

Handbook of
**Gender and
Women's Studies**



Edited by **Kathy Davis,**
Mary Evans and Judith Lorber



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Finally, Mary Evans would like to thank her co-editors for their endless support and sisterly concern at a difficult time. In large part, the handbook has emerged out of the collective enterprise that is feminism, and we hope that it will make a contribution to its ongoing dialogues.

Kathy Davis
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Judith Lorber

Introduction

Kathy Davis, Mary Evans, and Judith Lorber

The *Handbook of Gender and Women's Studies* is first and foremost an indication of the coming of age of academic work on women and the meaning of gender in the twenty-first century. This area of study, born out of second-wave feminism, has initiated and enabled the rethinking and the rewriting of previously taken-for-granted understandings of gender and its place in the social and the symbolic world. As this handbook demonstrates, no discipline in the university curriculum remains untouched by the intervention of thinking about gender.

This process, accomplished in the past forty years, has overturned previous certainties about the fixed order and meaning of gender. As the chapters in this collection demonstrate, there is no subject or context which cannot be seen differently when examined through the lens of 'gender thinking.' Although no author in this handbook would claim to represent the consensus of this new understanding of the world, all would agree on the centrality of gender to any coherent understanding of the world.

The handbook shows the theoretical plurality and diversity of gender and women's studies, and also demonstrates the political and national range of gendered thinking. Even if the historical roots of feminism lie in the European Enlightenment, the growth of the subject has not been subject to the same geographical limits. The handbook is, in the same way as feminism itself, literally international. Both the editors and the authors are drawn from different countries and different academic interests, but what is shared is greater than what is distinct: namely, a commitment to extending our understanding of arguably the greatest human division, that between female and male. In these pages, readers can find comprehensive reviews of the literature on gender in particular contexts. Just as significantly, the authors also suggest ways in which the existing richness and excitement of work on gender can be further extended. All in all, this handbook attests to the dynamic global work-in-progress on gender.

CONCEPTUAL ISSUES

The concept of women's studies, thirty-five years ago a radically new idea in an academic world where White Western men were considered the generalized

'human,' is now well enough established to have been complemented by gender studies and studies of men and masculinities. Each of these areas includes elements of the other areas, but in examining the current state and future potential of gender and women's studies, we take as our focus the research and theories that have developed around women, and, more recently, around gender as encompassing women and men in relation to each other. In addition to analyzing women's and men's interactions and the processes of domination and oppression of women by men, gender studies, more so than women's studies, has focused on the way the organization and structure of society itself and its cultural and knowledge productions are gendered.

By gendered, we mean the division of people into two differentiated groups, 'men' and 'women,' and the organization of the major aspects of society along those binaries. The binary divisions override individual differences and intertwine with other major socially constructed differences – racial categorization, ethnic grouping, economic class, age, religion, and sexual orientation – which interact to produce a complex hierarchical system of dominance and subordination. Gender divisions not only permeate the individual's sense of self, families, and intimate relationships, but also structure work, politics, law, education, medicine, the military, religions, and culture. Gender is a system of power in that it privileges some men and disadvantages most women. Gender is constructed and maintained by both the dominants and the oppressed because both ascribe to its values in personality and identity formation and in appropriate masculine and feminine behavior. Gender is hegemonic in that many of its foundational assumptions and ubiquitous processes are invisible, unquestioned, and unexamined.

There is still debate over whether a focus on *gender* rather than on *women* undoes the accomplishments of the past thirty-five years in bringing women and women's standpoints to the forefront in research, knowledge, and cultural production. Some scholars of women's studies are concerned that the concept of gender neglects sexual and emotional differences between women and men. For the more psychoanalytically minded, the concept of gender is too sociological and may obscure the centrality of the sexed body for understanding our culture. Others have worried that gender may water down the powerful concept of *patriarchy* as the source of women's oppression. Patriarchy, to some scholars of women's studies is much more encompassing than gender, in that it reflects the violence and misogyny that imbues many of the social and emotional encounters of women and men. More recently, the concept of gender has been criticized for not doing justice to the intersectionality of women's (and men's) multiple identities and the ways they are shaped by other socially constructed categories of difference.

A central concern of many of the authors is with the way in which the 'masculine' (whether as behavior or as a conceptual system) is both rewarded and hegemonic because it is taken for granted as the dominant perspective. Challenging the hegemony of the masculine in its many shapes

and forms has been the prime endeavor of second-wave feminism, but as numerous feminists have pointed out, that hegemony is institutionalized in complex and subtle ways. Social prohibitions clearly excluding or discriminating against women are easy to challenge and dispute (always assuming a form of civic society which allows such challenges), but more difficult to confront are those patterns of discrimination that have the appearance of either universality or the authority of the 'natural.'

One of the more famous binary oppositions posed in the history of second-wave feminism was outlined by Sherry Ortner in 'Is Female to Male as Nature is to Culture?' In that paper (first published in 1972), Ortner proposed that Western thinking in the years since the Enlightenment had been founded on the assumption that men inhabited the domain of understanding and rational thought, while women's 'natural' habitat was that of reproduction and the care of others, those 'naturally' vulnerable and unable to care for themselves. Despite Mary Wollstonecraft's best efforts (in 1792), it has taken over 200 years to challenge effectively those traditions and ideologies which locate women 'outside' knowledge, and hence outside the realms of power. We can recognize – as authors in this collection collectively do – the evolving global paradigms that impinge on the autonomy and well-being of women. It is another question of how those paradigms might be resisted or countered. Two strands are possible in considering this issue: one is to revisit those apparent certainties about the normative order of the world in order to define an agenda which is more assuredly both feminist and gendered. The other is to consider the transformation of the realm of the personal and public which has taken place in the West since the 1960s and ask if these 'new' people (or certainly people acting within new normative boundaries) will, through the politics of the personal, transform public politics.

These arguments and debates in the theory and scholarship of women's and gender studies draw on Western second-wave feminism, that explosion of creative and critical energy that played a large part in the recent transformation of Western civil society and its pedagogy. As the slogan of the 1960s states, 'the personal is political,' and that concept, in challenging the division of public and private which had been part of Western assumptions since the nineteenth century, came to overturn many previously held divisions and distinctions between the world of men and the world of women. That distinction was, of course, always more ideal than real, but the repudiation of different spheres was one that second-wave feminism claimed as a platform from which to demand the reordering of the social and intellectual world.

Women's studies was thus first the claim by women for the study of women, a paradigm shift in focus which would (and did) demonstrate the biases of the academy's male-centered viewpoint. Gender studies was made possible through this process of the recovery of women: once the human subject had been gendered, there arose the possibility of extending the knowledge of the

complexity of human gender to the study of both women and men and their interactions in the personal, in civil society, and in public and political life.

CURRENT STATE OF WOMEN'S STUDIES, GENDER STUDIES, AND STUDIES OF MEN

In this context, it is entirely appropriate that the chapter that opens this collection, 'The Life and Times of Academic Feminism' by Clare Hemmings, raises those issues which have always been of concern to scholars working in women's/gender studies, namely, the question of the disciplinary status of women's/gender studies and the relationship of the area (or discipline, depending on how the debate is resolved) to the institutional context of the academy. Far from being a matter of intellectual history, women's/gender studies is very much a matter of the present and future, as Hemmings argues: 'I remain in thrall to a thirty-year endeavor that has developed an institutional life that intersects with, but cannot be reduced to, feminist political movements, and that has been brave enough to take its own history and presumptions as critical objects of inquiry' (p. 14). To be critical of others is never problematic, to be critical of one's own positions is something unknown in the academy, and it extends that project of 'humanization' where second-wave academic feminism began.

In the second chapter, 'The Shadow and the Substance: The Sex/Gender Debate,' Wendy Cealey Harrison lays out the complexities of the intersection of sex and gender, taking the debate beyond the foundational assumption of the distinction between them that second-wave feminists originally promulgated. She asserts that the exciting and challenging work that remains to be undertaken in feminism is research that recognizes and understands the biological yet 'takes full account of the fact that human beings are pre-eminently social and cultural creatures who, in shaping the world around them, also shape themselves' (p. 35).

The growing acceptance of gender studies saw the parallel burgeoning of studies of men and masculinities. Jeff Hearn and Michael Kimmel, in 'Changing Studies on Men and Masculinities,' review the material which has made explicit the dynamics of gender as applied to men as well as women, and has problematized the meaning of 'masculinity.' As they comment, 'Men's outlooks and culturally defined characteristics were formally generally the unexamined norm for religion, science, citizenship, law and authority' (p. 53), but gender studies has shifted that assumption towards the now general analysis that masculinity, quite as much as femininity, is socially constructed. Yet in their concluding remarks, Hearn and Kimmel point out that research on the social construction of gender remains a 'First World' concern and that theories about gender which 'de-construct' biological gender have so far largely made an impact mostly in those rich societies where biology, in all senses of human identity and human need, is more likely to be negotiable.

CULTURAL REPRESENTATIONS AND CRITIQUES

It is the changing meaning of gender in modernity that is the focus of the chapters by Gabriele Griffin and David Morgan in the part on cultural representations and critiques. Addressing this key question, Griffin in ‘Gendered Cultures’ and Morgan in ‘The Crisis in Masculinity’ pursue ideas, first voiced at the beginning of the twentieth century, about the ways in which ideological change has made previously traditional expectations about gender redundant. Griffin highlights how shifts in discourse from ‘women’ to ‘gender’ have impacted on cultural practices, generating popular interest in women’s performance, film, and popular cultural work. She documents how the ‘cultural turn’ has changed the content of women’s and gender studies courses around the world.

In the second chapter in this part, Bronwyn Winter points out in ‘The Social Foundations of the Sacred: Feminists and the Politics of Religion’ that religion is constitutive of social organization and power relations and central to the collective and individual internalization of cultural identity. To the extent that feminists have challenged long-standing taboos in religious belief and practice, they have created major changes in traditional religions, yet they have not been able to resolve the question of whether symbols of religious identity that mark women, such as Islamic veiling, are demeaning or distinctive.

The ‘crisis’ in masculinity to which Morgan refers is the moral panic about what seems to be – to some men – the claiming of public and institutional space by women. As he points out, this ‘crisis’ tells us as much about the fragility of masculinity as about the strength of the feminine; nevertheless, he cites evidence which suggests that ‘structures of male power are remarkably resilient’ (p. 116). To many feminists, that remark would be judged as one of the great understatements of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Yet, as Morgan goes on to point out, while gender identities and differences are remarkably resistant to social change, they are always complicated by differences of class and ethnicity. Those whose social status is not dominant, which includes women, have challenged the traditional and conventional with their ‘outside’ perspectives and views ‘from below.’

KNOWLEDGE

An important contention of second-wave feminism is that the shaping of the world takes place through the production of knowledge. Thus, those who control and influence that production create the intellectual world we live in. The chapters in this part are particularly concerned with the ways that women’s and gender studies have problematized the taken-for-granted meaning of gender. All three chapters argue that feminist standpoints have

forced rethinking and reframing of research and scholarship, and have left deep marks in what and how we think and know.

Carolyn DiPalma and Kathy Ferguson in 'Clearing Ground and Making Connections: Modernism, Postmodernism, Feminism,' tackle one of the most important debates within academic feminism, namely, between modernism and postmodernism, showing how this debate has left a lasting imprint on feminist scholarship. Rather than resolving the debate, they argue that feminist thinking is best served by productively engaging with tensions between modern and postmodern thinking. Lorraine Code, in 'Women Knowing/Knowing Women: Critical-Creative Interventions in the Politics of Knowledge,' shows how feminist critical, gender-sensitive, and political inquiries have produced not only better but different knowledge by creating epistemic standards 'stringent enough to enable knowers to participate intelligently in the world, both physical and human' (p. 148).

In 'Gender, Change, and Education,' Diana Leonard reviews the many changes that have taken place in educational practice and notes the assimilation of women into both the institutions and values of schools and universities. At the same time, she observes the shift towards 'gender-blind' educational policies, a shift which, she notes, can frequently obliterate the interests of women. The drift towards the 'masculine' remains very powerful, entrenched as the masculine has been within the discourses of both Western religion and philosophy.

GLOBALIZATION AND THE STATE

Gender politics with the goal of more structural change are played out in national and international arenas. In the four chapters on globalization and the state, the authors confront state-sanctioned differences between women and men as citizens and members of particular nations with particular national identities and ideologies. If gender politics are complex within societies, they reach the heights of Byzantine complication between societies. Western assumptions about gender in the twenty-first century generally take for granted a formal equality of citizenship; outside the West, this equality cannot be taken for granted. Global agendas and rhetoric about 'democracy' and 'freedom' are sometimes deeply flawed by their limited appreciation of gender difference.

Miri Song points out in 'Gender in a Global World,' the very important role for feminist interventions that do not ignore local differences and diverse cultures. Song makes evident the erasure of gender in most mainstream writings about globalization, and the relationship between the global and the local; that is 'glocal'.

In 'Insiders and Outsiders: Within and Beyond the Gendered Nation,' Barbara Einhorn presents vivid evidence about the difference political change can make to women and gender politics: the dismantling of state

socialism in Eastern Europe and the coming of what is described as the 'free' market radically altered women's ability to participate in civil society.

The erasure of gender provides an important context for Dubravka Zarkov's chapter, 'Towards a New Theorizing of Women, Gender, and War.' Women over the centuries, but most notably in the twentieth century, as in *Three Guineas* by Virginia Woolf, have observed that war and organized violence are the province of men. The responsibilities of citizenship involve understanding the motivations for war and military action, yet while Western nations assume that this responsibility will be shared by women and men, none of them fully integrates women into the military. Some definitions of the 'feminine' remain resistant to transformation; yet just as certainly, women are as likely as men to be the civilian victims of violence and aggression. In 'Mothers and Muslims, Sisters and Sojourners: The Contested Boundaries of Feminist Citizenship,' Baukje Prins takes this discussion to the heart of our individual dilemmas as citizens and feminists, asking who we should include as our 'co-citizens' in a world which is increasingly global. The conclusions drawn by the authors are pessimistic about the possibilities of a specifically feminist resistance to the globalization of evermore brutal neo-liberal economies and unprecedented global militarization.

WORK AND FAMILY

One of the major challenges to traditional thinking has been the feminist confrontation of the intersection of the public and the personal in work organizations, families, caregiving, and the welfare state. The transforming impact of second-wave feminism on state policies about social care and welfare provision is founded on distinctions between women and men which largely assume stable gendered behavior. We know, for example, that the majority (although not all) of family carers are women, but in saying this we also have to recognize the cultural baggage implicit in that recognition. The precise nature of that cultural baggage and how it is changing under the impact of new thinking about men and women workers, family members, and caretakers is the subject of the chapters in the part on work and family.

The conventional understanding of gender, as Rosemary Crompton in 'Working with Gender' and Clare Ungerson in 'Gender, Care, and the Welfare State' point out, underpins much of the structure of the labor market, paid and unpaid caregiving, and the welfare state. Ungerson and Crompton draw on the particular case of the British welfare/labor structure, but their essays make the more general point that while gender is paramount in defining the organization of paid work and patterns of unpaid work, these aspects of society are also complicated by factors of racial and ethnic discrimination. Europe in general has far more extensive welfare provisions (notably in health services) than the United States, but other global divisions exist which

demand further attention to the different extent of the impact of gender on the individual lives of women and men.

Molly Monahan Lang and Barbara Risman, in 'Blending into Equality: Family Diversity and Gender Convergence,' argue that recent changes in families are increasingly minimizing the differences in women's and men's roles. If that convergence continues and becomes normalized (which is, of course, a matter of conjecture), it may arguably be the case that divisions of gendered behavior and ideologies about them will be overtaken by radical social changes and realignments.

INTIMATE RELATIONSHIPS AND SEXUALITIES

Even more drastic changes in gender and sexuality are outlined by Chrys Ingraham, Sasha Roseneil, and Wendy McKenna and Suzanne Kessler. These authors take as their subject matter the question of gender, sexuality, and intimate relationships; their shared argument is the social construction, and indeed the possible deconstruction, of gender and sexual identities. Although second-wave feminism drew on the rhetorical possibilities of the binary distinction between female and male, women and men, and homosexuals and heterosexuals, feminists at the beginning of the twenty-first century increasingly look beyond those binaries to the theoretical and social possibilities of what Ingraham, in 'Thinking Straight, Acting Bent: Heteronormativity and Homosexuality,' describes as 'thinking (and acting) bent.'

Ingraham proposes a major challenge to feminists and others who want to change the sex/gender system: to recognize the power of 'thinking straight'; that is, thinking in terms of heterosexuality (not gender) as the dominant social paradigm. Change, she argues, must take place by undermining the hegemony of heterosexuality. Roseneil, in 'Foregrounding Friendship: Feminist Pasts, Feminist Futures,' suggests that focusing on friendship enables a challenge to the heteronormativity of the social sciences, and makes visible 'some of the radical transformations in the organization of intimate life which characterize the early twenty-first century' (p. 324). Taking the transformations even further, McKenna and Kessler in 'Transgendering: Blurring the Boundaries of Gender' lay out the ways that this phenomenon 'radically deconstructs the meaning of gender categories and presents feminist scholars with possibilities for linking theory and practice' in producing social change (p. 344).

EMBODIMENT IN A TECHNOLOGICAL WORLD

The body, the environment, and science and technology are the focus of three chapters that explore the intersection and interaction of gender, bodies, and

technology. The authors point out the various tensions that exist between the individual choices which women make (or wish to make) and the social norms defining women's social position. In 'Gendered Bodies: Between Conformity and Autonomy,' Sharyn Roach Anleu argues that conformity to gender norms, while more restrictive for women than for men, does not always compromise or reduce women's autonomy and power.

Indeed, as Irmgard Schultz suggests in 'The Natural World and the Nature of Gender,' the concept of the feminine can play a key part in rethinking social organization. For example, the ideas of 'provident economy' and 'everyday life ecology,' ideas drawn from gendered perspectives about the conduct of daily life, take women's experience as the conceptual basis for the renegotiation of social relationships, in this case the particularly sensitive relationship of women and men to nature. In 'From Science and Technology to Feminist Technoscience,' Jutta Weber interprets recent cultural studies of science and technology as reactions to the feminist reorganization of knowledge.

MAKING CHANGE

The final part explores the possibilities for creating social change. The contributions in this handbook do not share the same political aims or strategies or, for that matter, moral views. In 'Moral Perspectives: Gender, Ethics, and Political Theory,' Joan Tronto explores the way people develop their moral views, and how those moral views are so deeply structured by context. Nevertheless, Tronto points out that the ethic of care is now an undisputed part of feminist challenges to the conventional post-Enlightenment assumption that individual citizens must be free to act in their own interests. For feminists, an ethic of care means responsibility for others as well. The concept of autonomy and agency, therefore, must encompass the recognition of that responsibility.

The goal of knowledge that accurately reflects our gendered lives is widely accepted by feminists, but there are major disagreements about how to do the research that will produce that knowledge. In 'Having It All: Feminist Fractured Foundationalism,' Sue Wise and Liz Stanley offer a 'toolkit' for practical use that they suggest will produce 'unalienated feminist knowledge.' In political activism, as Manisha Desai points out in 'From Autonomy to Solidarities: Transnational Feminist Political Strategies,' the aims of feminists vary considerably if one takes a transnational perspective.

In the final chapter, we offer our own utopian views on what social changes we would most like to see, and how these can be accomplished. At this point in the twenty-first century, the study of gender, in all its many forms, offers an endlessly challenging way of thinking through, and past, the banal rhetoric of public politics. One of the paradoxes of the twenty-first century is that as intellectual life allows increasing doubt and speculation

about the clarity of previously entrenched 'natural' categories, including male and female, it brings, as Judith Lorber argues in 'A World Without Gender?', the possibility of 'degendering' to the fore as a viable form of resistance to existing gendered social orders. Against the backdrop of global inequalities of power and a growing tendency towards fundamentalist politics, Mary Evans in 'Getting Real: Contextualizing Gender' reminds us that the task for feminism is to be critical of its liberal underpinnings, even as it remains committed to preserving its longing for a more egalitarian and democratic future for women and men. Taking a transnational perspective, Kathy Davis, in 'Feminist Politics of Location,' concludes on a hopeful note. With a little 'geographical imagination,' a feminism of the future may become the site for dialogues across cultural, regional, and national borders. Taken together, we provide a vision of how women's and gender studies can become a richly subversive challenge to the authoritarian construction of knowledge and an opportunity for a radical politics of social justice and transformation.

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Part I

**CURRENT STATE OF WOMEN'S
STUDIES, GENDER STUDIES,
AND STUDIES OF MEN**

The Life and Times of Academic Feminism

Clare Hemmings

This chapter re-examines two debates central to the current state of Gender and Women's Studies. The first is known as the autonomy/integration debate, which asks whether feminist enquiry should seek to influence the academy from within particular disciplines, or establish itself as a separate 'discipline' drawing on interdisciplinary theories and methods. In critiquing dominant modes of evaluating institutional success in this context, I provide an overview of the current state of academic feminism from a range of intellectual and geographical positions. The second debate concerns the 'proper name' of academic feminism. Here I focus on the proliferation of writing which condemns or endorses an institutional move from Women's Studies to Gender Studies, suggesting that we need to situate such claims in the geographical and as well as theoretical contexts from which they arise. Throughout this chapter, I stress the importance of thinking through academic feminist institutionalization as having a 'life of its own', one that is negotiated and renewed on a daily basis, rather than one whose meaning is predominantly referential.

INTRODUCTION

Joan Wallach Scott suggestively describes Women's Studies as 'a place of anxiety and irritability...but also one of great energy and vitality' (1997: iv). Marilyn Jacoby Boxer echoes Scott's ambivalence, insisting that 'to partake of Women's Studies is to dwell in an incubator of optimism – despite the field's obdurances, penuries, blindnesses, fallacies and disputes' (2003: xiii). And Beverley Skeggs bemoans the fact that 'the vibrantly energetic Women's Studies lovingly described by Ailbhe Smyth (1992) is taking a kicking and we are the body bags' (1995: 483), ending her otherwise crushing indictment of consumer culture's impact on Women's Studies in the UK with the rousing reminder that it 'is in these conditions that we will continue to fight'

(p. 483).¹ While invested commentary on the academic institutionalization of feminism is enormously diverse in many respects, it tends to share this strong affective tone, frequently weighing its difficulties against its pleasures and responding to both with equal fervour.

As an academic in Gender Studies, I also reside in those anxieties and vitalities. Deeply committed to feminist higher education though I am, some days I can't shift my feelings of gloom. In the UK, each year brings news of more closures of undergraduate Women's and Gender Studies departments, despite continued and diverse interest in feminist research and pedagogy and growth in some specific areas at the graduate level (such as gender and development). While academics are consistently encouraged to apply for external funding to give them much needed leave in departments starved of resources, feminist research remains unrecognized as distinct by the primary funding bodies, and thus interdisciplinary feminist applications are at a considerable disadvantage. In addition, the increasing bureaucratization of academic life in general means that curriculum development, pastoral care of students, and research are frequently squeezed out by audits, meetings, and the struggle for basic resources (Deem and Johnson, 2003; Gray, 2003; Knights and Richards, 2003).² My heart sinks when I see my in-tray, the list of meetings with students and colleagues, the cursed email in my inbox, and the possibility of research today trickles away – again. But such crowding at least delays the more persistent anxieties that have a different temporality and that can ruin the summer I thought I was looking forward to. Is feminist academic work valuable? If it used to be, is it still? Is mine? What do feminist academics think we are doing?

And then again, some days I fairly float to work. I teach feminist thought! I write about the social world from a feminist perspective! This is partly individual – it is a good life. I teach graduate Gender Studies at a well-funded UK institution, we have good student numbers, we are not facing imminent closure (for now). These days also serve to reframe those anxieties. Those demanding students are the same ones who thirst for feminist knowledge, push it to its limits, and make the connections that allow feminist thought to expand beyond itself and thus remain, or become, useful and relevant. They are motivated and ruthless in their critical judgements. On such days, it should be noted, so that you do not go away with the impression that students always carry the burden of my own sense of usefulness (a quite dreadful academic feminist habit), I am reminded why I am committed to an academic feminist project.

I remain in thrall to a thirty-year endeavour that has developed an institutional life that intersects with, but cannot be reduced to, feminist political movements, and that has been brave enough to take its own history and presumptions as critical objects of enquiry. In the process, academic feminism has developed a dizzying interdisciplinary array of epistemological and methodological tools that allow us to understand and challenge social and

political realities globally. It has not done so on its own, but it most certainly has done so. And there is plenty of life in the young (you name it) yet.³

You may see your own perspective represented in some parts of my opening account, but the affective tensions I have described are more fundamental to academic feminism than straightforward identification or dis-identification might suggest. The histories of the last three decades of academic feminist institutionalization are structured by these prevalent themes of loss or progress. Commentators tend to privilege one over the other, such that the institutionalization of feminism emerges either as a relentless march away from real feminist politics and towards professionalization and bureaucratization (Griffin and Hanmer, 2001; Messer-Davidow, 2002; Stanley and Wise, 2000; Stromquist, 2001), or as a welcome increase in the variety of tools in the feminist store cupboard, with a particular emphasis on the political importance of challenging the fantasy of lost feminist unity that grounds the previous narrative (Adkins, 2004; Huffer 1998; Roof, 1997; Stacey, 1993; Wiegman, 2000). My own introduction emphasizes both bureaucratization and transformation, and I began this chapter by locating myself as a way of flagging from the outset the central role of biography in determining whether anxiety or vitality dominates a particular account of academic feminist institutionalization. My story would be very different if I worked in an under-resourced institution, if my post were temporary or part-time, as so many Women's and Gender Studies jobs are, if I were a research professor with dedicated research assistance, or if I were the lone feminist researcher teaching in a disciplinary context.

In the rest of this chapter, I take forward the question of location to re-examine two abiding debates within academic feminism. The first is known as the autonomy/integration debate, which asks whether feminist enquiry should seek to influence the academy from within particular disciplines, or establish itself as a separate discipline drawing on interdisciplinary theories and methods. It is in this context that I aim to provide a partial account of the current state of play of feminist work within the academy,⁴ highlighting the material contexts of institutionalization of feminist work over the commonly abstract debates that circulate on this issue. The second debate concerns the 'proper name' of academic feminism. Here I focus on the proliferation of writing which condemns or endorses an institutional move from Women's Studies to Gender Studies, suggesting that we need to situate such claims in the geographical as well as theoretical contexts from which they arise.

Throughout this chapter, I stress the importance of thinking through academic feminist institutionalization as having a 'life of its own', one that is negotiated and renewed on a daily basis, rather than one whose meaning is predominantly referential. I see this project as a direct challenge to a feminist imagination dominated by the counterproductive myth of 'the selfish feminist academic'—the one who has abandoned her sisters to 'serve only

[her] professional interests and those of patriarchy and the male ruling class' (Evans, 1982: 61). The myth of the selfish feminist academic only works if we retain the image of her opposite of course: the political doer Mary Evans ironically dubs 'the true believer' (1982: 70). Such a perverse pairing means that academic feminist production can only be understood as lacking, as subject to an imagined feminist golden age before institutionalization, or a future full of political (which is to say non-institutional) redemption. This myth thus prioritizes easy scapegoating over the painstaking task of teasing out the specific contributions and challenges of thirty years of academic institutionalization of feminism.

INSTITUTIONAL ROUTES

In large part, debates about autonomy versus integration of feminist research and teaching within the academy are questions of strategy. Some feminists have argued that integration into existing disciplines is essential if change within the academy as a whole is to occur and be sustained, and further that ghettoization of feminist work will not advance its efforts for transformation of social or academic worlds (SIGMA report, 1995; Smyth, 1992; Stanley, 1991).⁵ Alternatively, feminists favouring autonomy stress the importance of providing a space for feminist dialogue across disciplinary interests and investments (Bowles and Klein, 1983: 13), and the importance of ensuring the development of intellectual as well as institutional autonomy (Braidotti, 2002: 288; Griffin and Hanmer, 2001). For these authors, autonomy is also more likely to generate a dynamic environment for student–staff interaction, including the development of innovative pedagogies and assessment methods (Deats and Lenker, 1994; Jackson, 2004). Both perspectives have been rigorously critiqued. Integration as a strategy is likely to put enormous pressure on individuals or small groups of feminist academics both to 'write to the [disciplinary] audience' concerned (Bowles and Klein, 1983: 7), and to fill the feminist gaps in the existing disciplinary curriculum and supervision arrangements. In addition, the replacement of feminist staff is harder to guarantee, being more subject to the intellectual and political investments of those with power in the department or discipline concerned. Yet autonomy can also isolate feminist departments, centres, or institutes, making them vulnerable to marginalization or closure. And if disciplinary integration has been abandoned, closure of an autonomous unit can effectively wipe out feminist research and teaching at a given institution.

There are two main responses to the opposition of autonomy and integration as described above. Most commentators now take the view that a combination approach is the most desirable and sustainable one (Bergman, 2000: 52; SIGMA report, 1995). Jackie Stacey, Ann Phoenix, and Hilary Hinds thus argued in the early 1990s that Women's Studies needs to work

‘within disciplines to challenge and transform them, and [seek] some autonomy through which to develop new models and understandings’ (1992: 5). This sentiment was reinforced a decade later by Rosi Braidotti, who stressed the importance of understanding Women’s Studies as both ‘a critical project in so far as it examines how science perpetuates forms of discrimination and...exclusion’ and ‘a creative field that opens up alternative spaces’ for feminists to take stock of our own critical history and imagine our future differently (Braidotti, 2002: 288).

A second approach tends to see autonomy as evidence of the *fullest* institutional achievement, through which the various other levels of institutionalization of feminist research and pedagogy can be measured (Barazzetti and Leone, 2003: 5–7; Silius, 2002).⁶ The latter may be useful as a temporary methodological necessity, perhaps, but such a developmental history privileges the experiences in countries where autonomy has already been (albeit partially) achieved – the UK, the Netherlands, and Australia, for example – or where autonomy is suited to the particular system of higher education, but hotly contested – most notably the United States. But a straightforward ‘combination’ approach is rather dissatisfying too, since it specifies an ideal rather than speaking directly to specific institutional strategies for sustainability of feminist work. I believe it is more useful to focus on the tensions that attend both the autonomy and integration approaches and on the material conditions in which the differences are negotiated than it is to seek to resolve the issue abstractly in a straightforward ‘additive’ mode.

In the majority of national contexts, the institutionalization of feminist knowledge within the academy is intimately linked to broader feminist social movements. Frequently known as the ‘academic arm’ of the women’s movement, a strong presence of such a movement seems to have been a precondition for feminist academic institutionalization in the United Kingdom, the United States, and Germany, for example (Silius, 2002). The lack of such movements is frequently cited as a central reason for delayed academic institutionalization in Central and Eastern Europe (Corrin, 1992; Papic, 2002). Yet this trajectory is not singular, or developmental, in any simple way – indeed the two are frequently in tension. In her discussion of women’s groups in Serbia and Montenegro, for example, Andjelka Milić indicates that women’s organizing was present in urban centres in the former Yugoslavia throughout the 1970s (2004), indicating that there must have been a different reason for the lack of academic feminist institutionalization in that context. In Italy, which had a strong feminist movement in the 1970s, grassroots opposition to feminist intervention (autonomy or integration as strategies aside) in the academy was so fierce that Women’s Studies only existed as a separate intellectual endeavour outside the academy until very recently (Barazzetti, 2000; Silius, 2002: 23). Similarly, in France, post-May 1968 feminist intellectual production was stronger in non-institutionalized contexts, such as the Cahiers du Grif collective, than in universities (Braidotti, Vonk, and van Wichelen, 2000: 167; Silius, 2002: 17).

In sites where feminist research and teaching were institutionalized early, debates about the dangers of depoliticization of feminist knowledge have been ongoing. Some discussants have insisted that university-level Women's and Gender Studies should be considered as one of several sites of struggle over knowledge production and not be privileged as primary (Barazzetti and Leone, 2003: 20; Lees, 1991: 90–91). The history of feminist knowledge production across Europe includes adult education (Kelly and Pearson, 1983), the establishment of independent publishers and academic journals, feminist libraries and documentation centres, and the use of interdisciplinary media, including art and film.

Within the academy, the struggle to resist institutional depoliticization has combined an ongoing emphasis on collaborative work and transformative pedagogy with an insistence on maintaining activist, community, and policy links.⁷ The extent to which these principles have been instigated and maintained in contemporary academic contexts varies enormously, as one might expect. Across Europe, the link between degree-level courses in Women's and Gender Studies and non-governmental policy development is well established, with students frequently using their degrees as stepping stones to careers in the NGO sector (Griffin and Hanmer, 2001; Silius, 2002).⁸

Yet it would be rather hasty to reify this 'academia into policy' route as straightforwardly preserving the integrity of feminist knowledge production. In the UK, the reduction in public spending on education has been accompanied by an increasing bureaucratization of the NGO sector to carry the burden of public sector service delivery (Griffin and Hanmer, 2001), hardly a self-evidently progressive arena. And I would also argue that policy intervention is not self-evidently transformative of gender relations in the long term. Writing from the perspective of the former Yugoslavia, Zarana Papic cautions that unless policy intervention is matched by concomitant cultural shifts in gender perceptions and expectations, policy advances are easily lost in the event of a regime change (2002).

While the relationship between intellectual and activist struggles has a clear effect on whether academic institutionalization of feminist research and pedagogy has occurred, the factor most directly influencing longevity of feminist courses or centres is the nature of local, national, or international institutional support. In national contexts where higher education is modular, expansionist, and employment directed, Women's or Gender Studies saw a boom in the 1980s and 1990s. A combination of demand from the new influx of women into higher education and staff vision to promote and meet that demand meant that a large number of Women's or Gender Studies courses at undergraduate and graduate levels were established in the United States, the UK, the Netherlands, and some Scandinavian countries during that time (Skeggs, 1995: 479; Stacey, Phoenix, and Hinds, 1992: 4; Threadgold, 2000: 44). Autonomy could thus be argued for and sometimes granted, if grudgingly, on the basis of parity rather than special treatment.

In most of these contexts, autonomy has been easier to achieve and sustain at the graduate level rather than undergraduate level because of the perceived need for a disciplinary undergraduate background in the first instance. Strangely, here, Women's or Gender Studies is imagined both as too narrow (biased) and too broad (interdisciplinary) to constitute a discipline in its own right. In the United States, where entry into graduate school is understood to mark the beginning of disciplinarity proper, after a broad-based undergraduate education, Women's and Gender Studies have taken a much greater hold at the undergraduate level, but for similar reasons.⁹

In contexts where higher education remains formally disciplinary and resolutely hierarchical, such as France and Italy, Women's or Gender Studies has not been able to generate the same level of internal institutional support and has thus either not expanded beyond individual course provision or has relied on the international reputation of individual feminists to force institutional approval.¹⁰ As a result, integration rather than autonomy is usually the only viable option within the institutions concerned, and lecturers frequently introduce feminist history, concepts, and contexts via courses with more neutral disciplinary names.

There is another increasingly significant route enabling the academic institutionalization of feminist research and teaching: external funding from government or equal opportunities agencies or funding from international agencies such as the World Bank, for whom 'gender' might be said to be the new agenda. In both Spain and Finland, for example, Women's Studies is predominantly funded by equal opportunities agencies (Silius, 2002: 29, 31), and in India, the thirty-two independent women's studies centres have arisen as a direct result of international and government agency support (Jain and Rajput, 2003: 19).

In a very real sense, then, one could argue that the success or otherwise of feminist academic institutionalization in different national contexts is predominantly a question of markets. And importantly, academic markets, like all markets, are subject to change. British feminist academics writing in the early to mid 1990s were aware that student demand and a 'market-led economy for higher education' (Skeggs, 1995: 497) were the core reasons for the blossoming of undergraduate Women's Studies at that time, and indeed we have subsequently been hit by an equally rapid decline in those student numbers, which has led to cutbacks and closures as many departments and institutions struggle to survive.

While the field continues to attract large numbers of graduate students (mostly overseas students), particularly in the context of joint degrees with development, social policy, or media, and an interested student can take pathways or individual courses in women's or gender issues in almost any university in the country, undergraduate programmes have been decimated. At this point, all UK single honours programmes have closed, and increasing numbers of autonomous centres, departments, or institutes have had to move into larger departments to survive in any form.

Commentators see two main reasons for this decline in the UK. First, the abolition of grants and introduction of fees for undergraduate degrees has reduced the number of mature students returning to education and created a dominant student culture of utilitarianism over idealism (Griffin and Braidotti, 2002: 4; Silius and Tuori, 2003: 17; Stromquist, 2001: 382). In this fee-paying context, given that most students are unlikely ever to have encountered Women's or Gender Studies as an area of academic enquiry before attending university, let alone appreciate the high level of employability of its graduates, it is unsurprising that the appeal of a single honours degree in Women's or Gender Studies has dwindled.

Second, pervasive cultural understandings of feminism as anachronistic mean that students steer clear of feminist programmes, particularly in light of the need to make their degree 'count' on the open market (Griffin and Hanmer, 2001: 43).¹¹ While the changing fortunes of UK higher education clearly play an important part in explaining this particular decline, it is critical to stress that not all academic areas of enquiry are positioned equally in relation to its logic. In a recent survey conducted by the Feminist and Women's Studies Association (UK and Ireland), feminist academics remarked on the inconsistent application of 'the numbers game' across their particular institutions. Other departments with low recruitment were frequently protected rather than dissolved, and the calculation of the numbers themselves varied according to the needs of the institution.

The feelings of isolation experienced by many UK feminist academics in this climate are compounded by broader institutional attacks on the life of Women's and Gender Studies. National funding bodies continue to refuse to recognize Women's and Gender Studies as fields of enquiry in their own right, meaning that, as suggested above, feminist grant applications are less likely to be evaluated by experts in the field and financial support for emerging feminist scholars is increasingly difficult to obtain. The Research Assessment Exercise (RAE)¹² that dominates contemporary UK academic life has axed the Women's Studies sub-panel for the 2008 round subsuming it with the Sociology sub-panel.¹³

The precipitous closure of undergraduate programmes in Women's and Gender Studies in the UK must be placed within this broader ideological context of devaluation of feminist research and training. It is difficult to be a feminist academic in the UK currently and not feel alternately angry and helpless in the face of these institutional blows. For this reason alone, perhaps, a less nationally delimited analysis can be helpful.

As suggested, Women's Studies in the UK was one of the countries swift to take up the market opportunities presented in the 1980s and early 1990s, and as one might expect, the same is true now in other national contexts. Women's or Gender Studies is currently growing in Germany, Spain, Portugal, and New Zealand, where higher education is in a period of reorganization. In contexts where there is ongoing support from equal

opportunities or international agencies, the situation is currently stable (Griffin and Braidotti, 2002: 4). There is also hope that the reframing of higher education in line with the Bologna Declaration (1999) will provide a new context of student demand and institutional support for Women's and Gender Studies across Europe.¹⁴ While not underestimating the competition-led nature of the Bologna Declaration, the European Women's Studies Thematic Network (Athena) has been actively exploring positive applications of this change (Silius, 2002: 19, 22), with particular emphasis on its potential value in consolidating a European Women's Studies curriculum and institutionalized exchange networks for staff and students.

A challenging development in the UK has been the increase of international students pursuing Women's and Gender Studies Masters and PhD programmes. In departments or programmes where growth in student numbers has been sustained, this can be largely attributed to the global demand for interdisciplinary, autonomous degree programmes in Women's and Gender Studies that the UK is well placed to meet. In market terms, the UK can currently provide interdisciplinary academic feminist training in a range of arenas and with an increasing number of specialties, which other national contexts cannot.¹⁵ At the graduate Gender Institute at the London School of Economics, where I teach, student numbers are high and growing, but they are predominantly international students, many from the United States, while numbers of UK students are in decline (for the reasons suggested above).

Within this context, students are particularly keen to take graduate courses that have an international, development, or globalization focus, since these both reflect their located interests and arguably offer the greatest employment prospects for Women's and Gender Studies graduates. As gender, and with it Gender Studies, can no longer (if they ever could) be thought of in national terms, the teachers of Women's and Gender Studies in the UK need to find a way to respond creatively to the current market without simply echoing its demands.

Academic feminists have no alternative but to seize the moments when institutional and/or international changes move in our favour, but opportunism must be met with plans for sustainability if we are not to keep on watching the contexts built up over years disappear when national and international circumstances alter. I have been suggesting that debates about autonomy and integration need to be situated within particular institutional, national, and international frames if the arguments are not to remain abstract. The institutionalization of feminist work in higher education is too uneven and precarious a process to have a single developmental ideal imposed upon it. Nor can we propose a dual, combined approach in anything other than the abstract. Instead, academic feminist debate needs to stress located, translatable sustainability to identify the best ways to enable feminist work to flourish.

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

In the uneven thirty-year process of academic institutionalization of feminist knowledge, a dispute has occurred over the proper name of this project. While some sites retain the title Women's Studies, others have shifted to, or named new programmes, Gender Studies, Women's and Gender Studies, or the more descriptive 'Gender and...'¹⁶ These questions of naming are anything but neutral, and one's theoretical position on the issue tends to be directly linked to intellectual biography and to national or international location. I have privileged the naming question over many others in this chapter because a given author's response to the issue is frequently a platform for engagement with concerns about the institutionalization of feminist work more generally.

Those who resist naming academic feminist work anything other than Women's Studies do so for compelling reasons. Most broadly, Gender Studies is perceived as representative of a desire for academic neutrality in the hope of accessing institutional rewards (Stromquist, 2001: 374–375). It is thus commonly seen as a deliberate depoliticization of an academic feminist project, all the more regrettable where the change is internally decided, and not externally forced. Commentators have been concerned that a primary effect of this renaming will be to open up what historically has been a vibrant, safe, women-only environment to include men (Evans, 1991; Richardson and Robinson, 1994). This potential invasion is theorized in several ways: as related to literal bodies (men will feel more comfortable in something called Gender Studies); as facilitated by the alliance between feminism and queer theory, which may privilege gay male experience; and as a shift to studying 'gender relations' over the experience and construction of womanhood, with its risk of an attendant consolidation of the heteronormative framing of gender as 'complementarity'. Renate Klein takes the strongest position on this last issue, rephrasing Gender Studies 'hetero-relations studies' (1991: 81). As Stacy Gillis and Rebecca Munford point out, these objections to Gender Studies are typically situated within a more general anger at the academic attacks on the 'very category of "woman"' (2003: 6), precipitated by the very worst invasion of all, that of poststructuralism into the academy.

Poststructuralism is credited with authoring 'a shift of attention from the basic issue of women's subordination' (Aaron and Walby, 1991: 5) towards a concern with language over material reality (Segal, 2000: 26; Stromquist, 2001: 373). Without 'woman' as the subject and object of feminism, what we are left with are 'fragmented bits and pieces, vagueness and uncertainty' (Klein, 1991: 83). To abandon Women's Studies in favour of Gender Studies is thus to have been 'lured' (Evans, 1991: 73) away not only from the 'proper object' (Butler, 1994) of enquiry, women, but from feminism itself. Wendy Brown's insistence that the final deconstruction of the 'woman' of 'Women's Studies' propels us towards an inevitable, and not to be lamented, return to disciplinarity would seem to prove the point (1997).

As anyone familiar with contemporary feminist theory might anticipate, the counter-arguments concerning the 'proper name' of feminism within the academy foreground the same issues but value them differently. Thus, the alliances between 'Gender Studies, queer, transgender and postcolonial theories' (Gillis and Munford, 2003: 6) are seen as essential to the survival of feminism in the academy, and as cause for celebration not retrenchment. Contests over the 'proper object' of feminism are seen as arising out of a positive political desire to recognize both 'other' marginal subjects and other marginalized fields within the academy (Braidotti and Butler, 1994; Zalewski, 2003). The argument is that in order for the desire for connections with Lesbian and Gay or Queer Studies, Transgender Studies, and Ethnic Studies to be understood as genuine, it will not always be appropriate (or ethical) to privilege a female body in terms of gendered meaning. Thus, in relation to Transgender Studies, for example, the mobilization of a female body as foundational has been theorized as part of an invalidation of transgender experiences (Wilton, 2000). Challenges to the grounding of Women's Studies in the category 'woman' usually supplement these with the delineation of gender as a theoretically and politically useful category of analysis that need not (though it may) take woman as its object (Martin, 2001; Scott, 1988; Spivak, 1981). Gender Studies is in this way thought through as part of a theoretical and political shift towards coalition within the specific context of the academic institutionalization of feminist work.

The debates I have outlined above are underpinned by maintaining a clear opposition between Women's Studies and Gender Studies in the first place. The two are consistently articulated as entirely separate projects with distinct objects and distinct subjects, and, importantly, as *chronologically* distinct. It is this rhetorical separation that allows Diane Richardson and Victoria Robinson to imagine a feminist choice about which one we want – 'should we welcome [Gender Studies]...or should we be critical?' (1994: 11) – as if feminist commentators were not already staked within the debates and located in areas other than Women's Studies. Richardson and Robinson's question only makes sense if we assume that those making such a choice are *first of all* located in Women's Studies. In fact, both 'sides' bolster their claims by situating the debates chronologically. Advocates of Women's Studies tend to frame Gender Studies simply as a rejection of the former, while advocates of Gender Studies repeatedly position Women's Studies as irredeemably essentialist and anachronistic, as *over* if one is at all theoretically sophisticated.¹⁷ In fixing the meaning of these designations as predominantly relational, both 'camps' ignore the myriad institutional and national or international contexts in which Women's Studies and Gender Studies have developed either independently or in mutually exclusive ways.

The assumption that advocating Gender Studies over Women's Studies or vice versa is an endorsement of either poststructuralism or material accounts of womanhood is simultaneously to assume that these designations mean the same thing everywhere. In this respect, the Women's Studies/Gender Studies

debates are remarkably Anglo-American in their frames of reference, while rarely being located in them as such. Thus Brown's (1997) advocacy of a return to disciplinarity for feminist scholars reflects her location in the US academy, where Women's Studies has made relatively little impression at the graduate level, and most feminist scholars have graduate, which is to say disciplinary, expertise to facilitate such a return. That the US situation is anomalous and thus in need of careful rather than abstract translation (Spivak, 1993) is ignored both in Brown's own recommendations for the international field of Women's and Gender Studies and in the transnational adoption of her arguments (Zalewski, 2003).

In contrast, my first critique of a fixed, chronological opposition between Women's and Gender Studies concerns the varied institutional contexts of their emergence, and is thus partly a way of tracing an institutional history of academic feminism. In most Scandinavian countries, for example, the translation of 'gender' into 'genus' in NGO and governmental sites has facilitated the dominance of 'genus studies' in the academy (Braidotti, 2002: 294). Kari Jegerstedt argues that the widespread use of 'genus studies' (with the exception of Finland) appropriately reflects and consolidates the prioritization of equal opportunities in academic feminist environments (2000). There is no history of displacement of Women's Studies in this context, and no sense of 'genus' as a neutral term. Additionally, in the 2000s, the global currency of 'gender' has increased to such an extent that it seems folly indeed to continue to think through the meaning of Gender Studies only in terms of an abandonment of an interest in women's subordination. The shift from 'women in development' to 'gender and development' in this particular interdisciplinary arena means that 'Gender Studies' as a designation is more likely to attract funding and students, and to facilitate interdisciplinary and international alliances in ways that cannot previously have been anticipated.

Let me be clear: I am not arguing for a celebration of plurality of meaning for its own sake. Located meanings of Gender Studies or its translations need to be examined in their own right precisely because they present new opportunities for assimilation and co-optation of feminist values, not because they are immune from these. While Gabriele Griffin and Rosi Braidotti are optimistic about the ways in which academic feminism can offer a potent challenge to nationalism within Europe by challenging the normative use of gender as the basis of national identifications (2002: 12), the linguistic and cultural foundation of 'gender' in 'genre' and thus 'species' in many countries makes guarding against its interpretation as part of a nationalist strategy focusing on 'gender purity' particularly important.¹⁸ And while governmental or NGO support of Gender Studies may provide opportunities for feminist research not otherwise available, there are both practical and theoretical problems with an unqualified endorsement of this direction. Such support can signal a potential loss of intellectual self-determination or the watering down of academic feminists' transformative

agenda. Bearing in mind the trenchant critiques of a gender and development agenda by transnational feminist theorists, we cannot afford to celebrate the international context of Gender Studies in narrow Anglo-American institutional terms either.¹⁹

'Women's Studies' as an institutional designation also has a varied history that cannot be reduced to its imagined past reliance on an inert conception of womanhood, from the perspective of Gender Studies as an imagined cutting edge. Again an international approach is instructive. As a term, 'Women's Studies' is a US import, but its translation into multiple contexts where English is not the native tongue has also transformed its meaning, linguistically and theoretically (Braidotti, 2002: 285). In Finland, for example, 'woman' already has multiple meanings – both biological and cultural – and Women's Studies is thus preferred over Gender Studies, which does not translate in the same way (Braidotti, 2002: 293). Theoretically, Griffin and Braidotti celebrate the ways in which, in European feminist sites that are grounded in continental philosophical traditions, the 'Woman' of 'Women's Studies' does not refer to the complement of Man, but to 'a multilayered and complex subject that has taken her distance from femininity'. In their European framing, the subject of Women's Studies becomes 'the subject of quite another story, a subject-in-process, who can figure as an example of the kind of transformation Europe...[needs] to undergo' (2002: 12). Here it is a European incarnation of Women's Studies more than Gender Studies that is most closely aligned with the mission of problematizing 'woman' in dominant discourse.

At its most radical, this project disarticulates 'the feminine' from the female body, challenging the necessary correlation between the two, as suggested by the mission statement of *Les Etudes Féminines* at the University of Paris VIII, which insists that '*le féminin d'Etudes Féminines ne revoie pas nécessairement à des sujets de sexe féminin*' (Berger, 2004).²⁰ While in the United States a thorough deconstruction of 'woman' has suggested the death of Women's Studies as a discipline, then, in France, the Netherlands, and Finland, the deconstruction of 'woman' might be said to constitute the ground of that discipline.

Women's and Gender Studies spaces are resonant with these different histories and contexts. As indicated above, academic feminism in many Western contexts is increasingly international in terms of its student body, staff mobility, and syllabus content. The hierarchical valuation of academic institutions globally means that more people come to study in the UK from India, say, than vice versa. But this hierarchization is further complicated for students wanting feminist education because of the uneven nature of institutionalization of feminist work in different countries, as discussed above. Students who want to work on feminist issues will frequently have to travel to obtain specialist training or to have feminist teaching of any kind.²¹ There is a flow from North America to the UK for students wanting

specialist training in gender and development or gender and social policy at the Masters level, for example, because of the particular pattern of institutionalization in the United States. Students from Italy are likely to take up places in the Netherlands, Germany, France, or the UK because of the difficulty in obtaining recognition for interdisciplinary feminist work in the strictly disciplinary Italian system. Australian Women's and Gender Studies courses draw significantly on nearby South East Asian contexts (Magarey and Sheriden, 2002). Feminist academics, as well as students, are often forced (and sometimes choose) to relocate to follow jobs, as feminist institutes, departments, and courses open and close, or to follow their hearts or the prospect of promotion. Writing about Australian Women's Studies, indeed, Susan Magarey and Susan Sheriden note that most of the 'home-grown' feminist academics in Australia come from, or have moved, elsewhere (2002: 139–140).

Academic feminism thus truly does produce nomadic professional subjects (Braidotti, 1994). The flow of staff and students between and among these sites makes academic feminism an interesting place to be, albeit one dense with contradictions. While an international staff and student body is cause for celebration in many ways, it needs to be situated in the context of forced migration, the financial privilege of elites, and the cornering of the global student market by a few leading universities (Rizvi and Walsh, 1998). Recent wars in former Yugoslavia, for example, have forced many feminist academics to disperse to other countries, notably France and Italy. And of course it is usually only the richest students who can afford to chase qualifications across continents.²²

The increasingly international background of staff and students occupying academic feminism means that we cannot afford to reproduce Anglo-American universalization for pedagogical reasons, too. In an extremely international space like the LSE Gender Institute, meanings are negotiated *in situ* as staff and students recognize and misrecognize each other's histories and locations through the terms they use. If particular students and staff reject Women's Studies and claim Gender Studies to describe their curriculum and environment, this can only be the beginning of further investigation. A US student may claim Gender Studies in order to mark her or his interest in Queer Studies, for example, while a seemingly similar claim from an Indian student is at least as likely to mark an interest in questions of economic redistribution over cultural and political identity. When UK, Italian, and French students insist that Women's Studies be considered the proper name of their academic endeavours, they may well be marking out intellectual, disciplinary, and political locations more different than they are similar. It is these tensions and unexpected alliances that I believe need to form the fertile ground for debates about Women's and Gender Studies in order to ensure that we are not working with outdated or provincial models of academic feminist institutionalization.

AGAINST FEMINIST NOSTALGIA

Given the range of theoretical, historical, and political ways of assessing the relationship between Women's Studies and Gender Studies, the domination of the debate by clear-cut positions for or against seems difficult to account for. My suspicion is that Women's and Gender Studies are kept chronologically and politically distinct in part because of feminist intellectual biography. As I suggested at the outset of this chapter, the chronologization of these debates intersects with and relies on broader positions on the decline or regeneration of (academic) feminism. Thus, the lament at the naming of academic feminism anything other than Women's Studies frequently chimes with the conviction that this was always bound to happen. Poststructuralism, with its UK and US impetus towards Gender Studies, provides retrospective evidence in support of the suspicion that the project of academic institutionalization of feminism was apolitical all along (Ehrenreich, 1990: 176). Recent millennium special issues of interdisciplinary academic feminist journals reflecting on the past, present, and future of academic feminist endeavour are peppered with articles bemoaning the loss of feminist unity in the face of intellectual and cultural fragmentation.²³ In such a narrative, lost feminist politics is always nostalgically invoked through reference to its contemporary absence, and personal experiences of 'the declining passion for politics evident in many veteran feminists' (Segal, 2000: 19) or 'the end of the exciting feminist intellectual milieu I once moved in' (Ehrenreich, 1990: 176) are generalized as representative of feminist experience in general. The alternative position relishes poststructuralist challenges to Women's Studies, producing a rather different narrative of a move away from false unity and towards a valuation of difference (Adkins, 2004; Wiegman, 2000).

My resistance to the first narrative is that it seems unable to concede that many feminists experienced the coincidence of poststructuralism and feminism precisely as political. I was one of those feminists, coming to left-wing politics in my early twenties, reading Black and postcolonial feminist theory in the late 1980s and early 1990s, finding it shed enormous light on the problems I was experiencing making sense of Black feminist resistance to 'reclaim the night' marches. On coaches on the way to marches against violence against women, my poststructuralist comrades and I debated whether 'woman' was still a useful category of analysis in the political present. Those of us who thought it was preferred an Irigarayan perspective of 'woman' as in excess of the hom(m)osexuality we were resisting (Irigaray, 1985), while those of us who had recently been reading *Gender Trouble* argued passionately in favour of the political importance of the parodic inside (Butler, 1990). Poring over my dog-eared copy of *The Epistemology of the Closet*, I was able to make connections between previous marches against Clause 28, the Alton Bill, and the Poll Tax through Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's analysis of the heteronormativity of the public/private divide (Sedgwick, 1991). (And here I burst into song)

'Those were the days, my friends...' and lately I have been wondering in turn, following Ehrenreich, where that 'exciting poststructuralist feminist intellectual milieu I once moved in' has gone.

Historiographic critique of my own narrative is harder, of course, because it requires my accepting that my own feminist intellectual biography may not provide a satisfactory narration of what Klein termed 'the passion and the politics' (1991: 75) of academic feminism for all partaking of it, or for all time. To begin to think through my own narrative myopia here, it makes sense to start from the knowledge that my own nostalgia, and therefore conservatism, makes me passionately resistant to contemporary claims that poststructuralism failed to take account of 'the material', 'the body', 'the psyche', and so on. I bristle in the face of a current intellectual certainty that the 'linguistic turn' was or is an evacuation rather than a re-evaluation of 'the political', witnessing, it seems, my formative political experiences, friendships, passions rendered useless, immaterial, redundant. My saving grace is that this, at least, is a lesser charge than that of essentialism.

As I differentiate myself from those I claim are more doggedly attached to myths than I am (lost unity? Oh come on!), I fatally lock myself into a reductively generational chain of feminist meaning, imperative to my continued occupation of the political and intellectual high ground. Perhaps you can guess what is coming next. As Segal and Ehrenreich are in relation to me, so I, too, am over-invested in insisting that those who come 'after' me are unquestionably less political, less interested in transformation, more concerned with their own career advancement than the project of transforming gender relations. From the duped before me to the duplicitous after me, the properly deconstructive subject saves the day again. That was close; I was in danger of having to challenge my own nostalgia for a moment there.

I am struggling here to show how important it is that I *do* challenge my own nostalgia, so that histories of feminist meaning and academic feminist change do not become embarrassing reflections of individual, generational, or geographical location, with their attendant sleights of hand and moral certitude. Such histories cannot be other than linear, since they seek to position a particular subject, and not others, as the heroine of feminist theory, and they are thus resistant to a thorough examination of difference within both the past and present.

We need to start our histories of academic feminism from an assumption of difference and contest, an attention to subordinate as well as dominant knowledges in the present, to open up a range of possible futures rather than predictable outcomes. In the process, we have to accept that we do not know in advance who the authors of these futures will be, and really to believe this, rather than merely to write this here, is very hard indeed. For academic feminism, whatever its designation, to remain as current, inspiring, and useful as it has been for the last thirty years, I feel that those of us working within it need to be prepared to do at least three things. First, we must adopt a reflexive approach that openly interrogates the relationship between the histories of feminist theory that we tell and our own intellectual biographies. Nostalgia

cannot be the ground of any meaningful life, still less one committed to political and collective transformation. Second, following Braidotti, we need to become skilled in the science of 'cultural translation' (2002: 302) in order to negotiate with precision and familiarity the linguistic, geographical, and cultural contexts that make up a contemporary academic feminist terrain. I see this method as a workable challenge to the spatially and temporally locked perspectives I have been addressing throughout this chapter. Third, and as I hope I have begun to do here, we should foreground the painstaking work of mapping and evaluating the specific conflicts and insights produced by many years of academic institutionalization of feminist research and pedagogy. Only then can academic feminist strategies for change, not only answerable to an imagined political outside but internally viable, be sustained.

NOTES

1 The aspect of consumer culture Skeggs is referring to here is the student demand to be taught from a perspective reflecting their existing convictions. Skeggs identifies the ways in which this 'demand' can lead to tensions between feminist staff and postfeminist students, and indeed this tension has scarcely been eased by the introduction of fees for UK higher education.

2 Joanna de Groot terms this familiar situation the alienated labour of academic feminists (1997).

3 Different people might want to anthropomorphize academic feminism in different ways – woman, queer, androgyne, man, exile? – or indeed not anthropomorphize it at all – cyborg, monster?

4 This partiality reflects the proliferation of work on the development of the interdisciplinary arena of Women's and Gender Studies. As Marilyn Boxer notes, in her account of that development in a US context, it is no longer possible to read everything that has been published on the subject (2003: xvii). It also reflects my knowledge about predominantly Western feminist contexts of institutionalization.

5 The SIGMA report on Women's Studies provided detailed information on Women's Studies teaching and research in universities and colleges across Europe. It made recommendations for a combined European strategy for improving Women's Studies educational provision. See <http://women-www.uia.ac.be/women/sigma/index.html>.

6 A clear exception to either position is Wendy Brown's call for feminist academics to 'return' to disciplinary engagement (1997). Her argument is that Women's Studies itself is not viable in an era of deconstruction of identity categories, however, rather than an endorsement of one or other side of an autonomy versus integration debate.

7 To give just a few examples, the Women's Education, Research and Resource Centre (WERRC) at University College, Dublin (est. 1983), and the Belgrade Women's Studies Center in Serbia and Montenegro (est. 1992) provide a range of open-access courses and maintain strong community links. See <http://www.ucd.ie/werrc/> and <http://www.zenskestudie.edu.yu/> respectively. The Anveshi Research Centre for Women's Studies in India (Jain and Rajput, 2003) and the Institute for Women's and Gender Studies at the American University in Cairo (Altorki, 2000) both prioritize activist, community, and voluntary sector links in their educational provision.

8 The context for this route is now increasingly international, as suggested by the popularity of courses and degrees in gender and development, a shift in emphasis that underscores the importance of and demand for global perspectives in feminist pedagogy more broadly.

9 In 2003 there were only ten graduate degree-awarding Women's or Gender Studies departments or centres in the United States, as compared to hundreds of undergraduate major and minor concentrations in Women's or Gender Studies (Boxer, 2003).

10 This is a particular problem in contexts where supervision of doctoral students is dependent upon a supervisor having the appropriate certification that only comes with very high levels of seniority (Barazzetti and Leone, 2003), producing a self-perpetuating cycle of exclusion and marginalization.

11 Susan Faludi most famously identified this cultural trend as a 'backlash' (1992). The success of the 'backlash' is the widespread belief that men and women now have equality, despite overwhelming evidence to the contrary (Whelehan, 2000).

12 The RAE is the national evaluation of academic research output that determines the research money allocated to each department. It takes place every six to seven years, when four pieces of published research per individual are graded and an overall departmental grade established. The exercise is enormously divisive in that it mitigates against projects that take considerable time to set up (Lewis, 2000), creates a counter-productive culture of competition (Knights and Richards, 2003), results in conservative, mainstream work over innovation (Lee and Harley, 1998), and subjects interdisciplinary work to disciplinary evaluation. While 'allowance' is made for maternity or other forms of necessary leave within the exercise, anyone on the job market without the requisite four in the lead-up to the exercise is at a considerable disadvantage.

13 While the sociology draft guidelines assure concerned researchers that interdisciplinary gender research will be evaluated by a sub-panel of experts, Women's and Gender Studies as an independent field of inquiry has been effectively undermined in this assessment process.

14 The Bologna Declaration aims to harmonize divergent EU higher education systems, creating Europe-wide co-operation and competition. It heralds the introduction of a 3 + 1/2 system – three-year BA courses followed by one- or two-year Masters programmes (Barazzetti and Leone, 2003: 17–18).

15 An integration approach at this point in time and space would thus be disastrous for many European Gender and Women's Studies contexts, since it is precisely the most developed independent programmes that are attracting this international student body, filling the niche not offered elsewhere.

16 Individual courses and the very occasional institute might use the term 'feminist'.

17 Both claims rather dangerously reinforce the broader cultural and institutional conviction that feminism has had its day.

18 Anastasia Posadskaya makes this argument in relation to Russia (1994), Theodossia-Soula Pavlidou in relation to Greece (2000), and Eva Bahovec in relation to Slovenia (2000).

19 The critiques of gender and development are many and varied, but as someone outside the field of Development Studies, I have found the collections by the following authors very helpful: Kum-Kum Bhavnani, John Foran, and Priya Kurian (2003); Rosi Braidotti, Ewa Charkiewicz, Sabine Hausler, and Saskia Wieringa (1994); Inderpal Grewal and Caren Kaplan (1994); and Marianne Marchand and Jane Parpart (1995).

20 Translation: 'the feminine of Feminine Studies does not necessarily refer back to those subjects sexed female'.

21 From its inception, the Athena network of European Women's Studies has focused on the facilitation of student movement within Europe. This focus recognizes the uneven development of opportunities for feminist research and pedagogy across European sites, and represents the desire to make feminist research and pedagogy more accountable to the specificities of a broad range of contexts (Griffin and Braidotti, 2002).

22 It is important to note that this situation similarly advantages academics and students without dependants or caring responsibilities.

23 These special editions include the following: (1999) 'Snakes and Ladders: Reviewing Feminisms at Century's End', *Feminist Review*, 61; (2000) 'Feminisms at a Millennium', *Signs*, 25(4); and (2000) 'At the Millenium: Interrogating Gender', *Women: a Cultural*

Review, 11(1–2). For a discussion of the specific techniques used to create and sustain these narratives see Clare Hemmings (2005). More examples are integrated into my discussion as a whole, but see also Susan Gubar (1998; 1999), Martha Nussbaum (1999), and Sylvia Walby (2000).

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