

Found Object

ISSN 1082-7552

Found Object is a bi-annual publication of The Center for Cultural Studies. Found

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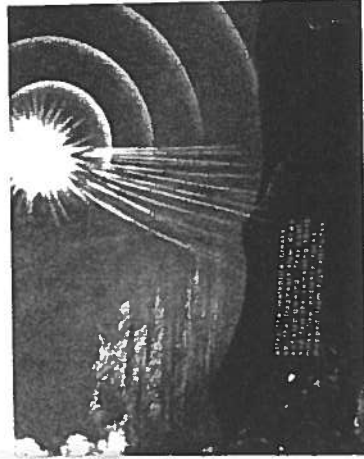
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25. I wish to acknowledge here Nancy Miller's formulation, one shared many years ago with me in a conversation, and one that has sustained me well during long battles with the right wing over the past couple of years.
26. Virginia Carmichael, *Framing History: The Rosenberg Story and the Cold War* (Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1993) xi-xiii.
27. I owe many of my first insights into the connections between postmodernism and the Rosenberg events to conversations with Jenn Meeropol, whose Harvard senior honors thesis remains the most up-to-date and succinctly accurate account of the Rosenberg trial I have seen: see Jennifer Meeropol, "The Framings of Ethel Rosenberg: Gender, Law, Politics, and Culture in Cold War America" (senior essay, Harvard University, 1994).
28. A public opinion survey quoted by Ilene Philipson, *Ethel Rosenberg: Beyond the Myths* (New York: Franklin Watts, 1988) 69.
29. What follows is a compilation and summation of what has been verified according to many different sources on the trial. See, for example (in order of publication): John Wexley, *The Judgment of Julius and Ethel Rosenberg* (New York: Cameron and Kahn, 1955); Walter Schneir and Miriam Schneir, *Invitation to an Inquest: A Near Look at the Rosenberg-Sobell Case* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1965); Robert Meeropol and Michael Meeropol, *We Are Your Sons: The Legacy of Ethel and Julius Rosenberg* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1975); and Ronald Radosh and Joyce Milton, *The Rosenberg File: A Search for the Truth* (New York: Holt, 1983). See also Jennifer Meeropol.
30. Schneir and Schneir 402.
31. For the definitive analysis of the most famous piece of evidence in the Rosenberg trial—the Jell-O box—see Marjorie Garber's essay in this volume.
32. One of the more bizarre instances of this "borderlanding" would have to be E. L. Doctorow's *The Book of Daniel* (New York: Vintage, 1971).
33. The Broadway smash hit *Angels in America* brought some of the more postmodern aspects of Roy Cohn's persona to life. For the details, see, for example, Sidney Zion, *The Autobiography of Roy Cohn* (Secaucus, NJ: Lyle Stuart, 1988), and Nicholas von Hoffman, *Citizen Cohn* (New York: Doubleday, 1988).
34. See the *Boston Globe* (11 Aug. 1993) 65, and the *Wall Street Journal* (26 Aug. 1993).
35. Hal Foster, "Postmodernism: A Preface," *The Anti-Aesthetic: Essays on Postmodern Culture* (Port Townsend, WA: Bay Press, 1983) xii.
36. For this insight into the relationship between technology and fascism, I am once again indebted to Clive Smith.
37. See, for example, Messer-Davidow.
38. "The sky above the port was the color of television, tuned to a dead channel" is the first line of William Gibson's cyberpunk classic *Neuromancer* (New York: Ace, 1984) 3.

GENERATIONS OF FEMINISTS, OR, IS THERE LIFE AFTER POST- MODERNISM?'

Rosi Braidotti

INTRODUCTION

It's strange how quickly one ages within feminism; here I am: barely 40, still sexually active but having to represent the "older" generation—how did this happen?

An academic symposium is a shared public space. It requires as a basic precondition the recognition of equality and of a commonality of vision. In my experience as a feminist, these qualitative criteria tend to cut across established boundaries of age and rest instead upon a deep sense of political affinity. Thus, I can only enter into this discussion with my colleagues and especially with the graduate students because, in spite of my chronological anteriority, I never think of them as "young" (not to mention the fact that I simply hate to think of myself as old).

A great deal of feminist and post-feminist ink has been spilled of late about the alleged "third wave," and the specific profile of what Naomi Wolf insists on calling, with evident narcissistic glee, "the younger feminists." I am well aware that "youth," in these postindustrial times, designates a powerful economic and cultural entity, which supports on its own most of the popular music, entertainment, and casual-wear markets. Precisely because of this sociological overload, however, I am very reluctant to take "youth" as a feminist political category *per se*.

Moreover, there is still a sense in which the baby-boomers determine taste and fashion through their sheer purchasing power. The same can be said of their power to set and control intellectual agendas. As one of my graduate students put it: "Now that you're all getting older, aging and menopause become feminist issues." I would also add to that list: nostalgia and the anxiety of influence.

I think one of the most persistent problems the women's movement has had since the predictable and merciful end of the mass demonstrations of the 1970s is how to ensure the

Let me qualify this right away and re-assure you that I do not intend to take the slippery—or should I say mucous—path of Carol Gilligan's "maternal ethics of care."

As a viewer of the *Alien* trilogy, I find such theories of maternal power quite unconvincing, especially if you read them against the cosmic duel of Sigourney Weaver against the spaceship computer, called—guess what?—MOTHER.

This scene has been read, notably by Barbara Creed, as the clash of titanic forces that oppose the archaic mother (which Kristeva has nightmares about, the all-powerful container of death and life) to the feminist daughter who does the right thing: she gives up biblical procreation and adopts a baby girl instead.² I think I will propose this script to the *V* Girls, for a sketch called: "Postfeminists in Outer-Space."

In other words, do not mistake my defense of the usefulness of the mother-daughter couple as a political paradigm for a romantic vision of the maternal. We, the riot girls, who have been persecuted, hassled, and repressed by Big Mama all our life; we who had to fight Mama off our backs and chase her out of the dark recesses of our psyche, we have quite a different story to tell. Virginia Woolf's famous injunction that the creative woman needs to kill "the angel in the house" that inhabits the most ancient layers of her identity is quite relevant. It is the image of the caring, nurturing, self-sacrificing soft female that stands in the way of self-realization. Women cannot be expected to share easily in the fantasy of a return to the Matrix; if anything, we want out of it and fast. The anger that follows from this struggle has even pushed some of us to enact, in our real everyday life, mum's worst fears about just how obnoxious women can be. As Bette Midler, put it: "I'm everything you were afraid your little girl would grow up to be—and your little boy!"

The point I wish to make here is that not all feminists are dutiful daughters, who either execute Mum's will—pursuing the modernist project of empowering females against all Thatcherite odds—or alternatively, give in to mourning the decline of the paternal metaphor and the crisis of the nation-state, thus getting lost in postmodern melancholia.

Considering these options, I actually feel closer to the mixture of anger and ego-defeating irony that marks so much of contemporary popular culture. That of the riot girls, which I could paraphrase—somewhat provocatively—as follows: there is a war going on out there and women did not start it. We are not naturally pacifists, we are neither Cassandras nor Antigones. We are the guerrilla girls, we're the riot girls, we want to resist but we also want to have fun. We women want our imaginary, we want our own projected selves, we want to design the world in our own glorious image. It is time for the unholy alliance with Dionysian forces; time for the female death-force to express itself, but in expressing itself also to move towards workable networks of translation into socially livable modes of behaviour. It is time for history and the female unconscious to strike up a new deal.

transmission and the continuity of its political and intellectual heritage, knowing that this rests mostly on the critique of power differentials such as age, class, whiteness, and heterosexuality. In the 1960s, the rule was not to trust anybody over the age of 30. As the leaders of the student movement grew older, however, this belief was amended and replaced with a more realistic appraisal of the need for continuity. Maybe experience also taught us that blind faith in the wisdom of youth had its limitations.

One other reason why "youth" lost some of its intrinsic political appeal for me is that I see feminism, as most cultural revolutions, as a utopian or transformative movement. It is a tale full of hope and promise and, like all tales, it requires good story-tellers. I have met among the feminists some of the greatest narrators of all times; I could listen for hours to Kate Stimpson telling the story of how *Sigis* was started; I hang on Marcelle Marini's lips, as she tells of the day Monique Wittig and Christine Delphy fell out, or how Marguerite Duras was before *L'Amant* made her unnecessarily famous. Their stories trace the web of an invisible, oral tradition of women's struggle, which inspires me and makes me feel I belong to a genealogical line of fighters and dreamers. You get nowhere in life without powerful identifications: women who have lived more intensely (which usually means longer than I) can offer this sort of inspiration.

I am not arguing here for fairy godmothers telling "younger" feminists bed-time stories of the great revolution that was. What I really want to put on the table is less the issue of age differences among women than the question of power. I think it is power-relations among women that erect (sic) distinctions of age, class, education, ethnicity, and sexual choices into divisive differences. I am using power in the negative sense of *potestas*, as a restrictive and confining notion; let us remember, however, that power has also a positive, empowering charge (*potentia*) which Nietzsche and all the neo-Nietzschean philosophers, such as Foucault, never fail to emphasize. But this is beside the point here.

The mother-daughter metaphor has been evoked by visible and usually more established feminists to describe a situation of powerful differentials among women. Defended by thinkers as different as Adrienne Rich and Luce Irigaray, alternatively expanded and critiqued by leading theorists such as Marianne Hirsch and Donna Stanton, the mother-daughter nexus has reached the status of a political paradigm. As such it fulfills two crucial functions: firstly, it points to a specific type of woman-to-woman bonding. Secondly, it spells the conditions of negativity and violence that are specific to that type of bonding. It is precisely on these two accounts that I wish to defend it as a very adequate political metaphor.

We are sick of the death squads of the phallos with their essential accessories—abstract masculinity, iconic femininity, racism, and violence. We want out, so Mum, get off my spaceship!

THE FEMINIST DEATH-DRIVE AND THE THEORY WARS

In my understanding, the Oedipal relationship is a strong political metaphor that Freud uses to describe inter-generational power conflicts over ownership, property, status, and sexual freedom. I am perfectly aware of the limitations of Freudian metapsychology and of the extent to which it is embedded in patriarchal premises,³ yet I know of no better term to symbolize the infernal weaving together of the axes which, as a feminist, I am committed to fighting against: the imbrication of class, status and decision-making power with older, whiter, straighter men. The Oedipal plot is nothing else than male ownership of the material and symbolic sources of wealth.

I do admit that it is symptomatic of our symbolic poverty as women that we can think of no better political myth to describe the occurrence of this problem among our rank and file. In this respect, speaking of a female feminist Oedipal plot may appear a poor copy of an old patriarchal tale. Nevertheless, I would defend this as the only apt meta-narrative that can help us analyze what happens among women in situations where power leads to divisive differences.

I think it would be unrealistic to deny that feminism has produced its own forms of power, its founding myths, its "main enemies" and immortal heroines. We are not short of story-tellers: what we need now are adequate meta-narratives to account for how women deal with power, how they use it for and against each other and how power relations clash with accountability and commitment to our gender. What is Oedipal about feminism today is the tendency to let the great vertical divides that we questioned in the 1960s become sources of horizontal divisions amongst ourselves.

Needless to say, institutionalized settings only exacerbate this. Institutions are imaginary constructions, based on that great propeller of human energy, the immortal couple that structures all human achievement: narcissism and paranoia. Without them, we are nothing! How to live with them, however, is the question, the political economy of which, we still have to face up to.

Being a university woman, I am painfully aware of this fact. Once again, the first point that comes to mind is how difficult it is, in an institutional setting, to compensate for the symbolic poverty of our gender. Let me give you an example that always makes me want to cry with rage: you may know that the root of the word "pedagogy" is the Greek word for "young boy": it's about the training of young boys. To say that higher education was not programmed for women is the understatement of all times.

So is it banal to stress that our practices are caught in a dead symmetry? The transmission of academic knowledge, a feminist teacher is caught in a double bind: she must instill in her students the sacred flame of the desire for knowledge, while, at the same time, making them critical of the male/ethno/hetero/centered nature of that very knowledge. It is a position of simultaneous appraisal and critique.

I do believe, however, that there are ways to deal with the many "theory wars" and other forms of horizontal violence that are taking place among feminists these days. The immortal couple narcissism and paranoia can provide a useful starting point.

After all, we all know that academic debates are often so very bitter because the stakes are so low; while we fill our time with academic disputes over essentialism and the mother-daughter metaphors, our political opponents are waging national campaigns against intellectuals and the autonomy of the universities. This is a way of saying that we should take our war-mongering a little more seriously as an object of intellectual inquiry. I propose that we include the female feminist death-wish as one of the great unexplored continents of the feminist project.

I think feminism tends to be an oppositional culture, that is to say a culture that encourages reactive, envy-prone affects. As Wendy Brown points out in her defense of a Nietzschean master-morality for feminism, the moral slave of Nietzsche's theory embraces any idea as long as it is indexed on the desire to humiliate and offend. A slave mentality aims at undermining the affirmative power of *any* subject, but it is especially pernicious in its denial of the affirmation of a subject position for embodied females of all sexual identities, ethnicities, and races.

STEPS TOWARDS FEMINISM AS AN AFFIRMATIVE POLITICAL PASSION

In other words, to return to the issue of "horizontal violence," one of the keys to the understanding of the "theory war" is not the propositional content of the theories themselves, but rather the kind of passions and intensities that are invested in them. Following the Deleuzian rereading of Spinoza's *conatus*, I do think that the truth of any idea rests in the affectivity of the passions that sustain them and as a result become unspoken. Desire is that which remains unthought at the heart of our thought because it is that which makes all thinking possible. As the pre-condition for speaking at all, desire is that which cannot be spoken. It is a sort of pre-discursive foundation.

In my pessimistic moment I think that male theorists, especially within post-structuralism, have been more eloquent about the violence and the rivalry that are implied in the exercise of discursive power, than feminists. Could it be that male theorists have been able to unveil the sub-text of fear and desire, paranoia and vision, violence and love, which accompanies the theoretical process? Could it be that postmodernity has made visible the

male death drive, and has held men accountable for it, whereas for women that road is still blocked?

In this respect, I have found in my practice that one of the ways out of the negativity and violence of the Oedipal plot is to lean on the more creative and less reactive aspects of my feminist consciousness. Resting on the sense of a feminist genealogy in the mode and mood of the riot girls I mentioned earlier, feminism can be turned into a source of strength and inspiration. It is, literally, an-other story, which does not assume a young boy at the center of the world of knowledge, but rather women in all their intensity and variety.

There is ample evidence, however, that the solution to theoretical problems and to the "theory wars" may lay outside the professional theoretical domain itself, and that the tenured theorists themselves may not be much help at all. Other kinds of practices may be infinitely more effective in driving the point home. Given that the central issue at stake is that we need to move out of the oppositional, reactive pattern of interaction that governs intellectual practice, we may want to start considering that the academy may not be able to provide its own solutions. As bell hooks never ceases to remind us, other kinds of practices may come in handy at a time like this. Artists, grass-root organizers, administrators, and even politicians may be in a better position to help rather than the professional theorists themselves.

My private quarrel in this respect is against the unwarranted discursive power that seems to be granted to "philosopher queens" within the many "theory wars" that periodically rage within our world. Speaking as a woman who was trained in philosophy, I also know that it took me years of consciousness-raising and of psychoanalytic training to cleanse myself of the syndrome of the masterful figure and of the intense seduction that is associated with it.

This image of the masterful mind combines the key elements of power in its twin characteristics of traditional oppression and of productive empowerment. Because of that, this image acts as a reflector which amplifies the elements of narcissism and paranoia which, as I argued earlier, lie at the heart of institutions. All this combines in charging the image of the feminist theorist with explosive elements, such as the omniscient, omnivorous, and highly seductive power of "she who knows and she who has the power." I see the spectre of Big Mama rising again, in a monstrous return of the abject: the archaic power of older woman over younger woman and the infinite seduction and bottomless hatred that simultaneously accompany it.

It strikes me as not only paradoxical, but also as cruel that this pernicious and disqualified fantasy should be reactivated in the feminist movement itself.

As somebody that was raised in the desire and the admiration for philosophical discourse, I have no resistance to recognizing that philosophy is for me a libidinal object. But this does not make me any less critical of the position of imaginary power and seduction that philosophers are allowed to and even called upon to exercise, even and especially in the feminist community.

As women whose intellectual passions are caught up with the movement of feminist theory, no position to assess what the impact of feminist philosophical discourse may be upon other women. I think it is much more formidable and contradictory than any of the protagonists would like to admit.

Acknowledging this fact could mark the beginning of a genealogical project of deconstruction of our theoretical quarrels along sensible and accountable axes, such as disciplinary traditions. For instance, I am extremely interested in trying to account for the role of feminist philosophers in the construction of some prominent theoretical debates in American feminism. You seem to take it as a matter of fact that there has been a changing of the guard from literary critics to the philosophers' circle. I think that is absolutely true, especially in the relaying of French feminist theories. But how would we go about assessing the implications of this?

I guess I am stating this as an eye-witness, i.e. someone who watched the marketing of French ideas into the American publishing and academic market, with a mixture of fear and excitement. You may remember that Jane Weinstock and I wrote a very critical review of that big marketing job that is the Marks/de Courtivron anthology, *New French Feminisms*. I believed very firmly and still do that this anthology failed to contextualize socially and politically the remarkable texts which it made available to the English-speaking audience. This disrespect for the political context is the worst aspect of the early reception of French feminism in the U.S., and I do not think this is the responsibility of the literary critics who have the merit of having introduced these ideas.

The truth of the matter is that these feminist ideas are philosophical and are rooted in some of the most complex and contradictory moments in European philosophy. I personally can only welcome the take-over of this debate by feminists who are trained in the continental traditions. Their work alone would testify to the high standards of the theoretical debate on these issues.

I do worry however, about the effects of this transition from one discipline, the literary, to another, the philosophical, in the relaying of French theories. In some cases the specific kind of sensibility that made French feminism possible, especially the aesthetic one, gets dissipated in favor of over-emphasis on the propositional content of the concepts supported by the French feminists.

This is another way of saying that attention to language, to the aesthetic component of the epistemological claims is very important. Like Irigaray I would speak of a basic epistemophilic drive in feminist theory, which needs to be respected at all costs. To think that English-speaking feminism should be approaching French feminist theorists without taking as much as a minute to reflect about what it means to do theory in translation seems to me incredible. I think there is much that philosophers should learn from literary critics who really launched the French feminist trend in the U.S. Of these, I am especially indebted to Nancy Miller, whose wit and great knowledge of the French cultural context I admire greatly.

By comparison, the philosophers strike a paltry collective figure: I remember the great sadness I felt at reading the special issue of *Hypatia* on French feminism. I could not understand why so many German critical theorists had been called upon to attack the French theorists. I mean, every Continental philosopher is aware of the deep antinomy that exists between German and French critical theorists, so why would the leading American feminist philosophical journal hand over to Habermassians the making of an issue on French philosophy? I really could not understand it. The statements that appear in such an issue did make me miss the much subtler accounts of the French feminist agenda by some of the literary critics, who at least spoke enough French to do justice to the complexity of the texts involved.

It seems to me in other words that we need a reflection on the discursive power of the different disciplines in the construction and the commercial marketing of certain Europe-based feminist theories.

One way of solving this may be to work seriously towards a typology of feminist positions/positions within feminist theory, with a mixture of honesty and that most ethical of all attributes: a sense of humour! I think it is time we all own up to the fact that the race for theory is over-determined by a multiplicity of non-theoretical and pre-theoretical factors that make it imperative for feminists to destabilize the very image they are called upon to uphold and to fulfill. It is time to speak of the seductive powers of theory-making and of its deadly bite as well. I am saying this especially with respect to the United States of America. I know of no social or academic system that burns out and consumes its bright and most promising intellectuals faster and more effectively than the American. The American system will use you to death, burning you out through that most pernicious and most successful of all means: flattery, i.e. over-exposure. And after they have used you, they will throw you and yours out like an unwanted entity.

It may be easier and somewhat more ethical, in this regard, for the women who are less caught in the institutionalized setting to question the relevance of the mother-daughter Oedipal plot. As a full professor and director of programs, I think it would be irresponsible on my part to deny the power I exercise and the responsibilities which it entails. I guess this is another way of betraying my '60s bias and stating that, after all, "youth" is a higher ethical category.

Rosi Braidotti is the author of *Nomadic Subjects*.

1. An earlier draft of this text was written in response to a paper by Christien Franken and published in the Dutch journal *Lofèr*.
2. Barbara Creed, *The Monstrous Feminine* (London and New York: Routledge, 1994).
3. As a matter of fact, I have had the opportunity to discuss the validity of the Freudian Oedipal political mythology with a graduate student from Cornell University, Trevor Hope. Our written exchange is forthcoming in the next issue of the journal *differences*.

I woke up this morning and tried to feel postmodern—decentered, discontented, always already out there. Tossing aside the real and the referential, I dragged my gender drag from its deeply disordered closet, munching my psycho-cybernetic cereal. It worked (for a minute anyway), and I have to admit, I was mighty relieved. After all, this is my generation, born into the age of virtual simu/stimulation, too lax to learn the history passed down by our elders, and too late for any memory of a time outside.

Only trouble is, if we're the generation who can't (or won't) believe anything we're told, I'm not sure why I have to live up to this. Especially since it isn't clear who's doing the naming, beyond certain remote voices out of my control. It's not that I completely disagree with the characterization, either of the age, or my position in it. It's more a question of whether postmodern has to define me as a feminist, and, if so, what to make of the retro reactions I'm having to what's been said this afternoon.

In short, I find myself in embarrassing agreement, particularly with the call to hear certain things discussed I know I'm supposed to have an altered sense of narrative, so how can I explain that what I want as a feminist now is a sense of the story so far? And that, yes, I still want the possibility of a new deep structure, recognizing, however grudgingly, what the Greeks got right, while moving toward that moment of post-Oedipal complexity.

I, too, want to talk about what happens between feminist generation. How does it feel to you to tell a story when its subject (the Rosenberg trial, the rise of the massive right in the '50s) is and can only be a story, to those of us with no living memory of the events? How does it feel for us to be cast as resistant listeners, falling somehow short of the expected response? How does it feel to you to stand for certain decades that all of pop culture claims to understand? How does it feel to us to be the generation described as X or cipher, ever-overshadowed by those just ahead? I want to talk about what's invested in defining ourselves against each other—me as alien baby kicking at the mother ship, you as power pilot who won't give up the controls.

I'm grateful to Rosi Braidotti for bringing up narcissism and paranoia. Though I agree that their reign isn't only over feminists, we all know how those words can get exchanged. What you call our narcissism ("who cares about history!") and we your paranoia ("everything we worked for coming to an end"), or we your narcissism ("have they noticed we're in power?") and you our paranoia ("she'll never help me get that job!"). Raised with faith in the power of negative thinking, I don't mind a little healthy gripe and snipe.

As long as we don't get stuck there. For having said all that, I find myself once more rebelling against the tidy categories I've just set up. There's not one "you" or a uni-

form "us." Not only are there more than two generations, such a split doesn't take into account the many overlaps that happen: the loyalties, defiances, and plain vagaries of feeling that break down or complicate any cohort. After all, it's part of what I came to feminism for—the promise of leeway, and the tools to help take too-tight categories apart.

Especially those feminism hasn't set up. It's all too easy, as I found, to get caught in characterizations that the media's over-eager pundits provide. If we are going to use them, let's at least switch them around, so anyone can be a riot grrrl and everyone can confess near-maternal pride in the stories we exchange and the work we talk back to—sometimes civilly, sometimes not.

As for other antidotes, I like the combination of a sense of history and a sense of humor, offered by our speakers earlier today. And Alice Jardine's new "transmodern" model is one I'd like to think can apply to generations, as we move from our bi-polar positions to a more coalitional configuration.

Finally, I don't think any of us want the only conversation between the generations to be the one about generations. We all have concerns, as women, in this moment, that go beyond this conversation and this room. For as those riot grrrls said, there's a war going on, one that neither starts nor ends here. And we all have reason—ex-post-moderns included—to join together in the fight.

A RESPONSE ADRIANA VELEZ

Despite what I may say in my response, I am glad that there are many generations of feminists, and that, at least during an idealistic moment, we are each other's allies. Though youth has been the privileged location of revolution, youth's revolutionary power now gets dismissed by a mass-marketed campaign of the so-called slacker, apathetic generation. Nevertheless, the de-glorification of youth seems like baby boomer affirmation at the expense of twenty-somethings.

My cultural experience has been a glamorization of nostalgia from *Graze* and '50s dress-up days in elementary school, to my Beatles obsession in high school, to bell-bottoms in *Pulp Fiction*. I perceive a whole range of perpetuation and parody of stylized cultural markers. Meanwhile what '90s cultural markers we whip up in our envy are sound-bite sized: Lollapalooza, Kurt Cobain's death, schoolhouse rock, and the mini-gates. These markers cannot compete with the nostalgia created through the hindsight and illusion previous generations take for granted.

As a high school student who romanticized the late 1960s, I got the impression that the big battle was the kids against the adults, the status quo, and the military.

Now that the connections between corporate America and the government have become all too clear, now that we expect deception from the media and from politicians, wars are displayed for the casual viewer as video games, and the hippies have gone corporate themselves, I often feel powerless, frustrated, and cynical—and I wonder if the myths about my generation are true for a good reason. I want to quit and live up in a cave somewhere in a secluded region of my home state Colorado, safe from incriminating jello boxes and right-wing backlash.

I have decided that I am suffering from postmodern frustration and anger caused by the ubiquitous nature of my target. Am I frustrated by previous generations in general? Specific professors, writers, and administrators? The tradition of youth usurping and trashing their elders? Myself? Financial powers that force us to compete for resources? Corporate America?

I sometimes feel like a disobedient child who wants to do feminism in opposition to what I perceive as institutionally established feminists. On the other hand, I still feel desperately dependent upon previous generations of feminists for knowledge and methods. After all as a brand-new graduate student, I still have much to learn. If only I could pick other women's brains without being violent, or being a suck-up or overdemanding of their time. If only I could distance myself from my envy.

The media has convinced my generation that the work has been done and that any other fuses contemporary feminists make are just regressive, opportunistic, whiny and man-hating. I don't want to join the disaffected and conservatively funded ranks of Katie Roiphe and Co. I want to define feminism on my own terms, building from feminist transmission and continuity. I want to enjoy the fun of Riot Grrrls politics and still take it seriously. I feel we're in a moment in which the "powers" that attempt to banish feminism, by co-opting it as a status quo maintain force, are the very same powers which illustrate how much we still need feminism.

In the research I've done so far, I have found a great reluctance on the part of older feminists to discuss generational differences as a significant category within feminism. One the one hand, generational differences may be a manifestation of the greater category of power relations within feminism. On the other hand, power relations may be only a part of the category of generational differences. However, I still feel that because of the specific difficulties between generations of feminists, this structure still deserves specific attention. And I'm glad that we're having this forum—an institutionally arranged arena for dialogue between generations.

I think it's up to us to find new methods of keeping the wheel rolling, to keep what the previous generation has taught us. We must discuss generational differences and postmodern discontent within feminism in order to create applicable methods of transmission.

A RESPONSE
MARGARET GEORGE

The connection between feminism, which has never been a single, uniform movement or set of ideas, and "generations," which are equally hard to define and delimit, has been difficult for me to grasp. Feminism can mean radically different things to the women who identify themselves as feminists; no single definition has ever served adequately for all women. Generations are loosely constructed cultural and historical categories; they acquire meaning mainly in retrospect, but also while they are being formed, as their members "come of age." The problem of understanding both these terms complicates the question of what feminism means to women of different generations, and how it gets "passed down" from one generation to the next.

I want to question the usefulness of the generational model for feminism. I'm struck by the fact that the word "generation" was originally defined in terms of procreation, specifically the difference in time between the birth of a woman's first child and that of her daughter's. I wonder whether, through demographic changes and the fact that fewer women may choose to have children, "generations" according to this definition will be smaller, less cohesive, or more sporadic in the future. In some communities, it's not unusual to find grandmothers in their thirties, whereas educated, professional women, those who decide to have children, seem to be having them later in life than in the past. So it's no longer a given that a particular generation will reproduce itself after about 25 years. I think we have to question whether the generational model, which relies so heavily on reproduction, specifically mother-daughter reproduction, will be useful for feminism in the future. Moreover, we tend to overlook other kinds of difference, like race and class, when we talk about generations.

For the generation of feminists that preceded my own, it is no exaggeration to say that there were no institutional "mothers." For the women of my generation, it is a different story. The women who have taught me about feminism, its history, and its importance are the same women from whom I want approval and recognition. On some level, I associate feminist ideology with authority, specifically female or maternal authority. (This has become such a powerful theme for all of us: longing for approval from a mother figure, but never quite getting it.) In other words, women grad students who are roughly my age have learned about feminism, which concerns itself in part with questioning structures of authority, from authority figures. This makes the transmission and exchange of ideas very complicated.

My problem with generational transmission is that it places younger feminists in a passive, subordinate position: this model suggests that we tend to receive and accept the ideas and the history that are bequeathed to us without having an active role in

their formation. Younger feminists, it seems to me, must find a way to assume more responsibility for the feminist traditions they embrace. The difficulty will be in discovering feminism for ourselves without losing its history.

A RESPONSE
REBECCA DAKIN QUINN

Nostalgia—in Greek, the sickness born of the desire to return home—seems particularly relevant to the current postmodern moment of discontent, especially in the context of generational differences within feminism. While we all know what the New(t) Right is nostalgic for, the question of transgenerational feminist longing is much more interesting, and paradoxically, its exploration may even enable us to chart new, more productive courses for the future.

I yearn for the spirit of community and endless possibility that I associate, nostalgically enough, with the late '60s and early '70s. Part of the reason for my romanticized notion of this period is the power of the feminist narratives—discussed by Rosi Braidotti—that have been passed along to my generation. Like her, I love the stories, and I love the storytellers, even those I don't know. Consequently, I suffer from a feeling of belatedness, of having been born too late to be an actor in the drama. But if I can't physically return to that historical moment, the Oedipal drama is eminently available to transport me there psychically: I can long for my (feminist) mother(s). Like Oedipus, I can return home from my exile and, of course, as the story goes, realize too late that I haven't read the story carefully enough. My sphinx riddles me with the question, and I answer, "Woman," when the correct response is obviously "Man." I want therefore to leave this Oedipal triangle behind while simultaneously acknowledging its seductive powers and its dangerous inadequacies. I came to academic feminism during the reign of post-structuralism. Unlike some others who experienced the illusory but exhilarating conjunction of structuralist analysis and the birth of feminist criticism, for me, everything was always already deconstructed. So, with the exuberance of youth (more of spirit than of age, I hope), I want to play in the postmodern rubble, to create a pastiche of our stories in an ever-shifting kaleidoscopic narrative. I want to revel in my postmodern condition and experience the pleasures of free-play and indeterminacy. If I can't feel "at home" in the '90s, I want at least to be able to "play house" in the '60s and '70s, and imagine that my feminist genealogy carries the best of those times within me in the trajectory of my own story.

Yet as Alice Jardine has pointed out, techno-cyberculture, with its virtual realities and simulacra, can often create some frightening effects in the real material world. Still, I am inclined to see what she characterizes as the "haunting of the '90s by the

'50s" not as a haunting, but as a hangover, of the '80s. As I surf the Internet, all around me I see signs that the Left is alive and well and living in Cyberspace. In fact, just recently many e-mail lists have been circulating a message from Hélène Cixous, asking for support as the French government attempts to eliminate Etudes Féminines from Paris VIII. I predict that this repressive initiative will fail by the time all the faxes against it roll in. Technology, while it raises the stakes and demands vigilance, can also be the means of an effective postmodern practice of resistance.

Am I home yet? Home is the place where there's space: space to be and to think, to speak and to listen and be listened to. Home is nomadic; it's never the same place twice, but it's the difference that makes it worth wanting to go back to again and again. I started off nostalgic, but home is here and now. Perhaps home, for us, could be provisionally defined as any location where two or more feminists intersect across their differences, generational or otherwise. Despite the power differentials that institutions enforce among their junior and senior members, differences that are exacerbated by the scarcity of resources we are compelled to compete for, I will nostalgically continue to believe that we will negotiate ways to remain first and foremost a community, not of mothers and daughters, but of teachers, students, colleagues, and perhaps even friends.

Postmodernism & its Discontents Gender and Generations

Friday, March 31, 1995

Nancy K. Miller: Alice and Rosi, do either of you want to comment quickly on these presentations? Then we'll have a general discussion.

Alice Jardine: Just an anecdotal comment: I gave a paper on generations once, and you, Nancy, were in the audience, in the fourth row. During the presentation, I was quivering, I was shaking in my boots because you were sitting right there. In a way, I was addressing this paper to my academic mothers, and they were all sitting in a row watching me. The conference's focus was the generations of academic women, of psychoanalytic therapists around Freud, and what happened to that generation of women, and also what is happening to the new generations of women in the academy. This seems to be one of my themes. The other thought that I have is that during so many of the frustrations, affirmations, complaints and suggestions that you (students) made, I was sitting here nodding and thinking, "Me, too." I'm frustrated too, I'm really frustrated, and I didn't always feel the differences.

Rosi Braidotti: I also was very moved and I did feel a lot of differences. [Laughter.] I think, however, that we should put the question of identity on the agenda for discussion. A lot of you understood generations less discursively, institutionally, than in terms of identity. "If you are X, then am I Y? Am I going to have to be as good as you?" Particularly Adriana in your statement, "I wish I could distance myself from my envy of this overachieving older generation." I think we need to look at identity and we should particularly focus on the intersection between identity and political subjectivity. I also heard a lot of very justifiable side attacks on the Oedipal plot and the mother/daughter thing, but nothing substantial. But this question of the Oedipal model is something we might all discuss. I'm going to stick to my conceptualization of the Oedipal until I hear more convincing arguments, other than that it is masculine, it is phallogocentric. To these I respond: So it's a heterosexist, phal-

Platonic gesture of reintegration, or are we going to be doing something different? And how do we negotiate that socio-symbolic pact? If we transpose some of the Platonic dialogues into the classrooms of today, not only would we have sexual harassment cases, but Alcibiades would win. These are some of the issues that I think the Oedipal model helps us think through, these moments of negativity.

Adriana Velez: I just wanted to comment in response. I was rather alarmed when you said that we hadn't discussed the implications of our professors, our mentors having power over us.

RB: But power is not only negative. *Potestas* and *potentia*, it's at least double.

Rebecca Daikin Quinn: I think my problem with the Oedipal plot is that it doesn't strike me as political. It strikes me as very much rooted in individual psyches, and I characterize it as "seductively powerful" because it's very easy for me to think of my relationships with female teachers, who are in a position of power over me, as mother figures. And I think it's a destructive thing in the final analysis.

RB: I think "Totem and Taboo" and "Moses and Monotheism" are fundamental treatises in political theory. They have got everything to do with the individual, but they, at the same time, construct social relations of power. I think that all of Freud's metapsychology is eminently political. And, in fact, if anything, he politicizes the whole making of psychic structures. It's to do with your own construction of the self, but embedded in the sociopolitical, the historical, and the culturally specific, and typically Western structures.

AJ: I wonder if we were just reflecting our intellectual historical bias here. Because it was through the "French connection," so to speak, that the Oedipal and all of the other libidinal economies described by the various thinkers in post-war France became internally politicized, almost immediately. There was no such thing as an individual narrative, it was always-already a social narrative, it was and is always-already political. So, for those of us embedded in this particular intellectual tradition it doesn't have that kind of de-politicized connotation that it might have for others.

Q: I'm Hester Eisenstein, and I also was very moved. I want to thank Nancy for presenting this forum. It seems to me you've all raised very important questions, and the word that's running through my mind is a very un-postmodern word: "solidarity." I'm struck by this discussion of power because I think that American feminism has had much more power in academia than it has had politically. When I say politically, I mean in terms of negotiating shifting resources and directing the social polity in the direction of greater equity, jus-

logocentric thing, so, so what? [Laughter.] So is grammar, and so is penicillin, and we still go on using them. If the maenadic is more useful that the maternal, then, quickly, how would it work? In another vein, I also like the idea that generations are categories that you can open up. Although, in this process, the points of entry into the practice of opening up generational spaces, may be very important. Lastly, I also have an anecdote in this respect. I recently read an interview with my still-favorite singer, Madonna. [Laughter.] Madonna was very cut up and very hurt because the riot grrrls don't recognize her as the one who started it all. She was the one who *really* put sex and anger into the thing, and these girls just don't recognize her as an honorary riot grrrl, when in fact they owe it all to her. So, yes, open generational categories to everybody, but take into account the mutual and respective positionings because those have everything to do with power. Power was completely absent from the replies.

Q: I would like to bring the issue of class into the discussion. I think that inter-generational rebellion and the whole issue about feminism as being an authoritarian standard really does have to do with class. The women who are feminists, who are writings, are also the same women who give you grades and who are your mentors. That there is a class situation, one perhaps more based on an institutionalized power differential, rather than a material power differential, has to be faced in a non-contentious way.

AJ: I was curious as to whether the students have anything to say about class because, as someone who class-hopped in a wild way through the university system, I was also always intensely conscious of the fact that my intellectual mentrices, as I call them, had power over my class future. Especially because I knew that my male professors basically didn't care, so that in fact it was up to these women: they had the power to determine my class future. That's something that's not just Oedipal.

RB: Just a footnote, I meant Oedipal as a political paradigm. I didn't mean it as a big, pre-symbolic soup, where all sorts of differences fade. I meant it as a metaphor that explains the distribution and the organization of differences along productive and lethal lines. If you read any of the Platonic texts from 500 years before Christ, it's all laid out beautifully: the role of the older man, his power over the younger man, the future of that younger man in the democratic city of Athens, no women in sight, no people of color, not a non-property-owning person in sight. This is the basic socio-symbolic contract that seals the fate of phallogocentrism. Now, for the first time in any kind of world history, a generation of female feminists are in comparable positions of training younger women. The question is: Are we going to repeat that

rice, the elimination of racism, things that I think that as feminists we all believe in. There is this power that's consolidated (although under threat) by feminism, and to a lesser extent womanism, in the academy. As graduate students you experience this power in the form of the material reality that we were just talking about—grades, access, jobs, and so on. But, I think, it is important not to lose sight of the broader context wherein these power dynamics take place: the macro political spectrum, particularly, the greater Gingrichism which has descended upon us. In light of this, it is absolutely essential for us to pick up Rosi's challenge and deal with that which divides us, without being nice girls. The time for nice girls is finished. Gone. Bye-bye. It's time now to discuss, maybe even hash out, what the issues are that get in the way of a sense of strength and solidarity and political energy. Now there is energy out there, students are out in the street, it's fantastic.

AJ: I want to go back to my rather unshaped comment when I said that I had a feeling of "Me, too" when listening to the graduate students' papers. I feel I've been targeted by the Right Wing for the last five years, and after five years of it, I feel, not younger, but smaller, a lot smaller, more insignificant and totally powerless. The machine is huge, it's there and there's nothing I can do. So, I have to pick myself up off the floor and fly to Paris and sue the guys for libel. That's what I meant by "Me, too." By feeling this, by saying this, I wasn't trying to erase the differences, the power differences, the class differences, the ability to control narrative versus the ability to sort of be folded into narrative, but nonetheless, for different reasons, I share that feeling of frustration, confusion, exhaustion, lack of identity, loss of boundaries. I think Hester's word, "solidarity," is a good one, an important one. Given that the humanities are being attacked and wiped off the map, and women's studies programs in particular, we all need to put aside, or at least find a way to discuss these tensions and differences so that we can talk together and fight the bigger monster.

Q: I've written a little bit about mentoring, and I think that one of the issues that doesn't get raised in mentoring is power and what to do with that power, and how to handle it when you're a student who is, in the case of those of us at CUNY, a teacher also. We're constantly having to negotiate between being the one in power and being the one who's powerless. So I think we can bring these questions into the mentoring relationships and talk to our mentors about these things. Accountability was something Rosi Braidotti brought up, and I wondered if you could all think about accountability. To whom are we accountable? To whom should we be accountable as feminists? I also noticed that, in terms of scholarship and publishing, there seem to be real dividing lines, like how you define yourself as a feminist, are you a materialist feminist,

a psychoanalytic feminist, a lesbian feminist, a materialist-lesbian feminist, etc. So there seem to be all these identity issues, and resultant constraints: we can't read everything, and we don't have conversations with people who are not working in the same areas that we are, or who are not using the same methodologies. I wish we could talk about those things in forums like this and other places.

RB: You may need the Red Cross, a couple of ambulances, a team of therapists [laughter], but it should be done. I think we have to start. If the question is what kind of political agency, what kind of solidarity and what kind of practices can we come up with to deal with this complex and issues, I would start from one step back and look again at the definition of postmodernism. Because it seems to me that postmodernism can also be defined as a time of simultaneous occurrences, of deeply contradictory effects. It's a time of simultaneous and paradoxical patterns of homogenization of cultures, globalization of cultural markets, and the incredible fragmentations within such homogenization and globalization. It's CNN and MTV, the whole world over, but it is also the enormous disparities, the increasing gap in economic resources both within what was formerly designated the First World and the real First World of today: the up-and-coming Pacific Rim and ex-Third World countries. It's about the Third Worldification of the First World and about the economic centralization of what used to be one section of the Third World. It's about mass migration, it's about cultural mixity, it's about diversity, it's about all of those types of simultaneous occurrences of contradictory things. On a more local level, it's about race relations going absolutely berserk in this country. As a European, I'm appalled at race relations in this country. And yet who are the big public intellectuals of today? The most provocative thinking is coming from black public intellectuals because nobody else is doing anything, as far as I can see. Who is being targeted, apart from the feminists who have been on the firing line ever since we existed? The black intellectuals, the Cornel Wests, the people who get it systematically. So there is a simultaneity of paradoxical and contradictory effects. If we agree to this as the political map, then we need forms of resistance and political intervention that can cope with this paradoxical effect. And there have been political models for this, I don't want to bring back the French post-structuralists all the time, but the Foucauldian micropolitics is a model for intervention in a world that is structured like this. Donna Haraway says the answer to the question of accountability and the question of solidarity is to have political *affinities* in communities grounded in specific forms of action. You may have several constituencies, you may be an eco-feminist and a pacifist and a guerrilla girl at the

same time. We need to exit the linearity of a certain type of solidarity that may have been effective before this paradox of globalization and fragmentation. We really need now to be split over and over again and very mobile in the type of political affinities that we strike up together. In that sense, marching the streets is as nomadic and as effective as it can be. Except that, to really be effective, you've got also to be marching the streets in cyberspace.

Q: What kinds of social relations do you need in order to effectively sustain such a politics?

RB: You need a web of contradictory and complex ones. The dominant ones are deeply schizoid, so from the dominant schizophrenia to—

Q: —political cultures that can sustain dynamic, communicative, close relationships in order to struggle in that kind of world. This, unfortunately, is what we don't have.

RB: I did say at the end of my paper that happiness is a political ideal, it's what we feminists have put on the agenda as being essential: nurturing communities. If you don't have that, then it's suicide.

Q: I'm not saying that we don't have it, I'm just saying that it can be very bitter and it can be very painful, and it's often not safe, especially in academia.

Q: I'm Prof. Electra Arenal and there are just a few things I wanted to throw out. Ruth Perry, who's talking on the subject very soon, asked me to pass on what I got from today. She's the head of Women's Studies at MIT, and they have a shirt with an old Greek figure holding the torch. This image for her crystallizes the problem: how do we, the older generation of feminists, pass on the torches. And of course we could talk about that image.

It was wonderful to hear you all, and I'm really glad that the event is taking place. I, as a Latina, am always very concerned that there's adequate representation of the student and faculty constituency at CUNY. I think this problem is one of translation. We need to keep translating, because even when we speak, we think we speak the same language, when we often are not. And this is an issue that is very relevant to the issue of solidarity that Hester mentioned previously. I want to mention that yesterday we heard from Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak about the change from globalization to what she calls the "financialization" of the world. Also she was thinking that a more accurate term for multiculturalism would be transculturalism, so there's another kind of "trans" to think about. Also, there is the N&P, which Cornel West describes as "nihilism" and "paranoia," in reference to African-Americans in our culture. He talks about the danger, the split between those who are older and who

have gotten somewhere in the world and those who are younger. In other words, there's a 25% whom the civil rights movement really helped, and 75% that it has not helped. Finally there are two things that I just thought we could hear from each of you. One has to do with something about power, and the other is something about not being nice. You see, I think that there are places we can not be nice. But I'm not sure, I think it's a little ingenious to think that in an academic community we can just not be nice. I don't know how to do it. But anyway, I throw it back to you.

NKM: Well, thanks a lot. [Laughter.]

AJ: Can I just throw one more term into the discussion? I've been sitting here trying to think about whether some of this is about, not only the place of generations and the place of oldies, but the place of feminism within the larger complex of political battles? How is a feminist, someone who identifies still with that social movement, supposed to integrate his or herself in terms of this larger complex of problems? In the beginning of my talk I said, "Gender is not specifically foregrounded in this talk, but I hope you will all know that it's essential to it." I think that I have been taking my feminism and my gender consciousness and subsuming it within inquiries into larger questions. I wonder if it isn't a question of "leadership." I don't know what else to call it, but it does feel to me that if one of the intrinsic qualities of the postmodern condition is fragmentation at the same time that everything's getting homogenized, leadership becomes a problem, and more than that it becomes a conundrum. Look at poor Clinton. He is having a terrible time leading. Why is that? Well, because he refuses the patriarchal model of leadership. He's trying to be a brother to everybody. But this lack of leadership may also be part of the frustration. I just wanted to put the issue of leadership out, because if it's outmoded, then there's a serious problem. If it's all network and web, and there's no hierarchy at all, then how do we ensure that our value systems, as feminists, are not only transmitted, but accessible?

NKM: I think it's true that no one has ever accused me of being nice [laughter], so I don't think that's something I have to really work on. But I think that the person whose work I have found most helpful in these questions of power between women is Jessica Benjamin, both in her first book, *Bonds of Love*, and her essay, "The Omnipotent Mother." In these two works, she does a really interesting analysis of understanding maternal subjectivity in her relationship to the child as within a relation of negotiation. Power, in this paradigm, is not autonomous and monolithic, but relational. This joins the earlier argument she made in *The Bonds of Love* about mutual recognition. This is one of the models that I try to work within in my relations with students. Although, I

don't think we have that situation at the Graduate Center. Because I actually think that the relations between teachers and students are not as difficult as the relations between faculty, between assistant professors and full professors, where the professional placement is much more ambiguous than a student/teacher relationship. I think that, within feminism, the question of mutual recognition is a complex one. For my part, what I've had to struggle with the most is what was criticized in Alice's saying, "I feel the same way you do." If I'm not careful, I forget that I'm no longer an assistant professor, the time in my professional life that most marked me in terms of power relations. I regress to thinking of myself as someone who's powerless, who doesn't have a say. I need to be reminded that I'm not an assistant professor, but that you also need to be reminded that we are not invulnerable; we need to know what's going on with you, and we need your responsiveness. So I'm very glad that this event came out of the Complaint Department, otherwise known as my seminar [laughter] last semester, where the students told me in no uncertain terms how much they objected to this colloquium, and brought us to work collaboratively at finding new venues

FOLLOW-UP DISCUSSION

NKM: If we return to the 1992 conference, "Out of the Academy and Into the World," we can see that in terms of generations, one of the prerogatives that institutional hierarchies in theory give you is the ability, as a senior person, to influence appointments, to bring along the kinds of people doing the kinds of work you would like to see happen. This means that you have to have the kind of lateral or horizontal relations with your other colleagues so that you have their support, or at least, that you have enough chips to trade. Carolyn Heilbrun did not succeed in doing that because there was something that got broken there. In terms of passing the torch, that is something that was not allowed to happen. And so when you think about senior faculty or senior feminists in terms of their power, one of the things has to do with the ability to promote younger feminists, both their work and their careers. And when you can't do that, it's a serious problem. So I just did want to say that as a footnote to these series of events, because I think it's extremely important.

RB: I was thinking of the Simone de Beauvoir conference at Columbia in 1980, which was also about generations of women. I wasn't there, but we were in Paris and heard echoes. You could make a list of these events, happenings so that this conference would be part of a genealogy of such things and we would

not, each time, feel that we are really part of this famous memory which we tend to lose.

AJ: Right, like forgetting that I'd given a major paper on generations, or the question of generations of women, with my academic mothers in the audience, ten years ago.

RDQ: I wonder too if the situation with Carolyn Heilbrun isn't generational in some sense itself, in that she was alone in her generation in doing feminist scholarship, and therefore she didn't have the strong connections with other women in her peer group in the academy, and that may have contributed to her being unable, among that group of senior professors, to promote junior colleagues. Also, the generation after her may have felt somehow distant generationally from her.

Margaret George: That's also impressive to me, is the mass reaction to that whole event. The fact that it triggered so much in terms of discussion and that it seemed to be kind of a wake-up call within the feminist community.

NKM: It's also the case that in the first chapter of Christina Hoff Sommers' book, *Who Stole Feminism*, she uses that conference to supply her with her dominant metaphor for the book about women under siege. She makes a mockery of this event and distorts it by seeing it as a day uniquely dedicated to anger.

AJ: Parodies me, for one thing.

NKM: Right—as well as everyone else there. In terms of the kind of typical strategy she has of selective reporting, she followed the tack of "Women Under Siege" throughout the whole book, so that it provoked media attention.

Michael Rothberg: Given some of these questions, I'm kind of interested in the national framework of the discussion that we've been having today. We've been talking a lot about "trans," transmodern, transnational—

AJ: Transcultural and transgenerational.

MR: Exactly. I'm wondering if some of these questions are still very much situated in a specific national context. In other words, is this discussion very much an American discussion or not. How would it be different in other contexts?

RB: I would really want another paper to do it properly. I think I distributed to some of you that paper by the Dutch graduate student that explains how different the situation would be. Holland is as advanced as you can get in terms of institutionalization of Women's Studies, but because it's a state university system which is fees-free, it is actually still quite disciplinary in some respects. This creates a different set of problems wherein the power issue can be dealt with, more classically, more traditionally, and consequently more effectively. It

may be more male-identified, but some of the more degenerate aspects of the teacher/student interaction, including lawsuits, are unthinkable in a European system. This, in part, is due to the centered way in which the state mediates power-relationships. We are state employees, and in a state which funds thirteen chairs of Women's Studies, the state can be called the "Mother." If you look at the paper, you will have some sense of how, if anything, the graduate students feel that they are non-existent three times over.

The other point about the national thing is the decline of the nation-state in the European context because of European unification. I write about that in *Nomadic Subjects*, and the only message I would like to add to what I say in that book, is that I think that there is absolutely no flow of information in the American media about what is really going on in Europe. I think that there are forces at work in the American market system that require your increasing ignorance of the real conditions of Europe because we are, together with the Japanese, your major competitors. The European unit constitutes a massive competitive threat for your people. Thus, it's in everybody's interest to give the image of Europe as a failing, floundering power, or as racist, xenophobic, and anti-Semitic. This is all true, of course, but it is only the negative flipside of a very important moment: the absolute dismantling of the European nation-state and the coming of the European federation, which means a transnational education system. I run a European network where we are teaching with twelve other European cultures, and our students circulate every academic year. They are Spanish and Greek and German and British and Irish, and Finnish and Swedish, and the Austrians are waiting in the wings. This is the first time that this has happened, and it is absolutely institutionally real. When we run out of money, we go to Brussels, and Brussels pays. Now, there is no flow of information about this into your media system. I have talked even to Gloria Steinem and suggested that she might run something in *Ms* about this trans-European educational system, but there is very little interest in European affairs in America, and zero leverage. That would be my only comment, but it would take us in a very different direction.

NKM: But some of that has to do with the fallout of the buzzword of Eurocentrism; in a way, we just erased Europe. There's been a turning away from Europe. There's always been chauvinistic ignorance, but now there's a whole population of students who are deliberately not going to look at anything European.

RDQ: If Europe becomes economically powerful, is there a danger of it becoming the next Evil Empire, right? Then, we'll have this conglomerate against which all social anger is focused.

RB: Anti-Europeanism has been riddling the country since really '78, '79. This multi-cultural federation that is in the making in Europe has a significant affect on the types of pedagogical relationships that we were discussing earlier. What happens in the universities as a result of this federalization of Europe? What happens to our students? There were more students here from Switzerland, Turkey, Italy today, in the audience, than we are ever likely to get any of you coming over to look at us. In the 1960s and the 1970s, interaction between Europe and America was a lot easier. We had a lot more in common as political cultures, we had the same political name. Now, strangely enough, since we're becoming a federation like you've been from the start, we're being split apart.

AJ: I don't think that anything we talked about today is only local. I don't think it has only to do with the United States, and I think that basically the whole question of the public sphere is being redefined and reinvented all over the world, and particularly in the current world context of the post-empire. I have my little trilogy of vectors that I think are criss-crossing. Whatever geographical site you focus on, the three vectors that are coming together are identity, technology, and ecology. Those three vectors have different configurations depending where on the globe you're looking from, speaking from, acting from, etc. That's where the debates are, around the question of identity and national boundaries, cross-national boundaries, the question of technology, the web, globality, etc. and the question of the infrastructure, that is, the ecological infrastructure, which is collapsing all over the globe, and therefore organizing the way in which the other two vectors get set up.

That said, I think that postmodernism, in the terms we were using today, is very much an American phenomenon that has been exported elsewhere. I was just talking to someone about being in Botswana last summer in somebody's home, and sitting there chewing on buffalo jerky, and watching *The Jeffersons* on TV. And this is in a town where the electricity is run off of a generator and it all shuts down at seven. So, the exportation of postmodernism to the rest of the world and the relationship of postmodernism to ex-empires, the ex-British Empire, the ex-French Empire, etc. is exceedingly complicated. For some bizarre reason, in Paris in the 1950s and early 1960s, the intellectuals came together, many of whom were not French, and came up with something which has been vaguely called post-structuralism, which, as far as I'm con-

and in other corridors. So that it seems to me that the competition's not going to go away if the marketplace is there, and there's nothing we can do about it. At least in the short term. But how one chooses to negotiate that marketplace, to what extent one wants to buy into the different models of negotiation (the consensual one being the current national fantasy) is an ethical and moral question up for grabs, and probably will have to be decided, certainly not by the intelligentsia, but by some new coalition of intellectuals, activists, artists, and other workers in the margins of the culture.

RB: I'd like to respond to the how to cope with competition question and then the positive aspects of mother and daughter. Even at the time of the greatest institutional expansion, I don't think that there was ever room for everybody, that we ever avoided competition. I don't think that we should, particularly. I think that if you're working in any institution, academic or other, and the university's not the worst in terms of "N&P," you're going to have to live with the fact that you will have to be a woman-warrior, and women-warriors are completely part of the feminist tradition. You're going to have to fight. Sometimes you will have to fight women that you're close to, or out of your generation, or of your class. There have been all sorts of negotiations for how to deal with this. There have been attempts at having a non-competitive, caring and nurturing, horizontally sharing approach, but when there is one job and everybody wants it, it is very difficult to function that way. It would be much more honest to actually face up to the realities as they are and to be able to articulate issues that are painful and difficult, such as, "I know that we are competing for the same job, and it's going to be very difficult, it may ruin this friendship." Being able to at least do a bit of talking may be a beginning to avoiding the worst aspects of what is going to be a situation of negative competition.

I also don't know why you say, "I don't want to fall into masculine modes of behavior." They are not all bad and we will have to deal with them until we have a Symbolic Revolution, a head start over forms of mediation and the social mediation of violence, competition and rivalry. That's why patriarchy rules, because they have forms of behavior. There's a lot to be said for loyalty, there's a lot to be said for the boy's network, and there's no reason why we shouldn't have a girl's network. In fact, we do have a girl's network, we try our best, and if it is not yet powerful, we do try our best. There are political organizations, lobbying groups that work. A period of mimetic repetition of some of the empowering aspects of the masculine logos may not be the worst thing that we can do in the absence of caring, nurturing, and whatever alter-

cerned, was a set of theoretical intuitions about the postmodern condition. They were the first generation after the Frankfurt School to try to actually theorize what a large part of the "First World" was beginning to experience on a daily basis.

RB: It could only happen in France because of the development of a particular brand of Marxism within the dominant materialist ideology of the 1960s and 1970s. The French love to hate the States, and they're the closest analysts and the closest observers of their own surroundings.

AV: One question I had for possible discussion was negotiating within a world of scarce resources. How do we deal with competition? How do we decide what is good competition, and what's bad competition? How do we avoid adopting masculinist modes of aggression, and how do we balance that with being "too nice"? How do we keep up a politics of care and solidarity and cooperation? It seems to me that this would entail demanding a greater share of the available resources, instead of struggling with each other for the small amount that we now have. The other question I wanted to ask concerns the mother/daughter model that Professor Braidotti discussed. I wanted to find out what the positive parts of this model are.

AJ: I have one small thought about the question of competition and boundaries, which is that, as far as I'm concerned, feminism is a piece of a much larger puzzle. This is something that's hard for my generation to accept, because especially in my formative years, when my intellectual and emotional abilities were being formed, feminism was *everything*, it was what kept me alive, it was what allowed me to speak and think that I had a brain. It's still obviously very central in my life, but I think it's now becoming clear that, if we are going to be intellectuals and we are going to assume leadership roles, then we have to remember that it's part of a bigger puzzle which involves an exceedingly complicated marketplace. The sort of ethical/moral questions are to what extent one will participate in that marketplace, who's going to control the marketplace, where it will be centralized, who's going to get to buy the stock. My fear is that, with the increased destabilization, fragmentation and loss of hierarchical centers, the hunger for authority, if not authoritarianism, is going to become very intense, particularly in the First World. For example, I think that in this country right now, one of the big image drives, is this image of the public sphere where everybody is nice, Bill is nice, and eventually everyone can come to an agreement. If we can create that image, strong enough, bright enough, and consistent enough in the American public's mind, then people will be content. They'll stop screaming from the margins, because the image will be so powerful, and then we can carry on as usual behind closed doors

Feminist Critic" is precisely that. There was something remarkable about being present at the creation! But that doesn't mean that we all got along, that no one hated anyone else, and that there weren't rivalries.

AJ: When you're in the middle of it, you don't always realize that you're being creative and amazing. I mean, this is feminist history, too. We're all sitting around this table now, and twenty years hence, you'll look back and you'll say, "Wow, can you remember that? We were twentysomething and we were trying to figure this stuff out, and multiculturalism, and the Right had come to power, do you remember that?" And then someone younger than you will say, "Oh, that must have been amazing, I mean you were really ahead of your time. You really saw what was coming." And you'll go, "No, no. We were just fighting against brain death." Am I wrong? I'm not trying to deny the historical edge to it. It was clearly the Women's Movement, the Civil Rights Movement, but that's also instructional. It's been very interesting for me to go back over all that history. When I talked about leadership today, I was thinking of Martin Luther King. I was thinking about the fact that the Women's Movement didn't really have a martyr, we didn't really have someone who could put up the parasol and say, "Come all ye peoples, come under my umbrella, and let me lead you to the mountain top."

NKM: We're never going to have that structure. But this is the question for your generation. In other words, if we're talking about continuity and the question about postfeminism. I mean you are the proof that there is feminism after postfeminism. And perhaps there are new tasks: how to articulate feminism with other social issues, especially if the name "feminist" is contaminated. A lot of the younger women are saying, "I'm not a feminist, but I believe in equal rights and equal pay and I'm against sexual harassment," and so on. If that word is contaminated because it has a certain history, what kind of feminist action can take place in relation to other groups or around specific issues? I think this is what is going to be a challenging question for the younger generation. That is not to say that it isn't a challenge for us, but it's also a challenge for you.

RB: What has worked very strongly with those in England and the Continent is cyberfeminism. Cyberfeminism is the answer and the very positive response to the postfeminist debacle is an adaptation of Donna Haraway's cyborg. There's been lots of cyberfeminist conferences throughout England, and we had one in Amsterdam in November. Even Donna Haraway came over. It was a lot of fun. It's a totally new generation, and these people were very literate in the computer stuff, and Donna was actually computer illiterate. One of the sources of cyberfeminism, and she was really embarrassed. We're now working

natives we may want. Go on talking about it with the people that you're most immediately connected to, and that are going to be your most immediate competitors. Speaking from experience, it is very difficult and very painful to feel that your boundaries are being crossed, that things have been stolen from you, or that your due is not being given to you. We've all been through crises of that kind, and there's only one way to do it—it's to actually do the Nike thing, do it! Go through the process. I mean, you're not going to be able to avoid it, and feminism never was supposed to make you get rid of that. It was not supposed to free you from the burden of existential survival, and that kind of competition.

RDQ: I think it tried to provide that illusion for a while. I think that's some of what we were saying about nostalgia. I think it gets to what Alice was saying about not having any leaders. You can't have nobody in charge, you'd get nowhere. There does have to be some form of hierarchy, but I do think that there's this powerful image of feminism as a very communal, very egalitarian, and very supportive.

NKM: I think you're conflating collective projects with the lack of competition. What did exist in the beginning was a sense of participating in something larger than yourself, and building from that with others. Imagine that when we began to study women writers, Showalter had just published *A Literature of Their Own* (1977), and Ellen Moers *Literary Women*, the year before. Except for a few articles, that was it! And when I was teaching the colloquium in Women's Studies at Barnard in the early eighties, we would do a review of feminist theory in the disciplines, and for each discipline there would be four articles, one of which was the review essay in *Signs*, where a scholar would survey the entire field. It's also the case, and one of the things that makes the feminist revolution different from other revolutions, that it never was a signature movement; there's no single founding name for a body of thought, like Marx or Freud. When we now say that de Beauvoir or Woolf was a forefather, that's a back formation that only makes sense viewed through layers of rethinking feminist history. It's been both the strength and weakness of feminism that it's never been gatherable under a single name, even if, obviously, as is the case with Freud and Marx, there are competing strands and deep divisions. The body of thought has always been collective.

It's true that there remains from those days of the second wave a feeling of excitement that came from creating new forms of knowledge, research and transmission. I cannot deny that there was something positively heady about that. And part of what you hear in the feminist narratives of "How I Became a

on the idea of naving computer games or CD-ROMs with feminist themes: "The Battle for Abortion." The only reason why we can't do it is because the industry doesn't believe that they would sell. We have a first draft of a program we're going to do with the European Community because they would risk it for us. But it's all happening out there—in cyberspace—the shift of culture and the change of generations. So even you, girls, are already in the old world vis-a-vis the cyberpunk.

Elizabeth Hollow: We skipped over the question to you, and I want to try to answer it for you. It seems to me that the positive aspects about reincarnating the Oedipal model was that it talks about negativity and violence in a way that rarely gets talked about.

RB: The good mother is the mother who says, "Be what you want, so long as you get your shots and you get your vitamins, and you don't get into jail." I mean my mother wasn't anything if not normative: "Thou shalt. . . ." Maybe you were lucky with your families, you had mothers who said be whatever you can be. Become what you are and give the most of your *potentia*, even if it contradicts everything I am, and everything I become. Even if you become a fascist piece of shit, you become what you want. But imagine an ontological structure without a conceptual content, allowing you to just become. Luce Irigaray, in "The One Doesn't Stir Without the Other," explores both the positive and the negative parts of the Oedipal paradigm. And the final sentence is for me a program, when she says, "All I wanted is for you to go on living and being who you are and letting me be what I am, although what I am is obviously not you." ["A toi, toujours, la vivante."] Mutual recognition—pure utopia.

AJ: At the risk of sounding a little hokey, I'm sitting here thinking, who knows what the humanities will look like by the time all of you are seriously engaged in your professorships? Who knows what they'll look like or whether they'll be, whether they'll even be? But in any case, let's assume the university survives, and let's assume that some semblance of the notion of a liberal education survives, you still may be the generation that has to completely reconfigure the protocol. Because the notion that there will be social sciences, sciences, humanities, etc. will be so aberrant, so wasteful, so inefficient and so beside the point that it will be your generation that will have to say, O.K., here's what the education of the future has to look like. And that is very scary, and that will have to do with feminism, and that won't have to do with feminism. It will have to do, again, with the bigger puzzle.

EH: I wanted to bring up the question of postmodernism again, specifically that the postmodern frequently has to do two opposite things at once. I wonder

what feminism looks like within a postmodern context. How should we and are we able to maintain feminism in this in this context?

RB: Feminism is grounded in humanism, and thus we may have to defend humanism in order to have some foundational ground from which to teach gender studies and the history of feminism. We are the most positive and the most successful edge on the Left, which tells you how disastrous the Left has been, educationally.

MG: I actually had a question that I wanted to ask Dr. Jardine. I'm interested in the question of surveillance, and I've been reading about how the machine worker in a factory is now tracked from minute to minute and hour to hour, and also how e-mail is monitored at work. I'm thinking about how the Left can use technology. This is an intriguing question because in this age of print and virtual media, you can have underground newspapers and public access channels, as well as other media. Part of my problem with the Left using cyberspace technology is that they will only be able to reach those who are able, in an economic sense, to have that technology. I think we need to look at who has access to e-mail, and who will go on to graduate school and get an e-mail account through that? It seems like relatively few people.

AJ: I think that this is changing. When you look at the history of television, by 1965, which is another reason I end the Second Fifties at '65, approximately 80% of American homes had a television. That's extraordinary. Thus, if you look at the distribution of new technologies, once the computer and the television collapse into one in a few years, everything will be contained in one instrument, and you'll have it in your living room. Maybe, you'll have little baby machines in your other rooms, but it'll all come out of one. At that point, the computer revolution will have succeeded, and it will be in most homes. I'm actually quite pessimistic about possibilities of cyberspace itself for resistance, but a lot of people disagree with me, and it's very much in debate. I think what worries me is the way in which the parameters of cyberspace are being determined so quickly in the corporate complex that, by the time academics feel sure about this stuff, it's already so old that it's not even relevant.

RB: I agree with you, but I don't share your pessimism about how open the information highway is or is not going to be. To really assess it you have to compare it to what happened in the first industrial revolution, the first phase of capitalism. When the first wave of the machines came, there were already the adjustments and questions of access and people being frightened of them. Workers even sabotaged the machines, saying we don't want them, and bombed them, saying that the machines are a new instrument of suppression.

So you already have the first generation of Marxist analysis which asked during the period of advanced industrialization: Is this going to kill the working class? Another interesting phenomenon was how the economy reorganized itself with the coming of the industrialized workforce, so that there was a whole pocket of illegal economy that became available to people who wanted to resist the system. This is something I'm not proud of, but I wonder to what extent the Left on cyberspace is confined to criminality as its modality of resistance. The hacker, which is a figure of theft and breaking the law—the Robin Hood of the information highway—is comparable to the Luddites and the people who sabotaged the machines. Of course, there were those people that invented the machines to make money, and those who cashed in on the workers' discontent by opening brothels and opium dens next to the factories to make the workers forget the drudgery of the work. We can find a great deal of the Left doing some sort of electronic terrorism or electronic criminality, and this in the context where the illegal economy is already a very major issue of postindustrial time. Examples are the traffic and laundering of illegal monies through stock exchanges and banks. So, you see, to a significant extent, the organization of the actual economic structure revolves around the illegal economy.

NKM: I think we'll call that a wrap.

