seeing and that should always be open to contestation*. In this view of feminism, we do not rely on objective truth but on "being accountable for what and how we have the power to see" (Castor, 1991, p. 64). The particular position from which we write this chapter is as feminist poststructuralists looking back, as we trace the emergence of that field and its influences on feminist work, and looking forward, simultaneously, to the possibilities that such work opens up.

Like many other feminist researchers in the 1980s and early 1990s, Patti Lather (1991) combined what she called a critical approach with postmodern and poststructural approaches. In envisaging the task she was undertaking, she located these three approaches along with feminism within the overarching social science framework in terms of the analytic work that social scientists took themselves to be doing in their analyses (p. 7). (See the table below.)

In this representation, earlier forms of research characterized as positivist and interpretive adopted a naturalistic or realist approach in which the researcher is understood as separate from the research and the social world as independent of the researcher's gaze. This is in marked contrast to work that sets out to make a difference to that social world, to emancipate subordinated groups from oppressive versions of reality.

The deconstructive or poststructuralist/postmodern movement will be the main topic of this chapter. In this section, we will adopt the shorthand "deconstructive" to refer to postmodern and poststructural approaches and we will subsume the "critical," for the moment, inside that term. Our account is not offered as a grand narrative of the progress of feminist theory from one approach to another. Such grand narratives exclude other ways of seeing, privilege accounts from those with power, and promote falsely linear versions of history. In what follows, we will point out how, and on what grounds, some feminists have been alarmed by the effects of

Postpositivist Inquiry

Predict	*Understand*	*Emancipate*	*Deconstruct*
Positivism	Interpretive Naturalistic Constructivist Phenomenological Hermeneutic	Critical Neo-Marxist Feminist Praxis oriented Educative Freirian Participatory Action research	Poststructural Postmodern Postparadigmatic Diaspora

"deconstructive" ways of thinking on feminist action and on our research and writing practices. We will provide some responses to these critiques, while reminding readers that neither the criticisms nor our responses to them are intended to be taken as the final word.

This chapter—and indeed the practices of the research to be discussed here—can be read as a simultaneous and constant weaving and unweaving of how we think and what we do and say in feminist research. *This is a second principle. Particular attention must be paid to the mode of writing, to the discursive strategies through which particular versions of the world are accomplished, especially in the present moment of writing.* In the figure of the weaver, simultaneously weaving and unweaving who she is, we ask you to consider the stuff of her weaving as the discursive threads of what is possible (nameable, seeable, doable, speakable, writeable) at any particular moment in time and place, and from a particular situated position. Feminist writers such as Laurel Richardson (1997) and Trinh Minh-Ha (1989, 1991, 1992) draw attention to the weft and weave of research texts and the subjectivities realized within them. Acute reflexivity—especially at the very moment of writing—is necessary for researchers working within critical, postmodern, and poststructural frameworks.

A further principle of these theoretical frameworks has to do with questions of power, emancipation, freedom, and agency. *Our third principle is that relations of power are understood as established and maintained through discourse and through positions taken up and made possible within particular discourses* (Davies & Harré, 2000). Power is seen as complex and unstable and possibilities for agency, resistance, "freedom," and emancipation as contingent and limited. These concepts are treated differently within critical, postmodern, and poststructural theories: Indeed, their different takes on power, freedom, and agency act as distinguishing features between them. Furthermore, feminist poststructuralism insists on a particular position on agency that tends to differ from the works of other poststructuralists (Davies, 2000a; Davies & Gannon, 2005, 2006; Weedon, 1997). Feminists working in poststructural paradigms seek to reconfigure agency so that we still might claim it as a possibility, albeit contingent and situated, that will assist us to conceptualize and bring about change.

You will notice that some of the theorists we mention in this chapter are men, who do not position themselves (and are not offered the position) as "feminist." Their positioning in the world as "men" may be seen by some radical feminists as negating their value for feminism because male theorists cannot know how one would think when positioned as a woman. From a deconstructive point of view, one can, rather, examine the nature of the "binary" division being discursively constructed in this concern: "Identity categories are never merely descriptive, but always normative, and as such exclusionary" (Butler, 1992, p. 16). Binary modes of thought limit and constrain thinking in ways that are oppositional and hierarchical. These binary categories—such as man/woman and good/evil—are implicated in dividing and constraining the world in ways that may be violent in their effects. So too, the category feminist, if understood in binary terms, implies the existence of an imagined and oppositional category that contains those items, people, or ideas that are "not-feminist" or even "antifeminist" (mobilizing the divisive logic of "if you are not with us you are against us"). Detecting these binary or oppositional and hierarchical modes of thinking, where categories emerge to structure thought on axes of this/not-this and good/bad, is of particular interest to researchers working within deconstructive frameworks. The binaries are implicated in relations of power and in maintaining the status quo. Despite the apparent orderliness of binary thought, categories tend to slip around and to glue themselves onto other binaries, conflating one with another. For example, feminist may be conflated with "woman" (and, conversely, not-feminist with "man"). The conflation of not-feminist with misogyny or patriarchy is a further binary move. Some of the binaries found glued to each other in Western traditions of mythology and that continue to inform our cultures and social practices are as follows (Wilshire, 1989, pp. 95–96):

KNOWLEDGE (accepted wisdom)/IGNORANCE (the occult and taboo)
higher (up)/lower (down)
good, positive/negative, bad
mind (ideas), head, spirit/body (flesh), womb (blood), Nature (Earth)
reason (the rational)/emotions and feelings (the irrational)
cool/hot
order/chaos
control/letting be, allowing, spontaneity
objective (outside, "out there")/subjective (inside, immanent)
literal truth, fact/poetic truth metaphor, art
goals/process
light/darkness
written text, Logos/oral tradition, enactment, Myth
Apollo as sky-sun/Sophia as earth-cave-moon
public sphere/private sphere
seeing, detached/listening, attached
secular/holy and sacred
linear/cyclical
permanence, ideal (fixed) forms/change, fluctuations, evolution
"changeless and immortal"/process, ephemeras (performance)
hard/soft
independent, individual, isolated/dependent, social, interconnected, shared
dualistic/whole
MALE/FEMALE

The binary metaphors through which our narratives and storylines are constructed and our identities as men and women are made real are recognizable here. It is possible to recognize one's gendered identity (who you are or believe you should be or are seen to be) by looking at the appropriate side of the table (the one you have been "assigned" to). But it is also possible to claim characteristics from the other side. Nevertheless, the binaries act as an ordering device, defining what is appropriately "male" or "female" in terms of their opposition from one another. They rule out multiplicity and differences to create order, social coherence, and predictability around the idea of two opposite hierarchical categories (Davies, 1994).

By drawing attention to the way binaries insert themselves into thought, deconstructive writers provoke us to think differently and more carefully about the nuances and the possibilities of meaning in the language and the ideas that we might use. In pondering the nature of deconstructive thinking and the concern that it might not be useful for feminists because it has been produced by men, it is fascinating to run down the female side of Wilshire's table. Most of these metaphors can be used to characterize the theorizing that is done by deconstructive writers whether male or female. We might ask then: Is poststructural and postmodern theorizing female even when it is produced by men? We can use such questions and observations to begin the work of deconstructing the male/female binary. We can ask, How are such categories constructed and maintained? What exclusions and inclusions mark such sites? How are social identities, the iterations of sex/gender, performed and sedimented in the particularities of people's lives? How are they lodged in their bodies? How are the unstable borders of these

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sites policed by individuals and institutions through oppositional and moralistic discourses and regimes of truth? As Cixous (1986) writes,

> Men and women are caught up in a web of age-old cultural determinations that are almost unanalyzable in their complexity. One can no more speak of "woman" than of "man" without being trapped within an ideological theatre where the proliferation of representations, images, reflections, myths, identifications transform, deform, constantly change everyone's Imaginary and invalidate in advance any conceptualization. (p. 83)

Feminist deconstructive writing searches for ways to disrupt the grip that binaries have on thought and on identity. Such deconstructive writing draws not only on rational argument but also on poetic writing, on fiction, on music, and on the performing arts. Sometimes it rewrites figures from the past (e.g., Cixous, 1991; Clément, 1989). Through play with language and alternative forms of narrative and representation such writing can blur the gender binaries, making a deconstructive move from either/or to both/and, disrupting, deconstructing, and troubling the clichés and stereotypes of everyday thought and practice in which we are enmeshed. *This is a fourth principle: The binaries within discourse limit and constrain modes of thought and the possibilities of identity. They disguise them as natural and give us only one option—of mimicking one part and abjecting the other. It is vital, life-giving work to play with and find ways of disrupting those linguistic forms, the binary oppositions, and the identities and meanings they hold in place. The power of language must be understood and language itself opened up for revision.*

It is here that we run into one of the deepest divisions within the approaches we are writing about in this chapter. The disruptive and deconstructive work on the categories through which we know ourselves and through which we argue for change is read by some who work within the critical framework to destroy the categories and to make them unusable for the work of changing society. Others do not see deconstructive play as destruction. Butler (2004a), for example, suggests that calling terms into question doesn't mean debunking them but leads, rather, to their revitalization (p. 178). From a deconstructive perspective it is clear that we must work within the language we have. The terms and the categories that we wish to question are nonetheless powerful categories that have a great deal of political purchase. They can and do accomplish a great deal within our personal and social worlds whether we choose to mobilize them for political ends or not. In drawing attention to their constitutive power, a deconstructive approach does not foreclose the use of constituted categories on behalf of those who are subordinated by them. In a double move characteristic of deconstructive writing, we continue to use particular categories, like feminist, but work to destabilize some of the category's certainties. We put them "sous rature" or "under erasure," following Derrida (1976), using a textual reminder to stand as a permanent reminder that we continue to need the concept but are also wary of some of its dangers. *A fifth and important principle of thought is this deep skepticism toward assumed truths and taken-for-granted knowledges, because they are generated through language, combined with a pragmatic understanding of the power of those categories to effect powerful positionalities and actions within the social world.*

The history of feminism can be read as a series of moments in which wins against patriarchal structures and practices have been achieved, and then subtly undermined by a shifting ground of resistance that negates the wins that have been made and keeps women's subordinate status carefully locked in place. Deconstructive approaches to feminism eschew simple recipes and actions in favor of a complex and continuous reflection on the ways in which identities, realities, and desires are established and maintained. This does not mean that they are prevented from action. Feminists are capable of working within multiple discourses, depending on the social and interactive contexts in which they find themselves, the particular moment in history, and the particular task in hand.

How Have Critical Theory, Postmodernism, and Poststructuralism Been Taken up Within Feminist Research?

In this section, we will separate critical, postmodern, and poststructural theories and elaborate some of the key concepts within them. We then

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elaborate the ways in which approaches, concepts, and strategies derived from each theoretical framework have been taken up and developed within feminist research.

Critical Theory, Postmodernism, and Poststructuralism: Their Emergence and Interconnections

Critical Theory

Many poststructural and postmodern feminist writers began as critical theorists and maintain a strong critical edge in their writing (e.g., Haug et al., 1987; Henriques, Hollway, Urwin, Venn, & Walkerdine, 1998; Lather, 1991; Walkerdine, 1990). Critical theory, as a formal description of a particular mode of research and analysis, first emerged in the Frankfurt School of Social Research in Germany in the 1920s and 1930s through the work of Adorno, Horkheimer, Marcuse, and, later, Habermas. These philosopher-sociologists rejected fixed notions of hierarchies of social domination, such as might be found in Marxism, although Marxism was an important influence. They disrupted disciplinary authority by critiquing the supposedly objective "view from nowhere" of a positivist social science that had been modeled on the natural sciences and that had emerged from Enlightenment beliefs in universal reason and objective thought. Critical theorists brought philosophical questions into the arena of empirical social research. They developed a reflexive and critical social inquiry that saw social scientific knowledge itself as implicated in complex modes of production and regimes of truth. In so doing, they historicized and contextualized social science for the first time. Their work highlighted the logocentrism of Western rationalist and liberal humanist thought—questioning the belief that reason is universal, disinterested, and dispassionate and that it can set us free. However, they did not abandon the tenets of Enlightenment thought—the belief in reason and the rational subject. Rather than dismantle them, they reconstructed them as sociocultural forms. In contrast to some of their successors, they resisted the lure of relativism and remained committed to the belief that truth is possible and can ground social action (McCarthy, 1994, pp. 7–30; Zima, 2002, pp. 194–198). For the critical social theorists of the Frankfurt School emancipation was part of their goal. This aspect of their work has threaded through into the liberatory discourses of contemporary critical theory.

Critical theorists continue to be influential in qualitative research in diverse disciplines and in different geographic locations. Current critical theory uses discourses of equity, inclusion, and social justice that are familiar and compatible with feminist agendas. Lincoln and Denzin (2003) note,

> The critique and concern of the critical theorists has been an effort to design a pedagogy of resistance within communities of difference. The pedagogy of resistance, of taking back "voice," of reclaiming narrative for one's own rather than adapting to the narratives of a dominant majority . . . [aims at] overturning oppression and achieving social justice through empowerment of the marginalized, the poor, the nameless, the voiceless. (pp. 625–626)

Critical theorists make grand claims for the potential of such work to change the world. Kincheloe and McLaren (2003), for instance, claim that critical theory produces "dangerous knowledge, the kind of information and insight that upsets institutions and threatens to overturn sovereign regimes of truth" (p. 433). They characterize the current "criticalist" as any researcher who believes

> that all thought is fundamentally mediated by power relations that are social and historically constituted, [that] facts can never be isolated from the domain of values or removed from ideological inscription, [that the] relationship between concept and object and between signifier and signified is never stable or fixed and is often mediated by social relations of capitalist production/consumption; that language is central to the formation of subjectivity; . . . that certain groups in society are privileged over others. (p. 453)

This description could also include many theorists who are called postmodernists or poststructuralists. With language like "ideological" and "social relations of capitalist production/consumption," the authors also reference the

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traces of Marxism in current critical theory. However, their claim that "institutions" and "sovereign regimes of truth" might be overturned implies a more rigid and hierarchical conception of power and its operations than that to be found in poststructural theory (e.g., Butler, 1997b; Foucault, 1980).

Although few feminists overtly cling to the founding fathers of critical theory, there is much sympathy with these positions particularly in our longing for emancipatory agendas. Indeed, recent critical theory is sometimes called new left theory or neo-Marxism[1] and it informs critical race theory, critical multiculturalism, critical psychology, critical feminist theory, and critical pedagogy. In *Getting Smart*, Lather's (1991) early synthesis of feminist and critical pedagogies, she articulates her indebtedness to critical theory and continuing affinity with its emancipatory objectives, but she critiques aspects of critical theory from a postmodern perspective. Although it can also be claimed that critical theory has "largely mutated into poststructuralism" (Boler, 2000, p. 362), authors and areas of study that thematize the "critical" tend to insist that, unlike those working with postmodern and poststructural approaches, the outcome they envisage is "real" social change, with the implication that this must entail subjects who have agency in the world. As we will argue later, these agendas are not as absent from the work of postmodern and poststructural feminists as some critical theorists claim, though the concept of agency is carefully revised by these feminists as a "radically conditioned" form of agency (Butler, 1997b, p. 15). In Judith Butler's view, for example, the social subject is a site of ambivalence where power acts to constitute these subjects (who might elsewhere be called "individuals") in certain limiting ways but where, at the same time, and through the same effects of power, possibilities to act (albeit constrained and limited) also emerge. Critical theorists are committed to a more straightforward concept of emancipation, and of the freedom of individuals to strive toward it, as a necessary and permanent possibility. Power tends to be seen within critical theory as oppressive and unilinear, and it is enacted by certain groups on other groups. Emancipatory potential lies in the radical overturning of those hierarchical relations of power. Freedom from oppression is a central goal of critical theorists. In pursuit of this outcome, discursive analyses of sexism, homophobia, racism, religious, and cultural oppressions in everyday life and institutional practices are part of their methodological arsenal though they may not take up postmodern or poststructural positions on truth or subjectivity.

Two prominent feminist exponents of critical theory have been philosophers Seyla Benhabib and Nancy Fraser. In their influential and polemical collection *Feminist Contentions* (Benhabib, Butler, Cornell, & Fraser, 1995), they defend the tenets of critical social feminist theory against the effects of poststructuralism, represented in the collection in two papers by Butler.[2] Benhabib and Fraser see value in some postmodernist ideas but they are wary of theories that they see as radical and dangerously relativist. Benhabib grounds her critique in three principles that she argues must not be abandoned by feminism and that, she claims, are weakened within a deconstructive approach. First, feminists must be able to assume an autonomous feminist subject who remains capable of self-reflection and agency. Second, she argues that large-scale narratives have their purposes, and feminists need to maintain some distance from social contexts they critique to develop objective perspectives and contribute to new narratives. Third, she insists that utopian ideals, abandoned by postmodernism, are necessary for feminist ethics and social and political activism (Benhabib, 1995, p. 30). In *Feminist Contentions*, Fraser is less resistant than Benhabib to postmodern feminism. She argues that feminism can benefit from incorporation of "weak" versions of postmodern ideas, but that feminist work must enable political action (Fraser, 1995a, 1995b). Benhabib and Fraser acknowledge some of the contributions of postmodernism to feminism, including the constitutive effects of language and the rejection of abstract (and masculine) universal reason. Their commitment remains, however, with critical theory, which they read as emancipatory and as enabling political activism in a way that they perceive postmodernism does not. The goal of critical theorists, they say, is not only to interpret social life but also to transform it. This transformation, like any theory of liberation,

they argue, is dependent on a notion of subjectivity that allows some agency and incorporates possibilities for choice and for freedom to act in the world.

Within postmodern and poststructural approaches to feminist research, in contrast, "liberation" is made problematic, because one can never stand outside of discourse, agency is always radically conditioned by the positions made available to the acting, agentic subject, and subjectivity is always also subjection to the available ways of being. Further, absolute moral or ethical truth claims are regarded with a measure of skepticism, though that does not prevent feminists who take up these approaches from passionate attachments to both morality and action. Nevertheless, critical theorists are wary of postmodernism and poststructuralism because of the obstacles they see in such positions for political, social, or economic transformation. If critiquing the foundations of radical thought and activism leads to their collapse, then how are we to move on? How might we, they ask, effect change in the world? How might we "work the ruins" of what we had and knew (St. Pierre & Pillow, 2000)? Accusations of ethical paralysis and apoliticism as the inevitable consequences of poststructuralist thought are common but they rest on an assumption that criticism and transformation are binary, irreconcilable opposites that cannot work together in a "both/and" kind of way. In such feminist dismissals of poststructuralism, criticism is allied with "theory," transformation with "praxis," and each side of the pair is positioned as oppositional; that is, as mutually exclusive. Michel Foucault (2000a) argued, in contrast, that critique and transformation are necessarily implicated in each others' operations, indeed that radical transformation can only emerge from radical critique:

> I don't think that criticism can be set against transformation, "ideal" criticism against "real" transformation.
>
> A critique does not consist in saying that things aren't good the way they are. It consists in seeing on what type of assumptions, of familiar notions, of established, unexamined ways of thinking the accepted practices are based. . . .
>
> There is always a little thought occurring even in the most stupid institutions; there is always thought even in silent habits.
>
> Criticism consists in uncovering that thought and trying to change it; showing that things are not as obvious as people believe, making it so that what is taken for granted is no longer taken for granted. To do criticism is to make harder those acts which are now too easy.
>
> Understood in these terms, criticism (and radical criticism) is utterly indispensable for any transformation. For a transformation that would remain within the same mode of thought, a transformation that would only be a certain way of better adjusting the same thought to the reality of things, would only be a superficial transformation.
>
> On the other hand, as soon as people begin to have trouble thinking things the way they have been thought, transformation becomes at the same time very urgent, very difficult, and entirely possible. (pp. 456–457)

The project for any critical theory, Foucault argues, is to make it possible to think differently and thus to open the possibility for acting differently. This has profound implications for social practice and for social research. In this sense, critical theory, poststructural theory, and postmodern theory can work together rather than in antagonism with each other.

Postmodern Theory

The terms *postmodern* and *poststructural* have at times been used interchangeably in the United States, both terms signaling a "crisis of confidence in western conceptual systems" (Lather, 1991, p. 159). Postmodernism is "an American term" (St. Pierre, 2004, p. 348) that has been used in diverse arenas of social and cultural life and that was in the early 1990s inclusive of poststructuralism. In a recent anthology of postmodernism, Bertens and Natoli (2002) trace three aggregations of this "protean" term: first, as a set of literary and artistic practices; second, as "a set of philosophical traditions centered on the rejection of realist epistemology and the Enlightenment project" mostly associated with French poststructural thought (p. xii); and, third, in its most "ambitious" form, as a term that seeks to describe "a new sociocultural formation and/or economic dispensation . . . an aggressive entrepreneurialist capitalism" (pp. xiii–xv).

In architecture and the arts, in general, postmodern aesthetics are marked by the collapse of distinctions between high and popular culture, by self-referential reflexivity, by irony, parody, pastiche, appropriation, and surprising juxtapositions of images and ideas. Postmodernism is viewed in other domains, such as economics, often with alarm. It sometimes stands as a synonym for "post-Fordist," "late," or "fast" capitalism, signaling the rise of Western consumer culture, multinationalism, and the globalization of corporate culture, capital, and labor. The postmodern logic underpinning the movement of global capital challenges the work of feminists who have fought long and hard for more equitable distribution of income, labor, and other resources. Global corporate culture can be understood as a new form of colonialism. Neoliberal approaches to management emphasizing the flexibility of workforces and workplaces—thus the instability of subjects and the relations of power and knowledge within which they are located—are underpinned by these versions of postmodern culture. Regardless of the context or ideological intent, discourses that deploy postmodernism "seek to distance us from and make us skeptical about beliefs concerning truth, knowledge, power, the self and language that are often taken for granted within and serve as legitimation for contemporary western culture" (Flax, 1990, p. 41). The turn from critical theory to postmodernism is thus marked by a profound skepticism toward taken-for-granted foundational concepts, including those that underpin emancipatory agendas.

In its very naming, postmodernism is produced both in opposition to and as a continuation of some aspects of modernism. While gurus of postmodernity, like Lyotard (1984) and Bauman (2004), have claimed that postmodernity was very modernist, postmodernity is more usually characterized as replacing modernity, which is the era of social and cultural life and aesthetics that spans the latter half of the 20th century in the West. Modernity—emerging from the Enlightenment overturning of church and king as the origins of truth—validates reason, logic, and universal truth as the foundation for action in the world. The emancipatory impulses of liberal humanism and Marxism, both of which have influenced feminist movements, are rooted in the modernist project. Critique of the institutions and social practices that routinely excluded women became possible because of modernist thought. Yet many feminists have noted that the tenets of modernism have not been friendly to women. They argue that the modernist subject, able to act autonomously in the world, his actions driven by scientific, objective knowledge and by will, is always already a masculine subject, an individual subject more or less separate from the social world and free to act on it. As Hekman (1990) notes, the feminist position on "the modernist-postmodernist debate" is "anomalous" (p. 2). Modernism is part of our legacy, and as the humanist ideals of social justice and equity that remain important for feminism emerge from modernism, its vocabulary and politics continue, inevitably, to work through us (St. Pierre, 2000a, p. 478). Nevertheless, both feminists and postmodernists have been critical of the modernist project and these critiques signaled a shift toward different conceptions of the subject and of society and its signifying systems. Postmodern approaches in art and social analysis "privileged aesthetics, language and singularity over the analysis of social institutions and social structures, and in their more extreme and polemical form declared the social to be dead" (Baudrillard, 1983, cited in Gane, 2004, p. 4). Postmodernists argue that knowledge is contextual, historically situated, and discursively produced; that subjects are constituted within networks of power and knowledge. Yet postmodernism, like feminism, is not uncontested. Bauman (2004) explains why he gave up the term:

> "The postmodern" was flawed from the beginning: all disclaimers notwithstanding, it did suggest that modernity was over . . . In time more flaws became clearer to me—I'll mention but two of them. One was, so to speak, objective: "postmodern" barred the much needed break or rupture . . . "Postmodern thinking" could not but adhere to the "modernity grid" . . . The second was subjective. I prefer to select my bedfellows and affinities myself. Ascription to the "postmodernist" camp grew more and more unsavory and unpalatable by the day as the "postmodern" writings went further and further astray and "postmodernism" came to mean, more than anything else, singing praise of

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> the brave new world of ultimate liberation rather than subjecting it to critical scrutiny. (p. 18)

Foucault (1998) also drew attention to categorical problems when he asked "What are we calling postmodernity? I'm not up to date" (p. 447), and, he continued, "I've never clearly understood what was meant in France by modernity . . . I do not grasp clearly what that might mean, though the word itself is unimportant; we can always use any arbitrary label" (p. 448). He goes on, nevertheless, to name the "recasting of the subject" as the central problem that allied those who had been working in what might be called postmodern theory up to that time. Of his own work he says,

> The goal of my work during the last twenty years . . . has not been to analyze the phenomena of power, nor to elaborate the foundations of such an analysis. My objective, instead, has been to create a history of the different modes by which, in our culture, human beings are made subjects. (Foucault, 2000b, p. 326)

It is this task of resituating the human subject not as the central heroic and active agent who shapes her own destiny but as the subject who is constituted through particular discourses in particular historical moments that is central to the postmodern approach to research. Butler also traces the splits and contradictions that are elided by the abstract collective noun postmodernism. Like Foucault and Bauman, Butler (1992) rejects the name: "I don't know about the term 'postmodern' but . . . [I know that] power pervades the very conceptual apparatus that seeks to negotiate its terms, including the subject position of the critic" (p. 6), and again, "I don't know what postmodernism is, but I do have some sense of what it might mean to subject notions of the body and materiality to a deconstructive critique" (p. 17). The subject, power, and the body—and deconstruction as a strategy for critique—are issues that they both signal and that are at the core of our theoretical conversations in this chapter.

Although categories are useful in academic work, and we use them and are here engaged in their perpetuation, we are less concerned with policing their borders than with exploring the work that might be done with ideas emanating from these modes of thought. The semantic puzzles prompted by the naming of theoretical positions—and the seductions of theoretical progress narratives and successor regimes—have led us to a moment when we are variously faced with "post-postmodern theory," "posthumanist theory," "postfeminist theory," and even "post-theory theory." Rather than becoming entangled in these confabulations, and having alerted readers to some of the problems with such labels, we go on to explore in more detail poststructuralism and what that might be said to entail. Because many feminist authors who originally used the term postmodern have since vacated the term and moved toward poststructural, we will devote the remainder of this section to an exploration of poststructural theory and the concepts that have been taken up within it by feminist researchers.

Poststructural Theory

While the postmodern label was initially used to cover both the postmodern and the poststructural, the term poststructural has subsequently become more common. The poststructural label signals in particular the "linguistic turn," although many theorists who would see themselves as responding to this turn would not describe themselves as poststructuralists and may or may not see themselves as postmodernists or critical theorists. The turn to language marked by poststructuralism is a recognition of the constitutive power of language and of discourse, particularly as introduced through the work of Michel Foucault (1997b) where discourses are seen to "articulate what we think, say and do" and to be historically contingent (p. 315). The subject is discursively produced and the very body and its desires are materialized through discourse. Thus, the linguistic turn of poststructuralism is, more accurately, a "discursive" turn. Poststructural theory turns to discourse as the primary site for analysis and brings a deep skepticism to realist approaches where the task of social science is to discover and describe real worlds, which are taken to exist independent of their observations and their subjects. It troubles the individualism of humanist approaches, seeing the humanist individual

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as a (sometimes) troubling and fictional accomplishment of social and discursive practices (Davies & Gannon, 2005, 2006). In this sense, poststructuralism, in marked contrast to postmodernism, might be seen as the antithesis of global capitalism and of neoliberalism in which the individual is emphasized and the social is proclaimed as dead. Humanist psychology and some aspects of psychoanalysis are among the metanarratives that have been brought into question by poststructuralism, though many feminist poststructural researchers find aspects of psychoanalysis useful (e.g., Britzman, 1998; Butler, 1997b, 2004b; Clément, 1989, 1994; Flax, 1990, 1993; Grosz, 1990, 1994a; Ussher, 1997; Walkerdine, 1990). These theorists use psychoanalysis to theorize desire and to explore the changes individual subjects must engage in to bring about new patterns of desire and thus new ways of being.

The focus of poststructural thinking is on cultural life as the production and reading of texts and on the deconstruction of those texts. Its work is in marked contrast to the realist and naturalistic modes of thought in which the task was to "understand" or to make predictions about what was already there (Lather, 1991, p. 7). This poststructural work, which Butler (2003) describes as the work of critical intellectuals, is often a difficult and painful process of making strange that which we take for granted:

> I believe it has to be the case (certainly since Marx it has been the case) that becoming a critical intellectual involves working hard on difficult texts. From Marx through Adorno, we learned that capitalism is an extremely difficult text: it does not show itself as transparent; it gives itself in enigmatic ways; it calls for interpretive hermeneutic effort. There is no question about it. We think things are the way they must be because they've become naturalized. The life of the commodity structures our world in ways that we take for granted. And what was Marx's point? Precisely to make the taken-for-granted world seem spectral, strange. And how does that work? It only works by taking received opinion and received doxa and really working through it. It means undergoing something painful and difficult: an estrangement from what is most familiar. (p. 46)

Though poststructuralism does not provide a clear set of practices that might be taken up and ossified as a "method," it does provide a new set of approaches that might be made use of in analysis to provoke the sort of estrangement that Butler speaks of and to allow for new thought. In addition, methodologies themselves are made strange as "thinking technologies" that are also, always, subject to critical scrutiny (Haraway, 2000). Within a poststructural research paradigm it becomes difficult to define discrete methods for research. Indeed, Barthes (1989) suggests that we need to "turn against Method . . . regard it without any founding privilege, as one of the voices of plurality: as a *view* . . . a spectacle, mounted within the text" (p. 319). It is more useful to think of strategies, approaches, and tactics that defy definition or closure. Poststructuralism promotes close textual analysis as a central strategy but the idea of a text encompasses far more than conventional written or spoken data. It allows for macrotexts like "capitalism" (or Marxism, humanism, feminism, postmodernism), and it allows for more familiar "micro" level texts like interview transcripts or literary texts. Strategies for poststructural analysis have nomadic tendencies and cross over disciplinary boundaries. Texts go beyond the conventional perceptions of literary or linguistic texts and might include bodies in space, spaces without bodies, or texts comprising nonlinguistic semiotic systems.

In poststructural research, the shift of interpretive focus is from language as a tool for describing real worlds to discourse, as constitutive of those worlds. There are no "right" research methods that will produce a reality that lies outside of the texts produced in the research process because reality does not preexist the discursive and constitutive work that is of interest to poststructural writers. This is important for feminist researchers in that it makes visible the historical, cultural, social, and discursive patterns through which current oppressive or dominant realities are held in place. What might have been taken for granted as natural, even essential to the human condition, and therefore unable to be questioned in any systematic way, is no longer taken to be inevitable, no longer left invisible. The structures and practices of everyday life are opened to scrutiny. Inevitabilities are reviewed as constituted realities (which have the possibility within themselves of

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their own reconstitution or collapse). In its focus on discourse and discursive and regulatory practices, poststructural analysis seeks to transcend the individual or social divide and to find the ways in which the social worlds we inhabit, and the possibilities for existence within them, are actively spoken into existence by individuals and collectives. The individual in this way of thinking is not separate from the social landscape, but continuous with it (Davies, 2000b).

An important focus of feminist poststructural theorizing is on the processes of *subjectification* and the discursive regimes through which we become gendered subjects. In this way it breaks with theoretical frameworks in which gender and sexuality are understood as inevitable, as *determined* through structures of language, social structure, cognition, or biology. It rejects the essentialism that attributes the experiences of women to "an underlying essence of womanness, an essence contained in bodies and expressed in culture," or that universalizes women's experiences (Ferguson, 1993, p. 81). Thus, it rejects conventional elements of radical and liberal feminisms. It also breaks with theoretical frameworks that define *power* as that which is held in hierarchical and institutional frameworks by certain groups and individuals (Foucault, 1980). The question for poststructural feminism then becomes that of *agency* and what possibilities there are for us to act. This agency does not presume freedom from discursive constitution and regulation of self (Davies, 2000a, 2000b) but rather lies in the capacity to recognize that constitution as historically specific and socially regulated through particular games of truth, and thus as able to be called into question and changed. Meaning and intention are not stable across times, places, interactive contexts, and discourses. Individual subjects take up their existence in specific moments and are always located historically, politically, and discursively in contexts from which they are not separate (Davies, 2000b). In what follows we will elaborate each of these concepts of discourse, subjectivity, agency, power, and truth.

Poststructural Concepts

Discourses are complex interconnected webs of modes of being, thinking, and acting. They are in constant flux and often contradictory. They are always located on temporal and spatial axes, thus they are historically and culturally specific. We are always already constituted within discourse and discourses operate on and in us simultaneously at the levels of desire as well as reason. The concept of discourse is used by poststructuralists to bring language into the material world where what can be understood and what can be said and done is seen as historically, socially, and culturally constituted. The range of possible ways of thinking are encompassed within (in)finite discursive possibilities that open thought up to us and close thought down. Discourse "can never be just linguistic since it organizes a way of thinking into a way of acting in the world" (St. Pierre, 2000a, p. 485). We do not have a prediscursive rational self, existing outside of or apart from discourse, we are ourselves constituted within discursive regimes, some of which are more powerful and more readily available than others. Discourses are not fixed but subject to constant revision and contestation to flux and flow. The concept of discourse serves to denaturalize what seems "natural," and to interrupt essentialist thought. It links together "power, knowledge, institutions, intellectuals, the control of populations, and the modern state as these intersect in the functions of systems of thought" (Bové, 1990, pp. 54–55). Influential discourses related to femininity, heterosexuality, fertility, and maternity have structured the conditions of women's lives. Feminists have worked to reform these structures. That reformation became possible through rethinking discursive regimes of truth about the essential qualities of women at particular moments in time. The suffragettes worked to make it possible to think about women differently—as rational and intelligent beings—at a time when women were excluded from citizenry. As it became possible to think differently, discourses about democracy and the institutions within which these discourses of citizenry were regulated and disseminated shifted until, quite rapidly, it became impossible to think that women were not capable of voting. The discourses of equity and women's rights that came to be called feminism in the West did not arise independently—outside of space and time—but from an intersection of historically situated

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discourses relating to emancipation and revolutionary changes in France and the United States that questioned what it is to be a human subject in a democracy. They arose in part from the new thinking that became possible at these intersections for individual subjects and from the strategic alliances that these women made with others who had begun this deconstructive thinking. Poststructuralists, however, are suspicious of successor regimes and victory narratives. They prefer to trace how a certain mode of thought became possible at a particular juncture, and how it became a dominant discourse or regime of truth that can itself be subjected to retracings and retellings. Butler (1992) sees such questioning of democracy as central to radical, deconstructive politics:

> A social theory committed to democratic contestation within a postcolonial horizon needs to find a way to bring into question the foundations it is compelled to lay down. It is this movement of interrogating that ruse of authority that seeks to close itself off from contest that is, in my view, at the heart of any radical political project. (p. 8)

Possibilities for shifting discourses, for taking up new ways of thinking and being, that is, for *agency* in the world, become possible in the contradictions and mo(ve)ments[3] within discursive regimes (Davies & Gannon, 2006). In contrast to the humanist essentialist more or less fixed version of identity, poststructuralism proposes a *subjectivity* that is "precarious, contradictory and in process, constantly being reconstituted in discourse each time we speak" (Weedon, 1997, p. 32). Some feminists have worried that the idea of doing away with the subject (i.e., the humanist, essentialized subject) has meant an abandoning of the possibility of agency and so of social change. Theorizing agency has thus become one of the most important tasks for feminists working within poststructural perspectives (Butler, 1997b; Davies, 2000a). In "Contingent Foundations," Butler (1992) makes a strong argument for subjection being a precondition of agency:

> The constituted character of the subject is the very precondition of its agency. For what is it that enables a purposive and significant reconfiguration of cultural and political relations, if not a relation that can be turned against itself, reworked, resisted . . . In a sense, the epistemological model that offers us a pregiven subject or agent is one that refuses to acknowledge that agency is always and only a political prerogative. As such it seems crucial to question the conditions of its possibility, not to take it for granted as an a priori guarantee. (p. 13)

Subjectivity is an ongoing construction taking place through an ongoing process of subjectification, in which one is both subjected to available regimes of truth and regulatory frameworks and at the same time and through the same processes becomes an active subject. As we are imbricated within discourse, we become complicit in our own subjection, simultaneously seeking submission and mastery (Butler, 1997b).

In contrast to the poststructural interest in subjectification, both radical and liberal feminisms relied on a humanist conception of the individual subject as separate from and outside of language, as autonomous and capable of rationality. However, because individualism and realism have been opened up to question by critical theory and the wider effects of postmodern and poststructural thinking, many of the strong claims made from within liberal feminist and radical feminist frameworks can no longer be counted as absolute certainties (Clough, 1994; Davies, 2000a; Moi, 1985; Tong, 1998). These essentializing claims were already under challenge because feminists of color (other than white) queried their invisibility—or their objectification—and these so-called third world women challenged the commonsense of Western feminism.

The question of the ongoing formation of the subject in everyday practices draws attention to the poststructuralist concepts of *power/knowledge*. Foucault (2000b) attended very closely to the micropractices of power relations and their effects in the creation of subjects:

> This form of power that applies itself to immediate everyday life categorizes the individual, marks him by his own individuality, attaches him to his own identity, imposes a law of truth on him that he must recognize and others have to recognize in him. It is a form of power that makes individuals

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> subjects. There are two meanings of the word "subject": subject to someone else by control and dependence, and tied to his own identity by a conscience or self knowledge. Both meanings suggest a form of power that subjugates and makes subject to. (p. 331)

Power is not hierarchical, for Foucault (1980), but it proceeds in every direction at once: It is capillary. It is not a possession that we have (or do not have) and that we can deploy to oppress (or to liberate) ourselves or others. Power is productive rather than oppressive, productive of subjects and of nets of domination and subjection within which subjects are always in motion. Subjects are constituted within power relations: They are not prior to or apart from them, nor can they be delivered from them. The rational, autonomous subject of some critical theory is a subject generated with a masculinist discourse. Foucault talks more often about power relations; that is, about how power is operationalized in interactions between individuals and institutions, than about power as something apart or prior to the discursive regimes within which power is in continual circulation. Indeed, we are always within relations of power, because we are always within discourse. In his work on power, beginning with his early work on asylums and prisons through to his later work on the care of the self, Foucault explored how the disciplinary power that was exercised in institutions became part of the humanist subject. Disciplinary power shifted from something brought on the individual, from outside the self, to a form of power relations taken up and internalized by individuals as their own responsibility. Similarly, women have sometimes been seen within feminism as complicit in their own oppression, though those feminisms assumed that once "false consciousness" was revealed, women would be free. Within poststructuralist conceptions of power, and the knowledge that power produces, there is no freedom from power relations, nor is there any place outside discourse. But just as within discourse we might find the possibilities for deploying new discourses, power relations also contain their own possibilities for resistance, albeit resistance that is "local, unpredictable and constant" (St. Pierre, 2000a, p. 492).

The concept of power in Foucault's (2000c) work then circles back, inevitably to the concept of discourse that he developed in his early work as he struggled to analyze power and its quotidian operations. Political thought from neither the Right nor the Left gave him the tools with which to think about power:

> The way power was exercised—concretely and in detail—with its specificity, its techniques and tactics, was something that no one attempted to ascertain; they contented themselves with denouncing it in a polemical or global fashion . . . the mechanics of power in themselves were never analyzed. This task could only begin after 1968, that is to say, on the basis of daily struggles at grass-roots levels, among those whose fight was located in the fine meshes of the web of power. This is where the concrete nature of power became visible. (p. 117)

The concrete nature of power is materialized in women's desires, in their bodies, and in social relations and institutional structures, and these areas remain the focus of much feminist poststructural empirical research (Davies & Gannon, 2005, 2006; St. Pierre & Pillow, 2000).

Foucault's work provides concepts with which we might think differently through what we still call "data" (though that term belongs squarely in positivist regimes of thought), about the *truth games* within which disciplinary and other knowledge is produced and reified. He provides us with a toolbox of strategies: *archaeology*, *genealogy,* and *technologies of the self*. Rather than distinct methods for analysis, these are intertwined modes of thought that make possible particular inquiries into games of truth, as sets of possibilities that we might take up because they are useful to us. Foucault's initial strategy of archaeology studies the conditions of possibility through which disciplinary knowledge is formed and becomes sedimented. It looks at discursive formations, at historical archives; it searches for subjugated knowledges. Rather than the human subject as the source of knowledge, which Foucault called "anthropological" history, archeology works in the labyrinth of the archive, in "the domain of things said" (Foucault, cited in Eribon, 1992, p. 191). Archeology interrogates the edifices of

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the disciplines, tracing how knowledge has come to define a particular domain, and to underpin its associated regimes of truth. It analyzes groups of statements to ascertain how they achieved "unity as a science, a theory or a text"; beneath the surface continuities we find "discontinuities, displacements and transformations" (Smart, 2002, p. 38). Foucault (1984) is interested in the modes of transformation of discursive practices and his strategy of genealogy is directed at interrogating knowledge and power relations particularly as they operate at the level of the body, where the body is the object of the operations and technologies of power. The body is understood as

> The inscribed surface of events (traced by language and dissolved by ideas), the locus of a dissociated self (adopting the illusion of a substantial unity), and a volume in perpetual disintegration. Genealogy as an analysis of descent is thus situated within the articulation of the body and history. (p. 83)

Foucault (1984) talks about genealogy as "gray, meticulous and patiently documentary" (p. 76). It has been taken up by researchers in many different ways—including as a contemporary catchall phrase for any sort of historical analysis—thus, how the subject is treated within genealogical studies differs greatly (Hekman, 1990). But it is in his final work on the care of the self that Foucault (1985, 1997b, 1997c, 1997d, 1999, 2005) turns his attention most explicitly to individual subjects rather than larger systems of thought and relations of power.

Although we sketch out some component parts of what Foucault called his "little toolboxes" (Foucault, cited in Mills, 2003, p. 7), it is important to note that Foucault was not dogmatic. His whole corpus was dedicated to the dismantling of dogma, of received and sedimented "truth." This included others' use of his own work: "A discourse is a reality which can be transformed infinitely. Thus, he who writes has not the right to give orders as to the use of his writings" (Foucault, cited in Carrette, 1999, p. 111). Mills (2003) suggests that "we should draw on his work as a resource for thinking, without slavish adherence, and we should be very aware of Foucault's weaknesses and blind spots" (p. 7). Deleuze (1988) argued that we should see Foucault not as a guru but as someone whose work might be useful in our everyday lives. Following Foucault, feminists might work with the cracks and fissures of dominant discourses, and the contradictory detail of the everyday, to multiply and enable alternative discourses. We might keep in mind, as we take up those aspects of Foucauldian thought that might be useful to us, that "a truly Foucauldian reading or method is one that moves beyond Foucault's writing and thinking" (Mills, 2003, p. 31). The potent pleasures for feminists in poststructural deconstructive work lies in the potential for finding the means to undo sedimented truths through which they might otherwise be held captive.

Poststructural Analytic and Textual Strategies

In our discussion of the work of Foucault, whose troubling of concept—including truth, power, knowledge, discourse, and the subject—underpinned the emergence of poststructural thinking, we have already introduced some of the analytic strategies that feminist poststructuralists have found useful. The generic term *discourse analysis* is sometimes used to signal the close textual work that researchers are engaged in, and reflects the turn to language as a constitutive force that underpins poststructuralism; however, it is imprecise and applied within a wide range of theoretically incompatible paradigms. In the remainder of this section, we will focus on explicitly poststructural approaches and strategies that have been important in feminist work.

Deconstruction

The term *deconstruction* has also migrated into populist discourse but, more precisely, it emerged from the work of Jacques Derrida. His analytic strategies work into the inconsistencies and weaknesses in meaning that are inherent within any text. Deconstruction was rapidly popularized in American literary studies partly because of its complementarity with the work of the Yale New Critics (Royle, 2000, p. 5). Meaning is to be found within the text for literary

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deconstructionists, but that meaning will always be multiple, shifting, and deferred. The text can be provoked to reveal its own contradictions and (im)possibilities through deconstructive analysis. Analysis does not produce definitive new readings of a text but is oriented toward the continuous deferral and displacement of meaning, which Derrida (1976) calls *différance*. Derrida's work began from the linguist Saussure's separation of the signified (the concept) from the signifier (the word representing the concept). Derrida argued that the relationship between word and meaning is arbitrary. Rather than being fixed or transcendental, meaning emerges in specific temporal and discursive contexts. As we suggested in the first section of this chapter, deconstruction pays particular attention to detecting and displacing binary pairs. In its narrowest application, deconstruction is a strategy for identifying and disrupting binary pairs. As Royle (2000) describes it, this form "took hold (like a virus or parasite)" and could be "stupidly formalistic" (p. 5). On the other hand, in its widest context, deconstruction has come to mean almost any analytical operation on any sort of text. McQuillan (2001) defines deconstruction as "an act of reading which allows the other to speak"; that is, as a practice that resists closure, a "situation or event of reading" rather than a method applied to a text (p. 6). Derrida prefers to consider "deconstructions," and he stresses that it has "never named a project, a method, or a system" (Derrida & Ewald, 1995, p. 283). Although Derrida's work can be usefully applied to specific texts, which may be its most prolific application, deconstruction is applicable to social institutions and discursive regimes that exceed a single text or set of texts. Deconstruction as it is useful for feminist poststructural research can be applied as an everyday everywhere practice, something we might use in our lives, something active that might help us "make sense" of lived experience but that is most likely to trouble our sense making, even to reach "into the bare bones" of who we see ourselves to be (Lenz-Taguchi, 2004).

Whatever its object or its scope, or its particular strategy, deconstructive work aims to unfix meaning so that it remains incessantly at play, mobile, fluid, unable to come to rest or ossify into any rigid structures of meaning. Derridean deconstruction opens language to différance, a principle that captures both "difference" and "deferral." Deconstruction attends to the spectral logic of absences that haunt the text. It is productive, inventive, and creative, concerned with excess and ceaseless iteration. It "opens a passageway, it marches ahead and leaves a trail" (Derrida, 1989, p. 42), and the trails crisscross to create new trails and surprising openings and closings. Deconstruction can, perhaps, be anything: "and indeed, one starts laughing, and I'm tempted to add 'deconstruction and me, and me, and me . . .,' to parody the parody of a famous French song—'50 million Chinese and me and me and me" (Derrida, 2000, p. 283). Parody is one of numerous strategies that Derrida—and those who have found his work useful—have taken up to dislodge the fixity of meaning in a text (see Kamuf, 1981; Spivak, 1976). Gayatri Spivak (1976), translator of *Of Grammatology*, describes the difficulties of capturing his work in language:

> The movement of "difference-itself," precariously saved by its resident "contradiction" has many nicknames . . . trace, différance, reserve, supplement, dissemination, hymen, . . . and so on. They form a chain where each may be substituted for the other, but not exactly (of course, even two uses of the same word would not be exactly the same): "no concept overlaps with any other" . . . Each substitution is also a displacement and carries a metaphoric change (p. lxx).

Although Derrida has used particular figures to work as "hinges"—as analytic devices to double and displace meaning—in particular texts under analysis, the figures available to feminist researchers for this sort of work are limited only by our imaginations and the texts we take up. Along with Spivak, who has used deconstruction to take on the fields of cultural studies (2000) and politics (2001), literary theorists Diane Elam and Peggy Kamuf have found Derridean strategies particularly fruitful for deconstructing "feminism" (Elam, 2000), "sexual difference" (Elam, 2001), "love" (Kamuf, 2000), and "critique" itself (Kamuf, 2001). Yet deconstruction as an analytic approach exceeds its origins and its originator. Judith Butler (1990, 1993, 1997a, 2004b), for instance, makes only passing reference to Derrida in the articulation of

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her radically deconstructive theory of gender performativity.

Rhizoanalysis and Nomadism

The rhizoanalytic work of Deleuze and Guattari (1972, 1987) has also been of great interest to feminists working within poststructural paradigms. In contrast with the linear, systematic branching of tree roots, the rhizome is a secret, unseen, underground, creeping, multiplying growth that can strangle the tree or the root of conventional thought, that "plots a point, fixes an order" from beneath (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 7). Rhizomatic plants, like heliconias, are knobbly, unpredictable, unstable, vigorous, prolific, extending in multiple directions at once, moving underground, splitting off, and springing up anew in unexpected places. Thought modeled on the rhizome links unexpected texts and events to make surprising new connections and unpredictable, unreplicable, insights. Such analysis is also concerned with the dissolution of the transcendental and unitary rational subject, of he who "knows." Deleuze and Guattari modeled many strategies—cartography, rhizomatic analysis, assemblages, figurations, becomings, flows, and intensities—that have been taken up and extended in interesting and provocative work by feminists (Braidotti, 1991, 1994, 2002; Colebrook, 2002; Gatens, 2000; Grosz, 1994a, 1994b; Probyn, 2000; St. Pierre, 1997a, 1997b, 1997c). This provocative philosophical shift has also been critiqued by feminist scholars. For example, provocative concepts, such as "bodies without organs" (BwO), emphasizing the corporeal as "non-stratified, unformed, intense matter" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 153), as intensity and energy rather than matter, have been both vehemently rejected by feminists concerned about the erasure of the materiality of embodied experience (Irigaray, 1977, cited in Braidotti, 2002, p. 76), and taken up by other feminists as productive ways to rethink female corporeality. Rosi Braidotti (1994, 2002) has used the figuration of the nomad to generate a feminist nomadic subjectivity that emphases "flows of connection" and "becomings" that rely on "affinities and the capacity both to sustain and generate interconnectedness" (Braidotti, 2002, p. 8). The feminist nomadic subject "critiques liberal individualism and promotes instead the positivity of multiple connections"; it emphasizes "the role of passions, empathy and desire as non-self-aggrandizing modes of relation to one's social and human habitat" (p. 266). The sort of feminist subjectivity that Braidotti theorizes emerges from an "empathic proximity and intensive interconnectedness" (p. 8) rather than from any independent, separate, or selfish mode of being human. In contrast to theories of the self that emphasize individualism, subjectivity is always already a "socially mediated process" (p. 7). Feminists who think through Deleuze and Guattari also attend to questions about imagination and creativity in their search for ways to think differently, and playfully, against the grain of dominant discourses and sedimented truths. Another feminist figuration, analogous to Braidotti's nomad, is Donna Haraway's (1991) cyborg, a type of nonsentimental Deleuzean BwO, neither girl nor woman, human nor animal, nature nor culture, corporeal nor technological but composite of all of them, becoming all of them. Yet the cyborg is a material and political figure as well, representing the human exploitation of underpaid workers, the invisible underclass of white capitalist production. Haraway brings Deleuzian thought together with an update of Foucault's conception of bio-power, showing that "contemporary power does not work by normalized heterogeneity any more, but rather by networking, communication redesigns and by multiple interconnections" (Braidotti, 2002, p. 242). Haraway's dissolution of the binary of subject/object through the figuration of the cyborg is a call for a feminist poststructuralism that entails both pleasure and responsibility. In *Volatile Bodies*, Elizabeth Grosz (1994a) also brings Deleuzian and Foucauldian concepts together to develop a deconstructive corporeal feminism. The body is the inscribed surface of events—as Foucault theorized—but in her cartography of the female body she theorizes a fleshy volatile body, subject to flows and intensities of desire and of substances, particularly fluids (e.g., blood, milk, vomit). She deconstructs inside/outside to show that the female body is "an assemblage of organs, processes, pleasures, passions, activities, behaviors linked by fine lines and unpredictable networks to other elements,

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segments and assemblages" (p. 120). Where poststructural philosophy had been accused of abstraction and elision of bodies, Grosz writes the fleshy carnality of the body back into that domain and addresses both the "somataphobia" of Western philosophy (p. 5) and the "universal, innate, nonhistoric" subject of biology (p. 187). All the feminists we have discussed here have appropriated and furthered the ideas generated by Deleuze and Guattari to open up new ways to think through the body in feminist theory.

Deconstructive Writing

The feminist poststructuralists we have discussed thus far take up theoretical concepts creatively and put them to new uses but, for the most part, their writing remains clearly on the side of theory. Other feminist writers take the deconstructive challenge into radical play with form and genre, defying binaries that organize writing into either analytical or creative writing and disregarding categories like theory, prose, poetry, drama, and film. As we have suggested earlier in this chapter, critical, postmodern, and particularly poststructural paradigms bring with them a hypervigilance to the politics, effects, and rhetorical tropes of language. Language is not a transparent tool for transmitting some truth that exists elsewhere, apart from the text. A text is never innocent but is constitutive of certain truths and exclusive of others, and thus must always be placed under interrogation. Language within poststructural frameworks tends to draw attention to its constructedness and to its multiplicity. The writers whose work we explore in the following paragraphs push language to the brink, using its creative possibilities to do highly original feminist textual work that is authorized by postmodern or poststructural paradigms.

Writing itself is a method of inquiry, as Laurel Richardson (1997) has demonstrated, rather than a transparent medium for re-presenting data. Richardson re-presents interview transcripts and other research "data" in poetic form, shifting the epistemological and ontological terrain in the process. With Richardson, Elizabeth St. Pierre theorizes writing as a "nomadic" practice, as a Deleuzian "line of flight" that asks the question: "*What else might writing do except mean?*" (St. Pierre, cited in Richardson & St. Pierre, 2005). With this shift, writing is no longer "a tracing of thought already thought" but a provocation to différance (St. Pierre, cited in Richardson & St. Pierre, 2005). Trinh T. Minh-Ha is a filmmaker whose writing has been particularly important for postcolonial and feminist poststructural scholars. Her films problematize the Eurocentric ethnographic gaze on the Other as "native" and as "woman" and her writing enacts a textual practice where Otherness is retained and given voice. Writing itself is the site of theorizing, and of interrogating theory through displacement and disintegration of the subject writing, the reader, of writing. Trinh (1989) claims a "hyphenated" textual space, a space where writing is both one thing and another, as the site for women's writing: "So where do you go from here? where do I go? and where does a committed woman writer go? Finding a voice, searching for words and sentences: say some thing, one thing, or no thing; tie/untie, read/unread." (p. 20).

Her writing brings together theory and fiction, analysis and creativity. Trinh (1992) develops a "politics of form" of "irrespectfully mixing . . . theoretical, militant and poetical modes of writing" (p. 154). She provokes a collision where "theorizing and practices of representation [are brought] into the same space each to bring the other into crisis" (Clough, 1994, p. 118). Trinh (1999) refuses the separation of theoretical and creative linguistic practice:

> Word as idea and word as word. These two movements of language are interdependent and always at work in the space of writing. When the telling and the told remain inseparable, the dichotomy between form and content radically loses its pertinence. That is the way I would try to describe the way I proceed in writing. The way a thought, a feeling, an argument, a theory, or a story takes shape on paper is at the same time "accidental" and very precise, very situated, just like a throw of the dice . . . if language is subjected to being a vehicle for thought and feeling, or if the focus is only laid on the told, the message, or the object of analysis, then the work will never resonate. And without resonance, writing becomes primarily a form of information retrieval or of administrative inquisition. (p. 35)

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Trinh's work plays with the aesthetics and effects of language, and is simultaneously intensely and provocatively political.

Hélène Cixous, likewise, works in another highly original textual location. Although she has been positioned for English readers as a theorist, she refuses that name. She writes fiction, criticism, psychoanalysis, and philosophy "without enclosing herself in any of them" (Conley, 1991, p. 12) and often within the same texts. In conversation with Conley, she locates her work in relation to "theory":

> I am obviously not without a minimum of philosophical and analytical knowledge, simply because I am part of a historical period. I cannot act as if I were not a contemporary of myself. Neither do I think that I must wage a mortal war against a certain type of discourse . . . I do have knowledge of theoretical discourses. Yet the part that represses women is a part which I quickly learned to detect and from which I keep my distance. One leaves these parts aside. (Cixous, in Conley, 1991, p. 147)

Cixous's (1981, 1986) explication and practice of *écriture feminine*, of a feminine writing that exceeds the phallogocentrism of rational thought, has influenced diverse feminists, including Trinh. Écriture féminine is a practice of writing that Cixous (1986) says "will never be able to be theorized, enclosed, coded, which does not mean it does not exist" (p. 92). Nevertheless, Cixous's work can be understood within a theoretical landscape. Cixous's texts are dense, enigmatic, intensely lyrical texts of desire, and of loss that might be understood as texts of bliss (Barthes, 1975).

Cixous's (1991) writing is deeply metaphorical. Her writing shimmers with "signifiers that flash with a thousand meanings" (p. 46). Her writing entails careful attention to the possibilities of language, sensitivity to the multiplicity, and excess of language. Like Trinh she shows that the simple truth (if such a thing can be said to exist) is neither desirable nor possible. She attends to other sources of language beyond the conscious, beyond reason. She locates her imagery and understanding of the corporeal effects of language in dreams, in the unconscious, and in what she calls *zones in(terre)conscious* (Cixous & Calle-Gruber, 1997, p. 88). Language emerges in zones between earth and consciousness, deep in the body and memory (Davies, 2000b).

Cixous (1991) reads her body as a text. She sources the "truths" of life and of writing within the body, which always mediates every experience and which is itself the ultimate text (of life):

> History, love, violence, time, work, desire inscribe [life] in my body. I go where the "fundamental language" is spoken, the body language into which all the tongues of things, acts and beings, translate themselves, in my own breast, the whole of reality worked upon in my flesh, intercepted by my nerves, by my sense, by the labor of all my cells, projected, analyzed, recomposed into a book. (p. 52)

The body is the fundament of writing, and the poetic writing practice that Cixous developed derives from the body and reverberates with the body and with other bodies. It resonates in and with the body—like music or like blood. Bodies are texts of lives and can be written within an embodied writing practice of écriture feminine, a writing that seeks to preserve Otherness. It was in theater that Cixous found the medium where the writer, as ego, could let go and make space for the multiplicity of the other: "In the theater one can only work with a self that has almost evaporated, that has transformed itself into space" (Cixous, cited in Sellers, 1996, p. xiv). In the space of theater, the writer must imagine and create and *be* everyone. She can encounter and inscribe the other, and in writing the other she puts herself under erasure. It is in writing for theater that the self will "consent to erase itself and to make space, to become, not the hero of the scene, but the scene itself: the site, the occasion of the other" (Cixous, cited in Sellers, 1996, p. xv). She sees her writing for theater as a critical component of her scholarly practice and as the place where an ethics of writing becomes possible.

These authors, as well as ourselves, have also been influenced by Roland Barthes who, like other French "founding fathers" of contemporary theory, marked the movement from structuralism into poststructuralism through his body of work. Barthes (1989) explicitly rejected the binary of science and literature in academia:

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> Science will become literature, insofar as literature—subject moreover to a growing collapse of traditional genres (poem, narrative, criticism, essay)—is already, has always been, science; for what the human sciences are discovering today, in whatever realm: sociological, psychological, psychiatric, linguistic, etc., literature has always known; the only difference is that literature has not *said* what it knows, it has *written* it. (p. 10)

In his later works, Barthes (1977, 1978) troubled the category of the individual writer and the practices of writing the self. His work, with that of the other writers in this section, has been inspirational in our own writing, provoking Gannon (2001, 2002, 2004a, 2004b, 2004c, 2005, in press) to develop a poststructural practice of autoethnography, and to (re)work data as fiction, drama, and poetry in a range of feminist textual interventions. This work has also been concerned to disrupt the binary of academia and the world, so that a text that began as a research project in a feminist academic context reemerges as a fictional play on a public stage and vice versa (Gannon, 2004b, 2005), and memory becomes the site for collectively theorizing a feminist poststructuralism (Davies, 2000a, 2000b; Davies & Gannon, 2005, 2006).

The writers we discuss in this section aim to bring language into crisis, to push at the boundaries of understanding so that multiple meanings can be provoked and multiple readings invited through a politics of form that disrespects generic integrity and disciplinary boundaries. They work at the limits of language where, as Trinh (1991) says, the aim is

> to listen, to see like a stranger in one's own land; to fare like a foreigner across one's own language . . . It is, to borrow a metaphor by Toni Morrison "what the nerves and the skin remember as well as how it appeared. And a rush of imagination is our flooding." "What she wishes to leave the reader/viewer with, finally, is not so much a strong message, nor a singular story, but "the fire and the song." (p. 199)

Controversies and Gaps, Critiques

The intersection of feminist and poststructural theories has been a vehemently contested but productive site. Although some readings of the debates suggest that poststructuralism has closed off possibilities for feminist work, vigorous new fields such as queer theory and feminist postcolonial theory have emerged in part from this collision. We have already explored some of the new work done by feminists and have discussed some of the concerns. In this final section of the chapter, we will further delineate feminist criticisms of these paradigms. Many of the accusations with which poststructural and postmodernist work have been charged by feminists hinge on their apparent *relativism*, explicitly their rejection of fixed truths and certainties. In contrast, researchers who locate their work as "critical theory," who claim emancipatory agendas and privilege praxis over (or alongside) theory, are not generally subjected to this critique. Accusations of relativism work along various axes in critiques of poststructural theorizing. Each axis rests on a binary way of thinking that asserts particular possibilities and impossibilities entailed in poststructuralism.

Relativism and Social Action

The first axis relates to *action*. The history of the feminist movement, as "women's liberation," was characterized by individual and collective action directed at political and social change. The relativism of poststructural feminism is seen by some critics as incapable of provoking any action to improve the lives of women. If "women" as a coherent category has been deconstructed, and "power" is seen as a capillary and localized operation, then how and where can feminists work to improve social worlds? And who is a feminist anyway in these times? Delmar (1986) suggested,

> At the very least a feminist is someone who holds that women suffer discrimination because of their sex, that they have specific needs which remain negated and unsatisfied, and that the satisfaction of these needs would require a radical change . . . in the social, economic and political order. (Delmar, cited in Beasley, 1999, pp. 27–28)

Appropriate feminisms, and feminists, are driven by the imperative for social critique and the possibility of radical social change. Social

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theory that does not foreground radical social action is suspect for feminist purposes. This position is evident in critiques of postmodern or poststructural feminism, where the focus on discourse is seen as inconsistent with an orientation to social change. Waugh (1998), for example, parodies this with:

> Rather than searching for scientific proof or metaphysical certainty, or a structural analysis of economic or social inequality, we should now recognize that the way to understand and to change our world is through the artificial mutation and manipulation of vocabularies. (p. 183)

Not surprisingly, she goes on to claim that (her version of) what she calls a "strong" postmodern position "raises enormous difficulties for any emancipatory collective movement concerned with profound economic and social inequalities" (p. 183). This "emancipatory collective movement" stands in for "feminism" in the sentence and in her argument. Differences between and within feminism(s) are elided to allow feminism—as a collective and unitary movement—to right the wrongs of patriarchy. Feminism is equated with and defined by its action orientation, much as an orientation to praxis and social transformation is definitive of Marxist, socialist, and critical theories. The argument rests on a set of binary oppositions whereby postmodernism or poststructuralism is set on one side of a binary against feminism, and the former is associated primarily with language and the latter with action. Each side of the binary excludes the other and is defined by that exclusion.

Taking a similar line through the axis of social action, Francis (1999) critiques deconstructive paradigms in educational research by imagining what she calls a "pure poststructuralism" that might be set against the sort of "applied poststructuralism" that she sees in Davies's deconstructive work with children and gendered identities (Davies, 1989, 2003; Davies & Kasama, 2003). The binary that Francis constructs does not hold, in our view, within poststructuralism where *thinking* differently necessarily and inevitably leads to *acting* differently in the world. Her argument seems to be that if it can be applied in social worlds, then theory isn't "pure" or "true." Thus, deconstructive paradigms are seen to be forever and necessarily precluded from social action. As we have previewed in our earlier discussions of Foucault, Derrida, and Butler, we do not see this to be the case. The problem, rather, if there is a problem, lies in how we might bring together postmodernism and poststructuralism with all that they entail (including a deconstructive stance toward language and the social world) together with the action orientation of feminist politics.

Of course, the dismissal of postmodern and poststructural thought from the arena of "action" in the critique we have just discussed relies on the definitions of social activism and of emancipation that are used and on the scale on which they are imagined. Waugh and Francis assert that worthwhile social action is underpinned by grand narratives (such as the relentless oppression of women by patriarchy) that imply large-scale social action as the ideal goal for feminists. We do not see this as the only possibility. Neither do we see a necessary dilution of the "purity" of the paradigm—an idea that we find antithetical to these paradigms—as resulting from moments of social critique, action, or of agency. Although it does not provide broad or simple answers to social problems, poststructural critique does enable close analysis of the operations of power. It enables us to examine how power operates to construct our desires, our thoughts, our ways of being in the world—our subjectivities—in ways that can make us unconsciously complicit in our own oppression. Poststructural analysis of subjectification—that is, of how power works on bodies to produce us as subjects—enables individuals and groups to undertake close readings of lived experience (Davies & Gannon, 2005, 2006). With subjectification, we focus on the *processes* through which the subject is produced, on subjectivities that are "precarious, contradictory and in process, constantly being reconstituted in discourse each time we speak" (Weedon, 1997, pp. 32—33). The poststructural research and writing strategy of collective biography that we have developed from the memory work of Haug et al. (1987) works at this level to map the operations of power on bodies (Davies, 1994, 2000b; Davies & Gannon, 2005, 2006).

As critics like Waugh have noted, the dislodging of habitual ways of thinking and being

that underpins poststructural work also entails the dislodging of fixed notions of the subject. This abandonment of the stable subject as the foundation for agency is seen as detrimental to action, as potentially paralyzing for feminists. However, the contrary has been the case for some feminists working with poststructuralist notions of the subject. For example, one woman tells how poststructuralist thought provides "a map through a crisis" when she discovers that her fiancée has sexually abused her daughter (in Davies, 1994). In the subsequent weeks, intersecting discourses of "legality, brotherhood, childhood, sexuality and psychology" work against each other to construct the woman and her daughter in ways that are disempowering. The analysis enables her to see by "pulling out the discursive frameworks why [she feels] so crazy and [how she is] being pulled to pieces" (p. 34). Reconstructing the way she thinks about the event is itself a powerful action and provides a clearer way forward into further action. She is able to move more easily between those discourses within which she felt trapped and can better "judge when she could resist and when she had little realistic choice but to comply" (p. 34). Feminist work that takes deconstruction seriously puts it to use in everyday social life.

Social change cannot be held apart from transformation that becomes possible at the levels of individuals and groups. Yet the social and personal transformation that might be possible in these paradigms is an ongoing and continuous process of self and societal critique and engagement rather than a step forward in a linear progress narrative toward something we might recognize as "emancipation," into which we might relax with satisfaction as though we have achieved the social changes we desired. As we suggested earlier in this chapter, at the beginning of this millennium the achievements of second-wave liberal feminism are proving remarkably fragile in the face of neoconservative discursive regimes. We do not see that an interest in deconstructive philosophies of the subject prevent us from participating in large-scale social activism, nor from seeking social justice in all the arenas of our lives. Nevertheless, within this paradigm, the claims we (and others) make about our projects, the language we (and others) use, and the actions we (and others) take will be subjected to rigorous and continual reflexive examination rather than accepted as taken-for-granted truths or emancipatory programs. The social transformation of gender relations remains the focus of feminism and, as Butler (2004b) has recently argued, though "theory is itself transformative," it is not "sufficient for social and political transformation" (p. 205).

Relativism and Politics

Obviously then, related to the charge that the supposed relativism of poststructuralism is detrimental for social action is the charge that poststructuralism is apolitical, or politically conservative. Braidotti (2000) argues that rather than being apolititical, "post-structuralists are politically to the far Left of the spectrum. They deconstruct, build genealogical approaches that clash with the dogma of historical materialism" though they emphasize the continuous "process of 'becoming,' that is the social, political and personal *pursuit* [italics added] of radical change and transformation" rather than any utopian achievement of transformation (p. 717). The subject is always in motion and it is in this movement, these mo(ve)ments of becoming, that the imperatives of political activism will call us into action. Braidotti sees that the radicalism of poststructuralism lies in the very qualities that some feminist critics have claimed make it useless for political activism: "This radicality consists in unhinging the very foundations of the subject, freeing him/her from the linearity of a *telos* where reason, justice and revolution always end up playing the last hand" (p. 717).

Nevertheless, no theory can be purely "left" or "right" or any other category. Nor is sophisticated theoretical work necessarily distant from praxis. Foucault's (1977) analysis of prisons in *Discipline and Punish* was accompanied by his active involvement in the establishment of a prison reform movement (Mills, 2003, p. 76). Nevertheless, it is imaginable that fragments of Foucault's work could be used to justify fascism or deny the Holocaust (p. 7). This is not to suggest that theory can be inherently good or evil. Rather, we should ceaselessly interrogate the political use to which theory is put, we must situate our own with care and continuous

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attention. For example, the radically disruptive works of Butler (1990, 1993) have influenced diverse fields. In her early works, she unhinged the sex/gender distinction and theorized the performativity of gender in ways that have been useful for queer politics. The questions she raises in *Undoing Gender* (Butler, 2004b) about the conditions of normativity that produce unintelligible and unviable subjects, precluding some from the very category of the human, reverberate across current neoconservative domains of social and political life. In the different spheres of global politics, beginning with her discussion of the first war in Iraq (Butler, 1992) through to *Precarious Life* (Butler, 2004a), she has continued her relentless interrogation of the practices of Othering that underpin Western neocolonialism as it plays out from the bloody arena of the Middle East to the indefinite detention of prisoners held by the U.S. military in Guantanamo Bay. In an earlier work, Butler (1995) describes the work of herself and her fellow philosophers as though it was removed from the world:

> We toil in the domain of philosophy and its critique, and in that way dwell within a presupposed sense that theoretical reflection matters. As a result, though, the important questions raised concerning the rarefied status of theoretical language, the place of narrative in or as theory, the possibility of a theoretical activism, the tension between theory and empiricism . . . are not interrogated. (p. 132)

Nevertheless, we believe that it is necessary to have different thoughts to work the world differently, and, as an exemplar, the work of Butler has been useful for particular domains of social life. This highlights another issue for feminists who are working in densely theoretical arenas. Academic intellectual thought is marginalized in the English speaking world. If we see the role of "public intellectuals" as part of our responsibility as feminists then how are we to cross back and forth between the academy and the world? How might we increase our communicative repertoires without sliding into a simplistic reductionism of complex ideas? How are we to act and speak in the world, as well as work to think it differently? How might we be "specific intellectuals" (Foucault, 2000d, p. 384) who might critique repressive systems of thought and collaborate with practitioners to change institutional practices? The work of the specific intellectual who talks about an area of specific knowledge is also a form of "action" that might have a transformative effect in the social world. Theory and praxis cannot be understood as mutually exclusive binaries, indeed they might rather be understood as mutually constitutive.

Relativism, Morality, and Ethics

Another axis for critiques of postmodern and poststructural theories rests on the question of *morality.* Although these paradigms—like any theoretical model—are not in themselves "moral" or "immoral," they do question the absolutist foundations of any system of morality. This is the work that postmodern and poststructural researchers set out to do. Entangled with the idea of morality are questions of ethics, what makes some behavior more moral or ethical than other behavior.[4] In humanist philosophy, ethics operates as an appeal to autonomous, rational subjects who are able to act impartially to choose their actions. Rather than relying on an autonomous subject or promoting any set of absolute rules, approaches to ethics or morality within a poststructural framework will shift to analysis of the forms of thought and action that are made possible in any particular context. Multiple readings of a particular event might elaborate different discursive effects and operations within that event. If feminist morality and ethics are contingent on absolutisms, then poststructuralist approaches are problematic for feminism. But if feminists take up and further poststructural interrogations of these concepts, then inventive and radical work becomes possible. Early feminist work in this field theorized an ethics that was based on "mothering" and was characterized by "caring and interpersonal relations" (see McNay, 1992, p. 93). In this framework, characterized by the work of Carol Gilligan (1982), morality and questions of right behavior are relativized within a network of relationships and responsibilities but they tend to rest on ahistorical and acultural essentialist notions of the feminine that are incompatible with the antifoundationalism of poststructural thinking. The work of reconfiguring ethics for

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feminists within poststructuralism entails insisting on responsibility and on judgment, but at the same time destabilizing the subject and the social contexts within which she is constituted and constitutes herself. In a poststructural feminist ethics, the subject is "neither sovereign nor autonomous but always caught up in a network of responsibility to others" (Elam, 1994, p. 105).

Ethics and morality are necessarily closely entwined in poststructural analyses. Foucault attempts to disentangle them by describing morality as having two elements—prescriptive codes of moral behavior that are externally imposed (though they may be taken up as our own desires) and ethical projects of the self on the self (Foucault, 1985). The second form of morality is intimately connected with the "biographical project of self-realization" (Rose, 1991, p. 12). Rather than a revelation (or an imposition) of right thought, poststructural conceptions of morality imply that we must engage constantly in the project of "self-reflection, self-knowledge, self-examination . . . the decipherment of the self by oneself, . . . the transformations that one seeks to accomplish with oneself as object" (Foucault, 1985, p. 29). The process of seeking to behave "morally" entails the intersection and effects of both of these sets of moral practices. The poststructural interest in morality lies particularly in these reflexive processes, unconscious as well as conscious, which Foucault calls "technologies of the self." These are the everyday practices through which we shape our bodies into particular bodies, historically and culturally specific bodies. Thus, we are simultaneously governed and govern ourselves. We are individualized and totalized through the same processes. Through continuous reflection and adjustment—unconscious and conscious—we shape ourselves appropriately for our contexts. In his examination of the history of sexuality, Foucault (1980, 1997b, 1997c, 1997d) traced technologies of the self through two conflicting imperatives—the obligation to "care for the self" and the obligation to "know the self." Morality lies in "the kind of relationship you ought to have with yourself, *rapport à soi*, which I call ethics, and which determines how the individual is supposed to constitute himself as a moral subject of his own actions" (Foucault, 1997b, p. 263).

Foucault's (1978, 1985, 1997b, 1997c, 1997d, 1999, 2005) work on the technologies of the self looked at how journal and letter writing, verbal self-criticism, and confession were taken up as reflexive and ethical strategies that contributed to the constitution of subjects in classical societies. However, his work set out to explore the formation of men as subjects in classical and premodern Western societies. Women (as well as children, slaves, and others) were explicitly excluded from the processes of subjectification that would have made them free and ethical subjects. In its implication that "questions of moral self-regulation were not relevant to women" (Grosz, 1994a, p. 159), feminists might have been tempted to reject this work as patriarchal or exclusionary. However, it has been more productive for feminists to view these gaps and omissions as invitations for feminist interventions and reconfigurations. St. Pierre (2004), for example, uses Foucault's work to interrogate the category "older woman" in ethnographic fieldwork in her home town in the rural American south. She uses his theories on the care of the self to examine how through their daily lives the women she interviewed enact "a particular aesthetics of existence in ethical relations with oneself and others" (p. 333). The subject of women, she theorized (of these women in this place), is constituted *in practice*, realized in the details of everyday interactions, through friendships that are played out in intimate neighborhood spaces and in each others' homes. These private spaces act as "loopholes . . . that encourage subversive citation and the disruption of the fierce moral codes that aim to keep women in their place . . . Christianity, patriarchy, racism and . . . the 'white southern woman's code'" (p. 342). St. Pierre describes the practices she examines in Foucauldian terms as representing "the mode of subjection—the way in which one is invited to become ethical . . . to have a beautiful existence" and as manifesting in attention to detail and in a particular "care for others" (p. 343). In poststructural practice, morality is manifest in part through these arts of existence and practices of the self.

From the perspective of Derridean deconstruction, Bennington (2000) claims that "ethics" is impossible. As a metaphysical concept—one of those which has been put under erasure by poststructuralism—ethics must be "a

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theme and object of deconstruction" rather than something that can "simply be assumed or affirmed" (p. 64). He warns against any illusion that sharp-eyed deconstruction might deliver us "into the clear light of ethical felicity and self-righteousness" (p. 64). Nevertheless, he argues that "deconstructive thought will have *specific* interventions to make in the traditional metaphysical vocabulary of ethics, around concepts such as responsibility, decision, law and duty" (p. 65). The core of any system of ethics, in philosophy as in the small southern U.S. town where St. Pierre did her research, is located in relations to others. Bennington differentiates between ethic and duty:

> Simply following one's duty, looking up the appropriate action in a book of laws or rules, as it were, is anything but ethical—at best this is an *administration* of right and duties, a *bureaucracy* of ethics. In this sense an ethical act worthy of its name is always *inventive*, not at all in expressing the "subjective" freedom of the agent, but in response and responsibility to the other" (p. 68).

Rather than poststructural thought having abandoned ethical practice, Derrida's work locates it within social relations:

> The other has a radical prior claim on me, or even allows 'me' to exist as essentially responsible to and for the other. I do not exist first, and then encounter the other: rather the (always singular) other calls me into being as always already responsible for him. (Bennington, 2000, p. 69)

Feminist poststructuralists have also found the work of Deleuze productive in reconceptualizing questions of ethics within the social. Bray and Colebrook (1998), for instance, argue that appropriation of his work opens the possibility for positive, active, and affirmative ethics with the potential to vitalize feminism. Braidotti (2002) describes the Deleuzean reconceptualization of the self as

> A relay-point for many sets of intensive intersections and encounters with multiple others, a self that "can envisage forms of resistance and political agency that are multilayered and complex . . . an empirical transcendental site of becoming . . . [that] actively desires processes of metamorphosis of the self, society and its modes of cultural representation . . . [that] results in a radical new ethics of enfleshed, sustainable subjects. (p. 75)

The work of reconfiguring ethics in which feminist poststructuralists are interested destabilizes both the subject—who is always already caught up in networks of responsibility to others—and the social world. It rejects essentialist categories and foundational assumptions and attends to the constant work of becoming that an ethical life entails. As Elam (1994) points out, this can seem paralyzing because "the words that the patriarchy have left us for this are anarchy and chaos" (p. 109). For feminist ethics, poststructuralism offers the possibility of a "groundless solidarity" with the "possibility of a community which is not grounded in the truth of a presocial identity" but in a contingent, precarious, and vital solidarity that "forms the basis, although not the foundation, for political action and ethical responsibility" (p. 108). Thus, in community, we "try to do the right thing, here, now, where we are . . . in our pragmatic context" with no "transcendental alibi to save us" (p. 108).

Male Theory/Patriarchal Theory

Some feminists claim that postmodern and poststructural theories are patriarchal white male theories (e.g., Brodribb, 1992). The influence of male theorists on contemporary feminist theory is clear throughout this chapter but we have argued that this is irrelevant to the uses to which feminists might put their ideas to critique gender. Critiques of the canonical "French feminists" also assert the primacy of sex in policing what can be considered feminist. Kristeva, Irigaray, and Cixous—packaged in the early 1980s for English readers as the triumvirate of feminist poststructural theorists (Marks & de Coutrivon, 1981; Moi, 1985)—rely primarily on male theorists—Lacan, Foucault, and Derrida. Cixous (1981) insists that the poetic practices of écriture féminine are as available to men as they are to women. Kristeva's (1984) avant-garde poetic writers are all men. But, as happens with poststructural thought, categories slip about, become unstable, canons tend to topple over. The French feminists are not feminists, according to

Moses's (1998) history of French feminism; nor are they French—but "Belgian, Algerian and Bulgarian-born" as Rosi Braidotti (2000, p. 720) reminds us, nor are they necessarily poststructuralist. Moses and Braidotti each produce a careful rereading of their emergence and commodification for the English-speaking world illustrating the use to which feminists might put their skepticism of familiar stories and the attention to detail that characterizes genealogical work. They draw attention to the discursive regimes of consumption and circulation within which knowledge and power are produced and commodified in postmodern times. Retracing histories for cracks and ruptures is important work but what matters most is not the origin of an idea but the use to which it might be put and the resonance it has with your own work. Whether we turn to Foucault, Deleuze, or Butler—or any other theorist—is determined by the moment and creative potential that we find in a concept and that provokes us to think differently about our data.

Feminists have taken Derrida to task for his appropriation of figures from women's bodies to use as deconstructive tools, such as "hymen" and "invagination." Derrida has been characterized as misogynistic and overtly antifeminist. Yet Derrida has claimed that feminism that remains committed to Enlightenment ideals and positivist paradigms is implicated in phallogocentric thought: "Feminism . . . is the operation through which a woman desires to be like a man, like a dogmatic philosopher, demanding truth, science, objectivity; that is to say, with all masculine illusions" (Derrida, 1978, cited in Elam, 1994, pp. 15–16). Elam carefully evaluates the charges and finds that, despite cautions, there are diverse points of intersection between them, indeed "there is a sense in which feminism already 'is' deconstruction, and deconstruction already 'is' feminism" (p. 19). Nevertheless, it is true that "if Derrida is positioned 'as a woman' in philosophy, he is still *not* a woman" (p. 64). The question then, for feminists, is to what extent does this matter? Derrida might even be applauded for his figurative use of the materiality of the body to achieve the displacements and deferral of meanings that characterize textual deconstruction. In "Circumfession" (Bennington & Derrida, 1993) and "A silkworm of one's own" (Cixous & Derrida, 2001), he uses male circumcision as the figure that defers and displaces the integrity of the text and the speaking self. The sex of the figure is less important than the work it might be put to displace the truth claims in a text. Nevertheless, it is relevant here to note that the poststructural theories and theorists we have discussed in this chapter also tend to be "Western" and "white." Although categories of cultural and geographic location are themselves complex and contradictory, feminist postcolonial theory emerges in part from the work of important poststructuralist thinkers (e.g., Spivak) and is discussed in detail elsewhere in this volume.

Lack of Relevance

Poststructural feminists have been accused of irrelevance, as though *relevance* is some pure state of moral value. Some critics claim that these ivory tower feminists—spinning language renowned more for its opacity than for its sense—rarely leave "their blissful surroundings, and as time passes their sayings become increasingly irrelevant to the majority of women" (Tong, 1998, p. 207). Of course, such criticisms are predicated on the existence of a cohesive "majority of women" who can be neatly positioned in opposition to the academic feminists. Who are these women and who decides what is relevant or irrelevant, or what these terms mean, what discursive regimes of truth they re-present?

A similar criticism of poststructuralist feminist theory in terms of irrelevance or relevance harnesses the Other women of the world to construct a sort of moral hierarchy. The final paragraph of a recent book on feminist methodology states that "for many women around the world, caught up in struggles to survive, raise children, cope with poverty, natural disasters, corrupt regimes or varieties of social exclusion, resources for thinking are irrelevant luxuries" (Ramazanoglu, 2002, p. 169). The work of postcolonial feminist theorists (e.g., Alexander & Mohanty, Trinh, Spivak) alerts us to the dangers of assuming that any women in the privileged West might be able to speak for these "many women" who are placed as abject others to those of us who peddle the "irrelevant luxuries" of critical thought. Although Ramazanoglu's

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criticism rests on an unsustainable essentialist view of all non-white and non-Western women as too poor and too busy to theorize, it implies the more important critique that these theories are grounded in assumptions of the white, non-indigenous subject as the unmarked subject of feminism. Postcolonial feminists are ambivalent about the effects of postmodern thought for women other than those in the hegemonic West. Although liberal humanist feminism simultaneously appropriated and marginalized women of color, postmodernism generates "epistemological confusions regarding the interconnections between location, identity and the construction of knowledge," according to Jacqui Alexander and Chandra Mohanty (1997, p. xvii). They explain how global realignments and fluid movements of capital in postmodernity have led to "processes of recolonization" (1997, p. xvii) that have been particularly destructive in the lives of women.[5]

The charge of irrelevance is implied in the metaphor of the "garden of intellectual delights" as a retreat from the world for feminist poststructuralists (Tong, 1998, p. 207). Dense language, replete with language games and strategies intended to destabilize and displace meaning, is an irritant to many critics. Calls for "clarity" assume that transparency is possible and that simplicity is desirable (Lather, 1996; St. Pierre, 2000b). Lather (1996) claims that clarity forecloses thought:

> Rather than resolution, our task is to live out the ambivalent limits of research as we move towards something more productive of an enabling violation of its disciplining effects. Inhabiting the practices of its rearticulation, "citing, twisting, queering" to use Judith Butler's words (1993, p. 237), we occupy the very space opened up by the (im)possibilities of ethnographic representation. (p. 541)

Thus, poststructural work entails a politics and practice of writing differently. It is through writing differently that thinking differently becomes possible. Neither comes prior to the other but they are simultaneously realized through the folds and hinges of language. Poststructural theory can be "of use in a time when the old stories will not do" (Lather, 1996, p. 541). Familiar research practices in the social sciences, such as ethnographic research, become sites of doubt rather than certainty (Britzman, 2000; St. Pierre, 1997a, 1997b, 1997c).

Another criticism locates poststructural thought as an exclusionary mechanism within the power/knowledge regimes of the academy. Ramazanoglu (2002) claims that these paradigms are intellectually elitist and disadvantage many feminists: "The difficulties and abstractions of so much postmodern thought have coincided with a period of competitive career pressures in higher education so that only certain kinds of feminist thought are deemed worthy of respect, funding or promotion" (p. 166). She describes scenarios where "terms such as 'empiricist,' 'essentialist,' 'foundationalist' . . . are fashionable weapons for trashing traces of modern thinking . . . (Pity the unsuspecting empiricist caught in a circle of contemptuous postmodern thinkers—and vice versa)" (p. 166). Apart from its implicit denigration of the intellectual capacities and flexibilities of women, and its assumptions that different feminisms must necessarily be combative, this claim rests on a rhetorical strategy of generalization that is difficult to uphold within deconstructive paradigms. It assumes a monolithic, even conspiratorial, new feminist oppression that disregards the specificity and capillary operations of power/knowledge. Poststructural analysis would seek out the particularities and specificities of social sites—faculty meetings, interview panels, corridor conversations—to interrogate and to challenge the local practices shaping academic feminism.

Erasure of Body and Materiality

Another criticism of philosophically oriented theoretical frameworks is that they valorize discourse at the expense of the carnal body. How can postmodern or poststructural theory account for the corporeal enfleshed events that impact on women's lives? How can theory help to explain menstruation, birth, rape, breast cancer and how these are lived in the flesh of women's bodies? Does this theoretical work inevitably entail a degree of "somatophobia" (Grosz, 1994a; Kirby, 1991) that is unhelpful for feminists? Although for Foucault (1984) "the body is the inscribed surface of events" (p. 83), it is

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feminist poststructuralists who have brought the corporeal sexed body into poststructural theory. This can be a risky strategy for poststructural work in that sex, gender, and desire are put under erasure and troubled by deconstructive work (e.g., Butler, 1990, 2004b). Feminists who attend to the body can risk slippage into an essentialism that would be disavowed within poststructuralist paradigms. Yet some of the most sophisticated and subtle poststructuralist work has come from feminists rethinking the body theoretically within poststructural philosophical paradigms. For example, Susan Bordo (1993) uses Foucauldian language and ideas to refine her readings of women's bodies in Western culture. Moira Gatens (1991) deconstructs the sex/gender distinction of liberal feminism that served to separate biological and social dimensions of women's lives, and centers a corporeal feminism in her feminist approach to ethics (Gatens, 1996). Vicki Kirby (1991, 1997) interrogates essentialist thinking and further disrupts the nature/culture binary as she theorizes the material body at the (as the) scene of writing. Elizabeth Grosz, in particular, has been influential in her theorizing of a corporeal feminism.

Grosz (1994a) argues that there has been "a conceptual blind spot" in both philosophy and feminism and argues that feminism is "complicit in the misogyny that characterizes Western reason" (p. 3) in uncritically adopting philosophical assumptions about the implicitly masculine rational body of Enlightenment thought. The female body is abject and expelled from (male) normativity as "unruly, disruptive, in need of direction and judgement" (p. 3). Grosz' project is feminist because that universal body has, she suggests, always functioned as "a veiled representation and projection of a masculine which takes itself as the unquestioned norm, the ideal representative without any idea of the violence that this representational positioning does to its others" (p. 188). Although Grosz admits that her program is a preliminary one and does not neatly provide "materials directly useful for women's self-representation" outside of patriarchy (p. 188), she does begin the hard work of rethinking what has been impossible to think in ways that other feminists have been able to work with. Prior to this work, feminist philosophy had generally been "uninterested in or unconvinced about the relevance of refocusing on bodies in accounts of subjectivity" (p. vii). Her work on inverting the inside/outside dichotomy to characterize female bodies as corporeal flows and intensities began to move poststructural feminists beyond this impasse. Elspeth Probyn (1991, 1993, 2000) has also brought the lived body to the foreground to explore the nexus of body and theory. She describes how reconfiguring her (anorexic) body with theory made "postmodernists nervous" and "feminists angry" (Probyn, 1991, p. 113). Vicki Kirby (1997) describes how poststructural feminists, despite their disavowals of binary thought, have inadvertently reified the central Cartesian binary:

> Perhaps commerce with the body is considered risky business because the split between mind and body, the border across which interpretations of the body might be negotiated, just cannot be secured. This fear of being discovered unwittingly behind enemy lines, caught in the suffocating embrace of that carnal envelope, menaces all conciliatory efforts. (p. 73)

Indeed, it has been argued that the body is only glimpsed, in much feminist poststructural work, just as it is disappearing from view (Somerville, 2004). Nevertheless, we suggest that it is here that much potential exists for feminism. The works of Grosz and others enable a theoretical engagement with the messiness of the lived corporeal body. The fleshy body is neither separate from nor inferior to a discursive poststructural body, but is the inscribed surface of discourse, the material effect of discursive practices made manifest in the flesh. The body for Grosz (1995) is "concrete, material, animate organization of flesh, organs, nerves, and skeletal structure, which are given a unity, cohesiveness, and form through the psychical and social inscription of the body's surface" (p. 104). Rather than absented through poststructural theory, the body might be privileged by it. Bell (1994), for example, claims that the body is the "only irreducible in Foucault's theorizing . . . simultaneously a biophysical given and a cultural construct" (p. 12). Bodies are also critical to Judith Butler's theorizing because: "Discourses do actually live in bodies. They

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lodge in bodies; bodies in fact carry discourses as part of their own lifeblood" (Butler, cited in Meijer & Prins, 1998, p. 282). Butler (1997a) rejects the binary opposition between discursive construction and the lived body in part by emphasizing the "fundamentally dramatic"; the body is not

> Merely matter but a continual and incessant *materializing* of possibilities. One is not simply a body, but, in some very key sense, one does one's body and indeed, one does one's body differently from one's contemporaries and from one's embodied predecessors and successors as well. (p. 404)

Despite claims that these paradigms elide the body, work that foregrounds and simultaneously deconstructs the body as the foundation for knowledge can be found in much critical and poststructurally oriented feminist research. The work of Haug et al. (1987), using memories of lived experience to unpack how the female body is materially inscribed by discourses of appropriate feminine deportment, demonstrates how critical theory can be held to account by female corporeality. In our own adaptations of this work (Davies, 1994; Davies & Gannon, 2005, 2006; Gannon, 2001, 2004c), we generate texts of the body to interrupt poststructural theory with our own flesh and expand theory in directions that are amenable to feminist readings of bodies and the world. Lather and Smithies (1997) conduct poststructurally inflected ethnographic research in a community of women who are HIV positive producing a textual mosaic that is concerned to retain "the weight and density" of the women and to resist the allure of the "comfort text" by using a range of disruptive textual strategies to trouble any easy reading (Lather, 2001, p. 212). Sedgwick (1999) takes what she calls an "adventure in applied deconstruction" in writing of her own experience with breast cancer within a poststructural analytical framework. Acknowledging the astonishment that some readers might have at the possibility "that deconstruction can offer critical resources of thought for survival under duress," Sedgwick responds that she encountered breast cancer "as someone who needed all the cognitive skills she could get," including "some good and relevant ones from my deconstructive training" (p. 156). At the ethnographic coalface, many feminist researchers working with girls and women use corporeal feminism and poststructural approaches to female bodies to think their data differently. In turn, their work, theoretically informed and politically oriented, feeds back into theory. A sampling of recent feminist empirical research shows how poststructural research interrogates the fleshy subjectivities of girls and women. Working with preteens, Gonick (2003) analyzes the discourses and practices of feminine sexuality, embodiment, desire, and relationship to others through which these girls imaginatively and corporeally construct femininity. Pillow (2000, 2004) takes up the body as a "deconstructive practice" in her study of pregnant teenager mothers and schooling. In a study of Danish university students, Søndergaard (2002) examines enactments of desire in the "signs on the body" inscribed by sexual and romantic storylines. Malson (1998) deconstructs the ideal of "the thin woman" underpinning anorexia nervosa. Each of these empirical investigations thinks back into theory from enfleshed female bodies.

Feminist theoretical and empirical work must engage with sexed bodies in one way or another. We are inclined to agree with Grosz (1994a) that corporeal interventions into theory—across the mind and body split—will bring theory toward new and productive horizons because, after all, "bodies have all the explanatory power of minds" (p. vii) and vice versa. We might go further in deconstructing this split by claiming that "theory-making is a labor of the body" (Zita, 1998, p. 204). Feminist appropriations of critical, postmodern, and poststructural theories foreground the body and make use of it as the volatile, unstable, and inventive ground for theorizing around the discursive production of sexed corporeal subjects.

Conclusion

In closing, we would like to reiterate the strengths of feminist postmodern, poststructuralist, and critical discourses. Rather than conceive of this work as nihilistic, excessively relativist, amoral, or apolitical, we hold that poststructuralist thought opens us into new futures. When

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dominant discourses that hold us in place and lock us into sedimented ways of thinking and being are dislodged, then we might shift into other—more hopeful and often more radical—modes of thought and existence. How we might relate this work to feminist research in other paradigms is an ongoing and irresolvable question. We might argue, in contrast to the implications of the critics, that feminism and critical, postmodern, and poststructural paradigms have much in common to begin with in that they share a "hermeneutics of suspicion" (Braidotti, 2002, p. 68). Feminist work has been characterized as celebrating interdisciplinarity; indeed, it is likely that a "disciplinary approach to feminist theorizing is untenable" (Clough, 1994, p. 168). Beasley (1999) describes contemporary feminism "as a kind of empty shell into which may be poured any number of different concerns, details and explanations" (p. 28). In the academy, despite the academic institutionalization of women's studies—"contemporary feminist scholarship is not [engaged] in mass group conversation but is, rather, engaged with respective disciplines, or bodies of theory, that are themselves rarely engaged with each other" (Brown, 2001, p. 33). We suggest, as savvy bricoleurs, that disciplinary borders should be treated by feminists with some disdain. They are not pure states or bodies of knowledge but, as archaeological analysis would demonstrate, they are inventions of the commodification of knowledge and of thought emanating from the Enlightenment. It is in the interstices between disciplines, as between discourses, that new thought might fruitfully be generated. Additionally, we would stress that we do not intend to locate critical, postmodern, and poststructural paradigms as successor regimes within a history of feminist ideas. Rather than abandoning discourses emanating from liberal or radical feminisms—those allied with humanist Enlightenment ideals—we would hold onto what we can of the "ruins" of such thought. There are many discourses of feminism in circulation and we need, at times, to deploy them all. We cannot abandon discourses, like humanism, that have shaped how we know and live in the world (Foucault, 1997a; St. Pierre, 2000a). Rather than rejecting them we need to become adept at mobilizing these discourses alongside and within a poststructural postpositivist skepticism, aiming to become able to think different, even contradictory, thoughts simultaneously. Taking up the poststructuralist dissolution of the subject as our project, what feminist poststructuralism allows for is a "new" subject of feminism who is "not Woman as the complementary and specular other of man but rather a complex and multi-layered embodied subject who has taken her distance from the institution of femininity . . . a subject-in-process" (Braidotti, 2002, p. 11).

How might we conclude this chapter on postmodern, poststructural, and critical theories and their sometimes uneasy relation to feminism? Early in this chapter, we introduced the figure of the woman weaver, engaged in the constant and simultaneous processes of weaving and unweaving herself in the discursive texts of the wor(l)d. This figure recalls Penelope, the wife of Odysseus, from Greek mythology, who for 20 years, wove in daylight and unpicked her work by moonlight.[6] Through this tactic she was able to fend off the suitors who would replace the missing king in her bed and on the throne. Resolution of her work—completion of the cloth she wove—was stalled, deferred, postponed, undone. In the endless iteration of her daily and nightly work, she came to it each time anew. Each time, no doubt, it changed. She changed. The threads would fade and thin and twist, as did her fingers. One day the light would draw to her attention a tiny part of the design that might be better. Another day the particular blue of the sky, the dark of clouds, or her own longings, would provoke a subtle variation. The themes of the work would change as time passed, or would change in response to the company she kept. There may have been as many versions as there were days. Penelope is usually read as the quintessential devoted wife; indeed, her story is shaped by her responsibility to this other, her husband. But she managed the estates and the nation in his absence. She was trapped in a patriarchal system, the wife whose only likely option was a change in husbands, a woman trapped in a tale told by a man. Not even a central character. Yet she found the possibility to make something her own, something new, something that was not an answer, not freedom, not escape, not truth, but a way to live in the place and time where she found herself, a way to live that had integrity, which was hers.

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NOTES

1. Or "neonmarxism" in Lather (1998, p. 487).

2. Butler's chapter "Contingent Foundations" appears in both Butler and Scott (1992) and in Benhabib et al. (1995). Butler's "For a Careful Reading" appears only in the 1995 edition, along with the essays by Fraser and Benhabib that we refer to in this chapter.

3. The formulation "mo(ve)ments" brings together "movement" and "moment" to stress that opportunities for agency, for ways of moving into different discursive frameworks, open and close in unexpected and transitory spaces. We use "mo(ve)ment" also to signify the simultaneity of memory and movement in the methodology of collective biography through which we shift analysis of lived experience from individual biography toward collective readings of discursive regimes, and through which we aim to dislodge habitual ways of thinking (Davies & Gannon, 2006).

4. Hoffmann (2003) suggests that while in everyday language morals and ethics are used interchangeably, in philosophy they slightly differ:

> moral is typically used to refer to specific, prescriptive rules, principles or behaviours, whereas "ethics" is used in a more general sense to describe entire theories, codes and systems of conduct, both prescriptive and descriptive. But this distinction is not absolutely hard and fast, and little turns on demarcating strictly between these two words. (p. 104)

5. See, for example, *The Globalised Woman* (Wichterich, 2000).

6. It also recalls and appropriates the trope of weaving that Derrida uses in "A Silkworm of One's Own" (Cixous & Derrida, 2001). The weaving he talks of here is within a male ordered system of Jewish law where the silk tallith, the men's prayer shawl, is the text that he unravels or ravels. It references also Barthes's (1989) view of text as "tissue" where "lost in this tissue—this texture—the subject unmakes himself, like a spider dissolving in the constructive secretions of its web" (p. 64).

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epistemology, methodology, and philosophy of science. *The Feminist Standpoint Theory Reader: Intellectual and Political Controversies* was published in 2004 and *Science and Social Inequality: Feminist and Postcolonial Issues* appeared in April 2006. She coedited *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* from 2000 to 2005 and she is currently working on *Women, Science, and Modernity.*

Mary Hawkesworth is Professor of Women's and Gender Studies at Rutgers University. Her teaching and research interests include feminist theory, women and politics, contemporary political philosophy, philosophy of science, and social policy. Her major works include *Globalization and Feminist Activism* (2006); *Feminist Inquiry: From Political Conviction to Methodological Innovation* (2006); *Beyond Oppression: Feminist Theory and Political Strategy* (1990); *Theoretical Issues in Policy Analysis* (1988); and *The Encyclopedia of Government and Politics* (1992; 2nd revised edition, 2003). She is currently the editor of *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*.

Catherine Hundleby is Assistant Professor in Philosophy and cross-appointed with Women's Studies at the University of Windsor, Canada. She focuses on feminist naturalism and feminist standpoint theory, with special attention to the relationships between cognitive and sociopolitical values. Her papers on these topics have appeared in *Hypatia, Social Epistemology,* and *Women & Politics.* She received her doctorate in philosophy from the University of Western Ontario, and her research focuses on feminist epistemology from an analytical perspective.

Toby Epstein Jayaratne is currently a research psychologist at the University of Michigan and directs the Beliefs and Understanding of Genetics Project, a study exploring Americans' perceptions about possible genetic influences on perceived gender, class, and race differences and on sexual orientation. Her academic interests focus on the use of genetic explanations to justify and support various social and political ideologies. She has written and presented several papers on the topic of feminist methodology. She received her PhD in developmental psychology from the University of Michigan.

Debra Renee Kaufman is the former founder and Director of Women's Studies, a Matthews Distinguished Professor, and Professor of Sociology at Northeastern University. Among her award nominated and selected books are *Achievement and Women* (coauthored with Barbara Richardson, honorable mention, C. W. Mills Award), *Rachel's Daughters: Newly Orthodox Jewish Women* (nominated for three awards), and an invited guest-edited edition of *Contemporary Jewry* titled *Women and the Holocaust*. Her commitment to feminist scholarship is evident in her published articles and chapters on post-Holocaust Jewish identity politics and her forthcoming books *From the Protocols of Zion to Holocaust Denial: Challenging the Media, the Law and the Academy* (coedited with G. Herman, J. Ross, and D. Phillips) and *Post Holocaust Identity and an Ever-Dying People: Contemporary Narratives.* She is currently researching intergenerational ties among adult Jewish daughters and their mothers.

Hyun Sook Kim is Chair and Professor of Sociology at Wheaton College in Massachusetts. She teaches a range of courses in sociology, women's studies, and Asian/American studies. Her research and publications have focused on postcolonial and transnational feminist studies of nation/state violence, gender, ethnic conflicts, nationalism, and history writing. She recently coedited a special issue (April, 2005) of *Gender & Society* that calls for retheorization of the linkages between "Gender-Sexuality-State-Nation" and the development of transnational feminist sociology.

Sally L. Kitch is Professor and Vice Chair in the Department of Women's Studies at Ohio State University, where she was Chair from 1992 to 2000. Her research focuses on the mechanisms by which women in various historical and cultural contexts have exerted pressure on gendered expectations and developed their own strategies of resistance. She has published numerous articles and three books of interdisciplinary scholarship analyzing gender, feminism, and utopianism: *Chaste Liberation: Celibacy and Female Cultural Status*; *This Strange Society of Women: Reading the Lives and Letters of the Woman's Commonwealth*; and *Higher Ground: From Utopianism to Realism in*

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American Feminist Thought and Theory. Her articles and book chapters on interdisciplinary feminist scholarship include *PhD Programs and the Research Mission of Women's Studies: The Case for Interdisciplinarity* (2003) and *Disciplined by Disciplines? The Need for an Interdisciplinary Research Mission in/and for Women's Studies* (1998, coauthor Judith Allen). Both articles appeared in *Feminist Studies*.

Noretta Koertge is Professor Emeritus in History & Philosophy of Science at Indiana University and has written extensively on the relationship between scientific research and social values. Her coauthored and edited books include *Professing Feminism* (1994, 2003), *A House Built on Sand* (1998), *Scrutinizing Feminist Epistemology* (2003), and *Scientific Values and Civic Virtues* (2005). After working in chemistry, she studied philosophy of science in London during the time when Popper, Lakatos, and Feyerabend were very influential. Her earlier publications address problems in scientific methodology and social science with an emphasis on the conceptual issues that arise in the study of homosexuality. Although she has taught in Turkey, England, and Canada, she has spent most of her academic life at Indiana University. After receiving tenure, she published two novels that deal with the lesbian experience in pre- and post-Stonewall America: *Who Was That Masked Woman?* (1981) and *Valley of the Amazons* (1984). She is the current editor of *The New Dictionary of Scientific Biography*.

Julie Konik is now a Scholar in Residence at Antioch College, where she is continuing her research on social identity and well-being, with a special focus on sexual minorities. Her recent research examines the role of individual differences in the development of sexual identity and the lived experiences of sexual minorities in a variety of contexts. She completed PhD in psychology and women's studies from the University of Michigan, where her dissertation focused on the negative effects of sexual harassment and heterosexist harassment in the workplace.

Rachel Kulick is currently a doctoral candidate in sociology at Brandeis University. Her areas of interest include feminist theory and methodology, visual sociology, media democracy, and globalization. Her current research examines the ways in which feminist artists aesthetically confront injustices and asymmetries of power across national, gendered, and racial borders. She holds a master's degree in education from Harvard Graduate School of Education.

Helen E. Longino is Professor of Philosophy at Stanford University. Her teaching and research interests are in philosophy of science, social epistemology, and feminist philosophy. She is the author of *Science as Social Knowledge* (1990), *The Fate of Knowledge* (2001), and many articles in the philosophy of science, feminist philosophy, and epistemology. Her many coedited volumes include *Feminism and Science* (with Evelyn Fox Keller, 1996) and *Osiris 12: Women, Gender and Science* (with Sally Gregory Kohlstedt, 1997), and the forthcoming *Scientific Pluralism* (Vol. 19) of the Minnesota Studies in Philosophy of Science (with Stephen Kellert & C. Kenneth Waters, 2006). She is currently completing a book-length comparative analysis of four approaches in the sciences of human behavior, focusing on research on aggression and research on sexual orientation. This analysis includes both an examination of the logical structures and interrelations of these approaches and study of their social and cultural reception and uptake.

M. Brinton Lykes is Professor of Community-Cultural Psychology at the Lynch School of Education and Associate Director of the Center for Human Rights and International Justice at Boston College. She is an activist scholar whose research explores the interstices of indigenous cultural beliefs and practices and those of Western psychology, toward collaborating in the design and development of community-based programs that respond to the effects of war in contexts of transition and transformation and in the development of training programs and postgraduate diplomas for psychosocial trauma workers. She has published extensively about this work in journals and edited volumes and is also a community activist, cofounder, and participant in many local, national, and international NGOs. These organizations include the Boston Women's Fund, Women's Rights International, and the Ignacio Martín-Baró Fund for Mental Health and Human Rights.

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Sarah Maddison is Lecturer in the School of Politics and International Relations at the University of New South Wales. She is currently working on the focused audits for women and sexual minorities for the Democratic Audit of Australia (http://democratic.audit.anu.edu.au) and is engaged in ongoing research on Australian Indigenous activism. She has been active in the Australian Women's Movement since 1995, and she has served as a national media spokesperson for the Women's Electoral Lobby since 1999. She has published many works in the areas of young women and feminist activism, social movements, nongovernment organizations, and democracy. Her first book, *Activist Wisdom: Practical Knowledge and Creative Tension in Social Movements* (2006, with Sean Scalmer), addresses important questions concerning the ways that activists manage tension and conflict in social movements. Her forthcoming book, *Silencing Dissent: How the Howard Government Is Eroding Democracy in Australia* (coedited with Clive Hamilton) is due in early 2007.

Cris Mayo is Associate Professor in the Department of Educational Policy Studies and the Gender and Women's Studies Program at University of Illinois at Urbana, Champaign. Her work includes *Disputing the Subject of Sex: Sexuality and Public School Controversies* (2004) as well as articles in the areas of philosophy of education, sexuality studies, gender studies, and multicultural theory.

Amy E. McLaughlin is Associate Director of the Consortium on Race, Gender and Ethnicity (CRGE) and works to further the organization's agenda of theoretical, methodological, and pedagogical insights into intersectionality. Her research agenda uses an intersectional lens to examine the symbolic and physical role that violence plays in the lives of women. She also pursues an interest in processes of institutional change and is currently working on a life history analysis of faculty members who engage in advocacy for social justice on university campuses.

Jennifer Bickham Mendez is Associate Professor of Sociology at the College of William and Mary. She wrote *From the Revolution to the Maquiladoras: Gender, Labor and Globalization in Nicaragua* (2005) and presents an ethnographic case study of a Nicaraguan working women's organization to demonstrate how globalization affects grassroots advocacy for social justice, particularly as it relates to the situation of women maquila workers. She has published articles in *Social Problems, Organization, Mobilization, Identities*, and other journals. Her current work focuses on Latino/a migration to Williamsburg, Virginia, and explores migrants' experiences of exclusion and incorporation in this new immigration receiving site.

Maria Mies is former Professor of Sociology of the Faculty of Applied Social Sciences at the University of Applied Social Sciences, Cologne. She worked for 5 years as a lecturer of German at the Goethe Institute in Pune, India. On her return, she wrote her PhD dissertation on "Indian Women and Patriarchy" (1972). Her study of Indian patriarchy helped her discover German patriarchy, and this encouraged her to become active in the international women's movement and other various social movements. She always combined theoretical work with social activism. In 1979, she initiated the program "Women and Development" at the Institute of Social Studies in The Hague, The Netherlands. It is the first of its kind in the world. She is the author of several works that include *Women: The Last Colony, Patriarchy and Accumulation on a World Scale*, *Ecofeminism* (with V. Shiva) and *The Subsistence Perspective*.

Kathi Miner-Rubino is currently Assistant Professor of Psychology at Western Kentucky University. She teaches courses in social psychology, psychology of women, and research methods. She has published several papers in the areas of gender, social class, and psychological well-being. Her most recent publications focus on vicarious exposure to the mistreatment (i.e., incivility and harassment) of women in work settings. She received her PhD in psychology and women's studies from the University of Michigan.

Pamela Moss is Professor in the Studies in Policy and Practice Program, Faculty of Human and Social Development, University of Victoria, Canada. Her research coalesces around themes of power and body in different contexts—feminist methodology, constructs of contested illness, and activist practices. She draws on

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feminism and poststructural thinking to make sense of women's experiences of changing environments and uses autobiographical writing analytically in her empirical and theoretical work. She is also active in feminist politics on issues of chronic illness and invisible or unapparent disabilities. She edited *Placing Autobiography in Geography* (2001) and *Feminist Geography in Practice* (2002). She also coauthored *Women, Body, Illness: Space and Identity in the Everyday Lives of Women With Chronic Illness* (2003) with Isabel Dyck.

Nancy A. Naples is Professor of Sociology and Women's Studies at the University of Connecticut where she teaches courses on feminist theory; feminist methodology; sexual citizenship; gender, politics and the state; and women's activism and globalization. She is the author of *Feminism and Method: Ethnography, Discourse Analysis, and Feminist Research* (2003) and *Grassroots Warriors: Activist Mothering, Community Work, and the War on Poverty* (1998). She is also the editor of *Community Activism and Feminist Politics: Organizing Across Race, Class, and Gender* (1998). She is coeditor of *Women's Activism and Globalization: Linking Local Struggles with Transnational Politics* and *Teaching Feminist Activism*. Her next book, *Restructuring the Heartland: Racialization and the Social Regulation of Citizenship*, focuses on a long-term ethnographic study of economic and social restructuring in two small towns in Iowa. She is currently working on a comparative intersectional analysis of sexual citizenship and immigration policies.

Angel David Nieves is Assistant Professor in the School of Architecture, Planning, and Preservation at the University of Maryland, College Park. He is an affiliate faculty member in the Departments of American Studies, Women's Studies, African American Studies, and Anthropology. He is also an affiliate member of the Center for Heritage Resource Studies. He completed his doctoral work in architectural history and Africana studies at Cornell University in 2001. His book manuscript, *"We Gave Our Hearts and Lives To It:" African American Women Reformers and Nation-Building in the Post-Reconstruction South, 1877-1968*, is currently being revised for publication. His scholarly work and activism critically engages with issues of heritage preservation, gender, and nationalism at the intersections of race and the built environment in the Global South.

Daphne Patai is Professor of Brazilian Literature and Adjunct Professor of Comparative Literature at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. She spent 10 years in the Women's Studies Program before deciding to leave it for reasons that are explained in her essay in this volume. She is the author and editor of 11 books, including *Heterophobia: Sexual Harassment and the Future of Feminism* (1998). Her 1994 critique of academic feminism, written with Noretta Koertge, was recently reissued in a new and expanded edition as *Professing Feminism: Education and Indoctrination in Women's Studies* (2003). Her latest book, coedited with Will H. Corral, is *Theory's Empire: An Anthology of Dissent* (2005). Many of her essays on academic foibles have appeared in *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. A recipient of fellowships from the Guggenheim Foundation, the National Endowment for the Humanities, and the National Humanities Center (all for feminist projects), she has come to appreciate that education and politics are not the same thing.

Deborah Piatelli is an activist and doctoral candidate in sociology at Boston College. She is currently writing her dissertation on the challenges contemporary mobilizations for peace and social justice face as they work across race, class, and gender. She works with the Global Justice Project at Boston College (an undergraduate student-led program) and a local community group of the United for Justice With Peace coalition based in Boston. Taking a feminist, participatory approach, she collaborated with activists over a 2-year period and uncovered how hidden cultures of privilege were preventing collective work across difference. Through participatory discussions with activists, this work has opened up a space for activists to reflect and exchange dialogue to potentially transform their beliefs, practices, and identities.

Wanda S. Pillow is Associate Professor in the Department of Educational Policy Studies at the University of Illinois at Urbana, Champaign.

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She is author of *Unfit Subjects: Educational Policy and the Teen Mother* (2004) and coeditor of *Working the Ruins: Feminist Poststructural Theory and Methods in Education* (2000).

Judith Preissle (formerly Preissle Goetz) is the 2001 Distinguished Aderhold Professor in the Qualitative Research Program at the College of Education, University of Georgia (UGA), and she is an affiliated faculty member of UGA's Institute for Women's Studies. Although she began her career teaching middle grades in 1965, Preissle has worked at UGA since 1975 and teaches, researches, and writes in educational anthropology, qualitative research, gender studies, and ethics. She founded the qualitative research program at UGA that now offers a graduate certificate program. She is the coauthor of *Ethnography and Qualitative Design in Educational Research* (1984, 1993), which was translated into Spanish in 1988, and coeditor of *The Handbook of Qualitative Research in Education* (1992). Her most recent book, coauthored with Xue Lan Rong, is *Educating Immigrant Students* (1998). She and her spouse, a computer network manager at UGA, have two miniature schnauzers and two Chinese pugs. All five share her interest in philosophical quandaries.

Diane Reay is Professor of Education at Cambridge University. She is a feminist sociologist working in the area of education but is also interested in broader issues of the relationship between the self and society, the affective and the material. Her priority has been to engage in research with a strong social justice agenda that addresses social inequalities of all kinds. She is particularly interested in developing theorizations of social class and the ways in which it is mediated by gender and ethnicity, and she has worked extensively with Pierre Bourdieu's conceptual framework. Recent research includes understanding white-middle-class identities in multiethnic urban spaces and the experiences of working class students in higher education. Her most recent book (with S. Ball & M. David) is *Degrees of Choice: Social Class, Race and Gender in Higher Education* (2005).

Shulamit Reinharz is the Jacob Potofsky Professor of Sociology at Brandeis University. She directed the Brandeis University Women's Studies Program in the 1990s and founded the Hadassah-Brandeis Institute (HBI) in 1997 to develop fresh ways of thinking about Jews and gender worldwide. In 2001, she founded the Women's Studies Research Center (WSRC) where research, art, and activism converge. The WSRC is housed in a 10,000 square feet facility, which she designed and for which she raised all the funds. Both the HBI and the WSRC are members of the National Council for Research on Women. Reinharz is the author/editor of 10 books, including *On Becoming a Social Scientist* (1979/1984), *Qualitative Gerontology* (1987), *Feminist Methods in Social Research* (1992), and *American Jewish Women and the Zionist Enterprise* (2005). She is also the chief editor of the *Brandeis Series on Jewish Women*.

Laurel Richardson is Professor Emeritus of Sociology at the Ohio State University. She specializes in the sociology of knowledge, gender, and qualitative methods. She has been honored with visiting lectureships in many countries and has published over 100 articles—many of them demonstrating alternative writing formats, including poetic representations. She is the coeditor of *Feminist Frontiers* and author of seven other books, including *The New Other Woman* (translated into seven languages), and the Cooley award winning book *Fields of Play*: *Constructing an Academic Life*. Her most recent book, *Travels With Ernest: Crossing the Literary/Sociological Divide* (2004), was coauthored with novelist Ernest Lockridge and models a new writing format that preserves the individual voice, breaks down hierarchies, and demonstrates feminist communication strategies across gender and disciplines. Her current research expands her interest in alternative reading/writing practices through an ethnographic and textual study of Altered Books.

Judith Roof is Professor of English and Film Studies at Michigan State University. She is the author of *A Lure of Knowledge: Lesbian Sexuality and Theory*, *Come as You Are: Narrative and Sexuality*, *All About Thelma and Eve: Sidekicks and Third Wheels*, and the forthcoming *The Poetics of DNA*. She is coeditor (with Robyn Wiegman) of *Who Can Speak? Authority and Critical Identity*.

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Sue V. Rosser has served as Dean of the Ivan Allen College of Liberal Arts at Georgia Tech since 1999, where she is also Professor of Public Policy and of History, Technology, and Society. The author of nine books, Rosser has also written more than 120 refereed journal articles on issues of women and feminism in science, technology, and health. Her most recent book is *The Science Glass Ceiling: Academic Women Scientists and Their Struggle to Succeed* (2004).

Denise Seigart is Professor in the Health Sciences Department at Mansfield University, Pennsylvania, and is currently serving there as Interim Associate Provost. She has been an active member of the American Evaluation Association and has served as Chair and Program Chair of the Feminist Issues in Evaluation Topical Interest Group. In collaboration with Dr. Sharon Brisolara, she edited *Feminist Evaluation: Explorations and Experiences: New Directions for Evaluation*, a critical work regarding Feminist Evaluation, which was published in December, 2002. She received her PhD in human service studies/program evaluation from Cornell University in 1999.

Dorothy E. Smith is Professor Emeritus at the University of Toronto and Adjunct Professor at the University of Victoria. Her published books include *Women Look at Psychiatry: I'm Not Mad, I'm Angry* (coedited with Sara David, 1975); *Feminism and Marxism*: *A Place to Begin, A Way to Go* (1977); *El Mundo Silenciado de las Mujeres* (1985); *The Everyday World as Problematic: A Feminist Sociology* (1987); *The Conceptual Practices of Power: A Feminist Sociology of Knowledge* (1990); *Texts, Facts, and Femininity: Exploring the Relations of Ruling* (1990); *Eine Soziologie Für Frauen* (translated and edited by Frigga Haug, 1998); *Writing the Social: Critique, Theory and Investigations* (1999); *Mothering for Schooling* (coauthored with Alison Griffith, 2005); *Institutional Ethnography: A Sociology for People* (2005); and an edited collection of essays by institutional ethnographers, *Institutional Ethnography as Practice* (2006).

Liz Stanley is Professor of Sociology at the University of Edinburgh. Her main research and writing interests focus on the questions of methodology and epistemology, and many projects were produced with Sue Wise. Substantively, her research has been on historical topics for the last two decades, in particular, regarding South Africa. Relevant books include *Imperialism, Labour and the New Woman: Olive Schreiner's Social Theory* (2002), and *Mourning Becomes . . . Post/Memory, Commemoration & the Concentration Camps of the South African War 1899-1902* (2006).

Abigail J. Stewart is Sandra Schwarz Tangri Professor of Psychology and Women's Studies at the University of Michigan and director of the UM ADVANCE project, supported by the NSF ADVANCE program on Institutional Transformation. She was director of the Women's Studies Program (1989–1995) and the Institute for Research on Women and Gender (1995–2002), and she is a former Associate Dean in the College of Literature Science and the Arts at the University of Michigan (2002–2004). She has published many scholarly articles and several books that focus on the psychology of women's lives, personalities, and adaptations to personal and social changes. Her current research combines qualitative and quantitative methods and includes comparative analyses of longitudinal studies of educated women's lives and personalities; a collaborative study of race, gender, and generation in the graduates of a Midwest high school; and research and interventions on gender, science, and technology with adolescent girls, undergraduate students, and faculty.

Lynn Weber is Director of the Women's Studies Program and Professor of Sociology at the University of South Carolina. Cofounder of the Center for Research on Women at the University of Memphis, her research and teaching has explored the intersections of race, class, gender, and sexuality for over 20 years. Since the publication of *Understanding Race, Class, Gender, and Sexuality: A Conceptual Framework* (2001), her work has focused on bringing the insights of intersectional scholarship to the problem of persistent social inequalities in health. Her recent publications include "Intersectionality and Women's Health: Charting a Path to Eliminating Health Disparities," in *Advances in Gender Research*, and "Reconstructing the Landscape of Health

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Disparities Research: Promoting Dialogue and Collaboration Between the Feminist Intersectional and Positivist Biomedical Traditions" in *Race, Class, Gender and Health,* edited by Amy Schulz and Leith Mullings. She is also coauthor of *The American Perception of Class*.

Sue Wise is Professor of Social Justice at Lancaster University, the United Kingdom. She is interested in all aspects of social justice and teaches and writes on social divisions and social diversity. The oppression and exploitation of children is a particular interest. She has written many books and articles on feminist epistemology and ontology with Liz Stanley. One of their most noted collaborations is *Breaking Out Again: Feminist Ontology & Epistemology* (1993).

Diane L. Wolf is Professor of Sociology at the University of California, Davis. She edited *Feminist Dilemmas in Fieldwork* (1996) and authored *Factory Daughters* (1992) and *Beyond Anne Frank: Hidden Children, Family Reconstruction and the State in Post-war Holland* (2006, in press). With Judith Gerson, she coedited *Sociology Confronts the Holocaust: Identities, Memories and Diasporas* (2007, in press). She also studies the children of Filipino and Vietnamese immigrants in California.

Alison Wylie is Professor of Philosophy at the University of Washington. She works on epistemic questions raised by archaeological practice and feminist research in the social sciences. Her analyses of evidential reasoning and normative issues in archaeology are collected in *Thinking From Things: Essays in the Philosophy of Archaeology* (2002), and appear in *Embedding Ethics* (2005) and *Ethics Issues in Archaeology* (2000). She coedited *Feminist Science Studies* (2004), and her essays on the philosophical implications of feminist research practices and feminist critiques of science appear in *Science and Other Cultures* (2003), *The Difference Feminism Has Made* (2001), *Primate Encounters* (2000), and *Changing Methods* (1995). She has also been active on equity issues as organizer of "Women, Work and the Academy" (2005: www.barnard.edu/bcrw/womenandwork) and as contributing coeditor of *Breaking Anonymity: The Chilly Climate for Women Faculty* (1995). She is currently working on a monograph, "Standpoint Matters," in *Feminist Philosophy of Science.*