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CULTURAL STUDIES AND NEW HISTORICISM

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# MIDWEST MODERN LANGUAGE ASSOCIATION

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## Introduction

Beginning with this issue of *The Journal of the Midwest Modern Language Association*, we shall experiment with publishing a few issues on specific topics, which have been chosen and announced in advance by the Executive Committee and the editor. We hope that these topics meet with your interest, and that the essays form important contributions to the current critical debate.

The present topic, "Cultural Studies and New Historicism," grew from the current wide interest in "literature and culture" courses in English and foreign literatures, the formation of separate cultural studies programs, and always questions: What do we mean by culture? What aspects of culture, whose culture do we choose? How do we see the relationship between literature and culture? What theoretical models do we find useful in analyzing cultural formations? The following essays address some of these questions and attempt to clarify the agendas of New Historicism and cultural studies, terms that have too often come to mean almost anything.

New Historicism's combining of the descriptive method of local knowledge taken from cultural anthropology with Michel Foucault's and Jacques Derrida's poststructuralist notions of circulation and exchange created an interdisciplinary, intricate way of describing culture. Developed primarily by Renaissance scholars, New Historicism has been rapidly appropriated by critics in other literary periods and literatures. With its popularity has grown polemical critique, which involves many aspects of the marxism-deconstruction debate. The new historicists' interest in rejecting any narrative and reducing everything to the anecdotal has at least been regarded as suspect.

The sequence of the following essays suggests a trajectory from New Historicism to the British version of cultural studies. Aram Veesser's attempt to establish a "new" New Historicism that overcomes the mere anecdotal and makes room for political agency exemplifies the strengths and shortcomings of New Historicism. Tom Lewis's essay "The New Historicism and Marxism" analyzes and further clarifies New Historicism's own interest and politics.

If New Historicism embraces paralyzing politics, cultural studies, as defined in Cary Nelson's manifesto, challenges the critic to be politically committed to progressive projects. Paul Smith's report of his teaching an introductory course in cultural studies further clarifies the question "What is cultural studies?" by emphasizing the reasons for cultural analysis. "Feminism and Cultural Studies," the topic of Anne Balsamo's essay, provides an informative, detailed map of the growing field of feminist cultural studies. Commitment and radical critique of the Birmingham cultural studies group are examined by Vincent Leitch in relation to the members' position on poststructuralism. Joseph Buttigieg's essay entitled "After Gramsci" reminds us of Gramsci's exemplary role as theorist and practitioner of cultural studies.

# Feminism and Cultural Studies

Anne Balsamo

## Multi-, Inter-, or Post-Disciplinary?

From the early feminist work by those associated with the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies in Birmingham in the 1970s and 1980s to more recent work that explicitly names itself “feminist cultural studies,” a dense agenda for critical feminist work has been elaborated and disseminated. From the onset, feminist cultural studies has been multi-disciplinary, multi-cultural, and inherently contradictory, so that simply to claim that feminist cultural studies is by definition interdisciplinary doesn’t do justice to the specificity of the range of cultural work going on in its name. By the late 1980s, feminist cultural studies named an inherently diverse set of projects—situated in different national contexts: German, French, U.S., Canadian, Indian, Australian, British, Nicaraguan, Brazilian; written from different political standpoints: women of color, womanist, marxist-feminist, women-in-exile, postcolonialist, lesbian studies; grounded in different intellectual traditions: poststructuralism, psychoanalysis, sociology, philosophy, medical science, anthropology, film studies, literary studies, and education. The density and multiplicity of sources and methodologies that have informed both feminist scholarship and cultural studies suggest that feminist cultural studies might best be regarded not as interdisciplinary or multidisciplinary but rather as postdisciplinary: no longer able, in other words, to fully recover its source disciplines and, indeed, no longer entirely interested in doing so. Given such a range of contexts, the task of “mapping the field” is daunting at best. My intent in this essay is to identify divergent lines of analysis and significant issues among the different projects of feminist cultural studies.<sup>1</sup>

The trajectory that describes the development of cultural studies itself is neither smooth nor uni-directional. It belongs equally within a story about American post-modernity, in another about the institutionalization of literary criticism in Britain and more recently in the United States, and in yet another of the establishment of the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies in Birmingham, England.<sup>2</sup> Because the definition of cultural studies is itself historical—there is no essential definition of cultural studies—it follows that the appropriate definitional strategy for feminist cultural studies is also historical. In effect, the work that I cite bears the name of feminist cultural studies because the authors either situate themselves within a tradition of cultural studies or explicitly address a line of questions coming out of cultural studies. My definitional strategy requires the rereading of certain projects from within a particular framework, one that is centrally concerned with the development of cultural theory. At the risk of being superficial, I choose a survey model to structure this essay which is intended to provide readers with a necessarily brief, but scopic, over-

view of a growing field. Given the nature of feminist cultural studies it is impossible to define the field in terms of a dominant paradigm, and to do so would certainly not be in keeping with the open and inclusive intent of the field itself. But if by definition we mean a project of historical mapping, then this essay could be understood to address the broad co-ordinates of a such a map. The three sections of this essay roughly sketch out the shape of the historical evolution of feminist cultural studies from the late 1970s to the 1990s. In each section I briefly describe a specific work or text and then elaborate the contribution each offers to the development of the broader framework; my intent is to suggest the diversity of feminist cultural studies without opening on to an empty pluralism; I will try, that is, to represent both the dissemination and the specificity of feminist cultural studies. I begin with a characterization of a hypothetical founding moment marked by the publication of the book, *Women Take Issue*, by the Women Studies Group at the CCCS. The second section describes the evolution of feminist cultural studies in the 1980s through its engagement with feminist literary criticism and theory on the one hand, and with the ethnographic methods of subculture research on the other. The final section reports on the status of feminist cultural studies in the early 1990s as exemplified by two fronts of cultural politics: one that is defined by the issues articulated by women of color and postcolonial theorists around questions of position, nationalist and ethnic identity, and cultural theory, and a second that addresses the developments in feminist thinking about science, technology, and the body. By the end, I hope to suggest what’s at stake in claiming the name of feminist cultural studies.

## Feminism and the Development of Cultural Studies

Feminist cultural studies takes shape first in Britain as part of the evolvement of British socialist-feminism. One of its beginning points is with the work associated with the feminist historians who were part of the History Workshop movement begun in the 1960s.<sup>3</sup> The influence of a historicist cultural materialism is marked by the commitment, in feminist cultural theory, to resist the temptation of grand theorizing in favor of developing a model of study that produces historically specific cultural analyses.<sup>4</sup> Another beginning can be traced back to the influence of British socialist feminists who, though they rely on Marxist theory, marked their critical difference from it because of its economic determinism and inadequate treatment of the role of women in capitalism. Although the encounters among members of these sometimes overlapping intellectual communities and their engagement with the central figures of cultural studies (Marx, Althusser, Williams, among others) has its own interesting history, what was shared and passed on was a commitment to the investigation of the material conditions of women’s lives under capitalism.<sup>5</sup>

One of the first books to explicitly address the intersections between feminist studies and cultural studies is the edited collection, *Women Take Issue: Aspects of*

*Women's Subordination* (1978) which includes essays and an introduction written by members of the Women's Studies Group at the CCCS.<sup>6</sup> In the introduction, the editorial group "takes issue" with the "invisibility" of women not only in relation to the articles in the early volumes of *Working Papers in Cultural Studies*, but also in "much of the intellectual work done within the Centre." Consequently, the *Women Take Issue* collection illuminates two important aspects of the cultural formation that would later be called feminist cultural studies. On the one hand, the working group was self-consciously concerned to construct a descriptive statement about the process of "doing" feminist intellectual work, both in relation to the CCCS and within the broader context of the British women's liberation movement.<sup>7</sup> As a result, early on, feminist cultural studies was marked by a reflexive mode of analysis that took seriously the responsibility to elucidate its own conditions of possibility in an academic institution, as well as its own political accountability to a broader social movement. On the other hand, a second equally important contribution was to address the structured absence of feminist work and "woman" from the theoretical frameworks and problematics which animated scholars at the Centre at that time.<sup>8</sup> This is to stress that the early feminist engagement with cultural studies was already defined as a critical intervention into a field that was itself an emergent formation. In addition to establishing a feminist presence in the work of the Centre, the book represents a characteristic move or stance that will become more pronounced in the later development of feminist cultural studies, by including a range of diverse feminist perspectives that explicitly take "culture" to be a focal point of the production of feminist criticism.

By way of a brief example of the more central feminist perspectives that invigorate the production of critical cultural work in Britain, consider the range of frameworks employed in the articles in the *Women Take Issue* book: where one article by Lucy Bland and others theoretically interrogates the adequacy of marxist concepts to account for the material subordination of women, a second by Angela McRobbie details the experience of working-class girls within a predominantly middle-class culture of femininity; yet another essay considers the psychoanalytic dynamics of the cultural acquisition of sexual subjectivity. Janice Winship employs yet another feminist approach in her analysis of women's popular magazines, one that is more informed by a literary framework. Although this collection invokes several different feminist perspectives, the articles share a productive locale in that each is developed within the space between marxism and feminism—so that they at once draw on Marxist theory, but are also concerned to revise such theory in keeping with a feminist commitment to engage the material conditions of women's lives. Where McRobbie describes her research in terms of ethnographic and sociological methodologies, Bland and others rely on an explicitly Marxist framework to describe the overdetermination of the sexual division of labor.<sup>9</sup> These differences we discover—between paradigms or research frameworks—permeated all aspects of the organization of the working group,

but in their introduction the collective foregrounds the importance of these differences: "What finally made the CCCS let us do this book was not just that we had 'proved' ourselves in relation to our theoretical work on the economic level in our presentation; it also had to do with playing the tapes of women speaking about their lives as housewives, a forceful demonstration of women's oppression, and of the political object of our intellectual work" (14–15). Here the members of the working group explicitly discuss how a common political agenda can produce differences that are themselves productive in terms of the formation of cultural criticism. In this sense, although they agree on the importance of constructing feminist analyses of "how things are" which includes "critiques of existing understandings, the discovery of new material and new questions, and the development of a theoretical understanding of women's subordination under capitalism," they disagree as to how to study such things, the theoretical framework to employ, and often even the transformative possibilities of intellectual work itself.

Two issues, however, are conspicuously missing from this collection: 1) a sustained analysis of race and racism within those same feminist projects, and 2) an account of the construction and bias of nationalist or imperialist feminist identities. These absences are telling in that they mark a characteristic blind spot of feminism more broadly during the late 1970s. But even with these notable absences, the *Women Take Issue* collection is an important event in the development of feminist cultural studies for several reasons. In the first place, these essays employ a more inclusive model of culture and subcultures that emphasizes the importance of everyday life and domestic space in the reproduction of relations of power. But the contribution was more than a shift of emphasis to what superficially might be recognized as the private sphere of collective life; the politics of the personal redefined that private sphere as equally political as the more public domain, and furthermore, as equally determined by structures of power. Secondly, these essays contribute to the development of an understanding of the articulation of sex, gender, and class in the organization of social relations and the disposition of power at a specific historical moment. To summarize, the impact of these essays is to focus on both women's subordination and class subordination and how the interconnections between them determine: 1) "women's structural position within the production and reproduction of material life," 2) "how this is understood and represented politically, and ideologically," and 3) "how women live their lives within and through these terms" (23). Like cultural studies more generally, this feminist work takes up the issue of the social construction of subjectivity and the role this plays in practices of everyday life. These three levels of analysis are characteristic of the projects that emerge during the 1980s as feminist cultural studies turns to psychoanalysis and poststructuralism to elucidate the relations between gendered and class subjectivities and everyday life.

Considered within the rhetoric of place, maps, and paradigms, the development of feminist cultural studies is structured by a tension inherent in the act of

narrating the identity of cultural studies itself. How does one account for the heterogeneity of an intellectual formation and still say anything specific without overly simplifying things? In Stuart Hall's elaboration of the two organizing paradigms of cultural studies, structuralism and culturalism, the place of feminism is occluded for good reason: what paradigm would best describe it in its multiform variety?<sup>10</sup> Similarly, in those accounts that use the concept of "debate" as an organizing feature of the development of cultural studies, feminism's position is equally problematic, because it never consolidated into a unified perspective, as did the position of Althusserian marxism or Lacanian psychoanalysis, for example. Clearly, from the beginning, the feminist work of those associated with the CCCS never exhibited a singular identity, but was instead marked by contradictions, differences, and even disagreements about the political possibilities of intellectual work. During the past decade, many feminist writers have offered overviews of the domain of contemporary feminist scholarship; in these overviews we can identify the variety of political and theoretical preoccupations of feminist cultural studies. The next two sections of this essay briefly identify two central projects of feminist cultural studies to emerge during the 1980s: one that is explicitly influenced by developments in feminist literary criticism and explores the issue of reading as a cultural practice, and the second that builds on the tradition of ethnographic subculture research and considers more specifically the practices of writing culture.

### Reading as a Cultural Practice and The Politics of Literary Criticism

In her essay "Teaching Feminist Theory," Paula Treichler addresses the scene of contemporary feminist theory, not only to elucidate the specific concerns and questions of particularly *feminist* theory, but also to articulate its contribution to cultural theory and pedagogy more generally.<sup>11</sup> Two important insights emerge from her analysis. For one, she makes it clear that feminist theory is deeply invested in the development of a "macroscopic view of women in culture" and that it does so by examining "the interlocking oppressions based on sex, gender, race, class, sexual preference, national origin, and ethnicity" (59). Furthermore she argues that the horizon of feminist theory is to speculate about possible futures and to offer a set of guidelines that would help feminists enact the best of those futures and avoid the worst. But Treichler's analysis provides a second provocative suggestion about the politics of naming and the work of constructing theory. Her project is explicitly interventionist in that her rereading (of various feminist texts) recontextualizes these texts as belonging within the domain of intellectual work called "Theory." The critical point here is not that she seeks to establish the qualifications of feminist projects as properly "theoretical," but rather that she shows how feminist work tactically enacts the power to designate and name itself as "theory." Her act of rereading, in effect, reconstructs the possi-

bilities of what can and should "count" as properly theoretical work so that in the end both the terms "feminist writing" and "theory" are reconstructed as mutually informing rather than antithetical projects.

In this project, Treichler joins other feminists who theorize reading and writing as fundamentally *cultural* practices; these will include those projects explicitly designed to examine what it means to "read" and "write" culture as a black feminist, a woman of color, a lesbian feminist, a working-class woman, or sometimes as a white feminist. These projects include as well the feminist cultural criticism produced in the context of literary and film studies. So in the very broadest sense, the development of feminist cultural studies in the 1980s is influenced by a range of work by feminist scholars who, like Janice Radway, investigate women's situated reading practices,<sup>12</sup> or, like Barbara Smith and Deborah McDowell, are concerned to articulate the case for a specifically black feminist criticism.<sup>13</sup> For some the distinction between feminist literary criticism and feminist cultural studies may seem like a rather arbitrary demarcation, since many feminist literary critics not only engage a broader cultural context in their discussion of literary works, but explicitly identify their work as making a contribution to the development of feminist cultural theory.<sup>14</sup> Indeed as Catherine Belsey and Jane Moore describe in their introduction to *The Feminist Reader*, from the early 1970s whenever feminist writers discussed literature "they refused to isolate it from the cultural of which it forms a part" and in this sense offered an extremely radical critique of traditional literary criticism.<sup>15</sup> Feminist cultural studies expands this critique to address the broader questions about the social and cultural determinations of reading practices and the organization of reading contexts. Nevertheless, feminist literary criticism and feminist cultural studies share a set of guiding commitments that could be specified in the following way: that writing be denaturalized as a solitary (individualist) act, that literature be understood as culturally and historically determined, and that art cannot be a retreat from politics. One of the consequences of the close connection between feminist literary criticism and feminist cultural studies is that by the late 1980s feminist literary critics are well advanced beyond their more androcentric colleagues in their apprehension of the expressly political aims of cultural studies more generally.

The affiliation between feminist literary criticism and feminist cultural studies is especially suggestive in the work that addresses the relationship between literary theory and feminist politics.<sup>16</sup> In her outline of a feminist appropriation of poststructuralism, Chris Weedon argues that feminism needs a theory of the relation between language and culture that would refuse the pull of a universalist individualism and provide a model for understanding how the subject and subjectivity are historically and culturally constructed. For Weedon, deconstruction, psychoanalysis, and poststructuralism offer good models for the analysis of the textual constructedness of gendered and class subjectivities, subject positions, identity, and desire—key structuring principles of a dominant patriarchal order. For most of her analysis, literature itself is displaced in favor of the notion of liter-

ary criticism as a discursive field in which "literature" is accorded a privileged place. In Weedon's poststructuralist feminism "literature is one specific site among many where the ideological construction of gender takes place" (167). As Weedon writes, "the task of the feminist criticism is to demonstrate how texts constitute gender for the reader in class- and race-specific ways and how these modes of femininity and masculinity relate to the broader network of discourses on gender—both in the present and the past" (168). Without a doubt, Weedon's directives for feminist criticism are centrally important for feminist cultural studies. But Cora Kaplan claims a more historically determining role for literature as not simply one site of the construction of narratives of gender identity, but rather the central productive place of "naturalized," and hence, ideological representations of women; here Kaplan anticipates the claim that Belsey and Moore assert that "for feminist critics, the literary is always/already political" (59).

Given that they share a critical focus on the relation between literature and the culture within which it is produced or consumed, feminist literary studies and feminist cultural studies are equally preoccupied with the discursive construction of identity and subjectivity, and what might be called the politics of representation. The point where they diverge, however, concerns the attention given to the circuit of production, exchange, and consumption of cultural products.<sup>17</sup> This leads to certain questions, not only about the cultural conditions of the production of given texts or other cultural forms, i.e., music, body practices, geography, but also about the specific conditions of reading or consumption, which often requires the investigation of the everyday situations of lived cultures.

In these ways, the critical agenda of feminist cultural studies extends beyond the by now familiar arguments for canon revision. It's probably fair to say that feminist cultural studies subsumes the study of literature under the broader study of culture, where textuality may be the medium of analysis, but the study of structures, institutions, and relations of power are the horizon of feminist scholarship. The struggle over the canon is understood to be a struggle about the politics of representation and the relations of power that organize knowledge; this not only concerns representation in books or films, but more broadly in the university curriculum, social movements, and global economic relations (among other things). The point of course is to win the struggle for inclusion not only with respect to the list of required reading, but more importantly in the social and political struggles outside of academe. For this reason, feminist cultural studies relies heavily on the analytical frameworks of contemporary feminist social and political theory.<sup>18</sup> The divergence then between feminist literary criticism and feminist cultural studies can be identified by the notion of the "text" that grounds feminist criticism, the degree to which literature remains the privileged object of cultural criticism, and the extent to which each approach accounts for the network of relations within which any text makes sense.<sup>19</sup>

Meaghan Morris's work provides one model of the productive merger between literary criticism, social theory, and cultural politics and demonstrates

quite clearly how a feminist analysis should be defined by the questions it asks and not solely by the objects it studies.<sup>20</sup> In the introduction to her book *The Pirate's Fiancée*, Morris returns to the recontextualization I identified above in Treichler's practice of rereading feminist theory—where rereading is understood to be an interventionist practice of reinscribing a speaking-position for women within a context in which they are denied one. For Morris, feminist work must engage a "history . . . in which the question of rewriting 'discourses' emerges from a political critique of the social positioning of women." Feminist textual strategies must be grounded in "the political projects of the women's movement" and feminist theorists must be accountable to "say what kinds of discursive changes will matter, why, and for whom."

In this way, the notion of a "textual strategy" cannot become a sort of free-floating aesthetic ideal, interchangeable with any other general concept of action or a vague thematics of "doing something." On the contrary: "strategy" here is a value that not only refers to and derives from the political discourse of feminism, but remains open to revision by them. (5)

In this passage, she articulates one of the aims of feminist cultural studies—to actively transform discursive material and to open up a position of power in discourse so that women have a place from which to speak. This loosely defined political aim will lead Morris to different questions and different theories, but she will return time and time again to the issues of women's writing and the articulation of textual politics all in the attempt to produce a speaking position (as a feminist, but not necessarily for feminism itself) within different political, critical, and material contexts.

### Ethnography and Autobiography: The Practice of Writing Culture

The relationship between culture and the subject has been a preoccupation of much feminist cultural criticism during the 1980s, either implicitly as in the work I described above, or more explicitly as part of the work that theorizes the practices of ethnography and autobiography. These practices all concern the process of "doing research on women" and consider at great length the politics of representing those who are usually denied self-representation. Although these studies logically belong within a tradition of British subculture research, each offers a significant re-vision of the cultural theory that develops out of that tradition. For instance, Angela McRobbie takes issue with the masculine focus of the tradition of ethnographic study of British youth, arguing not only that girls' subcultures have a specificity of their own, but also that methods of the subculture research need to be scrutinized for the relations of power and exploitation they enact. One of the major contributions from this line of feminist cultural studies is the attention to the politics and practices of writing cultural criticism.

In her article on "The Politics of Feminist Research," Angela McRobbie argues that the ethnographic accounts produced in the process of doing subcultural research necessarily provokes a tension between the "anarchy of talk and the order and formality of written work" (50).<sup>21</sup> In reflecting on her own research on women's or girls' subcultures, McRobbie points out that the research situation includes social relations and practices which, left unexamined, threaten to undermine crucial feminist political commitments. It is clear that feminist ethnographers rely upon the proliferation of women's talk and their willingness to share personal stories. The ethnographer, for her part, interviews, listens in, asks questions, all in the attempt to generate more talk. From there she orders the talk, summarizes it, selects from it, rephrases it, surrounds it with theory, and finally, but never simply, represents it; in constructing a representation of women's talk, the ethnographer offers an interpretation of that talk that is unavoidably partial and political because of the talk that was left out, ignored, and transformed through the process of transcription and transcoding itself. In this sense, the best ethnographies can only produce partial truths that are always politically inflected. Far from closing off ethnography for feminist cultural studies, these insights reinforce the understanding that all knowledge, both the kind that is fiercely personal as well as the kind that is contoured according to more public sensibilities, is discursively constructed and culturally determined.

I would like to describe two projects of feminist cultural studies that contribute to a broader theoretical understanding of how everyday life is constructed mutually from the stuff of biography as well as of history. Both projects rely on psychoanalysis and poststructuralism to provide models by which to understand the cultural determination of subjectivity and biography, but where Carolyn Steedman evokes and eventually revises the genre of autobiography, Frigga Haug and the *Frauenformen* Collective invent a new method of feminist ethnography.<sup>22</sup> Both projects will pay close attention to the writing practices involved in their cultural investigations.

Carolyn Steedman's book *Landscape for a Good Woman* is partly autobiographical, telling a story about her mother and herself, their working-class childhoods, and their place—or invisibility—in a history of postwar Britain; and partly theoretical, telling the official myths about the mechanisms of patriarchy and the psychoanalytic enterprise. The beginning points for Steedman's account are the different theoretical questions cultural critics engage—about the construction of subjectivity, about the production of desire, about the discipline of patriarchal law. In this engagement she will not only make sense of the act of constructing a biography, but will also revise her guiding theoretical questions as well:

Personal interpretations of past time—the stories that people tell themselves in order to explain how they got to the place they currently inhabit—are often in deep and ambiguous conflict with the official interpretive devices of a culture. This book is organized around a conflict like this, taking as a starting point the struc-

tures of class analysis and schools of cultural criticism that cannot deal with everything there is to say about my mother's life. (6)

The auto/biographies she offers recount a life in excess of the very theories available to make sense of them. In reflecting on the inadequacy of theoretical frameworks to make sense of her working-class childhood, for instance, she argues that "we need a reading of history that reveals fathers mattering in a different way from the way they matter in the corpus of traditional psychoanalysis" (19). The question she asks is how do children learn about the general ordering of social power when the father is relatively powerless and unimportant; who, then, is the proper agent of the law?<sup>23</sup>

It is not simply Steedman's working-class revision of psychoanalysis that marks her important contribution to feminist cultural studies, but also the way in which she reflects on and resists the "compulsions of narrative" that would have her transform her story into an historical trope. "I must make," she writes at the end,

the final gesture of defiance, and refuse to let this be absorbed by the central story; must ask for a structure of political thought that will take all of this, all these secret and impossible stories, recognize what has been made out on the margins; and then, recognizing it, refuse to celebrate it; a politics that will take, watching this past say "so what?"; and consign it to the dark. (144)

Even with the important challenge her working-class childhood offers to psychoanalysis, she refuses to celebrate it in any way; in so doing, she makes an important contribution to feminist cultural studies. By writing a story that is not central to the dominant culture, she illuminates the process whereby all stories are written by a dominant culture.

If autobiography reveals the process whereby culture writes the subject, ethnography demonstrates the ways in which subject(s) writes culture.<sup>24</sup> Following this, ethnography is understood to involve the construction of cultural interpretations by all participants, so that the ethnographic encounter is understood to evoke stories inherited culturally and constructed personally, as well as the local retelling of these stories.<sup>25</sup> Thus ethnography involves (at least) two sets of interpretations that are constantly in play against and off each other; one of the subjects as they make sense of their everyday lives and of the "ethnographic encounter," and another of the ethnographer as she makes sense of cultural symbols, myths, wisdom, personal stories, biographical texts, and the act of doing ethnography itself. One way that feminist ethnographers have dealt with this tension is by using a self-conscious narrative device to organize the production of knowledge and cultural criticism. These personal and autobiographical narratives from both the subject(s) and the ethnographer herself are then written in as part of the ethnographic account.<sup>26</sup>

Frigga Haug and the *Frauenformen* Collective describe in detail the practices and findings of their ethnographic investigation of the social processes of gender

socialization.<sup>27</sup> The Collective began with a broad empirical question: "what are the processes whereby individuals construct themselves into existing social relations." The term "memory work" identifies their method of ethnographic investigation whereby each member of the Collective contributes a written account of a memory that focused on the body in some way. Of particular interest were body stories that recounted a memory or an event that represented a moment of learning a sexualized interpretation of the female body. Memory work, as a form of ethnographic investigation, focuses on the act of writing as an investigative tactic:

Writing is a transgression of boundaries, an exploration of new territory. It involves making public the events of our lives, wriggling free of the constraints of purely private and individual experiences. . . . Writing also transports us across another boundary; it begins to break down the division of labour between literature as creative writing and everyday language as a means of communication (37-8).

Every woman read every essay; every essay was reworked and rewritten through the act of collective criticism and interrogation. Through this laborious process of remembering, writing, reading, and rewriting, the Collective began to identify ways in which women as individuals construct themselves into already existing/determined social structures, cultural narratives, and power relations. Simultaneously, they were uncovering the production of individual consciousness out of the stuff of culture and everyday life. Through the process of collaborative writing and self-interrogation, the Collective works to uncover the status of truth and authenticity that operate in women's subjectivity by focusing on how cultural narratives get "taken up" in the construction of the "self."

Both of these projects, by Steedman and by the *Frauenformen* Collective, investigate the role of writing practices in the production of feminist cultural criticism. In so doing, they illuminate a model for feminist textual politics that is not just vaguely determined by the general political aims of the women's movement, but more importantly, concerned to show specifically how discursive changes are produced, i.e., through writing, through close reading, how they can be empowering, i.e., through the construction of a speaking position, and, finally, how they can revise dominant narratives of gender, race, and class identity.<sup>28</sup> This emphasis on theoretically elaborating the practices of reading and writing cultural criticism will continue to distinguish much of the work of feminist cultural studies in the 1990s.

### Cultural Politics, Take 1: Race, Postcolonialism and Nationalism

In their editorial on "Challenging Imperial Feminism," Valerie Amos and Pratibha Parmar remind their readers that "it is the autonomous activities of Black women which have forced the white women's movement away from a celebra-

tion of universality and sameness, to be concerned with the implications of differences among women's experiences and understanding the political factors at work in those differences" (7).<sup>29</sup> The critique initiated and most fully developed by black feminist critics and postcolonial scholars establishes two broad objectives for feminist cultural studies: one is to challenge the often implicit assumption that there is general consensus among feminists regarding the appropriate political aims of critical feminist work. A second challenge requires the development of more complex criticism of the oppression inherent in the gendered and class relations within a racist society. The issue, according to Hazel Carby, will not be one of simply making visible the invisible "black woman," but rather of redefining the "central categories and assumptions of mainstream feminist thought" to take account of the interconnection of class, gender, and race and of the "existence of racism . . . as a structuring feature of our relations with white women" (213-14).<sup>30</sup>

In general, there have been at least two types of responses to challenges like Carby's.<sup>31</sup> The first redefines the notion of "identity politics" and uses it as a way out of the impasse of recent cultural theory. Where essentialist notions of identity are theoretically untenable from a poststructuralist perspective, and the concept of indeterminacy proves equally impossible as a foundation for feminist politics, some feminist theorists have tried to reconceptualize the relation between material identity and subject position to avoid the twin problems of essentialism and anti-essentialism. Linda Alcoff, for one, develops a notion of the subject as positionality, where she describes the positional definition of the subject (in contrast to an essentialist definition of the subject) as one that constructs "identity relative to a constantly shifting context" and where "the position that women find themselves in can be actively utilized (rather than transcended) as a location for the construction of meaning, a place from where meaning is constructed, rather than the place where a meaning can be discovered (the meaning of femaleness)" (324).<sup>32</sup> To broaden her model of positionality, Alcoff borrows the description of "identity politics" offered in the Combahee River Collective statement as a model for the construction of a politics that takes account of the material identities of women. And yet, this appropriation of black identity as a privileged sign of material identity troubles other feminists. By way of an implicit response to Alcoff's formulations, Valerie Smith examines the way that black women often serve as the emblem of otherness in recent feminist theory.<sup>33</sup> She takes issue with how black women are often constructed as the cultural sign of a materialist, or alternatively, "multiplicitous," or "corporeal" subject. Such a reification of the "black women's identity" as determined not only by gender, but also by race and class markers establishes a functional identity for black women as the repository of all that is "other" to feminist theory; consequently feminist is understood as the positive pole of identity that is not-raced and not-classed, a problematic construction that suggests, for example, that white feminists have no race.



In contrast, a second type of response to Carby's challenge—that mainstream feminist thought must redefine its central categories and assumptions—recognizes that the problem of multiple (race, class as well as gender) positionality must be theorized on the basis of white women's experience as well as black women's. This second response requires a different conceptualization of the notion of "positionality," one that doesn't fetishize black women as more "positioned" or "marked" than others. In a subtle revision of Alcoff's formulation of positionality as where "women find themselves," Cheryl Wall redefines positionality to mean not the place that women are assigned, but the place women put themselves. In her introduction to the book, *Changing Our Own Words*, Wall argues that the notion of positionality offers a different way to think about the relationship between identity, the body, place, speaking site, and subject site; it understands identity to be an articulation among these notions. Wall asserts that white women need to reflect on how they have been marked by race and *positioned* in a system of racial privilege. In some recent autobiographical writings, white women have begun to develop such accounts of their own multiple positionalities and responsibilities to acknowledge their position vis-à-vis other women.

Biddy Martin and Chandra Talpade Mohanty take Minnie Bruce Pratt's autobiographical essay as a model of the critical response required of white feminists.<sup>34</sup> Pratt offers a sustained self-critique that "sets out to explore the exclusions and repressions which support the seeming homogeneity, stability, and self-evidence of 'white identity,' which is derived from and dependent on the marginalization of differences within as well as 'without'" (193). Martin and Mohanty argue that Pratt not only critiques a universalizing notion of feminism, but also the notion that racial difference is an external division between white and black feminists rather than a difference that is internal to white feminist subjectivity. It is precisely the maintenance of fixed racial categories within feminism that Smith argues reproduces the fetishizing of black women. In contrast, Pratt understands herself as simultaneously privileged by race and marginalized by gender and sexuality in a contradictory way. Martin and Mohanty draw attention to how Pratt uses the figure of "home" to represent this contradictory positionality.<sup>35</sup> Pratt narrates her recognition that the southern community where she grew up constitutes itself through the repression of struggles against racism, and the history of its gay and lesbian community. Pratt conceptualizes her own subjectivity as constructed by similar repressions and exclusions and thereby as internally structured by differences of race and sexuality as well as gender. Martin and Mohanty pay close attention to the form of writing in Pratt's autobiography to show how her "narrative [and] personal history acquires a materiality in the constant re-writing of herself in relation to shifting interpersonal and political contexts. This rewriting," they argue, "is an interpretive act which is itself embedded in social and political practice" (210). Their reading is offered as a similar act of political practice in which they use the Pratt essay not as a source of

answers, but rather as the occasion for posing important questions about "how political community might be reconceptualized within feminist practice" (210). The importance of this work for the development of feminist cultural studies rests with its attention to the articulation of a politics of location that means, in Mohanty's words, attention to "the historical, geographical, cultural, psychic and imaginative boundaries which provide the ground for political definition and self-definition for U.S. feminists" (31).<sup>36</sup>

## Cultural Politics, Take 2: Science, Technology, and the Body

One of the more compelling issues for many U.S. feminists concerns the power/knowledge relationships codified in scientific and medical discourse and enacted through technological networks and applications—in the discourse of AIDS, for example, or as part of the exploitation of women's labor in the global factory.<sup>37</sup> An earlier feminist criticism that condemned science and technology as masculinist cults of rationality has given way to a serious engagement with a cluster of related questions that concern not only the development of new sciences and the deployment of new technologies (genetic engineering, for example), but also the philosophical frameworks that structure the social organization of the production of truth and knowledge. Here I am referring to the range of feminist work that addresses such issues as the methodological frameworks of the social sciences, epistemological questions that interrogate the truth value of scientific discourse, and the close-reading of the scientific "findings" that support culturally determined and ideological theories of sexual difference. By the end of the decade of the eighties, the central issues of the feminist engagement with science and technology can be briefly described in the following axioms: 1) science is a culturally determined discourse that organizes (or narrates) a particular worldview; 2) scientific knowledge is socially constructed and the practice, production, and organization of science is likewise structured by social relations; and 3) the manifestations of contemporary science, technology, and other institutionalized systems of rationality (medicine, for example) are multi-faceted, multi-national, and radically dispersed and decentered, and therefore require the development of numerous feminist projects that will engage, critique, and struggle over such sites of the organization of power and knowledge.<sup>38</sup> These projects of critical scholarship will, for the most part, each consider the relation of women to the discourses of science and technology, in terms of their participation in its production as well as their subjugation to its "truth." As a result, even though the techno-phobia of earlier feminist criticism has been displaced, not all feminist work on science and technology will find those discourses and power/knowledge relations compatible with their feminist values.

One of the most influential critical feminist cultural analyses to emerge in the past decade is outlined in Donna Haraway's essay "A Manifesto for Cyborgs:

Science, Technology and Socialist Feminism in the 1980s.”<sup>39</sup> First published in 1985, and reprinted more recently in several collections of feminist criticism, the essay develops a broad-ranging analysis of the contemporary scene of multinational science and technology in the interest of developing a framework for a socialist, materialist feminism that would be equipped to critically engage that scene.<sup>40</sup> The dense language and wide-ranging scope makes the essay a rich vein for the feminist reader, and the ironic use of cyborg imagery as its logic of organization and explication evokes the rapid firing of neural synapses; nonetheless, the critical point of the essay is sharply honed, and it is a criticism directed as much to other feminists as it is to the technologically seduced proletariat: social responsibility will not be well served by either a “anti-science metaphysics [or] a demonology of technology” nor by an equally problematic intoxicated belief in technological progress or the benign deployment of scientific knowledge. Quite forcefully Haraway argues that science and technology, as discourses, as social relations, as cultural productions, cannot be ceded to a hegemonic ruling bloc. It is simply not tenable, therefore, for feminists to write off those productions because they institutionalize masculinist values—of rationality, of conquest, of domination. Yet Haraway argues equally forcefully that the fictions of “women” that inform many feminist “standpoint” arguments are not any more the innocent foundation upon which to construct the necessary critiques and revisions of the production of science and technology. Rather, in Haraway’s cyborg cosmology, identity (feminist or otherwise) is always partial, recombinant, implicated, and in process. The agenda for feminist cultural studies then, calls for the production of cultural criticism that can take account of fragmented, fluid identities, as it targets specific sites for feminist intervention, infiltration, and re-construction.

The issue of the body shadows a range of discussions among feminist thinkers, for example, in discussions on the position of the female body in medical discourse, or on the heterosexist assumptions in debates about pornography. In many ways feminism (in all its varieties) is about taking the body seriously in terms of its gender, race, ethnicity, physical abilities, class position, and enacted corporeality. In this sense, feminism is about the body not silenced, not disciplined, not content to mind its place. The best work on the body does more than simply reverse the mind/body dualism where the body, not the mind, is now the valorized term of the polarity; this work rethinks the relationship between the body and knowledge to address their interconnectedness. As such this work contributes to our understanding of how the body is culturally constructed and not “naturally” given. During the past decade, several feminists have directly addressed the issue of the cultural construction of the gendered body. Judith Allen and Elizabeth Grosz refer to the recent interest in body scholarship as “corporeal feminism”; Michele Barrett, in turn, interprets this interest as one of the more interesting developments in feminist thinking in the past decade. The feminist work I describe here investigates the way that social and cultural practices gender the material body.<sup>41</sup>

The development of feminist readings of the cultural body take diverse forms, but all contribute to what Michel Feher calls “a thick perception of the body” in contemporary culture. One of the more interesting topics of the new feminist body work investigates body *transgressions* to elucidate the practices of resistance that are played out on and through the body. Judith Butler, for example, in her recent book *Gender Trouble*, reconceptualizes the body in terms of boundaries, connections, and discourses. She shows how gay culture mobilizes or rewrites the heterosexual matrix that defines gendered bodies as either male/masculine or female/feminist; gay identity, in this sense, is an articulation of behaviors, gender markers, and bodies.<sup>42</sup>

Other studies of female bodybuilding, sporting women, male drag, transvestism, the lesbian body, and butch-femme aesthetics will take up the related issues of the cultural construction of identity and desire.<sup>43</sup> Two volumes of feminist scholarship are central to these discussions: Carol Vance’s edited collection *Pleasure and Danger*, and Ann Snitow, Christine Stansell, and Sharon Thompson’s collection *Powers of Desire: The Politics of Sexuality*.<sup>44</sup> The *Pleasure and Danger* collection includes the papers, images, and poetry that were originally presented at the Barnard Conference on Sexuality in 1984. These essays challenge the sometimes moralist tendency in some feminist work to dismiss or overlook the importance of women’s pleasure. In her introduction, Vance reminds readers that “although sexuality, like all human cultural activity, is grounded in the body, the body’s structures, physiology, and function do not directly determine the configuration of sexuality.” Following this, we are asked to reconsider the possibility that women, even feminists, might enjoy such forbidden pleasures as pornography, s&m, and “watching.”

Although the body serves as a foundation for this feminist work, it is not to be interpreted as an essentialized object. In this sense, these studies ask the more interesting question, not what *is* the female body?, but *how* is the body female?—i.e., that how is the body gendered through social, technological, and cultural relations. This conception of the body avoids a too static definition of the body that would freeze it in time and space, as if it were not always in process and in history. More importantly perhaps, it promotes the construction of alternative narratives of body-based gender identity that would play with, rather than reproduce, binary models of male/female identity; all in the attempt to understand how bodies are only one element in the articulation of identity.

### What’s in a Name, or Playing the Name Game

What’s at stake in claiming a territory for feminist cultural studies? Should feminist cultural studies be defined as an internally homogeneous space within feminism or should the different positions within feminist cultural studies be understood as a productive feature of this critical movement? The names and projects I cite and describe should not be understood as establishing the borders

of some mythical territory that must henceforth be defended against other accounts of feminist cultural studies. Nor should the separate sections of this essay be understood to represent mutually exclusive projects within feminist cultural studies. Important constructions of the body emerge from black and post-colonial feminist critiques; attention to the cultural practices of reading and writing are important for the critique of science and technology as well within racial critiques. On the other hand these two critiques also make it impossible to read and write culture without taking them into account. With reference to this essay, we have to ask what purchase does the name of feminist cultural studies offer as a critical intervention in the on-going reproduction of cultural value?

Gayatri Spivak offers a critical analysis of the naming of "woman" in feminism, an issue whose role in the development of feminist cultural studies I have addressed above.<sup>45</sup> Spivak argues that the name of "woman" should be understood as a catachresis, a figure that marks the absence of a single proper name attached to a referent that can be empirically determined. Recognizing "the perils of transforming a 'name' to a referent—making a catechism, in other words, of catachresis," Spivak nevertheless proposes that we "name (as) 'woman' that disenfranchised woman whom we strictly, historically, geo-politically cannot imagine as literal referent. Let us divide the name of woman so that we see ourselves as naming, not merely named" (220). In the name of feminist cultural studies, I would like to offer a similar warning about the use of that name while at the same time I acknowledge my appropriation of it as a way of naming a critical project rather than allowing that project to be named for us in ways that would ignore feminist perspectives within cultural studies and feminist cultural studies as a perspective within feminism.

Illinois State University

### Notes

1. Michael Greer and Thomas Foster read earlier drafts of this essay. I am grateful for their helpful suggestions in the revision and expansion of this paper. I am indebted to Paula Treichler for the many opportunities she provided for thinking through these issues.
2. I discuss these different accounts of the development of cultural studies in an essay on "Cultural Studies and the Undergraduate Literary Curriculum," in James Berlin and Michael Vivion, *Cultural Studies and Literary Studies: Collapsing the Boundaries* (Boyton/Cook, forthcoming).
3. The relationship that British social historians—namely E. P. Thompson—had to cultural studies has an interesting history in itself. Cultural studies certainly shows the Thompson influence in its on-going interest in historical research and practices of historiography. At one point this influence provoked great controversy; Graeme Turner describes how the culturalism-structuralism debate divided historians from the structuralists in his book, *British Cultural Studies: An Introduction* (Boston: Unwin Hyman, 1990). Catherine Hall and Lenore Davidoff are two feminist historians associated with the History Workshop group whose work contributed to the formulation of feminist cultural studies. Lenore Davidoff and Catherine Hall, *Family Fortunes: Men and Women in the English Middle Class 1780-1850* (London: Hutchinson, 1987).

4. In her description of the relationship between feminist theory, social history, and "new historicism," Judith Newton points out at least three ways that feminist literary critics have been interested in questions of history; in so doing, she articulates a perspective similar to the one I am offering in this essay: namely that feminist literary critics have engaged the issue of history both as context for literary questions and as the site of questions about the politics of representation. See her "History as Usual? Feminism and the 'New Historicism,'" *Cultural Critique* 9 (1988): 87-121.

5. A more detailed account of the British influences on feminist cultural studies would include other important feminist projects of cultural criticism, including the work by Juliet Mitchell, Ann Oakley, Sheila Rowbotham, Catherine Hall, and Veronica Beechy; books by Annette Kuhn and AnnMarie Wolpe, eds., *Feminism and Materialism* (London: Routledge, 1978); Michele Barrett, *Women's Oppression Today: The Marxist/Feminist Encounter* (London: Verso, 1980); Rosalind Brunt and Caroline Rowan, eds., *Feminism, Culture and Politics* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1982); Michele Barrett and Mary McIntosh, *The Anti-Social Family* (London: Verso, 1982); and Rosalind Coward, *Patriarchal Precedents: Sexuality and Social Relations* (London: Routledge, 1983). In addition, a fuller account of the discursive context of the development of feminist cultural studies would most certainly include the essays and articles in the ten volumes of *Working Papers in Cultural Studies*, as well as those books and articles produced by members of the other working groups at the Centre: *Resistance Through Rituals* (London: Hutchinson, 1975); *Policing the Crisis: Mugging, the State and Law and Order* (London: Macmillan, 1978); *Culture, Media, Language* (London: Hutchinson, 1980); *The Empire Strikes Back: Race and Racism in 70s Britain* (London: Hutchinson, 1982).

6. The editorial group included Lucy Bland, Charlotte Brunsdon, Martin Culverwell, Rachel Harrison, Dorothy Hobson, Trisha McCabe, Frank Mort, Rebecca O'Rourke, Olivia Smith, Christine Weedon, and Janice Winship. An additional essay was contributed by Angela McRobbie. *Women Take Issue: Aspects of Women's Subordination* (London: Hutchinson, 1978).

7. The work by those feminists associated with Birmingham must also be seen as a political and intellectual engagement with the broader projects and concerns of British feminism. A recent book edited by Terry Lovell provides an excellent introduction to feminist cultural studies as it is situated in the context of the second wave of British feminism: *British Feminist Thought: A Reader*, ed., Terry Lovell (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1990).

8. From the other side, in his account of the early neglect of feminism at the CCCS, Stuart Hall describes how, in the mid-1970s, feminists came "crashing through the windows" to demand proper attention to the issues of gender as well as of class. "Cultural Studies and its Theoretical Legacies," paper delivered at the conference *Cultural Studies: Now and in the Future*, sponsored by the Unit for Criticism and Interpretive Theory, University of Illinois, Urbana, April, 1990.

9. The Bland, et al. article is written within a socialist-feminist framework in which the authors analyze women's subordination in terms of women's waged and unwaged work and the role of the state in enforcing that subordination. The article is characterized by a theoretical commitment to analyze domination and subordination in terms of the contradiction between forces and relations of production, even as it works at another level to articulate the specificity of women's socio-economic oppression. Specificity here comes through their analysis of "three significant historical moments in the development of the British welfare legislation" (48). Angela McRobbie's contribution to the volume, in contrast, reports her ethnographic research with working-class girls, and is written as an example of and as a response to the subculture research going on at that time; McRobbie's concern is to "redress" the absence of attention to girls in youth subculture studies. Although she acknowledges that the girls' culture she studies is partly determined by their "material position," "social class," and "future role in production," her broader intention is to "map out the ways in which they experienced and made sense of the social institutions which they inhabited and to consider in some detail their inter-personal relationships" (96). To this end, McRobbie's analysis of class contradictions is supported by reference to the girls' statements that work out their difference from middle-

class girls: "they all think they're brainy but they're not. . . . They always wear the uniform proper-like. . . . They suck up to the teachers, never do a thing wrong" (103). McRobbie interprets these experiences as they are produced by and in turn reproduce a culture of femininity. This shows only two of the different ways in which "the material conditions of women's lives" was theorized in the articles in this collection.

10. Stuart Hall, "Cultural Studies: Two Paradigms," in *Culture, Ideology and Social Process: A Reader*, Tony Bennett, Graham Martin, Colin Mercer, and Janet Woollacott, eds. (London: Open UP, 1981). See also Stuart Hall, "Cultural Studies and the Centre: Some Problematics and Problems," in *Culture, Media, Language*, Stuart Hall, Dorothy Hobson, Andrew Lowe, and Paul Willis, eds. (London: Hutchinson, 1980).

11. Paula A. Treichler, "Teaching Feminist Theory," in *Theory in the Classroom*, ed. Cary R. Nelson (Urbana: U of Illinois P, 1986).

12. In her book *Reading the Romance*, Janice Radway is already working at the intersections of American Studies, literary theory, and feminist criticism, so that she anticipates, and in some ways, inaugurates the development of feminist cultural studies in the U.S. Janice Radway, *Reading the Romance: Women, Patriarchy and Popular Literature* (Chapel Hill: U of North Carolina P, 1984) 204. Cathy Schwichtenberg defines feminist cultural studies in an article in which she focuses exclusively on Radway's book and Angela McRobbie's research to "identify the productive collusion between British and American feminist cultural studies." Cathy Schwichtenberg, "Feminist Cultural Studies," *Critical Studies in Mass Communication* 6 (1989): 202-08. Flynn and Schweickart include an annotated bibliography in their book on gender and reading: Elizabeth A. Flynn and Patrocino P. Schweickart, eds., *Gender and Reading: Essays on Readers, Texts, and Contexts* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1986). Annette Kolodny's article is by now required reading for feminist cultural studies: "Dancing Through the Minefield: Some Observations on the Theory, Practices, and Politics of Feminist Literary Criticism," *Feminist Studies* 6 (1980): 1-25. Several essays in the Green and Kahn collection describe the variety of feminist literary criticism. Gayle Green and Coppelia Kahn, eds., *Making a Difference: Feminist Literary Criticism* (London: Methuen, 1985).

13. Cheryl Wall offers a critique of McDowell's response to Smith's essay, but in the end suggests that her call "for a criticism that combines a consideration of context, both historical and political, with 'rigorous textual analysis' is important to the development of a project of black feminist criticism" (5). Cheryl A. Wall, "Introduction: Taking Positions and Changing Words" in *Changing Our Own Words: Essays on Criticism, Theory, and Writing by Black Women*, Cheryl A. Wall, ed. (New Brunswick, Rutgers UP, 1989). Barbara Smith, "Towards a Black Feminist Criticism," *Conditions Two* 1 (October 1977); Deborah McDowell, "New Directions for Black Feminist Criticism," *Black American Literature Forum* 14 (1980). Both of these essays are reprinted in *The New Feminist Criticism: Essays on Women, Literature, and Theory*, Elaine Showalter, ed. (New York: Pantheon, 1985). Alice Walker's essay, "In Search of My Mothers' Gardens," is a foundational essay of criticism by an Afro-American writer. Alice Walker, *In Search of Our Mothers' Gardens* (New York: Harcourt, 1983); see also the following books on the specifics of black literary criticism: *Conjuring: Black Women, Fiction, and Literary Tradition*, Marjorie Pryse and Hortense J. Spillers, eds. (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1985); *Reconstructing Womanhood: The Emergence of the Afro-American Woman Novelist*, Hazel V. Carby (New York: Oxford UP, 1987); *Reading Black, Reading Feminist: A Critical Anthology*, Henry Louis Gates, Jr., ed. (New York: Meridan, 1990).

14. As I mentioned in an earlier footnote, Judith Newton situates feminist literary criticism in relation to new historicism in her article "History as Usual?: Feminism and the 'New Historicism,'" *Cultural Critique* 9 (1988): 87-121. Teresa L. Ebert, on the other hand, offers a semiotic framework for the development of feminist cultural theory in her article, "The Romance of Patriarchy: Ideology, Subjectivity, and Postmodern Feminist Cultural Theory," *Cultural Critique* 10 (1988): 19-57. Mary Poovey questions the usefulness of poststructuralism for feminism: "Feminism and Decon-

struction," *Feminist Studies* 14.1 (1988): 51-65. For a developmental account of the more literature-based cultural studies and its relationship to feminist literary theory see the chapter on "Class, Gender, Race" in Patrick Brantlinger's book *Crusoe's Footprints: Cultural Studies in Britain and America* (New York: Routledge, 1990).

15. Catherine Belsey and Jane Moore, *The Feminist Reader: Essays in Gender and the Politics of Literary Criticism* (New York: Basil Blackwell, 1989). Indeed, Kate Millett, for one, explicitly argues for a materialist feminist literary criticism that takes account of broader cultural issues. Kate Millett, *Sexual Politics* (New York: Avon Books, 1970).

16. Chris Weedon, *Feminist Practice and Poststructuralist Theory* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1987); Cora Kaplan, "The Feminist Politics of Literary Theory," in her *Sea Changes: Culture and Feminism* (London: Methuen, 1986). See also Sally McConnell-Ginet, Ruth Borker, and Nelly Furman, eds., *Women and Language in Literary and Society* (New York: Praeger, 1980); Alice Jardine *Gynesis: Configurations of Woman and Modernity* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1985); Catharine R. Stimpson, *Where the Meanings Are* (New York: Methuen, 1988); Joan W. Scott, "Deconstructing Equality-Versus-Difference: Or, the Use of Poststructuralist Theory for Feminism," *Feminist Studies* 14.1 (1988): 33-50; The collection of essays edited by Judith Newton and Deborah Rosenfelt also includes several articles in the mode of feminist cultural studies that address the literary conditions of the social construction of human identity; see especially the essay by Catherine Belsey "Constructing the Subject: Deconstructing the Text," *Feminist Criticism and Social Change: Sex, Class, and Race in Literature and Culture* (New York: Methuen, 1985).

17. This description is informed by Richard Johnson's model of cultural processes given in his article "What Is Cultural Studies Anyway?" *Social Text* 6.1 (1987): 38-80.

18. There are a number of books and articles that offer new articulations of feminist social theory as well as feminist revisions of traditional social theory. A representative sample includes: bell hooks, *Ain't I a Woman: Black Women and Feminism* (Boston: South End Press, 1981); Kathy Ferguson, *The Feminist Case Against Bureaucracy* (Philadelphia: Temple UP, 1985); Carole Pateman and Elizabeth Gross, eds., *Feminist Challenges: Social and Political Theory* (Boston: Northeastern UP, 1986); Roberta Hamilton and Michele Barrett, eds., *The Politics of Diversity: Feminism, Marxism, and Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1986).

19. In an essay in this volume, Cary Nelson articulates the key aims and imperatives of cultural studies as it must be distinguished from literary studies. These differences are perhaps less clear in the case of feminist literary criticism which has much more of a claim to be "always/already cultural studies" than does traditional literary criticism or literary history.

20. Meaghan Morris, "Banality in Cultural Studies" *Discourse* X.2 (Spring-Summer, 1988): 3-29; Meaghan Morris, "At Henry Parkes Motel," *Cultural Studies* 2.1 (1988); Meaghan Morris, "Things to Do with Shopping Centers," in Susan Sheridan, ed., *Grafts: Feminist Cultural Criticism* (London: Verso, 1988); Meaghan Morris, *The Pirate's Fiancée: Feminism, Reading, Postmodernism* (London: Verso, 1988).

21. Angela McRobbie, "The Politics of Feminist Research: Between Talk, Text, and Action," *Feminist Review* 12: 46-57.

22. Here is the point at which ethnographic studies begin to overlap with feminist film and audience studies to elaborate a feminist cultural theory of female spectatorship. Representative collections include: *Women's Pictures: Feminism and Cinema* by Annette Kuhn (London: Routledge, 1982); *Boxed In: Women and Television*, Helen Baehr and Gillian Dyer, eds., (London: Pandora Press, 1987); *Female Spectators: Looking at Film and Television*, E. Diedre Pribram, ed. (London: Verso, 1988); *The Female Gaze: Women as Viewers of Popular Culture*, Lorraine Gramman and Margaret Marshment, eds. (Seattle: The Real Comet Press, 1989); *Indiscretions: Avant-garde Film, Video, and Feminism* by Patricia Mellencamp (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1990).

23. Hortense Spillers illuminates a similar analysis of "a life in excess of theory" in her account of a textual sociometry in which "Among African-Americans in the midst of violent historic intervention that, for all intents and purposes, has banished the father, if not in fact murdered him, the Father's law embodies still the guilt that hovers: one feels called on to 'explain,' make excuses, for his 'absence'" (127). Later she writes: "we situate ourselves, then, at the center of a mess, altogether convoluted in its crosshatch of historical purposes. . . . We might ask: to what extent do the texts of a psychoanalytic ahistoricism, out of which the report, the transactions of incest arise, abrade, or reveal against the historic science and its subsequent drama?" (130). Hortense Spillers, "'The Permanent Obliquity of an In(pha)llibly Straight': In the Time of the Daughters and the Fathers" in Cheryl A. Wall, ed., *Changing Our Own Words: Essays on Criticism, Theory and Writing by Black Women* (New Brunswick: Rutgers UP, 1989).
24. The formulation—of ethnography as the process of writing culture—is the subject of James Clifford and George Marcus's anthology *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography* (Berkeley: U of California P, 1986). Although the Clifford and Marcus book offers a more sustained treatment of a literary approach to the textual practices of ethnographers, the insights of the "Writing Culture" project resemble those of many feminists who have re-tooled ethnographic practices to accommodate feminist political commitments. See also Anne Balsamo, "Rethinking Ethnography: A Work for the Feminist Imagination," *Studies in Symbolic Interaction* 11: 45–57.
25. Two book-length accounts of ethnographic investigations that offer a thick perception of the cultural construction of women's identities are: *The Mirror Dance: Identity in a Women's Community* by Susan Krieger (Philadelphia: Temple UP, 1983), and *The Woman in the Body: A Cultural Analysis of Reproduction* by Emily Martin (Boston: Beacon Press, 1987).
26. In one such field study, Valerie Walkerdine investigates the way in which adults and children are discursively inscribed into family interactional patterns. Walkerdine watches a working-class family watch the film *Rocky II*. In her ethnographic account, she describes her construction as the "surveillant other" within this ethnographic situation and the way that this situation is fraught with "disciplinary" effects. Walkerdine suggests that the observer's alliance in the ethnographic encounter is actually more problematic than her inescapable presence. To this end, Walkerdine self-reflexively reinserts herself back into the account by addressing her own identification with the family's film watching. Her reflexive interrogation refuses the construction of a unified "self" in opposition to the family as the "exotic other"; rather, she considers how she is multiply positioned as both middle-class academic and working-class child." Walkerdine describes how, in the privacy of her office, watching the film alone, she encountered memories of pain and class struggle from her own working-class childhood. She elaborates the process of "recognition" that allows her to assert her understanding of the meaning of the family's interactions. To explicate her "recognition" of the family's nickname for the eldest daughter, "DoDo," Walkerdine recounts at length a similar naming event from her own history. Her essay thus includes a photograph of herself dressed as Tinkerbell—the costume that christened Valerie with the nickname, "Tinky." Walkerdine ranges between multiple subjectivities that position her outside of the working-class family as researcher and voyeur, and yet within one, biographically. She uses autobiography, not to tell the story of the construction of her "self" as the dominant ethnographic narrative, but to show how her biography was involved in the production of an ethnographic interpretation. Valerie Walkerdine, "Video Roleplays: Families, Films, and Fantasy," in *Formations of Fantasy*, Victor Burgin, James Donald, and Cora Kaplan, eds. (London: Methuen, 1986).
27. Frigga Haug and the Frauenformen Collective, eds., *Female Sexualization: A Collective Work of Memory* (London: Verso, 1987).
28. Michele Wallace outlines a model for the production of cultural criticism in which close reading would be only one stage of "an institutional, theoretical and political critique" that would move to an analysis of "how and where the audience receives or views the text." Her formulation of black feminist cultural theory "promulgates 'cultural reading' as an act of resistance" (244). Michele Wallace, "Negative Images: Towards a Black Feminist Cultural Criticism," *Invisibility Blues: From Pop to Theory* (London: Verso, 1990).
29. Valerie Amos and Pratibha Parmar, "Challenging Imperial Feminism," *Feminist Review* (Autumn 1984): 3–19. Indeed, in her new preface to the 1988 edition of her book *Women's Oppression Today*, Michele Barrett reflects on the changes in feminist cultural theory that have occurred in the decade since she wrote the first edition of the book. In particular she is concerned to acknowledge her neglect in that earlier edition to consider issues of ethnicity, race and racism in her marxist analysis of the gendered structure of capitalist relations of production. Michele Barrett, "Introduction," *Women's Oppression Today: The Marxist/Feminist Encounter*, revised edition (London: Verso, 1988).
30. Hazel V. Carby, "White Woman Listen! Black Feminism and the Boundaries of Sisterhood," in *The Empire Strikes Back: Race and Racism in 70s Britain* (London: Hutchinson, 1982). Carby develops a sustained response to this challenge in her book *Reconstructing Womanhood*, where she describes the emergence of two lines of Afro-American scholarship—black feminist literary criticism and black women's history—both of which are indispensable to the development of feminist cultural theory in the sense of helping feminism rethink the very terms of its own enterprise. Hazel V. Carby, *Reconstructing Womanhood: The Emergence of the Afro-American Woman Novelist* (New York: Oxford UP, 1987).
31. Similar challenges about racism, feminism and accountability have been raised by other feminists in the following sources: bell hooks, *Ain't I a Woman?: Black Women and Feminism* (Boston: South End Press, 1981); Gloria T. Hull, Patricia Bell Scott, and Barbara Smith, eds., *All the Women Are White, All the Blacks Are Men, But Some of Us Are Brave* (New York: Feminist Press, 1982); Barbara Smith, *Home Girls: A Black Feminist Anthology* (New York: Kitchen Table Press, 1983); bell hooks, *Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center* (Boston: South End Press, 1984); the special issue of *Feminist Review* entitled *Many Voices, One Chant: Black Feminist Perspectives* 17 (Autumn) 1984.
32. Linda Alcoff, "Cultural Feminism Versus Poststructuralism: The Identity Crisis in Feminist Theory," in Micheline R. Malson, Jean F. O'Barr, Sarah Westphal-Wihl, and Mary Weyer, eds., *Feminist Theory in Practice and Politics* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1989).
33. Black feminist theory for Smith is defined not only as "theory written (or practiced) by black feminists, but also. . . a way of reading inscriptions of race (particularly but not exclusively blackness), gender (particularly but not exclusively womanhood), and class in modes of cultural expression" (39). Valerie Smith, "Black Feminist Theory and the Representation of the 'Other,'" in Cheryl A. Wall, ed., *Changing Our Words: Essays on Criticism, Theory and Writing by Black Women* (New Brunswick: Rutgers UP, 1990).
34. Bidy Martin and Chandra Talpade Mohanty, "Feminist Politics: What's home got to do with it?" in *Feminist Studies: Critical Studies*, Teresa de Lauretis, ed. (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1986).
35. Martin and Mohanty also comment on African-American critic Bernice Johnson Reagon's use of the figure of "home" in coalition politics. See also Thomas Foster's essay, especially pages 29–30: "'The Very House of Difference': Gender as 'Embattled' Standpoint," *Generators* 8 (Summer, 1990): 17–37. Bernice Johnson Reagon, "Coalition Politics: Turning the Century," in Barbara Smith, ed., *Home Girls: A Black Feminist Anthology* (New York: Kitchen Table/Women of Color Press, 1983).
36. Chandra Talpade Mohanty, "Feminist Encounters: Locating the Politics of Experience," *Copy-right* 1 (Fall 1987): 30–44.
37. Paula A. Treichler, "AIDS, Homophobia, and Biomedical Discourse: An Epidemic of Signification," in Douglas Crimp, ed., *AIDS: Cultural Analysis/Cultural Activism* (1988); *Women Under Attack: Victories, Backlash and the Fight for Reproductive Freedom*, Susan E. Davis, ed. (Boston: South End Press Pamphlet No. 7, 1988).

38. The voluminous feminist work on science, technology, epistemology, and methodology includes the following collections (I've omitted references to single articles due to limitations in space): *Science and Liberation*, Rita Arditti, Pat Brennan, and Steve Cavrak, eds. (Boston: South End Press, 1980); *The Death of Nature: Women, Ecology, and the Scientific Revolution* (New York: Harper and Row, 1980); *The Woman That Never Evolved*, Sandra Blaffer Hardy (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1981); *Biological Woman: The Convenient Myth*, Ruth Hubbard, Mary Sue Henifin, and Barbara Fried, eds. (Cambridge, MA: Schenkman, 1982); *Women Scientists in America: Struggles and Strategies to 1940*, Margaret Rossiter (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1982); *Discovering Reality: Feminist Perspectives on Epistemology, Metaphysics, Methodology and Philosophy of Science*, Sandra Harding and Merrill Hintikka, eds. (Dordrecht: Reidel, 1983); *Machina ex Dea: Feminist Perspectives on Technology*, Joan Rothschild, ed. (New York: Pergamon Press, 1983); *The Technological Woman: Interfacing with Tomorrow*, Jan Zimmerman, ed. (New York: Praeger, 1983); *Science and Gender: A Critique of Biology and Its Theories on Women*, Ruth Bleier (New York: Pergamon Press, 1984); *Reflection on Gender and Science*, Evelyn Fox Keller (New Haven: Yale UP, 1985); *Myths of Gender: Biological Theories About Women and Men*, Anne Fausto-Sterling (New York: Basic Books, 1985); *The Science Question in Feminism*, Sandra Harding (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1986); *Feminism and Methodology: Social Science Issues*, Sandra Harding, ed. (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1987); *Sex and Scientific Inquiry*, Sandra Harding and Jean F. O'Barr, eds. (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1987); *Body/Politics: Women and the Discourses of Science*, Mary Jacobus, Evelyn Fox Keller, Sally Shuttleworth, eds. (New York: Routledge, 1990).

39. The cyborg essay serves as a prolegomenon for the fuller articulation of her critical project developed in her book *Primate Visions* where she issues an invitation "for the readers of *Primate Visions*—historians, cultural critics, feminists, anthropologists, biologies, anti-racists, and nature lovers—to remap the borderlands between nature and culture. . . . and to find an "elsewhere" from which to envision a different and less hostile order of relationships among people, animals, technologies, and land" (15). "A Manifesto for Cyborgs: Science, Technology, and Socialist Feminism in the 1980s," *Socialist Review* 15.2: 65–108. *Primate Visions: Gender, Race, and Nature in the World of Modern Science* (New York: Routledge, 1990).

40. The "Manifesto for Cyborgs" essay was reprinted in *Coming to Terms: Feminism, Theory, Politics*, Elizabeth Weed, ed. (New York: Routledge, 1989), along with three commentary essays: Christina Crosby, "Allies and Enemies," Mary Ann Doan, "Cyborgs, Origins, and Subjectivity," Joan W. Scott, "Cyborgian Socialists?"

41. Judith Allen and Elizabeth Grosz, eds., Special issue on Feminism and the Body, *Australian Feminist Studies* 5 (Summer 1987); Michele Barrett *Women's Oppression Today: The Marxist/Feminist Encounter* (London: Verso, 2nd ed., 1988). Key texts that inform feminist cultural studies of the body include: Monique Wittig, *The Lesbian Body* (New York: William Morris, 1975); Audra Lorde, *The Cancer Journals* (San Francisco: Spinsters Ink, 1980); Mary Ann Doane, "Woman's Stake: Filming the Female Body" *October* 17 (1981): 23–36; Beverley Brown and Parveen Adams, "The Feminine Body and Feminist Politics," *m/f* 3 (1979): 35–50; Susan E. Browne, Debra Connors, and Nancy Stern, eds., *With the Power of Each Breath: A Disabled Women's Anthology* (Pittsburgh: A Women's Publishing Company, 1985); Susan Suleiman, ed., *The Female Body in Western Culture: Contemporary Perspectives* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1986); Wendy Chapkis, *Beauty Secrets: Women and the Politics of Appearance* (Boston: South End Press, 1986); Helen Cixous and Catherine Clement, *The Newly Born Woman* (Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1986); Catherine Gallagher and Thomas Laqueur, eds., *The Making of the Modern Body: Sexuality and Society in Nineteenth Century* (Berkeley: U of California P, 1987). More recent work includes Jane Gallop, *Thinking Through the Body* (New York: Columbia UP, 1988); Page DuBois, *Sowing the Body: Psychoanalysis and the Ancient Representations of Women* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1988); Alison M. Jagger and Susan R. Bordo, eds., *Gender/Body/Knowledge: Feminist Reconstructions of Being and Knowing* (New Brunswick: Rutgers UP, 1990); Carole Spitzack, *Confessing Excess: Women and the Politics of Body Reduction* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1990); Anne Balsamo, "Reading the Gendered Body in Contemporary Culture: 1980–1990," diss., U of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 1991.

42. Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1990).

43. Other work in this vein includes Esther Newton, *Mother Camp: Female Impersonators in America* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1972); Angela McRobbie, "Dance and Social Fantasy," in *Gender and Generation*, ed. Angela McRobbie and A. Nieva (New York: Macmillan, 1984); Rosalind Coward, *Female Desires: How They Are Sought, Bought, and Packaged* (New York: Grove Press, 1985); *Formations of Fantasy*, Victor Burgin, James Donald, and Cora Kaplan, eds. (London: Methuen, 1986); *The Colonial Harem* by Malek Alloula (Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1986); *Policing Desire: Pornography, AIDS and the Media* by Simon Watney (Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1987); *Adorned in Dreams: Fashion and Modernity* by Elizabeth Wilson (Berkeley: U of California P, 1987); *Caught Looking: Feminism, Pornography, & Censorship*, edited by Kate Ellis, Beth Jaker, Nan D. Hunter, Barbara O'Dair, Abby Tallmer (Seattle: The Real Comet Press, 1988); "Women Writing the Body: Let's Watch a Little How She Dances," by Elizabeth Dempster, in *Grafts: Feminist Cultural Criticism*, Susan Sheridan, ed. (London: Verso, 1988): 35–54; "Toward a Butch-Femme Aesthetic" by Sue Ellen Case, *Discourse* 11.1 (1989): 55–73 *Fabrications: Costume and the Female Body* by Jane M. Gaines and Charlotte Herzog, eds. (New York: Routledge, 1989); Annie Woodhouse, *Fantastic Women: Sex, Gender and Transvestism* (New Brunswick: Rutgers UP, 1989).

44. Carole S. Vance, ed., *Pleasure and Danger: Exploring Female Sexuality* (Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1984), and Ann Snitow, Christine Stansell, and Sharon Thompson, eds., *Powers of Desire: The Politics of Sexuality* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1983).

45. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "Feminism and Deconstruction, Again: Negotiating with Unacknowledged Masculinism," in *Between Feminism and Psychoanalysis*, ed. Teresa Brennan (London: Routledge, 1989).