

Feminist Studies

A Guide to Intersectional Theory,
Methodology and Writing

Nina Lykke



Feminist Studies

Routledge Advances in Feminist Studies and Intersectionality

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- A critical analysis of the travelling of ideas, theories and concepts.
- A politics of location, reflexivity and transnational contextualizing that reflects the basis of the Series framed within European diversity and transnational power relations.

1. Feminist Studies

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First published 2010
by Routledge
270 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10016

Simultaneously published in the UK
by Routledge
2 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 4RN

Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an informa business

This edition published in the Taylor & Francis e-Library, 2010.

To purchase your own copy of this or any of Taylor & Francis or Routledge's collection of thousands of eBooks please go to www.eBookstore.tandf.co.uk.

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Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Lykke, Nina.

Feminist studies : a guide to intersectional theory, methodology and writing / by Nina Lykke.

p. cm. — (Routledge advances in feminist studies and intersectionality ;

1) Includes bibliographical references and index.

1. Women's studies. 2. Feminist theory—Study and teaching (Higher) I. Title.

HQ1180.L95 2010

305.4201—dc22

2009043461

ISBN 0-203-85277-X Master e-book ISBN

ISBN10: 0-415-87484-X (hbk)

ISBN10: 0-203-85277-X (ebk)

ISBN13: 978-0-415-87484-7 (hbk)

ISBN13: 978-0-203-85277-4 (ebk)

*. . . to Zak, Sofus, Asker, Jobbe, Carl, Eigil, Dorthe, Uffe,
Rikke, Naja*

– and to you, Mette!

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Editors' Foreword

WELCOME TO ROUTLEDGE ADVANCES IN FEMINIST STUDIES AND INTERSECTIONALITY!

Feminist studies is a vibrant and developing transnational phenomenon and web of activity. Feminist theories and practices have shown that gender is a major structuring force and principle in and across societies and cultures, both globally and locally. Gender relations are both subject to change and resistance to change, within what can only be seen as a turbulent historical period. Moreover, at the same time that gender and gender relations have become more fully recognized and analyzed in research, scholarship, intervention, politics and activism, the notion of gender has also become complex and perhaps even less certain.

One major source of these complications is the presence of multiple intersections in and around gender, gender relations and gender powers. These include intersections between gender and power differentials based on age, class, dis/abilities, ethnicity, nationality, racialization, sexuality, violence, and other social divisions. Further broad intersections continue and change, societally and transsocietally, between culture, economy, generativity, polity, sexuality, science and technology. A third, and crucial, form of intersections is between different branches of feminist theorizing, including: historical materialist feminisms, postcolonial and anti-racist feminisms, radical feminisms, sexual difference feminisms, queerfeminisms, cyberfeminisms, posthuman feminisms, and critical studies on men and masculinities. These present differential understandings of and intersections between discourse, embodiment and materiality, and sex and gender. Together, these various intersections feed into and draw from a fourth set of intersections of the humanities, the social sciences, and the medical, technical and natural sciences. As such, this series is committed to a process of intense transdisciplinarity.

We see these complex and changing formations as the product of and contributing to the travelling of feminist ideas, theories and concepts, as well as their critical analysis. Thus, the series is set within a politics of location. More specifically, this reflexivity and transnational contextualizing

reflects the basis of the series framed within European diversity and transnational power relations.

It is within these contexts that this series, *Routledge Advances in Feminist Studies and Intersectionality*, is committed to the development of new feminist and profeminist perspectives on changing gender relations.

More specifically, the series arises initially from an extensive collaborative network of transnational scholarship and intervention based at and linked to the Centre of Gender Excellence (GEXcel), based at the Universities of Linköping and Örebro, Sweden, but extending through Europe and beyond. This includes scholars from many different parts of the world.

The present volume—the first in the series—is written as an advanced textbook. It balances cutting-edge reflections with introductory overviews. It addresses scholars and professionals in the field and functions as a guide for students and other newcomers to the area working between and inside of existing disciplines.

Within the framework of the series, the book offers interpretations and reflections on its theoretical key issues: *Feminist Studies* and *Intersectionalities*. Interpreting Feminist Studies as a postdisciplinary discipline, the book highlights current issues in feminist theorizing of intersectional gender/sex and debates on epistemologies, methodologies, ethics, and academic writing styles. In particular focuses are on feminist theories of gender/sex in intersections with other sociocultural categorizations (race, ethnicity, class, sexuality etc.). The genealogies of current theoretical approaches to gender/sex as a form of doing are also explored, as well as feminist theories on intersections of sex and gender, bodily materiality, embodiment and subjectivity. Different feminist stances on epistemology are presented from standpoint, empiricist and poststructuralist feminisms to postconstructionist feminist moves into and beyond postmodern philosophy. Based on the assumption that writing and researching goes hand in hand, the book highlights feminist renegotiations of academic writing styles. In line with the transversal ambitions of the series, FEMINIST STUDIES encourages cross-cutting dialogues across all academic disciplines and across different branches of feminist theorizing.

It is with great pleasure that we open the book series with this volume which we hope will inspire critically generous discussions and open-minded debates on its key issues.

Jeff Hearn and Nina Lykke
Managing Series Editors

October 2009

Preface

I have published a somewhat different version of this book in Danish (*Kønsforskning. En guide til feministisk teori, metodologi og skrift*. København: Samfundslitteratur 2008) and in Swedish (*Genusforskning. En guide till feministisk teori, metodologi och skrift*. Stockholm: Liber 2009). To write for an international audience is different from writing for specific national ones. Moreover, I have integrated responses I have received, since I published the Scandinavian versions both from students and from the anonymous reviewers of the English one. Against this background, I have reworked all chapters as well as added new ones. I have also left out many specific references to books that are only published in Scandinavian languages, and that, therefore, languagewise will not be accessible for many readers on the international scene. However, as I believe in situated knowledges and politics of location, I did not erase all Scandinavian language references.

I shall also underline that I find the power issues related to languages tricky and problematic. There is a preponderance in references to Anglophone scholars in this book. This is because I want to give an advanced introduction to theoretical, epistemological and methodological debates in Feminist Studies with special attention to currently burning issues that make up a *joint international frame of reference* for many feminist researchers from different countries and contexts. Since English is the *lingua franca* of Feminist Studies, the works by Anglophone scholars happen to be the ones that often are given the status as international reference texts and that become nodal points in cross-national debates. I definitely think that the texts of Anglophone authors who make it to a position as international reference texts deserve this position due their excellent academic quality and innovative powers. The problem is that a lot of texts of the same high standards are not accessible internationally due to lack of translations. However, to solve this problem is not easy, and I will underline that it cannot be solved within a framework of a book like this. To do this would be another project than the one I have committed myself to here.

September 2009
Nina Lykke

Acknowledgments

There are many people whom I would like to thank for the ways in which they helped me to shape and finish this book—many more than can be named here.

First of all, a very warm thanks to the many students whom, over the years, I have guided around the shifting landscapes of Feminist Studies. You have taught me to love transversal dialogues and feminist pluralism. With all your manifold ideas and perspectives, your immense creativity and the diversity of your different kinds of feminist passions and political-academic innovative powers, you have made it so clear that the teaching of Feminist Studies can never be about prescribing something. Teaching Feminist Studies is about trying to perform as an inspiring sparring and dialogue partner, committed to learning processes that are governed and directed by the explorative and creative curiosity of the student.

Thanks to all the students whom I had the opportunity to teach and guide at the Centre for Feminist Studies at the University of Southern Denmark throughout my years there; a special thanks to Cathrine Egeland, Lotte Augustesen, Lotte Nyboe and Gert Balling, all of whose PhD research I had the pleasure of taking part in as supervisor then.

Warm thanks also to the many PhD students from many countries who took courses in NorsGender (the Nordic Research School of Interdisciplinary Gender Studies) and in InterGender (the Swedish-International Research School of Interdisciplinary Gender Studies). It was so great to become acquainted with your work in my capacity as director, course coordinator and co-teacher. Thanks a lot also to students who took part in sessions within the framework of the European NOISE (Network Of Interdisciplinary Women's Studies in Europe) summer school that I had the privilege to teach as part of a long-standing cooperation with great European partners, among others in Women's Studies at Utrecht University and within the Socrates-funded ATHENA network.

A particularly warm thanks to all of you who have finished or are in the process of taking the PhD degree in Interdisciplinary Gender Studies at the Department of Gender Studies at Linköping University, Sweden: Cecilia Åsberg, Malena Gustavson, Wera Grahn, Stine Adrian, Robert Hamrén,

Paula Mulinari, Anna Lundberg, Hanna Hallgren, Anna Adeniji, Kristina Lindholm, Victoria Kawesa, Monica Obreja, Linn Sandberg, Dag Balkmar, Redi Koobak, Alp Biricik, Tanja Joelsson, Emma Stollo, Anne-Charlott Callerstig, Ulrica Engdahl, Katherine Harrison, Wibke Straube, Magda Górska—and guest PhD students Peter Ussing and Thorgerdur Thorvaldsdottir. Without the many exciting dialogues and seminars we have engaged in throughout the years around your research, this book would never have been written.

Thanks also to feminist colleagues in Denmark, Sweden and many other countries for in-depth collaborative work on feminist curriculum development. Our joint efforts and innumerable discussions are also an important context for this book, but you are too many to be thanked separately.

A special thanks to Professor Lena Trojer at the Blekinge Institute of Technology, Sweden. You generously invited me to stay as visiting professor in 2006—and in so doing you gave me a free space in the middle of my hectic life at the Department of Gender Studies, Linköping. This free space allowed me the possibility to work intensively on the Danish and Swedish versions of this book. I am very grateful to you for this, Lena. Thanks also to other colleagues at the Blekinge Institute of Technology for interesting discussions about feminist epistemologies and transdisciplinary transformative work.

Thanks also to the Centre for the Study of Gender and Sexuality at New York University for offering me a stay as visiting scholar in 2008, which among other things gave me the opportunity to reframe and rethink the book for an international audience, including the planning of new and revised chapters.

Many thanks to Berit Starkman for your always unconditional, energetic and loyal support in the administrative everyday life at the Department of Gender Studies, Linköping University.

A very warm thank you to Elizabeth Sourbut, who made the linguistic and stylistic revisions with much patience and a subtle sense for language, and to Petra Nordqvist who helped me with part of the translation.

Thanks to the anonymous reviewers for their encouraging and very inspiring comments and thanks to Ben Holtzman and Max Novick at Routledge for your kind support.

And finally, thanks for EVERYTHING to Zak, Sofus, Asker, Jobbe, Carl, Eigil, Dorte, Uffe, Rikke, Naja—and to you, Mette.

September 2009
Nina Lykke

Part I

What Is Feminist Studies?

1 A Guide's Introduction

Feminist Studies is an advanced textbook balancing introductory overviews and cutting-edge reflections on current issues in feminist theory. I have written the book to address researchers, teachers, students and others who seek theoretical and methodological inspiration from feminist research, and who are interested in learning from feminist experiments with alternative ways of writing scholarly texts. I have composed the book so that it can be used both by newcomers to the field and by more advanced readers.

The book is written as a theoretical and methodological guide to the field. I introduce central issues in current international debates on feminist theory and discuss how epistemological, methodological and ethical issues are articulated and theorized within different branches of feminist thought. Moreover, the book emphasizes that writing processes and issues of method and methodologies are closely connected. From this point of departure, I take a look at the ways in which feminist researchers have challenged academic genres and writing styles and tried to change them.

As the book is conceived as a textbook, I pay a lot of attention to pedagogical explanations and overviews. But I also find it important to take an anti-canonical stance and to emphasize theoretical diversity and methodological pluralism. I consider theories and methodologies as moments in time and space, and not as universally given phenomena. Furthermore, I see it as an important feature of feminist research that it unlocks fixed and stereotyped ideas and concepts of gender, sex, science and knowledge production. An implication of this stance is that I find it necessary to problematize canon formation as potentially or actually elitist, fixing a status quo rather than opening up for change. Therefore, I wish to emphasize that in this book the reader will find a guide to a field of knowledge production characterized by diversity, fluctuation, fluidity and change. It is a field that looks quite different from the images of monologism, unilateralism and sanctioning of one 'true' line of political correctness that anti-feminist prejudice ascribes to feminist thought. Authoritarian monologism belongs to gender conservatism; the aim of Feminist Studies is to break up stereotypes and ideas about sameness.

I define my author's position as that of a *guide*; that is, as a person who shows readers around in a diverse landscape of feminist theories, epistemologies, methodologies, ethical reflections and writing practices. As guide I will give explanations, tips and ideas as to how readers may further explore the landscape on their own, but I will not point out one interpretation or one particular way through the landscape as being 'the right one.' I like to perform as the kind of guide who has her own opinions, passions and interpretations of the enchantments and attractions of the landscape, and who, therefore, can give personal guidance to the curious traveler. But there are no final instructions in my guidance—no prescription of a universalized canon. I consider it the task of the traveler herself or himself to develop her or his own passions, interpretations and curiosity and to make her or his own choices of directions in which to move.

However, to guide my readers around in the diverse landscape of feminist research, I have made choices as to what to foreground. A guided tour that 'objectively' points out all the details of the landscape is, in my opinion, not possible. Central to my understanding of feminist theorizing is a belief in a politics of location and an epistemology of situated and partial knowledges. This implies that the landscape must always be understood as seen from a non-innocent somewhere, and that the author has an obligation to make herself accountable for her location in it. Therefore, in this introductory chapter, I shall outline the main frames of reference on which my guidance is based. I shall outline what I mean by 'situated knowledges,' and account for my location and for my overall selection of different sites and sights in the landscape. Finally, I shall make some notes on terminology.

SITUATED KNOWLEDGES

According to a broad tradition within the field of Feminist Studies, all production of knowledge is to be understood as located—or 'situated' as feminist scholar Donna Haraway articulated it in a widely read article (Haraway 1991c, 183–201). What does this mean? In order to unpack the concept, I shall briefly elaborate Haraway's articulation of the epistemological tradition in Feminist Studies, which is often called the politics of location. I choose to use Haraway's version of this principle as illustration here because it has had a major impact on feminist theorizing, and because I find it important; I shall also give a more elaborate presentation of it in Chapter 8.

Haraway's articulation of the principle of situated knowledges is based on a critique of what she calls the 'god-trick' of positivist epistemology (Haraway 1991c, 191–196). With the term god-trick, she refers to the scientific belief in a faceless, bodiless and contextless knower, who can detach her/himself from the world and the objects of study, and then from an

aloof and elevated position of surveillance can produce objective knowledge. According to Haraway, the god-trick is an illusion. In their critique of positivist science, she and other feminist researchers who argue for a politics of location are, to a large extent, in line with postmodern philosophers of science. Like these, feminist critics of positivism stress that the knower is always *in medias res* (i.e., in the middle of), participant in and in compliance with, the analyzed world. In what has become a famous phrase, Haraway underlines that we are always 'in the belly of the monster' (Haraway 1991c, 188). According to this kind of conceptualization of science and knowledge production, there is no 'outside,' no comfortably distant position, from which the world can be analyzed. On the contrary, the researcher is involved, in compliance with and co-responsible; and knowledge production will always imply a subjective dimension. As Haraway emphasizes, echoing one of the postmodern science philosophy classics (Lyotard 1984), science is 'a story-telling practice' (Haraway 1989, 4); the researcher cannot give an objective depiction of the world 'out there,' but produces a story, of which she or he is a part.

For some postmodern thinkers this philosophy of science led to relativism and an abandonment of all objectivity criteria. 'The death of truth' has been placed on the agenda, stressing that science is nothing but stories, and that no criteria can define why one story is better or worse than another. To many feminist theorists, who have often had strong political and moral convictions, the relativism of postmodern philosophy has been a stumbling block. Relativism is perceived as problematic, and some feminists have argued that it can turn into an easy way out of the demand that researchers always ought to reflect on ethical implications and take moral and political responsibility for their research results. However, Haraway's principle of situated knowledges suggests an answer to the postmodern feminist dilemma of wanting to take a clear moral and political stance, but at the same time wishing to avoid universalizing master narratives with their illusory claim that it is possible to give a 'neutral' and 'objective' depiction of the world.

In order to overcome the dilemma, Haraway builds on the postmodern claim that we, as researchers, can never go beyond the world and the reality that we analyze or the research technologies that we have at our disposal. To this tenet, which is crucial to her world view, she adds the insight of situated knowledges and argues that the researcher, through a conscious reflection of her or his situatedness and her or his research technologies, can obtain a partially objective knowledge, that is, a knowledge of the specific part of reality that she or he can 'see' from the position in which she or he is materially discursively located in time, space, body and historical power relations.

Haraway talks about a reclaiming of vision. But in contradistinction to the faceless, bodiless and contextless god's-eye view of positivism, she interprets vision as a *bodily material* phenomenon:

I would like to insist on the embodied nature of all vision, and so reclaim the sensory system that has been used to signify a leap out of the marked body and into a conquering gaze from nowhere. . . . I want a feminist writing of the body that metaphorically emphasizes vision again, because we need to reclaim that sense to find our way through all the visualizing tricks and powers of modern sciences and technologies that have transformed the objectivity debates. (Haraway 1991c, 188–190)

When Haraway makes a point out of reclaiming vision for feminism, she refers polemically to the kinds of postmodernists, including some postmodern feminists, who reject vision totally due to its link to the positivist ‘god-trick.’ Haraway does not want to end the critique of positivism in a position where she has to completely reject vision as a path to knowledge. Her goal is to redefine vision as something that is inextricably embedded in its bodily context. Playing with the words ‘site’ and ‘sight’ (Haraway 1991c, 201), she emphasizes that we must reflect on our ‘siting’ (localization) and our ‘sighting’ (the ways in which our vision and optical systems are crafted in technological, ideological and bodily biological senses). If we as researchers follow this program, that is, reflect our siting and sighting thoroughly, we can, according to Haraway, talk with an authoritative voice about the *partial* reality that we can see—and we can make ourselves ethico-politically responsible, democratic players in it. In this way, she says, we can avoid *both* the god-trick *and* the position of postmodern relativism with its claim that all interpretations of reality are equally good or bad.

The principle of situated knowledges has many repercussions for research, as well as for the authoring of textbooks. As a textbook author it is difficult not to slip into a subject position either as one who plays the god-trick or as relativist. When I position myself as a personally committed *guide*, it is precisely in order to avoid these two pitfalls. Defining myself as a guide, I want to create an alternative author’s position that can direct me out of the dilemma depicted in Haraway’s reflections on situated knowledges. The guide is not a relativist; on the contrary, she has committed herself to sharing with the traveler her knowledge about the landscape—to show, to give tips, to explain, to point out. But, in contradistinction to the god’s-eye view of the positivist knower, the guide is not an irrefutable authority. In the relationship between the guide and the traveler, ultimately the important factor is always the curiosity of the traveler. At the end of the day, it is the interests, passions and thirst for knowledge of the traveler that determines to what aspects of the guide’s stories about the landscape and its sights she or he will pay attention.

I shall now follow up my introductory situating of myself as a personally committed guide and make myself accountable overall for my positioning in the landscape of Feminist Studies and for my choices of sites and sights.

A POSITIONING

I have chosen to present my position through a fictitious interview with myself. In summarized form, I shall reiterate some questions about my academic identity that are often posed to me, as well as the answers I usually give:

Q: What is your academic background?

A: Feminist Studies/Gender Studies.

Q: But what is your discipline?

A: I am professor of interdisciplinary Gender Studies.

Q: But you must have a discipline. Feminist Studies/Gender Studies is not a discipline—or, at least, it was not established as such when you were educated in the 1970s.

A: I do not belong to or identify with any discipline in the sense you are asking about. In order to explain myself here, I will have to briefly refer to my intellectual and academic autobiography. My certificates state that I have a masters of arts (MA) degree in Literary Studies and doctorate of philosophy (PhD) in the Humanities. However, I have identified neither as a literary scholar nor exclusively as a humanities scholar. As a student in the 1970s I was engaged in the feminist movement, and this meant that feminist theorizing and interdisciplinary approaches to understanding gender/sex became more important to me than Literary Studies. I studied in an academic environment—the Institute of Literary Studies at the University of Copenhagen, Denmark—where the students' and women's movements at that time were strong. This made it possible for me to form a tailor-made curriculum that focused on the study of gender/sex and feminist theorizing. After my graduation I had the opportunity to establish an academic career that has been totally dedicated to interdisciplinary Feminist Studies. All of my academic positions, from when I started as a PhD student in 1981 until today where I am a professor, have been defined within the field of interdisciplinary Feminist Studies. For twenty-three years I was employed at an interdisciplinary Centre for Women's and Gender Studies in Denmark—from 1986 as associate professor; my associate professorship was established as part of the Action Plan for Women's Studies, which the Danish Parliament approved in that year. In 1999 I was appointed professor at a program for Interdisciplinary Gender Studies at Linköping University in Sweden; the program was started as part of a big political initiative, carried by women politicians in the Swedish Parliament, aiming at the promotion of gender research and gender equality in Swedish Academia. I am also head of both a Nordic and a Swedish International Research School in Interdisciplinary Gender Studies as well as of an international Centre of Gender Excellence (a Feminist Studies research centre, where excellent

international scholars within the field meet via research fellowships). Throughout my whole academic career, I have had the opportunity to make gender/sex and interdisciplinarily based feminist theorizing the primary focus of my research and teaching. I am happy about the text- and discourse-analytic skills I learned when I studied Literary Studies at the University of Copenhagen in the 1970s. But if you insist that I define myself in disciplinary terms, I shall, against the background of both my work as a student and my later academic career, label myself a Feminist Studies scholar and not as a scholar of Literary Studies.

Q: OK. But does that mean that you consider Feminist Studies to be a new discipline?

A: Both yes and no. First of all, I would like to underline that I consider the kind of feminist research that takes place within the framework of existing disciplines to be important, even though I do not carry out such research myself. I agree with the large majority of feminist researchers who think it is important that Feminist Studies is ‘walking on two legs’ (i.e., that it is both integrated into the traditional disciplines and established as an interdisciplinary field of its own). Second, I want to emphasize that Feminist Studies, seen from my point of view, should be understood not as a new discipline in a simple sense, but as something that I will define as a *postdisciplinary discipline*. This definition implies that I see Feminist Studies as a field of knowledge production that has its own profile, which enables it to *pass as a discipline and claim the academic authority of one, but* which also keeps up *a transversal openness and a dialogical approach to all academic disciplines* (human, social, medical, technical and natural science disciplines). This has repercussions for my way of guiding and framing this book.

CHOICE OF SITES AND SIGHTS

So if you choose to follow my guiding, what are the sites and sights you will meet in the *four parts* of which the book is composed?

Against the background of my academic location and intellectual autobiography, I have framed the book as a cartography of the area of Feminist Studies interpreted as a *postdisciplinary discipline* (or shorthand: *postdiscipline*). Hence, it is the aim of Part I, ‘What Is Feminist Studies?’ (Chapters 1–3), to make clear what I mean when I use this oxymoron. I analyze Feminist Studies as an academic field that does not fit well into the monodisciplinary modern university, but which instead articulates a cross-cutting type of knowledge production that points the way toward innovative—postdisciplinary—modes of organizing universities. These arguments are built on a definition of the field’s strong commitments to multi-, inter- and

transdisciplinary modes of doing research and education. They are also related to broader discussions of the impact of the so-called knowledge-based society, which seems to change the structures of universities in more trans- and postdisciplinary directions (Smith 1998; Nowotny, Scott and Gibbons 2001; Case 2001).

Second, within a framework of feminist theoretical diversity, an important aim is to give readers a guided tour to sites and sights in the landscape of Feminist Studies where heated *theoretical* debates are currently taking place. In Part II, 'To Theorize Intersectional Gender/Sex' (Chapters 4–7), I have chosen to focus on debates and negotiations of *meanings of intersectional gender/sex*, considered as a *key conceptual tool* in contemporary Feminist Studies.

Three theoretical pivots are selected and presented in four chapters of Part II. The first of these is the question of *intersectionality*: how to theorize intersections between gender/sex and other power differentials based on class, race, ethnicity, sexuality, geopolitical positioning, age, dis/ability and so on. Two chapters are devoted to this issue emphasizing how intersectionality has been much debated among feminist researchers and activists in recent years. The concept of 'intersectionality' has both strong advocates and opponents. But the way in which it has become a nodal point of international debates indicates a broad consensus among many different feminist scholars that the phenomenon of intersectional gender/sex and gendered intersections needs to be taken into account and thought through.

As the second theoretical pivot, I focus on *feminist de/constructionism*, clustering different kinds of ethnomethodological, symbolic interactionist, historical materialist, psychoanalytic and poststructuralist feminist theories under this umbrella. In terms of delegitimizing biologically determinist and culturally essentialist perceptions of gender/sex, an array of rather different theorizations have been interpellated by feminist researchers. I choose to include a cluster of examples of such theories because de/constructionism in various forms is still a powerful and much discussed entrance point into feminist analyses of gender/sex in its intersections with other power differentials and identity markers.

The theorization of *intersections of gender and sex, subjectivity and embodiment, discourse and materiality* makes up the third theoretical pivot of Part II. This is another area to have attracted a lot of scholarly attention in recent years from many different feminists. A focus on sociocultural gender has been important for feminist critiques seeking to transgress theories of biological determinism and cultural essentialism. However, at the same time it has become an increasingly pressing need for many feminist scholars to be able to account for issues of biological sex, corporeality and matter and to go beyond a dichotomized distinction between gender and sex. This has generated feminist theoretical interests in bodily materiality, which I have chosen to group under the umbrella

term *feminist corpomaterialism*. I define this corpomaterialist trend in feminist theorizing as *postconstructionist* in the sense that, in different ways, it transgresses the de/constructionist dilemma of being able to account only for gender, as distinct from sex and sexual difference, often leaving the latter out of sight.

A *third* main aim of the book, articulated in Part III, 'To Re-Tool the Thinking Technologies' (Chapters 8–10), is to embed the presentation of current feminist debates on theorizings of gender/sex in their context of key questions in *feminist epistemology*, *methodology* and *ethics* and to relate them to issues of *writing* and *academic genres*. I draw on feminist philosopher Sandra Harding's (1986) classic distinction between different stances in feminist epistemology (*feminist empiricism*, *feminist standpoint theory* and *postmodern feminism*). This distinction is, in my opinion, still helpful and a good pedagogical tool. But I also suggest certain revisions. First of all, I argue that it is perhaps more to the point to speak about *postmodern anti-epistemologies* as the third stance. Postmodern feminists have approached epistemological issues from a critical deconstructionist position; rather than affirming new epistemological positions, they have made us alert to the hidden gender-conservative effects of all kinds of foundations, even those that at first glance may look radical and promising. Second, I suggest that a fourth stance should be added to Harding's taxonomy: *postconstructionist feminist epistemologies*. I add this position in order to take into account the articulation of feminist epistemological positions, informed by postmodern feminist critiques of foundationalism, *but* also going beyond these to affirm corpomaterialist positions as starting points for epistemological reflections. With these four clusters of different feminist epistemological positions as a main frame of reference, I discuss and exemplify how questions of *methodologies*, *methods* and *ethics* are theorized in the field of Feminist Studies.

Moreover, in order to emphasize how *writing processes*, *academic genres* and *styles* are closely linked to issues of epistemologies, methodologies and ethics, I analyze the ways in which feminist theorizing has often been intertwined with writing experiments on the boundaries between academic and creative writing. Based on examples from transgressive feminist theory texts, I analyze a number of reasons why this may be so. Focusing on links between epistemologies, methodologies, ethics and writing practices, I highlight how different kinds of feminist politics of epistemological location can change the position from which the academic text is told, calling for a visible and embodied narrator. I also discuss how the conditions for representing the voices and viewpoints of 'objects' of study or research participants are transformed by feminist reflections on epistemology, methodology and ethics. Moreover, I analyze how, in particular, postmodern and postconstructionist feminist epistemologies and methodologies generate a focus on issues of style, language and embodiment of the academic writing process, while the close relations of feminism with activism and

politics produce a focus on reaching out to broader audiences with texts that are understandable to non-academics.

In Part IV, 'To Use a Feminist Hermeneutics' (Chapter 11), I exemplify how a feminist analysis might be carried out. I illustrate this with textual analyses of two significant scholarly texts on science, gender/sex and laboratory animals. I choose to build my analytical examples on the method of textual analysis because I am a Cultural Studies scholar and well trained in this method. In this sense, Part IV stresses that the postdisciplinary profile framing my analysis of Feminist Studies does not preclude the taking up of disciplinary approaches. Rather, the chapter underlines the importance of bringing individual disciplinary expertise to enrich the postdisciplinary environment. The analytical examples expose the performativity of scientific genres and languages, making it clear how epistemologies, methodologies, ethical issues and writing styles are intertwined.

NOTES ON TERMINOLOGY: 'FEMINIST STUDIES' AND 'GENDER/SEX'

As indicated by the main title of the book, I have chosen to use the term *Feminist Studies* to characterize the field generally (i.e., when I do not refer specifically to institutions or groups that explicitly label themselves otherwise). It should, however, be noted that *Feminist Studies* in this book is to be understood as *shorthand for Feminist/Gender/Women's Studies*. Naming practices within the field have very much been tied to institutional politics and to strategies to make space for feminist theorizing in Academia, and these have varied from university to university and from country to country. But changes in naming practices have also reflected theoretical considerations on the part of different feminist researchers.

Women's Studies used to be a common denominator. It was translated from English into many languages in the 1970s, as the USA model of Centers for Women's Studies was adopted in many countries. However, the term was not only related to institutional politics. It also reflected the process of making women visible in research as well as the epistemological position of classic standpoint feminism (i.e., that research should be carried out by, on, for and with women).

During the 1980s and 1990s, *Gender Studies* started to compete seriously with Women's Studies as a label. Proponents defended the shift of name as an indicator of a parallel shift from analysis of women to a focus on gender relations. However, gender relations, under the name of 'patriarchy,' had, indeed, been the object of study of much research that was carried out under the label 'Women's Studies.' The reasons why some institutions in some countries took on the new name tag 'Gender Studies,' while others found it important to stick to 'Women's Studies' and others again constructed hybrid names such as 'Women's and Gender Studies,'

are, therefore, more complex than a reference to simple shifts of object may suggest.

Another line of argument is based on *epistemological considerations*. Seen from a postmodern feminist perspective, the label 'Women's Studies' may indicate a problematic standpoint epistemology, which takes the category of women and the slogan of research by, on, for and with women as givens, and which in so doing essentializes and fixes the category 'women' instead of deconstructing both it and the dichotomous, heteronormative, two-gender system to which it is linked. From this point of view, the name tag 'Gender Studies' might signal a welcome postmodernization. Moreover, it can make the point that *Critical Studies of Men and Masculinities* as well as studies of many kinds of *queer identities* fall within the scope of the field.

However, postmodern feminists might also have reservations vis-à-vis the label 'Gender Studies,' because it fixes an object of study instead of going for a radical deconstruction of 'proper objects' (Butler 1997a). Furthermore, other feminist lines of argument, based on various kinds of post-constructionist corpomaterialism, would underline that the label 'Gender Studies' is problematic because it essentializes a detachment of gender from sex and embodiment. Finally, it has also been argued that 'Gender Studies' has a less radical ring than 'Women's Studies.' In some situations, however, this has been a *sine qua non* for obtaining an institutional platform at all, and in others has led to radical positions of strength.

This brief summary of many complicated discussions indicates that the naming issue is a complex one. I have chosen to use the label Feminist Studies in this book because I think it avoids some of the problems that are linked to both Women's Studies and Gender Studies. It does not fix a 'proper' object as the two other names do and, in contrast to 'Women's Studies,' it does not connote a link to only one kind of epistemology, the one that starts from a 'women's standpoint.' Moreover, it does not connote a separation of gender from sex, as 'Gender Studies' does.

In my opinion, the label Feminist Studies may positively shift the perspective from the object of study to the political and epistemological position of the subject of research and its location in the empirical reality of social movements that problematize power differentials and hegemonies based on intersectional gender/sex and a heteronormative, two-gender system. However, I must also underline that I use the label 'Feminist Studies' as an *inclusive* shorthand for 'Women's/Gender/Feminist Studies.' This again is to be understood as a broad umbrella term for a multiplicity of branches of feminist theorizing, and to include that part of Critical Studies of Men and Masculinities that labels itself as '*profeminist*,' signaling a political solidarity with feminist movements. My point is not to exclude or canonize, but, conversely, to create openness and synergies, and to facilitate the forging of transversal links between different branches of feminist and profeminist theorizing.

Another terminological problem concerns the Anglophone distinction between *gender* and *sex*. As I shall describe in more detail in Chapters 2 and 3, the distinction was first welcomed by feminist researchers, because it made it possible to separate discussions of sociocultural and political change from biologically determinist and culturally essentialist references to biology. But as I will explain in more detail in Chapter 3, several languages have only one word for gender/sex. For example, my mother tongue, Danish, uses the word 'køn' for both. Therefore it was and still is sometimes difficult for feminists to make themselves understood to the broader public in such languages, when they want to talk separately about sociocultural aspects. Biological meanings tend to interfere all the time in the public understanding. The Anglophone notion of 'gender' has done a lot of productive semantic work here.

But, as I will argue more elaborately in Chapter 7, the distinction between gender and sex has also caused a lot of problems, creating a problematic separation of sociocultural and bodily material dimensions. As a feminist recognition of these problems gained ground, those of us whose mother tongue has only one word for gender/sex suddenly found ourselves in a linguistically privileged situation when we wanted to explain the intertwining of sociocultural and biological dimensions in our native languages (Widerberg 1998). In line with my use of Feminist Studies as a broad umbrella term and my intentions to avoid easy fixations, *in casu* the fixation of a dichotomy between gender and sex, I shall let my terminology be inspired by the languages that do not make the gender/sex distinction. More precisely, I shall use the consciously ambiguous term 'gender/sex' when I do not explicitly talk about either sociocultural or bodily material aspects, or refer to theories that explicitly maintain the separation. In this way, I shall try to 'export' the immediate linguistic sense of blurred boundaries between the two that is 'given' for me as a native speaker of a language with only one word for gender/sex. However, in order not to complicate my language unnecessarily, I shall retain the term 'gender' as shorthand for 'gender/sex' in composite expressions such as 'gender relations,' in verb forms such as 'gendered' and when lining up nexuses of gender and intersecting power differentials (race, ethnicity, class, sexuality etc.).

2 A Postdisciplinary Discipline

During the last thirty to forty years, Feminist Studies has developed into a well-established field of academic knowledge production. Critical research and teaching on gender/sex, gendered hegemonies, gender relations, gender identities, symbolic representations of gender/sex and intersections between gender/sex, sexuality, race, ethnicity, class and so on is today carried out at universities in many countries all over the world. The organization is different from country to country and from university to university.

The field has emerged and grown under the inspiration of feminist movements and political activism. In some countries, for example, Sweden and Norway, the emergence of Feminist Studies has been accompanied by a public focus on a politics of equal opportunities. But generally, the field has achieved its current academic status through an intellectual struggle against gender-conservative discourses, which in many ways have characterized and still characterize much knowledge production within Academia. The history of this struggle has had an impact on the organization of the field. In some countries and in some universities, Feminist Studies is still marginalized and only allowed to unfold through informal networks of researchers and students. In many other places, for example, Sweden, the Netherlands, the UK and the USA, Feminist Studies is recognized and institutionalized, with its own professors, research and teaching programs, separate institutions and so on.

If we look at Feminist Studies from a broad international perspective and apply the measuring stick that is normally used to define an academic field (i.e., professorships, research and teaching programs, institutions, publications, scholarly journals, conferences etc.), it is indeed possible to speak of Feminist Studies as a specific academic field of knowledge production. However, it is at the same time important to stress that the field is non-traditional and different.

In this chapter I shall introduce Feminist Studies in its capacity of being at one and the same time both established and non-traditional. I shall do this while situating my definition of Feminist Studies as a postdisciplinary discipline in the context of debates for and against interpretations of it as a separate field of academic knowledge production. Is Feminist Studies a

new discipline? Or is it more important to stress its links with existing academic disciplines? Or does Feminist Studies perhaps represent a new type of knowledge production? A type of knowledge production that appears 'queer' when seen against the background of the disciplinarily specialized university, but which carries visions of another type of organization of knowledge and another kind of university? A type of knowledge production that perhaps, in some respects, is in line with the multi-layered processes of change that universities are currently undergoing as part of the unfolding of the so-called knowledge-based society?

Against the background of my academic location in interdisciplinary Feminist Studies, I shall argue for it as a field of knowledge production that perhaps acts in 'queer' ways when seen from the perspective of the disciplinarily specialized university, but that can be understood as a *postdisciplinary discipline*, which can contribute in important ways to the processes of change characterizing present-day universities.

In order to make my point, I shall, first, briefly contextualize the feminist discussion about disciplinarity/interdisciplinarity. I shall refer to a classic debate in which one group of feminist researchers argued for the *integration* of feminist perspectives into existing disciplines, while another group claimed that *autonomy*, in the shape of Centers for Women's Studies, was the most appropriate way to organize feminist research. After a brief overview of this debate, I shall define how I understand the oxymoron of a postdisciplinary discipline, and discuss why I consider it important to apply this term to Feminist Studies instead of sticking to a rather unproductive dichotomy between 'integrationism' and 'autonomism.' I shall, on the one hand, claim that Feminist Studies can *pass* as a discipline and claim the academic authority of one, but, on the other hand, present a cluster of arguments as to why an open, transversally discipline-transgressing profile, which is included in my definition of *postdisciplinary* disciplinarity, is important for Feminist Studies. Moreover, I shall take a closer look at the concept of 'interdisciplinarity' and specify different kinds of '*interdisciplinary*' *modes of working* with research questions—*multi-, inter- and transdisciplinarity*—which are important for Feminist Studies, as well as define what I mean by a *postdisciplinary mode of organizing knowledge production*.

A CLASSIC DEBATE: AUTONOMY OR INTEGRATION?

Feminist Studies entered universities in more and more countries all over the world from around 1970. Since then there have been many discussions as to which directions the processes of institutionalization of the field should take. Should it be organized in units of its own? Or should it be integrated into existing disciplines?

At some universities in the USA, teaching of what was called 'Women's Studies' had already started by the end of the 1960s (Robinson 1997, 3).

The teaching was institutionally anchored in a new type of interdisciplinary centers—the so-called Women's Studies Centers. This model inspired Feminist Studies activists in many countries to try to set up this kind of centers. In Scandinavia, where my academic career unfolded, different kinds of centers emerged at a majority of universities throughout the 1980s and 1990s. The centers were often built up by researchers who had their roots in the disciplines, but in many places they also hired their own staff. The centers developed research and teaching profiles focusing on women and gender relations in an interdisciplinary perspective.

Parallel with the development of the centers, Feminist Studies also unfolded within many disciplines. A feminist critique of the disciplines initiated a big visibility-raising project. In discipline after discipline, a critical feminist spotlight targeted established research traditions, which had implicitly defined the human being as a man and had relegated women to the position of the other, the deviant sex. Women authors, women's history, women's everyday life, women's work and so on were made into objects of research within the framework of disciplines such as Literary Studies, History, Social Anthropology, Sociology and so on.

The development of Women's Studies Centers and the critique of the gender blindness of the disciplines ran in parallel, and at many universities in many countries there was much overlap between the feminist researchers who were active at the centers and those in the disciplines. However, discrepancies between the priorities of those who, first and foremost, identified with the centers, and those who primarily identified with the disciplines, created a debate between 'integrationists' and 'autonomists' (i.e., between researchers who claimed that the most important path to the development of feminist research led through the disciplines, and researchers who, in contrast, gave priority to a development via the centers). Over the years, the debate led to a widespread consensus on a both/and strategy—both integration into disciplines and a development via interdisciplinary centers. However, despite this consensus, for years the binary pair autonomy/integration set the agenda for the debate on the institutionalization of Feminist Studies. A classic documentation of the discussion, as it took place in the USA, is to be found in the book *Theories of Women's Studies* (Bowles and Klein 1983). During the 1990s the discussion of 'integration' was, to some extent, replaced by a debate on the 'mainstreaming' of Feminist Studies. However, the 'mainstreaming' concept has often been used in the institutionalization debate in ways that have overlapped with what was earlier called 'integration into the disciplines.'

A SUCCESSOR-DISCIPLINE?

The feminist debates on 'disciplinarity/interdisciplinarity' have often been intertwined with the discussion of institutionalization in terms of

'autonomy/integration.' 'Integration' has been used synonymously with 'integration into the existing disciplines,' while 'interdisciplinarity' has been identified with the establishing of 'autonomous' centers or departments for Feminist Studies at the universities. However, a reductionist collapsing of categories is at play here. Scholarly content and institutional form are not entirely independent of each other, but this does not mean that there is a simple one-to-one relationship between them. However, as part of the debate, questions pointing away from the autonomy/integration binary have also been raised.

In this way, USA-based feminist researcher Gloria Bowles, for example, posed the question of whether Feminist Studies ought to be defined as a new discipline as early as 1983 in 'Is Women's Studies an Academic Discipline?' (Bowles 1983). A more recent example of the same question is to be found in an intervention by the UK-based researchers Gabriele Griffin and Jalna Hanmer (2001, 220). As part of an analysis of the situation of feminist research in the UK at the beginning of the twenty-first century, Griffin and Hanmer argue that Feminist Studies should try to obtain discipline status for strategic reasons. Discipline status is, according to Griffin and Hanmer, of utmost importance when it comes to the distribution of research council grants, for example. If Feminist Studies obtains discipline status, it will appear as grant worthy in its own right and not just as a dimension of disciplines such as, for example, Sociology, History or Social Anthropology, and this, they argue, would benefit the area.

It is certainly not only in the UK, where Griffin and Hanmer are located, that discipline status is important in order to be visible to external funding agencies, which have a lot of agenda-setting power in relation to present-day research. Therefore, as a professional feminist researcher I listen carefully to the arguments of Griffin and Hanmer. But in their pragmatic way of arguing, I miss the layer of critical vision of alternative organizations of knowledge that Feminist Studies, in my opinion, envisions. Let me elaborate this point with reference to another classic debate in feminist research.

In a book that has obtained the status of a feminist theory classic, the USA-based feminist epistemologist Sandra Harding introduced a discussion of Feminist Studies as a kind of 'successor-science' (Harding 1986, 142). With this term, Harding conceptualized the dream of some feminist researchers that a new science can be produced, which abolishes all the biases, negligence, lacks and distorted outlooks of traditional science. Harding writes that she understands the dream of a successor-science, liberated from biases, but she is, nevertheless, critical of the idea. According to her, it is not enough to challenge biases in science. What must be changed are the epistemological foundations of knowledge production. Knowledge-producing practices are not neutral, according to Harding and many other feminist epistemologists, but dependent on the knowers' contextualization in time, space, historical power relations, bodies and so on. Therefore, Harding argues, it does not solve the problems to produce a

successor-science in which women are made visible. The crucial point is that profoundly new research questions are needed. I shall return to Harding and the epistemological discussion in Chapter 8.

In the context of this chapter, I draw on Harding's critique of successor-science projects, because I want to twist it a bit and relate it to the idea of Feminist Studies as a new discipline. The disciplining of Feminist Studies, about which Griffin and Hanmer talk, can be understood as the construction of a 'successor-discipline.' Such a discipline could, indeed, integrate the critical knowledge of intersectional gender/sex and gender relations of Feminist Studies. But it would not be well suited as a platform for a critique of the compartmentalized organization of knowledge and knowledge-producing practices that characterize the disciplinarily specialized modern university, because it would itself be unambiguously rooted in this mode of organization.

When, on the following pages, I argue for Feminist Studies as a postdisciplinary discipline, it is precisely to push the discussion in another direction than toward a successor-discipline.

A POSTDISCIPLINE

As I find a compartmentalized, discipline-specific organization of knowledge to be problematic in general and for Feminist Studies in particular, my answer to the question of whether or not the field should develop into a successor-discipline is different from that of Griffin and Hanmer. It is, indeed, possible to define Feminist Studies as a field of knowledge production in its own right. However, seen from my point of view, it should be done in a specific way. The definition should keep wide open a space for profound critiques of the disciplinarily specialized university and for further development of the meta-theoretical renegotiations of traditional epistemological conceptualizations of what knowledge production is, which have been initiated by major trends in Feminist Studies.

That Feminist Studies can be interpreted as an independent field of knowledge production does, indeed, mean that the prerequisites for organizing the area as a discipline in a traditional way are present. In this sense, I agree with Griffin and Hanmer's analysis. However, instead of simply 'going discipline,' I think that Feminist Studies should claim its innovative force and academic authority in contrast to traditional disciplinarily specialized ways of organizing scholarly knowledge. Feminist Studies should, in my opinion, keep alive the tension that is embedded in defining itself *both* as a field of knowledge production in its own right *and* as a field characterized by a total openness to transversal dialogues,¹ crossing all disciplinary boundaries. It is this *double stance* I am referring to, when I talk about Feminist Studies as a *postdisciplinary discipline* (or *postdiscipline*).

The following chapters will make it clear how Feminist Studies can *pass and claim authority as an academic field in its own right*, while at the same time *pointing toward alternative—trans- and postdisciplinary—modes of working and organizing knowledge production*. They will highlight:

- how Feminist Studies *both* fulfills *and* profoundly questions the traditional epistemological criteria defining an academic discipline;
- how the field has *both* generated *and* thoroughly problematized a ‘core’ object, that is, gender/sex in its intersections with other power differentials and identity markers (Chapter 3);
- how it has developed its own theoretical tools to *both* conceptualize *and* call into question this ‘object’ (Chapters 4–7);
- how it has *both* committed itself to *and* transformed issues of epistemology (Chapter 8) as well as methodology, methods and ethics (Chapter 9); and,
- finally, how it has *renegotiated* academic writing and genres (Chapter 10).

In other words, while stating that Feminist Studies can pass as a distinct field of knowledge production, I shall at the same time critically challenge the traditional meanings of concepts that delineate disciplines in a traditional sense (i.e., concepts such as ‘object,’ ‘theory,’ ‘epistemology,’ ‘methodology,’ ‘ethics’ etc.). I shall stress that Feminist Studies renegotiates not only the content of science and knowledge production, but also its ‘thinking technologies’ (Haraway 2004, 335) and its present modes of working and organizing, critically posing questions such as: What kind of phenomena are science and scholarly knowledge production? How should they be carried out to reach good results? What is a ‘good result’? What does it mean to work and write in a scholarly way? Which kinds of organizational structures give the optimal basis for reaching ‘good results’?

In the remainder of this chapter, I shall sustain my meta-theoretical interpretation of the field as *postdisciplinary discipline* (or *postdiscipline*) along the same lines, problematizing the splitting up of knowledge production into disciplinary units with relatively fixed borders, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, claiming that spaces for in-depth studies of transgressive and transversal moves such as those of Feminist Studies are necessary in order to unfold the innovative potentials of the field.

THE DIVISION OF DISCIPLINARITY/ INTERDISCIPLINARITY: A HISTORICAL CONSTRUCT

In order to argue for transversality and cross-disciplinary openness, let me start by challenging the claim to self-evident rationality of the disciplinarity/interdisciplinarity divide, emphasizing that it is important to keep in

mind that this dichotomy is a historical construction. The organization and division of scholarly knowledge production into disciplines such as Biology, Mathematics, National Literatures and Languages, History, Psychiatry, Psychology, Sociology and Engineering Science and faculties such as the Humanities, the Social Sciences, Medicine and Natural Sciences have been generated in a cultural and science historical process.

The organization of scholarly knowledge is not static. This becomes clear when we look at the history of science. At the first universities in the Renaissance, there were four branches of knowledge: Philosophy, Medicine, Law and Theology, and the last of these was the most important. With secularization, the importance of Theology declined, while the socio-technical development of society in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, in turn, meant that technology and the Natural Sciences became centrally located in the academic landscape. Already these few references indicate that the division and hierarchical ordering of different fields of knowledge production are part of a historical process and are embedded in power struggles over disciplinary territories and borders. With a historical perspective, disciplines, and the boundary zones between them, lose their innocent appearance as merely rational ways of drawing dividing lines between topics, research methodologies, theories, epistemologies and so on. With this perspective, disciplinary borders come to represent power relations rather than rational cuts in the body of knowledge. Analogies to national borders become obvious.

Against this background, it appears to be crucial, from a cultural and science historical perspective, to pursue questions such as: Which borders are drawn between disciplines and between faculties and why? Which disciplinary borders separate different theories and methods and why? Who has the power to draw and maintain the dividing lines between disciplines, faculties, theories, methods and so on and why? Via which discourses and rationalizations do those who have this power legitimize their way of drawing the lines? Which people, with which kinds of certificates, are given the power to administer, construct, develop, explore and mediate knowledge about different disciplines and why? Who has the power to frame the language in which scholars within disciplines are expected to speak and write, and to define the genre norms to be followed in the reporting of research?

Disciplines are phenomena that have always been in process during the course of science history. The same thing can be said about transgressions of disciplinary borders and the emergence of different kinds of interdisciplinarity. They, too, are part of a cultural and science historical process. Renaissance and early modern scholars were, for example, often trained in many branches of knowledge production and science, and, seen in retrospect, they can be described as multi-disciplinary researchers. Conversely, the nineteenth and, in particular, the twentieth century have been periods where disciplinary specializations became more and more central, mobilized

with respect to a lot of problems to which modern society expected technoscientific and scholarly solutions. Examples of the results of specialized science are legion, from the invention of vaccinations to fight contagious diseases to constructions of the 'oriental' to suit the purposes of control and surveillance of colonial powers (Said 1978).

However, today the importance of disciplinary specialization seems to have found serious competition from new kinds of interdisciplinarity. This is reflected, for example, in the discussion, initiated in the 1990s, about the distinction between so-called mode 1 science and mode 2 science (Gibbons et al. 1994; Nowotny, Scott and Gibbons 2001). Mode 2 science is defined by these authors as knowledge production in the so-called postindustrial knowledge-based society. In such a society, they argue, scientific knowledge is becoming more and more commercialized. At the same time, research is becoming more and more dependent on external funding, while the educational system is becoming 'massified.' In contrast to the earlier elitist university of mode 1, these authors argue, the transformation into mode 2 implies that a diversity of different social groups becomes included, and they pose new questions and make new demands.

Gibbons and colleagues (1994) summarize the distinction between mode 1 and mode 2 science thus: mode 1 is disciplinary and characterized by homogeneity and stable academic hierarchies, based on gender, race, ethnicity and class, while mode 2 is transdisciplinary and characterized by heterogeneity and more ad hoc structures. According to Gibbons and colleagues (1994), the two modes should be understood as neither mutually exclusive nor as two separate points on a linear historical time line, where mode 1 predates mode 2. Rather, they are to be seen as occurring in parallel, even though mode 2 seems to be gaining more and more ground in postindustrial society.

Even though mode 2 knowledge production is, in many ways, as problematic as mode 1, I shall contend that reflections on the former can be meaningful to Feminist Studies. They may help us to think strategically about the ways in which the interdisciplinary openness and transversality of the field may link up with general tendencies in the current development of universities, research and education. Such reflections may confirm that interdisciplinary openness can be an asset when research and education are required to operate under mode 2 conditions, which seem to be influencing universities more and more. This does not mean that mode 2 can simply be celebrated from a feminist point of view. Commercialization, dependency on external funding and so on create many problems for critical intellectuals, including feminists. On the other hand, as a critical feminist and anti-racist scholar, it is impossible for me to sustain a nostalgic longing for the 'good old mode 1 system,' where an elite of white, upper-class, male professionals was in charge of basic research neatly divided up along the lines of disciplines defined by professorial chairs.

GENDER/SEX AS A CULTURAL-NATURAL NETWORK

As an example of another type of argument supporting the importance of interdisciplinarity in research, I turn now to French sociologist of science Bruno Latour and his reflections on the current proliferation of 'hybrids' or 'networks' of 'social/cultural' and 'natural' phenomena (1993). Latour discusses what is required for research to grasp and adequately approach hybrids and networks, where technology, natural phenomena, society, politics, culture, subjectivity, text and symbols cannot be meaningfully separated. As an example of this kind of mixed—'impure'—phenomenon that science has to be prepared to confront more and more, Latour (1993) refers to the hole in the ozone layer. He asks: how can we build up an adequate understanding of the hole in the ozone layer, from the point of view of one discipline alone? Is it about chemistry, meteorology, politics, economics or what? The question is a rhetorical one. What Latour wants to underline is that it is more effective to approach the ozone hole as a network that relentlessly mixes elements from the objects of study of all these different disciplines and, therefore, urgently demands cross-disciplinary approaches. To understand the ozone hole, it is necessary to transgress what Latour evocatively names 'the great divide' (Latour 1993, 97–100), that is, the divide between sciences that look at 'things-in-themselves' (natural and technical sciences) and those that look at 'humans-among-themselves' and 'texts' (social sciences and humanities) (Latour 1993, 5). If we do not take a radically cross-disciplinary stance, but continue trying to solve problems such as the ozone hole using traditional monodisciplinary approaches then, according to Latour, it is not possible to understand the cultural–natural networks that surround us (i.e., networks where 'social/cultural' and 'natural' phenomena are inextricably entangled with each other). In other words, transgression of disciplinary borders is important from a Latourian perspective as well.

Latour's problematization of 'the great divide' between cultural/social and natural/technical sciences is important for Feminist Studies because gender/sex can be interpreted as a cultural–natural network in Latour's sense (Lykke and Braidotti 1996, 18–19)—and, hence, as an object of study that calls for cross-disciplinary approaches. That gender/sex fits into Latour's definition of a cultural–natural network can be illustrated by the classic feminist debate on the relationships between sociocultural gender and biological sex. I shall elaborate on this debate in Chapters 6 and 7. In this chapter, I shall just summarize key positions in order to emphasize how the category of gender/sex evades unambiguous classification as either a sociocultural or biological category.

BIOLOGICAL DETERMINISM AND CULTURAL ESSENTIALISM

Gender-conservative arguments are often founded in biological determinism and/or cultural essentialism. What does that mean?

Biological determinism is a thought figure that constructs biology as a determining factor as far as social, cultural and psychological character and position are concerned. Since the foundation of natural history and modern biology in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, biologically determinist arguments have been used as powerful political tools. They have been mobilized to legitimize social and cultural inequality, exclusion, subordination, exploitation and power differentials not only between women and men, but also between differently racialized groups, different ethnicities, classes, cultures, nations, mother tongues, sexualities, dis/abilities, ages and so on. Sexism, racism, ethnocentrism, classism, colonialism, nationalism, heteronormativity, homophobia, ableism and ageism have all in different ways been legitimized by the use of biologically determinist arguments.

These arguments have been endowed with a great deal of power and authority, not least because they have often been presented as sustained by natural science and medicine. In this way, they have been able to draw upon the authority that, in the modern period, has politically been delegated to these sciences. Through 'scientifically sustained' references to 'unalterable nature,' biologically determinist arguments have often been used to block social and cultural change toward a more equal, democratic and just society that makes room for diversity and difference.

An illustration of biologically determinist ways of thinking is the arguments that were used in the nineteenth century against women's access to university education. If women start to bother their brains with intellectual work, it was argued, it will have a disastrous impact on their wombs and reproductive capacities; the bodily energy is constant, so the powers that ought to be used by the womb will be sucked up into the brain, and this will harm women's and hence the whole of society's reproductive potential. According to these gender-conservative arguments, it would be a catastrophe for society—and for all mankind—if women were allowed access to universities (Rosenbeck 1987, 78–79).

While biological determinism naturalizes and universalizes unequal social relations through biological arguments, *cultural essentialism* is a way of explaining societal power differentials with reference to *cultural origins*. The effect, however, is the same. Identity and social position are rendered universal and unchangeable. Societal and cultural hegemonies, inequalities, exploitation, subordination and exclusion are legitimized by immutable structures.

Descent from a certain cultural context (an ethnic group, a religious community, a nation, a geopolitical location etc.) is considered to be a static and universal factor, which determines identity, character and behavior. A historical example is the 'orientalism' (Said 1978) that, in parallel with the colonizing of Asia and the wars and political power struggles between different European countries and Turkey, became a strong tendency in Western humanities in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. People with an 'oriental' descent were constructed as belonging to a fixed type with well-

defined identity markers. These markers were seen as unchangeable—and inferior—capacities that characterized all individuals who belonged to an ‘Arabic’ or ‘Muslim’ culture, marking them off vis-à-vis a ‘white, European norm,’ which was constructed as ‘superior.’

Cultural essentialism has often been linked to colonialist, nationalist and/or fundamentalist projects. A profound critique of this kind of thought figure has been an important goal for postcolonial thinkers and for scholars engaged in Critical Race and Ethnicity Studies. Cultural essentialism has also in many ways been targeted by feminist critiques. Colonialism, nationalism and fundamentalism are often practiced with gender, sex and sexuality as important tools. Universal constructions of colonial, national and religious fundamentalist hierarchies are linked to mythologized, fixed images of biologically determined differences between the sexes and to hierarchically distributed areas of sexually different social and cultural functioning.

A shared feature of both biologically determinist and culturally essentialist theorizing of gender/sex is that they both construct links from biological sex to social and cultural gender in a monocausal and determinist way. A stereotyped perception of ‘the universal meaning’ of biological sex, or a static idea about the implications of being a woman or a man in a certain culture, are used to motivate and explain sociocultural gender relations and norms. Biological belonging to a certain sex destines the individual for a certain gender, which implies a predetermined sociocultural gender identity and a pre-given place in the hierarchical gender order of society:

SEX → GENDER

(to be read: ‘sex’ determines ‘gender’)

I shall elaborate on the critique of these gender-conservative positions. But first I want to note that, in their own twisted way, they sustain the point I made based on Latour’s reflections on cultural–natural networks. The ultra gender-conservative SEX → GENDER formula profiles gender/sex as something that cannot be classified as either biologically or culturally/socially based.

FEMINIST THEORIES OF GENDER/SEX

As I shall elaborate further in Chapter 6, critical feminist theories of social construction, historicization and discursive deconstruction have been forcefully mobilized to counteract gender-conservative discourses and their simplistic and determinist linking of biological sex and sociocultural gender. In order to effectively repudiate gender-conservative arguments, many feminist theorists—not least in the early years of Feminist Studies in the 1970s and 1980s—began with the assertion that it was necessary to separate the

discussion of sociocultural gender from reflections on biological sex. Socioculturally changeable gender, and not 'static' sex, became the crucial issue for many feminist researchers.

Had it been possible to keep up this separation, the mixed (cultural–natural) and ambiguous character of the phenomenon gender/sex could have been abolished. Seen from a Latoureaan viewpoint, we may say that the endeavor of feminist theorizing to 'liberate' the analysis of sociocultural gender from issues of biological sex was an attempt to 'purify' (Latour 1993, 11) the gender category, to make it modern in Latour's sense, that is, to separate its 'nature' part from its 'culture' part and classify them as each belonging to their different pole within the framework of 'the great divide' (Latour 1993, 97–100; Lykke and Braidotti 1996):

SEX → GENDER

(to be read: 'gender' is different from 'sex')

However, particularly since the beginning of the 1990s, many feminist researchers (e.g., Haraway 1991c; Butler 1993; Braidotti 1994) have pointed out that it is problematic to maintain a dichotomy between sex and gender. From a Latoureaan perspective, their arguments can be seen as contributing to a collapse of 'the great divide'—and as a move toward making visible the ways in which gender/sex is a mixed and ambiguous phenomenon:

GENDER / SEX

(to be read: 'gender' and 'sex' are inextricably woven together)

In Chapter 7, which explores feminist corpomaterialism, I shall present critiques of the classic feminist gender–sex dichotomy in more detail. The point I want to make here is that a side effect of this critique is that it once more foregrounds the fact that gender/sex has to be understood as a mixed, cultural–natural phenomenon. An endeavor to modernize (or in a Latoureaan sense 'purify,' 1993, 11) the concept of gender/sex through a detachment of sociocultural gender from biological sex is replaced by a visibilization of the ambiguous and 'impure' entanglement of culture and nature, which causes 'the great divide' that was set up between gender and sex by a feminist modernity to collapse. Gender/sex is re/conceptualized as a mixed phenomenon, which includes both biological bodily materiality and sociocultural dimensions, although in a very different way from the earlier gender-conservative and determinist discourse.

But in this way yet another argument for the necessity of a relentless interdisciplinarity and transversality in Feminist Studies is placed forcefully on the agenda. As a mixed (cultural–natural) phenomenon, gender/sex will demand a cross-disciplinary approach, that is, an approach that can handle both bodily material and sociocultural dimensions.

MULTI-, INTER-, TRANS- AND POSTDISCIPLINARITY

I have now, in different ways, argued for transversality and cross-disciplinary transgressions in Feminist Studies. The term that is often used to characterize this kind of effort is 'interdisciplinarity.' Now the time has come for a problematization of this concept. 'Interdisciplinarity' is often used as an umbrella term that covers many different ways of working across the frameworks of the disciplines. Due to these differing definitions, it is often not clear what people are referring to when using the term. Many researchers are, therefore, in agreement that distinctions between different types of 'interdisciplinarity' are necessary. Along the lines of this critique, I shall distinguish three interacting, but different, *cross-disciplinary working modes: multi-, inter- and transdisciplinarity*—as well as elaborate on the previously mentioned notion of *postdisciplinarity*, which implies an overall critique of the discipline-based *mode of organization of knowledge*.

That I distinguish between multi-, inter, and transdisciplinary modes of working does not mean that I give priority to one of these as 'better' or more analytically useful than the others. Which of the three to choose in your scholarly work depends on the character of the specific project on which you are working and the competencies of the researcher(s) involved. The point I want to underline with this three-layered distinction is that it is generally important to clarify what you are doing when you choose a cross-disciplinary approach—and that different types of cross-disciplinary modes of working must be distinguished from one another. Furthermore, I wish to stress that all three approaches are, and have been, crucial for Feminist Studies. I shall, therefore, present the distinction in more detail by applying it to the ways in which it operates in Feminist Studies.

The first mode of working is *multi-disciplinary research*. It can be defined as a *collaboration between different disciplinary approaches*, where disciplinary canons and tools, theories and methodologies are kept up. The aim of multi-disciplinary Feminist Studies is to foster tools for analyzing the complexities of gender/sex, gender orders, gender relations, gender identities and symbolic representations of gender/sex in their intersections with other power differentials and identity markers. The approach is *additive*: The disciplinary canons, theories and methodologies are added to each other. The multi-disciplinary argument for adding, for example, gender history, gender anthropology, gender sociology and gender psychology is that the complexities of gender/sex cannot be adequately understood from one of these disciplinary perspectives alone. By adding analytical approaches from more than one discipline, a more complex picture of gender/sex emerges. But the disciplinary tools, theories and methodologies as such are not challenged or brought into dialogue with each other.

In contrast to the rather confusing use of the concept 'interdisciplinary' as an umbrella term for a range of different kinds of cross-disciplinary

research activities, I find it important to use it in a more limited and precise sense. I suggest here that *interdisciplinarity* is to be understood as a mode of working that falls between a multi-disciplinary approach, which keeps up existing disciplinary borders, and a transdisciplinary one, which dissolves them. In contrast, I define interdisciplinarity as research that transgresses borders between disciplinary canons and approaches in a theoretical and methodological *bricolage* that allows for new synergies and transversal cross-disciplinary dialogues to emerge between heterogeneous fields of theory and methodology. Unlike the additive, multi-disciplinary approach, interdisciplinary research is characterized by an experimental openness to cross-fertilization between theoretical and methodological tools that were previously separated by disciplinary borders. The heterogeneity and differences between disciplines are marked as in multi-disciplinary research, *but* in a dialogue that is open toward new and emerging theoretical and methodological synergies.

In order to illustrate how these kinds of synergy effects have been developed within the framework of Feminist Studies, I shall take a look at Feminist Cultural Studies. As this sub-field of Feminist Studies and Cultural Studies has developed, it has combined semiotic, text and discourse analytical approaches with social anthropological and ethnographic ones. It is rooted in a broad concept of culture that includes both meaning-making practices (which point toward semiotic—textual and visual—approaches) and an everyday life practice (which refers to ethnographic and social anthropological approaches). What is at stake here is a redefinition of culture, which at the same time generates theoretical and methodological approaches that transgress disciplinary borders. Feminist interventions in the field of Cultural Studies have contributed to this development and generated even more hybridity and synergy than characterize non-feminist versions (Thornham 2000). Feminist Cultural Studies has among others forged strong links with the field of Science and Technology Studies (STS) (e.g., Haraway 1997; Franklin, Lury and Stacey 2000; Bryld and Lykke 2000; Lykke 2000; Lie 2002; Sundén 2003; Roberts 2007; Smelik and Lykke 2008).

Finally, I distinguish a third mode of working: *transdisciplinarity*. Unlike interdisciplinarity, which transgresses disciplinary borders but still relates to them, I define transdisciplinarity as an approach that moves the research process beyond the disciplines and into new fields of theorizing, and poses questions to which no traditional discipline can claim 'ownership.' In its transdisciplinary dimension, Feminist Studies focuses on the ways in which concepts of intersectional gender/sex affect knowledge production in general and on the development of theories and methodologies adequate for the analysis of gender/sex in their intersections with other power differentials and identity markers. As examples of transdisciplinarity in Feminist Studies and research debates that have been going on beyond the disciplines, I shall refer to the reflections about the object, theory, epistemology,

methodology, ethical and genre issues in Feminist Studies that are the focus of this book. The debates I shall introduce on the following pages are not 'owned' by any of the traditional disciplines. They are in principle relevant for feminist research within all disciplines.

Trans- and postdisciplinarity are easily collapsed into each other and are sometimes also treated interchangeably. However, in order to make my points about Feminist Studies as a non-traditional field in terms of *both content and form*, I would like to distinguish between the two. The distinction I make is that *transdisciplinarity* is to be understood as a *mode of working* with research questions that do not belong to any particular discipline, while *postdisciplinarity* refers to a *mode of organizing* knowledge production in ways that are different from the discipline-based structure of the modern university.

A related reason for making this distinction is to point out that the transdisciplinary working mode can be seen as the driving force behind the unfolding of Feminist Studies as a field in its own right, but that a push toward postdisciplinary modes of organizing is not necessarily implied in the transdisciplinary mode of working. Against the background of my previous discussion of feminist debates on autonomy/integration, successor-discipline/postdiscipline, it is important to emphasize that the unfolding of transdisciplinary dimensions have led different feminist researchers to different conclusions about the processes of institutionalization and organization of the field. As I illustrated by the example of Griffin and Hanmer (2001), the unfolding of transdisciplinary dimensions of Feminist Studies, which are not 'owned' by any existing discipline, can lead to arguments for the establishment of a successor-discipline, bounded off from other disciplines. *But* it can also be interpreted as part of a historical process of change toward 'postdisciplinarity' (i.e., toward modes of organizing knowledge production that are no longer based on a monodisciplinary structure). I would like to illustrate the latter stance with the position of USA-based feminist scholar Sue-Ellen Case, who opts for 'postdisciplinary' modes of organizing and defines them as follows:

'Post-disciplinary' retains nothing of the notion of a shared consciousness, or of a shared objective that brings together a broad range of discrete studies. Instead, it suggests that the organizing structures of disciplines themselves will not hold. Only conditional conjunctions of social and intellectual forces exist, at which scholarship and performance may be produced. Scholars do not work within fields, but at intersections of materials and theories. (Case 2001, 150)

The position I have argued for here—Feminist Studies as a postdisciplinary discipline (or postdiscipline)—insists on a *paradoxical middle ground* between the pragmatics of Griffin and Hanmer (2001) and the jump into 'postdisciplinarity' of Case (2001).

It should be added that in my experience there needs to be a special *organizational platform* in order to perform as a *postdisciplinary discipline*. Organizational stability and institutional autonomy in the shape of separate resources are prerequisites for an in-depth unfolding of field-specific reflections at all levels (empirical, theoretical, epistemological, methodological, ethical and as writing practice). Close and committed connections and possibilities for transversal movements between multi-, inter- and transdisciplinarity are, however, also a *sine qua non* for keeping up an open, reflexive knowledge production, which avoids congealing into taken-for-grantedness. I see it as a challenge for present-day universities to create postdisciplines that meet this dual need for frameworks that allow *both* for in-depth studies of certain thematic issues—in this case gender/sex in its intersections with other power differentials and identity markers—and open, transversal movements between multi-, inter- and transdisciplinarity.

CONCLUSION: TO PERFORM AS A POSTDISCIPLINE

In this chapter I have argued for Feminist Studies as a postdiscipline and discussed what it means to perform as one. My argument is contextualized by references to feminist debates on institutional autonomy versus integration into existing disciplines and on the question of whether or not Feminist Studies should 'go discipline.'

When I suggest that Feminist Studies should be positioned as a postdiscipline, I opt for a two-layered definition of the field. On the one hand, I stress that Feminist Studies can pass as a discipline, with its own profile and specific ways of pursuing knowledge, both in terms of carving out objects of study and ways of theorizing them and in terms of developing epistemological, methodological and ethical reflections and genres of writing. On the other hand, I emphasize the need for critical renegotiations of all these elements of which disciplines are composed, as well as the importance of keeping up transversal and open cross-disciplinary dialogues.

In order to sustain the point about keeping the borders of the field open, I have, first of all, referred to the research context that the so-called mode 2 (Gibbons et al. 1994) and the 'knowledge-based society' in general generate; I have stressed how it seems to increase the importance of transgressions of monodisciplinary knowledge production. Second, I have interpellated Bruno Latour's (1993) reflections on the ways in which it becomes more and more essential for scientific knowledge production to be able to approach mixed, cultural–natural phenomena and, in so doing, to transgress borders between natural, technical, medical, social and human sciences. Third, I have discussed how gender/sex can be characterized as a mixed phenomenon, that is, as something that can be reduced neither to purely sociocultural dimensions nor to purely biological ones and, hence, calls for relentless transgressions of disciplinary borders. Fourth, I have

stressed how ‘interdisciplinary’ modes of working ought to be specified as multi-, inter- or transdisciplinarity, and discussed how all three levels are important for Feminist Studies. Fifth, I have spelled out a distinction between transdisciplinarity as a mode of working with discipline-transgressive research questions and postdisciplinarity as a mode of organizing knowledge production in non-discipline-based ways, and I have argued that I see it as a challenge for present-day universities to create special organizational space for the unfolding of innovative postdisciplines like Feminist Studies.

3 Undoing Proper Research Objects

In the introductory chapter, I discussed problems related to the naming of the field of studies. I argued that I chose Feminist Studies because it does not fix a bounded and ‘proper’ research object. However, to name the field from the perspective of its location in feminist movements does not solve all the problems. Implicitly, I revitalized the question of ‘object,’ when, in Chapter 2, I discussed the capacity of Feminist Studies to pass as a discipline, but also problematized a mere ‘going discipline’ in favor of a definition of the field as postdisciplinary discipline. To define Feminist Studies as a discipline would traditionally beg an answer to the question: What is the core object of study? The present chapter begins with this question, but with the intention of firmly deconstructing the simple answer that gender/sex should be such a core object of study.

Following my definition of Feminist Studies as a postdisciplinary discipline, I shall, on the one hand, claim that gender/sex in its intersections with other power differentials and identity markers can pass as a ‘proper object.’ But, on the other hand, I shall stress that the main point is to make intersectional gender/sex into an object of research *without* fixing and essentializing it.

In order to make these points, I shall, *first of all*, refer to Judith Butler (1997a) and her significant problematizations of the linguistic act of fixing gender/sex as an object of scholarly knowledge production. Keeping this problematization in mind, I shall, *second*, discuss how critical feminist concepts of intersectional gender/sex must be understood against the background of a historically close connection to political activism and social movements, with their critique of power, society and science. I shall also underline how the link between scholarly knowledge production, activism and politics, which is so important for Feminist Studies, accentuates the need for a focus on change and transformation. *Third*, I shall take a look at what happens when the concept of gender/sex travels across linguistic borders. With reference to the complicated issue of translation, and to the fact that there is no one-to-one relationship between the meanings of words in different languages, I shall further underline the ambiguities and fluidity of the gender/sex concept, which are sustained by feminist problematizations and renegotiations of it.

TO DEFINE OBJECTS OF RESEARCH IS NEVER AN INNOCENT ACTIVITY!

The act of defining gender/sex as a 'proper' object of Feminist Studies has been problematized in significant ways by feminist researcher Judith Butler (1990, 1997a). Butler's critique is inscribed in a poststructuralist and queer-feminist framework. When I choose to use her articulations as illustration, it is both because they have had a great deal of influence on current feminist theorizing and because I find them important.

Butler argues against the fixations and mechanisms of exclusion that are interwoven in the definition of scholarly objects of study. She does this in an article with the telling title 'Against Proper Objects' (Butler 1997a). Her examples are 'Gender Studies,' on the one hand, and 'Lesbian and Gay Studies,' on the other. Beginning her analysis with a concrete text—the introduction to a Lesbian and Gay Studies reader (Abelove, Barale and Halperin 1993, xv–xvi)—Butler shows how reductionism is generated if one strictly delimits these fields of study in relation to one another. According to Butler's critique, it is simple and easy, but profoundly problematic, when the introductory chapter to this reader defines the object of 'Gender Studies' as sociocultural gender, and that of 'Lesbian and Gay Studies' as sex in the sense of 'sexuality.' Via the delimitation of the two fields in opposition to each other, sociocultural gender and sex/sexuality are constructed as a binary pair. Moreover, the ambiguity embedded in the word 'sex,' which means both 'biological sex' and 'sexuality,' is erased. Butler's critique aims to show how the construction of a dichotomy between gender and sex (the latter in both the previously mentioned senses) is untenable in a number of ways. According to Butler, it is not adequate for 'Gender Studies' to ignore either biological sex or sexuality. If it does this, it will become reductionist. Sexual practices and identities are gendered, and, therefore, interesting for 'Gender Studies,' Butler argues; biological sex, sexuality and sociocultural gender are discursively constructed in interplay with each other. For the same reason, she writes, it is also unsustainable for 'Lesbian and Gay Studies' to neglect the meanings of gendered subjectivities and sexed embodiment and to focus exclusively on sexuality. In so doing, she argues, this field of study will cut itself off from important understandings of gendered and sexed dimensions of sexual practices and identities. Many feminist researchers and scholars of 'Lesbian and Gay Studies' agree with Butler here and consider it crucial to work in the intersections between gender, sex and sexuality.

Butler's discussion of the mechanisms of reduction and exclusion that occur when 'Gender Studies' and 'Lesbian and Gay Studies' try to delimit and unambiguously delineate their objects of study in relation to each other is in line with her famous introduction to the book *Gender Trouble* (Butler 1990). In *Gender Trouble* Butler problematizes the political subject of feminism: the category of 'women.' What does it mean that feminists claim

to represent and to act as political spokespersons for 'women'? Butler asks. Does this not mean that feminists end up legitimizing and normatively fixing a universalizing category and an illusionary idea about a shared identity and a common oppression that transgress differences produced by time, spatial location, class, racialization, nationality, sexuality and so on? Does it not imply that feminists contribute to the maintenance of a category that is part of the problem rather than its solution? Butler's questions are rhetorical. Her answer is a clear: 'Yes, they do!' *Gender Trouble* is a radical critique of much feminist theorizing, in particular standpoint feminism. The book was part of the political momentum whereby discussions of racialized, ethnicized and sexualized differences among women gained a lot of ground in feminism. As I shall discuss further in Chapters 4 and 5, this is a momentum that, during the 1980s and 1990s, was produced by many kinds of political critiques from black feminists, postcolonial feminists, lesbians and queerfeminists. Butler wants to abolish the unproblematic and retrospectively naive way of talking about shared political ground linking all women together in a universal sisterhood. She wants to break down the normativity that a heterosexual, white, middle-class feminism constructed as a 'normal' and 'natural' interpretation of the meaning of 'women's liberation.'

Like Haraway, Butler is, however, well aware that we (both as researchers and as political subjects and citizens) always think, talk and act *in medias res*—that the god-trick is an illusion not only in science, but also in politics. According to Haraway, Butler and others, we cannot position ourselves 'outside' of the world we are analyzing and in which we act. Therefore, feminists cannot leave the category 'women' behind just like that. Butler emphasizes that the point of departure of feminist movements is the 'historical present' (Butler 1990, 5). This implies that current meanings of 'women' must be taken into account. From their different localizations within the here-and-now, feminists must, Butler argues, reflect upon their political core category and not just consider it as an *a priori* given. They have to reflect consciously on the exclusions, reductionisms, normativities, power differentials and so on that are (re)produced when they use the category 'women.'

In *Gender Trouble*, Butler speaks about feminism as a political movement and about women as political subjects. But her arguments can easily be transferred to the discussion about Feminist Studies and about gender/sex as an object of study. Like the category 'women,' gender/sex are universalizing categories that may generate normativity and exclusion in both a political and a scientific sense. This is what Butler illustrates in 'Against Proper Objects' (1997a). Therefore, if we pursue Butler's arguments, it is also possible to articulate parallel paths out of the dilemmas that fixed categories such as 'women,' 'gender' and 'sex' generate for feminists in politics as well as in Academia. Like feminism, understood as a political movement, Feminist Studies as an academic field of knowledge production may

handle the dilemmas by taking a critically reflexive and problematizing stance toward categories such as 'women,' 'gender' and 'sex' as they circulate in the here-and-now, and toward the ways in which they (re)produce exclusions, power differentials and reductionism. Against this background, Feminist Studies can be interpreted as critical research aimed at problematizing meanings of gender/sex.

CRITICAL RESIGNIFICATIONS OF GENDER/SEX

Having begun with this critical outline, problematizing rather than reaffirming, the object of Feminist Studies, I now want to define one of the central foci of the field as being the construction of discursive sites of resistance to exclusion, fixity and oppressive meanings of gender/sex (i.e., sites that make it possible to *resignify* gender/sex). Let me explain this in more detail.

This definition implies that scholarly knowledge is understood as discourse. Furthermore, it claims that society, politics, knowledge production and culture are closely linked. The starting point is an ontology that takes society as being characterized by a constant negotiation of meanings between different actors and collectives, and that characterizes scholarly production of knowledge as part of and complicit with a continuous political negotiation of meanings. Hegemonic discourses (e.g., scientific classifications) materialize in the institutions, rules, principles and norms of society, but they are not uncontested. Those who are excluded, dominated or stigmatized by hegemonic discourses participate intensely in the negotiations of meanings. These 'inappropriate/d others' (a concept coined by the Vietnamese-American feminist and filmmaker Trinh Minh-ha and adopted by Haraway, Minh-ha 1986–87; Haraway 1992) establish discursive sites of resistance against hegemonic discourses and resignify the categories used for classifying, defining, stigmatizing and excluding them.

The concept 'resignification' was forcefully introduced into the feminist theoretical debate by Butler. She elaborated it in order to conceptualize acts of resistance with respect to the notion 'queer' (Butler 1993, 230; 1997b), which queer movements turned around from a negative stigma to a positively valued identity. Butler's theory of resignification is inspired by Michel Foucault's analysis of the homosexual movement of the nineteenth century (Foucault 1978). According to Foucault, the movement emerged as a result of hegemonic discourses of medicine and psychiatry that defined homosexuality as deviancy. These discourses constructed a homosexual identity in a negative and stigmatizing sense. But at the same time, the notion of 'homosexuality' opened up possibilities for identification and for a movement of persons identifying as 'homosexuals' who turned the negative and excluding hegemonic discourse about sexual deviance upside down. Butler's discussion of resignification takes place with the notion of 'queer' as

its pivot. In the Anglophone world, 'queer' used to be a popular invective, stigmatizing homosexuals, but queer theory and the queer movements that gained momentum in the 1990s transformed 'queer' into a positive political signifier referring to a broad critical challenge to the dominant heterosexual normativity.

When I define Feminist Studies as a site for critical resignifications of gender/sex, I build on a parallel line of thought. Against this background, the starting point for Feminist Studies can be defined as critical resignifications of notions such as 'woman/man,' 'feminine/masculine,' 'gender/sex' and so on. Various kinds of feminist movements have articulated such resignifications as part of their resistance to hegemonic, gender-conservative discourses, which legitimize social and cultural inequality and power differentials with reference to biologically determinist or culturally essentialist definitions of gender/sex. When Feminist Studies becomes established as an academic field of knowledge production, it claims the authority to delegitimize such gender-conservative discourses. These are replaced by new ways of theorizing gender/sex, which make room for diversity, transformation and change. The term 'woman/women,' for example, is resignified so that it no longer refers to a universal notion of 'Woman,' understood as the negative and inferior opposite of 'Man,' but as a diversity of different subjects, who are considered to be equal in value to each other and to men.

Within the horizon of interpretation I present here, it is, *first of all*, important to keep in mind that the development of new critical concepts of gender/sex demands a political collectivity. The urge and momentum to resignify categories and hegemonic classifications come from political movements. Feminist Studies is created by political feminisms. *Second*, it is at the same time crucial to acknowledge that what happens when Feminist Studies establishes itself as a field of scholarly knowledge production is an opening up of a new level of theorizing of resignification processes. It becomes possible to base this theorizing on a systematic involvement of scholarly methods. The risk is that absorption into the academy may produce deradicalization, but the effect can also be an important strengthening of the foundations of the process that decisively increases the legitimacy and authority of theories and arguments. *Third*, I shall also underline that I see political and scholarly processes of resignification and theorizing as a *continuum*. Scholarly activity is a special kind of intellectual work, but neither essentially different from other kinds of knowledge production, including those that are part of political activism, nor necessarily detached from them.

GENDER/SEX AND INTERSECTIONAL NETWORKS OF CATEGORIES

As I have already discussed in relation to Foucault's and Butler's reflections on the categories 'homosexual' and 'queer,' gender/sex is not the only socially and culturally critical category to have emerged out of heavy

negotiations and struggles over meaning-making processes during the past couple of centuries. Other sociocultural categories have also been involved in intense renegotiations (i.e., categories such as class, race, ethnicity, sexuality, nationality, etc.). I want to take a closer look at these processes, because the ways in which these other categories interact with gender/sex have had a significant impact on conceptual development within the field of Feminist Studies.

First of all, I want to emphasize that gender-conservative discourses have often linked different social categories together. Since the eighteenth century, modern science has been obsessed with classifications. The history of science is full of examples documenting the ways in which classifications based on gender, sex, race, ethnicity, class, sexuality, nationality, mother tongue and so on have been used to legitimize social hierarchies, power differentials and in/exclusions. Sciences such as medicine, biology, psychiatry, sociology, anthropology and so on have contributed significantly to the construction not only of hierarchies between women and men, but also hierarchies that mixed and merged sexist, racist, ethnocentric, nationalist and class-privileging classifications. Telling illustrations can be found in the book *Nature's Body* (Schiebinger 1993), for example. Here the USA-based researcher Londa Schiebinger describes how natural history, biology and medicine of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries constructed a 'natural' human hierarchy with black women at the bottom, above them black men, then white women and above all others white men. The sexual science, *Scientia Sexualis*, of the nineteenth century, as described by Foucault (1978), is another historical example documenting how hegemonic discourses have legitimized social exclusion (e.g., by criminalizing sexual 'deviants,' that is to say, homosexuals, and defining them as psychiatric cases). Here, too, discourses on gender/sex merge with those on homosexuality. The 'deviants,' as defined by *Scientia Sexualis*, were the masturbating child, the hysterical woman and the homosexual (i.e., the 'female man' and the 'male woman') (e.g., Bryld 2001; Bryld and Lykke 1982). All these 'monstrous deviants' shared a characteristic: They 'ignored' the 'obligation' to contribute to the 'common good' of the nation through reproducing themselves within the normative framework of the heterosexual family, defined by a hierarchical, two-gender model. Therefore, they were socially stigmatized.

But it is not only gender-conservative discourses that have stressed the link between gender/sex and other social and cultural categories. The counter-discourses of political movements, too, have often generated interaction among categories. When political movements establish discursive sites of resistance and—to use Butler's term—resignify hegemonic classifications, they are responding to a mixture of sexist, racist and nationalist stigmatizing and pejorative discourses. In this context, the interaction between categories becomes part of the process of resignification too. Therefore, feminists in different political movements have, for example, often focused on the question of interaction between categories in order to strike up

political alliances. Feminist socialist debates on the relationship between gender and class provide one such example. Discussions of gender, race and ethnicity, taking place in the intersections between postcolonial, anti-racist and feminist movements, is another. A third example is the debate between queertheorists and feminists about the relationships between the categories of gender, sex and sexuality.

Against the background of interactions between categories, which both gender-conservative discourses and the counter-discourses of political movements have initiated, many feminist theorists have considered it important *not* to detach the categories of gender/sex from other sociocultural categories, but, conversely, to look at the interplay—or intersectionality—between them. As I shall discuss in more detail in Chapters 4 and 5, many feminist researchers consider gender/sex to be categories that cannot be separated from—and are inextricably intertwined with—other sociocultural categories such as class, ethnicity, race, sexuality, nationality and so on.

FEMINIST FIGURATIONS

On the previous pages, I have focused on a definition of gender/sex that understands it as an object of study that is open, dynamic, changeable and intersectionally linked to other sociocultural categories, such as sexuality, class, race and so on. Furthermore, inspired by Butler, I have underlined that Feminist Studies is geared toward a critique and problematization of gender/sex rather than toward a delimiting and delineating of fixed definitions of the categories. However, the connection to politics, activism and political movements also means that questions of positive and affirmative dimensions are forcefully raised: What kind of alternative visions of gender/sex can Feminist Studies generate? This apparently simple question conceals a dilemma. For the theorizing move *from* critique and problematization to affirmation can easily, as an unintended side effect, end up in an act of essentialization and universalization. Instead of opening up to a dynamic process that can create space for the unfolding of diversity and multiplicity, a kind of god-trick (Haraway 1991c, 191–196) may be reinstated: ‘Here is a vision about gender/sex which is good and right for everyone!’

This dilemma has led to the question: How can positive visions about alternative ways of ‘doing’ or ‘performing’ (Butler 1990) gender/sex be built into the critical conceptualizations of intersectional gender/sex of Feminist Studies, while maintaining a dynamic openness, and systematically avoiding processes of universalizing and essentializing? Feminist researchers have given different answers to this question.

I shall base the following example of such an answer on the notion of ‘feminist figurations,’ as it is articulated by the Italian-Australian-Dutch philosopher Rosi Braidotti, and by Haraway. According to Braidotti, a

feminist figuration is 'a politically informed account of an alternative subjectivity' (Braidotti 1994, 1), that is, an alternative subjectivity articulated in a figurative form that points to ways out of hegemonic, gender-conservative discourses about gender/sex in its intersections with other sociocultural categories. Braidotti bases her definition of the concept of figuration on the postmodern French philosopher Gilles Deleuze and his thoughts on bodily and affectively grounded processes of becoming. According to Deleuze, subjects, understood as mergers of mind, emotion and body, are always in the midst of processes of change and emergence, or as he articulates it: 'becoming' (Braidotti 1994, 111–123). Along similar lines, a feminist figuration is defined as a vision toward which the subject is moving in an intellectual, emotional and bodily sense. Braidotti emphasizes that figurations are figurative and do not refer only to concepts—for example, liberation or emancipation. A concept is a phenomenon we can embrace with our rational mind, but not an object of desire. Something that is figuratively formed is, however, different. It can be pervaded by mind, emotion and body, inhabited in an intellectual, bodily and emotional way. Braidotti emphasizes that the notion of figuration challenges 'the separation of reason from imagination' (Braidotti 2002, 3), which for centuries has characterized mainstream European philosophy.

One more important point is stressed by Braidotti: A figuration is, according to her, not a mere metaphor, but a lived reality:

A figuration is a living map, a transformative account of the self—it is no metaphor. Being nomadic, homeless, an exile, a refugee, a Bosnian rape-in-war victim, an itinerant migrant, an illegal immigrant, is no metaphor. . . . These are highly specific geo-political and historical locations—history tattooed on your body. One may be empowered or beautified by it, but most people are not; some just die of it. Figurations . . . draw a cartographic map of power-relations and thus can also help identify possible sites and strategies of resistance. (Braidotti 2002, 3)

According to this definition, a figuration cannot be understood in isolation from current societal power relations and the position of the subject within them. But at the same time, it can make up a site of resistance against these, and here the visionary aspect of the notion comes into play. Within Braidotti's framework, the subject is not a mere victim of the way she or he is positioned. She or he has agency; she or he can think, imagine, act and resist in order to change her or his situation. All this means that a figuration includes a palpable and literal moment of here-and-now positioning on the one hand, but on the other hand, it is also a figuratively formed vision encompassing the subject's process of intellectual, emotional and bodily change toward something other than the status quo. Braidotti characterizes the figuration as a 'political fiction' (Braidotti 2002, 7); or to paraphrase Haraway, figurations can be described as phenomena balancing

on the boundary between fact and fiction, between lived social reality and (science) fiction (Haraway 1991b, 149). According to Haraway, the balancing act of figurations points us in the direction of an 'imagined elsewhere' (Haraway 1992, 295), but in so doing, it influences the ways in which we think about our here-and-now situation. Both Braidotti and Haraway underline that figurations involve a continuous feedback between the lived reality of the here-and-now and imagined alternatives.

Examples of feminist figurations that have had a huge impact on the development of Feminist Studies are Donna Haraway's feminist 'cyborg' (Haraway 1991b, 149–181), Rosi Braidotti's 'nomadic subject' (Braidotti 1994), Judith Butler's 'queer' (Butler 1993, 223–242) and Trinh Minh-ha's and Donna Haraway's 'inappropriate/d others' (Minh-ha 1986–87; Haraway 1992). I shall go into more detail about these figurations in Chapters 4, 7 and 8. In the present chapter, I shall exemplify the concept with Haraway's cyborg.

HARAWAY'S CYBORG: AN EXAMPLE OF A FEMINIST FIGURATION

The cyborg refers to the proliferating fusions of bodies and technologies, between human/animal and machine, that take place today as a consequence of the development of new information and biotechnologies. A cyborg is defined as a cybernetic organism, a machine-human or a machine-animal, a techno-body (i.e., a body so technologically changed that it is impossible to distinguish between something 'original,' 'authentic' or 'natural,' on the one hand, and something 'technological' or 'artificial,' on the other hand). Technology and body have become one.

The term 'cyborg' was originally coined by two US researchers from Rockland State Hospital in New York, Manfred Clynes and Nathan Kline. In 1960, as part of early space research, Clynes and Kline discussed how the human body would need to be changed in order to live in outer space (Clynes and Kline 1995). Since then the cyborg concept has become part of the science fiction genre, featuring in such classic films as the *Terminator* trilogy, *Robocop*, *Star Trek*, *Alien* and *Blade Runner*.

Why include the cyborg in a discussion of feminist figurations? In her famous cyborg manifesto (Haraway 1991b, 149–181), Haraway suggests the cyborg figuration as a possible ally for feminists and other radicals who want to fight the dualisms and hierarchies of modern society. Haraway stresses that the cyborg should not be considered as an innocent partner. On the one hand, the figuration sustains power differentials based on gender/sex, sexuality, class, race, ethnicity and so on. But on the other hand, according to Haraway's feminist interpretation, the cyborg mobilizes other, critical stories that have the potential to undermine hegemonic power and dualisms. She underlines the importance of remaining aware of both dimensions of the cyborg figuration. It can be a dangerous antagonist,

contributing to the development of militaristic and capitalist 'command-control' paradigms (Haraway 1991b, 154). But at the same time, the cyborg can be considered as a figuration that breaks down a range of dualisms on which modern technoscience and power differentials of present-day society are based. As a fusion of body and technology, the cyborg challenges the borders between nature and culture—and hence also the borders between biological sex and sociocultural gender. The cyborg makes it explicit that concepts such as 'nature,' 'body,' 'sex' and so on are not universally given, but changeable, ethnospecific constructions. Furthermore, the cyborg emphasizes that nature and bodies today are so fused with technology that they have to be considered as 'reinvented' (Haraway 1991a) rather than as 'authentic and pure nature.' The cyborg figure makes it very obvious that 'nature,' 'body' and 'sex' have to be understood as a 'co-construction among humans and non-humans' (Haraway 1992, 297), as a biocultural or cultural–natural process in constant change, and not as something that can be traced back to either a biological or a cultural origin.

In this way, the cyborg may radically delegitimize all kinds of gender-conservatism, which argues for biology and nature as steady, fixed and unchangeable phenomena. According to Haraway, this makes it apt as a feminist figuration, and her interpretation has been influential in Feminist Studies. Her cyborg manifesto was first published in 1984 and has since been republished many times, among others in a collection of essays with the telling title, *Simians, Cyborgs and Women: The Reinvention of Nature* (Haraway 1991a). It became a cult text and gave rise to a strong *cyborg feminist* trend. Considered from a retrospective point of view, the cult status of the manifesto is clearly due to the ways in which Haraway's feminist cyborg is the bearer of two dimensions that are important in making a figuration effective. First of all, the cyborg refers to a lived reality; as a figuration it matches experiences that life in the age of bio- and information technologies involves proliferating fusions of bodies and technology with major consequences for everything, including gender, sex and sexuality—from the pill to artificial insemination. Second, this is a figuration with major potential not only for the destructive fictionalizations of, for example, star wars scenarios, which are the theme of much traditional science fiction, but also for positive feminist fictionalizations. In the cyborg manifesto as well as in other texts, Haraway makes many references to feminist science fiction. At a meta-theoretical level, these images from science fiction that Haraway likes to call forward emphasize the figurative dimension of the concept of figuration.

GENDER/SEX AS TRAVELING CATEGORIES

As I have discussed, it is an important point in Feminist Studies *not* to fix the meaning of gender/sex once and for all. The gender/sex categories of

Feminist Studies are consciously multiple, multi-layered, ambiguous and changing. Before I finalize this chapter, I shall take one more look at this multiplicity and consider what happens when gender/sex categories travel across linguistic and national borders. I shall unfold the long feminist debates about the intersectionalities between gender/sex and other socio-cultural categories in more detail in Chapters 4 and 5, and elaborate on the debates about relationships of biological sex and sociocultural gender in Chapters 6 and 7. But here I shall briefly discuss the Babel of translation problems that have been stirred up by the latter debate. The reflections over gender/sex as traveling categories will here act as yet another kind of reminder that Feminist Studies is based on resignifications and that context and situatedness are important.

More precisely, I shall discuss implications of the fact that the English-language distinction between biological sex and sociocultural gender is not easily translatable into many other languages, while at the same time Anglo-American Feminist Studies has had a strong international impact, in part due to the status of the English language as an academic *lingua franca*. This situation has brought the problem of translation forcefully onto the agenda. Many kinds of linguistic solutions have been mobilized in order to approach the problems of adequate translation of the gender/sex categories. The translation issue has also been linked to debates about whether or not a rigid distinction between biological sex and sociocultural gender would be appropriate for feminist theorizing.

The linguistic solutions that feminist researchers in different countries have chosen in order to separate sociocultural from biological dimensions of gender/sex and to reconnect them in new ways are interesting, because they give a close-up picture of feminist work of resignification. They speak about the ways in which the critically problematizing and deessentializing approaches to gender/sex and other social categories, characteristic of Feminist Studies, renegotiate and resignify traditional meanings. As illustration, I shall take a closer look at the ways in which feminist researchers have translated gender/sex into different languages.

Let me start with my own mother tongue, Danish. As mentioned in Chapter 1, the traditional Danish word 'køn' does not distinguish between biological and sociocultural dimensions of gender/sex. The same is true of several other European languages: the Norwegian ('kjønn'), Swedish ('kön'), German ('Geschlecht'), Dutch ('sekse') and Russian ('pol') refer to sociocultural gender, biological sex and sexuality. In spite of the commonality between these languages, the intertwined processes of feminist resignification and translation have, nevertheless, taken different routes in the six national contexts.

In Danish, Norwegian and German contexts, feminist researchers established a distinction between 'sex' and 'gender' via qualifying adjectives ('biological' versus 'sociocultural') attached to the unspecified noun: 'køn/kjønn/Geschlecht.' The effect is often a certain stylistic clumsiness. But,

as I stressed with reference to the Norwegian–Swedish feminist researcher Karin Widerberg (1998) in Chapter 1, the Scandinavian language situation is also positive for feminist theorizing of gender/sex. For those feminist researchers who consider the Anglophone distinction between ‘sex’ and ‘gender’ to be problematic, because it dichotomizes bodily material and subjective-sociocultural dimensions, the Danish, Norwegian and German language situation, where the terms ‘køn/kjønn/Geschlecht’ traditionally do not involve a distinction between biological and sociocultural aspects, seems more promising. According to Widerberg (1998), what is lost in stylistic elegance is made up for because it becomes easier, through traditional linguistic means, to articulate an understanding of the ways in which body, culture and society are woven together in gender/sex rather than making up compartmentalized and separate entities.

Russian and Dutch feminists have handled the resignifying processes and translation problems differently. In both these countries, many feminist researchers simply chose to borrow the English word ‘gender’ (Aristarkhova 2000; Vonk 2002). However, as Aristarkhova (2000) reports, the direct import of the Anglophone term ‘gender’ by Russian feminists has had the negative result that Feminist Studies and feminism have been hit hard by the suspicion that everything ‘Western’ awakens in some Russian contexts. In the Netherlands, the import of the term ‘gender’ seems, conversely, to have had more positive effects. The traditional Dutch term, ‘geslacht,’ is almost never used in feminist debates in the Netherlands. According to Vonk (2002), this has made it possible to avoid tendencies toward biological determinism, which could have been an unintended side effect had the traditional Dutch term ‘geslacht’ been mobilized by feminist research.

A third way of renegotiating and translating gender/sex is to be found in Sweden. The traditional Swedish term ‘kön’ is close to Danish ‘køn’ and Norwegian ‘kjønn’ and, like these, it does not involve a distinction between sociocultural and biological dimensions of gender/sex. Until the end of the 1980s, Swedish Feminist Studies, therefore, acted in parallel with feminist researchers in Denmark, Norway and Germany, using the adjectives ‘socio-cultural’ versus ‘biological’ to qualify the unspecified noun ‘kön.’ However, in 1988, the Swedish feminist researcher Yvonne Hirdman (Hirdman 1988, 2001) introduced the Latin concept ‘genus’ as a way to distinguish socio-cultural gender from biological sex. In the wake of Hirdman (1988, 2001), the ‘genus’ concept gained a lot of ground in Sweden, as did an edited volume with the significant title *From kön til genus* [From sex to gender] (Kulick and Bjerén 1987). Like ‘gender,’ ‘genus’ is a term that—besides the specific sociocultural meanings that feminist researchers ascribe to it—has linguistic connotations referring to grammatical gender, as well as biological ones referring to the classification of females versus males. However, the intention of Hirdman and others who argued for the ‘genus’ concept in Sweden was not primarily to refer to this traditional semantics. The main

point was that the renaming process should do the same semantic work for Feminist Studies in Sweden as the 'gender' concept had done for the promotion of the field in the Anglophone world; 'genus' should create a basis for a clear and simple linguistic distinction between sociocultural and biological dimensions of gender/sex. In the Swedish version, the English distinction between 'gender' and 'sex' was transformed into a distinction between 'genus' (relating to sociocultural dimensions) and 'kön' (now delimited to mean 'biological sex' in an English sense).

Many Swedish feminist researchers have criticized the renaming process initiated by Hirdman's 'genus' concept (e.g., Jónasdóttir 1998). First of all, the critics argue that it creates terminological confusion when 'genus' comes to occupy the linguistic site for 'sociocultural gender' and 'kön' as a consequence is reduced to referring only to 'biological sex.' Second, they argue that the Swedish concept of 'genus' inherits the problems that have been critically addressed from many sides in relation to the English concept of 'gender.' Both concepts, these critiques stress, maintain a problematic dichotomy between sociocultural and bodily material aspects. As I argued in Chapter 1, this kind of separation was perhaps appropriate when feminist research in its early stages needed to tear the category 'woman/women' out of the grip of biological determinism, but today the separation appears to be unsustainable because it makes it impossible to understand 'gender' as a mixed phenomenon that is intertwined with 'sex.'

Parallel with the critique of Hirdman's 'genus' concept, however, the renaming process that she and others initiated has had a lot of success in Sweden. 'Genus' has become the official way of branding Feminist Studies, and with this concept as a tool, feminist researchers in Sweden have established themselves as an integrated and well-recognized part of Swedish Academia—with professorships, research and education programs, centers of gender excellence and so on. The category of 'genus' has become a publicly and academically recognizable signifier for Feminist Studies understood as a field of academic knowledge production. Today, therefore, the vast majority of Swedish feminist researchers uses the term 'genus' as a joint frame of reference, as an umbrella term, a nodal point (Laclau and Mouffe 1985, 112), which, however, in no way excludes problematization and critique of the very same 'genus' category and its binary relation to 'kön.'

In the Roman-speaking countries, we find yet another terminological situation. The French/Spanish/Portuguese/Italian languages do, indeed, distinguish between 'genre/género/genere,' on the one hand, and 'sexe/sexo/sexo,' on the other. But, seen from the point of view of feminist researchers, one of the problems is that 'genre/género/genere' signify both 'genre'/species' and 'grammatical gender,' while feminist attempts to resignify them to mean 'sociocultural gender' have not gained much public ground either inside or outside of Academia. This means that it is difficult for feminist researchers to make themselves understood when they use 'genre/género/genere' to mean 'sociocultural gender.'

The situation in the different Roman-speaking countries is, however, not identical (Rolle 2000; Macedo 2000; d'Amelia 2000; Puig de la Bellacasa 2000). Moreover, changes seem to be under way. First of all, a younger generation of feminist researchers is apparently more inclined to include 'genre/género/genere' for 'sociocultural gender' in its research vocabulary. Second, a push for change is generated by EU translations (Puig de la Bellacasa 2000, 96). 'Gender' is routinely used for 'sociocultural gender' in all kinds of EU programs. When the program texts are translated from English into French/Spanish/Portuguese/Italian, 'genre/género/genere' is occurring more and more frequently as a translation of 'gender' in this sense.

When the problems of translation are discussed in Feminist Studies, the existence of a distinction between biological sex and sociocultural gender in the English language is often treated as if it was a simple and given thing. This is in fact not the case. As a final point in this brief overview of the intertwining of translation problems and feminist renegotiations of meanings of gender/sex, I shall underline that the Anglophone distinction between sociocultural gender and biological sex, too, is a product of feminist interventions and processes of resignification. As the Spanish-Belgic feminist researcher Maria Puig de la Bellacasa reminds us, the Anglophone resignification of 'gender' should be remembered as an achievement of critical thinking about gender/sex, even though there are many problems with the way in which 'gender/sex' perform as a binary pair:

It is useful to remember that the feminist Anglo-American meaning of 'gender' and its variations didn't exist in dictionaries before the early eighties, it was not an evident meaning of the word either. Gender is a concept that conquered a space of its own in Anglo-American academic institutions, public spaces, the media, and, finally . . . in dictionaries. (Puig de la Bellacasa 2000, 97)

In the USA, resignification of 'gender' as 'sociocultural gender' (in binary opposition to 'sex,' understood as 'biological' components) was initiated by sexological research during the 1960s (Haraway 1991d, 132–134). Psychoanalyst Robert Stoller's research on inter- and transsexual persons' gender identities at the University of California, Los Angeles, was important, as was the work of psychoendocrinologists John Money and Anke Ehrhardt at the Gender Identity Clinic at Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine. The distinction between sociocultural 'gender' and biological 'sex,' which became well known in the USA due to this 1960s sexological research, was, according to Haraway (1991d, 132–134), adopted and further elaborated during the early 1970s by feminists who saw the category 'gender' as an effective conceptual tool making it possible to push the discussion of the category 'woman/women' away from the traditional Man/Culture versus Woman/Nature dichotomy and instead situate the 'woman/women question' in a political and social context.

CONCLUSION: GENDER/SEX AS A TRANSFORMATIVE OBJECT OF STUDY

In this chapter I have taken a look at phenomena that, from the point of view of a traditional definition of a discipline, would have had to perform as rigidly bounded objects of study. However, I have instead given attention to gender/sex as an open, dynamic and transformative phenomenon. Inspired by Butler (1997a), I have emphasized that Feminist Studies aims at a critique and problematization of gender/sex rather than at fixed and essentializing definitions. Moreover, I stressed that social and political movements were to be understood as sites for the emergence of critical feminist concepts of gender/sex and, from this angle too, I underlined that changeability, transformation and resignification were the dynamic pivots. I elaborated this point by focusing as well on the intersectional interplay between gender/sex and other sociocultural categories such as class, race, ethnicity, sexuality and so on, that is, categories whose critical transformative meanings must also be understood as products of social and political movements. Furthermore, with the concept of feminist figurations, I stressed the ways in which positive visions of alternatives to the gendered hegemonies of the present day can be included in the theoretical and political debate without essentializing and universalizing gender/sex norms or reinstalling 'right' and 'wrong' ways to 'do' or 'perform' (Butler 1990) gender/sex. Finally, I have taken a look at gender/sex as traveling categories: What happens when such categories travel across linguistic borders? Against this background, too, I have drawn attention to the multiplicity, fluidity and context-dependence of gender/sex concepts and, at the same time, I have also illustrated what resignification of gender/sex may mean.

With this emphasis on openness, dynamism and transformation, I have implicitly continued the discussion I initiated in the last chapter about Feminist Studies as a postdiscipline. When working within the framework of a postdiscipline, as I defined it in Chapter 2, it is important to create a thematic focus (*in casu*: gender/sex in their intersections with other power differentials and identity markers), but it is just as important to do so without fixing the production of knowledge with delimiting and hence excluding and essentializing definitions.

Part II

To Theorize Intersectional Gender/Sex

4 Intersectional Gender/Sex

A Conflictual and Power-Laden Issue

Having mapped the field of Feminist Studies as a postdisciplinary discipline, aiming at the ‘undoing’ (Butler 2004) of fixed, essentialized and stereotyped understandings of gender/sex, I shall now proceed to the question of theorizing the processes of political resignification. In the following four chapters, I shall look at some of the many theories that feminists have developed in order to comprehend and activate the processes of undoing and thawing congealed and conservative understandings of intersectional gender/sex.

In particular, I shall focus on theorizings of intersectional gender/sex currently in widespread use. In line with my self-positioning as a Feminist Studies professor-guide with passions for certain theorizations, but no wish to canonize or universalize them, the theoretical positions that I have chosen to present here should be seen as a selection that could have been made differently. They do not represent a canon (i.e., a body of texts and theories claiming to represent *the* ‘core’ of the field). Rather, they should be seen as situated nodal points (Laclau and Mouffe 1985, 112), that is, as temporary crystallizations in ongoing feminist negotiations of located theory making.

This is in line with the earlier presented open, dynamic, transformative and politically situated definitions of Feminist Studies and the nodal point/object: intersectional gender/sex. Following the way in which I have theorized and presented the field in Part I, I shall emphasize that I understand the cartography of theories that I shall present in the following four chapters as produced by critical reflections on resignifications of meanings of intersectional gender/sex, and, moreover, as something that is in motion and constantly under renegotiation. I conceive the landscape of theories as a site of resistance to gender-conservative approaches; and I see the emergence of Feminist Studies as part of a political process, engendered by feminist movements and theoretically intensified in interplay with the academic institutionalization of the field that has taken place in many countries during the past three to four decades.

The theories that I shall present in the first two theory chapters (4 and 5) will focus on gender/sex as a category and process that, according to a

majority of present-day feminist theorists, must be understood as *intersectional*. That is to say, it should always be considered in relation to its intersections with constructions of other sociocultural categories such as race, ethnicity, class, sexuality, age, dis/ability, nationality and so on. However, the consensus regarding the importance of intersectionality does not mean that feminist theorists are in agreement about how to define and approach the issue. There are many different stances here, and the question of recognition of intersections has also been a focus for intense conflicts and tensions among different kinds of feminists. In the next chapter I shall go into more detail about feminist genealogies of theories and conceptualizations of intersectional gender/sex, beginning with the concept ‘intersectionality’ as it was introduced into feminist theory by USA-based feminist law professor Kimberlé Crenshaw (1989, 1995).

However, my overall focus is not the concept of ‘intersectionality’ as such, but rather the idea that gender/sex intersects with other sociocultural categorizations²—an idea that is integrated in much feminist theorizing, but that also has generated many conflicts about political and theoretical priorities. Therefore, in this chapter I shall start my discussion of intersectional gender/sex by locating it in examples of some key conflicts. I shall illustrate how the critical categorization of gender/sex and the question of its intersections with other socioculturally produced categorizations emerge out of often conflictual negotiations within and between feminist and other social movements. This point of departure for the discussion of intersectional gender/sex is intended to emphasize the point that the question of intersections and the issue of which categorizations to prioritize are closely related to power issues and struggles over political boundaries and agendas.

A DEFINITION

There are many interpretations of intersectionality and intersectional gender/sex in the field of Feminist Studies, so I shall begin by making myself accountable for my approach. I suggest a broad, umbrella-like definition, which can encompass some key dimensions that many feminist theorists would agree upon even though they might disagree in other ways and have different entrance points to the theorizing of intersections of gender and other sociocultural categorizations.

According to this definition, intersectionality can, first of all, be considered as a theoretical and methodological tool to analyze how historically specific kinds of power differentials and/or constraining normativities, based on discursively, institutionally and/or structurally constructed sociocultural categorizations such as gender, ethnicity, race, class, sexuality, age/generation, dis/ability, nationality, mother tongue and so on, interact, and in so doing produce different kinds of societal inequalities and unjust social relations. As this is an umbrella definition, it is important to notice that the

societal mechanisms at stake here are defined in different ways by different branches of feminist theorists. Depending on the theoretical framework, they can be theorized as dominance/subordination, in/exclusion, recognition/misrecognition, power/disempowerment, possession/dispossession, privilege/lack of privilege, majoritizing/minoritizing and so on.

In addition to the definition of intersectionality as a theoretical and methodological entrance point to understand power differentials and normativities, it is, second, to be understood as a tool that can be used to analyze how political resistances vis-à-vis intertwined power differentials and normativities are being built around a resignification of categorizations and normative identity markers, and, more generally, how individual subjects negotiate the power-laden social relations and conditions in which they are embedded.

As part of this general definition, it is important to underline that the point is to analyze how different categorizations are interwoven—how gender, for example, is interwoven with race, ethnicity, class and sexuality. Many researchers within the field of Feminist Studies are in agreement that intersectional interplays between categorizations should be analyzed as mutual and intertwined processes of transformation and not as a mere addition of gender, class, ethnicity, race, sexuality and so on. Therefore, I wish to revise and improve my definition, replacing the word ‘inter-act’ by the neologism ‘intra-act,’ a term that was coined by feminist physicist Karen Barad (Barad 2003, 815), whose work I shall present in more detail in Chapters 7 and 8. Barad underlines that *inter*-action is something that goes on between bounded entities, clashing against each other like billiard balls, without initiating mutual transformations. Conversely, *intra*-action refers to an interplay between non-bounded phenomena, which interpenetrate and mutually transform each other. What is important for many feminists when they speak of intersectionalities between gender, race, ethnicity and so on, is precisely these processes of mutual construction and transformation. Therefore, I find Barad’s notion of *intra-action* appropriate here.

In line with currently widespread feminist ways of theorizing gender/sex and other sociocultural categorizations as ‘doings’ (to be discussed in more detail in Chapter 6), that is, as effects of *processes of interpersonal communication* rather than as fixed identities that individuals ‘have’ or ‘are,’ intersectionality is also often conceptualized in a verb form rather than as a noun. Intersectionality is thus described with reference to the entanglement of processes of genderizing, racializing, sexualizing and so on.

This definition of intersectionality as process rather than structure is informed by poststructuralist feminist theory. However, it is important to underline that other trends in feminist theorizing of intersectionality also stand out. For some feminist theorists, in particular those who are informed by structuralist and/or Marxist feminist analyses, it is crucial to emphasize that different power differentials and categorizations are based on *different logics*. Against this background, some feminist theorists will explicitly stress

that it is important to distinguish between different levels of analysis, for example, to make analytical distinctions between economic logics producing the category of class and cultural logics shaping sexual categorizations. Along these lines, political scientist Nancy Fraser (1995) underlined the importance of distinguishing the societal logics that regulate economic re/distribution from the one that governs social mis/recognition. From a queerfeminist perspective, Judith Butler has, in return, criticized Fraser's stance. Butler points out that the analytical distinction between a struggle for 'redistribution' and one for 'recognition' basically reproduces an economistic Marxism's problematic division between an economic basis and a cultural-ideological superstructure with the effect that, for example, the social stigmatization of queer identities is reduced to something that is 'merely cultural' (Butler 1998) and without 'serious' economic consequences.

I shall exemplify different theoretical positions regarding intersectional gender/sex in more detail in the next chapter. As should have already become clear from this brief introduction to feminist intersectional thought, there are many different theories of intersectionality in Feminist Studies. What I would also like to argue here is that many different feminist researchers nevertheless will agree that gender has to be understood in some kind of interplay with other categorizations. Against this background, intersectional gender/sex can be considered as a nodal point for feminist discussions, where new theoretical and political tensions and synergies have continued to emerge. I shall now take a look at some of these productive *and* conflictual discussions. I shall focus on three examples. First of all, I shall discuss postcolonial and anti-racist feminisms, which emphasize intersections of gender, race and ethnicity. Second, I shall concentrate on queer-feminism, which theorizes intersections of gender and sexuality. Third, I shall look at profeminist studies of men and masculinities, which critically examine men's hegemonies, hegemonic masculinities and the ways in which they establish themselves in intersectional intra-actions between gendered power differentials, and power differentials based on class, ethnicity, sexuality and so on.

POSTCOLONIAL AND ANTI-RACIST FEMINISMS: GENDER, RACE AND ETHNICITY

As the emergence of the concept of intersectionality is linked closely to anti-racist and postcolonial feminist struggles to establish platforms for the analysis of the intertwining of processes of genderization, racialization and ethnification, I shall begin my presentation in this branch of feminist theorizing.

Postcolonial and anti-racist feminisms operate in a boundary space between different political discourses of resistance. On the one hand, these feminisms are in critical negotiation with anti-racist and anti-colonialist

discourses, which often seem to ignore gendered power differentials. On the other hand, they argue critically against white, Western, middle-class feminist discourses that tend to leave issues of racism and neo-colonialism out of sight. The highly ironic and telling title of a now classic book published in the USA in the early 1980s underlines this discursive in-between space from which anti-racist and postcolonial feminist analysis of the intersectionality of gender, race and ethnicity emerged. The title of the book is *All the Women Are White, All the Blacks Are Men, But Some of Us are Brave* (Hull, Scott and Smith 1982).

Another now classic key text that had great impact as a critique of white, Western, middle-class feminism is the USA-based feminist researcher Chandra T. Mohanty's article 'Under Western Eyes' (Mohanty 1988). With this article, Mohanty helped to establish a space for critical analysis of intersections of gender, race, ethnicity and geopolitical position. She turned a critical gaze on middle-class feminist slogans about global feminism and a universal sisterhood. She interpreted these slogans as embedded in a hegemonic discourse that constructed white, Western, middle-class feminism as a kind of avant garde. The notions of global feminism and universal sisterhood were, according to Mohanty, articulated on the basis that women all over the world had identical political interests. White, Western, middle-class feminists constructed a homogenous, global, feminist 'we,' Mohanty argued, and in so doing they neglected the differences in interests generated, for example, by geopolitical positioning, class structures, ethnicized and racialized mechanisms of exclusion and oppression and so on. The political goals of the feminist 'we' were set up against the background of what were in fact white, middle-class feminists' own interests, but were articulated, according to Mohanty's analysis, as a universal, identity political platform, which pretended to take the interests of all women into account.

Mohanty also pointed out that the construction of the feminist 'we' implied problematic ideas of an avant garde and a rear. This is a figure of thought typical of the kind of modern, linear way of thinking about 'development' that produced, among other things, the concept of 'developing countries,' (i.e., countries that should seek to 'achieve' the level of the industrialized West). The idea of the global, feminist 'we' is thus, according to Mohanty (1988), related to an equally unspecified 'they,' abstractly defined as women who appear to be 'more backwards' in terms of reaching out for the 'common' feminist goals. Located in the 'they' category are non-Western women, women with another ethnic background than white and often also women who are anchored in the lower social classes. Or in other words, what happens is a hegemonic and essentializing construction of 'Third World Women' as the 'ignorant, poor, uneducated, tradition-bound, religious, domesticated, family-oriented, victimized' Other of white Western feminism (Mohanty 1988, 53). In this way, white, Western, middle-class feminists have unreflectingly reproduced a colonialist tradition of cultural essentialism.

Against this hegemonic construction, postcolonial feminists and anti-racist feminists like Mohanty argue that it is crucial for white, Western feminists to abandon the identity political idea that all women have identical interests and critically rethink the way they reproduce deeply problematic modern ideas of linear social development and cultural essentialist notions of 'we' and 'they.' According to postcolonial and anti-racist feminists, feminist theory, analysis and politics should instead recognize that global hegemonies, social subordination and exclusion produce power differentials among different groups of women. If 'we' (= white, Western, middle-class feminists) do not carefully reflect our positionality in an intersectional, global perspective and revise our ways of doing theory as well as politics, 'we' will end up supporting rather than breaking down the global and local power structures against which 'we' claim to fight.

The criticism of hegemonic tendencies to universalize a white, Western, middle-class feminism has been articulated in many different ways both before and after Mohanty's influential intervention (1988). Therefore, the label 'postcolonial and anti-racist feminisms' that I use here should not be taken to refer to a monolithic unity. Links to class analysis and to issues related to ethnicity, race, nationality, geopolitical location, sexuality and so on have been emphasized differently by different postcolonial and anti-racist feminists located in different societal contexts. Critical voices who have particularly stressed anti-colonialist perspectives (e.g., Spivak 1988a; 1988b) have blended in with voices whose primary focus has been the articulation of an anti-racist feminism—in the USA for example explicitly linked to black feminism (e.g., hooks 2000).

Theoretically as well as politically, postcolonial and anti-racist feminisms make up a large and heterogeneous field. Poststructuralist, gender deconstructionist and discourse analytical positions, as well as different forms of feminist Marxist and neo-Marxist thought, constitute important theoretical trends in the field, but other positions are also articulated. For example, the USA-based cultural theorist Gayatri Spivak's contribution to postcolonial feminism is inscribed in a theoretical approach of sexual difference, which has certain affinities with the corpomaterialist theories I shall discuss in Chapter 7.

Even though I want primarily to stress the diversity of approaches to postcolonial and anti-racist feminist theorizing rather than collapse the productive diversity of theoretical viewpoints into a homogenized whole, I shall also emphasize some cross-cutting perspectives.

As I shall discuss in more detail in Chapter 5, it should be noted that the concept of '*intersectionality*' was explicitly introduced into the feminist debate for the first time by black feminists from the USA (Crenshaw 1989, 1995; Collins 1998). Postcolonial and black feminist criticisms have generated a strong focus on the ways in which intersections of gender, class, race, ethnicity and nationality mutually influence and transform each other. As the concept of intersectionality has been used by many postcolonial and

anti-racist feminists, it is in principle open for inclusions of new categorizations. However, it is important for the understanding of intersectionality that it should be distinguished from a liberal and relativistic notion like *multi-culturalism*. Postcolonial and anti-racist feminists would thus underline that the point is to direct attention to the dynamic interplay between societal in/exclusions, majoritization/minoritization and mechanisms of dominance/subordination. It is power in different forms (economic, political, cultural, psychological power) that is on the agenda for postcolonial and anti-racist feminists. According to them, the concept of intersectionality should not be collapsed into the liberal and relativist concept of multi-culturalism. The latter concept, postcolonial and anti-racist feminists claim, will just repeat a culturally essentialist way of thinking in a new form. It would replace essentialized notions of cultural superiority/inferiority with an abstract series of parallel, but even as culturally essentialized identities, delineated from each other without any reflections on the power relations, societal dynamics or transformatory processes that generate these categorizations and their interplay.

In addition to the notion of intersectionality and the critique of multi-culturalism, the concept of *transnational feminism* (Grewal and Kaplan 1994; Kaplan, Alarcón and Moallem 1999) has also gained central significance in postcolonial feminist theorizing of intersections. This concept heralds a transgression of liberal ideas about *multi-nationalism*, which, according to postcolonial feminists, are implicated in the problematic notion discussed earlier of global feminism. An internationalism based on multi-nationalism does not take into account geopolitical power differentials and neo-colonial hegemonies. Multi-nationalism means that you look at single nations as if global conditions were characterized by an abstract equality. As an alternative to this liberal point of departure, a transnational feminist approach focuses on the intersectionality of gender, class, race, ethnicity and so on, not only within the framework of single nations, but also against the background of transnational relations: economic-political-cultural hegemonies and power differentials among nations. Analyses of geopolitical positionings are important from this perspective as part of the scrutiny of intersectionalities. This requires a self-reflexive stance on global/local locations not only in relation to crude and rather abstract categories such as East–West/North–South as the issue of geopolitical positioning is sometimes framed. As I have discussed it with some European feminist research journals as my example (Lykke 2004), it is necessary to engage in much more detailed reflections on unequal relations between nations, regions, mother tongues and so on and to analyze the ways in which they generate various kinds of problematic methodological particularisms or universalisms in research.

Postcolonial and anti-racist feminist theorizing has also contributed to the development of discussions about the construction of whiteness as a normative categorization. Under the label ‘Critical Studies of Whiteness,’

this approach gained a lot of ground at the beginning of the 1990s (Gilroy 1987; Morrison 1992; Ware 1991; Ware and Back 2001; Frankenberg 1993; Dyer 1997).

Critical Studies of Whiteness focuses on analyses of racialized relations of dominance. This type of analysis will make visible how the unmarked 'white' norm is constructed instead of looking at the 'different' and 'racialized' other. The point is to look critically at the racialized and racist processes that construct 'whiteness' as a superior norm and symbol of civilization, progress, beauty and so on. The black USA-based writer Toni Morrison, who had a strong impact on the development of the field with her book *Playing in the Dark* (1992) on whiteness as a symbolic categorization in USA literature, articulates it like this:

My project is an effort to avert the critical gaze from the racial object to the racial subject; from the described and imagined to the describers and the imaginers; from the serving to the served. (Morrison 1992, 90)

Critical Studies of Whiteness are based on the same principle as the other two fields whose intersections with Feminist Studies I discuss in this chapter, that is, queerfeminist theorizing, which challenges heteronormativity, and Critical Studies of Men and Masculinities, which take a profeminist approach to turn critically against the hegemonies of men and hegemonic masculinities. The pivot of all three kinds of studies is to stress from the outset that it is not enough to analyze the subordinated/excluded/minoritized position. In order to understand how relations of dominance are constructed and reproduced materially institutionally and symbolically discursively, it is necessary also to critically analyze the dominant/included/majoritized position and the intersections on which it is built. Against this background, Feminist Studies of Whiteness can be defined as an endeavor to take a critical look at the ways in which power differentials, which are understood as being both racialized and gendered, are re/produced, and how class privileges, normative heterosexuality and nationalism all support and sustain these processes.

QUEERFEMINISM: GENDER AND SEXUALITY

Postcolonial and anti-racist feminisms position themselves in a discursive in-between space between a white feminism and a black anti-racism with a masculine face. They are rooted in political tensions and critical confrontation about definitions of the subject of feminism. 'When "we" talk, for example, about "global sisterhood," who are "we"?' postcolonial and anti-racist feminists ask.

I shall now take a look at lesbian feminism and queerfeminism, which also occupy a discursive in-between space that involves criticisms of a more

mainstreamed feminism. On the one hand, lesbian feminism and queer-feminism challenge heterocentric trends in mainstream feminisms. They make it clear how an exclusive focus on the problems and interests of heterosexual women implicitly confirms the hegemony of heteronormative discourses, the stigmatization of homosexual and other queer relations and the particular tendency to make lesbian relations invisible. On the other hand, both lesbian feminism and queerfeminism are engaged in a critical discussion with trends in homosexual and queer theory. They criticize the ways in which a focus on gay men implicitly reproduces a heteronormative tendency to make lesbian relations invisible, and they challenge the claim that it should be possible, politically as well as analytically, to separate sexuality from gender.

Both lesbian feminism and queerfeminism have turned against heterocentric and heteronormative trends in feminism, but in different ways. Lesbian feminist studies have to a large degree been inscribed in a project of visibilization—rendering lesbian history, everyday life, sexuality, literature and so on visible. In an epistemological sense, this is in many ways both parallel to and a revision of the feminist visibilization project that was embedded in the earlier described feminist critique of the disciplines (Chapter 2). The aim of the latter was to make women's history, everyday life, literature and so on visible in research. It challenged research traditions that have equated 'man' with 'human being.' Lesbian feminist studies have for their part turned against both traditional research and more mainstream feminist critiques of the disciplines, because the critical points of departure of the latter have to a large extent ignored lesbian voices (Griffin and Andermahr 1997). An example of a radical and very influential version of the lesbian feminist critique is the USA poet and theoretician Adrienne Rich's article 'Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence' (1986a). In this now classic article, Rich challenges the way in which mainstream feminism contributes to the oppression of women by making the so-called 'lesbian continuum' (Rich 1986a) invisible; what Rich refers to when she talks about the 'lesbian continuum' is the emotional bonding between women. According to Rich, when mainstream feminism makes the existence of this bonding invisible, it reconfirms the historically produced coercion to live a heterosexual life and to keep up heterosexuality as a compulsory norm that cannot be questioned.

Queerfeminism, too, is critical of mainstream feminist thought. A pivot for tensions between queerfeminism, on the one hand, and certain more mainstream-like trends in feminism on the other, has been the question of sexuality and attitudes to sexual liberation and to the sex-liberal ideology that was strong in the 1970s, with debates in some Western countries on the liberalization of laws against pornography, decriminalization of homosexuality and so on. An example of exposed tensions between queerfeminists and certain parts of a feminist mainstream is the conflict that crystallized in the 1980s in the USA into what has been called 'the sex wars' (Duggan

and Hunter 2006). Two issues in particular acted as catalysts for the controversies: first a discussion of the relationship between pornography and women's oppression, and second the question of lesbians who practiced sadomasochism in the name of a feminist sexual liberation.

One wing in the conflict was represented by a feminist anti-pornography movement—featuring names like Andrea Dworkin (1981) and Catherine MacKinnon (MacKinnon and Dworkin 1988). Both these authors gained ground in public opinion in the USA with their demands for state-regulated censorship and a ban on pornography. This movement saw pornography as a direct expression of a symbolic violence against women that legitimized and led directly to the sexual oppression of women in the form of rape, violence, trafficking and so on.

The opposite wing was, in particular, made up of voices from sex-positive lesbian feminist groups, that is, groups that promoted sexual liberation and women's right to sexual pleasure on their own conditions. These groups considered the anti-pornography feminists to be puritanical and much too negative in their view of sexuality. Among others who were famous on this wing was the group Samois (1978–1983), which was named after the house of a lesbian dominatrix in Pauline Réage's novel *The Story of O* (1965). The Samois group's book about lesbian sadomasochism (S/M) (Samois 1982) attracted a large readership both within and outside of the USA. The Samois group included names such as the feminist researcher Gayle Rubin and the writer Pat (now Patrick) Califia. Califia, in particular, had the effect of a red rag to a bull to the anti-pornography feminists, and vice versa. By the end of the 1970s Califia was already well-known for her books, in which she explored and argued for lesbian experiments with butch-femme roles (i.e., lesbian plays with opposites between masculine and feminine sexual performances) and lesbian sadomasochism. Califia published among others a lesbian sex handbook *Sapphistry: The Book of Lesbian Sexuality* (Califia 1988). Moreover, she wrote a series of articles that criticized the anti-pornography feminists, accusing them of contributing to keeping women stuck in a repressive Victorian sexual morality. Conversely, the anti-pornography feminists saw Califia and other sex-positive feminists' defense of lesbian S/M and plays with butch-femme roles as unambiguous expressions of their entanglement in the interests of a capitalist porn industry dominated by men.

The feminist 'sex wars' had major consequences. They divided both heterosexual and lesbian feminists into several camps. Therefore, it would be an approximate reduction to see the distinction between sex-positive feminists who focused on pleasure and the construction of sexual subject positions, and anti-pornography feminists, who discussed women's roles as victims of different kinds of sexualized violence, as coinciding with a distinction between a lesbian feminist and a heterofeminist position. But it is also important to note that the 'sex wars' contributed, to a large extent, to the unfolding of queer positions on the sex-positive wing, which argued for a political separation of

queer and feminism and for an analytical separation of sexuality and gender. In the wake of the sex wars, theoreticians such as Gayle Rubin (1984) and Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick (1990) initiated a strong queer critique of the status of the heterosexual couple as a hegemonic norm for all intimate cohabitation. That this heteronorm was reproduced by the anti-pornography feminists was not the least issue underlined by Rubin (1984).

Queer theorists like Rubin (1984) and Sedgwick (1990) launched the idea of a separation of gender and sexuality in order to make it possible to explore sexual hierarchies, sexual diversity and sexual ambiguity without interference from an essentialist two-gender model, which demands a positioning in unambiguous sex/gender boxes and might allow an anti-sex version of feminism to derail the discussion. The separation has, however, been criticized by many queerfeminist theoreticians. According to the latter, gender, sex and sexuality are so entangled with one another in lived experience that it will lead to both analytical and political reductionism if they are separated. Instead of separating the categories, according to many queerfeminists, it is necessary instead to reflect on and deconstruct the naturalized intersections between them. In order to avoid the possibility that hegemonic discourses about two heteronormatively defined sex/genders unintentionally interfere with the queer theoretical analysis, it is necessary to take a critical look at the ways in which power differentials and constraining normativities based on gender, sex and sexuality are intertwined instead of keeping the question of intersections out of sight (Butler 1990; Rosenberg 2002).

As an example of the many different linkages between queer theory and feminism that have been generated since the queer movement started to make itself heard in the early 1990s, I shall focus on Judith Butler and stress her queerfeminist position and critical analysis of the intersections between the categories of gender, sex and sexuality.

To say that Butler's agenda is queerfeminist (Rosenberg 2002) means that she turns against the dimensions of biological determinism and cultural essentialism that insist upon a deterministic and culturally normative connection between biologically sexed bodies, the gender identities 'woman' and 'man' and the heterosexual organization of sexual desire. An important goal for her is to deconstruct and delegitimize what she calls the 'heterosexual matrix' (Butler 1990, 17), that is, the discursive regimes of power that have naturalized and normalized the classic heterosexual intercourse as *the* sexual and reproductive act together with the dichotomous two-gender model on which it is based.

Butler's argument that biological sex is discursively constructed by the same societal power regimes as sociocultural gender (to be discussed in more detail in Chapter 7) is inspired by Foucault (1978). According to Foucault and Butler, both sex and sexuality are discursive constructions and an effect of the biopolitical agendas of modernity. Foucault (1978) localized the discursive institutionalization of sexuality in the biopolitical power

regime that has been mobilized since the eighteenth century in order to regulate our bodies into reproducing themselves according to (bio)political and demographic standards. The discursive regulation of sexuality into a 'normal' (= reproductive) and a 'deviant' (= non-reproductive) form should be understood as an effect of the ways in which reproduction is dependent on sexuality and heterosexual intercourse. According to Foucault, this intercourse—normatively constructed in opposition to 'deviant sexual practices'—has for centuries been the central pivot for the biopolitical regimes of power that are anchored in institutionalized attempts to control life processes and demography. Biologically determinist arguments claiming causal relations between sexed bodies, sexual desires, sexual object choices, gender identities and gender performances are, according to Butler's interpretation of Foucault, linked to this biopolitical power regime and the central position of sexuality in it.

In order to delegitimize, denaturalize and denormalize the continuously repeated chain of biologically determined and culturally essentialized causal relations between body, sex, desire, gender identity and gender performance, Butler focuses on the figuration 'queer,' which she understands as an open and mobile subject position and not as an identity fixed once and for all. The queer subject resists normatively fixed identities as woman/man, feminine/masculine, hetero/homo/bi and so on and disturbs the smooth running of the discursive machinery, within which the two-gender model and the heteronorm reproduce themselves via an endless series of performative repetitions. With 'perverse' citations and gender parodies, the queer subject exposes dissonances, Butler writes, and makes visible that there is no essential, universal, normal and *a priori* connection between body, sex, desire, gender identity and gender performance.

It is possible to expose the dissonances in many ways. What Butler calls gender parody is one of these possibilities. Butler's examples of queer exposures of dissonances through gender parody include drag (drag queens and drag kings), cross-dressing and lesbians who perform stylized butch-femme relations (Butler 1990, 137). All these examples make it clear that the relationship between biological sex, gender identity and gendered desire performance are not once and for all givens. For example, the butch-femme couple displays the same sex, but the kick in their sexual play and the sexual attraction between them are based on opposed gendered identities and sexual performances. According to Butler, the idea of a 'true' and original gender vanishes in favor of paradoxical and ambiguous messages, which make every attempt to confirm a 'truth' about gender, sex and sexuality impossible.

Let us take a look at the butch-femme couple as an example. The butch exposes a dissonance between anatomical sex (female) and a culturally constructed masculine identity and desire performance. At first glance the femme on her part confirms a link between anatomical sex (female) and a feminine identity and desire performance—and yet she does not do this,

because what she desires is *both* the butch's female body *and* her masculine performance, and in this way the femme, too, becomes totally committed to the exposure of dissonances and to the parodying of the idea of a 'true' heterosexual femininity. As Swedish queerfeminist Ulrika Dahl emphasizes, the femme, too, is performing as a 'copy without original' (Dahl 2008; Volcano and Dahl 2008).

CRITICAL STUDIES OF MEN: HEGEMONIES AND MULTIPLE MASCULINITIES

The last part of this chapter has a slightly different take on questions of gender/sex and intersectionality compared to the two previous sections. Both postcolonial/anti-racist feminisms and queerfeminisms have emerged as critical reactions to feminisms that have focused too exclusively on gendered power differentials without considering intersections with other power-laden social categorizations—ethnicity, race, class, nationality, sexuality and so on. Critical Studies of Men and Masculinities have also been committed to political and theoretical demarcations, but not in relation to branches of Feminist Studies. Conversely, researchers within the field stress a close relationship to Feminist Studies and distance themselves critically to so-called Men's Studies, which, they argue, constitute 'a false parallel to Women's Studies' (Hearn 2004, 50). According to researchers engaged in Critical Studies of Men and Masculinities, the problem with 'Men's Studies' is that, in contrast to the case of women as a social category and women's perspectives, men as a social category and men's perspectives have not been invisible or overlooked in dominant research. Quite the opposite is true. Traditionally, prevailing research has focused on men and men's perspectives. Furthermore, 'Men's Studies' take a starting point in men's perspectives without necessarily critiquing the ways in which gendered power relations privilege men as a social group. As an umbrella term, 'Men's Studies' also includes directly anti-feminist studies of masculinity, among others the so-called mythopoetic masculinity studies (Bly 1990) that fetishize masculinity as the essence of manliness.

By contrast, it is central to researchers in the field of Critical Studies of Men and Masculinities to define themselves as *profeminist* and to explicitly criticize the gendered power differentials that sustain men's hegemonic power (e.g., Mellström 1997, 2003, 2004, 2007; Hearn 1989, 1992, 1997, 2004). Jeff Hearn, a British academic now based in Finland and Sweden, highlights in a programmatic article on Critical Studies of Men and Masculinities that the field is 'counter-hegemonic' (Hearn 2004, 62). The aim is to contribute to the breakdown of men's hegemonies. Furthermore, the field is defined as anti-essentialist. The categories 'men' and 'masculinities' are seen as social constructs; they are analyzed from a so-called doing-gender perspective, that is, as something that is 'done' (constructed) in a

communicative social process, and should not be seen as a fixed characteristic that certain individuals 'have' or 'are.' Critical Studies of Men and Masculinities also highlight gender as relational, meaning that men as such are not the primary focus. Rather, the main objects of study are gendered power differentials. The aim is to analyze relations between women and men, who are considered as groups relationally constructed and socially constituted in power-laden relationships of subordination and dominance. A related aim is to scrutinize relations between different groups of (privileged, subordinate or marginalized) men in society, also understood as constructed and constituted in power-laden social relations to each other.

I want to highlight two aspects in particular of the discussions within the field of Critical Studies of Men and Masculinities that touch centrally upon the issue of intersectionality.

First, like the feminist critiques of the disciplines discussed in Chapter 2, research within the area of Critical Studies of Men and Masculinities has critically investigated the hegemonic and excluding intersectionality between the categories of 'man' and 'human being' as the prevailing starting point for much traditional research. In an early volume on Critical Studies of Men and Masculinities, British feminist Jalna Hanmer emphasized the agenda of bringing the implicit equation of 'human being' and 'man' in dominant discourses out into the open. She highlighted the importance of 'naming men, as *men*, as *one of two* genders' (Hanmer 1990, 38). While traditional disciplines have in various ways naturalized, normalized and thereby legitimized hegemonic constructs of intersections between the categories of 'man' and 'human being'—constructing 'man/human being' as the subject of science, society and culture—profeminist Critical Studies of Men and Masculinities seek to critically make visible, problematize, deconstruct and deessentialize the ways in which this intersection has been taken for granted. As already noted, there are clear parallels between this agenda and those of Critical Studies of Whiteness and Queer Studies of heteronormativity. All three areas aim to criticize, problematize, deconstruct and deessentialize social constructions of those intersections that occupy hegemonic positions, claiming to represent the given, the unassailable, the obvious, the normal—the peak of humanity, progress and civilization.

Second, apart from contributing to the critical exposure of hegemonic constructs of intersections between 'man' and 'human being,' Critical Studies of Men and Masculinities have also committed themselves to feminist debates on intersectionalities by emphasizing the importance of power differentials between different groups of men and by highlighting that masculinity must be understood as a multiple and contextually changing categorization. The Australian scholar Robert W. (now Raewyn) Connell's theorization of 'hegemonic,' 'subordinate,' 'complicit' and 'marginalised masculinities' (Connell 1995, 77–81) has been highly influential for this conceptualization of masculinities.

In line with feminist intersectionality studies, Connell argues that masculinities—as well as gender in general—must always be understood in relation to other social categories, such as class, race, ethnicity, sexuality and so on, and in this sense they are to be considered as multiple social categories. However, Connell also emphasizes that it is not possible to talk about ‘a black masculinity or a working-class masculinity’ (Connell 1995, 76) as a fixed typology. Instead Connell theorizes relations between men as well as between women and men as dynamic, based on a ‘doing gender’ perspective and embedded in an understanding of gendered power relations as historically and socially changing. A key concept in Connell’s theoretical framework is ‘hegemony,’ which is borrowed from the Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci (1971). Connell draws on Gramsci’s conceptualization of class hegemony as a cultural dynamic that creates dominance and subordination between classes. Connell reworks Gramsci’s concept in order to conceptualize hegemonic masculinity, defined as a process and practice, that is, as a:

... configuration of gender practice which embodies the currently accepted answer to the problem of the legitimacy of patriarchy, which guarantees (or is taken to guarantee) the dominant position of men and subordination of women. (Connell 1995, 77)

According to Connell, hegemonic masculinity or hegemonic masculinities (to emphasize the plurality of the term) should be understood as cultural and social practices that legitimize gendered power differentials, privileging some men and making it possible for them to successfully dominate and subordinate women and other men. Connell emphasizes the dynamism of the process by noting that different social contexts produce different hegemonic practices and different kinds of hegemonic masculinities that, moreover, should be understood in their intersections with other social categorizations (class, ethnicity, race, sexuality etc.).

One of the strong points of profeminist theories of masculinities, such as Connell’s, is the elaborate way in which they emphasize that analysis of gendered and other power differentials should not only focus on relations between women and men or between women. While these power relations are important, Connell, along with other scholars within the field of Critical Studies of Men and Masculinities, argues that it is also important to focus on relations of dominance/subordination between different socially constructed categories of masculinities. Apart from hegemonic masculinities, Connell has introduced three other categories. First, ‘complicit masculinities’ are discussed, as a kind of supplementary position to those of the hegemonic masculinities (1995, 79). Individuals who are bearers of complicit masculinities do not manage to comply with the normative standards of hegemonic masculinities, but they nevertheless benefit from the hegemonic power relations in which they take part. They do so by pocketing

'the patriarchal dividend' (1995, 79), that is, by enjoying the privileges that gendered power differentials give certain men. Second, Connell introduces the category of culturally 'subordinate masculinities,' taking the example of gay men (1995, 78). Third, Connell uses the category 'marginalised masculinities,' using the example of men who are subjected to the power of other men because of societal power structures based, for example, on ethnicity and/or class (1995, 80–81). Connell admits that the term 'marginalised masculinities' is 'not ideal' (1995, 80). However, both 'subordinate' and 'marginalised' masculinities are introduced as categories that stand in contrast to 'hegemonic' and 'complicit' masculinities because this makes possible a distinction between different types of subordination/dominance between men. Connell wants to be able to distinguish between a culturally normative relation of dominance/subordination and one based on social structures, which give one group power over another.

Connell's theorization of masculinities has been highly influential among feminist and profeminist theorists. However, it has also been criticized. As previously noted, Jeff Hearn, who has also had a great deal of impact on the development of the field of Critical Studies of Men and Masculinities, has noted that Connell's concept of 'hegemonic masculinities' gives rise to certain analytical problems. Hearn argues that Connell's theory is not totally clear as to whether it refers to cultural representations of masculinities, whether it concerns how the social category of 'men' relates to women, children and other men in everyday life practices, or whether it relates to institutional structures that give certain groups of men privileges and power at the cost of women, children and other men (Hearn 2004, 58). Hearn indicates that Connell's conceptual framework gives rise to slippages in terms of analyzing men's hegemonic exercise of power and the interplays with other power differentials based on class, ethnicity, sexuality and so on in precise ways.

To resolve this problem Hearn suggests shifting the analytical perspective from hegemonic masculinities to men's hegemonies and their hegemonic practices. Hearn agrees that it is important to study cultural representation of masculinities, but he emphasizes that in order to understand the social context, it is necessary to critically analyze the social construction of the category 'men' and its taken-for-granted links with positions of dominance, control and hegemony. How is the category 'men' created and recreated in concrete everyday life and institutional practices, and in interplay with categories such as class, ethnicity, sexuality and so on? How does the social category 'men' become naturalized? How does it happen that this category's socially constructed relations to dominance, hegemony and power become taken for granted and legitimized by the consent of those who are dominated?

Another critique is articulated from a queerfeminist perspective. This critique has first and foremost addressed the wave of non-explicitly profeminist and sometimes even anti-feminist masculinity research that has proliferated since the 1990s within the field of Cultural Studies. However,

theories such as Connell's are also implicitly challenged. In particular, USA-based queerfeminist Judith Halberstam (1998) has elaborately critiqued the lack of theorization and analysis of female masculinities within the field of Cultural Studies of masculinities. Halberstam argues that an implicit side effect of these kinds of cultural analyses of masculinities, which normally ignore the issue of female masculinities, is often a confirmation of an essentialized and naturalized link between the male body and hegemonic masculinity. This is in spite of the explicit social constructionist perspective that defines Cultural Studies of masculinities. With an ironic undertone, Halberstam emphasizes how Cultural Studies of masculinities have, on the one hand, given a lot of attention to multiple masculinities based on race, class, sexuality, nationality and so on, while, on the other hand, studies of female masculinities were totally ignored in the field (Halberstam 1998, 13–19). Halberstam argues, however, that female masculinity 'masculinity without men' (Halberstam 1998, 13) should be of interest to social constructionist and intersectional masculinity studies. This is because it radically underlines masculinity as a social construct and as something that does *not* emanate in mysterious ways from male bodies, natures and sexualities. Furthermore, Halberstam highlights that women with a masculine gender performance have historically contributed to the construction of modern masculinities. According to Halberstam, modern, white, middle-class masculinities must be understood as having emerged from the way in which they have demarcated themselves from the masculinities of gay men, working-class men and non-white men. In this, Halberstam argues in line with Connell's analysis. *However*, Halberstam adds, the historical emergence of modern, white, middle-class masculinities should also be understood against the background of a delineation vis-à-vis women's masculine gender practices (Halberstam 1998, 48).

CONCLUSION: INTERSECTIONALITY AND CONFLICTUALITY

In this chapter I have looked at some of the many political tensions within the landscape of feminism and in the borderlands between feminist and other radical social movements that have given rise to different ways of theorizing intersectionalities between power differentials and normativities based on gender, race, ethnicity, nationality, sexuality and so on. My choice of conflicts and discussions of intersections—postcolonial and anti-racist feminist challenges to white, middle-class feminism's belief in a unified women's identity, queer feminist challenges to heteronormative and anti-sex tendencies in feminism, the way in which researchers from the area of profeminist and Critical Studies of Men and Masculinities challenge non- and anti-feminist Men's Studies—are intended as examples. I have chosen these particular examples because they currently play a significant role in the international debate on intersectional gender/sex.

But the fact that these are examples means that other conflicts and debates on intersectionalities could have been included. As indicated earlier, reflection on intersectional interplays between social categorizations is an integral part of much feminist thought—and in this sense is *not* limited to the examples that I have focused on here.

An important political and theoretical conflict over intersections, which I have not discussed in this chapter, is the fierce negotiations about the categories of gender and class that took place in the period before, during and after World War I and again in the 1970s between feminist and non-feminist Marxists and socialists. I have chosen not to present this conflict in the present chapter, because it does not play the crucial role it once did. The fall of the Berlin Wall and the Soviet Union undermined the authoritarian and orthodox kinds of Marxism that insisted on the primacy of class over all other social categories. However, I should like to stress that my leaving out this particular struggle over intersectionalities should not be taken as an excuse to ignore the still-important discussion of intersectionalities of gender and class. I shall come back to this in Chapters 5 and 6.

5 Theorizing Intersectionalities

Genealogies and Blind Spots

As underlined in previous chapters, many feminist researchers are in agreement that gender should be theorized as intersectional, that is, as interwoven with other sociocultural power differentials and normativities categorized in terms of race, ethnicity, class, sexuality, nationality and so on. This can be understood, first of all, as an effect of Feminist Studies forming a site of resistance to hegemonic gender-conservative discourses that, co-construct gender and other sociocultural categories in such a way that sexist, racist, ethnocentric, class-privileging, homophobic, xenophobic and nationalist discourses often go hand in hand. I discussed this in Chapter 3, referring to the ways in which sciences like medicine, biology, psychiatry, sociology, anthropology and national philologies back to the eighteenth century have not only contributed to the construction of ‘universal’ and ‘naturally’ given hierarchies between women and men, but also hierarchies where other kinds of sexist, racist, ethnocentric, nationalist, colonialist and class-privileging classifications merged. To resist these hegemonic discourses, critical analyses of intersectionalities have been initiated. Second, in Chapter 3, I also examined the ways in which endeavors to build alliances between anti-sexist, anti-racist, anti-homophobic, anti-nationalist and anti-colonialist movements called forward reflections and mobilized theorizings of intersectionalities between key categories of the different movements. In Chapter 4, I followed up on these references to negotiations of intersections between different kinds of political movements and underlined that the question of intersectionalities in feminist theory has emerged out of tensions between movements and power-laden debates about which intersections, power differentials and normativities should be given priority in which political contexts.

In this chapter, I shall take a look at intersectionality as a critical theoretical and methodological tool in feminist analysis. I shall make it clear how I consider it to be a nodal point for different kinds of feminist theorizing of intersections between sociocultural categorizations. In order to carve this out, I shall apply a so-called genealogical approach, beginning with an introduction to what it means to work genealogically.

A GENEALOGICAL APPROACH

To introduce my discussion of genealogies of feminist theorizing of intersectionality, I shall start with a brief account of what it means to apply a genealogical perspective.

I build on Foucault (1984) when using the term genealogy. He argued that the representation of histories of knowledge production as linear development is problematic. They support an understanding of the ‘progress’ of rational thought as though it were linear and independent of social and historical contexts. Seen from this simplistic perspective, new theories are interpreted as though they documented a process of becoming wiser and wiser. Foucault introduced a genealogical perspective as an alternative to this traditional way of telling the history of science and knowledge production. The genealogical approach entails constructing a kind of ‘family tree’ for current strands of theory. Rather than asking if theory A has rationally developed into theory B, a Foucauldian genealogist will ask: What strands of thought can, in hindsight, be seen as woven together to constitute this particular theory that we currently consider to be important? In other words, instead of telling the history of knowledge production as some kind of origins story, starting in the past and running forward, a genealogy will use the here-and-now as a lens and trace different theoretical strands that seem to have merged and intertwined while shaping the current version of the theory.

I agree with Foucault’s suggestion that histories of knowledge production should be analyzed and told genealogically. As a hub for the following historical overview of feminist theorizing of intersectionality, I have, therefore, chosen the concept of intersectionality as it was explicitly introduced into feminist theorizing by black feminist scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw in the late 1980s and as it is currently used. From this entrance point, I shall distinguish between three clusters of feminist analysis of intersections:

- *Explicit feminist theorizings of intersectionality*, that is, theories that—like Crenshaw’s theory—explicitly use the concept ‘intersectionality’;
- *Implicit feminist theorizings of intersectionality*, that is, theories that focus on intersections, but without using the concept ‘intersectionality’ as the main frame of interpretation;
- *Feminist theorizings of intersectionality under other names*, that is, theories that concentrate on intersections, but while using other concepts and frames than ‘intersectionality.’

There are certain overlaps between the three clusters, but as I have discussed it in earlier work (Lykke 2006), I think the genealogical ‘family tree’ that they construct, nevertheless, may give a useful introduction to the diversity and richness of feminist reflections on intersectionalities. Consequently, I

shall also structure the following theoretical overview with the three clusters as the lens for my genealogical analysis. First, I shall take a look at *explicit feminist theorizings of intersectionality*. On the one hand, I shall discuss social justice and anti-discrimination approaches that take a more structural point of departure, and, on the other hand, I shall concentrate on poststructuralist approaches that put focus on subject formations in an intersectional perspective. Second, I proceed to *implicit feminist theorizings of intersectionality* in which intersections between sociocultural categorizations are discussed without placing the meta-theoretical label ‘intersectionality’ at the hub of the analysis. From the point of view of my genealogical analysis, I shall focus first on a couple of historical examples from the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries to stress how the intertwining of intersectional thought and feminist theorizing has a long and diverse tradition. Thereafter, I shall discuss more contemporary examples of feminist discussions of intersections that have explored them without a focus on the concept of intersectionality. To emphasize that there is no clear consensus among feminist theorists as to whether or not the concept of ‘intersectionality’ is the best tool to analyze intersections, I shall also discuss examples of *feminist theorizings of intersectionality under other names*, illustrating how other meta-theoretical frameworks are used to come to grips with the phenomenon of intersections between social categorizations, power differentials and normativities.

TO MAP OUT FEMINIST INTERSECTIONALITY STUDIES FROM DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES

To avoid misunderstandings, before starting my analysis I would like to stress that my genealogically based clustering of different feminist theories of intersectionality differs from the one suggested by USA-based feminist sociologist Leslie McCall in a frequently quoted article (McCall 2005). McCall’s classification is motivated by the methodological question: How do different kinds of what I call ‘explicit’ feminist intersectional analysis handle the complexity of power differentials and identity formations? The broader range of feminist frameworks for intersectional analysis, which my genealogical perspective teases out under the headings ‘implicit feminist theorizing of intersectionality’ and ‘feminist theorizing of intersectionality under other names,’ are not discussed by McCall. To avoid the possibility that the two frameworks (McCall’s and mine) are collapsed into each other or used interchangeably, I shall briefly summarize McCall’s classification here. Moreover, as I find it useful within its (limited) scope, I shall also, where applicable, refer back to it, that is, I use it in the first part of my genealogical analysis on explicit feminist theorizing of intersectionality, and leave it out in the later parts of my analysis, which go beyond its scope.

In her article, McCall celebrates feminist theorizing of intersectionality as a major contribution to social theory and empirical analysis of the complexity and multi-dimensionality of social relations and subject formations. She singles out intersectionality as perhaps ‘the most important theoretical contribution that women’s studies, in conjunction with related fields, has made so far’ (McCall 2005, 1771). In particular, McCall celebrates what she considers to be rather unique to Feminist Studies, compared to other academic fields—that feminist theorists have not only been looking at the category of gender from an intersectional perspective, but that they also ‘have embraced intersectionality . . . as itself a central category of analysis’ (McCall 2005, 1771).

What McCall wants to accomplish with her article is to push the feminist discussion of the methodologies of intersectional analysis further. To facilitate this process, she produces an overview of existing feminist intersectionality studies, clustering their approaches to the analysis of complexities and multiple social relations into three groups: anti-categorical, intra-categorical and inter-categorical intersectional theory and analysis. According to McCall, the goal of the *anti-categorical approach* is to deconstruct categories with a starting point in the argument that social relations and subject formations are so ‘irreducibly complex’ (McCall 2005, 1773) that categorizations will always be reductive. *Intra-categorical intersectional analysis* aims at analyzing ‘neglected points of intersection’ (McCall 2005, 1774), related to single social groups located on boundaries between different categories in ways that have made their specific situation invisible. An example is women of color, who are located in-between the categories of gender and race, which means that analyses taking either one or the other category into account will miss the complexity of the situation of this group.

Finally, the *inter-categorical* approach aims at analyzing ‘relationships of inequality among social groups and changing configurations of inequality among multiple and conflicting dimensions’ (McCall 2005, 1773). This is the framework within which McCall conducts her own research, among others large quantitative studies of inequalities, e.g. wage differences, where, in contrast to more traditional sociological studies, she goes beyond merely adding variables such as gender, race etc. onto each other, and instead aims at systematic comparative analyses of the complexities of relationships ‘among multiple social groups within and across analytical categories’ (McCall 2005, 1786).

THE CONCEPT OF ‘INTERSECTIONALITY’: SOCIAL JUSTICE AND ANTI-DISCRIMINATION APPROACHES

As I have chosen the concept of intersectionality as my lens, I shall start my genealogical mapping exercise with the work of *Kimberlé Crenshaw*. In two key articles, ‘Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex’ (Crenshaw

1989) and 'Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence Against Women of Color' (1995), Crenshaw coined the concept of intersectionality within the framework of USA Black Feminism, critical race theory and her background as a professor of law fighting for social justice and against discrimination based on the overlapping effects of race and gender. With the metaphor of intersections, of roads crossing each other, Crenshaw wanted to create an appropriate tool for analyzing and resisting discrimination and exclusion of women of color. Her point is that the situation of women of color becomes misrepresented by political initiatives that are built on conventional politics, founded around resistance to only one power differential. The image of roads crossing is intended to show how both identity politics and anti-discrimination policies that take either gender/sexism or race/racism into account, but not both simultaneously, miss the point in relation to women of color. Applying McCall's framework, we can say that Crenshaw calls for an intra-categorical approach to understanding the complexity of the situation of women of color.

In a recent booklet on intersectionality (Crenshaw and Harris 2009) from the think tank, African American Policy Forum, which is directed by Crenshaw, a famous court case on sex and race discrimination from the 1970s is presented in order to illustrate the point. The case was taken to court by five black women from the USA, who complained about the discriminatory hiring practices of General Motors (GM). White women were hired to do the front office jobs, while African American men were hired to carry out the heavy industrial work. African American women were hired for neither kind of job. Against this background, the five women complained that they were discriminated against because of the intertwined effects of gender and race. However, the court dismissed their case. They were caught in a trap of intersectional invisibility, because the anti-discrimination laws were geared to take into account only one-dimensional types of discrimination. The five women could neither prove that they were discriminated against as women, because white women were in fact hired to the office jobs, nor could they prove that they were discriminated against because of their skin color, because black men were hired to the industrial jobs. With the cross-roads metaphor, Crenshaw wants to make it clear that anti-discrimination policies must change in order to be able to take into account what happens when gender- and race-based discriminations cross each other, as in the case of the five women who were not hired by GM.

In order both to adequately analyze the complex situation of women of color and to politically push for transformation, Crenshaw also suggests that it is important to distinguish theoretically between two dimensions. To do an effective intersectional analysis it is, according to Crenshaw, necessary to structurally analyze how power differentials around gender, race and ethnicity are entangled with each other. Crenshaw defines this as *structural intersectionality* (Crenshaw 1995, 358–360). But she argues that it is also important to underline that political resistance and work for change

must take into account the structural entanglement of power differentials and build up political alliances and coalitions, rather than base itself on a one-dimensional identity politics that takes only one categorization (e.g., gender or race) into account. Crenshaw identifies this multiple approach to political action as *political intersectionality* (Crenshaw 1995, 360–374). Applying McCall's analytical framework, we can say that with this distinction Crenshaw theorizes how intersectional analyses must take into account inter-categorical differences at both a structural and a political level.

Another central scholar who explicitly theorized intersectionality in the 1990s is the political philosopher and social justice theorist Iris Marion Young. In Young's book *Intersecting Voices* (1997), the distinction between structural and political intersectionality is elaborated. She introduces the concept of 'seriality' in order to grasp the ways in which oppressive structures are entangled with each other, that is, what Crenshaw defined as 'structural intersectionality' (Young 1997, 12–37). Borrowing from Sartre (1976), Young defines a *series* as a social collective that shares some structural conditions without necessarily forming a political identity around these. Like Sartre, Young exemplifies this with people queuing for a bus (Young 1997, 24). The people in the bus queue share a structural relationship: They are all waiting for the bus. But they do not necessarily develop a political consciousness and group identity around this shared structural condition. They may develop such a consciousness if, for example, they feel cheated by the bus company and decide to collectively do something about it. But, in many cases, they will just make up a series of individuals who do not engage in any act of social or political bonding.

In contrast to the series, Young defines a *group* as a political collective, whose members actively share a commitment to a common cause. According to Young, we are all submitted to intersectional networks of power differentials. Or, in other words, we belong to intersectional networks of series, which submit us to different axes of power (based on gender, class, race, ethnicity etc.). But we do not necessarily respond politically to all of these. In this analysis, political groups, mobilized via resistance against various power differentials, will tend to be made up of individuals who share some serial conditions, but who in other respects belong to different series.

If these differences are not taken into account, Young argues, they may cause tensions in the political collective. A women's movement that constitutes itself on resistance and the transformation of gendered power differentials will, for example, often tend to include individuals who belong to different series as regards class, ethnicity, race, sexuality and so on. These different serial belongings may cause conflict and tensions, particularly when they are concealed beneath an ideology of identity politics, that is, a politics claiming that members of the movement are subjected to identical social conditions, and therefore have identical struggles and goals. If a shared political struggle is to succeed, it is necessary, according to Young, to take differences into account politically—or, to use the conceptual

distinction of Crenshaw, to recognize structural intersectionality and build a platform for solidarity that is based on political intersectionality rather than on (false) pretensions about identity.

Like Crenshaw's theorization of structural/political intersectionality, Young's definition of serial belongings vis-à-vis group formation must be understood as a framework for analysis of what McCall defined as inter-categorical complexity.

POSTSTRUCTURALIST APPROACHES TO 'INTERSECTIONALITY'

From the structuralist and social justice-oriented versions of explicit feminist theorizing of intersectionality, I now proceed to some poststructuralist examples in order to show the wide span of theoretical positions within the field.

In this context, it should be mentioned that Crenshaw's metaphor of roads crossing has been criticized by, among others, feminists informed by poststructuralist theory. The crossroads metaphor may be effective when the purpose is to find tools for transforming the legal system. However, when the aim is to analyze the subtleties of the processes by which subjects are constructed discursively in and between a multiplicity of categorical identity markers, the crossroads metaphor becomes much too crude and too static as a tool, it is argued (Staunæs and Søndergaard 2010). It opens up the possibility of an understanding of entangled power differentials, but it also conjures up an image of categorizations as structural entities. Roads meet at an intersection, but they go in separate directions before and after this meeting. For feminist poststructuralists, it is important to be able to carry out intersectional analyses that can grasp the construction of subjectivities in discourses that weave together narratives of gender, race, ethnicity, sexuality, nationality, age and so on. In the poststructuralist view, the different categorizations are seen as mutually pervading and interpenetrating each other without any possibility of separating them out analytically. Moreover, poststructuralist feminists underline that it should not be considered a given from the outset of the analysis which categorizations are taken up and prioritized at the level of the everyday life experience of the subjects.

Feminist theoreticians informed by poststructuralism have made this point forcefully. As an example of this branch of feminist theorizing of intersectionality, I would like to refer to an article with the title 'Where Have All the Subjects Gone?' (Staunæs 2003), written by the Danish social psychologist, Dorte Staunæs. Analyzing gendered, ethnicized and racialized processes of subject formation among Danish school children, she argues that in order to apply the concept of intersectionality to 'meaning-making processes on a subject level' (Staunæs 2003, 3), it is necessary to engage in a 'reworking' of the concept. Referring to British

social constructionist psychologists Margaret Wetherell and Janet Maybin, Staunæs stresses that individuals are not to be analyzed as “cultural dopes” . . . acting out one homogenous cultural personality’ (Wetherell and Maybin 1996, 234). According to Staunæs’s poststructuralist social constructionist approach, although individuals are constrained by discourses, within these limits they are engaged in ongoing meaning-making processes, through which they take up subject positions, elaborate upon them and make them their own.

It is important, Staunæs claims, to recognize that different discursive normativities construct different constraints for differently gendered, ethnicized and racialized individuals. Moreover, she argues that this implies a production of ‘troubled’ (Wetherell 1998) or ‘inappropriate/d’ (Minh-ha 1986–87; Haraway 1992) subject positions for those who are othered by these normativities.

However, in order to come to terms with the ways in which individuals engage in their lives and experience and negotiate the framings and constraints in complex and ambiguous ways, it is not appropriate to consider them as merely caught up in a rigidly predefined grid of intersecting categories, Staunæs argues. In a poststructuralist vein, she suggests instead that we should look at the processes by which individual subjects create meaning out of the categorizations and normativities that frame their everyday lives. Following the constructionist assumption that gender, race and ethnicity are constructed in communicative processes and should not be seen as something people ‘are’ or ‘have,’ Staunæs suggests foregrounding the ‘doing of intersectionality,’ that is, ‘the doing of the relation between categories, the outcome of this doing and how this doing results in either troubled or untroubled subject positions’ (Staunæs 2003, 5). (For a further elaboration of the ‘doing’ approach, see Chapter 6.)

To give one more example of a poststructuralist feminist critique and reworking of the concept of intersectionality, let me refer to Dutch feminist and political philosopher Baukje Prins’s article in *The European Journal of Women’s Studies*’ special issue on *Intersectionality* (Prins 2006). Prins distinguishes between what she calls ‘systemic’ and ‘constructionist’ approaches to intersectionality and argues that the latter is more apt for grasping the complexities of intersectional identity formation. Her material is life-history narratives by her former primary school classmates, women and men who share a working-class background, but whose ethnicity is differently framed; about half are of Dutch descent, while the other half are of Moluccan descent.

Prins identifies the ‘systemic’ approaches as those which, like Crenshaw’s analysis, foreground structural inequalities and focus on intersecting systems of domination and subordination with the categories of gender, race, ethnicity and class as the central ones. The aim of these approaches, Prins argues, is to expose ‘the detrimental effect of the subordinate poles of gender, race and class, and simultaneously to problematize the dominant poles

of these binary oppositions, such as masculinity, whiteness and middle-classness' (Prins 2006, 279).

This is fine in principle, Prins argues. However, the systemic approaches to intersectionality fall short when it comes to the analysis of agency and subjectivity and the ways in which individuals construct their social identifications. The homogenizing views of mono-categorical approaches (looking exclusively at, for example, gender *or* race) are, indeed, transgressed in the systemic approaches. People's identities will not be analyzed solely through one lens; they will instead be seen as converging effects of different kinds of subordination. This does not, however, allow for a dynamic, relational and diversity-sensitive analysis of subject formations and agency, Prins argues. Instead of being homogenized into one category, people are seen as the converging effects of two lenses, but they are still conceptualized as 'passive bearers of the meanings of social categories' (Prins 2006, 280), and not as active agents who rework the categories in a diversity of subjective ways.

In contrast to the systemic approaches, Prins argues for a 'constructionist' one (2006, 280–290), which not only takes into account grids of intersecting systems of power, but also gives attention to the ways in which power, interpreted in a Foucauldian vein, is productive on a subjective level. In order to grasp subjective agency, the crucial analytical task, as defined by Prins, becomes to create tools to approach the question: How do intersecting power differentials produce individual life-history narratives in which the effects of genderization, racialization, ethnification, class stratification and so on can be seen as interwoven? Prins's arguments for life-history narratives as an appropriate tool for analysis of the subtleties of intersectionality as experienced by individuals resemble Staunæs's plea for an analytical foregrounding of the ways in which people make meaning of categorizations and take up un/troubled positions in their everyday lives.

Reviewed within the framework of McCall's classifications, both Staunæs and Prins inscribe themselves clearly into the anti-categorical 'camp,' even though the work of both also demonstrates that McCall's classifications are too crude to grasp subtle nuances. Neither Staunæs nor Prins would simply reject categories.

HISTORICAL DEBATES ON INTERSECTIONAL GENDER/SEX

As stressed by many scholars (e.g., Davis 2008), a focus on various kinds of intersections of power differentials and normative identity markers was not a new idea in feminist theory when the notion of 'intersectionality' was first launched into circulation by Kimberlé Crenshaw (1989 and 1995). What I call 'implicit' feminist intersectional analysis, that is, analyses of intersections of social categorizations that do not make meta-theoretical reflections on 'intersectionality' the hub of the analysis, have been an integral

dimension of several traditions of feminist theorizing. Moreover, it should be noted that debates on intersectional gender/sex have a long history in feminist thought. In one of the many recent articles on intersectionality, British feminist scholars Avtar Brah and Ann Phoenix make the point that the genealogies can be traced back to the nineteenth century (Brah and Phoenix 2004). They refer to reflections on gender and race and tensions between feminism and the anti-slave movement in the USA, quoting a famous speech by the former slave Sojourner Truth to the Women's Rights Convention in Akron, Ohio, in 1851. In a powerful rhetorical refrain, repeatedly asking the question 'Ain't I a woman?' Sojourner Truth maps out the troubled relations between herself as a black woman and the politics and images of feminism as conjured up by white feminism:

Well, children, where there is so much racket, there must be something out of kilter, I think between the Negroes of the South and the women of the North—all talking about rights—the white men will be in a fix pretty soon. But what's all this talking about? That man over there says that women need to be helped into carriages, and lifted over ditches, and to have the best place everywhere. Nobody helps me any best place. And ain't I a woman? Look at me! Look at my arm. I have plowed (sic), I have planted and I have gathered into barns. And no man could head me. And ain't I a woman? I could work as much, and eat as much as any man—when I could get it—and bear the lash as well! And ain't I a woman? I have borne children and seen most of them sold into slavery, and when I cried out with a mother's grief, none but Jesus heard me. And ain't I a woman?' (Gates and McKay 1997)

So, as Brah and Phoenix remark, with her precise and critical analysis of the paradoxes of black women's intersectional invisibility in-between anti-racist and white feminist political arguments, Sojourner Truth foreshadows 'campaigns by black feminists more than a century later' (Brah and Phoenix 2004, 77).

From a European perspective, I find it important to add yet another historical example of implicit feminist intersectionality analysis, namely the debates on intersections of gender and class that persisted for decades on the boundaries between feminist and socialist movements. Like the debates on gender and race, those on gender and class also date back to the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Let me briefly illustrate how intersections of gender and class were brought forcefully onto the political agenda by women in the socialist movement around the turn of the twentieth century. They negotiated this intersectionality critically challenging both the mainstream of the worker's movement, dominated by men and ideologies of proletarian masculinity, and the bourgeois feminist movement that did not take class differences and power differentials between themselves and working-class women into account. I make my point by quoting

the Russian socialist Alexandra Kollontai, who organized women workers in the Bolshevik movement in prerevolutionary Russia, and who was later appointed minister in the first revolutionary government of the Soviet Union in 1917.

In her speeches and writings, Kollontai teases out the complexities of relations between gender and class. In words that resonate with present-day versions of postcolonial and anti-racist feminist critiques of notions of 'global sisterhood,' Kollontai attacks bourgeois feminist identity politics and discourses about an unproblematic unity among women. Her speech at the first all-Russian women's congress in 1908 is a case in point:

Bourgeois women talk all the time about the unity of women's interests, about the necessity of a joint struggle for women's rights. And this congress, the first congress in Russia for representatives for 'the fair sex' has as its goal to gather all women under a joint women's banner independent of class and party differences. But where is this joint women's banner? As the men's world, the women's world is divided in two camps: one that in its goals, its endeavours and its interests joins hands with the bourgeois classes; another one, which is closely linked up with the proletariat . . . (translated from the Danish edition of *Selected Writings of Alexandra Kollontai*, Kollontai 1977, 195)

However, Kollontai does not simply reduce gender issues to class issues. Differentiations based on class and the class struggle are crucial to Kollontai and make up the context in which, according to her, the effects of gender should be understood. But gender also has its own logic in Kollontai's political analysis. In her essay 'New Woman' in *The New Morality and the Working Class* (1918/1971), Kollontai reflects on the characteristics of the so-called 'new woman,' that is, women from both bourgeois and working-class backgrounds who take up the 'modern' position of wage laborers in capitalist society. Kollontai describes these 'new women' as women who are often unmarried or, if married, are not dependent on their husbands' wages. In spite of the fundamental class differences that separate them, Kollontai argues, these women share a feminist rebellion against the special kind of patriarchal subordination and dependency that women of all classes were submitted to in the past:

Capitalist reality . . . sharpens the feeling of the social conflict among wage earners. Only one thing remains common to the women of the new type: their unique difference from the woman of the past, those specific characteristics which are the hallmark of independent single women. The latter [i.e. the working-class woman wage earner], like the former [i.e. the bourgeois woman wage earner], go through a period of rebellion, the latter, like the former, fight for the assertion of their personality. . . . But whereas with the women of the working

class, the struggle for the assertion of their rights, the strengthening of their personality, coincides with the interests of the class, the women of other social strata run into unexpected obstacles: the ideology of their class is hostile to the transformation of the feminine type. (Kollontai 1971, 34)

With the examples of Sojourner Truth and Alexandra Kollontai, I want to sustain the point made by Brah and Phoenix (2004) that critical feminist reflections on intersectionalities do indeed have a long history. Moreover, I want to make it clear that it can be useful to apply a genealogical perspective and read history with ‘intersectionality’ as a lens, even though the label was not used at the time of Truth and Kollontai. Historical cases like the ones I have briefly referred to here illustrate how affinities between feminist and other movements have played a significant role for the theorizing of intersectional gender/sex. Through them we may also get a glimpse of the ways in which geopolitical differences have historically contextualized and toned struggles and negotiations of intersectionalities between feminists identifying with different political movements. While intersections of gender and race became a major issue of negotiation early on in the context of the USA on the boundaries of the feminist and anti-slave movements, major continental European debates on intersections have been absorbed by the issue of gender and class, and back to the nineteenth century, it has been negotiated intensely which category to prioritize in the spaces between class struggles and feminist movements.

FEMINISTS THEORIZE INTERSECTIONS FROM MANY PERSPECTIVES

From the historical examples of implicit feminist theorizing of intersectionality, I shall now return to more contemporary ones. It is important to note that the introduction of the concept of ‘intersectionality’ created an important nodal point and provided a name for a multiplicity of ongoing feminist debates, which no doubt accounts for the success of the concept (Davis 2008). However, reflections on what has now become widely known as ‘intersectionality’ have been taking place within many different frameworks both before and after Crenshaw’s introduction of the concept. For example, only part of the contemporary theorizations of intersectional gender/sex that I discussed in Chapter 4 took place under the heading ‘intersectionality.’

To exemplify the ways in which sophisticated meta-theoretical theorizations of intersections took place years before the concept ‘intersectionality’ was introduced, I shall refer to the work of two UK-based feminist researchers, Floya Anthias and Nira Yuval-Davis, who, for three decades, have published extensively on the issue of intersections of gender, ethnicity, race,

class and nationality. In a key article from 1983, Anthias and Yuval-Davis enter into critical dialogue with early 1970s USA-based black feminism's understandings of intersectionality as a 'triple oppression' of gender, race and class. In addition to arguing for a broadening of the scope to include the category of ethnicity, Anthias and Yuval-Davis also call for a theorization that does more than mechanically add different kinds of oppression onto each other without analyzing the specificities of each or taking into account the 'specific effects' of the 'particular intersections involved' (Anthias and Yuval-Davis 1983, 63). Beginning with a Marxist framework, which they review and revise critically from a feminist and anti-racist perspective, Anthias and Yuval-Davis develop a sophisticated meta-theoretical program for intersectional analysis. They argue that it is not only important to go beyond the additive approach of the notion of 'triple oppression.' The reductionist and competitive approach of traditional Marxism, which reduces everything to class issues and considers the class category as *a priori* more theoretically and politically central than all others, is also targeted critically, and so is certain kinds of middle-class feminism that focus exclusively on a universal model of women's subordination. Instead, Anthias and Yuval-Davis propose an analytical model that understands the power differentials based on gender, ethnicity and class as governed by different logics, but also inextricably entangled in specific and contextually shifting ways, which make it analytically impossible *a priori* and abstractly to prioritize one over the others or to reduce one to the others:

All three divisions [based on gender, ethnicity and class] . . . are affected by and affect each other and the economic, political and ideological relations in which they are inserted. . . . It is not a question therefore of one [division] being more 'real' than the others or a question of *which* is the most important. However, it is clear that the three divisions prioritize different spheres of social relations and will have different effects which it may be possible to specify in concrete analysis. However, we suggest that each division exists within the context of the others and that any concrete analysis has to take this into account. (Anthias and Yuval-Davis 1983, 65)

However, feminist and anti-racist Marxist frameworks, such as those within which the early work of Anthias and Yuval-Davis is located, form only one among many strands of what, from my genealogical perspective, I call 'implicit feminist theorizing of intersectionality.' Marxist feminism's general focus on gender and class, which was also demonstrated by the historical example of Alexandra Kollontai, will be presented in more detail as part of the discussion of gender constructionism in Chapter 6. The ways in which postcolonial and anti-racist feminisms generally are based on theorizations of gender, race and ethnicity, often in combination with issues of class and nationality, was discussed in Chapter 4 and was

also the focus of the historical example of Sojourner Truth. Chapter 4 also demonstrated that reflections on intersections of gender, sex and sexuality are an integral dimension of lesbian and queerfeminisms. That chapter also gave attention to the ways in which intersectionality in the shape of critical discussions of multiple masculinities and deconstructions of discourses on man as the universal human being were a *sine qua non* for critical and profeminist studies of men. Finally, in Chapters 6 and 7, I shall touch upon the ways in which various kinds of psychoanalytically inspired feminism and sexual difference feminism theorize intersections of gender/sex and sexuality.

In addition to these diverse strands of implicit feminist theorizing of intersectionality, which are being presented in more depth in other parts of this book, I would like to list a few more crucial ones in order to further demonstrate the wide and diverse scope of feminist theorizing of intersectionality.

First, it is important to note that the broad tradition of feminist Cultural Studies, which emerged in dialogue with the interdisciplinary field of Cultural Studies (initiated in the 1960s by the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies in Birmingham, England, but later turned into a worldwide research endeavor), has been rich in empirical analyses and theorizations of intersections. Feminists, who for decades have been influential in the field, have critically gendered, for example, the classic Cultural Studies tradition of the study of working-class cultures and youth cultures. In so doing, they have contributed important intersectional analyses of the gender/class and gender/age nexus. More broadly, feminists working within the field of Cultural Studies have also developed cultural analyses of intersections of gender, sexuality, ethnicity, race, nationality, dis/ability, age and so on. To give a glimpse of the strong tradition of feminist intersectional analyses within the field of Cultural Studies, I point the reader toward classics such as Beverley Skeggs's analysis of gender and class cultures (Skeggs 1997 and 2004), Angela McRobbie's work on gender and youth cultures (McRobbie 1990) and Anne McClintock's cultural historical analysis of the ways in which race, gender and sexuality were entangled in colonialist discourses (McClintock 1995).

Second, I would like to draw attention to the emerging field of feminist studies of human–animal relations, which overlaps partly with certain dimensions of feminist science studies and its critical focus on the science of biology, among others, and partly with different ecocritical strands of feminist thought. Donna Haraway has been influential in the field with her seminal work on the history of primate research (Haraway 1989) and later on dogs (Haraway 2003 and 2008), together with British feminist biologist Lynda Birke (1994). Both Haraway and Birke have forcefully underlined the ways in which human–animal relations are currently being formed within the framework of strongly power-laden discourses on gender, race and sexuality, and how mutual processes of performative construction

operate between discourses on gender/race/sexuality, on the one hand, and animals on the other. I shall go into more detail about this, with an analytical example, in Chapter 11.

While feminist Cultural Studies' focus on intersections of gender, class, age, race, ethnicity, nationality and sexuality coincides with central discussions in explicit feminist theorizing of intersectionality, more or less the opposite is the case as far as the intersectional constructions of animals are concerned. However, as I have argued in earlier research (Bryld and Lykke 2000, 28–29), I think that animals and what ecofeminist Val Plumwood poetically suggested we call 'earth others' (i.e., the world of animals, plants and minerals) (Plumwood 1993, 137) ought to be much more integrated into explicit feminist theorizing of intersectionality. I agree with Plumwood when she points out that reflections on the human domination of earth others is a 'missing piece' in feminist theory in general (Plumwood 1993, 2), existing as a strand of its own, which is normally not counted in when different kinds of intersectionalities are discussed. Likewise, I think that it is appropriate to make a parallel claim, based on Haraway's cyborg feminist theory (see Chapter 3): The category of cyborgs and posthuman others should also be taken much more into account in explicit feminist theorizing of intersectionality. However, it should also be noted that the two claims are partly overlapping insofar as cyborgs and posthuman others constitute categories that encompass animal technobodies—from genetically modified scientific laboratory animals to animals specifically bred for industrial food production.

Even though animals and earth others have been discussed much more widely in Feminist Studies since Plumwood made her ecocritical feminist statement about the 'missing piece' in 1993, the feminist discussion of non-human actors runs parallel, to, rather than being integrated with, explicit feminist theorizing of intersectionality. The latter is still a predominantly human affair and in this sense reinforces problematic modern dichotomies of 'human/nature' and 'human/non-human' that set humans hierarchically apart from non-humans, be they 'earth others' or 'posthuman cyborgs.' Current debates on climate change, however, might shift the perspective here. They make it so obvious that we are all in it together and that power differentials producing gender, race, class, ethnicity, sexuality and so on are also entangled with those governing the relations between humans, earth others and post/non-human others. USA-based feminist scholar Stacy Alaimo has forcefully made this point with her notion of 'trans-corporeal feminism' with which she emphasizes that bodies are not islands bounded off vis-à-vis each other, but for good and for bad inextricably interlinked as part of the material world (Alaimo 2008 and 2009). Also the growing feminist interest in 'posthumanities'—a transdisciplinary area of studies focusing on the setting up of meeting places of mutual commitment between human and natural sciences (Åsberg 2009)—might contribute to the integration between studies of intersectionalities in the 'human' domain with those that pertain to the world of non-human others.

In addition to animals, earth others and posthuman cyborgs, two other categories are also often emphasized by the feminists studying them as being ‘missing pieces’ in explicit feminist theorizing of intersectionality. These are the gender/sex–dis/ability and the gender/sex–old age nexus. Both these intersections are currently growing fields of study. Examples of sophisticated theorizations of the former intersection are the work of UK-based philosopher Margrit Shildrick (Shildrick 2009) and Norwegian sociologist Ingunn Moser (Moser 2006), while the latter can be illustrated by the work of USA-based researchers Toni Calasanti and Kathleen Slevin (2001 and 2006).

ARE THERE BLIND SPOTS IN FEMINIST STUDIES OF INTERSECTIONS?

When I ended the discussion of implicit feminist theorizing of intersectionality speaking about ‘missing pieces’ in explicit feminist intersectional analysis, I submitted the latter frame to one of its own tools, that is, to what feminist law professor Maria Matsuda has articulated as an important principle for feminist intersectional analysis, namely to ‘ask the other question’ (Matsuda 1991). What Matsuda refers to with this oft-quoted suggestion is to ask about blind spots in the analysis of intersections, that is, to ask if it would be important to include other categories in the analysis than those that appear to be most obvious to the analyst. Matsuda articulates this as follows:

When I see something that looks racist, I ask, ‘Where is the patriarchy in this?’ When I see something that looks sexist, I ask, ‘Where is the heterosexism in this?’ When I see something that looks homophobic, I ask, ‘Where is the class interest in this?’ (Matsuda 1991, 1189)

What I was doing, when I inserted reflections on ‘missing pieces’ earlier was to let the implicit intersectionality analysis frame critical questions about ‘blind spots’ and ‘missing’ categories in the grid of ‘usual suspects’ (gender, race, ethnicity, class, sexuality), which has almost turned into a mantra or norm for explicit feminist intersectionality analysis. But also I want to underline that it is important to thoroughly reflect on what it means to talk about ‘inclusion’ of ‘missing’ categories.

Reflections on the normativity of intersectional analysis and what it means to say that categories are ‘missing’ should be carried out against the backdrop of the fact that one of the issues that has attracted a lot of attention in the feminist debates on intersectional theory and generated different answers is the question of whether the list of intersections to be taken into account should be considered as finite or infinite. Should priority be given to a certain set of intersections (often identified as the trinity

of gender, race and class, e.g., Knapp 2005), or should an open-ended 'etc.-clause' always be added in order to take into account newly emerging issues? While structuralists and feminist Marxists would argue for the former viewpoint, poststructuralists would be in favor of the latter. But it should also be noted that a lot of in-between positions are being articulated by different feminists. Based on a poststructuralist understanding of signification as an unending process of displacements, Judith Butler argues, for example, for openendedness in the understanding of intersectional processes of subject formation. Nevertheless, she also suggests that the 'etc.' signals an 'embarrassed' and too easy way out (Butler 1990, 143), perhaps indicating that intersectional analysis of identities, seen from her point of view, is caught up in a dilemma between a wish for completeness and the necessity of recognizing the unending sliding of meanings.

The different feminist positions with respect to the issue of prioritizing and delineating of categorizations indicates how important it is to reflect carefully on the status and interrelatedness of the categorizations included in intersectional theory as well as in analytical practice. It is, as Matsuda suggests, important to ask the other question on both these levels (theoretical framework and analytical practice), but it is also crucial to make clear any presuppositions. Feminist theorizings of intersectionality and intersections are complex, and the complexity of the analysis increases the more categories are involved. This must be kept carefully in mind.

TO THEORIZE INTERSECTIONALITY UNDER OTHER NAMES: INTERSECTIONALITY AND ITS DISCONTENTS

As the last point in this exposé of genealogies of feminist theorizing of intersectionality, I elaborate on the point that there has been much debate in Feminist Studies as to whether the concept of intersectionality is best calibrated to explore the phenomenon of intersections between power differentials and normativities based on gender, race, class, sexuality and so on or whether other frameworks could do better. To round off my genealogical analysis, I shall mention examples of alternative concepts and frameworks and briefly summarize the motivations for them.

Black feminists in the USA used the term 'interlocking oppressions' as far back as the 1970s. The classic 'A Black Feminist Statement' of the Combahee River Collective (1977/1982) emphasizes that the members of the collective are committed to struggling against 'racial, sexual, heterosexual, and class oppression' and that 'an integrated analysis' is needed to understand that these 'major systems of oppression are interlocking' (Combahee River Collective 1977/1982, 13). The metaphor of 'interlocking' suggests an image of intersections that, unlike Crenshaw's roads crossing each other, cannot be separated. Some feminist researchers find

this image more convincing and the term 'interlocking' is still in circulation (e.g., George and Ramkissoon 1998).

Taking inspiration from Donna Haraway's reflections on diffraction (1997, 268), about which I shall go into more detail in Chapter 9, Norwegian feminist and Science and Technology Studies (STS)-scholar Ingunn Moser (2006) has suggested the metaphor of 'interference' as an alternative to intersectionality in her study of the relations between gender, class and dis/ability. What Moser wants to accomplish with this change of metaphor is to open up a space for analyses of the ways in which the different processes that construct gender, class and dis/ability not only mechanically sustain and reinforce each other (as the metaphor of intersections suggests), but may also clash, come into conflict and neutralize each other. Following Hirschauer (2001), Moser also emphasizes that it is important to take into account the fact that the different axes of power differentials are not necessarily enacted all the time and in all spaces. However, this does not in any way mean that they simply vanish.

In a similar vein, Haraway has promoted the notion of 'inappropriate/d others' (Haraway 1992), drawing inspiration from the Vietnamese-American feminist artist and theoretician Trinh Minh-ha (Minh-ha 1986–87 and 1989) and with certain echoes of Foucault's notions of norm and deviancy. The concept refers to intersectional networks of power differentials, based on gender, race, class and so on, which produce social exclusion and marginalization, or, to rephrase this with Haraway's/Minh-ha's term, make groups of people 'inappropriate/d.' To use the concept of inappropriate/d otherness makes it possible to speak of subjects othered by clusters of power differentials, but without privileging certain intersections and axes of analysis as the *per se* and *a priori* most important ones. The concept is thus well suited as a way out of the dilemmas pointed out by Moser that categorizations may reinforce, but also neutralize each other, and that they might be enacted differently according to time and space, which basically implies that they should not be imposed as a grid from the outset of the analysis.

Chela Sandoval, a USA-based Chicana feminist, coined the term 'differential powers, politics and consciousness' in her seminal work on *Methodology of the Oppressed* (Sandoval 2000). She, too, is interested in alternatives to the grid-like understanding that the metaphor of intersections creates. With this concept, she emphasizes that the boundary work and the consciousness coming out of boundary crossing between categorizations are more important than the grid of categories itself.

The focus on boundary crossing, not only at the level of the consciousness of the subject, but also at an interpersonal level is also emphasized in Nira Yuval-Davis's work on transversal politics (Yuval-Davis 1997, 125), which is motivated by an interest in finding ways to establish boundary crossing solidarity between differently located individuals in political work. The concept of transversalism is inspired by Italian feminists and is intended as a proposal to overcome the political tensions that may occur

in women's movements when they try to bridge the gaps created by differences between group members. Yuval-Davis's example is of women who are politically divided by national or regional conflicts. Transversal politics is a specific method for establishing political solidarity and platforms for joint action without reverting to an identity politics that would suppress differences in politically unsustainable ways. The method is based on a dialogue in which all group participants commit themselves to combine 'rooting' (in their own local and partial perspectives) and 'shifting' (i.e., seriously taking up and committing oneself to the perspective of differently situated group members) (Yuval-Davis 1997, 130).

As my last example of alternative frameworks, I want to underline the fact that there is a long feminist tradition of theorizing intersectionality as difference, focusing on differences among women. I discussed this in Chapter 4 as part of the presentation of postcolonial and anti-racist feminist critiques of the homogenizing moves of white, middle-class feminism. In Chapter 7, I shall also go into more detail about sexual difference theorist Rosi Braidotti's theorization of the notion of difference, but for now I shall just briefly mention the part of her work that is of particular relevance to the intersectionality debate. Braidotti defines three levels of sexual difference. The second of these—differences among women—encompasses the intersectionality debate and takes the inspiration for its articulation from USA-based feminist scholar Teresa de Lauretis's semiotic reflections on the relationship between the terms 'women' and 'Woman.' Against this backdrop, Braidotti reflects on the ways in which the notion of differences, which has negatively defined intersecting hierarchies and hegemonies based on sexism, racism and so on, can also be reclaimed for feminist politics and affirmatively resignified as that which rings the death knell for the oppressive, gender-conservative category of universal womanhood as a viable identity category. The recognition of differences among women, Braidotti argues (1994, 187), makes visible how the category 'Woman' is an impossible abstraction.

CONCLUSION: INTERSECTIONALITY AS A NODAL POINT

In this chapter I have carried out a genealogical analysis of the concept of intersectionality, as it was originally framed within a context of black feminism in the USA. I have looked at explicit feminist theorizing of intersectionality, based on anti-discrimination and social justice approaches as well as poststructuralist ones. Via a genealogical analysis of a broad range of implicit feminist theorizings of intersectionality, I have also underlined that the theorizing of intersections between gender and other sociocultural categorizations is much more integrated into feminist thought than it appears when one looks only at the explicit use of the concept of 'intersectionality.'

I sustain the argument that the explicit articulation of the concept in the late 1980s gave voice to a theoretical endeavor that until then had been

widespread and outspoken in feminist theorizing, but without the kind of nodal point that a clear conceptualization establishes. I argue that it is important to have a nodal point, that is, a shared framework for the negotiation of the most effective analytical frameworks. The explicit coining of the concept of intersectionality has been productive in this sense. Such a conceptual nodal point facilitates the comparison of differences and similarities of related theoretical, political and analytical endeavors, and in this way it can create fertile soil for analytical refinement and sophistication—and more effective political interventions. But as part of the exploration of conceptual genealogies, it is important to keep in mind that intersectional ways of thinking have a long and complicated history in feminist thought.

Finally, I also wanted to underline that a lot of feminist theorizing of intersections did not make the concept of intersectionality the hub of the discussion, and that many feminist discussions of intersections were carried out under other names, that is, using other metaphors and frameworks than ‘intersectionality.’

6 Genealogies of Doing

Besides theorizing gender/sex as intersectional, it has also been important for Feminist Studies to develop understandings of gender and other social categorizations as being historically, socially, culturally and linguistically constructed and to deconstruct and deessentialize stereotypes. Therefore, in this chapter I shall focus on feminist de/constructionism.

I cannot emphasize strongly enough the importance of gender de/constructionist theories for feminist critiques of biological determinism and cultural essentialism. The constructionist endeavor to establish sociocultural gender as a specific area of knowledge, independent of biological sex, has been a central contribution to feminist theory. This is also true of linguistic deconstruction, which has been a pivot of feminist poststructuralism. Although I shall elaborate in Chapter 7 (on corpomaterialist feminist theory) on the critique of the gender/sex distinction and the problems of gender de/constructionism, which I briefly mentioned in Chapter 2, this should not overshadow the theoretical significance of feminist de/constructionist thought. There is a widespread consensus among feminist theorists that the insights of feminist de/constructionism have been crucial.

In order to demonstrate the richness of feminist de/constructionism, I shall give examples of a range of different positions. More precisely, I have chosen to briefly illustrate the interplay between feminist theorizing and theoretical strands such as existentialism, historical materialism, psychoanalysis, symbolic interactionism, ethnomethodology, speech act theory and poststructuralist philosophy of language, which have all been significant inspirations for feminist theorizations of social and linguistic constructions, and deconstructions, of gender/sex.

As in the previous chapters on theories of intersectional gender/sex, I shall use a genealogical approach to map out different positions in feminist de/constructionism. In the first section of this chapter, I shall begin with the feminist de/constructionist theories that are currently influential. I shall give particular attention to theories highlighting gender as a phenomenon that is constructed discursively, linguistically and communicatively. In particular, I shall focus on the 'doing-gender' approach, mentioned earlier, which theorizes gender as something we 'do' rather than something we 'have' or

as something we 'are.' I shall also briefly discuss how this approach has been combined with reflections on intersectionalities.

Second, I shall take a retrospective look at theories which, in a genealogical sense, can be considered to have paved the way for gender de/constructionism. I start with a brief reference to French existentialist Simone de Beauvoir's famous quote from 1949: 'One is not born but becomes a woman' (Beauvoir 1984, 267), an important reference for later gender constructionist thought. I then move on to the gender constructionist theories that gained ground in the 1970s and 1980s: feminist Marxism and different kinds of psychoanalytic feminism. From a genealogical perspective, I explore these strands of feminist theorizing as predecessors of poststructuralist feminist de/constructionism, which emerged, in particular, during the 1980s and 1990s. Thereafter, I examine French poststructuralist language philosopher Jacques Derrida's classic concept of deconstruction, which became crucial for the emerging poststructuralism and deconstructionism in feminist theory. In the last section of the chapter, I discuss theories of the so-called *écriture féminine*, women's writing. This part of the chapter sits a bit uneasy with the rest, because *écriture féminine* focuses on how sex and language relate to the body; it belongs theoretically among corpomaterialist feminist theories and is, therefore, addressed again in Chapter 7. The reason for including theories of *écriture féminine* here as well is that their focus on issues of language and linguistic deconstruction also had a major influence on feminist deconstructionism. Therefore, I introduce this theoretical strand of feminism in this chapter, going into it more in depth in the next chapter.

CURRENT GENDER DE/CONSTRUCTIONISM: GENDER AS DOING, PERFORMANCE AND BODILY SIGN

Drawing on a genealogical perspective, I begin this presentation of gender de/constructionist theory in the here-and-now. I shall focus on three theories of gender as a sociocultural and discursive process—as a process of 'doing.' All three theories have been in active use since the 1990s. For many feminist theorists, among them many younger and third-wave feminists, the 'doing gender' perspective has constituted a major way in to the problematizing of gender-conservatism.

First, I explore the work of the USA-based sociologists Candace West and Don Zimmerman, and their version of the *doing gender* theory. In a famous article entitled 'Doing Gender' (West and Zimmerman 1987), they introduced the theory that gender is something we 'do' and that it is constructed in human interaction—it is not something that we 'have' or 'are' outside of interpersonal communication. West and Zimmerman developed the theory of gender as doing by drawing inspiration partly from the Canadian micro-sociologist Erving Goffman (Goffman 1959, 1976, 1977) and

partly from the strand of sociology called *symbolic interactionism*. They also built on the work of North American sociologist Harold Garfinkel and *ethnomethodology*. Symbolic interactionism investigates how agents together create common social categorizations in everyday life interaction, while ethnomethodology explores how individuals methodologically manage their public performances in interpersonal interaction.

Drawing on symbolic interactionism and ethnomethodology, West and Zimmerman theorize sociocultural gender identity as something that is created—or ‘done’—in communicative interaction. In this theory they stress that it is important for individuals to construct coherence and intelligibility in their gender performance vis-à-vis others. West and Zimmerman emphasize that gender in this sense is not to be understood as something that merely emerges out of biological sex. On the contrary, gender is a social construct. In part, West and Zimmerman base their argument about gender as a social construct on one of the case studies of Garfinkel and ethnomethodology: that of the transsexual Agnes (Garfinkel 1967).

Agnes grew up as a boy, but adopted a female identity at the age of 17. She later underwent a surgical sex change. West and Zimmerman’s conceptualization of gender as doing emerges from their reflections on the process of learning that Agnes is undertaking, according to Garfinkel’s analysis, as she decides to adopt a female identity. During the process, she has to ‘learn’ to ‘do’ gender as a woman. That is, she has to learn to produce ‘configurations of behavior that would be seen by others as normative gender behavior’ (West and Zimmerman 1987, 134).

In addition to the influential article on gender as ‘doing,’ Candace West—together with Sarah Fenstermaker—has also written a follow-up article (West and Fenstermaker 1995) that expands the ethnomethodological and symbolic interactionist interpretation of gender as ‘doing’ to include the categories of race and class. The point of the article is to create an approach to analyze how neither gender nor race and class are ‘done’ in isolation from each other, but how they operate together on an everyday level, producing inequality between groups in society.

A second currently influential understanding of gender as process, construction and ‘doing’ draws on the work of Judith Butler. Butler’s internationally important theories of gender, sex and sexuality link together *queerfeminist theory*, *poststructuralist philosophy of language and deconstruction* and *speech act theory* in sophisticated ways. Butler’s theories have been influential in many ways, which I explore in different parts of this book. In Chapter 2, I quoted her critique of ‘proper objects,’ and in Chapter 4, I investigated her queerfeminist theorization of the intersections of gender, sex and sexuality. In Chapter 7, I shall explore her contribution to corpomaterialist feminist theory. In this chapter I focus on her sophisticated and influential version of the ‘doing gender’ approach.

Building on a linguistically oriented philosophical perspective, Butler defines gender as *performative*. What does this mean?

In her theorizing of gender as performative, Butler draws on the speech act theory of North American philosopher of ordinary language, John L. Austin (Austin 1962). According to speech act theory, a performative is a word that, when spoken, triggers action. That words can trigger action is clearly illustrated in cases where words are *identical* with action. For example, when a judge declares the defendant 'guilty' or when a priest or wedding officiate declares a couple 'husband and wife.' Speech act theory defines these cases as *illocutionary* speech acts, that is, cases where the spoken word and the action are one and the same thing. According to speech act theory, words can also direct action in another sense; in these cases the word is not identical with the action but the action will follow as a consequence of an articulation of a word. Speech act theory defines these cases as *perlocutionary* speech acts. An example is that of a sergeant commanding 'run,' and the soldiers beginning to run as a consequence of the command.

According to speech act theory, language should thus be understood not only as meaning making, but also as an active praxis with reality-producing effects (Butler 1997b, 44). To theorize gender as performative, Butler combines insights from speech act theory with inspirations from French structuralism and, in particular, from poststructuralist articulations of the ways in which the subject is constituted in and through language. Moreover, Butler builds on Foucault's notion of the subject (Foucault 1978), which suggests that subjects are constructed through the discourses that are in effect in society. According to Foucault, we do not exist as subjects 'prior to' or 'beyond' discourse. Partly, Butler also draws on French Marxist philosopher Louis Althusser's concept of interpellation (Althusser 1971). According to Althusser, interpellation means that our identity is created when we are 'called' by someone or something, and given a name and an identity via that call (Butler 1997b, 25). Althusser suggests that the subject comes into being when she or he is addressed through speech. He illustrates this by using the example of a police officer calling out 'Oi, you!' to someone, whereupon the person targeted by the address, as an effect, feels guilty. Another example is the famous English campaign to recruit soldiers during World War I: a poster showing the image of an officer (Lord Kitchener) pointing a commanding finger at the person looking at the poster, and a caption saying 'Your country needs you!' The poster unambiguously constructed the viewer as a potential soldier, and communicated guilt to those who would evade signing up to join the army.

In Butler's theorization of gender as performative, she links together inspirations from Austin, Foucault and Althusser. According to her, gender is an effect of repeated speech acts that interpolate the subject, that is, calls her or him into a gender identity, and thereby constructs her or him as a gendered subject. As in the theory of West and Zimmerman, there is no prediscursive gender in Butler's universe (and no prediscursive sex either; I will return to this in Chapter 7). She notes that gender does not exist before it is 'done', that is, before it is produced in communicative praxis.

... gender is always a doing, though not a doing by a subject who might be said to preexist the deed. (Butler 1990, 25)

Importantly, Butler also demonstrates that there are two sides to the performative becoming of gender. She states that, on the one hand, gender is a process. On the other hand, discursive, performative and 'interpellating' (Althusser 1971) production of gender also has material and real effects that make gender, although constructed, appear to be essential and given. This is due to the performativity of gender-producing speech acts that, according to Butler, (re)create that which is said. Through continuous repetition and citations, norms about 'right/wrong' or 'natural/unnatural' ways of doing gender become fixed and naturalized. Through the repeated speech acts, gender comes to appear as if it were substantial and essential. Butler uses the metaphor 'congealing' (Butler 1990, 33) to indicate what happens. This 'congealing', Butler argues, has consequences for the discursive frames within which subjects must define themselves, as well as for the ways in which they will have to stylize their bodily expressions in order to make themselves understood as gendered subjects in society. In other words, the repeated interpellations and speech acts make the sociocultural communicative production of gendered subjects appear as if it were an effect of an essential inner nature. So even though there is no 'doer behind the deed' (Butler 1990, 25), nevertheless it will appear as though there was a 'natural' gender and a 'natural' gender identity:

Gender is the repeated stylization of the body, a set of repeated acts within a highly rigid regulatory frame that congeal over time to produce the appearance of substance, of a natural sort of being. (Butler 1990, 33)

This is, according to Butler, the reason why it is necessary to deconstruct and deessentialize gender.

These conceptualizations of gender as doing have been highly influential in feminist theory. Butler's contribution, in particular, has been an important source of inspiration and has generated many kinds of elaborations. For example, an original development has been introduced by the Danish social psychologist Dorte Marie Søndergaard. Although she draws on Butler's social de/constructionist deessentialization of gender, her work also represents an independent strand of theorizing.

Søndergaard engages in a social psychologically contextualized reading and further theoretical development of Butler (Søndergaard 1996, 2002 and 2005). She confronts Butler's categories with an empirical material: investigating how a group of Danish students in the 1990s performs or 'does' gender. Butler's conceptualization of the performative production of gender through communicative praxis is brought to life in a social psychological sense. Søndergaard shows how Butler's approach works in concrete empirical

practice in a historically and geographically specific context. Along with, among others, the Australian social psychologist Bronwyn Davies (1993), the North American educational researcher Patti Lather (Lather and Smithies 1997) and Danish social psychologist, Dorthe Staunæs (2003), Søndergaard highlights the importance of linking poststructuralist theories about the deessentializing of gender to concrete empirical analyses.

Furthermore, Søndergaard also elaborates on Butler's theoretical framework by drawing on inspirations from cultural semiotics (the theory of the life of signs in culture). Using this perspective, she develops a theory of the *sexed body* that understands it *as a visual sign*. According to Søndergaard, the body that is visually marked by sex appears as a sign, which, in different contexts of communication and interpretation, becomes endowed with different connotations and associations.

Søndergaard's semiotic reading of the sexed body as a visual sign strengthens the perspective of deessentializing integral to Butler's theory. According to semiotics, signs do not carry essential meaning. Rather, they are representations that gain meaning in interpersonal communication. According to, for example, the North American language philosopher Charles S. Pierce (Pierce 1985), the active meaning-making dimension of signs is defined as a so-called interpretant, that is, as an interpretative key that varies with the cultural context of sender and receiver. When the sexed body is analyzed as a visual sign in Pierce's sense, a theoretical perspective is established that breaks radically with biological determinism and cultural essentialism. From this perspective, the aim is not to explore bodies as such, but instead to analyze the varying connotations that become attached to bodies visually marked by sex in continuously shifting processes of communication.

Søndergaard highlights her point about deessentializing by consequently 'alienating' ways of talking about 'individuals marked bodily as female or male' or about 'individuals with male and female body signs, respectively,' rather than simply using terms like 'women' and 'men' (Søndergaard 1996, 86–92). If the taken-for-granted terminology easily leads into the trap of biological determinism or cultural essentialism, alienating terms such as 'bodily marked individuals' or 'body signs' leave room for reflection. The connection between body, identity, desire and gender performance ceases to appear given. Instead, what Søndergaard calls 'posttraditional gender' (1996, 411) starts to become visible.

'ONE IS NOT BORN BUT BECOMES A WOMAN'

From the here-and-now perspective on gender de/constructionism and the doing-gender approach, I now shift to a retrospective genealogical perspective to trace, in the history of feminist theorizing, moments of emergence of feminist theories on the social and linguistic construction and deconstruction of gender. As I do so, Simone de Beauvoir's famous statement from her

book *The Second Sex* from 1949 appears as an important landmark: 'One is not born but becomes a woman' (Beauvoir 1949/1984, 267). This statement implies that men are not born as men either, but become men. Beauvoir suggests that we become 'women' and 'men' through socialization, through a symbolic and discursive inscription into social structures—not because of nature. There is no inner sexual nature that can be located in biology. This was Beauvoir's revolutionary message in 1949.

With this statement, Beauvoir radically gave shape to a constructionist interpretation of gender, arguing firmly against any form of biological determinism. The statement had an enormous impact on the feminist movement in the 1970s and later. Much feminist gender de/constructionist theorizing over the past four decades has sustained Beauvoir's statements. However, this does not mean that the theoretical framework used by Beauvoir—an existentialist Marxist one—has been a general frame of reference. This is not the case. It has had its spokespeople among feminist researchers—and was revitalized in interesting ways some years ago by the Norwegian feminist theorist Toril Moi (1999). However, what I would primarily like to highlight is that a variety of different theoretical frameworks have been used to support the feminist de/constructionism heralded by Beauvoir's famous words. In the following sections I shall investigate some of the conceptual frameworks that have been mobilized in support of gender de/constructionism.

FEMINIST HISTORICAL MATERIALISM: GENDER AS A HISTORICAL AND CLASS-DIFFERENTIATED CATEGORY

The development of a critical foundation for gender constructionism by feminist rethinkings of Marxist historical materialism has been an important endeavor for feminist researchers in many countries. Feminist Marxism peaked in the 1970s and 1980s (e.g., Mitchell 1971, Arnfred and Syberg 1974; Hartman 1979; Sargent 1981; Jones and Jónasdóttir 1988; Jónasdóttir 1994). But for some feminist theorists, further development of historical materialist ways to theorize and analyze gender relations is still the main item on the agenda. A recent example is a couple of volumes by Sweden-based feminist Anna G. Jónasdóttir and USA-based feminist Kathleen B. Jones (Jones and Karlsson 2008; Jónasdóttir and Jones 2009).

However, in the 1970s feminist revisions of Marxism figuratively exploded as part of a strong socialist feminist political commitment in the feminist movements of many countries. An important aim for these rethinkings of Marxism was to denaturalize the categories 'woman' and 'man' and to define them as historically changing, socially constructed and class-differentiated categories. Feminist Marxists gave gender a new interpretation as a historical and social construct, critically turning against gender-conservatism and its dualistic understanding of gender as universal, natural and biologically grounded.

Feminist Marxists criticized biologically determinist perceptions of gender, challenging gender dualism and the idea of femininity and masculinity as two totally separate and biologically determined sets of characteristics; they saw this kind of thinking as expressions of bourgeois ideology. They argued that the dualist understanding of gender was a product of the specific, historical gender division of labor in the bourgeois family and its basis in a capitalist mode of production that generated a structural split between a feminine, emotional intimate sphere, on the one hand, and a masculine, rational public sphere, on the other. As an alternative to the bourgeois ideology of universally separate spheres and a natural gender/sex dualism, feminist Marxists explained gender and gender difference as being produced through capitalism and its way of organizing production, the economy and reproduction. Femininity and masculinity were reinterpreted and redefined from biological to historical and socially constructed categories. It was also a central tenet of Marxist feminism that gender categories were changeable and bound to change together with shifts in the mode of production.

Furthermore, feminist Marxists saw it as important to distinguish between women and men of different classes. To theorize the intersectionality of gender and class was a crucial point on the agenda for the feminist Marxist research that emerged at many universities in many countries during the 1970s. This research focused on the differences between bourgeois, middle-class and working-class conditions for practicing gender, sexuality and family. It sought renewal and revolutionary change, expecting it to come from working-class women and to some extent also from middle-class women wage laborers.

It was also important for the feminist Marxists' way of challenging the universalizing, biologically determinist and dualist bourgeois understanding of gender and developing of a historical materialist gender constructionism to expose the ways in which the working classes practiced gender differently from the bourgeoisie. These class differences could be used as an argument against bourgeois ideology. Thus, feminist Marxists argued, it was obvious that working-class women, for economic reasons, could not afford to practice gender in the same way as bourgeois women; the bourgeois family ideal, based on the ideology of the 'naturally' given separate spheres of femininity and masculinity, could not function among the working classes. The paid work and conditions of life of working-class women demonstrated clearly that the bourgeois ideology of a universal gender dualism, which defined women as 'naturally' belonging in a separate, private family sphere, was a class-specific, historical construction.

FEMINIST HISTORICAL MATERIALIST THEORY OF SOCIALIZATION AND PSYCHOANALYSIS

For some of the feminist revisions of Marxism that emerged from the socialist feminist movement of the 1970s, the link to psychoanalysis was

important. One of the problems that feminist theorists found in Marxism was its lack of interest in the individual subject and the ways in which she or he is inscribed into gender and class through the process of socialization. Psychoanalysis became one of the routes to make up for this lack and to generate new theoretical insights in subjectivity. Both Marxism and psychoanalysis were seen as theoretical strands that, although they had important potential, were also considered to be embedded in problematical, patriarchal ways of thinking. Therefore, many feminist theorists sought to link together Marxism and psychoanalysis, and at the same time to revise both in order to liberate their theoretical potentials. The aim of the combined linking and revision exercise was to inscribe a theorization of the gendered subject's process of becoming into Marxist theory, and, at the same time, to reinterpret Freud's psychoanalysis from a universal to a historically specific materialist theory of gender socialization in capitalist society (e.g., Mitchell 1974; Prokop 1976; Lykke 1993a).

Since I took part in the development of these theoretical frameworks, I shall illustrate feminist Marxist psychoanalytic gender de/constructionism with contributions I have been involved in myself (Bryld and Lykke 1983, Lykke 1993a, Lykke 1993b, Lykke 1994). Together with a Danish colleague, Mette Bryld, I developed a feminist psychoanalytic revision of Marx's theory of capitalist society, theorizing intersections of gender and class via the Marxian concept of 'character masks' (Marx 1972/1990).³ Our work was inspired by the psychoanalytically oriented part of the German Frankfurt school, in particular historical materialist theorists of socialization such as Alfred Lorenzer (1972 and 1973) and Peter Brückner (1972), who defined Marx's concept of character masks as a unit of subjective identity and objective field of function that is forced on all individuals in society through societal processes (production of goods and reproduction/production of new generations) and through the divisions of labor that characterize their daily life as well as their lifelong conditions of living. According to Marx's analysis of capitalism, all members of society are inscribed in a range of character masks (Matzner 1964). The class-based division of labor, for example, produces the character mask of capitalist, on the one hand, and worker, on the other. Also the relationship between the buyer and seller of goods at the market is regulated in Marxian theory within a framework of character masks.

According to the feminist Marxist theory, developed by Mette Bryld and myself, members of society are not only inscribed in character masks such as capitalist/worker, buyer/seller, however. Their conditions of life are also framed by *gender character masks*. Foundational to feminist Marxism, including our own, is the theory that a division of labor based in both class and gender characterizes capitalist society. Our theorizing of the gendered division of labor within capitalist society is the basis of our argument about gender character masks, which, *in intersection with class character masks*, make up the regulatory framework and conditions of life of all individual members of society.

According to Mette Bryld's and my own theoretical framework, one of the effects of gender character masks is that they shape the child through the process of socialization. Together with class character masks, they define the societal conditions in which the child becomes a subject in the early part of the socialization process. The unequal hierarchical relationship, which intersecting class- and gender-defined divisions of labor in capitalist society produce in different ways between mothers and fathers of all classes, means that they come to practice their parenthood differently. Through the process of socialization, this difference is communicated to daughters and sons.

Like, for example, Mitchell (1974), we used Freud's theory of the Oedipus complex that girls and boys undergo at the age of three- to five-years-old in order to explain how gender difference is communicated in the process of socialization. We inscribed the Freudian theory of the Oedipus complex, and its conceptualizations of 'normal' and 'deviant' ways for girls and boys to live through this complex, into the framework of our feminist Marxist theory of intersecting gender and class character masks. We reinterpreted the Oedipus complex as a theory about girls' and boys' subjective responses to and experiences of the gender character mask-regulated practices of their parents. We understood the sexually differentiated ways of 'doing' parenthood under capitalism as being shaped by the hierarchical relationships between mothers and fathers, recreated daily and lifelong by gender character masks and the gendered division of labor, which, according to our theory, in different ways characterizes the life conditions of the different classes under capitalism.

SOME CONTINUITIES AND DISCONTINUITIES

If, from a genealogical perspective, we compare the feminist Marxist understanding of gender as a historically and socially constructed category with current poststructuralist versions of gender de/constructionism and theories of doing gender, we see both similarities and differences, continuities and discontinuities.

One of the important *discontinuities* is based on a different understanding of the *relationship between language and 'reality'*. Marxism focuses on social realities, and considers language to be a tool that, in principle, can reflect this reality objectively. For this to be possible, it is necessary that the scientific presentation, through a consciously reflected and theorized starting point in the interests of the working class, can be 'cleansed' of the 'false' consciousness and legitimizations of bourgeois ideology. Central to Marxist theory, and its theorization of how to understand knowledge and science, is a movement beyond false consciousness via a clear standpoint in the interests of the working class. In feminist Marxism, a women's standpoint is added in, which takes a starting point in the interests of working-class

women and, as previously noted, at times also in those of wage-laboring, middle-class women.

Marxism, including feminist Marxism, is a product of modernity in its belief in the possibility of an objective scientific representation, expressed in a transparent language beyond the false consciousness of bourgeois ideology. In contrast, poststructuralist gender de/constructionism emphasizes that our access to 'reality' is always communicated through a non-transparent filter of discourse and language. When applying the latter framework, we can never create a privileged, revolutionary class and gender standpoint from which to review reality objectively.

In Chapter 8 I explore the important differences between a feminist standpoint epistemology and a feminist postmodern epistemology. For now, I only want to emphasize that these different epistemological starting points mean that feminist Marxism and feminist poststructuralism constitute different frameworks for the analysis of gender as a constructed category.

From a genealogical perspective, however, it is also important to highlight that there is not only discontinuity but also *continuity* between these two theoretical frameworks. Feminist Marxist versions of gender de/constructionism aim to *denaturalize and deessentialize gender*, and to define gender categories as changing and *historically constructed* in intersection with class differences and a *society in constant change*. In the endeavor to theorize gender as a changing, non-natural, non-universal and non-essentialist phenomenon, I see continuities between feminist Marxist and feminist poststructuralist de/constructionism.

LACANIAN FEMINISM: PHALLUS AS SIGN AND GENDER AS LANGUAGE

In the 1980s, the so-called linguistic turn (a broad scholarly interest in language and discourse that followed in the wake of structuralism and, in particular, poststructuralism) and a range of French theorists became important sources of theoretical inspiration for the continued feminist struggle against biological determinism. Among others, the theories of French psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan became influential. Some feminists found Lacan's orientation toward language a particularly useful aspect of his reinterpretation of Freud's psychoanalysis. For feminist theorists such as, for example, Mitchell and Rose (1982) and Gallop (1982), Lacan represented an important approach to a critical understanding of gender as constructed rather than biologically determined. In contrast to feminist Marxism, which focused on the *historical* and *social* construction of gender, the focus of Lacanian feminism was the *linguistic* construction of gender.

While Freud confirmed biological determinism by stating that sex and thereby gender is an anatomically determined destiny, Lacan understands

the construction of the gendered subject as separate from biology or anatomy. In a Lacanian context, biological and anatomical sex are irrelevant insofar as the construction of gender is concerned. What matters are two cultural orders: the *imaginary order*, which is linked to our early image- and fantasy-based way of making sense of the world, and the *symbolic order*, which is built on symbolic-rational language. In Lacanian theory, our gendered subjectivity is generated as part of our inscription in both of these orders, and against this background it must be understood as something produced in language and culture without any reference to biology. This is important for Lacanian feminists.

In the imaginary order of Lacanian theory, the phallus is constructed as an imaginary screen for projection of an *a priori*, non-gendered desire. According to Lacanian theory, when the phallus comes to function as a privileged signifier of desire, this has nothing to do with the penis and biology. In contrast, Lacan argues that the fetishization of the phallus as a privileged signifier of desire is linked to an early desire that he claims is characteristic of all human beings. This is a desire to be what their mother desires, and as she, in Lacanian theory, desires the phallus, it is the phallus that becomes the privileged signifier of desire.

In the Lacanian symbolic order, gender difference is established because of a necessary and unavoidable, but nevertheless symbolically and not biologically determined, choice of subject position. Lacan illustrates the symbolic constitution of psychosexual gender difference and the taking up of a linguistically defined subject position as either 'woman' or 'man' as a choice between two toilet cubical doors that are entirely identical apart from the linguistic marking 'women' or 'men':

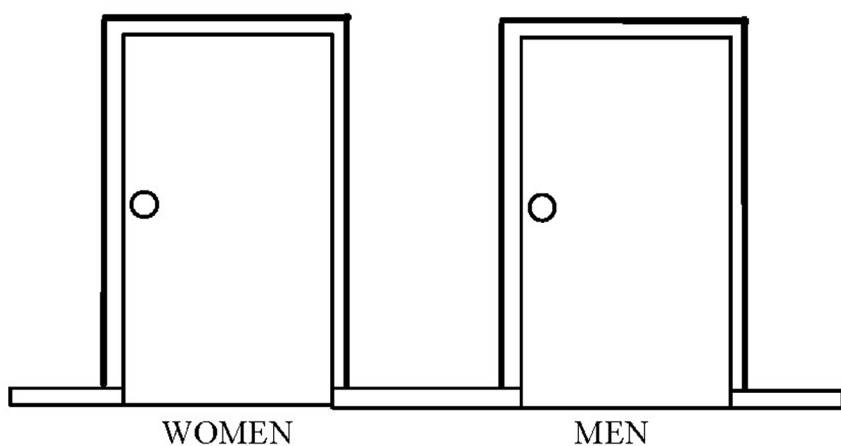


Figure 6.1 Two toilet doors, identical except for the naming 'WOMEN' and 'MEN' (computer graphics)

This example illustrates Lacan's point: when we are schooled in the linguistic orders of culture, we know exactly which door to choose. However, it is the linguistic-symbolic, cultural-discursive markings on the doors that tell us what is 'right' and 'wrong,' not an inherent biological sexual nature. Against this background, Lacanian feminists argue that Freud's understanding of anatomy as destiny has been overcome by Lacanian theory, which thus gives us a radical possibility to break away from biological determinism. What is important in Lacanian theory, they argue, is language and culture, not biology.

However, where exactly is the potential for developing a gender constructionism that some feminist theorists claim to find in Lacanian theory? While breaking away from biological determinism, does it not suggest that, instead, we are locked into a phallus-fetishizing imaginary order and a symbolic order that forces us to choose sides within the framework of a strictly defined gender dichotomy? Lacanian feminists would answer both yes and no to this question. To them, it is, first of all, important that Lacanian theory emphasizes that no one (neither women nor men) have any privileged access to the phallus when it is redefined as a sign and detached from its biological relationship to the penis. Second, they emphasize that, although the enforcement of the symbolic order and its gender dichotomy is maintained in Lacanian understanding, its strict regime is, to some extent, also undermined by continuous disruptions by the unconscious. According to psychoanalysis, the unconscious is a space governed by an absolute gender anarchy.

Reviewing Lacanian feminism from a genealogical perspective, I would like to suggest that there is a *continuity* between this and current poststructuralist gender de/constructionism. The continuity lies in the emphasis on both the phallus and the gender dichotomy as linguistic signifiers, that is, as *constructed in language without reference to any kind of 'biological reality.'* However, in my view, a problem that Lacanian feminists inherit from Lacan is that the symbolic order is understood as a static structure. A historically dynamic understanding of language and discourse is not included in Lacanian theory. This lack of dynamism or reflections on changeability makes Lacanian feminist constructionism *differ from both* feminist Marxist *and* poststructuralist feminist de/constructionist gender theory. Although, in different ways, both of these two latter strands of feminist theorizing seek to investigate *societally changing and changeable* constructions of gender, as it is produced socially historically and/or linguistically discursively. Alongside this *discontinuity* with both *feminist Marxism and feminist poststructuralism*, the *linguistic perspective* on gender de/constructionism highlights a *continuity between Lacanian feminist and poststructuralist feminist gender de/constructionism*, which again marks a difference between them and feminist Marxist constructionism.

POSTSTRUCTURALIST THEORIES OF LANGUAGE: TO DECONSTRUCT GENDER

While the Lacanian feminist definition of gender as language and sign drew on a structuralist framework, another important contribution to language- and discourse-oriented feminist gender de/constructionism and its critique of biological determinism is inspired by poststructuralist language theory and, in particular, by the deconstructive method of French language philosopher Jacques Derrida (1979 and 1987).

As with Lacanian psychoanalysis, Derridean deconstruction has also been an influential source in the development of feminist de/constructionist thought. Derrida's critique of the binary oppositions of structuralist thinking, including the gender dichotomy, has been important. According to Derrida's version of poststructuralist theories of language, meaning cannot, as claimed by structuralism, be schematically understood in a binary A versus non-A model. Gender, for example, cannot simply be understood as the binary 'man' versus 'non-man' (= 'woman') as Lacan's structuralist conceptualization of the symbolic order suggested. According to Derrida, there will always be excess meanings that disrupt the binary scheme and displace its fixed meanings.

However, Derrida also argues that language nevertheless constantly tries to build up binary oppositions between terms, of which one has a tendency (through a symbolic-linguistic act of violence) to establish itself as the signifier that defines the pair, while the other becomes profiled as a mere negation of the first. A defines itself, as well as its negation, non-A. For example, the signifier 'man' has linguistically constituted itself as superior, defining the signifier 'woman' as everything that is an inferior negation of 'man.' The aim of Derrida's deconstructive method is to disrupt and displace hierarchies and binary oppositions. The undecidability, fluidity and constant sliding from one meaning to another, which, according to Derrida, characterize the non-A position in the binary such as woman, is made visible in the act of deconstruction and mobilized as the driving force that makes the system of fixed binary oppositions fall apart.

Many feminist theorists have been inspired by Derrida's deconstruction of gender as a hierarchically fixed binary. Prominent examples are the French author and theorist of feminine writing, *écriture féminine*, Hélène Cixous (1980, 1991) and the USA-based postcolonial feminist Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (1998a). However, many feminist theorists have also criticized Derrida for not taking the deconstruction of gender far enough. According to these critics, Derrida uses the concept 'woman' as a deconstructive tool but fails to include the term 'man' in his reflections on the breakdown of the gender dichotomy (e.g., Braidotti 1991). Furthermore, Derrida has been criticized for the ways in which he touches on the issue of Eurocentrism, but without committing himself to a consequent deconstruction of it from a postcolonial perspective (Spivak 1998b). However, these critiques do not alter the fact that

the deconstructive method has been embraced by theorists who wanted to push feminist de/constructionism further.

From a *genealogical* perspective, it can be argued that a feminist deconstruction of gender sustains and elaborates the language-oriented critique of biological determinism, which characterized Lacanian feminism and its structuralist understanding of the gender dichotomy as an effect of language, not nature. However, Derrida's poststructuralist deconstruction has also inspired feminist de/constructionism to move beyond Lacanian feminism. As already indicated, Lacanian feminist theorizing of gender had to rely on linguistic disruptions generated by the unconscious and by the imaginary order, where the gender dichotomy was not yet installed, to move beyond a strictly maintained hierarchical gender binary. Derrida's work makes it possible for feminist de/constructionists to theorize more radical subversions of fixed and dichotomous gender orders as well as their intersections with other orders of discursive categorizations (based on race, ethnicity, sexuality etc.). In feminist theory inspired by Derrida, binary and hierarchical dichotomies fall apart, opening up the category of gender and other normative categorizations for a focus on excess meanings, continuous linguistic displacements and disruptions of essentialized meanings and new, undecidable spaces between the strictly separated discursive categorizations.

WOMEN'S WRITING, BODIES AND DECONSTRUCTION

From the retrospective perspective of my *genealogical* analysis, the language theories of three so-called French feminists have—apart from those of Lacan and Derrida—had a great deal of impact in terms of giving impetus to the linguistic turn in Feminist Studies and to a move toward a poststructuralist gender de/constructionism. I am talking about Julia Kristeva, Luce Irigaray and Hélène Cixous, to whom the label 'French feminists' in historical accounts of feminist theorizing has often been attached, even though, in a strict sense, it is a misnomer. None of the three women define themselves as feminists. Furthermore, their individual life histories and intellectual work is shaped by the fact that, as well as having a background in France, they also have important biographical contexts outside of France. Kristeva came to France from Bulgaria. Cixous came from French Algeria, and Irigaray from Belgium. In addition, feminism in France—like elsewhere—has multiple faces and voices.

I introduce the three theorists here, despite the fact that, theoretically, they, as mentioned, sit uneasy with the gender constructionists and fit in with the next chapter about corpomaterial feminist theory. My reason for doing this is that the three theorists—together with Lacan and Derrida—have had major impact on poststructuralist feminist de/constructionism. I shall, therefore, also return to them in later chapters. I shall explore in more detail the work of Irigaray as part of my discussion of corpomaterial

feminist theories in Chapter 7, while, in Chapter 9, I shall elaborate on the work of Cixous in her capacity of theorist of women's writing, *écriture féminine*. Like Lacan and Derrida, Kristeva, Cixous and Irigaray have played a big role in the linguistic turn of feminist theory. The inspirations from Kristeva, Cixous and Irigaray have, in particular, influenced the ways in which the question of the female body and writing in a feminine mode was linked to the deconstructive process. What these theorists have in common—while otherwise representing rather different positions—is that their sophisticated poststructuralist articulations of links between language, writing, text, gender/sex, body and psychoanalysis inspired a lot of interest in theorizing the female body as part of the linguistic and poststructuralist turn in feminist theory. Both feminist Marxism's and Lacanian feminism's critiques of biological determinism were, in different ways, absorbed by the endeavor to sustain the detachment of sociocultural-linguistic gender from biological sex. As a consequence, little attention was paid to the sexed body. However, inspirations from the work of Kristeva, Irigaray and Cixous linked the linguistic turn in feminist theory and de/constructionism together with a new and non-deterministic focus on bodily difference.

An important hub for discussions about the female body and sexual difference was the previously mentioned idea of *écriture féminine*, 'women's writing.' The notion *écriture féminine* has been used as an umbrella term for the theoretical inspirations that many feminists found in the theories of Kristeva, Irigaray and Cixous. However, in a strict theoretical sense, the term *écriture féminine* only refers to Cixous' position (Cixous 1980, 245; 1991); Irigaray prefers the notion of '*parler-femme*,' 'speaking-as-a-woman' (Whitford 1991a, 38; 1991b, 137), while Kristeva talks in a gender neutral way about 'desire in language' (Kristeva 1980, 1984, 28). In order not to complicate the terminology too much, I shall use the term *écriture féminine* as an umbrella term, but I shall also map out an important difference between the positions of Cixous and Irigaray, on the one hand, and that of Kristeva, on the other.

Cixous and Irigaray have in common an endeavor to textualize the difference of the female body. They will write, speak and even sing it into language. In contrast to Kristeva, both are part of what has been called 'the sexual difference school' (Braidotti 1991, 209–273; 1994, 152–153) in accounts of the history of feminist theorizing. In contrast to many other strands of feminist thought, this one has chosen to take an ontological starting point in sexual difference, understood as a difference that makes a difference. However, it should, of course, be noticed that the way it is done is radically different from biologically determinist gender-conservatism. Sexual difference is thus conceptualized on a non-deterministic basis (I cover this in more detail in Chapter 7). In the theoretical universes of Cixous and Irigaray, to write or textualize the female body means to insist on its irreducible, but non-deterministic difference, which, when articulated as text, can produce deconstructive effects in the existing language

and culture. To write the female body into text is, according to Cixous and Irigaray, a way to disrupt the phallogocentrism of existing language; that is, to break down the way in which language has constructed phallus and logos as the pivots of its meaning-making machine.

Kristeva also focuses on the textualization of the body, but she does not use a sexual difference theoretical framework. She discusses how desire breaks into language, and she does so by drawing on psychosemiotic theory, which links psychoanalysis and semiotics. She traces the desire that manifests itself in language to the child's early psychosexual relationship with the body of its mother, the so-called semiotic *chora* (Kristeva's term for very momentary, presymbolic articulations of meaning, closely related to the baby's drives in relation to the mother's body). According to Kristeva, traces of the desire created in this early phase of human life will constantly lead to disruptions, slides, displacements, condensations and so on in rational speech and text. Kristeva argues that the symbolic order of language, which is characterized by well-ordered representations and utterances built up thematically (i.e., as rational theses), is interrupted by prerepresentative, presymbolic and completely momentary articulations and energies, emerging from the *chora*.

On the one hand, these prediscursive energies have a subversive power in relation to the fixed (gendered) meanings of the symbolic order. On the other hand, Kristeva also highlights that these energies must manifest themselves through the symbolic order; otherwise, she argues, the individual will have a psychotic breakdown. According to Kristeva, it is therefore not possible to totally unleash the subversive potential. She is open to more subversiveness than Lacan, but in her framework, too, the regime of the symbolically ordered gender dichotomy is strictly locked into place as a necessary regulatory mechanism.

Although Kristeva discusses desire as gender neutral, gender still has some significance in her theorization of the links between body and language. The body of the mother plays a central role in the articulations of desire generated by the semiotic *chora*. The desire that transpires in language is thus shaped by the interplay with the mother's body, but is, in other ways, gender neutral.

Theoretically and analytically, the works of Cixous, Irigaray and Kristeva—which, as indicated, are in many ways quite different—gained importance for the feminist turn toward linguistic gender de/constructionism in the 1980s. They generated a focus on textual disruptions of fixed gender dichotomies as well as a great interest in the diversity of bodily desires that manifest themselves in poetic literary and other texts, such as interviews (Witt-Brattström 1990; Stistrup-Jensen 1987).

More Continuities and Discontinuities

As part of the *genealogical* analysis of this chapter, I shall now once more ask questions about continuity and discontinuity. In Judith Butler's lengthy

discussion of the works of Irigaray (Butler 1993, 36–55) and Kristeva (Butler 1990, 79–93), we can trace both continuity and discontinuity between the theories of écriture féminine and Butler's versions of poststructuralist gender de/constructionism.

Continuity can be found insofar as the focus of écriture féminine on *gender/sex*, *body* and *desire* is also important for Butler's version of gender de/constructionist feminism (I explore this in more detail in Chapter 7). Both strands of thought—écriture féminine and Butler's gender de/constructionism—transgress the tendency to ignore the body that characterized both feminist Marxists and Lacanian feminists. Furthermore, Butler shares with Cixous, Irigaray and Kristeva a focus on the *significance of language*. In écriture féminine as well as in Butler's gender de/constructionism, language plays an active part both in the construction of gender/sex norms and dichotomies and as a medium to create disruption, trouble and renewal. Despite many differences between the positions of Butler, Cixous, Irigaray and Kristeva, their theories share an attention to troubling and disruptive actions of gender/sex in language that may sustain a revolutionary hope for renewal.

However, there is also *discontinuity* between their views on *the ontological status of the body*, *sexual difference and its relation to language*. According to Irigaray and Cixous, sexual difference is an irreducible, bodily facticity. By contrast, in Butler's queerfeminist universe, sexual difference is a discursive-material construction; that is, it is to be considered as an effect of discourses, and not as something primary and original. I shall return to this theoretical difference in Chapter 7.

There is also *discontinuity* between Butler's position and Kristeva's theorizing of the chora and the early relationship to the mother's body as something primary and *prelinguistic*, *governed by a prediscursive energy*. To Butler it is a problematic *mystification and an act of essentialization* to ontologize the mother's body as a prediscursive and precultural carrier of 'original' subversiveness. Furthermore, Butler is also critical of Kristeva's statement about the necessity for a gender dichotomy in the symbolic order and her idea that its heteronormative regime must be maintained, and that inevitably it leads to psychosis if the subversive energy of the chora, and the relationship to the mother's body, is given too much space and power to disrupt this regime. Butler asks polemically if Kristeva's entire theory about the chora, (limited) subversiveness and a prediscursive relationship to the mother's body is 'an effect of culture rather than its secret and primary cause' (Butler 1990, 81).

CONCLUSION: GENEALOGY AND COMPLEXITY

In this chapter I have moved back genealogically from a here-and-now-perspective in current gender de/constructionism, in particular theories

highlighting gender as a doing, to some historical examples. I emphasized Simone de Beauvoir's statement that gender is not something innate, and highlighted the feminist Marxist understanding of gender as a historic, societal and class-differentiated category. I also underlined how psychoanalysis has, in different ways, played a role in the development of gender de/constructionism. First, I explored the meaning of psychoanalysis for feminist Marxists, who reinterpreted Freud's theories of gender and sex in a historical materialist framework. Second, I discussed how feminist theory relates to Lacan's psychoanalysis, and how Lacanian feminists have contributed to gender de/constructionism, adopting Lacan's focus on language and his rejection of the Freudian focus on anatomy as destiny. Thereafter, I followed feminist de/constructionism into the poststructuralist turn, exploring how feminist theory has been inspired by Derrida's method of deconstruction. Finally, I emphasized the importance of the *écriture féminine* theories and Julia Kristeva's psychosemiotics for the linguistic turn in Feminist Studies and the focus on deconstruction of gender/sex.

It should be clear by now that there are many differences between the theoretical strands that I have introduced in this chapter. Often, such differences have resulted in the construction of dichotomies. As UK-based feminist Clare Hemmings (2005) has forcefully put it, the history of feminist theorizing has often been told in ways that claim a distinct difference between 'modern' and 'postmodern' feminist theory where the 1970s are compared against the 1980s and 1990s. I agree with Hemmings that such dichotomies are simplified, and that they do not contribute to a complex and dynamic understanding of feminist theorizing. By using a genealogical perspective, I have sought to avoid such unproductive dichotomies. I have highlighted that discontinuities and differences are important in such a perspective, but I have also indicated that it is just as crucial to take similarities and continuities into account. With feminist gender de/constructionism as the pivot for my genealogical analysis, I have explored patterns of similarities/differences and continuities/discontinuities of theoretical positions.

7 Making Corporealities Matter

Intersections of Gender and Sex Revisited

The last chapter focused on social and linguistic de/constructions of gender. It ended with theories of sexual difference and psychosemiotics and a discussion of the links between language, gender/sex and body. The issue of bodily materiality, which was touched on in the final section of Chapter 6, will be the focus of this chapter. Here I shall take a look at feminist theories of sexual difference, embodiment and corporeality that transgress gender de/constructionism. How do they get the sexed body and prediscursive facticities of materiality onto the agenda without reproducing gender-conservative and biologically determinist and culturally essentialist positions?

In this context I shall refer more critically to gender de/constructionism than I did in the previous chapter. But when I turn to questions that push feminist theorizing beyond gender de/constructionism, I would like to emphasize that the insights of corpomaterialist theories of gender/sex should not be understood as simply outdated those of gender de/constructionism. My criticisms are not intended to diminish the invaluable contribution of feminist gender de/constructionism with its radical interrogation of gender-conservative, biologically determinist and culturally essentialist perceptions of gender.

The main point of this chapter is to present theories of gender/sex that manage to focus on the prediscursive facticities of sexed bodies, but *without* abandoning the insights of gender de/constructionism. In order to emphasize that the latter are relevant for Feminist Studies of sexed corpomaterialities, I shall use the umbrella term *postconstructionism* to group together the theorists presented in this chapter. I use the term 'post' in the sense of both 'transgressing' and 'including' (parallel to the way in which post-structuralism is defined as both transgressing and including structuralism). The term 'post' is problematic insofar as it signals a temporal 'after' and is associated with a linear way of thinking, of which, as mentioned earlier, I am critical. To avoid unfortunate associations with linear thought and a temporal 'before'/'after,' I would like to emphasize that, in this chapter, I introduce theorizations that move beyond gender de/constructionism, *but* that the two ways of theorizing have run *in parallel*, and that my exploration of feminist postconstructionism and issues of corpomateriality should

not be seen as a gender/sex theory 'phase 2' that follows 'after' a gender de/constructionist 'phase 1.'

In addition to the term postconstructionism, I shall also characterize the following cluster of theorists as *feminist corpomaterialists* in order to indicate a shared focus on the materiality of bodies and corporeality. I have chosen this term instead of the more commonly used 'feminist materialism' or 'new feminist materialism' in order to make a clear distinction vis-à-vis historical materialist feminists (i.e., feminist Marxists) whose theoretical framework, ontologies and epistemologies, as described in Chapter 6, are significantly different from the feminist postconstructionist ones. The differences between these two groups of feminist materialists mean that the term 'feminist materialism' becomes ambiguous. Also the term 'new feminist materialism' is in my view problematic, because it associates to the kind of linear development that, as previously mentioned, I definitely want to avoid.

WHY TRANSGRESS GENDER DE/CONSTRUCTIONISM?

Despite the invaluable contributions of gender de/constructionism, it has a problematic side. I have previously described how feminist de/constructionism emerged from a critique of biologically determinist and culturally essentialist gender-conservative discourses (see Chapter 2). I also emphasized how feminists critically adopted the sexological distinction between sex and gender and, against this background, constructed gender as a separate social/cultural/psychological category (see Chapter 3). This enabled analyses that could proceed without taking biological sex into account. This approach has been, and still is, important, but there are also certain dilemmas involved, which I shall introduce in this chapter. Gender de/constructionist theory has, on an overarching level, focused on socioculturally changing and changeable gender. However, in so doing, it has often ended up leaving biological sex critically undertheorized. As an unintentional side effect, feminist gender de/constructionism has contributed to the reproduction of a dichotomous understanding of biological sex and sociocultural gender. The sexed body has been reduced to what Haraway has pointedly described as a 'blank page for social inscriptions' (Haraway 1991c, 197).

Seen from the point of view of corpomaterialist and postconstructionist feminisms, it is obvious that several of the theories I covered in Chapter 6 treated biological sex too parenthetically—from Simone de Beauvoir to feminist Marxism and Lacanian feminism. Furthermore, according to a number of feminist corpomaterialists, Judith Butler and the poststructuralist feminists who have taken inspiration from her work are also giving bodily materiality and prediscursive bodily facticities too little attention. Therefore, drawing on the theories of North American feminist physicist Karen Barad (1998), I would like to position Butler's work in-between feminist gender de/constructionism and corpomaterialist postconstructionism.

As an alternative to reducing the body and biological sex to a 'blank page for social inscriptions,' Haraway and other postconstructionist feminists call for non-deterministic and non-essentialist conceptualizations of prediscursive facticities of bodily materialities. In the following, I shall illustrate where this takes the feminist theorization of gender/sex.

First, I shall focus on sexual difference theories. In the last section of Chapter 6, I described how the work of sexual difference theorists such as Luce Irigaray and Hélène Cixous have contributed to the linguistic and poststructuralist deconstructive turn of Feminist Studies. In this chapter, I shall highlight how a range of sexual difference theorists (e.g., Irigaray), taking a starting point in the female body as a prediscursive facticity, expose dilemmas integral to feminist gender de/constructionism.

Second, I shall investigate the diverse work of another group of corpomaterialist and postconstructionist feminists, who have in common a background in the natural sciences. They mobilize this background in various ways, both when calling into question gender de/constructionism, and also as they analyze bodily materialities from a postconstructionist position.

Third, using the genealogical principle introduced earlier, I shall discuss Judith Butler's approach to the sexed body. I shall highlight how her theorization of the meanings of bodies (1993), as seen from a postconstructionist perspective (Barad 1998), positions her in-between feminist post-structuralist gender de/constructionism and a postconstructionist feminist corpomaterialism.

SEXUAL DIFFERENCE MAKES A DIFFERENCE!

Seen from the perspective of sexual difference theory, gender de/constructionism is problematic because it neglects the bodily irreducibility of sexual difference and the specificity of the female body. Irigaray, for example, emphasizes strongly that to do so is to confirm the hegemonic phallogocentric indifference toward sexual difference (*'l'indifférence sexuelle'*, Irigaray 1974/1985, 29). As noted in the previous chapter, the alternative offered by Irigaray and Cixous is the *écriture-féminine/parler-femme* perspective and its focus on the relationship between the female body, writing and a disruption of the phallogocentric order.

Following up on the previous chapter's introduction to sexual difference theory, I shall begin the discussion of feminist corpomaterialism and postconstructionism with a more elaborate presentation of Luce Irigaray's position. I shall take a closer look at the ways in which, rather than looking at sociocultural gender as the de/constructionists do, she emphasizes a non-deterministic but irreducible quality of sexed bodies, that is, their sexually different morphology (form). I shall highlight how, against this background, she articulates a historically constructed difference and inequality between individuals with female and male morphology. According to Irigaray, this

historical inequality can only be challenged by insisting on and making visible female difference.

Irigaray bases her theory of sexual difference on a highly sophisticated and complex mixture of subversive mime and deconstruction of Western philosophy, from Plato and Aristotle to psychoanalysis (Freud and Lacan) (Irigaray 1974/1985). She reads Lacanian psychoanalysis and theory of language as an expression of the ways in which Western philosophy understands gender/sex and concludes that the morphological difference between penis and labia has not been ascribed any linguistic or philosophical meaning. In Lacanian theory, the mirror image in which we all mirror ourselves when our imaginary order is formed is a phallic one: It is our mother's desire for the phallus. Furthermore, the symbolic order constitutes the phallus as the privileged signifier for desire. Indeed, according to Lacan, the phallus does not represent a biological man. As noted in Chapter 6, Lacanian theory rejects a simple identification of penis and phallus. But, Irigaray asks polemically, what does it mean that the phallus, the privileged signifier for desire, has been created in the image of penis and not in that of the female labia? What consequences are entailed by the fact that male morphology—in contrast to female—is ascribed a privileged cultural–linguistic–philosophical meaning? What, for example, does it mean that the form of the penis is made into a sign of logical non-ambiguity, while the female labia—because there are two—would be suitable for representing ambiguity, if they were ascribed meaning? Why does ambiguity have a low status in Western philosophy and logic, while non-ambiguity is prioritized? Can a connection be traced here to the linguistic–philosophical *indifference* to the morphological difference between the sexes?

Through her analysis of Western philosophy, psychoanalysis and Lacanian theory of language, Irigaray argues that there is a crucial, historically constructed difference between the situations of individuals with female and male bodies. The form of the penis plays a central role as a privileged signifier, while the female labia have not been ascribed any philosophical meaning at all. In other words: The morphological difference between the sexes has been historically excluded from linguistic and philosophical theorizing. The existing semantic economy, that is, the universe of meanings that we know from philosophy, literature, politics, media and so on, is, according to Irigaray, characterized by phallogocentrism. Its pivot is a phallically defined logic and a total indifference toward sexual difference ('*l'indifférence sexuelle*,' Irigaray 1974/1985, 29).

According to Irigaray, the historical foreclosure of the morphology of sexual difference from linguistic and philosophical theorization is catastrophic. The exclusion of female sexual morphology from the processes of signification in both the imaginary and symbolic orders of language means that individuals of female sex are locked into a position where they fundamentally lack 'the mirror of the other woman' (Irigaray 1974/1985). Culturally and linguistically, women lack a mirror that can reflect their body

in its morphological specificity. In contrast to men, who can bond homosocially with each other by reflecting themselves in symbolic and imaginary articulations of the phallus,⁴ the individual of female sex finds herself in a historical position where she lacks the possibility of morphological mirroring and basic identity-constituting bonding.

To change this situation, it is, according to Irigaray, the historical task of the female subject to deconstruct the ways in which language and philosophy center on phallus and logos, to radically disrupt their phallogocentrism and indifference to sexual difference. She must give voice to female morphological specificity, taking as a starting point the fact that sexual difference is irreducible but non-deterministic. Irigaray's term *parler-femme* ('to-speak-as-woman') and her contribution to the philosophy of *écriture féminine* must be understood against this backdrop.

To expose the historical hierarchy between the sexes, which, according to Irigaray, has been culturally institutionalized via the philosophical and linguistic indifference to female difference, she distinguishes between three positions: the Same, the other of the Same, and the other of the Other. The subject whose speech reproduces the phallogocentric economy of signification occupies the position of the Same. In Irigaray's texts, this is the privileged subject who is represented by gender-conservative male philosophers and psychoanalysts (from Plato and Aristotle to Freud and Lacan). In the phallogocentric economy of signification, the female subject cannot do anything but take the position of the other of the Same; lacking the mirror of the other woman, she is left to confirm the hom(m)osociality of the dominant economy of signification, including its indifference to sexual difference and to her non-articulated and othered position. However, when the female subject begins to disrupt the phallogocentric indifference to sexual difference, she takes the position of the other of the Other. Consciously claiming the latter position, the female subject begins to articulate sexual difference and commits herself to a process of becoming the mirror of the other woman.

CORPOREAL FEMINISM

During the 1990s, a group of Australian feminists (e.g., Grosz 1994; Grosz and Probyn 1995; Gatens 1996; Kirby 1997) developed a branch of sexual difference theory known as 'corporeal feminism.' Drawing on Irigaray, this group has argued that feminist researchers should, literally, turn the de/constructionist feminist subject discussion upside down. They argue that feminist theory of gender/sex should take as its starting point the specificity of bodies and sexual difference rather than remaining stuck in the socioculturally constructed aspects of gender. I shall illustrate the approach of this group by taking a look at the work of the Australian, USA-based feminist philosopher Elisabeth Grosz and her book entitled *Volatile Bodies: Toward a Corporeal Feminism* (1994).

In this book, Grosz introduces a program for a corporeal feminism, developed in a critical dialogue with two separate parties. On the one hand, she discusses theories of the body and corporeality as they appear in certain strands of philosophy, psychoanalysis and cultural theory, focusing on theorists previously mentioned, such as Freud, Lacan, Foucault, Deleuze, as well as the phenomenologist, Maurice Merleau-Ponty. On the other hand, she engages in dialogue with feminist gender de/constructionism. Grosz wants to shift the perspective of both discussions. Rather than theorizing a non-specific, but often implicitly male body, as do these male philosophers of the body and corporeality, she theorizes the sexually differentiated specificity of bodies and analyzes philosophically the corporeality of the female body. Such a starting point transgresses not only the previously mentioned male philosophers' theorizing of the body, but also feminist gender de/constructionism. Where gender de/constructionism has focused on the socio-cultural construction of gender, Grosz instead uses the corporeality of sex and sexual difference as a framework and starting point for a feminist discussion of subjectivity.

By shifting the theoretical horizon in these ways, Grosz challenges traditional dualistic thinking in binary oppositions such as mind/body and culture/nature, which is so deeply ingrained in Western philosophy. Like Irigaray, Grosz emphasizes how hierarchical, gender-dualist thought is rooted in the philosophies of Plato, Aristotle and Descartes, among others. She shows how their stereotypical gender discourses have constructed masculinity, mind, rationality and culture as interchangeable and hierarchically opposed to femininity, body, irrationality and nature. Of course, to Grosz it is somewhat ironic and paradoxical to have to conclude that de/constructionist feminism, with its distinction between sociocultural gender and biological sex, draws on Western philosophy and its problematic binary oppositions of mind/body and culture/nature. However, Grosz argues, this is the case: Gender de/constructionism has, indeed, radically challenged the binary construction of femininity/masculinity *but* it has at the same time failed to critically analyze and deconstruct the two related binary oppositions and has instead become caught up in them.

According to Grosz, in order to transgress dualist philosophy, it is necessary to shift away from the starting point of de/constructionism. Instead of beginning from sociocultural gender, feminist analysis of subjectivity and identity should take corporeality, the body and its individual and multiple (sexed, sexualized, racialized etc.) specificities as its point of departure. Grosz argues that if we always remember to look at subjectivity as being corporeal and embodied in specific ways, we can avoid the traps of dualism. She emphasizes that, with this approach, it is possible to talk about sexual difference *without* reproducing this difference in dualistic, deterministic and essentialist stereotypical schemas in which masculinity, mind, culture and rationality are hierarchically opposed to femininity, body, nature and irrationality.

With an emphasis on the specificities of bodies—in terms of race, ethnicity, sexuality and so on as well as sex—Grosz goes further than Irigaray, who only focuses on sexual difference and neglects the question of intersectionality. Grosz also engages much more explicitly in a dialogue with feminist de/constructionism, clearly articulating, for example, the crucial question that defines the dividing line between a constructionist and a post-constructionist feminist ontology of the body:

In other words, is sexual difference primary and sexual inscription a cultural overlay or rewriting of an ontologically prior differentiation? Or is sexual differentiation a product of the various forms of inscription of culturally specific bodies? (Grosz 1994, 189)

Grosz's tentative response to this question is that the other, radically constructionist perspective (i.e., that the differentiation in biological sexes is a product of the sociocultural production of gender), leaves us with a representation of the body that is too passive. Within this framework, the body is reduced to passive raw material, which does not in any way resist sociocultural inscriptions. Grosz suggests that, as an alternative, the relationship between the sociocultural discursive and the biological material dimensions of gendered and sexed bodies can be compared to that of the writing tool and the writing material in an etching. In the etching, Grosz argues, it is important to take the specificities of the material into account and 'their concrete effects in the kind of text produced' (Grosz 1994, 191). According to Grosz, we must likewise take into account—in a non-deterministic way—the materiality of the sexed body and the effects of sexual difference.

THE NOMADIC FEMINIST SUBJECT

As part of this presentation of prominent examples of sexual difference theorists, I would also like to draw attention to the work of Rosi Braidotti, whose term 'feminist figurations' I discussed in Chapter 2. Braidotti has linked up Irigaray's philosophy of sexual difference with Deleuze's theories of the subject's embodied becoming in several major contributions to feminist philosophy (Braidotti 1994, 2002, 2006).

She, too, criticizes the tendency of gender de/constructionism to neglect biological sex and to focus exclusively on the socioculturally and discursively constructed category of gender. Among others, Braidotti articulates her criticism as a problematization of the ways in which Anglophone gender research has introduced and used the term 'gender.' Theories based on the 'gender' concept, are not, Braidotti argues (Braidotti 1994, 150–158f; Braidotti and Butler 1997, 40–42), well suited to challenge or counteract the power differentials in which gender relations are currently embedded, because they lack the potential to come to grips with sexed bodies.

According to Braidotti's Deleuze-inspired ontology, the way in which we become subjects is closely related to our development of a bodily and sexual identity. In line with Irigaray, she also understands current gender relations as historically produced in a process where the becoming of subjects takes place through symbolic and imaginary inscriptions of different bodies in an asymmetrical power order; that is, an order the asymmetry of which is based in a normative prioritizing of likeness and identity over difference, defining non-identity and the Other (e.g., women and non-whites) as being inferior and less valid.

Braidotti argues that gender constructionist theory is inefficient in its critique of gendered power relations because it fails to address the basic question of how different bodies are asymmetrically inscribed with symbolic and imaginary meaning in the current phallogocentric order. This affects the ways in which 'gender theorists' can discuss alternatives, Braidotti says. In their eagerness to think along non-essentialist lines, gender de/constructionists refuse to explore prediscursive meanings of material bodies and sexual difference. According to Braidotti, gender constructionist thought, therefore, ends up in suggestions of postgender or androgynous identities, which, in fact, fail to take into account that life basically is embodied.

Like Irigaray and Grosz, Braidotti argues for a non-deterministic theorization of the difference of the female body as an alternative to the gender constructionist perspective. Bodily difference, Braidotti says, has historically positioned women (observe the plural form) as a reference for the term Woman (observe the universalist, singular form). Constructed by philosophers, scientists, in political discourses and so on, the term 'Woman' has, for centuries, been forcibly imposed on empirical women as a biologically determinist and culturally essentialist definition and classification. Braidotti describes this as a symbolic act of violence that has denied the diversity of empirical women. Furthermore, the classification 'Woman' has inscribed the diversity of empirical women as universally subordinate to the category 'Man.' This is because the classic definition has locked the category 'Woman' into the binary opposition 'Man'/'Woman,' where the first is superior to the second.

In order to destroy the biologically determinist and culturally essentialist discursive constructions that the term 'Woman' represents, the female feminist subject must create herself, that is, she must give the definition 'I, a woman' a new feminist meaning, Braidotti argues.

Moreover, she suggests that the process of becoming of the female 'I' as a feminist subject takes place through insisting on a series of interrelated levels of difference. First, the female 'I' has to critically expose how the universalist and essentialist definition of herself as 'Woman' implicates that she is constructed as other. Like Irigaray, Braidotti argues that an exposure of this otherness would mean emphasizing the significance of female difference and disrupting the continuous repetition of the monomaniacal phallogocentric indifference to sexual difference. Braidotti calls this insistence on *women's*

difference from men ‘*Sexual Difference Level 1, Difference Between Men and Women*’ (1994, 159). Second, the becoming of the female feminist subject means an insistence that the term ‘Woman’ is extremely reductionist. It is reductionist because of the many differences among women (based on class, ethnicity, sexuality, age etc.) and also because every individual woman encompasses multiple layers of difference. When Braidotti talks of differences *among* women, she is referring to feminist intersectionality theory, which she calls ‘*Sexual Difference Level 2, Differences Among Women*.’ In addition, she describes the differences within each woman as ‘*Sexual Difference Level 3, Differences Within Each Woman*’ (1994, 165). Braidotti’s understanding of the latter kind of differences is based on her postmodern disbelief in a definition of the subject as a fixed entity with a stable, inner core. According to the postmodern philosophy on which Braidotti draws, we are all different at different times and in different situations (Braidotti 1994, 166).

An insistence on these different types of difference (in relation to men, among women and within the individual woman) challenges the notions of singularity and universal subordination that are integral to the term ‘Woman,’ Braidotti argues. Via this insistence, the female feminist ‘I’ becomes a nomadic subject, a position that Braidotti defines under inspiration drawn from Deleuze. As described in Chapter 3, the nomadic subject is in constant critical, passionate, desiring and energetic political movement toward alternative feminist figurations. It is a subject whom I describe, using the terms defined in Chapter 3, as being involved in a process of becoming. Braidotti suggests that the energy required to realize the discursive transgressions away from being forced into subordination under the category ‘Woman’ comes from the bodily unease that empirical women experience when the category ‘Woman’ is violently imposed on them, denying their diversity and difference and constructing them as Man’s inferior other.

What Braidotti does with this analysis is first of all to combine Irigaray’s sexual difference perspective, which is limited to taking into account only sexual difference, with a perspective on—and an insistence upon—intersectionality, theorized as Sexual Difference Level 2, Differences *Among Women*. Second, she draws on a notion of the subject inspired by postmodern philosophy and psychoanalysis, which indicates that the ‘I’ cannot be considered as a rational and fixed entity; it is pervaded by different, and sometimes contradictory, desires and interests. From this perspective, the subject is understood as multiple, and as shaped both by a political will to act out its different interests and by unconscious desires. Braidotti also links together Irigaray’s idea that the female subject must articulate her difference with the theories of Deleuze and Guattari about the bodily, affective and intellectual becoming of the subject, which, as noted in Chapter 3, takes a critical, affirmative and non-deterministic starting point in body and desire (Deleuze and Guattari 1992, 232–309; Braidotti 1994, 111–123).

The different female body is thus included in Braidotti's theory as the very facticity that has historically subjected empirical women to the definition of 'Woman.' Moreover, the body is theorized as the source of the energy and passion that makes it possible to fight and to transgress biologically determinist and essentialist definitions. In this way, Braidotti's post-constructionist theory conceptualizes the sexually different body as a living facticity that is not just passively formed by gendered subjectivity, but that actively interferes with it.

CRITIQUE OF GENDER DE/CONSTRUCTIONISM FROM LOCATIONS IN THE NATURAL SCIENCES

Another important cluster of feminist scholars who have articulated critiques of gender de/constructionism is made up of feminists with a background in the natural sciences, not least biologists. Haraway is a prominent figure within this group. However, her discussion of the dilemmas facing feminist gender de/constructionism should be seen in the context of quite similar critiques raised by other feminists with a natural science background (e.g., Fox Keller 1989, 43; Oudshoorn 1994, 2; Barad 1996, 163–165; Birke 1999, 21).

On the one hand, gender de/constructionism has been important for feminists in the natural sciences; it goes without saying that these feminists have been extremely active in criticizing the natural sciences' legitimization of biological determinism, and gender de/constructionism has been an important tool for this critique. On the other hand, it is obvious that coming from a natural science background has meant that these feminist theorists have not been able in theoretical terms to simply 'bracket off' biological sex and the sexed body as easily as feminists coming from the social sciences or humanities.

To illustrate the critical approach of this group, I shall highlight the work of the English biologist Lynda Birke (Birke 1994; Birke, Bryld and Lykke 2004) and her way of raising critical questions that challenge the exclusive focus on sociocultural gender of feminist gender de/constructionism. With a starting point in a biological and feminist ecocritical interest in human–animal relationships, which she shares among others with Haraway (Haraway 1989, 1997, 2003, 2008), Birke criticizes gender de/constructionists for leaving the animal-related aspects of corporeality critically undertheorized, positioned in frameworks that understand them in static and fixed ways. Birke argues that we cannot dispose of the biologically determinist conservative locking of gender/sex into static and essentializing models by only focusing on the changing aspects of sociocultural gender (1994, 11). The failure of gender de/constructionists to theorize sexual biology only strengthens the dichotomous relationship between a changing sociocultural gender and a static biological sex. Furthermore, they fix feminism within an anthropocentric

humanism where, for example, human–animal relations are not theorized in critical ways, even though, as Birke points out, animals have played, and still play, an important role in biologically determinist discourses on gender and sex. Animals have been largely used, and are still used, in biological science as models for humans. Furthermore, the scientific theorizing of animals, human–animal relations, and animals' ways of performing gender and sex are, and have been, influential in biologically determinist arguments.

THE APPARATUS OF BODILY PRODUCTION

Haraway, too, has been an important driving force in pushing feminist thought beyond gender de/constructionism. In my discussion of the concept of figuration (see Chapter 3), I introduced Haraway's cyborg theory. I emphasized how the cyborg figure challenges the distinctions between culture/nature and technology/organism, but also those between sociocultural gender and biological sex. In the context of this chapter, I shall go into more detail about Haraway's critique of gender de/constructionism and her contribution to feminist corpomaterialist theories of gender/sex.

Haraway emphasizes a dilemma in which gender de/constructionists often find themselves. She notes that feminist gender de/constructionists have been eager to articulate theories about gender that highlight sociocultural transformation and historical change. But, Haraway argues, there is a big risk that gender de/constructionism's exclusive focus on the changeability of sociocultural gender unintentionally reduces biological sex to a blank page for social inscription and, according to Haraway, this is too high a price to pay. Biological determinism must be countered by feminists but, as a biologist, Haraway cannot allow this to happen at the cost of reducing biology to passive raw material for cultural activity. She articulates this dilemma in the following way:

... 'sex' as an object of biological knowledge appears regularly in the guise of biological determinism, threatening the fragile space for social constructionism and critical theory, with their attendant possibilities for active and transformative intervention, called into being by feminist concepts of gender as socially, historically, and semiotically positioned difference. And, yet, to lose authoritative biological accounts of sex, which set up productive tensions with its binary pair, gender, seems to be to lose too much; it seems to be to lose not just analytical power within a particular Western tradition, but the body itself as anything but a blank page for social inscriptions, including those of biological discourse. (Haraway 1991c, 197)

Haraway's corpomaterialist alternative to gender de/constructionism has been developed in dialogue with various theories, including feminist

critiques of the natural sciences (for example, Harding 1986), and the interdisciplinary research field of Science and Technology Studies (STS). Through so-called Actor Network Theory (Law and Hassard 1999; Latour 2005), STS focuses on how human and non-human actors interact in the context of sociotechnical phenomena. Haraway's research brings this tradition into dialogue with feminist, anti-racist and postcolonial theory.

Against this background, Haraway theorizes gender/sex in relation to new cultures of technology and in its intersections with processes of sexualization, racialization and ethnification. As a feminist biologist, she problematizes biologically static constructions of racialized and sexualized gender, as well as gendered and sexualized racializations. She also emphasizes that biological matter and non-human actors are active agents. Problematization and rethinking of technoscientific themes are integral to Haraway's approach. This is visible, for example, in her grand work on primates, *Primate Visions* (Haraway 1989), in which she reads the science of biology as a storytelling practice—that is, as a dramatic and ever-changing variety of stories about gender/sex, sexuality and race. In *Primate Visions* (Haraway 1989), there is a focus on the agency of non-human actors. This focus is ever more central to Haraway's more recent research into the relationship between humans and dogs (Haraway 2003 and 2008), in which she not only writes about other researchers' animal studies, but also conducts her own.

In interplay with the cyborg theory, Haraway's theorization of the body as an 'apparatus of bodily production' (Haraway 1991c, 1991e, 208; 1997) makes an important contribution to feminist postconstructionist and corpomaterialist theories of gender/sex. It makes up a basis for understanding sexed embodiment within a framework that neither yields to biological determinism nor blocks the possibility of talking about biological sex as something other and more active than a 'blank page' for social inscription (Haraway 1991c, 197).

Haraway defines the 'apparatus of bodily production' as a matrix from which perceptions of biological and medical objects of knowledge, including sexed bodies, are 'born' as part of scientific knowledge production. In so doing, she brings together several different approaches. First, she draws on a Foucault-inspired understanding of science as a discursive construction of objects of knowledge, implying that scientific objects are not pregiven, but created within and through scientifically institutionalized discourses. Haraway builds on this constructionist interpretation of scientific knowledge production, but she also goes beyond it in her conceptualization of the body as an apparatus of bodily production. Second, the concept is based on an STS-inspired theorization of the body as a technologically reconfigured materiality, as a technobody that from birth to death is part of a continuous interplay with technoscientific interventions, and which is considered as co-constructed by a sociotechnical network of human and non-human actors. Third, Haraway's concept of the apparatus of bodily production

includes a theorization of matter as 'witty agent' (Haraway 1991c, 199) beyond human control. Haraway compares the agency of body and matter to that of the figure of the 'trickster' in Native American mythology (Haraway 1991c, 199). That is, a figure who plays tricks on humans and whom we can never fully control.

In other words, when Haraway theorizes the body as an apparatus of bodily production, her point is that it should be considered as an inextricable mixture of discourse, co-construction of human and non-human actors and trickster/witty agent beyond human control.

When highlighting the body as what she also describes as a material-semiotic actor, that is, as a network of physical matter/living facticity and discursive social construction, Haraway breaks away firmly from classical social constructionism, which leaves matter and the facticity of the body theoretically out of sight. Emphasizing the active and uncontrollable trickster character of corpomateriality, she also radically transgresses the philosophical paradigm in which both gender constructionism and traditional natural science are embedded; that is, a paradigm that is based on a Cartesian understanding of the body as passive raw material for culture.

'BODIES THAT MATTER . . .'

In line with both the sexual difference theorists and the previously mentioned cluster of feminist postconstructionists working from a natural science background, Judith Butler, too, wants to incorporate the materiality of the body and theorize both gender and sex—but in a different way. That is why she is sometimes seen as part of the group of feminist corpomaterialists (e.g., Grosz 1994, 17; Braidotti 1991, 264). Drawing on feminist physicist Karen Barad's analysis (1998, 2003 and 2007), I locate Butler's position in-between feminist gender de/constructionism and postconstructionist corpomaterialism. Here, I outline this in-between position in more detail, and also use it as a backdrop for a presentation of Barad as a final example of feminist postconstructionism and corpomaterialism.

According to Butler, not only sociocultural gender but also biological sex is discursively produced and performed. She builds her argument on Foucault (1978) and his critique of the interpretation of sexuality as a universal and natural phenomenon. Foucault considers the historical emergence of sexuality as a discursive effect of the biopolitical agendas of modernity and sexual science, *Scientia Sexualis*, which (as noted in Chapter 3) in the nineteenth century discursively institutionalized classifications of 'normal' (= reproductive) sexuality, as contrasted with 'deviant' (= non-reproductive) sexuality, such as hysteria, homosexuality and other so-called perversions.

It might seem obvious that, when Butler emphasizes that biological sex is discursively constructed and performed, we should position her in relation to feminist de/constructionism (as I did in the previous chapter). Why

then also discuss her work in relation to feminist corpomaterialism and postconstructionism?

First, the fact that she discusses the connection between biological sex and sociocultural gender without ignoring biological sex or placing it in theoretical parentheses creates a contiguity between her arguments and those of the postconstructionist corpomaterialists that I discuss in this chapter. Like them, she is critical of the tendency in feminist gender de/constructionism to theorize sociocultural gender in a dichotomous relationship to biological sex and to leave the latter critically under- or untheorized.

A second reason to include Butler in this chapter is her reflections on the ways in which sex is produced through bodily processes of discursive materialization, in particular in the book with the telling title *Bodies that Matter* (Butler 1993). Butler's discussion of the performative power of (hetero) normative discourses to materialize not only as sociocultural gender but also as biological sex is, as Barad has pointed out (1998, 2003 and 2007), a sophisticated theorization of processes of interaction between discourse and bodily materiality. Butler's point, which, according to Barad, can be seen as an important contribution to corpomaterialist feminist theorizing, is that the performative, 'sex' (in different exclusionary and heteronormative meanings), materializes and stabilizes via endless repetitions through what Foucault calls 'somato-power,' somatically (i.e., bodily) incorporated power (Foucault 1980, 186). Foucault's notion of 'somato-power' refers to a discursive power that has an immediate effect on the body and that shapes it without first being filtered through the consciousness of the individual subject. Therefore, it can appear to the individual as something substantial and stable with which she or he can identify, and which can make her or him socially and culturally recognizable. According to Butler, the performative 'sex' is endowed with this kind of power to materialize bodily without the interference of the consciousness of the individual:

... the regulatory norms of 'sex' work in a performative fashion to constitute the materiality of bodies and, more specifically, to materialize the body's sex, to materialize sexual difference in the service of the consolidation of the heterosexual imperative. . . . 'Sex' is, thus, not simply what one has, or a static description of what one is: it will be one of the norms by which the 'one' becomes viable at all, that which qualifies a body for life within the domain of cultural intelligibility. (Butler 1993, 2)

BETWEEN CORPOMATERIALISM AND DE/CONSTRUCTIONISM

When I describe Butler's theory (about heteronormatively determined materializations of sexually different bodies) as a position that should be theoretically located *in-between* gender de/constructionism and feminist

corpomaterialist postconstructionism, it is because it differs in important ways from the other feminist corpomaterialist theories that I have discussed in this chapter. While the latter take into account the agency of bodily matter, Butler places theoretical parentheses around this question; her research interests go in other directions. However—by introducing the work of Karen Barad (1998, 2003 and 2007) and her reading of Butler—I linger on this parenthesis in Butler's analysis. Hereby, I would like to round off my presentation of some of the arguments and positions that have profiled corpomaterialist feminist theorizations of gender/sex.

Like Birke and Haraway, Barad uses her natural science background (in physics) in a feminist theorization of the relationship between discourse and materiality. Barad explores possible links between Foucault's discourse theory, Butler's theory of gender/sex performativity and the Danish physicist Niels Bohr's contribution to quantum physics. Her research interest is not, first and foremost, to theorize the relationship between sociocultural gender and biological sex, but to create a general epistemological and ontological framework that can transgress the dichotomous relationship between discourse and materiality, which, among other things, is at stake in some versions of feminist gender de/constructionism. I return to Barad's onto-epistem-ology (her way of theorizing ontological and epistemological issues as inextricably linked) in Chapter 8. In this chapter I focus on her reading of Butler.

According to Barad, Butler's *Bodies that Matter* (1993) gives us an important analysis of how discourses materialize through performatives. Barad argues that critiques of Butler claiming that she reduces all questions of materiality to discourse are reductionist: She is not a gender de/constructionist in any simplified sense. As already mentioned, Barad stresses that Butler treats the question of how *discourses* come to matter in a sophisticated way, but what she ignores is 'how *matter* comes to matter' (Barad 1998, 90–91). According to Barad, Butler argues convincingly about how discursive constraints—for example, in terms of regulatory norms of femininity, masculinity, heterosexuality, reproductive sexuality and so on—are materialized as bodily processes. But, Barad asks, how does Butler understand 'material constraints' (1998, 91)? Seen from Barad's point of view, Butler fails to address or analyze the question of the resistance of matter—that matter 'kicks back' (Barad 1998, 116)—when discourses materialize. In this sense, Butler remains within a theoretical framework that considers matter as passive raw material.

Barad's alternative understanding of the relationship between discourse and materiality, which I shall discuss in more detail in Chapter 8, builds, among other things, on her concept of agential realism. Agential realism means that there is a so-called intra-action between human and non-human actors or agents. As mentioned in Chapter 4, Barad coined the neologism 'intra-action' to refer to phenomena that are only momentarily and temporarily distinguished from each other, that affect each other actively, and

that transform each other in reciprocal ways. Applied to Butler's discussion about the discursive and material dimensions of sex, Barad's conceptual framework introduces the need for a further development. In accordance with Butler's own way of theorizing, agential realism means that, on the one hand, the performativity of discourses shapes bodily matter, *but*, on the other hand, following Barad's argument, it implies that bodily matter, moreover, should be understood as performatively acting in and of itself. Barad suggests that this means a 'reworking of Butler's notion of performativity from iterative citationality to iterative intra-activity' (Barad 1998, 106). Translated into a theory of gender/sex (which Barad only does implicitly), this means that gender/sex, which according to Butler is created through continuous repetitions of normalizing and discursive-material performative citations, should instead be seen as a reciprocal intra-action between these citational practices and the ways in which bodily matter actively 'kicks back.'

CONCLUSION: TO MOVE BEYOND GENDER DE/CONSTRUCTIONISM

In Chapter 6, I highlighted the importance of gender de/constructionism for Feminist Studies. In this chapter I have, in return, given attention to and called into question some of the unintentional consequences of this—that bodies and matter can be reduced to what Haraway calls 'a blank page for social inscriptions' (1991c, 197). I have investigated how different clusters of postconstructionist feminist corpomaterialists have raised the question of bodily matter that feminist gender de/constructionists have only treated parenthetically.

First, I looked at how gender de/constructionism appears from the perspective of some sexual difference theorists. To them, the major problem is that gender de/constructionism, in focusing exclusively on sociocultural gender, reproduces the *indifference* of phallogocentric discourses toward non-determinist but irreducible sexual difference. According to these theorists, gender de/constructionism, by ignoring sexual difference, can neither adequately account for nor critically transgress phallogocentrism. They argue that, unintentionally, gender de/constructionism ends up sustaining the very gender hierarchies it claims to be breaking down. To sexual difference theorists, an alternative starting point is to account for the material specificities of the body, including the morphological difference of the female body.

Second, I have focused on the work of feminists coming from the natural sciences. They, too, argue that gender de/constructionism is insufficient. The crucial point of their argument is that gender de/constructionism fails to theorize the meaning of body and matter as anything beyond raw material for society and culture. To them, the question of the embodiment of

sexual difference is not the primary focus—if it is mentioned at all. In contrast, they have focused on new ways of theorizing how the specific forms of agency of corporeal matter can be understood, as well as how networks of active matter, discourses and performatives intra-act (Barad's neologism). Haraway's concept of the apparatus of bodily production suggests one way of understanding these forms of agency; Barad's conceptualization of intra-action and agential realism is another.

Third, I have discussed the kind of materialism that characterizes Butler's *Bodies that Matter*. I have indicated that Butler can be positioned in an in-between position with affinities to both gender de/constructionism and corpomaterialist feminist postconstructionist analysis of gender/sex. Drawing on the work of Barad (1998, 2003 and 2007), I have discussed how, on the one hand, Butler makes an important and sophisticated contribution to understanding how (hetero)normative and conservative gender discourses materialize performatively. However, on the other hand, I have also demonstrated that Butler's conceptual framework does not tap into the discussion about the agency of bodily matter.

Part III

To Re-Tool the Thinking Technologies

8 Rethinking Epistemologies

Epistemology is a philosophical term referring to the setting up of criteria for the production of scientific knowledge and definitions of what science is. What criteria should be fulfilled in order to evaluate knowledge production as scientific and scholarly? This chapter considers different feminist approaches to the question of epistemology.

As the feminist philosophers Linda Alcoff and Elizabeth Potter point out in an introduction to feminist epistemology (1993, 1), seen from the perspective of traditional philosophy, it is an oxymoron, a self-contradiction, to link the concepts ‘feminism’ and ‘epistemology.’ In a traditional philosophical context, epistemology deals with criteria for a value-neutral, objective production of knowledge about the world, and in contrast to this, Feminist Studies is seen as and defines itself as partial and political. However, it is even as clear that precisely the question of epistemology must attract a lot of attention in Feminist Studies.

As I have discussed in previous chapters, one of the driving forces in feminist theorizing is a critique of hegemonic discourses on gender/sex, race, class, sexuality and so on. This implies a strong challenge to traditional sciences, since both the natural/medical/technical and the social/cultural/human sciences throughout their history have sustained and legitimized biologically determinist and culturally essentialist perceptions of gender in its intersections with other sociocultural categorizations. What is important in the context of this chapter is that the feminist critique of these legitimizing moves has engendered an array of epistemological questions. For if science claims that it can live up to traditional epistemological ideals about objectivity and value-neutrality, and if at the same time, when seen from critical feminist perspectives, it is evidently entangled in hegemonic discourses and pervaded by political interests, power issues and values, then there clearly seems to be something wrong with the criteria. It looks as though they should be critically scrutinized—and revised. It is, therefore, no wonder that this gap between ideals and praxis has generated a feminist skepticism vis-à-vis traditional science, and sustained by the many historical examples of scientific legitimations of exclusions and stigmatizations based on gender/sex, class, race, sexuality and so on (e.g., Schiebinger

1989, 1993), the skepticism has produced an equally strong interest in epistemology and in the criteria that define what science is.

In this chapter, I shall take a closer look at the ways in which different feminist theoreticians have reflected on epistemological issues. In order to produce a pedagogical introduction to this rich and diverse field, I shall base my account on the USA-based feminist philosopher Sandra Harding's often-quoted overview of key strands in feminist reflections on questions of epistemology (Harding 1986). Harding maps out three main positions: *feminist empiricism*, *feminist standpoint epistemology* and *postmodern feminist epistemology*. This classification has been interpreted as if it was meant to refer to a historical development. However, it is important to stress that Harding herself considers it to be rather an account of epistemological positions that run in parallel throughout the history of Feminist Studies. All three positions can also be found still active in today's feminist research. Moreover, it should be mentioned that Harding's distinctions have been criticized in different ways. However, as a basic introduction to feminist debates on issues of epistemology, it is still widely used and is quoted in most overviews of the field. Therefore, I shall also use it as my entrance point and as a tool to cluster my introduction to the area. But I shall elaborate upon it, as several other introductions have also done (e.g., Braidotti 2003). More precisely, I shall revise and expand Harding's third category and, on the one hand, talk about *postmodern feminist (anti-)epistemology*, and, on the other hand, add a fourth position: *postconstructionist feminist epistemology*, a position to which I have already given a preliminary introduction in Chapter 7 on corpomaterialist feminist theories of gender/sex.

As Harding's third category, postmodern feminist epistemology, indicates, one strand of feminist epistemology is based on dialogues with postmodern philosophy. I find Harding's concept relevant as it is obvious that such dialogues have had a lot of impact on feminist theorizing. However, it is important to be aware that her concept works as a kind of umbrella term for many different positions, and it has become much clearer since Harding articulated the classification in 1986 that feminist appropriations of postmodern philosophy and movements *into* the field and its anti-epistemological and anti-foundational tendencies are part of the game, *but* so are transgressive movements *beyond* it. This is my background for elaborating on Harding's framework and adding a new main category, postconstructionist feminist epistemology.

The chapter starts with a brief presentation of the first two parts of Harding's classificatory framework: *feminist empiricism* and *feminist standpoint epistemology*. As recent discussions of feminist epistemologies have placed more focus on the *dialogues with postmodern philosophy and its anti-epistemological trends* as well as on the move into what I define as *feminist postconstructionism*, I shall give more space to the presentation of these two latter strands. This will also include a presentation of an *updated and revised version of standpoint epistemology* that, in line with

the feminist debate on *intersectionality*, addresses the question of how to articulate the standpoint of the knower, understood as a multiply located subject of research.

IS THERE A FEMINIST EPISTEMOLOGY?

Before starting my presentation of some of the main positions in feminist debates on epistemology, I want first to underline a pluralistic approach, and answer the question ‘Is there a Feminist Epistemology?’ with a *no*. When I map out the landscape of feminist research and Feminist Studies, it seems evident that there is no basis for talking about feminist epistemology in the singular. Epistemologically, the field is in critical dialogue with such different strands of epistemological thought as positivism, Marxism, critical realism and postmodern philosophy, and its epistemological reflections intersect with many different types of anti-racist, postcolonial, anti-capitalist and queertheoretical debates on epistemologies. Harding’s tripartite division and my own quadripartite one point in the direction of plurality, and as the chapter will illustrate, each of the main positions that are part of both Harding’s and my own cartography encompasses a diversity of sub-positions. The plurality is partly motivated by the heterogeneity and diversity of voices and perspectives that—as I have emphasized throughout the book—generally characterize feminist theorizing. Partly, it is also an effect of the field’s large degree of multi-, inter-, trans- and postdisciplinarity. One of the ramifications of Feminist Studies’ many forays into and out of a diversity of human, social, medical and natural science disciplines and postdisciplines, which all have different traditions for defining and theorizing their epistemological bases, is an outspoken epistemological heterogeneity.

At the same time, however, it is also important to underline that besides the diversity, there are also overlaps and shared starting points between the different epistemological positions. I have already elaborated on one of these in Chapter 2: a reflexive focus on the localization and contextualization of the knower. In the chapters on theories of intersectional gender/sex (4–7), I have discussed how the project of Feminist Studies has scrutinized the *object* of research and problematized perceptions and conceptualizations of gender/sex found in traditional disciplines. In parallel with Feminist Studies’ calling into question of the object of research, the position of the researcher *subject* has also been critically analyzed in a multiple critique of the belief in a neutral knower of classic positivist empiricism. Many feminist theoreticians, who adhere to different epistemologies, have rejected such a knower’s position as an illusion. According to this broad group of feminist scholars, the knower will always be anchored in a specific historical, societal and bodily material context, which frames and influences her or his knowledge-producing practices.

This axiom (basic assumption) of the interconnectedness of context and knower, which can be traced back genealogically to classic sociologies of science such as those articulated by Thomas Kuhn (1962) and Paul Feyerabend (1975), is shared by many feminists and other critical epistemologists who consider science and knowledge-producing practices to be part of society and not as something that simply follows its own internal logic of development. There are, however, many different feminist versions of the axiom, developed in dialogue with different types of social constructionist, critical realist, poststructuralist and empiricist theories of knowledge. The examples of feminist epistemologies I shall present on the following pages will give some glimpses of this diversity.

FEMINIST EMPIRICISM

The concept of 'feminist empiricism' was introduced by Sandra Harding (1986, 24) to denote the epistemological position that was central to the early phase of Feminist Studies. It played a significant role in the project of making women visible in scholarly knowledge production and has also been important in later phases.

Via empirical research, this project aimed, and still aims, at making women visible in terms of their experiences and perspectives, their contributions to society and culture, and their social, cultural and bodily conditions of life. Moreover, the idea is to analyze what gender relations and gendered power orders (sometimes conceived in partnership with their intersections with other power differentials and sometimes not) mean for women's lives. Also implicated in the process of making women visible was, and is, a knowledge-critical project that aims at revealing and criticizing the ways in which traditional disciplines often construct Universal Man as the human norm.

In terms of epistemological starting points, this critique of scientific knowledge and knowledge production can be carried out in different ways that call for more or less radical transformations of disciplines and their understandings of the concepts of objectivity and subject/object positions in research. Epistemologically, feminist empiricists are located at the less radical end of the spectrum. To them, the problem is not the epistemological foundation of traditional scientific knowledge production per se, but that its rules for 'good' scientific practice are not adhered to strictly enough.

Feminist empiricists will explain the merging of Man and human being found in traditional disciplines as being the result of 'gender bias.' This means that gender-stereotyped value judgments and ideological prejudices about gender have been allowed to interfere with the process of scientific knowledge production in unscientific ways. According to feminist empiricists, gender bias launches the disciplines onto a collision course with their own positivist ideals about objectivity and value neutrality, but the problems

can be remedied with the tools of positivist empiricism itself. Through a much stricter methodological observance of the rules for 'good' (= objective and value neutral) scientific practice, the knower can avoid allowing herself or himself to be led astray by unscientific views and gender-stereotyped prejudices.

An example of gender bias, which feminist empiricists have critically challenged, is the way in which medical research has often taken male patients' typical symptoms and patterns of risk factors as the foundation for research on prevention and treatment. For years, the male body has been considered as the evident and unquestioned norm for much medical research, because it was easier to use as a model since it was not necessary to take into account 'disturbing' factors such as menstruation cycles, pregnancies and so on. As a consequence, female patients have in some cases been systematically misdiagnosed and treated inadequately. Researchers at the Centre for Gender Medicine at the Karolinska Institutet in Stockholm, Sweden, for example, attracted a lot of international attention when they documented that cardiovascular diseases, which have been studied exclusively with male patients as research models, typically develop differently in women than in men. This means that different kinds of interventions and preventative measures need to be taken (Schenk-Gustafsson 2003; Janszky et al 2004). From the point of view of a feminist empiricist epistemology, we can define what is at stake here as a gender bias, which can be eliminated if the researchers see to it that both females and males are represented in the groups on which the research models are built. According to a feminist empiricist argument, in this way it will become possible to avoid ignoring differences between the sexes, and to develop and offer differentiated cures and preventative measures to female and male patients.

FEMINIST STANDPOINT EPISTEMOLOGY AND STRONG OBJECTIVITY

As feminist empiricism is in critical dialogue with traditional positivist empiricism, so feminist standpoint epistemology is both based on a critique of Marxist epistemology and also inspired by it. What is at stake is a construction of analogies, which was characteristic of feminist Marxism in the 1970s and 1980s. One of the elements in Marx's theory of capitalism and its class struggles, which has inspired feminist epistemologists to think in terms of analogies to Marxism, is its theorizing of the standpoint of the oppressed as an epistemologically privileged perspective. On the one hand, feminist standpoint epistemology rejects communist Marxism's privileging of a narrow and elitist definition of a class standpoint, based on the so-called avant garde of industrial workers who were considered to be the only ones in a position enabling a true revolutionary insight into the oppressive core mechanism of capitalist production, the production of surplus value.

On the other hand, feminist standpoint theorists have, in different ways, argued that either women in general or specific groups of marginalized and intersectionally oppressed women (women workers, women of color, third-world women etc.) can be considered as bearers of a privileged access to potentially transformative insight into the existing hegemonic gender orders.

As an example, I refer briefly to one of the central figures in classic standpoint feminism, the Canadian sociologist Dorothy Smith, and her ideas about a radical transformation of the discipline of sociology. Smith (1987) emphasizes how traditional sociology is defined in its theoretical, methodological and empirical orientation from a position that represents a top-down view of society, developed in order to facilitate public management from 'above,' which is conceived in opposition to the local, concrete, embodied life worlds of everyday life. In contrast to this kind of traditional sociology, Smith develops a program for an alternative sociology, thought through from a bottom-up perspective that, in a standpoint theoretical sense, is defined as a 'women's perspective' (Smith 1987), that is, a sociology that takes its point of departure in women's work, everyday life and experiences from the concrete life worlds in which the gendered division of labor has located them. According to Smith, this is not a program for a 'women's sociology,' which would just be an 'addendum' to existing sociology. The central question for Smith is 'how a sociology might look if it began from the point of view of women's traditional place in it' (Smith 1987, 85).

Harding coined the notion of 'strong objectivity' (1991, 138–163) to make the point that this kind of standpoint epistemological foundation is a much more robust framework for producing 'good' science than traditional positivist empiricism. When the latter focuses exclusively on the 'logic of justification' (i.e., the internal coherence of the scientific argument), leaving the 'context of discovery' (i.e., the context in which the producer of knowledge is located) out of sight, it fails to investigate important sources for the emergence of biased results, Harding argues. Economic, political and personal interests are always part of the makeup of the research context, she says, since it does not take place on an isolated 'island,' but is an integrated part of society. Therefore, when standpoint epistemologies meticulously reflect on the location of the knower, they set out 'a rigorous "logic of discovery" intended to maximize the objectivity of the results of research' (Harding 1993, 56).

POSTMODERN FEMINIST (ANTI-)EPISTEMOLOGIES

Just as the notion of 'feminist epistemology,' seen in the context of a traditional philosophy of science, is an oxymoron, so is the idea of 'post-modern epistemology.' If the task of an epistemology, as traditionally

defined, is to set up criteria for what objective and value-neutral knowledge production is, so postmodern philosophy must be defined as anti-epistemological. From the perspective of postmodern philosophy, science is discourse (Foucault 1978) and narrative (Lyotard 1984)—or, as Donna Haraway puts it, a ‘story-telling practice’ (Haraway 1989, 4). To define traditional epistemological criteria for ‘good’—objective and value neutral—science is, according to French postmodern philosopher Jean-François Lyotard’s critical postmodern analysis, the same as inscribing the scientific project in grand master narratives about Euro-American values and notions of ‘progress,’ ‘civilization,’ ‘humanism,’ ‘emancipation’ and so on. In contrast to traditional epistemology, a postmodern (anti-) epistemology is a self-reflexive project that aims at problematizing and deconstructing the apparently stable and secure foundations of scientific knowledge production.

The postmodern critique of science and epistemology has been much disputed in Feminist Studies. The encounter between feminism and postmodern philosophy has often been storm tossed. But the skepticism about traditional science and knowledge production, which is shared equally by many feminist theorists and postmodern philosophers, has also generated a lot of synergy (e.g., Nicholson 1990). To illustrate this I shall take a look at the ways in which the postmodern turn toward anti-epistemological, anti-foundational, self-reflexive and deconstructive stances has been in consonance with feminist ideas and has inspired feminists to criticize and expose problems in feminist empiricism and standpoint epistemology in order to create space for alternative ways to do Feminist Studies.

A significant moment in the postmodern turn in feminist epistemological thought was Judith Butler’s head-on attack on the category ‘women’ (Butler 1990, see Chapter 3), which has inspired a lot of feminists attracted to postmodern views. Butler’s problematization of the notion of ‘women’ implies a radical critique of both feminist empiricism and standpoint epistemology. Seen through a Butlerian lens, both these epistemologies display a naive relationship to the notion ‘women.’ For both it is a foundational category, which they take for granted without further ado. This is the case both when they discuss the category as a possible object of research, and—as is typical particularly of standpoint epistemologists—when they focus on ‘women’ also in the knower’s position, as subjects doing research. With their unreflecting use of the categories ‘women’ and ‘men,’ both feminist empiricism and standpoint epistemology mobilize a performative power that, according to Butler’s theory of gender/sex performativity (see Chapter 6), fixes and normatively confirms the categories and their implication in a heteronormative gender order and a hegemonic, two-gender model. An alternative to this way of beginning with a *a priori* given gender/sex categories is to start from a radical problematization and critique of these models and normativities, and this is one of the things that a postmodern feminist (anti-)epistemology would urge the researcher to do.

Another major target of postmodern feminist critiques is the notion of 'experience.' Both feminist empiricism and standpoint epistemology focus on women's experiences. Feminist empiricism wishes to expand existing knowledge about society, culture, the body and so on by adding women's until-now invisible experiences, while standpoint feminism, more radically, takes them as the starting point. A shared foundation of both, however, is that they ascribe a central epistemological significance to 'experience'; 'experience' becomes epistemologically established as a self-evident and authoritative testimony (Scott 1992, 24). As in the case of the heteronormative gender order and the two-gender model, postmodernist critics argue that feminist empiricism and standpoint theory here, too, are making the epistemological mistake of basing their knowledge production on a foundational category that is presupposed instead of problematized. 'Experience' is, in many feminist-empiricist analyses, simply related to what is seen as a spontaneous, authentic and discursively unmediated encounter between the individual subject and the world.

Marxist-inspired feminist standpoint epistemology is, in some ways, more reflexive than this. The classic standpoint feminist texts of USA-based political scientist Nancy Hartsock, for example, do explicitly discuss whether the privileged insights of the subjugated emerge from their immediate and spontaneous everyday experiences, or if a process of collective feminist consciousness-raising is necessary to produce the transformative knowledge. Hartsock answers that the latter is the case. Transformative consciousness is 'achieved rather than obvious,' it does *not* spontaneously emanate out of everyday experience (Hartsock 1987, 162). The individual experiences of the subjugated should, according to Hartsock, be understood as a potential that can unfold into a critical feminist consciousness as part of a *collective* process of consciousness-raising within the framework of political women's movements. However, even though classic standpoint feminism's understanding of the potentials embedded in the experiences of the subjugated are more sophisticated than that of feminist empiricism, a postmodern feminist critique will nevertheless evaluate both as equally entangled in a naive perception of the individual as a stable ego, and in a simplistic notion of experience as something that is established independently of language and discourses. The postmodern notion of the subject as decentred and as re/produced in and by discourses is instead setting the agenda for a feminist research that, as an alternative to the focusing on 'experience' of feminist empiricism and standpoint feminism, looks at discursive-linguistic and unstable constructions of (gendered, racialized, sexualized and so on) subjects.

A third postmodern feminist challenge to feminist standpoint theory, in particular, is closely related to the debate on intersectionality. It concerns the ways in which it becomes difficult for classic standpoint feminist epistemology to handle the politically and theoretically pressing task of relating to the multiplicity of different standpoints that are generated

when postcolonial feminism, anti-racist feminism, black feminism, lesbian and queerfeminism and so on challenge the starting point in the interests of 'women,' understood as a unified category. For precisely which women are classic standpoint feminists talking about, when they refer to 'women's lives and interests' as an epistemological starting point? And which women are implicitly excluded here? These tricky questions are posed to classic standpoint feminism by a critical chorus of many different feminist voices.

Standpoint feminists, in particular those inspired by feminist Marxism, did, indeed, often implicitly talk about women who, in terms of class position, are non-privileged. But when they used the universalizing terminology 'women,' they ended up implying that the feminist standpoint could be deduced from the life conditions of all women, understood against the background of one and the same theoretical model, which did not take into account the intersecting power differentials of class, race, ethnicity, sexuality, geopolitical location and so on. Seen from the classic standpoint feminist position, the answer to this problem was to supplement and expand the theory of society on which the theorizing of oppression and the ensuing locating of the epistemologically privileged subject of revolutionary transformation was based. In this way, classic standpoint theory made room for further standpoints, for example, a black feminist standpoint (Collins 2000), a lesbian feminist standpoint (Harding 1991, 249–267) and so on.

But to many feminists, a more productive answer to standpoint feminism's dilemmas around theoretically grasping problems of intersectionality came from linking together the idea of multiple standpoints with the postmodern critique of grand master narratives (in casu: narratives that in a standpoint feminist fashion were based on a 'one-path-to-liberation-fits-all' paradigm, that is, a theory of societal transformation stipulating one theoretically determined path to revolution and emancipation for all women). The alternative focus on 'small' stories, situated in specific local contexts, suggested by postmodern philosophy (e.g., Lyotard 1984), fit well together with the political and theoretical critiques of the universalizing notion of 'women' of classic standpoint feminism that were articulated by postcolonial, anti-racist and black feminists as well as by lesbian and queerfeminists. USA-based feminist Adrienne Rich's notion of a 'politics of location' (Rich 1986b) and Donna Haraway's concept of 'situated knowledge' (Haraway 1991c) are clearly consonant with Lyotard's suggestion that postmodern knowledge production (Lyotard 1984, 60) should be based on a bricolage of many small heterogeneous stories rather than on one, grand, coherent master narrative.

FEMINIST POSTCONSTRUCTIONISM

Although the unfolding of synergies with postmodern philosophy has been productive for feminist debates on epistemologies, it has also caused

problems. The political and moral relativism that is an integral dimension of postmodern philosophy—that one of the ‘small’ local stories, for example, can be quite as good or bad as another—is in some ways on a collision course with the ideals of liberation, emancipation, social justice, equality, change, societal and individual transformation and so on, different versions of which are central to feminist thought. Because of this relativism, some feminists have immediately rejected both postmodern philosophy and poststructuralism. For others, however, the dilemmas involved have led to a fruitful combination of simultaneous embracing/affirmation *and* critical transgression of postmodern thought and poststructuralist theorizing.

The combined movements into and beyond the stances of postmodern philosophy and poststructuralism are the reason why I think it is important not only to retain Harding’s umbrella term ‘postmodern feminist epistemologies,’ but to distinguish between a postmodern (anti-)epistemological trend and a fourth strand, which I have named ‘feminist postconstructionism.’ The latter strand gathers together several rather different positions that, as indicated in Chapter 7, share a commitment to transgressing gender de/constructionism in an endeavor to think through the links between discursivity and bodily materiality. But, as I shall elaborate in the following pages, I also intend the term ‘postconstructionism’ to refer to a diverse tendency to transgress postmodern feminist (anti-)epistemological stances. It seems to me that the transgressive moves beyond de/constructionism and beyond postmodern (anti-)epistemologies are so entangled into each other in contemporary feminist thought that it is appropriate to refer to them using a shared term. However, I would like to emphasize that, in line with my general approach to terminologies as nodal points rather than fixed definitions, I consider ‘postconstructionism’ to be a temporarily useful framework for joint theoretical reflections and negotiations rather than a definition carved in stone.

The epistemological stances that I shall discuss in the remainder of this chapter are different from, but nevertheless informed by, the move into and beyond postmodern philosophy and poststructuralism. Moreover, there is a lot of overlap between the theories that generated these epistemological moves and those that made up the focus of Chapter 7 on corpomaterialist and postconstructionist feminist theorizing of gender/sex. This is the dual background for clustering the theories to be discussed on the following pages under the umbrella of postconstructionist feminist epistemology.

INTERSECTIONAL LOCATIONS: STANDPOINT FEMINISM REVISITED

Donna Haraway’s concept of situated knowledges, which I introduced in Chapter 2, is a good example of a postconstructionist stance. It is informed

by postmodern philosophy and poststructuralism *and* committed to critical transgressions.

On the one hand, the epistemological position that Haraway outlines with the concept is generated in synergies between poststructuralist, postcolonial and queerfeminist critiques of universalizing master narratives, such as, for example, classic standpoint feminism's grand narrative about 'all women's' way to liberation. Instead of 'women,' Haraway talks about 'the subjugated' (Haraway 1991c, 191) and 'the inappropriate/d others' (Haraway 1992; Minh-ha 1986–87), that is, she uses categories that, as open nodal points and in line with intersectional thought, can encompass a diversity of different kinds of social and cultural in/exclusion, domination/subordination, majoritizing/minoritizing, including many kinds of bases for resistance and epistemically privileged access to understand the mechanisms of subjugation. Against this backdrop, she emphasizes what she calls 'an epistemology of partial perspectives' (1991c, 191), that is, an epistemology that builds on a mobile multiplicity of critical localizations in the partial perspectives of different subjugated groups and not in any *a priori* defined and fixed categories. All this echoes a postmodern point of departure in the diversity of different local stories.

On the other hand, Haraway's concept of situated knowledges cannot simply be inscribed in a relativistic version of postmodern (anti-)epistemology. First, Haraway's disciplinary background in biology means that she does not wish to totally abandon a notion of objectivity. It is often forgotten that her article addresses not only situated knowledges, but also objectivity. Second, the link to postcolonial and anti-racist feminisms, which is crucial for Haraway, does not only create synergies with postmodern philosophy. Haraway challenges postmodern relativism explicitly in her article and transgresses it in favor of the previously mentioned multiple and mobile kind of standpoint epistemology that—in addition to a self-reflexive dimension—includes the idea that the knower should aim for a partially objective articulation of reality and stand up to her or his moral responsibility for her or his research. Haraway uses the notion of 'accountability' to refer to this moral responsibility; the knower should make herself or himself 'accountable' for her or his articulations of reality (Haraway 1991c, 190). In other words, the knower should take into account, both critically and morally, what kind of reality-producing effects her or his research will engender. She or he must justify why some—partial—articulations of reality (e.g., ones informed by postcolonial and anti-racist feminist reflections) are better than others, and she or he must take moral responsibility for her or his partial position seriously.

Haraway summarizes the way in which this epistemological point of departure is different from both positivist empiricism, classic standpoint theory and postmodern (anti-)epistemological thought by referring to three traps that this new, mobile, intersectional, multiply and partially situated standpoint epistemology should avoid (Haraway 1991c, 191). The first one

is the 'god-trick' of positivist empiricism. Instead of claiming a neutral and omniscient vision from 'above,' as positivist empiricism does, it is, according to Haraway, important to see 'from below.' But what does it mean 'to see from below'? Haraway asks. There are two more traps to avoid here. One is to totalize and universalize one kind of perspective, as classic standpoint feminism did. The other is to claim that everything is relative, as postmodern philosophy did. A postmodern relativist (anti-)epistemology is thus, according to Haraway, as problematic as the totalizing moves of Marxist historical materialism. Totalization and relativization are 'mirror twins' in Haraway's perspective. Both share the same basic shortcomings as the positivist empiricist position: a lack of bodily concrete and critically contextualized reflexive localizing of the epistemic position of the knower, including a reflection on its ethical-political consequences for the 'object' of research:

Relativism is the perfect mirror twin of totalization in the ideologies of objectivity; both deny the stakes in location, embodiment, and partial perspective; both make it impossible to see well. Relativism and totalization are both 'god-tricks' promising vision from everywhere and nowhere equally . . . (Haraway 1991c, 191)

Haraway's plea for an epistemology of situated knowledges and partial objectivity can be interpreted as part of a larger revision of standpoint feminism, which should be seen as engendered by the urge to move into and beyond postmodern and poststructuralist thought, which I have discussed under the umbrella of postconstructionism. However, in addition to this, it should also be understood against the background of the difficulties that classic standpoint feminism displays when confronted with the task of relating to multiple and intersecting standpoints.

Haraway's notion of situated knowledges has been influential in these moves, but it should also be noted that revisions of standpoint feminism have been developed in different versions. At the more poststructuralist end of the spectrum, Chela Sandoval's previously mentioned notion of 'differential powers, politics and consciousness' (Sandoval 2000) takes as its epistemological starting point the deconstruction of unambiguous categories into an explosion of in-between spaces, transformations, excess meanings and mobile positionings. In a more neo-historical materialist vein, Chandra Mohanty argues for a revised standpoint feminist point of departure in racialized gender with a focus on the globally most marginalized communities of women and their epistemic privilege (2002, 510).

As an example of a specific elaboration of Haraway's notion of situated knowledges, I would also like to refer to Nira Yuval-Davis's previously mentioned reflections on transversal politics (Yuval-Davis 1997, 125–132), which, in collaboration with Marcel Stoetzler, she has linked to the discussion of a revised standpoint feminism (Stoetzler and Yuval-Davis 2002a

and 2002b). In the work of Stoetzler and Yuval-Davis, epistemic privilege is generated in a transversal dialogue between different standpoints within the framework of a political collective, where the members reflect their own situatedness ('rooting'), but also commit themselves to a 'shifting' to the standpoints of other group members. The 'rooting' and 'shifting' of the transversal dialogue is, as elaborately described by Stoetzler and Yuval-Davis, based on a mobilization of sociocultural imagination—what they define as 'situated imagination' (Stoetzler and Yuval-Davis 2002a, 328). The move between positions, which is characteristic of transversal dialogue, makes it clear how notions such as mobility and multiplicity, on the one hand, and situatedness and localization, on the other, which, on immediate consideration might seem contradictory, do not need to be seen as mutually exclusive.

SEXUAL DIFFERENCE AND POSTHUMAN EMBODIMENT: THE CRISIS OF REASON AND RHIZOMATICS

Another dimension of the postmodern turn, which has been in consonance with and inspiring for feminist endeavors, while at the same time challenging feminists to more radical transgressions, is the phenomenon that has been labeled, among other things, 'the crisis of reason' (Grosz 1993). This is a term that refers to postmodern critiques of Enlightenment thought and its focus on the rational subject of science and philosophy.

Feminist postconstructionists and corpomaterialists of *the sexual difference school* (see Chapter 7) have engaged in close dialogues with postmodern critiques of reason and the rational subject. Through these dialogues, sexual difference theorists have radically challenged traditional epistemologies in ways that have been pertinent not only for transformations of the *content* of scientific knowledge production, but also for its logical-argumentative *form and language*. The experiments with women's writing, *écriture féminine*, which I touched upon in the last section of Chapter 6 and which will also be discussed in Chapter 10, are examples of this.

Sexual difference theorists' critique of reason is linked up with their general understanding of modern science and classic philosophy as articulated within the framework of phallogocentric language. As forcefully exposed, among others, by Luce Irigaray (1974/1985), this entails a significant indifference toward sexual difference and bodily specificities, and the effect in language is an unending repetition of the phallogocentric logic of the Same. This is a logic centered on the phallus as an abstract signifier, referring to a logos that is disembodied and distanced vis-à-vis the kind of corporeality that generates embodied emotions, passions, desires and so on. It is also a logos that defines itself in rigid demarcation from an artistically and creatively founded knowledge production—a logos that distances itself from a knowledge production that implies that bodies, emotions and intuition

are counted as important co-players in the practice of scholarly knowledge production. Furthermore, it is a logos that forecloses the possibility that something could be different, and that negates differences and diversity by simply enrolling them in its own regime as the other of the Same.

Partly in consonance with Haraway's critique of the 'god-trick' of positivism and her quest for a situating of knowledges, corpomaterialist sexual difference theorists emphasize that traditional science, philosophy and scholarly knowledge production are epistemologically entangled in the problem that they cannot reflect their actual starting point in a concretely embodied knower, due to a foundation in ideals of disembodiment. This disembodied starting point constitutes a 'blind spot in the epistemology of traditional science' (Grosz 1993, 192), and the effect is that any possibility of unfolding and engaging in alternative, embodied ways of knowing vanishes. Thought and feeling, logic and intuition are constituted as oppositions in this kind of scientific and scholarly knowledge production instead of conceived as dimensions that can mutually sustain and support each other.

In contrast to the traditional way of doing science, sexual difference theorists discuss what it means to take a concretely embodied, epistemological starting point in sexual and other bodily differences. How does this make science and knowledge production different? It is important to underline that epistemologists informed by sexual difference theories do *not* universalize and essentialize knowledge production built on women's experiences in an empiricist sense as did, for example, a group of USA-based feminist epistemologists in an often-mentioned project called 'Women's Ways of Knowing' (Belenky et al. 1997). According to sexual difference theorists, to do so is equivalent to being caught in a trap where the only 'accomplishment' is a simple reversal within the framework of the logic of the Same, which defines men as rational and logical and women as emotional and intuitive. An epistemology based on sexual difference theory does not aim at this type of simple reversal. On the contrary, the goal is to radically undermine the foundations of this kind of phallogocentric essentialization, and of the universally abstract and dichotomous way of understanding knowledge production on which they are based. To do this, sexual difference theorists work in consonance with, as well as in transgression of, postmodern critiques of reason. Let me illustrate this with Rosi Braidotti's philosophy.

In consonance with the work of Deleuze, Braidotti seeks to give new and alternative answers to the question: What does it mean to think? To do this, first, she follows the Deleuzian arguments for an epistemological position that consciously and reflectively transgresses the borders between logos, on the one hand, and emotions, passions, desire and corporeality, on the other. This position is mobile, 'nomadic' (Braidotti 1994) and in rhizomatic motion. Rhizomatics is a Deleuzian concept referring to a process of knowledge production that moves like rhizomes. In botany, rhizomes are

underground plant stems, which move horizontally in all directions, and which bear both roots and shoots. In contrast to a process of knowledge production that grows like a taproot, deeper and deeper down into the earth in a more or less straight and predetermined line, rhizomatic knowledge-creating practices are in Deleuze's philosophy (Deleuze and Guattari 1992, 1–25) open to new ideas and carried not only by logic and ratio, but also by passion and affectivity. Instead of striving for objectivity in a classic epistemological sense, it aims at what I would call a poetic truth (a notion I shall describe in more detail in Chapter 10).

Second, however, Braidotti does not simply stay with Deleuze's framework. Instead she combines it with an Irigaray-inspired strategy for breaking down phallogocentrism. To produce scholarly knowledge as a female feminist subject, Braidotti argues, implies, in a mimetically *and* critically transgressive move, to 'work through' the relationship of traditional science and philosophy to notions such as 'Woman,' 'Body' and 'Emotions.' The concept of 'working through' that Braidotti uses in this context is taken from the vocabulary of psychoanalysis. Freud uses the concept in order to conceptualize how psychic traumas can be transgressed by living them through in a consciously reflective mode instead of endlessly repeating them unconsciously. In Braidotti's feminist philosophy of sexual difference, the psychoanalytic concept of 'working through' is transferred to a textual/cultural/philosophical context. Here it is taken to mean the establishing of epistemological entrance points in precisely those textual-discursive positions where traditional science and philosophy have foreclosed the possibility that 'Woman' could take up subject positions in knowledge production due to too much contiguity to 'Body' and 'Emotions.' Braidotti defines these positions as 'the discursive and material sites where "woman" was essentialized, disqualified, or quite simply excluded' (Braidotti 1994, 200). Instead of merely reproducing the disqualifying and excluding gestures of traditional science and philosophy, the process of working through means a double move that, on the one hand, implies a mimetic living through the positions 'Woman,' 'Body' and 'Emotions,' and, on the other hand, simultaneously critically and consciously transgresses them by deconstructing and breaking down the whole system of dichotomies ('Man-Ratio-Logos' versus 'Woman-Body-Emotions') on which traditional philosophy and science is founded.

In addition to this discussion of the epistemological position of sexual difference theorists like Irigaray, Grosz and Braidotti, I would, however, like to underline that these are not the only theorists who have profiled feminist debates on epistemologies via radical specifications of the epistemological meanings and effects of bodily material differences. Haraway's *posthuman cyborg-feminism* is yet another example. In connection with the theory of situated knowledges, Haraway raises the question of the epistemological meaning of *seeing* the world from a post- or non-human position. She asks what the world looks like when seen with the technomodified

eyes of a cyborg, or with the biologically differently functioning ones of a dog (1991c, 190). With this question, she emphasizes how bodily concrete and different the faculty of vision is, and how this means that it is necessary to reflect on situatedness not only as far as temporal and spatial localizations are concerned, but also in terms of concrete bodily make ups and with due respect to the multiplicity of different sights that they give rise to. As mentioned in Chapter 2, against this background Haraway will 'reclaim vision' (Haraway 1991c, 188–90), and in saying this, she plays ironically with the ways in which Enlightenment philosophy privileged sight as the main route to rational knowledge production. While the sight promoted by the Enlightenment philosophers was abstract, distanced and ratio based, the one Haraway talks about is concrete and embodied, rooted in feelings of pleasure, pain, joy, disgust and so on.

POSTCONSTRUCTIONIST ONTO-EPISTEM-LOGY

Sandra Harding has emphasized that the feminist project to make women visible in scientific knowledge production was quickly transformed into a large and complex epistemological enterprise. 'The Woman Question in Science' was transformed into 'the Science Question in Feminism' (Harding 1986, 29), a phrase that has been much-quoted since. It became important not only to put women in science on the agenda, but to initiate a feminist-inspired transformation of the epistemological foundations of scientific and scholarly knowledge production in general. Haraway's discussion of situated knowledges illustrates how feminist debates on epistemology relate not only to the question of how to handle intersectional gender/sex as a scientific problem, but also to how they often spill over into discussions of the conditions for knowledge production in general. In order to emphasize the general dimensions of feminist debates on epistemologies, I shall proceed to a postconstructionist feminist for whom these are the crucial agenda points: Karen Barad.

In my earlier introduction to Barad's work (see Chapter 7), I underlined her concept of agential realism, which theorizes a transgression of dichotomies such as discourse/materiality, human/non-human, mind/body. Central to Barad's theory is also a rejection of the dichotomy between epistemology and ontology. To maintain such a dichotomy is, in Barad's view, equivalent to sustaining yet another array of problematic dichotomies—those between subject and object, culture and nature, language and world (Barad 1996, 175). According to Barad, it is therefore much better to talk about *epistem-onto-logy* (Barad 1998, 120) or *onto-epistem-ology* (Barad 2007, 185). (Barad uses the two terms interchangeably. I choose to use the latter in the context of this book in order to avoid confusion.)

Barad's theory includes several elements that correlate with Haraway's article on situated knowledges (Haraway 1991c). But whereas Haraway's is

a shorter piece, the development of a postconstructionist onto-epistem-ology is a primary focus for Barad. Barad unfolds her theory over several works (Barad 1996, 1998, 2003, 2007), which, as discussed in Chapter 7, combine feminist theory and Niels Bohr's philosophical reflections on quantum physics, among others the famous wave-particle paradox, which was generated as part of the attempts to revise the physical theory of light in a quantum theoretical sense. Briefly summarized, the paradox is that light behaves as either waves or particles, depending on the experimental apparatus.

Important in the context of this chapter are Barad's onto-epistem-ological reflections on scientific subject/object-relations, interpreted as material-discursive, constructed cuts, that intra-act with a world that is understood on an agential realist background, that is, as constituted by what Bohr calls 'phenomena' (Barad 1996, 170–194; 2007, 118–121).

In Barad's reading of Bohr, a phenomenon is something that is *both* constructed *and* an objectively existing reality—and in this way is conceived within a framework that corresponds well with my definition of *postconstructionism*. The phenomenon is *constructed*, because, according to Barad (and Bohr), we can never produce objective knowledge about the world without setting up an experimental apparatus, which through its material-discursive design (technology, concepts etc.) produces a certain type of result (e.g., that light appears as waves). Within the frame created by the research design, however, it is possible at the same time to call forward an *objective* result, understood as a result that can be reproduced and repeated by other observers using the same research design (a certain experimental apparatus will always make light appear in wave form, while a certain other experimental apparatus will always make it appear in particle form). In this way, it becomes possible and relevant for Barad, in a similar way to Haraway, to speak about a *partial and localized objectivity*, that is, an objectivity that is valid within the specified and local frame and context of the particular research design, but not outside of this.

Like Haraway, Barad wants to reclaim objectivity. But she, too, does so within a framework that differs radically from a traditional positivist concept of epistemology. The latter relates to a model situation where a distanced and neutral knower/researcher subject, floating above and outside of the world to be analyzed, observes via a neutral apparatus of observation an object of which she or he is not a part of herself or himself. In contrast to this, Barad, in line with the stances of Bohr and Haraway (and other feminist theorists), defines a localized subject position, consisting of both knower/researcher subject and research apparatus/technology/language, which altogether are understood as inextricably bound to and embedded in the world to be analyzed. It is due to this state of being in the world to be analyzed, which characterizes the knower in Barad's theory (as in those of both Bohr and Haraway), that the question of ontology cannot be separated from that of epistemology. This is the background for Barad's neologistic portmanteau-word 'onto-epistem-ology.' However,

in this context it is important to note that the impossibility of separating researcher subject and research object, knower and known, does not mean that it becomes impossible to achieve objective results. This is what Barad emphasizes with her use of Bohr's concept 'phenomenon.'

According to Barad, scientific knowledge production must be based on the establishing of cuts and on the delineating of a researcher subject position (including an experimental apparatus, a research technology, a conceptual framework etc.) vis-à-vis a research object. Without these kinds of cuts and without defining the borders of subject and object, respectively, it is not possible to do science, Barad argues (1996, 171; 2003, 815). In contrast to a traditional positivist epistemology, working on the basis of a universal cut between world/research object and researcher subject, conceived in a separate position 'outside' of the world to be analyzed, Barad operates with cuts that are chosen by the researcher subject in order to analyze particular, locally delineated objects. Through the cut, the researcher subject constructs her or his research object—and her or his basis for the production of objective knowledge in a partial and specifically localized sense.

CONCLUSION: EPISTEMOLOGY AND THE TRANSFORMATION OF SCIENCE AND KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTION

In this chapter I have presented feminist debates on epistemology, clustered around Sandra Harding's distinction between *feminist empiricist*, *standpoint feminist* and *postmodern feminist epistemologies*. But I have also revised the classification. I have discussed the postmodern position as *anti*-epistemological, and I have added a fourth one, *feminist postconstructionism*. I did this in order to come to terms with the ways in which feminist epistemology debates informed by postmodern philosophy and poststructuralism are profiled by a double move. I discussed how they have taken inspiration from postmodern philosophy and poststructuralism in the articulation of (anti-)epistemological stances critically turned against the foundations of feminist empiricist and standpoint feminist epistemologies in concepts such as 'women,' 'experience' and 'standpoint.' However, I also pointed out how feminist epistemological discussions critically transgressed postmodern and poststructuralist positions in search of alternative understandings of objectivity and epistemological implications of embodiment.

During my journey through the different epistemological positions, it should have become clear how 'the science question in feminism' (Harding 1986), emerges out of two-way processes between feminism and science/scholarly knowledge production: processes through which it is critically scrutinized how feminism fits (or does not fit) into what is traditionally defined as science and scholarly knowledge production, and vice-versa, how the latter does (or does not fit) into feminism. A crucial point to notice is the

ways in which both feminism and science/scholarly knowledge production are transformed by their mutual encounter. In the beginning of the chapter, I discussed how traditional perceptions of epistemology and feminism clash against each other. At the same time, I have also emphasized throughout the chapter how epistemological issues are central to feminist theorizing—and how the whole array of different feminist discussions of epistemologies that I have presented point in the direction of transformations of science and knowledge production. So, finally, I wish to stress that, even though feminist epistemological positions are diverse, an important shared perspective seems to be the engendering of transformations of scientific and scholarly knowledge production.

9 Methodologies, Methods and Ethics

Epistemology, methodology, method and ethical issues are all interrelated. However, they all mean slightly different things. A common distinction between *epistemology* and *methodology* is that the former deals with *criteria* for what constitutes scientific and scholarly knowledge, while the latter focuses on *rules, principles* and *procedures* for the production of knowledge. Distinct from methodology, *methods* relates to the *concrete approaches* chosen to carry out a particular piece of research. Since the process and the product of research—and issues concerning choice of approaches, methodological underpinnings of this choice and criteria for how a desirable outcome of the research can be reached—are so closely related, these issues are often discussed together. By contrast, the question of *ethics* (how to conduct research in ethically sustainable and morally responsible ways) is often treated separately from the issues of epistemology, methodology and methods. However, in this book I have chosen to proceed somewhat differently. Following on from the previous chapter's discussion of epistemologies, in this chapter I shall link the discussion of methodologies, methods and ethics.

My reasons for dedicating a separate chapter to methodologies, methods and ethics instead of integrating them into the epistemology chapter, are, first of all, that, as a teacher of Feminist Studies, I am often asked specific questions about methodology, methods and research ethics by students. For students, it is often a difficult moment when they reach the point in their research where they are beginning to articulate concrete links between over-arching epistemological and theoretical issues and the messy world of phenomena to be studied that forms the backdrop against which they want to work. Trying to define the topic and 'object' of your research, taking into account both what you wish to accomplish with it and how to do it in ethically sustainable and morally responsible ways, is not always easy—neither for beginners nor for more experienced researchers! Methodologies, methods and ethical principles can be important tools at this difficult moment, if they are interpreted and used as flexible 'thinking technologies' (Haraway 2004, 335) and supportive guidelines to facilitate the process in creative ways, and *not* as devices to be applied mechanically.

Second, I think it is important to carefully single out in a separate chapter how different epistemological positions have different implications in terms of methodologies and methods. This is because of the way in which feminist debates have often given much space to discussions of epistemological differences without making it clear how these differences translate into methodological ones. By this, I by no means wish to imply that methodologies in Feminist Studies have been a non-issue; far from it. There are a number of relevant books and special issues of feminist journals on methodologies and methods in Feminist Studies (for example, Harding 1987; Wisveswaran 1994; Ribbens and Edwards 1998; Hesse-Biber, Gilmartin and Lydenberg 1999; Sandoval 2000; Ramazanoglu and Holland 2002; Naples 2003; Letherby 2003; Sprague 2005; Lykke 2005). My point is rather that discussions of methodologies and methods have not occupied the same spectacular space in the limelight of feminist theorizing as have debates on epistemologies. This has had the effect that students who have eagerly studied the 'big' epistemological issues have sometimes got stuck in a vacuum when it came to solving the unavoidable, but at first glance seemingly nitty-gritty, 'how-to' questions.

Third, a particular reason for also integrating a discussion of ethics into this chapter is that many feminist epistemologists go to great lengths to stress that epistemology and ethics are and should be inextricably bound together—that 'epistemology without ethics is deadly,' as feminist philosopher Margaret Whitford articulates it in a summary of Luce Irigaray's views (Whitford 1991a, 149). As methodology and epistemology, too, are closely linked, it implies that ethical considerations, according to these epistemologies, should also be carefully integrated into reflections on methodologies and methods. By including a section on ethics in this chapter, I would like to encourage the thinking through of ethical issues as an integrated part of the profiling of research designs in terms of methodologies and methods.

In order to stress how different positions in feminist epistemology have different methodological and ethical implications, the chapter will present two cartographies, mapping out *first*, the methodological, and *second*, the ethical dimensions of the four main feminist strands of epistemology that I discussed in the previous chapter. However, as I could not avoid touching on issues of methodology and ethics in that chapter, due to the close connections between the three aspects, the presentations on the following pages will be briefer and more of a summary. *Third*, I shall introduce some key arguments for why I think that an open-ended, experimental pluralism in the choice of methods is important for Feminist Studies.

METHODOLOGICAL PRINCIPLES IN FEMINIST EMPIRICISM

As the epistemological starting point for feminist empiricism is the existing positivist criteria for 'good' (disinterested and value-neutral) science, an important methodological principle becomes to identify ways to eliminate

gender bias from research. The process of elimination will differ depending on the particular field of research. For feminist empiricists in the natural sciences, medicine and the more quantitatively oriented parts of the social sciences (which together more or less make up the cluster of sciences that Harding [1986] identified as the primary basis for the development of feminist empiricism), the principle of elimination of gender bias is translated into demands for particularly strict assessments of the standard criteria of validity, reliability and relevance. The principle can be used in relation to *new* research and translated into stricter rules for the construction of research designs. It can also be applied to previous research and, for example, be used to set up designs for *re-analysis* investigating potential gender bias in already-existing research results.

Making women visible is, as described in Chapter 8, yet another important goal for feminist empiricists. Clearly, this aim is closely related to the revealing of gender bias, but the methodological principles that can be deduced from it are somewhat different. They translate into giving priority to the definition of alternative research questions and to the setting up of specific research designs that will facilitate the analytical process of making women visible. My earlier example from medical research highlights this. Instead of continuing to normatively center on men in research on cardiovascular diseases, it becomes important to construct new research designs, which make it possible to answer questions about the specific symptom patterns of female patients.

It should generally be emphasized that the logic of discovery and the improvement of existing standards for 'good' science is the main focus of feminist empiricists—in contrast to other feminist epistemologies, which shift the focus to include the context of discovery. Against this background, methodological key terms for feminist empiricists are 'better normal science' and 'stricter control over the logic of discovery.'

METHODOLOGICAL PRINCIPLES IN CLASSIC STANDPOINT FEMINISM

When classic standpoint feminist theory brings the relationship between the subject of research and the context of discovery onto the agenda, several important methodological effects are generated. In accordance with the mix of inspiration from and critique of Marxism characteristic of classic standpoint feminism, general methodological principles are constructed via analogies to Marxist methods on the one hand, while, on the other hand, the critical stance implies feminist renegotiations and revisions.

In analogy to Marxist analysis, which begins methodologically from the point of view of the working class, research founded in classic standpoint feminism will take its point of departure in women's interests and perspectives. For example, research informed by standpoint feminism will define

itself as research for, by, about and with women, and this starting point will provide methodological guidelines for the articulation of research questions and for the construction of research designs.

A 'women's perspective' is defined in different ways by different standpoint feminists. This means that methodological guidelines will also differ. The definition of the women's perspective will depend on the particular ontology, understood as the specific theory about the gender order, that forms the context of the analysis. This way of linking methodology and ontology is similar to the way in which Marx's theory of capitalist society constitutes the ontology that is a prerequisite for Marxian methodology. Some standpoint feminist researchers will emphasize as their main methodological principle a starting point in women's experiences (e.g., Smith 1987). But the focus framing the methodological guidelines can also be defined as the experiences of a specific group of women, for example black women (Collins 2000) or lesbian women (Harding 1991, 249–267). Standpoint feminist studies can also reject individual experiences as the main methodological starting point, as did Hartsock (1987), for example, and instead give priority to an overarching feminist analysis of society, and define the pursuit of the implied emancipatory perspective as the guiding methodological principle.

Generally, standpoint feminist methodologies are grounded in a critical realism, that is, in an ontological assumption that there is a real world 'out there', which can be analyzed as an entity separate from the researcher and from language and discourse. The researcher is seen as one who takes sides and intervenes in reality through a point of departure in her or his standpoint and its power-critical perspective. But when she theorizes and reflects on this perspective, she can, according to the standpoint-theoretical perception of knowledge production, reach an understanding of reality that is *both* politically grounded *and* objective. The criteria for the construction of a research design and for the choice of methods are based on the underlying ontological assumptions about a specific social formation, its power differentials and the best paths to social transformation and emancipation.

POSTMODERN FEMINIST (ANTI-)METHODOLOGY

In the same vein as I defined postmodern philosophy, including feminist postmodern thought, as (anti-)epistemological, I shall also discuss them as (anti-)methodological. I shall suggest that the paradox of (anti-)methodological guiding principles grasps the situation appropriately. When fixed epistemological frameworks are called into question within a postmodern framework, this move will also have unavoidable consequences for the ways in which stable methodological principles can, or rather cannot, be articulated. Basically, this means that fixed methodological rules and criteria for choice of methods vanish. This is why the term 'anti-methodological' seems appropriate. However, according to postmodern feminists, it is precisely the

open-endedness that is mobilized in this way that can create a productive space for a reflexive and experimental approach to issues of methodology and choice of methods. The somewhat paradoxical result is that feminist postmodern epistemological stances go hand in hand with a great diversity of methodological reflections and experiments, and this is the reason why I put 'anti-' in parentheses.

As it is impossible, in a summarized form, to give an overview that does justice to this diversity, I shall only highlight a few common (anti-)methodological themes.

Whereas standpoint feminist research is guided by the methodological principle that women's experiences and interests, defined against the backdrop of specific ontological assumptions about society and emancipatory perspectives, should be the focus of research, postmodern feminist research is, conversely, (anti-)methodologically grounded in a radical skepticism toward fixed categories such as 'woman'/'man,' 'heterosexual'/'homosexual,' 'white'/'black' and so on. The subject and object of research, the boundary between the two and social structures understood as prediscursive 'facts,' are likewise deemed to be problematic entities to be called into question. Rather than asking what women, as subjects and objects of research, have in common, feminist research that draws on a postmodern perspective will be guided by a methodological principle that urges us to look for differences: between women, between men, between women and men, and within the individual woman and the individual man, and to ask about the effects of such differences for the 'object' and subject of research. Moreover, postmodern feminist research is often methodologically guided by a tendency to multiply gender in its intersections with other sociocultural categorizations, or to abandon predetermined categories altogether in favor of open ones, perhaps defined within the framework of a particular empirical analysis and whatever comes up as relevant in this specific context. To look for excess meanings, undecidable in-between spaces between fixed categories, boundary figures and ambiguous subject constructions that do not fit in with binary models such as woman/man, feminine/masculine, heterosexual/homosexual, white/black and so on is also a central approach.

Similar to the questioning of the concept 'women,' the postmodern feminist calling into question of the term 'experience' is also fraught with methodological consequences. When subjects are not perceived as carriers of 'authentic' experiences, but are instead constructed discursively and narratively, discourse analysis and narrative analysis (for example, with a focus on autobiographical narratives) become central entrance points to subject formations.

Yet another important (anti-)methodological principle of postmodern feminism is to focus on small, localized and contextually specific stories, rather than exploring over-arching master narratives that take for granted specific assumptions about society, gendered power differentials, emancipation and particular priorities as regards intersectionalities. Related to the focus on small, local stories, it is also important to note that the critique of power is

handled methodologically differently than in standpoint feminist research. Rather than building on methodologies that facilitate a focusing on ‘master narratives’ of overarching power structures, postmodern feminists, guided for example by a Foucauldian analysis of power and resistance, will look for the ways in which power is being performed as a decentralized, localized, discursively and institutionally normalizing process, and which also productively generates various and multiple local forms of resistance.

Finally, as part of this brief summary, it is important to highlight the methodological consequences of the so-called linguistic and narrative turn, that is, a turn toward the linguistic, discursive and narrative dimensions of society and culture, which also implies a rejection of the possibility of approaching ‘pre-discursive facts’ in an unmediated way. This turn, which has been methodologically important for researchers informed by postmodern thought, including feminist ones, was a radical challenge to all kinds of realist ontologies, which are based on the assumption that language, subject and ‘reality out there’ can be separated. As a consequence of the linguistic and narrative turn, language, which is considered to be a transparent medium in more traditional understandings of knowledge production and science as well as in Marxist and standpoint feminist ones, is instead perceived as actively creative and always fluid in its production of meaning. Subjects and ‘realities’ are considered to be constructed in language and discourse—and in dramatized stories with plot structures. It is assumed that there is a constant negotiation of meanings going on, making it impossible to uphold fixed concepts, definitions and ontologies. Conceptual frameworks and ontologies can only have a provisional character, and must be understood as nodal points (Laclau and Mouffe 1985, 112), in which research energies are momentarily located before again moving on to other signifying spaces.

This linguistic and narrative turn has been highly influential within Feminist Studies. It means that, in an (anti-)methodological sense, postmodern feminist research is often characterized by a strong tendency to carry out linguistic experiments and explore narrativity as an analytical tool apt to criticize the master narratives of hegemonic power as well as to articulate alternative—non-essentializing—approaches to analyses of resistance and subjective agency.

RHIZOMATICS AND SEXUAL DIFFERENCE AS ANALYTICAL STRATEGY

In the previous chapter, I described how feminist reflections on epistemologies performed a double move in relation to postmodern philosophy—moving both into and beyond it. Here, I shall do the same thing for methodologies. As the move ‘beyond’ is just as complex and multiple as the move ‘into,’ here too, I shall only give some examples of methodological reflections, related to the discussions about postconstructionist feminist epistemologies in Chapter 8.

Building on the ways in which I have described sexual difference theorists' version of the epistemological move 'into and beyond' postmodernist thought, I shall first take a look at the methodological principles implied in this branch of postconstructionist feminism. What does it mean methodologically to take the body as a normative, but non-essentializing starting point, and to search for alternative feminist figurations in a rhizomatic and affirmative mode?

A major methodological guideline to be derived from the work of sexual difference theorists such as, for example, Elizabeth Grosz and Rosi Braidotti, is to use the specific materialities of the body and its multiple differences, including sexual ones, to frame research. Moreover, Braidotti in particular highlights the importance of letting feminist figurations and the desires they call forward give direction to the research process and its analytical strategies.

I would like to emphasize that taking a starting point in the body and bodily differences and to see these as an unavoidable ontological basis, as do sexual difference theorists such as Grosz and Braidotti, is in no way equivalent to an essentialist fixing of categories. I have already noted that, according to these theorists, the body is not a static unitary essence, but a dynamic, multiple, non-hierarchical and differentiating process; and it is this bodily process that, according to sexual difference theory, makes up an important methodological hub.

Furthermore, building on Deleuze, Braidotti highlights that in terms of methodological framing, the research process should be seen as a nomadic and rhizomatic course of events where all concepts are in motion, and where new, unexpected, non-hierarchical connections are continuously set up between previously separated phenomena. Braidotti argues that the aim of 'the nomadic or rhizomatic mode in critical theory' is to be able to account for 'processes, not fixed points'. She explains the process as follows:

This means going in between different discursive fields, passing through diverse spheres of intellectual discourse. Theory today happens 'in transit', moving on, passing through, creating connections where things were previously disconnected or seemed unrelated, where there seemed to be 'nothing to see'. . . . It is therefore crucial to learn how to think about processes and not only concepts. The challenge is in how to represent in-between zones and areas of experience or perception. (Braidotti 2002, 173–174)

AGENTIAL REALISM AND SITUATED KNOWLEDGES AS ANALYTICAL STRATEGY

Other postconstructionist theorists, such as Haraway and Barad, also focus on processes and on the ability to navigate methodologically in process-

shaped and dynamic worlds where the subjects and objects of research, knower and known, are part of the same context and not fenced off from each other. What follows is a summary of some methodological principles that I interpret as common denominators for Haraway and Barad. I shall summarize these principles, or 'thinking technologies' (Haraway 2004, 335), in four points. In some of these points I foreground Barad's theoretical framework, while in others I highlight Haraway's perspective. It should, however, be noted that this kind of merging is meaningful only because Barad and Haraway are closely related theoretically and make a substantial number of cross-references to each other, and because Barad (who is the younger of the two), in some respects, elaborates explicitly on Haraway's work.

1. *Construction of cuts between subjects and objects of research*: Based on her theory of agential realism and intra-action, Barad rejects the idea of a universal cut between subjects and objects of research. According to Barad, the researcher subject and the object of research are not *a priori* bounded off from each other. Instead, they are always to be considered as parts of the same world and reality and involved in continuous intra-actions with each other. But, at the same time, cuts and boundaries are, at least provisionally, important for science and knowledge production, Barad argues. Therefore, it becomes an important methodological principle to create and construct provisional and momentary cuts and boundaries between the researcher subject and the object of research, and define how they relate to each other in each particular research project. A traditional methodology would normally require that the *object* of research is defined and delimited. In contrast to this, a methodology inspired by Barad's agential realism will emphasize:

- that both *researcher subject* and *object of research* should be defined and contextualized;
- that the *relationship*, and thereby also the *boundary*, between researcher subject and object of research should be defined; and
- that the boundary between subject and object should *not* be defined as something that is fixed and given once and for all, but, on the contrary, it should be understood as a *momentary* phenomenon, defined through the particular research project, and against the background of a (self-)reflexive process that also implies that the researcher makes herself or himself explicitly accountable for the *research interests* involved in the project.

2. *'Siting' and 'sighting'*: Barad's principles for contextualization and profiling of the researcher subject and her or his interconnectedness with the object of research are clearly related to Haraway's notion of

situated knowledges. According to both Haraway and Barad, this situatedness includes two aspects, which both have key methodological implications. As discussed in Chapter 1, Haraway uses the terms 'site' and 'sight' to refer to these two aspects. The methodological principles derived from this distinction are, on the one hand, a demand for 'siting' (meaning that the researcher subject should reflect her or his situatedness) and, on the other hand, a demand for 'sighting' (meaning that the involved research technologies, as well as the optics through which the research object is constructed should be made visible as part of the research).

More precisely, the first principle, '*siting*,' implies the methodological demand that the researcher subject must reflect on her or his position in terms of time, space, body and history, and in terms of the context of intersecting power differentials in which she or he is inscribed. Within the framework of Haraway's postconstructionist and intersectional version of standpoint epistemology, which I described in Chapter 8, this demand for a siting of the researcher subject and the research also, methodologically, involves an obligation for the researcher subject to reflect on and take moral responsibility for the context of the research, understood against a more complex background than the one employed by classic standpoint feminism. The methodological principle of '*siting*' urges the researcher subject to reflect on her or his embeddedness in a fabric of multiple, intersecting and mobile standpoints and to analyze how the implicated (power) relations position and define her or him in relation to the research object.

'*Sighting*'—the second methodological principle for the profiling and contextualizing of research—implies, as mentioned, that the involved research technologies and their effects should be made visible. According to both Haraway and Barad, the material as well discursive dimensions of research designs should be scrutinized, as should the biological make-up that enables us to perceive things in certain ways and not in others. The research apparatus, concepts/thinking technologies and our specific bodily (dis)abilities that enable us to perceive the world in certain ways and not in others, should all be included in this analysis. Furthermore, it is important for both Haraway and Barad to underline that the research apparatus should not only be conceived as a material phenomenon, but also as a discursive one. Along similar lines, both theorists also stress that concepts should not merely be understood as representations of a reality different from themselves (representationalism), but should instead be seen as reality-producing performatives. Discourse and materiality are, in other words, understood as inseparable. Furthermore, it is implicated in both Haraway's and Barad's framework that research technologies cannot perform independently of researcher subject and object of research. Applying Barad's terminology, we can say that research subjects, research technologies/apparatuses and objects of research are linked in a continuous process

of intra-action. Against this background, the methodological principle of 'sighting' must be understood as complex. It means to account for both material and discursive/conceptual dimensions of research technologies/apparatuses as well as for their intra-action with researcher subject and objects of research.

3. '*Phenomena*' and '*imploded objects*': In this complex world of intra-actions, what is a research 'object' and what does it mean to analyze one? Both Haraway and Barad emphasize that the aim of research is not a simple reading of characteristics of a world that is conceived as independent of both the researcher and the research technologies. On the other hand, it is also important for them to highlight that the world is endowed with an agency of its own that the researcher cannot control. Haraway poetically talks of 'the world's independent sense of humour' (Haraway 1991c, 199). Barad uses the term 'phenomenon' (Barad 1996, 170–94; 2007, 118–121) to underline that the 'object' of research must be explored *both* as a constructed result of the processes of 'siting' and 'sighting' *and* as an agent acting objectively and beyond the control of the researcher. Haraway talks about her research objects as 'imploded objects' (Haraway 2004, 338). Since I have already covered Barad's concept 'phenomenon' in detail in the previous chapter, this section will focus on Haraway's term, 'imploded objects.'

Using this term, Haraway emphasizes her ontological starting point: The world must be understood as a complex, process-based network, which makes it analytically problematic to separate out subjectivity from objectivity, human from non-human, organism from technology, discourse from materiality, fact from fiction, macro-analysis from micro-analysis and so on. Rather than producing reductionist distinctions between such categories, Haraway seeks to accentuate complexity, relationality, inseparability and interconnectedness. This is where the metaphor of 'implosion' is mobilized. In physics, implosion is a process that, in contrast to an explosion, collapses inward rather than outward. For example, if the TV breaks down because the cathode-ray tube implodes, the only thing to appear on the screen is a little white dot. In phonetics, the distinctive feature of an implosive consonant, as for example 'p' in the word 'up,' is that only the closing of the mouth is heard; the rest is silence. Therefore, implosion, in both physics and phonetics, refers to a dynamic process indeed, but one that is hidden beneath a calm and unspectacular surface.

To Haraway this double meaning of the metaphor—that it refers to *both* a dynamic *and* non-spectacular process—makes it well suited as a methodological approach for feminist research wanting to grasp how entities that appear to be fixed, stable and self-evident can be analytically unlocked and genealogically traced back to the dynamic processes of transformation of which they are momentary products. (Haraway herself uses 'seed, chip,

database, bomb, fetus, race, brain, and ecosystem' [1997, 12] as examples of 'imploded objects'.)

In a mode that is typical of Haraway, shifting elegantly between discursive spaces and sometimes enjoying dragging science out of its ivory tower and into everyday life, she also uses another metaphor for the heterogeneous and imploded objects of research. In a video (Paper Tiger Television 1987), she compares these objects with a ball of yarn, from which she disentangles one thread after another. However, whether Haraway uses the term 'imploded objects' or untangles a ball of yarn, the methodological message is a genealogical one. The aim is to suggest a process of 'thawing'—in a retrospective move to transform a 'frozen' and reified 'object' of research into a subjective-objective, discursive-material, organic-technological, human-nonhuman, factional,⁵ macro-micro-social process, that is, a process with great relevance for Feminist Studies and its radical problematization of seemingly self-evident entities and given power structures.

4. *Diffraction*: Another related thinking technology used by both Haraway and Barad is the term 'diffraction.' Understood as an alternative methodology to critical reflection, 'diffraction' for both theorists is a tool that can dynamically open up analytical fields to a continuous production of new approaches and perspectives. The concept 'diffraction' is taken from physics: from optics, and, more generally, from the science of the interference of wave motions. Diffraction, for example, refers to the phenomenon that occurs when light waves are sent through an array of narrow slits, whose width is roughly the same as the wavelength of the light. Under such conditions, the flat wave fronts are made to curve and light waves passing through adjacent slits will overlap with each other. If the light waves are caught on a screen after going through the narrow slits, the screen will show patterns of light and darkness in a series of 'interference fringes.' These so-called patterns of interference occur because some of the diffracted light waves arrive in phase with one another and their peaks and troughs strengthen each other, creating bright fringes, while others arrive out of phase and, like water waves on a lake, the peaks and troughs extinguish and neutralize each other, creating the dark fringes. Haraway (1997, 268–274; 2000, 101–108)—as well as Barad (2007, 71–94), drawing on Haraway's work here—mobilize the concept 'diffraction' as a critical analytical tool to challenge another optical metaphor: 'reflection,' which has gained an almost autocratic position as *the* thinking technology in critical thought. Both Haraway and Barad underline how the term 'reflexivity' refers to the optical concept of 'reflection,' which denotes a situation where light is sent back. Moreover, both argue that the optical term 'diffraction' makes up a better thinking technology for critical intellectuals, including feminists who not only want to think about the world in a critical mode, but who also want to change it.

So I use it [the optical concept 'diffraction'] to talk about making a difference in the world as opposed to just being endlessly self-reflective. Obviously, I am not against being self-reflective, but I am interested in foregrounding something else. (Haraway 2000, 104)

That diffraction is a more productive critical figure than reflection, can, according to Haraway, be explained as follows: If we take the optical metaphors seriously, a reflexive methodology means using the mirror as a critical tool. Haraway notes that while this can be useful, it also has limitations if you seek alternatives and want to make a difference. For using the mirror as critical tool does not bring us beyond the static logic of the Same. We can look critically at the reflection in the mirror, but no new patterns emerge. A mirror image appears as a static entity; both the foreground and the background remain the same. In contrast to critical reflection, diffraction is a much more dynamic and complex process, Haraway argues:

Diffraction is the production of difference patterns in the world, not just of the same reflected—displaced—elsewhere. (Haraway 1997, 268)

If reflection shows us an unchangeable entity, diffraction, in contrast, creates continuously new patterns of difference. Small displacements in the narrow slits continuously create new types of diffraction and interference. What used to be foreground—the deflected beams of light—becomes dark and turns into background, and vice versa. The process of diffraction creates ever-changing new patterns.

Like the concepts of imploded objects (Haraway) and phenomena (Barad), the notion of diffraction is methodologically relevant for Feminist Studies. Like the other two, the notion of diffraction is useful to analyze change or dynamism related to processes of sociocultural transformation, liberation, emancipation and so on that are given high priority in Feminist Studies. The three terms—imploded objects, phenomena and diffraction—can productively be used together. Objects of research can be interpreted as imploding objects or phenomena, and the analysis can be made more diverse and multi-faceted, if the methodology of diffraction is included in order to make the foreground and background of the phenomena shift.

Finally, it should also be noted that Haraway has done the same thing to the notion of diffraction as she did to that of imploded objects, namely provide it with an everyday analogy. Haraway illustrated the imploded object with an entangled ball of yarn. The methodology to which Haraway refers with the notion of diffraction—continuously making new patterns emerge in the 'object' being analyzed—she also describes via the old string game of 'cat's cradle.' Cat's cradle is a game that can be played by one, two or more people. During the game, new string figures are continuously created through a string which, in ever-new ways, is stretched between the fingers of the participants. To Haraway, diffraction and the cat's cradle game are

two ways of describing an analytical process that is continuously innovative because of the ever-changing patterns of foregrounding and backgrounding, which aptly put the complexity of imploded objects at stake and thereby create new understandings of them (Haraway 1997, 268).

EPISTEMOLOGY AND ETHICS

Having mapped some major methodological implications of the different feminist epistemological positions that were introduced in Chapter 8, in the following section I shall take a look at the ethical ones. Intertwined with the ways in which feminist debates on epistemology radically problematize the positivist ideal of value-neutral and disinterested knowledge production, the question of values, morals and ethics emerges forcefully onto the agenda. This is integrated with critiques and revisions of traditional ethics and is based on different kinds of alternative ethical reflections, which I now address. In order to do so, I shall once more call forward the four positions of feminist empiricism, feminist standpoint epistemology, postmodern feminist (anti-)epistemology and feminist postconstructionism.

As *feminist empiricism* is built on the belief in positivist ideals about value neutrality, the question of ethics takes a different form here. For feminist empiricists it is a question of 'good' versus 'bad' science, where 'good' science means that value judgments should be eliminated rather than emphasized.

In *classic feminist standpoint epistemology*, questions of political values and social justice are, in contrast, central and outspoken. Some standpoint feminists give high priority to stressing that epistemology and ethics are inseparable. This is the case in black feminist standpoint theory, among others, as articulated by, for example, Patricia Hill Collins (Collins 2000, 262f). For Hill Collins, an epistemological comparison of competing claims to a 'correct' analysis of the world involves not only a rational evaluation from the perspective of a black feminist standpoint, but it is also linked to an assessment based on an ethics of care, which has grown out of the marginalized lives of black women. This ethics of care implies both an empathy with and respect for other oppressed people and an individual expressivity and self-respect. Other examples of classic standpoint feminist theoreticians who give priority to moral-ethical values are Hilary Rose (1983) and Sara Ruddick (1989; 2004, 165). They, too, give much weight to the relationship with traditional dimensions of women's lives and everyday practices—and to values such as care and motherliness. There is a clear connection between the standpoint epistemological focus on women's experiences as a critical social and political point of departure and the emphasis on these 'feminine' values as an epistemological *and* ethical-moral foundation. In this way, standpoint epistemology articulates a clear alternative to the abstract, decontextualized and universalist notions about 'the good,' 'rights,' 'moral conduct' and so on of traditional ethics.

Similarly, there is also a connection between the *(anti-)epistemological approach of postmodern feminism*, its problematization of concepts such as 'women,' 'experience,' 'standpoint' and so on, and its ethical-moral reflections. Unlike standpoint epistemology, it is deconstructive. It problematizes all kinds of ethical foundations and moral principles—the abstract universalism of traditional ethics as well as standpoint feminism's concrete rooting in women's traditional lives and the values they generate. In the same way as I spoke about (anti-)epistemology and (anti-)methodology, it is also meaningful to use the notion '*(anti-)ethics*' about postmodern feminist approaches to issues of ethics. An ethics that is understood in a traditional way as a normative and universal system of stable concepts about 'the good,' 'the just,' 'morally correct conduct' and so on would, according to a postmodern feminist (anti-)ethics be unethical, because it would exclude everything that cannot be enrolled under the categories of its abstract logics. As feminist philosopher Margrit Shildrick articulates it, a postmodern feminist (anti-)ethics is instead founded in 'instability, multiplicity, the incalculable, and above all in leakiness' (Shildrick 1997, 12). Within a postmodern framework, there is no final, universally given truth about 'the good,' 'the just,' 'the morally correct' and so on. Categories are unstable, multi-layered, incalculable, and they 'leak,' that is, their meanings spill over into each other and cannot be unambiguously defined. According to a postmodern feminist (anti-)ethics stance, lack of ambiguity and universalism will result in the exclusion of diversity and a confirmation of the logic of the Same.

However, the tendency to destabilize the rationalist universalism of traditional ethics and in this way to become open for ambiguity, multiplicity and diversity makes up only one dimension of postmodern feminist contributions to the ethics debate. The tendency to go *beyond postmodern philosophy*, which in Chapter 8 I traced in relation to epistemologies, seems also to apply in the area of ethics. Different types of feminist corpomaterialist postconstructionists—both sexual difference theorists and natural science-based ones such as Haraway and Barad—all give a great deal of attention to stressing the link between alternative epistemological reflections and a reconfiguration of ethical questions.

Let me first take a look at the ethical considerations embedded in theories of sexual difference. As feminist theoretician Margaret Whitford summarizes it in her in-depth analysis of Luce Irigaray's philosophy (Whitford 1991a), the linkage of epistemology and ethics is a 'must' for Irigaray:

Irigaray wants to restore the link between epistemology and ethics. I don't think it would be putting it too strongly to say that, for Irigaray, epistemology without ethics is deadly—destructive to women, destructive to men, destructive to the earth. The danger of our times is that the subject as knower has become split off from the embodied and social subject. (Whitford 1991a, 149)

For Irigaray (1984/1993), an alternative ethics must take its starting point in a new encounter between the sexes beyond phallogocentrism and its way of both symbolically and imaginarily evading of giving any significance to sexual difference in society, science, culture and so on. Irigaray asks for a new ethics, which, as Whitford emphasizes, ‘recognizes the subjectivity of each sex,’ and that deconstructs the phallogocentric logic and its symbolic division of labor ‘which allocates the material, corporeal, sensible, “natural” to the feminine, and the spiritual, ideal, intelligible, transcendental to the masculine’ (Whitford 1991a, 149). How comprehensive this project is in both an epistemological and an ethical sense, Irigaray underlines as follows:

For the work of sexual difference to take place, a revolution in thought and ethics is needed. We must re-interpret the whole relationship between the subject and discourse, the subject and the world, the subject and the cosmic, the microcosmic and the macrocosmic. And the first thing to say is that, even when aspiring to a universal and neutral state, this subject has always been written in the masculine form. . . . (Irigaray in Whitford 1991b, 166)

To emphasize how particularly important the relation between epistemology and ethics is for sexual difference theorists, I also want to refer to Rosi Braidotti’s major work on nomadic ethics (Braidotti 2006). Here she combines Irigaray’s sexual difference ethics with a Deleuze-inspired nomadic and posthuman ethics that is built on visions of a new productive unfolding of sexual difference and many other types of embodied differences that intersect in a non-deterministic and non-hierarchical interplay. In consonance with the previously described figuration of a ‘nomadic subject’ (see Chapters 3 and 7), which unfolds in an embodied, horizontally difference-generating, politically critical, passionately pleasure-seeking movement, bodily materiality and what Braidotti calls ‘life as zoe’ are central dimensions of this ethical framework. ‘Life as zoe’ (i.e., as prediscursive, generative, non-human energy)—in contrast to ‘life as bios’ (i.e., as politics and discourse)—in Braidotti’s philosophy is theorized as a posthuman, affirmative and passion-laden entrance point to ethical responsibility. It is an entrance point that tunes in human beings to the life rhythms of bodies and matter—and that in so doing also contributes to a sustainable development. It is, moreover, an entrance point that transgresses binary oppositions (logos/body, ratio/emotions, masculinity/femininity, human/non-human)—that is, oppositions that, as I discussed in Chapter 8, are, according to sexual difference theorists, characteristic of phallogocentric knowledge production. To transgress such knowledge production and to take up an ethical approach is for Braidotti one and the same thing.

The other branch of postconstructionist corpomaterialist feminists, that is, those who have a background in the natural sciences, takes an approach to ethics, which, similar to that of the sexual difference theorists, also

gives much attention to the link between epistemology and ethics. A notion about the researcher's moral responsibility ('accountability') for her or his interpretation of reality is, as already mentioned, an integral dimension of Donna Haraway's theorizing of situated knowledges and partial objectivity (Haraway 1991c, 190). Barad's theory of agential realism elaborates not only on Haraway's onto-epistem-ological understandings, but also on the ethical perspectives. Barad stresses that agential realism involves what she calls an 'ethics of knowing' (Barad 1996, 183). Ontology, epistemology and ethics are woven together in what Barad with yet another portmanteau-word names an 'ethico-onto-epistem-ology' (Barad 2007, 185).

According to both Haraway and Barad, all research reconfigures reality and the world in a semiotic-material (Haraway 1991c, 192) or discursive-material (Barad 2007, 152) sense. Scientific research produces realities and worlds, and precisely because research, for good and for bad, is never without real effects, the researcher cannot allow herself or himself to avoid taking moral co-responsibility for the consequences. This holds true whether it is an engineer who designs a bridge, or a literary scholar who publishes an analysis of a poem. In addition to this, according to both Haraway and Barad, it is also important to note that the researcher is situated in and is part of the reality she or he investigates. The ethical relation between knower and known, between subject and object of research, is in this way given one more twist. As Karen Barad specifies, against this backdrop we should not talk about an abstract, ethical subject who relates to a radically externalized other. Instead we should think about the researcher's position as one that should imply taking moral responsibility for those networks, processes and relations in which she or he participates as embodied subject:

Ethics is therefore not about right response to a radically exterior/ized other, but about responsibility and accountability for the lively relationalities of becoming of which we are part. (Barad 2007, 393)

PLURALISM OF METHODS AND FEMINIST HERMENEUTICS

After mapping the methodological and ethical implications of the feminist epistemologies introduced earlier, I shall now turn to the question of methods. When one has considered epistemology, methodology and ethical implications, how can one proceed to the choice of methods? As previously noted, pluralism of methods is central to how many researchers within the field would characterize Feminist Studies, and I shall do the same thing here.

Some methods have been used more commonly than others in some strands of feminist research. For example, discourse analysis and narrative analysis have been influential in research drawing on postmodern feminist thought. Qualitative methods have often dominated over quantitative

methods in humanities and social science-based feminist research. Quantitative methods, on the other hand, have been extensively used by feminist researchers within medicine and biology and in some parts of the social sciences. However, generally, I think it is important to emphasize that the landscape of Feminist Studies in terms of methods is characterized by a broad diversity of approaches. There are several reasons for this multiplicity and diversity.

First, it has implications not only for issues of methodology and ethics, but also for the question of methods. As earlier mentioned, it is not possible to talk about *one* feminist epistemology. This follows from the ways in which questions of epistemology, methodology, ethics and methods are all interconnected. Epistemological pluralism goes hand in hand with methodological and ethical pluralism, and methodological pluralism implies pluralism in the choice of methods. When there are different sets of rules, principles and procedures as to how to produce knowledge in Feminist Studies, it is more or less self-evident that this entails a great deal of diversity when methods are to be chosen in individual research projects.

Second, the multi-, inter-, trans- and postdisciplinarity of Feminist Studies makes up yet another reason for pluralism as far as the issue of methods is concerned. Feminist Studies, which all through its history has been characterized by a high degree of cross-disciplinary work, has become a field in which multiple approaches and methods interfere. Against this background, a transgressive approach to discipline-bound choices of methods has emerged and prompted feminist researchers to experiment and create new synergies and unexpected connections moving across and in-between approaches and methods characteristic of different disciplines.

A third, and more normative, reason for highlighting a pluralistic approach to choice of methods in Feminist Studies is related to the innovative force of the field. An experimental and innovative perspective on issues of methods is, in one way or another, integral to a major part of feminist research. This relates to the basically critical attitude of Feminist Studies vis-à-vis the ways in which scientific and scholarly knowledge and theories about intersectional gender/sex have traditionally been produced. As discussed in previous chapters, Feminist Studies has critically challenged biological determinism and cultural essentialism in the production of scientific and scholarly knowledge about intersectional gender/sex. In addition it has highlighted how gender/sex has been ignored under the cover of a focus on gender-neutral ideas about 'the human.' This critique not only has significant theoretical, epistemological and methodological consequences, but it also has important effects in relation to the issue of methods. The problems occurring when gender/sex is to be understood as changing and contextual rather than as a fixed and static—biologically or culturally determined—entity, alongside those emerging from the attempt to make visible meanings of gender/sex where they have been hidden under gender-neutral or even gender-blind categories, have formed an incentive for feminist researchers

to use unconventional and innovative research methods. This is why, as my third point in this section, I want to emphasize pluralism in terms of methods not only as a characteristic of existing feminist research, but also as something that I want to normatively underline and suggest as an overarching guiding methodological principle when it comes to the choice of methods. This is due to my conviction that the innovative force of Feminist Studies will only operate in optimal ways if it maintains an experimental, unorthodox and open approach to the issue of methods. Feminist innovation emerges out of untraditional, non-authoritarian and, to use Haraway's term, 'unfaithful' (1991b, 151) approaches to existing theories, thinking technologies and tools.

For all of these reasons, there are no ready-made answers to the question of how to make the specific choice of methods in a feminist research project. Furthermore, I believe that no such preprepared model answers ought to be given. A consequence of making a radical methodological claim about a pluralist perspective on the issue of methods is that the concrete decisions about choice of approaches can only be taken in the context of the individual research project—based on the research interests and subject-object configurations that are at stake in this particular project. However, as an open indication of direction in answering this question, I shall suggest the use of a double strategy. On the one hand, I think it is important to mobilize a maximum of unorthodox creativity, and, on the other hand, to combine this with a rigorous, scholarly endeavor to seek partial objectivity and moral accountability (in line with Haraway's previously discussed way of theorizing this).

Drawing on the work of Feminist Cultural Studies scholars Sarah Franklin, Celia Lury and Jackie Stacey (2000, 6), I would also like to stress the importance of what they call '*feminist hermeneutics*.' With this concept, they refer to a multiplicity of critical interpretative (hermeneutic) practices, based on the multiple tradition of feminist theorizing. Moreover, they emphasize that feminist analysis need not be confined to investigations of gender/sex and gender relations, they can be used vis-à-vis *all* kinds of research objects.⁶ However, I would like to expand the argument and also relate it to the issue of methods. Along these lines, I suggest that analytical strategies drawing on critical feminist theorizing should be seen as able to interfere with all kinds of research methods—qualitative and quantitative methods, methods characteristic of the arts, humanities and social sciences as well as methods used in biology and medicine.

CONCLUSION: DIVERSITY AND PLURALISM

In this chapter, I have summarized how the different epistemological positions that were introduced in Chapter 8 translate into principles of methodology and methods, and how they are also closely related to ethical issues.

I have highlighted the interrelatedness of questions of epistemologies, methodologies, ethics and methods, and how they connect within feminist frameworks. The interconnectedness means that a reflection on one's epistemological and ethical starting points can be used to give a helping hand in setting up guidelines for methodological 'how-to' questions and for decisions about which routes to take in terms of research methods; and, vice versa, methodological choices of specific principles and decisions about methods can be tried out against the background of reflections on their epistemological and ethical implications.

Generally, the mapping exercise in this and the previous chapter has highlighted that pluralism and diversity are key terms in issues of epistemology, methodology, ethics and methods as seen from a Feminist Studies perspective.

10 Shifting Boundaries Between Academic and Creative Writing Practices

Writing is central to research. All research involves communicating results in writing, but nevertheless the writing process is often considered to be external to the research process. It is common among researchers to think, ‘first I do the research, and then I write down my results.’ Books on how to write an essay or thesis by following this approach have become a genre of their own. However, I shall recommend instead that the writing process is understood as an integral dimension of the research process. Therefore, I include a chapter on the academic writing process, its genres and styles.

My entrance point to this chapter is that I understand ‘writing as a method of inquiry,’ to quote the USA-based sociologist and feminist researcher Laurel Richardson (2000). In line with Richardson, I see language as active in the production of research results. Researchers think and analyze while writing, not only before they write. As noted by Richardson, the handling of writing, textuality, style and genre and the issue of research methods are two sides of the same coin. Processes of naming and categorizing are important—not only for humanists and poststructuralists committed to sophisticated language experiments, but for all scholars. Following on from the argument of the two previous chapters, I shall also stress that writing processes and issues of epistemology, methodology and ethics are inextricably entangled in each other. A natural science report, an anthropological field diary or a literary essay are examples of different academic genres, and the differences between them must be understood against the background of the different epistemological and methodological frameworks and ethical guidelines in which knowledge production in the natural sciences, anthropology and literary studies, respectively, are based.

Besides emphasizing the general importance of writing processes in research, an even more important reason to include a chapter on academic and creative writing in a textbook on Feminist Studies is that the field is rich in writing experiments. Although many feminist researchers write in the styles and genres that are common to their respective disciplinary traditions, nevertheless the writing of research, and reflections on shifting boundaries between academic and creative writing processes, have in many ways constituted a consciously reflected theme in Feminist Studies.

However, it should be noted that this interest in writing, writing processes and writing experiments goes hand in hand with postmodern and post-constructionist epistemologies in particular and to some extent also with standpoint feminist ones. Conversely, it follows from the feminist empiricist stance on the grounds of standard criteria for doing science that a strict observance of the rules of traditional ways of reporting is important here.

In this chapter I shall discuss some of the reasons why feminist researchers have sometimes taken an interest in exploring the meanings of writing in the research process, and have in some cases started to write in experimental ways at the boundaries between academic and creative writing. As part of the discussion, I shall also illustrate how scholars in Feminist Studies have, in different ways, disrupted traditional academic genres and styles of writing. To sustain my argument, I shall use examples where alternative ways of writing academic texts stand out clearly. Examples emerging from feminist moves into and beyond postmodern thought are given a certain priority, because writing experiments are especially rich within this kind of Feminist Studies. However, I also wish to emphasize that it is possible to learn from these examples when it comes to developing your own style and genre of writing without necessarily adhering to the same epistemological positions.

EPISTEMOLOGY AND NARRATOR'S POSITIONS

I shall start my mapping of the ways in which writing experiments and reflections on academic writing have been significant for Feminist Studies by taking a look at the relationship between epistemologies and narrator's positions.

In Chapter 8, I discussed how feminist research critically challenged and theoretically rejected what Donna Haraway ironically calls 'the god-trick' of modern science (Haraway 1991c, 191–196). I explored how the epistemological turn in Feminist Studies toward the context of discovery, standpoint(s), politics of location, situated knowledges, self-reflexivity and so on has had the effect that discussions of the position of the researcher subject have been given high priority. But decisive consequences for genres and writing styles are also implied in this turn. Translated into a question about academic writing, it means that it becomes urgent to radically depart from the bodyless, faceless, depersonalized and decontextualized narrator's position that characterizes traditional academic genres.

As standard and norm, scientific reports are written in the third person by a narrator who does not appear explicitly in the text. A traditional scientific report indicates the identity of its narrator via the name on the book cover or attached to the title of the journal article. The name guards the scientific property rights to the results presented. But in the text itself, readers do not meet a textually personified version of this name other than perhaps

as a sporadically inserted, general and consensus-related 'we' or 'one.' Saying 'I' is normally forbidden by standard academic genre rules.

In contrast to this, Feminist Studies texts, which epistemologically are based on a politics of location and situated knowledges, will often focus on the question of how the researcher subject is written into the text. Within a framework of classic standpoint feminism, the researcher subject will normally come into view in the text as a collective and politically founded 'we'—'we women,' 'we feminists,' 'we black feminists,' 'we women-identified lesbians' and so on. In texts informed by postmodern feminisms as well as by sexual difference and other postconstructionist feminist epistemologies, the researcher subject will also appear in person in the text. Though, here the researcher-narrator will most often appear as an individualized 'I,' rather than as a 'we.' But this postmodern or postconstructionist 'I' is also situated, and like the standpoint feminist 'we,' this 'I' takes responsibility for her or his point of view and for the position from that she or he speaks. The difference between a standpoint feminist 'we' and a postmodern or postconstructionist 'I' is that the latter is more mobile and more prepared to acknowledge differences; moreover, this 'I' does not make claims to speak for others.

In relation to the traditional third person narrative of scientific reports, these 'we'- or 'I'-based feminist texts mark an overall shift in narrator's position and perspective—from a depersonalized, divinely omniscient and omnipresent narrator, toward narrators who appear explicitly and visibly in the first person (as 'I' or 'we'), and who make themselves accountable and commit themselves in terms of their partial perspective and against the background of the context in which the research is produced. It cannot be emphasized strongly enough that such a shift has major consequences for both the question of academic genre and for writing processes. To change the textual positioning and perspective of the narrator is no simple matter, and is far from being merely related to the question of the use of personal pronouns. To inscribe a standpoint feminist 'we' or a postmodern or postconstructionist 'I' as the narrator of a scholarly text—and in this sense introduce a position, a standpoint, a partial perspective from where the text is spoken and told—has consequences for all elements and dimensions of the text. It impacts on everything, from narrative composition to language and style. In other words: A major shift of genre is taking place.

To make it clear how different narrator's positions have decisive consequences for all dimensions of a text, I shall draw on an analogy with a distinction taken from narratology (the theory of narration and narrativity in literature) between different types of narrators. For example, the classical novel is often narrated from an 'Olympian' (god-like) perspective. The narrator is raised above the characters and knows their psychology, their thoughts, their whereabouts and actions. Jane Austen's novels are an example. The Olympian narrator can participate as a character in the course of events of the novel, but is commonly not part of the story.

In contrast to this, modernist novels often have narrators who take part in the course of events at the eye level of the characters. The narrator in such novels does not know any more about what is happening than do the other characters; she or he is as much in 'the middle of everything' as they are (*in medias res* as it is called in literary theory, when a novel starts in the middle of the course of events without explaining the prehistory). Examples can be found in Virginia Woolf's novels. Finally, postmodern novels often have a fragmented narrator's perspective with so-called meta-fictional layers in the text, that is, layers that create ambiguity and doubt about the identity of the narrator and about the relationship between the universe of the characters and the framing of the story. A famous example from the world of film is the USA-based director David Lynch's crime fiction and cult TV-series, *Twin Peaks* (Lynch and Frost 1990–1991), in which the narration throughout the course of events refers explicitly back to the process of staging and the frame within which the narrator is located.

I shall use these general distinctions (which, seen from a literary or film historical perspective, are in some ways simplified) as a lens through which to better grasp the disruptions of genres that are generated in scholarly texts when the researcher subject/'I' is written into the text in the way that often happens in Feminist Studies texts. However, I also want to underline that—besides certain overlaps—there are also decisive genre differences between the narration in fictional and scholarly texts, respectively, and that it is important to be aware of these when making this kind of analogy. A scholarly text must commit itself in one way or another to social, cultural, discursive, historical, natural, medical and technical realities, even though this can be done in many different ways as discussed in Chapters 8 and 9. This requirement does not apply to the fictional text. I shall not elaborate in more detail on this, but just highlight that my comparison of narrator's positions in scholarly texts with those in novels and films is aimed at creating a platform from which to better understand the former. The intention is not to erase the differences between fictional and scholarly texts. Having stressed this *caveat*, I shall suggest that a reflection on the relationship between narrator's positions and genres in narrative fiction can give inspiration to set up a new, although rough, typology of genres and narrator's positions in scholarly texts.

The narrator's position in the classic scientific report, that is, the 'god-trick,' can, to a certain extent, be compared to the classic novel's Olympian perspective. Therefore, literary history's theorization of the decisive transformations of genre and narrator's position that the modernist and the postmodernist novel generated vis-à-vis those of the classic novel can give rise to a reflection on the wide-ranging textual disruptions of the classic scientific report genre that are required when the 'we' of standpoint feminism or the 'I' of postmodern or postconstructionist feminism are to be written into the scholarly text.

It has major consequences for every aspect of a text whether, as author, you start out claiming a universalist consensus, speaking from a depersonalized Olympian narrator's position, or whether from the beginning you present a localized first-person pronoun. As an example of the former kind of depersonalized introduction, I shall refer to an article on the topic of writing scholarly introductions that presents, among others, the following model example: 'There is reason to believe that . . . ' (Swales 1983, 193). As an elegant example of the other—personified—type of introduction where the narrator makes herself visible and accountable from the beginning, I shall quote Haraway's introduction to her famous article on situated knowledges and partial objectivity. In the introduction she talks first from the position of a standpoint feminist 'we,' second, she invites her readers to a self-critical, irony-laden and diffracting reasoning about this 'we' and its perhaps over-simplified 'they/us'-dichotomies, and third, she localizes herself as an 'I' in the text:

Academic and activist feminist enquiry has repeatedly tried to come to terms with the question of what *we* might mean by the curious and inescapable term 'objectivity.' We have used a lot of toxic ink and trees processed into paper decrying what *they* have meant and how it hurts *us*. The imagined 'they' constitute a kind of invisible conspiracy of masculinist scientists and philosophers replete with grants and laboratories; and the imagined 'we' are the embodied others, who are not allowed *not* to have a body, a finite point of view. . . . At least, I confess to these paranoid fantasies and academic resentments . . . (Haraway 1991c, 183; Haraway's italics)

WRITING 'OBJECTS' OF RESEARCH INTO SCHOLARLY TEXTS AS SUBJECTS WITH AGENCY

Just as there is a link between feminist disruptions of traditional epistemologies and the attempts to establish new types of narrator's positions in scholarly texts, so the epistemological shifts also have major consequences for the ways in which feminist scholars reflect on the question of textual representation of the 'objects' of research. A researcher who no longer takes the divine, omniscient and omnipresent narrator's position, but situates herself or himself at the same level as her or his 'informants' or research participants, and locates herself or himself as part of the same messy and confused reality as they, is in some way or another obliged to give these 'objects' of research perspectives, voices and agency on their own terms, when she or he inscribes them into her scholarly text.

This shift in the ways in which the researcher subject relates to her or his 'objects' of research is generating many writing experiments, in particular in Feminist Studies informed by the move into and beyond postmodern

thought. Within the framework of standpoint feminism, the textual representations of research 'objects' does not become as great a challenge as it is for postmodern and postconstructionist feminists.

Since classic standpoint feminists generally see themselves as part of a political feminist 'we,' in which individual members have identical interests as 'women,' 'black women,' 'lesbian women' and so on, they can—without further reflection—speak on behalf of this 'we.' They can start from the framing that is given by their overarching ontological starting point in a master narrative about the political route of the 'we' toward disruption of oppressive social structures. Supported by her ontology and the theoretical master narrative of social structures and their revolutionary disruption, the standpoint feminist researcher can legitimize the position that she works within a so-called monologically framed text production (to borrow yet another term from literary theory, Bakhtin 1984, 52). According to the Russian literary theorist Mikhail Bakhtin, only one voice is heard in a so-called 'monologic novel,' the voice of the narrator. On the one hand, in a standpoint feminist text, research 'objects' will spring to life as subjects with agency. Besides using 'we' as the narrator's position, this textual inscription of research participants as subjects with agency is one of the central ways in which standpoint feminist texts diverge from traditional positivist texts, in which 'informants' and research 'objects' remain thing-like objects, without a perspective of their own. On the other hand, standpoint feminist texts only acknowledge that research participants can have a perspective of their own within the framework of the 'we' that the monological voice of the narrator has defined.

To illustrate this, I shall quote the introduction to black USA-based feminist bell hooks's *Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center* (hooks 2000). Here, hooks starts out defining the 'silent majority' of poor, oppressed women whom she wants to represent and speak for. She also inscribes herself as part of this 'we':

Feminism in the United States has never emerged from the women who are most victimized by sexist oppression; women who are daily beaten down, mentally, physically, and spiritually—women who are powerless to change their condition in life. They are a silent majority. (hooks 2000, 1)

We [= women who feel excluded in dominant feminist theory] resist hegemonic domination of feminist thought by insisting that it is a theory in the making, that we must necessarily criticize, question, re-examine, and explore new possibilities. My persistent critique has been informed by my status as a member of an oppressed group, my experience of sexist exploitation and discrimination, and the sense that prevailing feminist analysis has not been the force of shaping my feminist consciousness. (hooks 2000, 10–11)

Obviously, the standpoint feminist 'we' in hooks's text does not find the differences between the academically eloquent hooks and the silent majority of poor women whom she speaks about and for, noteworthy. Without further reflections, the academically well-educated narrator and the poor women are inscribed in one and the same 'we'-category, based on a stance in identity politics.

By contrast, the relationship to research 'objects' becomes problematic for the feminist researcher's 'I,' who has distanced herself epistemologically from the identity politics and the over-arching master narratives that are integral elements of standpoint feminism. Neither can this researcher's 'I' rely on an unproblematic 'we,' nor can she lean against a master narrative framing perspectives on power and resistance. Instead she is confronted by a multiplicity of (power) differentials that she has a no more privileged or superior access to define than do her research 'objects.' To be true to her ethical-political obligation to give 'objects' a perspective and a voice, she has to invent new ways of inscribing these into her text.

The problem that this type of researcher's 'I' faces can be compared to what is happening in the polyphone (multi-voiced) novel (to use one more term from literary theory). The aforementioned literary theorist Mikhail Bakhtin (1984) contrasts the polyphone novel with the monological one. He illustrates his points using examples from Russian literary history, interpreting Dostoyevsky's novels as polyphone and Tolstoy's as monological. Tolstoy's fictional universes and characters are presented from the perspective of an omniscient, 'Olympian' narrator. The novels appear as this 'divinely' located narrator's monological story about the characters, their psychology, their social status, their actions, their communications, the course of events in which they are involved, the spatial environment in which the novel is located and so on. This differs from Dostoyevsky's novels. His characters have a standpoint of their own and a subjective point of view, and the worlds they inhabit are characterized through their eyes and from their perspectives. Dostoyevsky's novels are based on the artistic rule that descriptions of characters, surrounding worlds and actions are first and foremost communicated to the reader through the voices of the characters themselves. The course of events of the novel is shaped via dialogues taking place between characters, in which they outline their ideas and positions. In this way, the narrator constructs the novel's universe and its plot through the polyphonic choir of the characters' voices. In contrast to the monological novel, the narrator cannot step 'outside' of the fictive world; she or he cannot take a look from an 'Olympian' position and, from this perspective, establish a final truth. In the polyphone novel, the narrator's perspective and 'truth' is only one of many.

There are, of course, many differences between Dostoyevsky's novels and feminist theoretical texts. The comparison is not intended to eradicate these differences. The idea is instead to suggest that it is possible to

reach a deeper understanding of academic genres by looking at Feminist Studies texts through the lens of Bakhtin's concept of polyphony. Feminist research can find inspiration in Bakhtin's theories on polyphony and dialogism, as is pointed out in a volume on feminism and Bakhtin (Bauer and McKinstry 1991).

Just as polyphony in literature can take many unique forms, it should be noted that it is in no way implied by my use of it here that there is or should be a scheme for its integration into feminist research texts. I shall take a look at a couple of radical examples among a variety of different feminist research texts that, each in their own way, perform polyphonously. First, I shall discuss one of the articles that have been agenda setting within the field of postcolonial feminist theorizing: María C. Lugones's and Elisabeth V. Spelman's dialogical article 'Have We Got a Theory for You!' (1998). This article discusses the relationship between white Anglo-feminism and Chicana-feminism in the USA. As the second example, I shall focus on Patti Lather and Chris Smithies's book *Troubling the Angels* (1997) about women living with HIV/AIDS.

Lugones and Spelman's article is written as an explicit dialogue between two voices—one Hispanic-feminist voice (Lugones) and one white, Anglo-feminist voice (Spelman). The article theorizes a postcolonial feminist critique of white, middle-class feminism's tendency to speak for Feminism (in singular, determined form, and with a capital F). In some ways, this article focuses on the same critique of white feminism's hegemonic discourses and practices as I earlier illustrated in bell hooks's standpoint feminist version. However, in contrast to hooks's use of an unproblematic 'we'-identity ('we' = black, oppressed women who have been marginalized by white, middle-class feminism), the 'we' in Lugones's and Spelman's article is one that reflects on the complex and entangled power and solidarity relations between the two subjects who constitute the 'we,' and whose differently situated perspectives also make up the self-reflexive research 'object' of the article. The article has two voices and two perspectives and, similar to the polyphone novel, no superior voice is called forward to authorize a final monological order and do away with competing truth claims. In this way, the article diverges from hooks's work. In the preface of the article, Lugones and Spelman define their conscious use of two voices in the following way:

Thus the use of two voices is central both to the process of constructing this paper and to the substance of it. We are both the authors of this paper and not just sections of it but we write together without presupposing unity of expression or of experience. So when we speak in unison it means just that—there are two voices and not just one. (Lugones and Spelman 1998, 375)

My second example (Lather and Smithies 1997) is also a text that introduces the dialogical mode in the shape of an authorial 'we,' situated as

two personified discursive subjects with distinct voices and perspectives. First, this 'we' includes Patti Lather, who introduces herself as a feminist researcher, white, 'not yet, to my knowledge, HIV positive,' and as more interested 'in research *with* people, instead of the more typical research *on* people' (1997, xxv). The other half of the 'we' consists of Chris Smithies, who tells us that she is a practicing psychologist and a feminist who for several years has organized support groups for women living with HIV/AIDS. From each of their situated starting points, Lather and Smithies want to write a book that is not only academically meaningful, but that also makes a difference for the research participants/'informants' involved. One of the aims of the book is to create a better public understanding of the situation of women living with HIV/AIDS. In particular, it is important for the authors to highlight that, at the time of the research, the disease specifically hit African American and Hispanic women. At that time, this was little known to the general public. The authors want the book to critically challenge the stigma associated with the disease—and to do so without falling into the trap of mythologizing, heroizing or pathologizing the participating women.

Troubling the Angels is organized according to what Lather, in line with the anthropologist George Marcus's terminology, characterizes as a 'messy' text (Lather 2001, 201; Marcus 1994). That is, a text that is shaped as a kind of collage consisting of heterogeneous elements, such as

- passages with edited and narratively organized interview extracts,
- passages with scholarly analyses,
- extracts from Lather's and Smithies's field notes and research diaries, including comments on the research process; all this is graphically placed as a continuously running strand of text on the lower part of each page, see the illustration on the following page.
- fact boxes,
- so-called Inter-Texts, which introduce a continuous layer of reflections on the existential issues of life and death that the confrontation with HIV/AIDS raises, both in the participating women and in the two researchers. This layer of reflection is generated through many different quotes on the theme of 'angels,' and, furthermore, through a dialogue between the authors and a fictive reader's character who asks them about the meaning of the 'angel' texts.

That the authorial 'we' is made up of two distinct voices is clearly marked, not only in the introduction but also through the continuous strand of comments that is part of the field notes and research diary texts printed in the lower part of each page throughout the book.

The polyphony of this text goes further than that of the article by Lugones and Spelman. In Lather's and Smithies's book, there is a large choir of different voices. Similar to the Lugones and Spelman text, Lather's

be very average, normal. I don't want anybody to be labeled. I think that is wrong.

Joanna: I sit on panels sometimes and do speaking engagements and there will always be people sitting in the audience wanting to know how I got infected.

Patti: How does that question make you feel?

Joanna: Well, it depends on my time of the month. And it depends on my general mood. And it depends on the nature of the audience. Sometimes I'll just come out and say, you know it is really just none of your business. Or, it doesn't really matter, the point is I am HIV+ now and I am living with it. And this shouldn't happen to other people and hopefully we can educate. And usually I will tell them that I became infected probably through my husband who died. But that doesn't matter. Because if he had known I wouldn't be positive. He didn't know; I just knew shortly after he knew. Nothing changes. The fact is we all are positive and we all are living with it.

Chris: What's it like to live with such a secret?

Rita: That's why I am thinking about moving even though I feel pretty good right now, my count is up and everything. But just for that reason—to take off the pressure of living with a bunch of women that if one day you just don't feel like getting up, you've been up all night long with

participation. Needless to say, Patti passed my inspection. She understood my protectiveness and honored these requirements. We began to create a partnership.

Notes from drive to Women and AIDS retreat, Chris and Patti, May 22, 1992

Chris: I want this research to fill a void: there is very little psychosocial research on HIV+ women, and even fewer opportunities for these women to express their own views and feelings. We have the skills and training to get their voices out there: we are a conduit for these women, and they are our opportunity to create new research design and presentation. There's so much about these women that inspires me. Personally and professionally, I want to better understand them and I want others to not fear them. Most of what is written is about dying and I want to fore-

ground what incredible examples of living HIV+ folks are. I want to hear them talk about how this has changed them: relations with women, the disease, themselves, the world. For some, the support group is the first experience of closeness with women outside their families. In this work, I can apply what I've learned in the feminist trenches but in a context that is heart-centered. This is unlike a lot of other feminist space nowadays.

These women search to find meaning in being HIV+. This project could really help. A while back a romance writer presented her view on living with HIV/AIDS to the Cincinnati support group, who challenged her narrative considerably. Her manuscript contained a thanks to the group; they were energized by this and decided then to publish their own stories. That was the seedling for this project.

Figure 10.1 Picture caption 'Messy text.' Reprint of a page in Patti Lather and Chris Smithies: *Troubling the Angels: Women Living with HIV/AIDS*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press 1997, 5. Published with the permission of Westview Press, Perseus Books.

and Smithies's own voices are included in what they define as their research 'object.' But added to this are, first, the voices of the research participants: twenty-five women who live with HIV/AIDS (four of whom died before the book was finished). Second, there are all the different voices of the authors of the texts about angels (writers, musicians, singers, researchers etc.) that are part of the so-called 'Inter-Text' sections of the book. Third, also included are the voices 'authors' and 'readers' appearing in the dialogues about the meanings of the angel texts. The result of the ways in which all these many voices are put together in this text is a sophisticated, in-depth, polyphonic analysis. Together with the collage form of the text (its 'messyness'), the radical polyphony establishes the authors' voices as no more important than any of the others, including those of the research participants. In a concrete way, these are transformed from 'informants' and 'objects' of research into participating co-researchers and co-analysts. Not only do the women have their own voices, standpoints and analytical perspectives in the text, they also have their own explicit aims for the book. One of them states:

Danielle: Well, I think, if at all possible, I would like to reach certain people like government people and say 'help us.' And to reach other women or other people who are infected and say 'don't give up.' (Lather and Smithies 1997, xxviii)

THE LINGUISTIC AND NARRATIVE TURNS AND THEIR MEANINGS FOR TEXT AND GENRE

I have highlighted how different feminist epistemologies and their interpretations of the relationships between researcher 'subjects' and 'objects' of research influence the process of scholarly writing and encourage authors to disrupt and break away from the depersonalized genre of scientific reporting. In particular, I have given attention to the ways in which the disruption of traditional scholarly genres becomes central to feminist research informed by postmodern and postconstructionist epistemologies. But at the same time I have underlined that this is a broad tendency in Feminist Studies, which also has consequences beyond postmodern or postconstructionist feminist texts.

However, the theme that I shall now address—the linguistic and narrative turns and their effects in terms of writing experiments and reflections on academic writing and genre in feminist research—is directly and specifically linked to the feminist double move 'into and beyond' postmodern philosophy and poststructuralism. They relate to the theorizing of language as an active reality-producing medium instead of seeing it as merely a transparent and mimetic representation of the world 'out there.' Furthermore, the two intertwined turns are linked with postmodern and

poststructuralist interpretations of science as ‘a kind of story-telling practice’ (Haraway 1989, 4), which imply that academic texts can be analyzed as narratives.

These postmodern ‘turns’ toward understanding science and knowledge production as embedded in linguistic and narrative practices have in many ways been in tune with feminist critiques of traditional science. Many feminist scholars who have taken part in the moves into and beyond postmodern thought and poststructuralism, have been inspired to experiment with the disrupting of boundaries between academic and more creative—that is, ‘literary’—ways of writing. I use the term ‘literary’ to identify certain textual techniques and writing practices that are generally associated with fiction and poetry rather than with scientific reports, even though it also should be noted that the boundaries between academic and creative writing were already permeable and unstable before they were challenged by the linguistic and narrative turns in knowledge production. Within certain disciplines, such as anthropology, literature and the arts for example, there is a long tradition of writing in experimental and different ways that goes far beyond influences from postmodern philosophy and poststructuralism.

When I talk about the use of ‘literary techniques’ in the writing of scholarly texts, I refer to practices such as giving attention to the narrative composition, the plot structure, the dramatic rhythm, the use of metaphors and other types of figurative language and tropes, the connotations of words (i.e., the associations that emerge from them) rather than solely taking their denotations (i.e., their dictionary definitions) into account. Moreover, I want to mention the search for a unique ‘poetic truth’ (Stevens 1957; Lewis 1946), rather than for ‘results’ and ‘findings’ that are objective and generalizable in a positivist sense. The English philosopher Hywel D. Lewis defined a poetic truth in terms of the aesthetic and ethical effects that good art and literature may produce in an audience. He argued that they can make us see something well-known from a new angle that allows its concrete and unique specificity to appear in unexpected ways. We may become fascinated, feel it as an epiphany and think-feel: ‘Yes, that’s *true*, it is like this, but I haven’t thought so before!’ This is what is called a ‘poetic truth.’

To illustrate how the linguistic and narrative turns have inspired many feminist researchers to stylistically transgress the boundaries between literary and scholarly textual practices, I would like first to return to Laurel Richardson and her emphasis on ‘writing as a method of inquiry’ (Richardson 2000), which I discussed in the introduction to this chapter. Richardson has convincingly theorized and illustrated how writing can be consciously used as a method of inquiry. Her name for this kind of writing/inquiring process is CAP ethnography where CAP is an acronym for Creative Analytic Practices (Richardson 2000, 929). Richardson defines CAP ethnography as a method of working in ways that are ‘*both creative and analytic*’ (Richardson 2000, 930), and that imply other writing styles and genres than those of the traditional scientific prose report:

Science-writing prose is not held sacrosanct. The ethnographic genre has been blurred, enlarged, altered to include poetry, drama, conversations, readers' theater, and so on. (Richardson 2000, 929)

In her books *Writing Strategies* (1990) and *Fields of Play* (1997), Richardson discusses and exemplifies different types of strategies for writing/analyzing. One of many radical examples from her own research—a research project on unmarried mothers—is a transcription and analysis of a sociological life history interview that Richardson transforms into a poem 'Louisa May's Story of Her Life' (Richardson 1997, 131–170). Richardson argues that a poetic articulation can communicate many things that a traditional objectifying representation of a transcript with an ensuing analysis and quotes cannot. First, the poetic form makes the dimension of construction, which is an integrated part of the research process whether it is articulated as a traditional report or as a poem, much more apparent and visible. A poem does *not* pretend to be an objective representation in a positivist sense; it clearly appears as the researcher's interpretation of the dialogue between herself and the 'informant'/research participant. Second, according to Richardson, a poetic representation makes it possible to get closer to the embodied, individually specific and unique dimensions of the research participant's speech acts, and to interpret these in a contextual way. The personal rhythm of the speech acts, their emphases, pauses, idiomatic expressions and so on emerge in the poem as poetically integrated and contextually situated in their specific individual uniqueness. In this sense, the poem mobilizes a 'poetic truth.'

Another example that, in particular, illustrates the implications of the narrative turn, I shall take from my own research: the monograph *Cosmodolphins* (Bryld and Lykke 2000). With it, I shall give an example of an academic monograph that is consciously composed in a literarily narrativized way, that is, built on a narrative plot structure that can be compared to that of a novel. As plot structure and 'motor' for unfolding the 'narrative,' we (my co-author Mette Bryld and I) use Derrida's basic model for how a deconstruction may proceed methodologically through a certain sequence of 'steps.'

In short, the monograph is a critical feminist and intersectional analysis of post- and neo-colonial re/de/constructions of a classic colonial discursive figure: Universal White Man as discursive norm and standard, contrasted against an intersectionally constructed trinity of 'others': Woman, Native, and Nature. The focus of the analysis is a range of contemporary discourses on cosmos and the oceans, perceived as vast areas that can still pass as 'wild nature.' The analytical material consists of both factual and fictional texts on cosmos and the oceans as well as interviews with female and male space researchers, New Age astrologers and dolphin trainers in the USA and Russia. Based on these materials, we analyze how both cosmos and the oceans function as contemporary projection screens for discourses

about how Universal White Man conquers unknown territories, symbolically represented in a language that activates old colonial ideas of intersections between gender, race and nature. At the same time, we make 'queer' and deconstructive readings of these constructions. We trace how gaps and excess meanings are generated that disrupt the reproduction of colonial discourses and make space for the unfolding of other, more promising—feminist, anti-racist, anti-colonialist—discourses and claims about ecologically sustainable approaches.

The book opens with an analysis of a picture. Through this analysis, we introduce the classical model for an act of deconstruction. Schematically speaking, a process of deconstruction takes as its starting point an opposition established between two signifiers, of which one is making the other subordinate through a symbolic act of violence. The next step is an inversion, in which the subordinated signifier revolts and takes the dominant position in the binary relation. As the third step in the deconstruction, the analyst must focus on excess meanings and undecidables, that is, meanings that do not fit into the binary opposition. These excess meanings and undecidables have a subversive impact on the binary scheme. Its fixed and violent system of classifications begins to crumble and to lose its authority and legitimacy. This crumbling and loss of authority and legitimacy are the theoretical and political driving forces of the method of deconstruction.

After introducing the picture and the model of deconstruction, we use the key moments in the sequence of deconstructive steps as a narrative plot structure, that is, as the 'motor' that constitutes the storyline and generates the narrative flow of our text. First we expose and highlight the hegemonic and hierarchical relationship between, on the one hand, the stories of space conquest, which appear filled with high-tech, nationalistic and masculine connotations, and, on the other hand, the stories of New Age astrology and their construction of a symbiosis between humanity and a feminine/motherly connoted cosmos. We devote four chapters (3, 4, 5 and 6) to the exposure of this opposition.

After the introductory chapters, in which we state the aim of the book, its theoretical framework and our situatedness in relation to it, we move on to analyze narrative constructions of the cosmos of space exploration (Chapters 3 and 4). Here, we emphasize how this first cluster of narratives is framed within the context of a high degree of public legitimacy based on its close relations to 'Big Science' (Galison and Hevly 1992) and to publicly highly valued myths about heroic masculinity and the technopowers of the nation. We stress how this framing of the first cluster of narratives positions it publicly in a hegemonic position vis-à-vis the second cluster of narratives about the motherly cosmos of New Age astrology.

In Chapters 5 and 6 we proceed to the analysis of the second cluster of narratives, on New Age astrology. In terms of the plot structure of the book, this cluster is analyzed as an inversion of the first one—and as the second step in the sequence of events that characterizes a classic deconstruction.

In these chapters we challenge the discursive hegemony and the superior position claimed by the first cluster of narratives. We do not take sides or present one cluster as giving 'truer' or more legitimate images of the cosmos than the other. Both are simply presented as clusters of stories. However, the hegemonic position of the space flight stories is disrupted when our plot structure and storyline construct a contiguity between them and the New Age astrology stories, and when the inversion drags them down onto the same level as the latter, that is, onto the level of their inferior, irrational and marginalized other.

In terms of plot structure, the two following chapters (7 and 8) are profiled as the third and decisive step in the process of deconstruction, the blowing up of the binary opposition via a focus on excess meanings and undecidables. Our analysis of the dolphin stories performs this step. First, Chapter 7 introduces a cluster of links between contemporary discursive constructions of cosmos and the oceans, discussing how in present-day cultural imaginaries⁷ both symbolize the 'last, vast, wild nature.' Against this backdrop, Chapter 8 interprets the dolphin stories as spilling over with excess meanings, which are undecidable in relation to the binary opposition between, on the one hand, a cluster of masculine/national/heroic/high-tech narratives about space flight and the conquering of cosmos, and, on the other hand, a cluster of New Age astrology narratives about a mother-child symbiosis between cosmos and humanity. In contrast to the rather clear-cut opposition between these two clusters of stories, the chapter on dolphin narratives focuses on the dolphin figure as an undecidable. We outline how stories and myths about dolphins have proliferated during the second half of the twentieth century, and how multiple layers of ambiguities are associated with the dolphin figure in these stories and myths.

On the one hand, the dolphin has become a popular icon associated with 'feminine' New Age values and with a nostalgic longing for a life in harmony with an 'untouched, wild nature,' modeled in the framework of romanticized and hegemonic discourses on indigenous people's life worlds. On the other hand, the dolphin has become linked to high-tech worlds and associated with key ideas such as speed, streamlined forms and sophisticated communication technologies.

In terms of gender, dolphins have connotations of both femininity and masculinity, and they are also interpellated as ambiguous, bi- or transsexual figures.

Moreover, dolphins have symbolically been related to ocean, earth and cosmos: to the ocean because this is where they live; to earth because they are mammals. The symbolic link to cosmos emerged out of the role that dolphins played in early space flight. Some USA space researchers invested scientifically in the idea that communication with dolphins could prepare humans for communication with other 'extraterrestrial' beings, that is, 'aliens' from outer space. Dolphins were perceived as embodying a symbolic 'in-between' identity on the boundary between 'us' and 'non-us'. They were

considered to be at the same time both 'like us' (mammals, inhabitants of the planet Earth) and 'not like us' (extraterrestrial animals, living in the water and not on dry land). The scientific experiments with dolphin communication during the early days of space flight created a basis for the ways in which dolphins have later become popular characters in science fiction literature alongside other extraterrestrial boundary figures.

All these interacting layers of ambiguity—in between which dolphin figures perform in the stories and myths presented in our material and in so doing cause gender, race, ethnicity, nationality, sexuality and animality to intersect in queer and unexpected ways—explode the binary opposition between the narratives of space flight and those of New Age astrology in our book. The dolphin narratives evade categorization according to the binary scheme introduced in Chapters 3 to 4 and 5 to 6. In other words, the dolphin chapters (7–8) in our book constitute a third step in a dramatic narrative about discursive hierarchies, their inversions, and their collapse into an excess of undecidable meanings.

In order to highlight that our book is based on an epistemology that sees science and knowledge production as a story-telling practice (Haraway 1989, 4), and *not* as a search for a final truth, we have emphasized the overriding importance of plot structure and, as described, have consciously built one into our text. In addition to this, we also stress that each sub-section of the book's overall narrative can be constructed with specific literary genres as lenses. We analyze the space-flight narratives through the adventure/action story. The New Age astrology stories we interpret with the literary genre of the spiritual journey as framework. We read the high-tech dolphin stories with science fiction as our model. Finally, we explore the nostalgic New Age dolphin stories using the literary genre of the pastorate as lens (in literary history, a pastorate is defined as a narrative about an innocent, edenic nature).

TO WRITE BODY AND PASSION INTO THE TEXT

As yet another line of argument in this exposé of reasons as to why writing experiments have gained importance in the context of Feminist Studies, I shall discuss the role of body and passion in the writing process. This point makes specific reference to feminist research informed by sexual difference theories. However, there are also certain overlaps and relations to the issues that emerged out of feminist appropriations of the linguistic and narrative turns.

As discussed in Chapter 8, sexual difference theories focus on the meaning of bodies and passions in the knowledge producing process. As I indicated in the last section of Chapter 6, the theorizing of sexual difference has also been profiled by a close, highly reflexive and experimental relation to language. A key text that unites the focus on bodies and passions

as knowledge producers and a commitment to experimental writing in a sophisticated way, is the previously introduced French-Algerian author and theoretician Hélène Cixous's poetic-theoretical essay 'Coming to Writing' (Cixous 1991). This is a text that has inspired many feminists to explore ways of textualizing body and passion within the framework of writing experiments on the boundaries between literary and theoretical, creative and scholarly writing.

I emphasized in Chapter 8 that sexual difference theorists, such as Braidotti and Grosz, argue for using bodily differences, especially female difference, as an epistemological starting point. I also discussed how Braidotti, in particular, experiments with alternative modes of Deleuze-inspired rhizomatic writing that radically disrupts traditional academic genres and writing styles with their focus on a logical chronology of arguments. While Braidotti and Grosz argue philosophically for a bodily starting point, Cixous's texts take one step further both in form, style and genre. Her writings are far from the academic genre where the (chrono)logical construction of arguments is the 'motor' of the text. Rather, much like a poem, what moves Cixous's text forward is a reflective sensitivity, an attention to the directions in which body, passions and emotions push the writing process. The body and body-speak, not a logical sequencing of rational arguments, are what make the text proceed and take certain directions rather than others. Cixous explains this in the following way:

Writing was in the air around me. Always close, intoxicating, invisible, inaccessible. I undergo writing! It came to me abruptly. One day I was tracked down, besieged, taken. It captured me. I was seized. From where? I knew nothing about it. I've never known anything about it. From some bodily region. I don't know where. 'Writing' seized me, gripped me, around the diaphragm, between the stomach and the chest, a blast dilated my lungs and I stopped breathing. Suddenly I was filled with a turbulence that knocked the wind out of me and inspired me to wild acts. 'Write.' When I say 'writing' seized me, it wasn't a sentence that had managed to seduce me, there was absolutely nothing written, not a letter, not a line. But in the depths of the flesh, the attack. Pushed. Not penetrated. Invested. Set in motion. The attack was imperious: 'Write!' (Cixous 1991, 9).

According to Cixous, text cannot be separated from a passionate and desiring body. Using a trope (a stylistic figure of language), I define the relation between body and text in Cixous's writings as metonymical (see also the discussion in Bryld and Lykke 2000, 139–158). A metonymy is a stylistic figure that is often compared to the metaphor, but is actually different. Stylistically, a metaphor is a figurative comparison. For example, when Jesus is described in an old Christian psalm by the image of a rose shooting up from frozen earth, the rose is a metaphor. The rose image works due to a

comparison. It is understandable to a Christian audience because of the characteristics that Jesus and the rose are believed to have in common: 'spiritual beauty' and 'compassion,' which distinguish both from the 'ugly,' 'cold' and 'merciless' world around them. In contrast to the metaphor, a metonymy is not based on a comparison between two semantic elements (e.g., Jesus and rose), but instead on a contiguity. 'Would you like a cuppa?' is a metonymic expression where 'cuppa' stands for the content that we drink (e.g., tea). The metonymy works because there is contiguity between the 'cuppa' and the 'tea' to be poured into it for us to drink.

Cixous experiments with a writing style built on metonymical relations between the desiring and passionate body and the text. She sees the text as developing from its intimate contiguity with her body and as reaching out to touch the reader in a bodily way. For example, she articulates the relationship of contiguity between text and body in the following way:

Writing to touch with letters, with lips, with breath, to caress with the tongue, to lick with the soul, to taste the blood of the beloved body . . . (Cixous 1991, 4).

Cixous is both a theorist and a writer. Apart from theoretical texts, she has also written novels and dramas. At the same time, her theoretical texts have consciously been written in what can be seen as a 'no man's land'—to use a metaphor that plays on intertwined disruptions of phallogocentrism and fixed genre boundaries. She wants to open up spaces for new ways of writing in terms of genre, language and style. The so-called 'écriture féminine,' which Cixous introduced (see Chapter 6), is a passionate writing of female bodily difference into texts, where boundaries that sexual difference theorists perceive as constructed by phallogocentrism cease to exist, that is, boundaries between theory and literature, rational thought and passion.

Many feminist researchers have been inspired by Cixous's work, and many have analyzed her texts (e.g., Shiach 1991; Conley 1992; Lie 1999; Bray 2004; Munck 2004). Furthermore, her texts have given rise to different kinds of writing experiments. The poststructuralist feminist researcher Bronwyn Davies (Davies 2000a) has, for example, translated Cixous's ideas about a theoretical-literary, embodied, poststructuralist writing into social psychological analyses of Australian pre-school children's constructions of gender and sex (Davies 1993). Inspired by Cixous, Davies has also explored the meanings of embodied situatedness in specific landscapes (Davies 2000b).

TO WRITE IN AN EASILY ACCESSIBLE STYLE

Another reason to focus on writing processes within Feminist Studies is the attention to communication, and the question of going beyond the ivory

tower of research in order to communicate with a wider public, not only an academic audience. The urge to do so has been generated through a close relationship between feminist research, activism and politics. Against this background, some feminist researchers have strongly emphasized the importance of also reaching out to women who do not have the academic background of the researcher. With this intention, they have experimented with pedagogical ways of writing in easily accessible styles that steer clear of specialized terminologies.

To some extent, this tendency has collided with the demands for new ways of writing and speaking that have emerged from feminist interactions with postmodern philosophy, poststructuralism and the linguistic and narrative turns, and from the wish to radically transgress ways of writing that fix gendered hierarchies and stereotypes or confirm phallogocentrism as sexual difference theorists would articulate it. However, the collisions have, in their own way, contributed to making the issue of writing even more pressing and complex. How can a writing style be developed that is *both* creative/transgressive *and* easily accessible? Heated debates and conflicts over this issue have raged among feminist researchers for many years, but in a productive vein this has generated a multiplicity of positions and experiments.

It should, however, be underlined that there does not necessarily have to be a contradiction between writing in a complex and innovative way that disrupts traditional genres and styles on the one hand, and creating an easily accessible text on the other. There are many successful examples of doing both in Feminist Studies.

To illustrate this, I would like to briefly return to Patti Lather's and Chris Smithies's book *Troubling the Angels* (1997). In the epilogue, Lather and Smithies discuss how the book has been received among the women living with HIV/AIDS who participated in the research. Lather and Smithies asked the participating women to read a draft of the book before it was printed, and to comment on it in focus groups that included the authors. Through this, the authors wanted to involve the women as a kind of editorial board and feedback group. Although the authors retained the final word in terms of editing the book, the dialogues with the women in the epilogue indicate that they received the book positively. Moreover, it seems as if the authors' attempt to write in a new genre had actually been successful. Judging from the women's overall positive reception, the book has apparently achieved its goal of becoming accessible to a wide group of non-academic readers, although the women's opinions differ as far as the experimental writing in the book is concerned. For example, by no means all of them like the sections on angels. Several are also critical about the graphic layout of the pages into different sections. Some women are enthusiastic about these experiments with form, others are not. However, they all firmly agree that the book is different, better than other books on the topic of HIV/AIDS, and that it can reach far beyond the ivory tower of research. For example,

one of the women 'Heather' notes that the collage style of the book makes it possible to reach a broad audience. It means that texts of varying degrees of difficulty in terms of the academic skills required to read them are kept separate so that the book can easily be read in different ways:

Heather: Some people are just going to read the dialogue, maybe to begin with and maybe only. It's real free flowing and kind of titillating in some places for someone who's not into deep reading. That might be the gist of the book for them. Other people are going to read both [top and bottom]. I think it's going to appeal to people from all different levels of ability to read and comprehend. If you want a book that the general population can read, it needs to be at grade three level, but the women's dialogue is readable no matter what. (Lather and Smithies 1997, 233).

THE MEANING OF MULTI-, INTER-, TRANS- AND POSTDISCIPLINARITY FOR GENRE AND WRITING

Finally, I would like to highlight one more reason for the focus on writing experiments in feminist research. The high degree of multi-, inter-, trans- and postdisciplinarity that is characteristic of Feminist Studies plays an important role here, too.

As mentioned, different disciplines have various requirements and traditions as far as genre and style are concerned. This means that they also have differing standards, norms and criteria for what a 'good' article, monograph, report, thesis, and so on should look like. These standards, norms and criteria are commonly taken for granted within the boundaries of the discipline in question, and they are most often communicated to new generations of scholars and students as a set of relatively fixed rules about genre and style, which they are expected to learn and follow in order to be accepted as professional members of the discipline.

However, when the borders between different disciplines are being transgressed, as is radically the case in Feminist Studies, it becomes clear that each of the fields to be crossed have their own standards, norms and criteria for what a 'good' academic text should look like. What is normally taken for granted suddenly comes into question. All researchers who work in multi-, inter-, trans- or postdisciplinary research contexts will, to varying degrees, be confronted with this issue of differing disciplinary standards. In consequence, existing norms and criteria will become more relative, and writing practices will at the same time also tend to become more reflexive.

This more relativistic and reflexive approach to academic genres and styles, which in this way follows in the wake of multi-, inter-, trans- and postdisciplinarity, is not at all unique to feminist researchers. However, what is quite special for the field of Feminist Studies is the way in which

its multi-, inter-, trans- and postdisciplinary practices involve more or less *all* kinds of disciplines. This means that feminist researchers sometimes get a much broader idea than other cross-disciplinarily oriented researchers about the multiplicity and diversity that characterize academic genres and writing styles. This wide-ranging outlook across many different disciplines, which is characteristic of researchers working within the field of Feminist Studies, is likely to produce an especially strong urge to reflect on and ask critical questions about traditional academic writing practices, criteria and given standards and to experiment innovatively with genres and styles.

CONCLUSION: FROM EPISTEMOLOGY TO WRITING AS A METHOD OF INQUIRY

This chapter has discussed different reasons as to why feminist researchers have paid attention to writing experiments and innovative academic writing practices. In particular, I have emphasized how the majority of epistemological positions that were introduced in Chapter 8—standpoint feminisms, postmodern feminisms and postconstructionist feminisms—imply a disruption of traditional academic genres and writing styles. The chapter has illustrated in different ways how the taking up of these epistemological positions means that, in one way or another, the writing process has to be foregrounded in the research process.

Moreover, I wanted to highlight that it can be productive in general for the research process to integrate reflections about the writing process into considerations on methodology and methods. As Laurel Richardson (2000) notes, writing should be seen ‘a method of inquiry’. Therefore, this chapter also aimed to highlight the ways in which feminist research has generated a great deal of knowledge about academic writing processes and shifting boundaries between academic and creative writing, from which useful lessons can be learned.

Part IV

To Use a Feminist Hermeneutics

11 Doing and Undoing the God-Trick

Analytical Examples

In this last chapter I shall present a couple of examples demonstrating how to carry out an analysis informed by Feminist Studies and feminist hermeneutics (interpretative practice) as it was defined in Chapter 9. However, initially, I want to emphasize that the broad multi-, inter-, trans- and post-disciplinary character of the field, as well as its general diversity in terms of theories, epistemologies, methodologies, methods and ethics, which I have stressed throughout the book, imply that it is impossible to give anything but a taste of what a Feminist Studies-based analysis might look like.

In the examples I have chosen I shall link up my feminist hermeneutic approach with the method of *textual analysis*. Due to the pluralist and broad cross-disciplinary use of methods in Feminist Studies I could, of course, have focused on a wide range of other methods (for example, ethnographic, sociological, visual, quantitative or qualitative methods). However, I have chosen to link up with this particular method because of my own disciplinary background in textual analysis, Literary and Cultural Studies. More precisely, I shall perform what in the context of textual analysis is called a *close-reading*, that is, an analysis that gives priority to a focus on the details of a text (its rhetorical gestures, tropes, imagery, pronouns, proper names etc.).

As material for my textual analysis, I have chosen a particular kind of texts. I close-read extracts from two different *scholarly texts*, written in two different historical contexts and based on different epistemological frameworks. In so doing, I pay special attention to the ways in which gender/sex, bodies, subjects and objects are constructed in the texts. In this sense, the analyses follow on from Chapter 10's discussions of academic genres and writing styles and their relation to issues in epistemology, methodology, methods and ethics.

My first example is taken from Australian feminist linguist Terry Threadgold's analysis (1988) of the ways in which the relationship between epistemology, methodology, methods, ethics, academic genre, writing and gender/sex is exposed in a classic scientific text from the seventeenth century—that is, from the historical period where empiricist positivism and its depersonalized genre of reporting was under construction. As the second

example I shall use my own analysis (Lykke 1996) of (an extract from) a text by Donna Haraway—from one of her many theoretically and epistemologically important texts, which at the same time, like most of her texts, is a piece of experimental writing (Haraway 1997, 79).

I contrast my discussion of Haraway's text with Threadgold's analysis of the seventeenth-century text. I discuss how Haraway seeks to *transgress* exactly the academic genre and writing style that the classic science text, which Threadgold analyzes, was in the process of *installing* as norm and standard. I also take a look at the way in which Haraway's textual transgressions imply a radical shift in epistemological, ethical and (research) political agendas. A juxtaposition of Threadgold's and my analysis can illustrate how what Haraway called the 'god-trick' (1991, 191–196) of positivist empiricist science is *constructed* and *deconstructed*, *done* and *undone*.

Apart from illustrating a feminist interest in the interconnections between epistemology, methodology, methods, ethics, genre, writing and gender/sex, the juxtaposition of Threadgold's and my own analyses also illustrates how the focus on *intersections between gender and other categorizations* can provide useful analytical perspectives. Central to both of my analytical examples are—if in different ways—a focus on intersections between gender/sex and human/animal relationships. This is perhaps a somewhat surprising intersectionality to focus on. However, as briefly discussed in Chapters 5 and 7, Animal Studies is a growing area of importance for Feminist Studies due, among other reasons, to the ways in which representations of animal bodies and animal behaviors are often used as 'scientifically' sustained frames of reference for interpretations of gender and sex among humans.

In sum, the analytical examples I offer as tastes on the following pages are thus textual analyses of scientific texts, based on a feminist-intersectional hermeneutics with a special focus on intersections of gender, science and human/animal relationships. As a frame for the analyses, I shall start with a brief introduction of the theoretical framework for analyzing intersecting processes of gendering, sexing and animaling in the two different scholarly texts. After this I shall present extracts from the two texts and analyze, first, the ways in which the seventeenth-century text performs an act of *doing* the god-trick, constructing a cut between subject and object of research. Second, I shall scrutinize how Haraway's text performs an act of *undoing* the god-trick and reconnecting researcher subject and object.

INTERSECTIONALITY, GENDER/SEX AND ANIMAL PERFORMATIVITY

Both of my examples explore how science and humans relate to animals in ways that, through intersectional linguistic slides and displacements, also link up with gender/sex. I therefore start by looking at how some of the theoretical

contributions introduced in Chapters 4 to 7 can be usefully translated into tools for an intersectional feminist analysis of human–animal relationships. More precisely, in line with my earlier research in collaboration with feminist researchers Lynda Birke and Mette Bryld (Birke, Bryld and Lykke 2004), I shall suggest that the human–animal relationship can be understood through the term performativity, as it is used by Judith Butler in the context of gender, sex and sexuality (Butler 1990 and 1993) and by Karen Barad in her theory of posthuman performativity (Barad 2003). Along these lines, human–animal relationships can be understood as based on performative processes in which not only do discourses materialize, but material constraints, too, are counted in as active players and agents (see Chapter 7).

For the purpose of these brief analyses, I shall, however, draw particularly on Butler's discussion of the performative 'queer,' and make an analogy to the performative 'animal/bestial' (Birke, Bryld and Lykke 2004). Butler underlines (1993, 223–242) that the noun and adjective 'queer,' understood as a derogatory term, emerges from a range of hegemonic, heteronormative discourses that have established an essentialized dichotomy between a heterosexual norm and 'queer' deviancy. In similar ways, the noun 'animal' is interlinked with a series of hegemonic discourses on human–animal relationships (philosophical, scientific etc.). These discourses maintain a universal hierarchy, and a binary opposition between the superior position of human/culture/subject and the inferior one of animal/nature/object. In this kind of discourse, 'the animal' is defined as non-human, bestial, lacking subjectivity-intentionality-language-tools, a merely genetically programmed stimulus–reaction machine (Birke, Bryld and Lykke 2004).

Butler indicates that the fixing of an essentialized definition of 'queer' deviancy vis-à-vis a heterosexual norm can be discursively opened up by shifting the focus from noun/adjective to verb. The verb form shifts the perspective to processes of 'queering,' through which the heterosexual norm constantly re-establishes itself in the superior position and stigmatizes the queer position as inferior other. Via the change of perspective, the apparently unchangeable universality that sticks to nouns and adjectives is deconstructed. Fixed entities are reconfigured through the verb form as processes that are made and remade, but that could also be done differently. In similar ways to the case of 'queer' and 'queering,' a discursive shift from 'animal/bestial' to 'animaling' can perhaps stimulate us to reflections on other ways of doing human–animal relationships (Birke, Bryld and Lykke 2004). The verb form 'animaling' can make visible the fact that 'we' (humans) do something to animals (that 'we' for example make animals into genetically programmed machines that we can treat at our own discretion), and that, in this process, the meanings of human–animal relations are continuously recreated both discursively and materially, in speech and in action. The emphasis on the process rather than the product highlights the fact that things could be different. Human/animal, man/woman, hetero/queer—all these power-laden constructions of hierarchically ordered binaries could be done differently.

In the following analyses I shall use this performative interpretation of human/animal relations to explore how the two text examples (the seventeenth-century one and that of Haraway) perform acts of animaling in different ways. Moreover, I shall explore how both texts perform intersectionalities between gendering, sexing and animaling.

Two Text Examples

Let me first present the two texts to be analyzed.

Text example 1 is an experimental report from 1663. It was written under the auspices of the first scientific society in the world, the English Royal Society, which was founded in 1660. This text was analyzed by Terry Threadgold (1988), and I draw on her analysis.

Text extract from:

The Life and Work of Robert Hooke. Part 1. Early Science in Oxford.
Proceedings of the Royal Society
 (Gunther 1930, quoted in Threadgold 1988, 54)

Experiment. (1663)

March 23. The experiment of purging water from air not succeeding, the engine not being tight, it was ordered to be tried again at the next meeting; and likewise the experiment to be made again, how long a fish will live in water thus freed from air; and the celerity of a falling body in a long glass, exhausted of air. Mr. HOOKE was appointed curator of these three experiments.

Collection of Deep-sea Water.

Sir ROBERT MORAY, Dr. WILKINS and Mr. HOOKE were desired to be curators of trying the two sorts of cylindrical vessels [for the fetching up of water from the bottom of the sea.]

Microscopical Observations.

Mr. HOOKE was solicited to prosecute his microscopical observations, in order to publish them.

Fish and Lime.

A fish was put in a glass with water, closed up with lime, in order to see how long it would live so, the air being excluded from it.

Pneumatical engine.

April 1. An account was given of the construction of the pneumatical engine, as it then was; which was ordered to be brought in writing, together with a scheme of the engine, by Mr. HOOKE.

Water purged from Air.

Water was purged from air by the said engine, and Mr. HOOKE was appointed to make the experiment [of Monsieur HUYGENS of the not subsiding of such water, according to the Torrecellian experiment,] against the next meeting.

Fish under Diminished Pressure.

The experiment [of the exhausting the air from a fish in water] was tried in the engine, whereby the fish, which was a tench, was put into much disorder, and buoyed up to the upper part of the water, when he would sink; his eyes also swelling and standing out. The operator was ordered to observe the fish and how long she would live after the exhausting of the air; the experiment being directed to be tried again at the next meeting, together with that of the celerity of falling bodies in a glass exhausted of air.

Fish and Lime.

An account was given of the tench shut up close with lime in a glass with water, viz. that it had been taken out the next morning, after fourteen or fifteen hours, and found alive. Dr. GODDARD was desired to repeat the experiment, and to fill the glass full of water, and to leave the fish in it a longer time.

Text example II is an extract from Donna Haraway's book *Modest_Witness@Second_Millennium_FemaleMan©_Meets_OncoMouse™. Feminism and Technoscience* (Haraway 1997). The extract focuses on Haraway's analysis of the oncomouse, a so-called transgenic strain, and more precisely, a mouse that, through reprogenetic modification (it is born with a cancer gene), was turned into a laboratory model to be used in research on breast cancer. The mouse was patented in 1988 and developed for production and sale by the company Du Pont. The oncomouse is the world's first patented animal organism. In her book, Haraway discusses the ethical problems involved in the patenting of animal species and in making a painful disease part of their genetic make-up. The oncomouse text that I have analyzed (Lykke 1996), and that I shall re-analyze here, is a short extract from a longer chapter.

Text extract from:

Donna Haraway: *Modest_Witness@Second_Millennium_FemaleMan©_Meets_OncoMouse™. Feminism and Technoscience* (Haraway 1997, 79).

'Available to researchers only from Du Pont, where better things for better living come to life.'

OncoMouse™ is my sibling, and more properly, male or female, s/ he is my sister. Her essence is to be a mammal, a bearer by definition

of mammary glands, and a site for the operation of a transplanted, human, tumor-producing gene—an oncogene—that reliably produces breast cancer. Although her promise is decidedly secular, s/he is a figure in the sense developed within Christian realism: S/he is our scapegoat; s/he bars our suffering; s/he signifies and enacts our mortality in a powerful, historically specific way that promises a culturally privileged kind of salvation—a ‘cure for cancer’. Whether I agree to her existence and use or not, s/he suffers, physically, repeatedly, and profoundly, that I and my sisters may live. In the experimental way of life, s/he is the experiment. S/he also suffers that we, that is, those interpellated into this ubiquitous story, might inhabit the multibillion-dollar quest narrative of the search for the ‘cure for cancer’.

If not in my own body, then surely in those of my friends, I will someday owe to OncoMouse™ or her subsequently designed rodent kin a large debt. So, who is s/he? Gestated in the imploded matrices of the New World Order, OncoMouse™ is many things simultaneously. One of a varied line of transgenic research mice, s/he is an animal model system for a disease, breast cancer, that women in the United States have a one in eight chance of getting if they live into old age. Self-moving in Aristotle’s defining sense, s/he is a living animal, and so fit for the transnational discourses of rights emerging from green social movements, in which the consequences of the significant traffic between the materialized, ethno-specific categories of nature and culture are as evident as they are in patent offices and laboratories. OncoMouse™ is an ordinary commodity in the exchange circuits of transnational capital. A kind of machine tool for manufacturing other knowledge-building instruments in technoscience, the useful little rodent with the talent for mammary cancer is a scientific instrument for sale like many other laboratory devices.

Above all, OncoMouse™ is the first patented animal in the world.

THE DEATH OF A MALE/FEMALE/NEUTER FISH

The text from the English Royal Society confronts us with the historical period where the empiricist experimental method of modern natural sciences was emerging. Terry Threadgold emphasizes this in her analysis (1988). In the seventeenth century, natural scientific knowledge production as we know it today was far from given. Procedures and protocols for how experiments should be conducted in order to be acknowledged as scientific were under development. But science was not only struggling for identity in terms of procedures. How to report on the experiments in proper ways was also still an open question. In 1663, the genre of scientific reporting was in no way established as standard and norm. It was under construction, and it is this moment of process, construction and ‘doing’ that Threadgold seeks to capture in her analysis.

In terms of language, certain things happen in the text from the English Royal Society that would not happen in a conventional natural science report today. Threadgold (1988, 58) points out that the text is linguistically messy. Evaluated retrospectively, from the perspective of modern genre norms for a scientific report, the text is stylistically 'incorrect' in its use of personal pronouns and proper names. However, it is important to emphasize that the stylistic 'mistakes' cannot be seen as violations of genre norms. Since such norms were not established when the text was written about 350 years ago, it is, according to Threadgold, more appropriate to interpret the 'mistakes' as signs exposing the text as having been written within the framework of a not yet fully developed genre.

In terms of personal pronouns, the fish is called both 'it,' 'he' and 'she' ('it' in the first section entitled 'Fish and Lime'; 'he' and 'she' in the section entitled 'Fish under Diminished Pressure'). Looking at the standards for the genre of the scientific report, as it was eventually constituted, third person neuter ('it') is the 'correct', thing-like way of describing an animal used for experiments. Third person neuter signals that the animal is a mere instrument for the experiment, a thing. 'She' or 'he' are, by contrast, standard pronouns for reference to subjects (usually human ones), and a laboratory animal, in scientific discourses like these, is not seen as a subject.

When the English Royal Society text in some cases uses 'he' or 'she' instead of 'it' when referring to the fish, this can, first, be interpreted as an anachronism emerging out of discursive regimes belonging to a prescientific, animistic world view that constructs animals as living subjects. Second, following Threadgold's analysis (1988, 58), we can also see the gender ideology of the authors of the report reflected here. When the fish actively struggles to keep afloat in the upper part of the water where there may still be some oxygen left, it is referred to as 'he'—compare 'buoyed up to the upper part of the water, when he would sink.' However, when it lies passive and half-dead on the bottom of the tank, when more or less all the oxygen seems to be gone, it is referred to as 'she'—compare 'how long she would live after the exhausting of the air.' In other words: the actively struggling fish is linguistically constructed as male, while it is defined as female when transformed into a passive, half-dead object.

In her analysis of the English Royal Society text, Threadgold makes yet another interesting linguistic observation on the use of proper names. The human actors, that is, the male researchers who conduct the experiments, are meticulously named. Apparently, it is important for the author(s) of the text to account for exactly who does what. As readers, we can witness how Sir Robert Moray, Dr. Wilkins, Mr. Hooke and Dr. Goddard each participate in specific ways in the various experiments. However, in the developed genre of the scientific report, it is precisely *not* important who does what. On the contrary, according to a major tenet of empiricist positivist epistemology, it should be possible to repeat an experiment independent of the particular researcher handling the research apparatus and so on. This

is the epistemological reason why depersonalization has become a genre norm. The names—Moray, Wilkins and so on—should, according to modern genre norms, appear on the title page of the report, but should not be scattered across the text as is the case here, as if it *did* matter in some way to the end result of the experiment who did what.

As noted in Threadgold (1988, 58), the English Royal Society text is stylistically messy and inconsistent if, in retrospect, we use the fully developed modern scientific report genre as lens and norm. Parts of the text make ‘mistakes,’ as I have previously discussed. But it should also be noted that other parts comply exactly with later criteria and standards. This is the case as far as the first section called ‘Fish and Lime’ is concerned. In this part of the text, the fish is, ‘correctly,’ referred to as ‘it,’ there are no named human actors—and in line with the vanishing from the scene of these actors, verbs are, moreover, written in passive form:

A fish was put in a glass with water, closed up with lime, in order to see how long it would live so, the air being excluded from it. (Threadgold 1988, 54)

According to Threadgold, the stylistic messiness that is significant of the text should, as mentioned, be interpreted as an expression of a genre under construction (1988, 56). However, Threadgold argues, this is precisely what makes the text interesting. The readers can follow linguistically how ‘the myth of objective science and the knowing subject’ (1988, 58) is constructed. The messiness lays open the process of construction and its intersecting moments of doing: doing science, doing science writing, doing human–animal relations and doing gender/sex. As readers, we not only see the final—‘congealed’—result of the god-trick of modern science in the shape of detached observations of the duration of the death of a fish left without oxygen. We are instead linguistically called forward as witnesses to a violent process of slow suffocation with named perpetrators. Moreover, we are confronted with the ways in which the material violence (the painful way in which the fish is killed slowly) is matched by a symbolic, linguistic violence when the suffering and struggle of the fish and the researchers’ involvement in the killing are erased in the first ‘Fish and Lime’ text’s construction of neutral, depersonalized, third-person sentences in the passive mode.

The differences between the three text sections dealing with the fish and lime experiment spell out the doing of the god-trick of modern science in a clear way. The fish’s struggles and suffering, which we as readers are brought to witness when reading among other things about ‘his eyes swelling and standing out’ in the ‘Fish under Diminished Pressure’ section, is dramatized by the objectification of the fish as it is, in a concrete linguistic sense, reified from ‘he’/‘she’ to ‘it’ in the first ‘Fish and Lime’ section. How the researchers are personally active in causing the fish its painful suffering is, on the one hand, laid totally open, when we as readers are told (in the

last 'Fish and Lime' section) that Dr. Goddard will repeat the experiment and let it carry on until the fish cannot survive. On the other hand, when the researchers vanish from the textual scene in the first 'Fish and Lime' section, their bodily concrete and personal involvement in the killing also disappears from the horizon. Complying with later genre norms, what is left on the scene in the first 'Fish and Lime' section is just a fish thing being manipulated by invisible hands, while the researchers are transformed into neutral, faceless narrators and observers from 'outside,' who are not in bodily contact with the fish apart from through a distanced God's-eye view. In this sense, the god-trick of modern science has been consummated in the first 'Fish and Lime' text.

Furthermore, apart from illustrating the god-trick in a concrete linguistic way, the English Royal Society text is interesting insofar as it gives an example of the performativity of many traditional scientific discourses in terms of constructing intersections between processes of animaling, sexing and gendering in stereotypical binary ways. However, in addition to the binaries, the text also includes an interesting illustration of the point made forcefully by poststructuralism: that excess meanings and ambiguities tend to sneak into the binary schemes. The gender order of the text is, as Threadgold notes 'remarkably systematic and consistent' (Threadgold 1988, 58). Activity is associated with masculinity and passivity with femininity. In this binary scheme there is no confusion, no transgressive meaning. The scheme appears natural and universal. But, as Threadgold also points out, a certain 'gender confusion' is simultaneously at play when different sex-indicating pronouns are applied to the fish in 'inconsistent' ways (Threadgold 1988, 58).

THE RESURRECTION OF A TRANS/GENDERED LAB ANIMAL

After looking at how the English Royal Society text seeks to constitute a genre of scientific reporting, which, in a positivist sense, makes it possible for researchers to perform the god-trick of speaking in an 'objective' (neutral, depersonalized) and objectifying mode, I shall now turn to Haraway. Haraway's OncoMouse™ text is a sophisticated example of an act of *linguistic undoing* of precisely the process of *linguistic rendering* the animal research-object into an 'it,' and the researcher(s) into a distant god's eye, illustrated by the English Royal Society text. Using a postconstructionist feminist rhetorical gesture, Haraway disrupts the way in which positivist-empiricist science writing, as part of the god-trick, reduces laboratory animals to things, objects and resources. In so doing, she also 'undoes' the ways in which normative and stereotyping processes of gendering, sexing and animaling are often intertwined in traditional scientific discourses. As I account for it in an earlier analysis (Lykke 1996), which I shall elaborate on here, Haraway carries out these processes of linguistic undoing by

consciously using what in Chapter 10 I called 'literary techniques.' On the following pages I shall line up some of these, spelling out the concrete contrasts with the English Royal Society text.

First, Haraway consciously uses pronouns in a different way. While the English Royal Society text performs a genre constituting move toward constructing the laboratory animal as an 'it,' Haraway undoes the reifying speech act of the scientific report genre. In her text, she transforms OncoMouse™ into a 's/he.' She resurrects OncoMouse™ from the degraded status of reified object (instrumentalized laboratory animal) to a subject of equal worth with the human one, using pronouns usually referring to humans ('she'/'he'). Furthermore, when she writes the mouse into the text as a transgendered 's/he,' she challenges stereotypical gender connotations belonging to the essentialized two-gender model that universalizes behaviors in a dualistic scheme as 'feminine' or 'masculine.'

Second, Haraway underlines the performative act of resurrecting OncoMouse™ from a degraded thing to a subject of equal worth by giving her/him a proper name: OncoMouse™. The norm of the scientific report is to refer to animals as representatives for their species, *in casu*, the transgenic strain oncomouse. But Haraway undoes this norm by naming the mouse OncoMouse™. She gives her/him a proper name that, however, also works as a reminder of her/his gloomy destiny as a patented laboratory animal adding '™' (trademark) to it.

Third, Haraway undoes the god-trick's construction of a universal cut between researcher subject and object of research, which is seen in a fully developed form in the first 'Fish and Lime' section of the English Royal Society text, where the human actors have withdrawn from the scene of violent action to a position as neutral, uninvolved, distant observers. In Haraway's text, researcher subject and research object are reconnected. She recognizes her close kinship with OncoMouse™, 'interpellating' (Althusser 1971) the mouse as her 'sibling' or 'sister.' She also talks about OncoMouse™ as an ethical subject to whom you must pay respect and to whom you can owe a moral debt. She even admits that she, probably personally, will end up being in debt to OncoMouse™ ('If not in my own body, then surely in those of my friends, I will someday owe to OncoMouse™ . . . a large debt' [Haraway 1997, 79]).

Fourth, Haraway undoes the depersonalized and neutral style of writing that the English Royal Society text tried to install as norm. Consciously, Haraway writes herself into the text as an 'I' who is ethically committed to caring for her sister/sibling, the suffering OncoMouse™. On behalf of her sister/sibling, Haraway articulates a strong critique of the reprogenetic industry and its problematic consequences, for example its production and patenting of transgenic animals, such as OncoMouse™.

Fifth, a further complicating move in this connection is that Haraway commits herself ethically not only to OncoMouse™, but also to the women who may be cured from breast cancer through this research, for which

OncoMouse™ pays with her body. Haraway refers to *both* the suffering of OncoMouse™ *and* to human friends who maybe in the future will be cured from cancer. In this way, Haraway moves away from a classic standpoint epistemology and a traditional animal rights discourse toward a type of multiple standpoint epistemology (discussed in Chapter 8). In the text, she takes both the standpoint of the laboratory animal (OncoMouse™) and that of women who suffer from breast cancer, and whose suffering may come to an end through the suffering of OncoMouse™.

Sixth, I also want to highlight that Haraway articulates her ethico-political commitment by breaking with the norms of a neutral—denotative—writing and unambiguously defined terms that characterize the traditional scientific report genre. She uses ‘literary techniques’ and writes in a literarily informed academic style. Consciously, she plays with connotations and multi-layered meanings, including what in textual analysis is called ‘overdetermination,’ that is, the phenomenon that a textual element can carry meanings from many different discursive registers. An example of Haraway’s play with overdetermination is her ironical–metaphorical construction of contiguity between OncoMouse™ and Jesus, establishing a link between the things the former does for breast cancer patients and those that the Christian faith holds that Jesus’ suffering is doing for humanity. This metaphorical comparison is made explicit in the following characterization of OncoMouse™:

Although her promise is decidedly secular, s/he is a figure in the sense developed within Christian realism: S/he is our scapegoat; s/he bars our suffering; s/he signifies and enacts our mortality in a powerful, historically specific way that promises a culturally privileged kind of salvation—a ‘cure for cancer’. Whether I agree to her existence and use or not, s/he suffers, physically, repeatedly, and profoundly, that I and my sisters may live. (Haraway 1997, 79)

In the metaphorical comparison between OncoMouse™ and Jesus that is inscribed in this paragraph within the framework of the concept of overdetermination, several complex things are at stake.

To make OncoMouse™ into a Jesus figure is an ironic-feminist and subversive gesture. The gesture can be interpreted as an example of a ‘carnavalesque travesty’ (Bakhtin 1993), using a notion from literary scholar Mikhail Bakhtin’s analysis of laughter, the grotesque and the carnival of the European Middle Ages and Renaissance as a political culture of resistance. A carnivalesque travesty is a genre in which something that is normally dignified and occupies a ‘high’ position is dragged to the ground and ridiculed. In Haraway’s text, in the manner of a carnivalesque travesty, Jesus is carnivalized, that is, brought into contiguity with the ‘low’ and ‘inferior’ laboratory animal thing OncoMouse™. God’s son, the human *par excellence*, is transformed into an ‘inferior’ animal, a transgendered,

transgenic and patented laboratory mouse. We must ask: Can He (Jesus) sink any lower? and confirm that there is an ironic-feminist point in effectively dragging Him down to the level of s/he.

The textual construction of a carnivalesque linguistic contiguity between Jesus and OncoMouse™ is, however, not the only thing at stake here. While Jesus is dragged down, the resurrection of OncoMouse™ to a quasi-human status is at the same time intensified, that is, the move that was initiated by Haraway's previously mentioned naming strategies, use of pronouns and emphasis on her being related to OncoMouse™ by blood ties of kinship. Thereby, Haraway's ethical commitment and political critique of the reprogenetic industry is profiled even more strongly. In a feminist-ironic mode, I commented on this in my earlier analysis:

If it is unethical to treat a sister as stupid, subjectless matter, it is of course even more despicable to submit Jesus to such a treatment. (Lykke 1996, 36, translated from Danish)

In a traditional Christian discourse, this degradation of Jesus is sacrilege. However, as I stressed in my analysis (Lykke 1996, 37), there is yet another layer of meanings in OncoMouse™'s metaphorical appearance as Jesus. When Haraway discusses 'a cure for cancer' as 'salvation,' OncoMouse™ is metaphorically compared to Jesus as the Savior. But more things are at stake here. A few lines further down in Haraway's text, she inscribes the 'cure for cancer' into what she refers to as 'the multibillion-dollar quest narrative' (Haraway 1997, 79) with clear, critical references to the reprogenetic industry that may, in the future, make huge profits from such a cure, as well as from the effective laboratory animal for experimental testing, that is, OncoMouse™, whose body is genetically programmed to 'reliably' (Haraway 1997, 79) develop breast cancer. This reference to the reprogenetic industry and its hunger for profit is supported by the advert that introduces the OncoMouse™ text in Haraway's book. The first line in Haraway's text—'Available to researchers only from Du Pont, where better things for better living come to life' (Haraway 1997, 79)—comes from Du Pont's advertising campaign for OncoMouse™. By inserting the narrative about OncoMouse™ into a context that links it up with Du Pont's commercial, and by adding ™ (trademark) to the name of OncoMouse™, thereby highlighting the mouse as a commodity, the ambiguity and multi-layeredness in relation to the metaphorical comparison with Jesus increases. Against this backdrop, the comparison can be interpreted as Haraway's critical-ironic miming of the ways in which the reprogenetic industry advertises its products through referring to 'big' master narratives, for example Christian ones, about salvation from death and damnation. Through these references to Du Pont, and, more generally, to slogans of the reprogenetic industry, Haraway invites associations with layers of meaning that intensify the reification of the laboratory animal. With these references, Haraway makes it

visible that OncoMouse™ is not only turned into an instrument with use value for basic research, which was the case with the fish in the English Royal Society text. OncoMouse™ is also commercialized and transformed into a commodity value, a patented, profit-making device for the reproductive industry, which sells 'salvation' and 'better living' through the suffering body of OncoMouse™.

For my *seventh*, and final, point in this line-up of ways in which Haraway undoes the epistemological god-trick and the writing styles of the scientific report (which the English Royal Society text tried to install as norm), I shall return to the notion of 'poetic truth' (which I discussed in Chapter 10). Haraway's 'literary' characterization of OncoMouse™ can thus be seen as a conscious attempt to textually articulate a poetic truth rather than a positivist one. The term 'articulation' is Haraway's way of referring to the ways in which subjectivity and objectivity are woven into each other in the scholarly writing process (Haraway 1997, 63). According to her, a scholarly text can never be a representation. In a literal sense, 're-presentation' means that the text 'presents again'—that in a positivist mode it mimes reality 'out there' through language that is transparent. In contrast to this, Haraway defines 'articulation' as a way of standing by and productively exploring the ways in which language is an actively creative and reality-producing medium.

There is a clear connection between what Haraway refers to as 'articulation' and what, in the last chapter, I referred to as 'poetic truth.' This also relates to Haraway's notion of situated knowledges and partial objectivity. Linking the notions of 'poetic truth' and 'situated, partial objectivity' implies the claim that the search for the former will always involve the researcher as a committed and situated subject whose articulations of the 'object' bear her subjective mark in the same way as, for example, a novel stands out as a work that is shaped by the imagination and subjectivity of the author. But it is also implied in the claim that the 'poetic truth' or 'situated, partial objectivity' to be reached involves a more robust link to the discursive-material world of intersubjective realities than being a mere outburst of private fantasies. Seen from the perspective of positivist science, such a conceptualization of subjective-objective or poetic 'objectivity' is an oxymoron. Within a literary context, as well as in the context of a postmodern or postconstructionist feminist epistemology, it makes perfect sense.

CONCLUSION: BALANCING POSTDISCIPLINARITY AND DISCIPLINARY LUGGAGE

In this chapter, I have focused on analytical examples that can assist those readers who are interested in what it means, in concrete terms, to make feminist analyses and who are interested in using a feminist hermeneutic perspective (Franklin, Lury and Stacey 2000, 6). As described in Chapter 9, this is a perspective that may focus on intersectional gender/sex, but

that can also be used in relation to other objects of research. This chapter's analyses have built on both of these analytical dimensions. The chapter has explored gender and intersectionality (between gender and human-animal relations), but also issues in epistemology, writing and ethics.

Moreover, as noted in Chapter 9, pluralism as far as methods are concerned is a key word for Feminist Studies. A critical feminist hermeneutics can be combined with a broad variety of methods. In this chapter, I have chosen to combine it with the method of textual analysis, which is close to my own background in Literary and Cultural Studies. My choice of Threadgold as sparring partner should also be seen in relation to this. There are many overlaps between the methods that she uses in her capacity of linguist, and some of the methods of analytical close-reading common in the Literary Studies tradition from which I come.

Against this backdrop, it is important to emphasize that I could have ended this book by using completely different analytical examples. The analyses that are presented in this chapter should thus be seen as tastes, not templates.

Despite my pleas for multi-, inter-, trans- and postdisciplinarity, I have good reasons for choosing to introduce analytical examples in this final chapter that build on my own disciplinary tradition. To emphasize the postdisciplinary disiplinaryity of Feminist Studies, and its transgression of disciplinary starting points, should not be taken to imply that the individual feminist researcher should forget what her or his education and specific background have made her or him particularly good at doing. In contrast, I argue that it is my obligation, as a postdisciplinary feminist researcher, to take with me into the postdisciplinary field the methods to which I, via my educational and professional background, have a privileged access. I consider it to be my task to elaborate on the ways in which they can enrich the field and not just leave them behind. To perform as a postdisciplinary feminist researcher should not be the same as doing the god-trick, that is, to pretend to know all sorts of methods from all sorts of areas equally well. A postdisciplinary researcher can explore a variety of methods, but must carefully consider what she or he has in her or his own academic luggage.

Notes

NOTES TO CHAPTER 2

1. For a further elaboration of the notion of transversal dialogues as methodology in feminist research, see Pryse 2000. Drawing inspiration from Nira Yuval-Davis's notion of transversal dialogues (Yuval-Davis 1997; see this book Chapters 5 and 8), set up to explore affinities and possible platforms for solidarity and joint action between geopolitically differently located feminist activists, USA-based feminist scholar Marjorie Pryse developed a model for cross-disciplinary transversality in Feminist Studies.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 4

2. German feminist scholar Antje Hornscheidt (2007, 67; 2009, 41) has argued that the term 'categorization' is more appropriate than 'category,' when the social and communicative processes of 'categorizing' are to be emphasized; 'category' associates to the reified and congealed results of these processes.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 6

3. 'Character mask' is a direct English translation of the German concept 'Charaktermaske,' which Marx uses to define the ways in which members of capitalist society by the logics of production and circulation are reduced to personifications of economic relations (Marx 1972/1990, 100). The term is commonly used in German Marxist texts. Often, English translations do not translate the term directly. But it is sometimes used (Eldred 2003, 38). The direct translation gives a more precise understanding of the way in which Mette Bryld and I appropriated the concept for feminist theory. This is why I use it here.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 7

4. Luce Irigaray uses, in a critical-ironic way, the term 'hom(m)osexuelle' (Irigaray 1974/1985, 460) to describe homosocial bonding between men. She draws on the similarity between the words 'homo' (alike) and 'homme' ('man' in French) and thereby signals that male homosociality has homosexual undertones.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 9

5. The neologism 'factional' is a combination of the concepts 'fact' and 'fiction.' It refers to a genre that erodes the boundaries between the two.
6. Besides the work of Franklin, Lury and Stacey (2000), I shall also refer to feminist scholar Mette Bryld (1998) to briefly illustrate what it means to use a feminist hermeneutics in analyses, where gender/sex or gender relations *per se* are not the analytical focus, but at the same time are given a crucial role in the interpretative framework. Bryld (1998) explored the ways in which shifting scientific discourses on animals (lab dogs and dolphins) in the former Soviet Union reflected changes in politics from Stalinism to the era of Khrushchev, showing how a discursive regime, centered on metaphors playing on 'grandfatherification,' gave way to one of 'grandmotherification.'

NOTES TO CHAPTER 10

7. The term 'cultural imaginaries' is used in the field of Cultural Studies to refer to the perceptions, images, fantasies and so on in which a cultural community collectively mirrors itself, and which, therefore, gains importance as a shared frame of reference for the production of identity for the community.

Glossary

Agential realism: A theory, informed by feminist theorizing, that was developed by Karen Barad (1996, 1998, 2003, 2007). With the term agential realism, Barad refers to intra-action (mutually transformative interplays) between human and non-human actors involving both discursive and material dimensions. With the neologism '*intra-action*,' Barad draws a distinction in relation to *inter*-action of fixed and bounded entities, which clash like billiard balls. Instead, *intra*-acting phenomena relate to each other in mutually transformative ways. Barad's theory about agential realism and intra-action has clear implications for feminist theorizing of intersectional gender/sex. It implies that the borders between biological-material and sociocultural aspects of intersectional gender/sex cannot be maintained. Barad's agential realist theory of intra-action is also highly relevant for the theorizing of intersectionalities between gender and other sociocultural categories. (See also **Corpomaterialist feminist theories** and **Intersectional feminist theories**.)

Articulation: refers to the process of scholarly writing, understood as 'a method of inquiry' (Richardson 2000). It can be contrasted with representation, which—if taken in a literal sense—refers to a mimetic re/presentation of a reality that already exists 'out there,' independent of the knowledge-producing process. Articulation is a concept used (among others by Donna Haraway [1997, 63]) to critically emphasize the agency of language, discourse and narration in the process of writing research reports. (See also **Writing as a method of inquiry**.)

Biological determinism: This notion refers to the conservative assumption that bodily biology (in terms of sex, race, dis/ability etc.) is a determining factor for social, cultural and psychological identities and positions in society. Biologically determinist perceptions of sexual difference and gender relations are normally interrelated with gender-conservative ideas about a binary and hegemonic relation between men/male/masculinity, universally defined as superior/dominant in relation to women/female/femininity, which are cast as inferior/subordinate. Biological determinism is also closely related to a hegemonic idea of heterosexuality as an unquestionable, nature-given norm—an idea that leads to the stigmatization of non-heterosexual practices as 'unnatural' and 'deviant.' Biologically determinist thought is often intersectional, linking, for example, sexism, homophobia and racism. Moreover, it often goes hand in hand with cultural essentialism. (See also **Cultural essentialism**.)

Corpomaterialist feminist theories: It is used in this book as an umbrella term for a set of rather different theories of gender/sex and sexual difference that nevertheless share a critical approach to the classic feminist gender/sex distinction and to tendencies in feminist gender de/constructionism to focus on historical-sociocultural and/or linguistic-discursive gender constructions as being detached from sexed embodiment and from the materiality of bodies. Against the background

of this shared critique of the ways in which feminist gender de/constructionists have tended to ‘forget’ to theorize and rethink sex, sexual difference, biology, bodily materialities and agencies, I have in this book defined them as ‘*post-constructionist*.’ They theorize bodily materialities, including sexual ones, and give attention to the relationships between subject and embodiment as well as between discourse and materiality. In contrast to feminist gender de/constructionists, corpomaterialist feminist theorists consider it possible to theorize the body as a prediscursive facticity. They emphasize the agency of matter, but without falling back into the trap of biological determinism. The agency of matter is conceived in non-determinist and non-essentializing ways. (See also **Agential realism**, **Cyborg feminist theory**, **Gender/sex-distinction**, **Postconstructionist feminist epistemologies**, **Sexual difference theories**.)

Critical Studies of Men and Masculinities: are based on the assumption that it is not enough to critically analyze gendered power differentials and gender relations with a focus only on those who are oppressed or marginalized. According to researchers in the field, men’s hegemonies and hegemonic forms of masculinities must also be submitted to critical scrutiny in order to develop strategies to create equality and break down the hegemonic powers and positions that some men hold over women, children and other men. Critical Studies of Men and Masculinities focus on differences in men’s positions and operate with multiple masculinities. From an outspoken ‘profeminist’ perspective, researchers within this sub-field of Feminist Studies turn critically against men’s hegemonies and also against research on men and masculinities that does not take a clear and ‘counter-hegemonic’ position (Hearn 2004, 62).

Critical Whiteness Studies: are based on the assumption that it is not enough to critically analyze processes of racialization with a focus only on those who are oppressed or marginalized. According to researchers in the field, it is also necessary to critically scrutinize white normativity. Feminist researchers doing Critical Whiteness Studies have analyzed intersections of gender and whiteness. (See also **Intersectional feminist theories** and **Postcolonial and anti-racist feminist theories**.)

Cultural essentialism: The notion that cultural ‘origin’, that is, descent from or background in a certain cultural context (in terms of ethnicity, national belonging, religious beliefs etc.), is a determining factor for social, cultural and psychological identities and positions in society. Culturally essentialist perceptions of sexual difference and gender relations are normally interrelated with gender-conservative ideas about a hegemonic and hierarchical relation between men/male/masculinity, universally defined as superior/dominant in relation to women/female/femininity, which are cast as inferior/subordinate. Cultural essentialism is also closely related to a hegemonic idea of heterosexuality as a universal cultural norm—an idea that leads to the stigmatization of non-heterosexual practices as ‘anti-social’ and ‘deviant.’ Culturally essentialist thought is often intersectional, linking for example, sexism, racism, homophobia, xenophobia and ethnocentrism. Moreover, it often goes hand in hand with biological determinism. (See also **Biological determinism**.)

Cyborg feminist theory: A cyborg is a cybernetic organism, that is, a merger of technology and organism, a technobody. As part of the wide-ranging technologization of bodies, everyday life and environment that is characteristic of the world today, the cyborg figure has gained importance both as a figure of science fiction and as scientific fact. Donna Haraway (1991b) appropriated the cyborg figure for feminist theory. According to her, it can mobilize a critical potential because, as a technobody, it erases the boundaries between discursive/semiotic and material aspects of the body, including the boundaries on which the gender/sex distinction is based. The fact that discursive/semiotic and material aspects

of the cyborg's technobody cannot be separated implies that the boundaries between biological-material and sociocultural dimensions of gender/sex cannot be maintained. (See also **Corpomaterialist feminist theories** and **Gender/sex-distinction**.)

Deconstruction and deessentialization of intersectional gender/sex: This terminology refers to theories that use a deconstructive method in order to break down stable and fixed categories of gender/sex in their intersections with other sociocultural categories (race, ethnicity etc.). In this way, they subvert the basis for an essentialized and universalist understanding of such categories.

Deconstructive method: was developed by Jacques Derrida (1979, 1987). A deconstruction explodes the binary oppositions of language (for example, feminine/masculine, black/white, homosexual/heterosexual) in favor of a focus on in-between spaces, excess meanings, undecidables and so on, that is, meanings that cannot be classified within a framework of binary and hierarchically ordered oppositions. Strong branches of feminist research have appropriated the deconstructive method and used it to think beyond the stereotyped two-gender model, which sees 'Woman' and 'Man' as fixed polar oppositions, determined in a culturally essentialist and/or biologically determinist sense. Intersectional gender/sex is also often analyzed against the background of deconstructive methods. (See also **Biological determinism** and **Cultural essentialism**.)

Doing differences: refers to a de/constructionist theorizing of the ways in which intersecting power differentials are produced in sociocultural processes of interpersonal communication and in constantly renewed negotiations of meaning. Against the background of this approach, intersectionalities between gender and other social categorizations are understood as something we 'do' in a communicative process rather than as something we 'have' or 'are.' (See also **Doing gender** and **Intersectional feminist theories**.)

Doing gender: refers to gender de/constructionist theorizing of the ways in which gender is produced in sociocultural processes of interpersonal communication and in constantly renewed negotiations of meanings of gender/sex. Against the background of this approach, gender/sex is understood as something we 'do' in a communicative process rather than as something we 'have' or 'are.' (See also **Gender de/constructionism**.)

Écriture féminine, women's writing: is a mode of writing developed by sexual difference theorist and author Hélène Cixous that combines theorizing and experimenting with an embodied and passionate writing. Together with the texts of Luce Irigaray, another sexual difference theorist, on speaking as a woman ('*parler-femme*'), and also the psychosemiotician Julia Kristeva's theories of desire in language, Cixous' notion of *écriture féminine*, women's writing, became influential for the poststructuralist and deconstructive turn in Feminist Studies. The new mode of writing/theorizing inspired a new take on the relation between gender/sex, sexual difference, body and language.

Feminist empiricism: A branch of feminist epistemology giving priority to the elimination of gender bias in scientific knowledge production through a rigorous adherence to existing criteria for 'good' (i.e., objective and value-neutral) science. According to feminist empiricism, gender bias (i.e., the fact that scientific results are influenced and distorted by gender-conservative prejudices and ideologies) occurs because scientific standard criteria have not been applied rigorously enough by the researchers.

Feminist figuration: An alternative—affirmative—feminist subjectivity, articulated in a figurative form. A figuration is located in-between fact and fiction. It should be understood both as a vision that the individual female feminist subject is in the process of making real, and as a critique of the here-and-now situation. According to Rosi Braidotti's theorizing of the notion of figuration (Braidotti

2002, 3), which draws on Gilles Deleuze's philosophy, it is important that figurations take into account thought, emotions, imagination and bodies.

Feminist hermeneutics: refers in this book to the critical feminist practice of interpretation and analysis, which can link up to a diversity of different methods—from social sciences, humanities, medical and natural sciences. The term was coined by feminist Cultural Studies scholars Sarah Franklin, Celia Lury and Jackie Stacey (2000, 6). They use it to emphasize that the object of feminist research does not necessarily have to be gender/sex, but that all possible research objects can be analyzed from a critical feminist perspective.

Feminist Marxism: Karl Marx's theories and his method of historical materialism have been influential for feminist theorizings of intersections of gender and class. The aim of historical materialism is a radical historicizing of oppressive social relations and societal conditions and, against this background, to develop a socially transformative and emancipatory perspective. Feminist theorists have built on historical materialism, but they have also critically revised Marxist conceptual frameworks and analyses in order to conceptualize the gender orders of capitalism.

Feminist standpoint epistemologies: make up a branch of feminist epistemology that builds on certain analogies with Marxist epistemology. In Karl Marx's theories of capitalism, the class standpoint of the workers' collective can lead to a revolutionary understanding of the core mechanisms of societal oppression. In feminist standpoint theories, a women's standpoint or a feminist standpoint, developed in the context of the collective practices of women's movements, are prerequisites for a critical transgressive conceptualization of society that can be used as a basis for defining a new, socially just societal order without oppression or inequality. As is the case in Marxist epistemology, a feminist standpoint epistemology is linked up with a certain ontological starting point in a social theory (a feminist materialist theory of society).

Feminist Studies: In this book it is used as a broad, umbrella term and inclusive shorthand for Feminist/Gender/Women's Studies, defined as a postdisciplinary discipline, referring to broad cross-disciplinary endeavors informed by specific debates on epistemologies, methodologies, ethics, theories, methods and genres of reporting. The field is also understood as based on an inclusive feminist pluralism, dialogism and boundary crossing between a multiplicity of branches of feminist theorizing that have emerged out of many different kinds of differently located feminist movements for political, social and cultural change. It also includes the area of Critical Studies of Men and Masculinities that labels itself as 'profeminist,' signaling a political solidarity with feminist movements. (See also *Postdisciplinary discipline* or *postdiscipline*.)

Gender as social construction: There is a range of different feminist theories that conceptualize gender as social construction. A common denominator in the middle of this theoretical diversity is a focus on the ways in which gender is produced in historical-societal and/or discursive-linguistic processes. Feminist Marxist gender theory, for example, pays attention to the historical-societal dimensions of the process of gender construction. Lacanian feminist gender theory, conversely, concentrates on the gender constructions going on in language. Theories about doing gender and gender as performative focus on the discursive-linguistic process, understood as embedded in specific historical-institutional contexts. (See also *Doing gender*, *Feminist Marxism*, *Gender as performative*, *Gender de/constructionism* and *Lacanian feminism*.)

Gender de/constructionism: An umbrella term, used in this book for theories of gender as social construction that theorize gender as produced in historical-societal and/or discursive-linguistic processes. (See also *Deconstruction* and *deessentialization of intersectional gender/sex* and *Gender as social construction*.)

Gendered power differentials: refers to the ways in which different kinds of societal power relations, based, among others, on class, race, ethnicity, sexuality and so on, intersect with power differentials based on gender/sex. Many feminist theorists argue that each of the power relations, including that of gender/sex, are based on different logics, but that they also mutually influence and transform each other. Different feminist theories of intersectionality have been mobilized to theorize these mutual influences. (See also **Intersectional feminist theories**.)

Gender/sex as performative: In speech act theory (Austin 1962), a performative is a word that prompts an action. Judith Butler (1990, 1993, 1997b) has developed her much-quoted theory about gender/sex as performative and as doing with inspiration from speech act theory and within the framework of a general understanding of language as performative. Seen from a Butlerian perspective, gender/sex should be understood as being shaped in language and discourse, that is, in unending sequences of citations through which the individual subject gets to know herself or himself. Butler's theory is based on the assumption that there is no prediscursive gender/sex or subject ('no "doer" behind the deed,' Butler 1990, 25); gender/sex and subject are created and re-created via citational practices. (See also **Doing gender**.)

Gender/sex category: In line with the critique of the gender/sex distinction, which was first welcomed by many feminist researchers, but later criticized due to its splitting of sociocultural dimensions from issues of bodily materiality, I have chosen to use the ambiguous term 'gender/sex' in this book, when I do not explicitly talk about either sociocultural or bodily material aspects, or refer to theories that explicitly maintain the separation. However, in order not to complicate the language unnecessarily, I retain the term 'gender' as shorthand for 'gender/sex' in composite expressions such as 'gender relations,' in verb forms such as 'gendered' and when lining up nexuses of gender and intersecting power differentials (race, ethnicity, class, sexuality etc.). (See also **Corpomaterialist feminist theories**, **Gender as a social construction**, **Gender de/constructionism** and **Gender/sex distinction**.)

Gender/sex distinction: The separating out of sociocultural 'gender' from biological 'sex' has been important for feminist critiques of biological determinism and cultural essentialism. Gender-conservative constructions of stereotypes and universal dualisms linking men/male/masculine/superior and women/female/feminine/inferior were critically countered by feminist theorizings of gender as changeable, relational and contextually re/produced in societal and discursive processes that are in constant transformation, implying that current hegemonic relations of domination/subordination could be critically challenged and changed. However, the conceptual separation of sociocultural gender from biological sex has also been criticized by many feminist theorists, who, on the one hand, recognize the ways in which 'gender' has assisted in countering biological determinism and cultural essentialism, but who, on the other hand, argue for new—non-determinist and non-essentializing—theorizations of bodily matter and biological sex. (See also **Biological determinism**, **Corpomaterialist feminist theories**, **Cultural essentialism**, **Gender as a social construction** and **Gender de/constructionism**.)

Genealogical analysis: The concept is taken from Michel Foucault (1984). A genealogical analysis takes as its starting point a here-and-now perspective and constructs, via a retrospective analysis, a kind of 'family tree' for a certain strand of theory, conceptual framework, terminology and so on. A genealogical analysis disrupts the idea that the history of theory, science and knowledge production develops as a linear, rational sequence of events. On the contrary, it is based on the assumption that theoretical–historical links and mutual impacts between different strands of theory are best understood in hindsight.

Intersectional feminist theories: focus on the ways in which gender/sex is 'done' in intra-action with other sociocultural categorizations, and how societal power differentials and constructions of identities, based on gender, class, race, ethnicity, geopolitical position, nationality, sexuality, dis/ability, age and so on mutually influence each other. Feminist Marxism, for example, has theorized the relation between gender and class; postcolonial and anti-racist feminism has emphasized co-constructions of gender, race, ethnicity, geopolitical position and nationality; queerfeminism has focused on the relation between gender, sex and sexuality. Transversal reflections on the interplay between gender, class, race, ethnicity, geopolitical position, nationality, sexuality, dis/ability, age and so on are integrated into much feminist research, though in differing ways. The term 'intersectionality' (derived from the American English word for the crossing of roads: 'intersection', equivalent to the British English 'junction') has gained a lot of ground since the early 1990s as a name for these intra-actions between gender/sex and other sociocultural categories, power differentials and identity markers. Some feminist researchers have criticized the term 'intersectionality' and the use of the metaphor of an intersection. They use other names to theorize how power- and identity-forming processes based on gender/sex and other sociocultural categories, power differentials and identity markers interact and mutually transform each other (e.g., difference). (See also **Doing differences**, **Doing gender**, **Feminist Marxism**, **Postcolonial and anti-racist feminist theories**, and **Queerfeminist theories**).

Lacanian feminism: The French psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan's theories about the linguistic construction of gender and gendered subject positions have been adopted by feminist researchers, who particularly stressed Lacan's point that these positions are constructed without any inferences from biology or biological sex. Against this background, Lacanian theory has been mobilized in the feminist struggle against biological determinism. Seen from a feminist point of view, Lacan's theories also have their limitations, however. They allow no possibility for change in the language orders that uphold rigid gender polarities. The linguistic gender orders are, on the one hand, constantly disrupted by impulses from the unconscious; but, on the other hand, these disruptions cannot change the overarching gender dichotomy that is institutionalized in language.

Monologism/dialogism: refers to different types of literary texts and, in the context of this book, is translated into an interpretation of academic genres. In *monological* texts, all voices and perspectives of the 'characters' (informants-research participants, the material) are submitted to the control of the main narrator (the researcher subject), who also authoritatively evaluates competing truth claims. By contrast, in a *dialogical* text, the main narrator calls forward and enters into dialogue with other voices without indicating any final truths. Other voices are represented in the text with their own independent perspectives.

Multi-, Inter-, Trans- and Postdisciplinarity: In this book, the umbrella 'interdisciplinary' is specified, first of all, in three different *modes of working*: multidisciplinary research (problem-based collaboration between different disciplinary approaches without changing the disciplines), interdisciplinary research (creation of new synergies between disciplinary approaches) and transdisciplinary research (posing and exploring research questions that do not belong to existing disciplines). Second, the term, postdisciplinarity, refers to innovative *modes of organizing* scholarly knowledge production that is not based on a disciplinary structuring. (See also **Postdisciplinary discipline or postdiscipline**).

Phallogocentrism: The term is part of the conceptual framework of sexual difference theories. It articulates the intertwined centering on Phallus as a privileged signifier for desire and on Logos as hegemonically directing thought. According to sexual difference theorists, existing language and philosophy are

characterized by such a merging of Phallus and Logos. Phallogocentrism implies indifference toward sexual difference and a rejection of the links between rational thought and bodies/desires/passions/emotions. (See also **Corpomaterialist feminist theories**, **Écriture féminine** and **Sexual difference theories**.)

Pluralism of methods: In the context of this book, the term refers to a methodological principle of Feminist Studies. It follows from its multi-, inter-, trans- and postdisciplinary character that a diversity of methods can be, and is, used.

Postcolonial and anti-racist feminist theories: is an umbrella term for a diversity of different kinds of feminist theories that are based on inspirations from postcolonial theory and critical studies of race and ethnicity, and which share a theoretical and political interest in intersections between gender, race and ethnicity, often in interplay with categorizations such as class, geopolitical location, nationality and sexuality. Postcolonial and anti-racist feminists emphasize power-laden differences among women. They have criticized white, middle-class feminists' habit of both theoretically and politically building on universalizing claims about women's perspectives (e.g., claims about global sisterhood), implying that these should be identical. Postcolonial and anti-racist feminists argue that this kind of white, middle-class feminism glosses over major power differentials and inequalities among women. Both more structuralist-oriented theories and more poststructuralist ones have been articulated within the field. The former focuses on intersections between societal orders and logics of oppression, based on gender, race, ethnicity, class and so on, while the latter gives attention to discursive co-constructions of gender, race and so on and to the ways in which gender is done in intersection with processes of racialization, ethnification and so on. (See also **Doing differences**, **Doing gender** and **Intersectional feminist theories**.)

Postconstructionist feminist epistemologies: is an umbrella term that I introduce and define in this book. It refers to different epistemological positions that share a commitment to a double move into and beyond postmodern philosophy and poststructuralism. On the one hand, they are inspired by postmodern critiques of the foundationalist claims of traditional science and alternative ways to theorize science as discursive construction. On the other hand, it is also characteristic of these positions that they have moved beyond postmodern, poststructuralist and constructionist thought. Their takes on epistemological issues are different from postmodern feminist (anti-)epistemologies. They are not anti-epistemological, but base themselves firmly in alternative epistemological approaches. With a starting point in different types of corpomaterialist theories and ontologies, they claim that it is important to be able to speak about the world as a prediscursive facticity endowed with a non-determinist, but independent agency. (See also **Agential realism**, **Corpomaterialist feminist theories**, **Cyborg feminist theory** and **Sexual difference theories**.)

Postconstructionist feminist ethics: A common denominator for the different feminist postconstructionist theories that I introduce in this book (sexual difference theory, cyborg feminist theory, agential realism and so on) is their emphasis on close links between epistemology and ethics. Karen Barad, for example, stresses the importance of an 'ethics of knowing' (Barad 1996, 183). With this term, she refers to the ethical commitment of the researcher subject, her or his obligation to make herself or himself ethically accountable (as Donna Haraway puts it, 1991c, 190) for the results she or he creates through her or his research. Barad articulates this as an 'ethico-onto-epistem-ology' (Barad 2007, 185).

Postdisciplinary discipline or postdiscipline: When Feminist Studies in this book is defined as a postdisciplinary discipline (shorthand: postdiscipline), it implies that the area is seen *both* as an independent field of knowledge production (with its own core-object, theories, reflections on methodologies, epistemologies and ethics) *and* as a transgressive field that, through its multi-, inter-, trans- and

postdisciplinary practices, engages in radically open transversal dialogues across and beyond traditional disciplinary boundaries. (See also **Multi-, Inter-, Trans- and Postdisciplinarity**.)

Postmodern (anti-)ethics: As postmodern epistemology is best described as anti-epistemology, so it is also pertinent to understand postmodern ethics as an anti-ethics, that is, as an endeavor that aims at destabilizing and deconstructing fixed and universalized ethical foundations.

Postmodern feminist (anti-)epistemologies: Postmodern critiques of traditional positivist beliefs in a value-neutral and objective science have gained much ground among feminist theorists. Instead of setting up criteria for what 'good' science is, postmodern theorists—feminists and non-feminists alike—have epistemologically problematized and deconstructed the stable and secure foundations of scientific knowledge production and emphasized an understanding of science as discourse and narrative. Therefore, it is relevant to talk about postmodern anti-epistemology and stress postmodern critiques of epistemologies, rather than merely speak about postmodern epistemology. Feminist postmodern critiques of epistemologies have, among other things, problematized the epistemological foundations of standpoint feminism in concepts such as 'women' and 'experience,' and the fixed and given epistemological point of departure in, for example, a 'women's standpoint.'

Queerfeminist theories: This term refers to the part of queer theory that emphasizes that gender, sex and sexuality cannot be analyzed in separation from each other, and that critical Feminist Studies of gender/sex, and critical sexuality studies must be integrated into each other. Through Judith Butler's influential version (Butler 1990 and 1993), queerfeminist theory has become linked up with a radical deconstruction and deessentialization of gender, sex and sexuality. Gender and sexuality are critically analyzed as intra-acting performatives (identity-constructing notions) within the framework of a heteronormative discourse (the so-called heterosexual matrix, Butler 1990, 17), which forcibly normalizes and naturalizes a hegemonic heterosexual two-gender model and a heterosexual desire. (See also **Deconstruction and deessentialization of intersectional gender/sex and Gender as performative**.)

Resignification: To resignify means literally to give meaning to a term 'once more.' The concept was introduced into feminist theory by Judith Butler (e.g., 1993 and 1997b) as a term indicating the process whereby a pejorative way of naming groups of people is given a new—positive—meaning as part of a political movement resisting hegemony and stigmatization. Butler's example is the way in which the term 'queer'—an invective used to stigmatize homosexuals—was turned into a positive, identity-confirming self-denomination by the queer movement of the 1990s.

Sexual difference theories: A cluster of different corpomaterialist and postconstructionist feminist theories of gender/sex, which have in common that they approach sexual difference as an irreducible, prediscursive difference that makes a difference, but without determining effects. Implied in the approach of sexual difference theorists is a critique of networks of interconnected, hierarchical dualisms such as Man/Woman, mind/body, ratio/emotions, culture/nature and so on, where the 'first' category historically has appropriated the power to define and set the agenda for the other, which implies that the difference and specificities of the latter have not been allowed to unfold within the existing—phallogocentric—economies of signification. (See also **Corpomaterialist feminist theories, Écriture féminine and Phallogocentrism**.)

Situated knowledges and politics of location: As epistemological frameworks, these concepts are based on the assumption that scientific and scholarly knowledge is not value-neutral and disinterested, but, conversely, is to be understood as

embedded in its contexts of production, which include the researcher subject's location in time, space, body, historical and societal power relations and so on, as well as the research technologies (the particular technical apparatuses and theories/conceptual frameworks that are at the researcher's disposal). Against this background, it is considered epistemologically crucial to analyze and (self-) critically reflect on the context of production and the role played by the research technologies involved as part of the research process. The two terms, situated knowledges and politics of location, are often used interchangeably in Feminist Studies. The former was introduced into feminist theory by Donna Haraway (1991c), the latter by Adrienne Rich (1986b).

Strong objectivity: This is a concept coined by Sandra Harding (1991, 138–163). It is built on Harding's argument that a scholarly knowledge production based on epistemologies that critically reflect on their own standpoints and politics of location/situating of knowledges gives better and more objective results than science that is not self-reflexive in this sense. While it is standard in traditional scientific knowledge production to focus on the *logic* of discovery (does the scientific argument hold?), knowledge production based on a politics of location will also require a strict scrutiny of the *context* of discovery, that is, the sociocultural context in which the researcher and the research technologies are embedded. Since it is in the context of discovery that bias (prejudices, ideologies), including gender bias, emerges, it must, Harding argues, improve the results when this context is consciously scrutinized as part of the research process. The polemical point that Harding makes is thus that politically contextualized knowledge production, such as Feminist Studies, tends to be more objective than the allegedly neutral, but unreflectingly political knowledge production characteristic of traditional science. (See also **Feminist standpoint epistemologies**, **Postconstructionist feminist epistemologies**, **Postmodern feminist (anti-) epistemologies** and **Situated knowledges and politics of location**.)

Transnational feminism: Along the lines of postcolonial and anti-racist feminism, transnational feminist theorizing pays attention to analyzing intersectionalities between gender, race, ethnicity, class and so on against the background of a transnational perspective, which takes into specific consideration power differentials based on geopolitical and national positioning. (See also **Intersectional feminist theories** and **Postcolonial and anti-racist feminist theories**.)

Writing as a method of inquiry: This terminology was coined by Laurel Richardson (2000). She wanted to stress that the writing of research reports should not be seen as a mere instrumentalized, post-festum writing down of results and findings, detached from the research activity itself. Instead, writing processes and an actively reflexive use of language should be considered as an integrated part of scientific knowledge production, that is, as a dimension of the scientific method. (See also **Articulation**.)

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