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Feminist and Gender Studies

BEFORE the 1970s, readers and teachers of literature were assumed to be neutered beings who left their multiple subjectivities at the door of the academy. As students during that immediately prefeminist era, we learned the impersonal rhetoric of both New Criticism and structuralism. We were taught to speak from the position of the universal, sometimes at the cost of painful mutilations and self-denials, though our professors of the universal were, with insignificantly few exceptions, white, male university professors of European ancestry who were either straight or closeted. Today, in this last decade of the twentieth century, a first-year graduate student, whether male, female, black, Hispanic, young, old, gay, lesbian, bisexual, Jewish or Arabic, postcolonial or metropolitan, or any combination of these "identities"—and the list of possibilities is constantly being updated and nuanced—enters a radically reconfigured institution, where various and complex subjectivities are accommodated on all sides of the seminar table in the "house of difference" many American institutions are becoming (Lorde, *Zami* 226). But this house was not built in a day or by a single hand; the process of construction is collective and at times contentious. Of all the forces that have participated in this ongoing enterprise, none has had a more profound impact than feminism.

And yet the 1980 edition of the MLA's *Introduction to Scholarship* contained no essay on feminist criticism, a revolutionary new approach to literary analysis and theory that emerged in the late 1960s and stood on the verge of academic respectability at the close of the 1970s. In 1989, when this edition of that volume was being planned, I was invited to provide an introduction to gender studies, a rubric meant to encompass feminist criticism and theory but also to account for more recent studies of the effects of gender on literary analysis (studies of masculinity, sexuality, and lesbian and gay issues). While these new areas of study are clearly political, they are less closely linked to women's liberation, the political movement with which feminist criticism in its most vital form has been identified and intertwined from the outset. It was only after some negotiation—an expected part of the complex process of assembling this volume—that the term *feminist* was added to my title.

This brief history of the respective places of feminist criticism and gender studies immediately suggests the approach I take in presenting feminist and gender studies in the 1990s. Although gender studies has evolved from feminist criticism and although feminist studies has always been in the most literal sense a form of gender studies, the two cannot be simply collapsed onto each other. Such a move risks erasing the specificity either of feminist criticism and its radical challenge to earlier gender-blind studies of literature or of gender studies and their elaboration, questioning, and, ultimately, reconfiguration of the insights of feminist criticism. At a moment when many institutions are debating whether to opt for a program in women's studies or for one in gender studies, it is important to understand that such decisions can be made only in terms of local contexts and situations. For instance, had the 1980 edition of *Introduction to Scholarship* contained an essay on feminist criticism, then I would now have less of a problem folding feminism into gender. But in an institutional context where feminism has not been foregrounded, it is strategically important to feature it.

By identifying my own position—I speak as an American teacher of French whose postgraduate professional career developed along with feminist criticism and for whom gender studies is an intriguing yet problematic notion—I am already performing a feminist critical act, namely, refusing to speak from a position of supposed neutrality and pseudoscientific objectivity. Two chief axioms of feminist criticism state that all acts of language are grounded in the dense network of partial positions (e.g., sexual, class, racial) occupied by speaking subjects and that to claim to speak for all (women, feminists, literary critics) is to speak from a position of assumed mastery and false universality. This position is precisely the one we as feminists seek to interrogate and dismantle, even though, as many of us have discovered, assumed mastery and false universality constantly reassert themselves.

Because gender has proved to be the central and thus, simultaneously, the most powerful and most vulnerable category of analysis elaborated by feminism, I have chosen to organize my account of feminist and gender studies around the category of gender and its vicissitudes, with all the consequences such a choice entails. One result is that I violate precedence, not to say precedent, by placing Simone de Beauvoir ahead of Virginia Woolf as a tutelary figure of feminism. Among the other consequences, I single out two.

First, obviously and inevitably, making gender the focus means subsuming the other categories of difference that currently organize feminist analysis, notably race and class, under the privileged category of gender. The current yoking of race, class, and gender can have the unfortunate effect of suggesting that these terms function as a harmonious, monolithic unit, that the articulation of these levels of analysis is nothing if not dauntingly delicate.

Of course, from the perspective of black or working-class women who are caught up in "a simultaneity of discourses" (Henderson 17), the very notion that such a choice exists at all is illusory, an indelible mark of privilege. As socialist and black feminists have argued, blindness and invisibility threaten those critics who fail to attend to the ways in which gender, race, and to a lesser extent class overdetermine the subjectivities of the unprivileged in our racist, sexist, and classist society. Certainly the possible interweavings and tensions among the stories of race, class, and gender are far more complex than current well-meaning calls for pluralism allow, and each critic working in the field of

gender studies must constantly negotiate conflicting and coordinate claims (see also the essays by Allen and Gates in this volume).

Second, because gender, at least in its emergent phase, was not the operative concept informing gay-male studies, privileging the category of gender means presenting a skewed and partial view of a field initially less concerned with issues of sexual difference and the social construction of sexual roles than with undoing centuries of persecution, pathologizing, and erasure (Crew and Norton). Misogyny and homophobia share—alas—many features, but they cannot simply be mapped onto each other. In phallocentric societies, however much gay males may suffer from the myths of masculinity, they do share in the privilege of the phallus, just as in heterosexual societies, women, however disabled by the myths of femininity, can benefit from the hegemony of the heterosexual norm if they are straight. Making gender the focus, then, means privileging the more recent work in gay-male studies that collaborates in feminism's unveiling of the phallus and the hierarchies it underwrites.

If, borrowing from Joan Scott, we define gender as "a social category imposed on a sexed body" (32), then we can state unequivocally that the distinction between the "facts" of biology or anatomy and the constructs of culture constitutes the very foundation of feminist theory and criticism and continues to inform gender studies today. Yet gender studies has come under penetrating criticism from extreme constructionists (e.g., Butler), who argue that while seeming to accord primacy to the sociocultural, the notion of gender covertly preserves the myth of an unmediated access to nature, to the body. Because the distinction between gender and sex is a relatively recent one, feminist and especially gender studies—unlike several of the other approaches discussed in this volume that trace their origins back to classical antiquity—are newly constituted disciplines with short histories and still evolving problematics. Women figure prominently as writers, characters, and readers throughout the Western literary tradition, but feminist criticism is a strictly modern phenomenon born of the Enlightenment philosophies of individual rights, which enabled the fight for women's emancipation and franchise. Feminist criticism is further intimately bound up with deep transformations of the humanistic curriculum within nineteenth- and twentieth-century institutions of higher learning.

BEAUVOIR AND WOOLF

When Beauvoir stated boldly in *The Second Sex*, "One is not born a woman, one becomes one," she performed a radical gesture whose far-reaching consequences even she did not foresee (301). For reasons as much linguistic as epistemological—French has no strict equivalent for *gender* (one says, "la différence sexuelle"), and in 1949 the category of gender had not yet been elaborated by scientists and social scientists (Bock; Haraway)—Beauvoir, the most ardent of constructionists, never spoke of gender as such in *The Second Sex*.

Determined to liberate women from the disempowering constructs of patriarchy, Beauvoir studied an array of symbolic systems and cultural artifacts to deconstruct the "womanizing" of the female of the species, the process whereby a human infant born female is transformed into the embodiment of femininity, is made to function as man's other. Beauvoir demonstrated, in several studies of the way five modern male authors (André Breton, Stendhal, Henri de Montherlant, D. H. Lawrence, Paul Claudel) represented woman, that the most prevalent form of "othering" in literature is the doublet misogyny/idealization, the reduction of female characters to variants of two types, the angel-mother and the monster-whore. Following in the tradition inaugurated by Beauvoir, pioneering feminist critics such as Katharine Rogers, Mary Ellmann, and Kate Millett used what Gayle Rubin was to dub the "sex/gender" distinction to denaturalize the representation of women chiefly in male-authored fictions. Portrayals of female protagonists that had long claimed to be realistic were revealed through careful and often scathing analyses to be largely stereotypical projections of the patriarchal psyche, a psyche ruled by linguistic and cultural codes and legitimated by the unequal distribution of power between men and women in the society at large. What was quickly dubbed "images of women criticism" (Cornillon) and then "feminist critique" (Showalter, "Feminist Poetics") was in fact part of a larger and very powerful critical trend of the early 1970s, the structuralist-poststructuralist critiques of mimetic representation. Though much of the work on representation by theorists such as Roland Barthes and Michel Foucault did not take gender into account and certainly did not adopt a feminist perspective, it did intersect with the early feminist project in laying bare the sexual politics at work in seemingly innocent and authoritative imitations of social reality. The primacy of the phallus is as much the target of Barthes's playful reading of Balzac's *Sarrasine* in *S/Z* as it is of Kate Millett's scornful accounts of Norman Mailer's *American Dream* in *Sexual Politics*.

Most pioneering work in feminist criticism was produced by academically based American critics working on a predominantly white, Anglo-American corpus of nineteenth- and twentieth-century fictional texts and espousing a liberal humanist politics of individualism and experience. With the twenty-twenty vision of hindsight, we can now see American feminists as sharing many features of an essentially Continental body of male-authored theory and its feminist counterparts. Yet the initial encounters between so-called French feminism, a shorthand covering both French feminist theory and the broader conceptual framework on which it relies (the writings of Freud, Marx, Nietzsche, Saussure, Lacan, Derrida, Foucault, et al.), and so-called Anglo-American feminism were marked in the United States by suspicion and hostility, some of it justified, some not. One casualty of these initial encounters was the work on women and representation in male-authored fiction. Despite the extraordinary productivity and political efficacy of this form of critical inquiry, this first stage of gender study was quickly overtaken by what was deemed the more proper study of feminist critics, the interpretation of women's writings influentially

termed "gynocriticism" by Elaine Showalter ("Feminist Poetics"). Implicitly and in practice, the exemplary gynocritic was a female feminist.

Throughout the 1970s, many feminist critics continued to work on male-authored texts from a feminist perspective and to engage theories produced by male (and often French) philosophers, psychoanalysts, anthropologists, and semioticians. Similarly, feminist film criticism, because of film's emphasis on the visual and because of the industry's dearth of female-authored or female-"auteured" films, notably continued to pursue questions of representation in highly sophisticated terms even into the 1990s (E. A. Kaplan; Doane; Bathrick in this volume). But the cutting edge of feminist criticism and theory in the United States shifted from re-visioning the cultural productions of patriarchy (Rich, "Awaken") to recovering a generally discredited, underread, and often even forgotten corpus of writing by women and to elaborating a new literary history and poetics specifically adapted to women's writing (Moers; Spacks; Gilbert and Gubar; Showalter, *Literature*). Throughout the 1970s and into the 1980s, a woman-centered feminist criticism bent on reclaiming a lost legacy of women's writing undertook to revalorize less prestigious genres associated with the feminine, such as the sentimental novel (Tompkins), and reputedly minor forms of nonfiction prose, such as diaries and letters in which women were acknowledged to excel. The canon and its often subtly gendered mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion became and remain, necessarily, a central concern of feminism (see Scholes in this volume).

What *The Second Sex* was to "images of women criticism," Woolf's *Room of One's Own* was to gynocriticism. Confronted in the reading room of the British Museum, as Beauvoir was some years later under the cupola of the Bibliothèque Nationale, with the overwhelming record of patriarchal objectification of woman, Woolf, like Beauvoir, set out to ground a subjectivity for women. However, unlike Beauvoir, for whom subjectivity is ideally and necessarily universal, Woolf undertook through an archaeology of women's writing to theorize and valorize a specifically female subjectivity and textuality, and that specificity was bound up with the maternal. Woolf writes, "We think back through our mothers if we are women" (79). Gynocriticism in its most productive form was an attempt to (re)constitute a female literary tradition by exploring the complex and hitherto hidden workings of the literary reproduction of mothering. The reigning metaphor of gynocriticism was maternal, although there were others, many of them spatial (e.g., the attic, the pavillion).

THE MATERNAL METAPHOR

One of the first works by a woman author to be included in Columbia University's famed Humanities Course syllabus, which claims to account for the best thinking and writing in the entire Western humanist tradition, was Marie-Madeleine LaFayette's *La Princesse de Clèves*. The work gradually emerged as a central

French text in the feminist rewriting of the canon, although it has not always held a privileged position in French literary history. Written in the seventeenth century by an aristocratic author close to the center of literary power, *La Princesse* has long been considered the inaugural work in the great French tradition of psychological fiction. From its anonymous publication in 1678, the controversial work has been the object of a large body of criticism, most of which focuses on its transgressions of the laws of verisimilitude and the conventions of closure: the Princess's implausible confession to her husband of her love for another man and her enigmatic final renunciation.

In a well-known essay entitled "Emphasis Added: Plots and Plausibilities in Women's Fiction," Nancy K. Miller boldly brought the question of gender to bear on the traditional debate over plausibility, by hypothesizing a link between the text's alleged implausibilities and the specificity of women's writing. Now to posit a sexual-textual specificity is to take as one's guiding assumption the basic tenet of gynocriticism: that the sex-signature of an author matters; that to be born female—and especially to be socialized as a woman in a society where education, money, and control over cultural production accrues disproportionately to those born male and socialized as men—is to write with a difference, to write otherwise. The status of the signature has been at the center of one of the longest-running debates within the Franco-American feminist community, beginning with Peggy Kamuf's "Writing like a Woman," which has since become the privileged intertext both in the debate between Kamuf and Miller and in a series of pieces concerned with the place of men in feminism (Kamuf and Miller; Culler; Modleski; Scholes; Fuss). Indeed, the debate over female signatures quickly slides into a debate over male readers, a move supporting the argument that as soon as one attacks the biological foundation of women's writing, writing by women tends to drop out of the discussion and the emphasis shifts instead to the sex of the reader. Biology is not really eliminated, merely displaced.

Even for those theorists willing to grant the premise of a sexually differentiated textuality, the question of just what form this difference might take has proved both endlessly stimulating and frustratingly elusive; it has largely centered on violent but unresolved (and perhaps unresolvable) debates within feminism over the interplay of social constructionism and essentialism. For critics who hold the view of sexual difference as socially constructed, the specificity of women's writing up to the present has been tied to cultural factors that are largely historical and thus, at least in theory, amenable to change. There is no immutable, biological reason why women writers should write the double-voiced discourse to which they, like many dominated members of society (especially racial and sexual minorities), have traditionally resorted to gain critical recognition from the establishment while at the same time resisting and subverting it. They have simply been constrained to do so by bourgeois patriarchy. Those theorists who subscribe to a view somewhat loosely labeled essentialism argue that a complex but presumably transhistorical and cross-cultural relation exists between women's language and women's bodies. Because women's pleasure is

social constructionists .

polymorphous, because women are multiorgasmic, because women's bodies are somehow bound up with the fluid (blood, milk, amniotic waters), women's writing is (or should be) essentially different: more fluid and multivoiced, less centered and hierarchized, than men's writing.

This belief in the bodily grounding of linguistic difference is referred to as *écriture féminine*, and it is somewhat misleadingly associated with the early writings of the French feminists, notably Hélène Cixous and Luce Irigaray. Not that Cixous, Irigaray, and others did not at times posit such unmediated relations between bodies and texts, for, of course, they did (Cixous; Irigaray, *This Sex*). But, as is all too often forgotten, their speculations were fraught with significant contradictions and were, furthermore, utopian poetic manifestos rather than the somewhat crude hard-line positions they have been cast into by their critics. The specters of biological determinism these French feminists raised did have the virtue of reminding more empirically oriented American feminist thinkers that language was neither transparent nor purely instrumental and that to go beyond the sexual indifference of patriarchy (Irigaray, *Speculum*), it might be necessary to challenge prevailing symbolic and representational systems, such as realism, by exploring alternative experimental uses of language by no means restricted to *écriture féminine*.

By 1981, when Miller first published "Emphasis Added," serious doubt had already been cast on the early assumption that female specificity might be located in a bodily grounded language, that what Woolf called a "woman's sentence" might be marked by specific tropes, such as metaphor or metonymy, that were somehow connected to aspects of the female body or sexual economy. Instead, Miller proposed that the elusive specificity lay in the way women writers inflected the maxims that Gérard Genette had shown to ground plausibility: this was the "emphasis added." Women's writing manipulated the cultural rather than the linguistic code. From this perspective what seemed aberrant about *La Princesse de Clèves*—the ways in which it confounds readerly expectations based on masculine cultural paradigms—became suddenly intelligible, plausible. The Princess's famed renunciation, her refusal to enter into a heterosexual marriage contract with the Duke, stemmed not from some sexual dysfunction (i.e., frigidity) but rather from a uniquely feminine economy of desire that privileged fantasy over consummation.

How, then, was one to account for this specifically feminine form of desire, a desire not oriented by the inevitable rush toward closure but one that, in Rachel Blau DuPlessis's words, strained to go "beyond the ending"? The answer to this question inevitably entailed another explanatory model, one based in psychoanalysis. Like other feminist readers working in a psychoanalytic rather than a formalist framework, some students of *La Princesse de Clèves* sought to locate that specificity in the psychological relationship between mother and daughter. Marianne Hirsch proposed a reading of *La Princesse* that located the text's feminine specificity in the representation of the intense pre-Oedipal bonds

between mother and daughter that Freud had belatedly discovered to specify female sexual development.

In *The Pleasure of the Text*, Barthes made explicit a long-unspoken assumption that all narrative is Oedipal. Calling this idea into question, feminist critics working in a psychoanalytic perspective on texts ranging from the high classical *La Princesse de Clèves* to contemporary mass-market romances (Radway) have challenged the claims to universality of a theory of narrative based on a normative Oedipal model congenial to male sexual development and entirely oriented by the quest for closure. Rejecting the dominant Oedipal grid as an explanatory model unsuited to women's writing, feminist psychoanalytic critics have sought to uncover or recover the operations of a pre-Oedipal connection with the mother chiefly in the form of a prelinguistic, presyntactical, prerepresentational "m(other) tongue," similar to what Julia Kristeva has called in a slightly different context the semiotic. Molded by her intense and seemingly unmediated relationship with her widowed mother and especially by a powerful maternal discourse, the Princess's relationships with men—notably her husband, who comes to occupy the position of the mother—remain fixated at the stage of what Jacques Lacan has termed the imaginary, a dual mirroring relationship that precludes the possibility of a normative adult sexuality. Thus one of the standard plots available to the female protagonist in modern European fiction, the so-called marriage plot, is short-circuited by the imperatives of a maternally inflected desire. Unfortunately, of course, the escape from the marriage plot activates the only alternative closure available to the female protagonist, death.

The place of the maternal in feminism, as both Anglo-American and French psychoanalytic theorists agree, is thus at the very least ambivalent: empowering when it involves recovery of and reconnection to a lost maternal body and the resumption of an interrupted mother-daughter dialogue, potentially fatal when it involves unmediated fusion and an inability to enter the paternal cultural order. When the maternal is located in cultural contexts other than the hegemonic white, European one implicit in both Anglo-American and French psychoanalytic theory, a different and even more poignant set of complexities emerges, even as the centrality of the maternal metaphor remains unchallenged. The legacy of slavery, with its violent disruptions of the mother-child bond and its mystifying stereotypical figures of alienated motherhood (the mammy, the matriarch), immensely problematizes the representation of mother-daughter relationships in African American fiction. When Alice Walker goes "looking" for Zora Neale Hurston, the mother through whom, to paraphrase Woolf, so many black women writers think, Walker's quest for origins is frustrated by obstacles peculiar to the African American woman writer, at least until recently: the poverty and invisibility culminating in an unmarked grave. Similarly, in the Asian American context of Maxine Hong Kingston's *Woman Warrior*, the Eurocentric paradigm of ambivalence proves inadequate to account for a mother-

daughter relationship embedded in the immigrant experience of clashing Western and Eastern cultures.

What is immediately striking about the readings I have been discussing is their exclusive focus on the female protagonist, on the operations of sexual difference in writing. Maternalist feminist criticism is concerned with identifying the productions of the female imagination, charting female psychosexual development, psychoanalyzing feminine desire, making once again audible a muffled or silenced maternal voice. Though concerned with the operations of gender, such examples of feminist criticism—chosen, of course, for what I take to be their representative status—remain by definition almost exclusively woman-centered; that is, gender is taken throughout these texts to be synonymous with sexual difference, with woman. Even in the early 1980s when the interest in readings of *La Princesse* moved away from the female protagonist and her mother to consider the construction and representation of male subjectivity in the novel and the tradition it inaugurates (Schor, "Portrait"), the underlying presumption of a female specificity in reading and writing remained largely unchallenged. It is perhaps no accident that the only article to approach *La Princesse de Clèves* from a truly bipolar gender perspective is Michael Danahy's "Social, Sexual, and Human Spaces," the sole male-authored text in the cluster I am considering. Danahy fully espouses the feminist critics' concern with the Princess's attempted escape from the oppressive, intrigue-ridden court world, but he subtly shifts the grounds of discussion away from the specificities of women's writing. Instead, he recognizes the novelist's canny representation of the operations of gender in the text's spatial organization. Whereas male characters are given unrestricted access to the various spaces in which the novel deploys its narrative, entering and exiting as they please, the female protagonists, even those with political power such as the Queen, are not free to initiate access and must struggle to find an inviolate space.

To begin to move from feminist to bisexual gender studies necessitates a micropolitical analysis of male power and masculine privilege, a dismantling of the master's house not only with "the master's tools" (Lorde, *Sister* 110–13) but, more important, by the master himself. As it quickly became apparent in the late 1970s and early 1980s, few men were initially willing to open the tool box.

THE RAPE OF FEMINISM

The sudden emergence, in the increasingly competitive "intellectual marketplace" (Jameson 10), of a disruptive critical approach representing a large and politicized constituency within the academy confronted the male-dominated critical-theoretical establishment with a challenge far more threatening than the earlier emergence of black studies, on which women's studies were initially modeled and with which they have often been compared. While feminist critics complained that their male colleagues did not read them (Gilbert), male critics

eager to join the movement complained of the "separatism" (Ruthven) of its leading practitioners. What exactly was, and what is, the place of men in feminism (Jardine and Smith)? Should they be in feminism at all? Can they be kept out in the era of reader-reponse criticism, which validates all readers' reponses irrespective of sex, race, or class (Flynn and Schweikart)? What of the sometimes competing claims of race and gender in the race for gender? What was (is) the place of black men in black women's studies or the place of black women in black men's criticism and theory? What did these men and women want?

If adding women authors to the male canon meant nothing less than rethinking the grounds of canonicity itself and inventing a new poetics, a new literary history, and the like, adding male critics to feminist criticism has entailed a similar upheaval. This process follows the familiar logic of the Derridean supplement, wherein all add-ons reveal an inner lack, a difference or, as we shall see in a moment, differences within (Johnson). The emergence of gender studies went hand in hand with the refashioning of feminist criticism into a less provincial, more culturally diverse, more heterogeneous critical approach. But this did not happen all at once.

The understanding that gender is a social construct pinned to a sexed body is fundamental to feminist criticism, and it logically implies that both masculinity and femininity are cultural formations designed to secure the social organization known as patriarchy. Yet, significantly (though it is hardly surprising), most male critics' earliest attempts to deal with feminist criticism and theory did not apply the insights of gender study to deconstructing masculinity. These male critics sought instead to appropriate for themselves the insights of feminist criticism to continue a long tradition of objectifying and othering woman; the privileges of the heretofore unmarked term in a binary opposition—whether it be maleness, whiteness, heterosexuality, or Westernness—are always the last to be interrogated by the members of the privileged class. In some instances, individual male critics—often gay critics in search of a criticism of their own—approached feminist criticism sympathetically, though at first it was hard to see the male "incursions" into feminist criticism as anything but a new ruse of misogyny. Woman remained the object, man the subject.

Symptomatic of this first incursion of men into feminism was the intense critical debate that briefly swirled around Samuel Richardson's *Clarissa*, a text seemingly predestined to serve as an allegory for what I am somewhat melodramatically calling the rape of feminism. Two indissolubly linked features of *Clarissa* made it an appropriate text for simultaneously inviting and mirroring the entry of men into what had heretofore been a critical domain largely occupied by women: Clarissa is, as we know, an inveterate writer and the victim of a particularly sordid rape. By linking rape with the attempt to silence a writing woman—an attempt that, of course, fails spectacularly, since Clarissa continues to produce language and symbols even beyond the grave—*Clarissa* presented a particularly inviting textual body over which to enact the critical battle of the

sexes. "Struggle," writes William Warner, "is the pervasive and continuous reality of Richardson's novel *Clarissa*" (*Reading* Clarissa 3). Indeed, as Warner remarks, the struggles for mastery over the interpretation of the novel replicate the struggles for mastery over Clarissa's body that go on within the novel. Inescapably, the issue of rape has always been at the center of the interpretive struggles over *Clarissa*, and critics have long argued over the valence to be attached to this unrepresented act. Yet it was only in the late 1970s, in the light of the women's movement, that this discussion took on major theoretical import.

From the outset of the second wave of feminism, the crime of rape has occupied a central place in feminist theory. Viewed as the physical enactment of the unequal distribution of power under patriarchy, racism, and classism, rape has been the object of countless protest marches and rallies ("take back the night"), articles, and books by such feminist thinkers as Susan Brownmiller, Catharine A. MacKinnon, and many others. Feminist analyses of rape have run the gamut from an ethical protest against all forms of sexual violence, including what is generally viewed as normal heterosexual intercourse, to a radical acknowledgment of the pleasures of danger in sexuality (both heterosexual and homosexual), from a global indictment of rape as a transhistorical crime with interchangeable victims to a historically situated denunciation of the institutionalized rape of black slave women. Most feminists, at least in the United States, would agree that rape is a defining issue of feminism. The argument over "the rape of Clarissa" that burst on the critical scene around 1980 was one whose wider implications far exceeded the specific instance of *Clarissa*. Not the least of these implications was the difficulty of articulating feminism and deconstruction.

Feminism is not a methodology or a theory unified by reference to a single proper noun (e.g., Marx or Freud) or, as has also been suggested, merely a playful eclecticism or pluralism (Kolodny), a female form of what Claude Lévi-Strauss famously called *bricolage*. Rather, it is a radical and always political form of interdisciplinary or transdisciplinary critique; indeed, "women's studies," which began by bringing together historians, anthropologists, and literary scholars, contests by definition the prevailing disciplinary model of the production and transmission of knowledge. This critique can and probably should be applied to all cognitive paradigms whose claims to universal validity are grounded in an indifference to sexual difference. These include Marxism and even, as Irigaray has convincingly shown (*Speculum*), Freudianism, to the extent that Freud continues to dream the old phallocentric dream of symmetry. The conjugal metaphor has been repeatedly enlisted to describe the unhappy marriages (Hartmann) or endlessly deferred nuptials of feminism and other isms, and deconstructionism, which has itself enlisted the hymen as a central metaphor, is no exception to the rule (Bartkowski). As the debate over the status of the female signature has already shown, the intersection of feminism and deconstruction has been the site of some of the most productive and irreconcilable critical exchanges in the 1980s. One primary reason has been the use of deconstruction

to critique "essentialism" as a "ruse of metaphysics" (Poovey 57). This association of deconstruction and antiessentialism has led some materialist feminists to enlist deconstruction in their battle against ahistorical essences such as "woman." Others, more drawn to the problematics of sexual difference, resist it, suspecting Derridean antiessentialism as being a ruse of patriarchy, all the while recognizing in deconstruction a powerful lever for unsettling the paradigm of sexual difference and valorizing the previously devalorized term (Schor, *Breaking*; Homans). However, as the debates over *Clarissa* make clear, the tensions between deconstruction and feminism also participate in the tensions between deconstructionist and ideologically based views of language: Deconstruction, as applied by certain of its interpreters, views woman as a trope and sexual difference as a pure language effect, whereas, like other critics unwilling to assent to a disjunction between the world and the text that turns signifiers loose and renders all socially grounded meanings impossible, most feminists would insist that fictional women do bear some relation, however opaque, to historical women and the contingencies of their lives. In a feminist perspective, rape, like woman, can never be just a metaphor.

Interestingly, the first two books to face off against each other in the struggle, Warner's *Reading* Clarissa and Terry Castle's *Clarissa's Ciphers*, share the crucial assumption that *Clarissa* is a text centrally concerned with language. Both critics devote large sections of their studies to charting the ways in which the struggle between Clarissa and Lovelace is in fact a struggle for control over the encoding and decoding of messages, over who shall produce interpretation, and over whether and how meaning will be decided. However, the two critics, operating as they do out of radically incompatible critical frameworks, differ irreconcilably in their readings of Clarissa's enigmatic ciphers. Lining up with the Lovelaceans, Warner attempts to combat what he sees as the dominant traditional reading of Clarissa by deconstructing the seemingly clear-cut and rigid opposition between Clarissa and Lovelace, the innocent virgin and the rake. The inevitable and to my mind regrettable result is that, in the end, the victim is in a sense blamed for her own victimization. Breaking with a tradition of so-called humanist readers stretching back to Richardson himself, Warner sets out to displace the rape from the central meaning-giving position it occupies in the final version of the novel in order to bring out instead Clarissa's redoubtable powers for controlling language and interpretation, and thus snatching her greatest interpretive triumph from the jaws of violent sexual defeat. Warner's language vividly bodies forth his view of Clarissa's powers:

> In raping Clarissa, Lovelace attempts to undermine the power of her wholeness, to break her into parts, to show she's made of the same stuff everyone else is, and therefore can be read by the text of the rake's creed: "once subdued, always subdued." All this will subject Clarissa to Lovelace's interpretation of her, and so the rape becomes Lovelace's venture to master, once and for all, Clarissa's meaning.

> But Lovelace should beware. For even the commonest slut knows how to weave new veils to cover the body with a seeming freshness. And Clarissa is *not* common. (50)

These are fighting words. In *Clarissa's Ciphers*, Castle joins the fray, arguing that Warner forgets a key lesson of feminism: "The battles of interpretation, in the text, in the world, are seldom fair fights." Clarissa and Lovelace are not equal combatants in a political sense: Lovelace has available to him "all the institutionalized advantages of patriarchal power, including the power of sexual intimidation" (193). Warner fails to recognize that struggles for interpretation, whether inside or outside the text, take place in a field where the laws of gender work to disempower some participants while empowering others, and this failure most decisively separates him from politically engaged readers of Clarissa's rape such as Castle and Terry Eagleton. Indeed, lest one assume too hastily that Warner's and Castle's readings differ because of their authors' own positions in the field of gender, Eagleton's aptly named *Rape of Clarissa*, published the same year as Castle's book, complicates the question. Eagleton, a preeminent male Marxist, boldly makes common cause with the feminists and even goes much further in his ideological reading than Castle does, by asserting that *Clarissa* is not only a novel centered on the patriarchal crime against women par excellence but "arguably the major feminist text of the language," "the true story of women's oppression at the hands of eighteenth-century patriarchy" (17).

These strong texts by Warner, Castle, and Eagleton form a curious critical triangle where alliances shift depending on the angle of vision one adopts but where Castle's book occupies the central, mediating position. On the one hand, Warner and Castle share an essentially formalist view of *Clarissa* as a novel about language; on the other, Castle and Eagleton share an essentially ideological view of the relation between the text and the world. If, however, one gives this critical kaleidoscope yet another turn, one sees a crucial third view of this triad wherein Castle disappears, the triangle collapses, and Warner and Eagleton are left fighting over the textual body of a woman; in the end the struggle for interpretation is waged between men. This perspective takes over in Warner's riposte to both Castle and Eagleton, "Reading Rape: Marxist-Feminist Figurations of the Literal," where Warner ends his lengthy review article by focusing all his attention on Eagleton. In turning Eagleton's prose against him, Warner accuses Eagleton of being like Warner himself (like all men?): a Lovelacean who reenacts through his "figuration of the literal"—the lush prose in which he evokes Clarissa's violation—the very rape of Clarissa he seeks to condemn.

In the final section of *The Rape of Clarissa*, however, Eagleton makes an important shift that Warner does not account for and that might be seen as a sort of turning point in the entry of men into feminism. Eagleton, in his postscript, turns briefly to Richardson's final novel, *Sir Charles Grandison*, which he describes as "the production of a new kind of male subject" (96), one constituted through the absorption of the noblest characteristics of female sensibility: chastity and altruism. Though the novel of male sensibility is artistically a dud and the feminization of the male protagonist hardly a cause for feminist rejoicing, Eagleton's last-minute evocation of the ways in which the asymmetries of gender affect the construction of male subjectivity is a crucial and important one. It signals the beginning of a movement away from the attempts by male critics to master feminist criticism even at the cost of phallicizing women—Eagleton's Clarissa is, as Showalter astutely points out, an amazing phallic woman ("Cross-Dressing")—to a more sobering recognition that no one has the critical phallus.

GENDER STUDIES

In the rapidly evolving field of critical theory, it is not always an easy matter to assign precise dates to major shifts, since these shifts occur slowly and in uneven, zigzag patterns. In feminist criticism one must then settle for approximations: "around 1970"—to adopt Jane Gallop's mode of periodization—feminist criticism began to constitute itself on the ruins of New Criticism and in the wake of the social upheavals of the 1960s; "around 1981," again according to Gallop, feminist criticism in the United States attained academic legitimacy as measured by such leading indicators as the exponentially growing list of feminist publications (journals, books, articles), the proliferation of feminist sessions at the annual MLA convention, and, perhaps most significantly, by the tenuring of scholars primarily identified as feminist critics. Though one might argue that feminism's success in the field of literary studies was not as profound as a merely statistical overview might suggest, by the early 1980s feminist criticism and theory were without question no longer marginal activities, practiced by an embattled corps of largely untenured and powerless women.

Around 1985 feminism began to give way to what has come to be called gender studies. As I indicated at the outset, I take it that feminist and gender studies are not coextensive, though they share a central concern with gender. Instead of viewing gender studies as the inevitable transformation of feminist studies, the *end* of feminist literary history as it were, we must for heuristic as well as political reasons hold them apart so that we may grasp their specificities and carefully weigh the risks of prematurely abandoning strictly feminist concerns against the advantages of uncoupling gender from feminist politics (Langbauer).

It is, of course, equally important to subject the very notion of gender studies to close scrutiny, for, like feminism itself, gender studies is not a single entity. In fact, at this transitional moment, gender studies is an ill-defined and undertheorized label covering a heterogeneous set of critical practices whose only commonality appears to be a rejection of a narrowly conceived, woman-centered gynocriticism. Gender studies is, then, a convenient catchall term grouping together such diverse current critical practices as a feminist approach recycled into a new comparativism (what N. K. Miller, in *Subject to Change*, terms "reading in pairs" [129]), a men's studies that knowingly replicates women's

studies (Brod), and gay and lesbian studies that increasingly call into question the very notions of sex and gender.

I have chosen 1985 as the date that signals the rise of gender studies in part because it marks the publication of Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's influential *Between Men*. In that book, Sedgwick articulates the insights of feminist criticism onto those of gay-male studies, which had up to then pursued often parallel but separate courses (affirming the existence of a homosexual or female imagination, recovering lost traditions, decoding the cryptic discourse of works already in the canon by homosexual or feminist authors). This unusual and explosive conjunction both in Sedgwick's book and elsewhere has driven and energized gender studies in the field of literature and has arguably produced the field's finest readings and most significant theoretical advances. Before we examine this most innovative and promising area of gender studies, several other determinants of the shift we are tracing need to be mentioned, for, although Sedgwick's text crystallizes that shift, it is itself caught up in larger trends that need to be sorted out. I mention three in passing—a generational shift, the exhaustion of a paradigm, the emergence of a new constituency—and focus on the fourth, the publication of Michel Foucault's *History of Sexuality*.

By 1985 a first generation of feminist scholars of remarkable daring and creativity had established the indisputable validity of a feminist approach to texts and their interpretations, and a second generation of student-daughters and in some instances student-sons had begun to refine the first generation's pioneering studies. At the same time, as with other paradigms, many of the paradigms of feminism had become familiar, and, in large measure, the results of their application had become predictable. Against this backdrop, highly articulate and increasingly compelling voices that had too long remained marginal within the feminist community of literary studies—chiefly but not exclusively the voices of so-called minority women (African American, Chicana, Native American, Asian American)—began to be heard in a different way by the generally white, bourgeois, liberal, East Coast women who had shaped the early stages of feminist studies. In an era of postcolonialism, of surprisingly acrimonious public debates over the canon and pluralism, and of the flowering of black women's writing, issues of race, class, and ethnicity, long subsumed to the urgent task of creating from whole cloth a new way of reading texts and interpreting culture from a feminist standpoint, could no longer be ignored. In a series of publications (Moraga and Anzaldúa; Hooks; de Lauretis; Hull, Scott, and Smith) the multiple differences that divide women from one another and from themselves returned as a powerful force repressed by a dominant feminism now viewed as dangerously totalizing and exclusionary in its claim to speak for all women. Questions of identity that had been dismissed as pretheoretical were reopened from the standpoints of subjects unaccounted for by dominant theories. The utopian ideal of sisterhood was displaced by the realistic recognition of struggle.

However much women's liberation has been an international movement, for economic, cultural, and structural reasons women's studies has taken off and

taken root in the United States as it has in no other country in the world. Because of the overwhelming influence of mainstream feminist studies, other forms of feminist study have found it difficult to constitute themselves without reduplicating some of the stages and gestures of work done "in English" by Americans. Thus canon building has been as central, if not more so, to black feminist studies as it has been to feminist studies in the national literatures (Washington; Gates; N. K. Miller, *Subject to Change*). And yet as the 1980s progressed, the studies of marginal or subaltern subjectivities and cultural productions, without ceasing to follow the lead of mainstream feminist studies in some ways, emerged in others as one of the most powerful forces spearheading the formation of the new interdisciplinary field of cultural studies (Carby; Spivak; Bathrick in this volume).

Meanwhile, other feminists who had struggled to construct subjectivities for women, even in the face of the much touted death of the author-subject, began to come to terms with some of the implications of the poststructuralist or "posthumanist" (Homans) critique of the unified subject. They brought feminism and theory together, legitimating a union long held to be bound by a shotgun marriage (see Culler in this volume). As a consequence of these and other developments, the very ground of feminism—notions such as a universal category of woman or the oppression of women by a universal patriarchy—began to heave and crack, and the temblor's aftershocks continue to be felt today.

Perhaps no single work has proved more unsettling for feminism and more influential in the field of what I would term the new gender studies than *La volonté de savoir*, the first volume of Michel Foucault's four-volume *Histoire de la sexualité*. First published in French in 1976 and translated into English in 1978, this work has provided a tremendous impetus for rethinking not so much the operations of gender—which are not, as many of Foucault's feminist readers have been quick to point out and deplore, his concern—as the distinction between gender and sexuality. The disengaging of sexuality from gender has been a major determinant in the passage from feminist to gender studies as it is emerging today. Whereas gender can be a universal category and has been posited as such, albeit one with culturally inflected variations, sexuality was, according to Foucault, an invention of nineteenth-century Europe. It is, he would argue, from within the prison house of sexuality that we have constructed our views of gender as an intractable binary system of opposites.

By historicizing sexuality, by interrogating sexuality's function as the key to an individual's most intimate and secret identity, by arguing that the association of hysteria with the female body and the association of perversion with the male body are but aspects of the regulation of pleasures and desires effected by the power-knowledge apparatus of the rising bourgeoisie, Foucault made possible a new look at and beyond the sex-gender system, including a questioning of the validity of that foundational distinction. Inspired by Foucault's analyses but also by Monique Wittig's pioneering critiques of the sex-gender system, "postfeminist" theoreticians have begun to argue several issues: First, there is no distinc-

tion between sex and gender, in that there is nothing outside or before culture, no nature that is not always and already enculturated; "sex," writes the philosopher Judith Butler, "by definition, will be shown to have been gender all along" (8). Second, the implied correlation or distinction between sex (male/female) and gender (masculine/feminine) and thus the very notion of gender serve to enforce a compulsory heterosexuality. What is at stake, then, in the postfeminist appropriation of Foucault's history of sexuality is a radical questioning of the complicity of the sex-gender distinction and the hegemony of heterosexuality. If it can be shown that gender difference is the product of a series of normative regulatory practices that work to secure a binary sexual model and to marginalize other forms of desire and object-choice, then what needs to be questioned is gender itself. Paradoxically, then, gender studies in its most exciting and genuinely innovative form becomes a kind of cultural studies based on a radical questioning of the very category of gender. It is no accident that this questioning has been carried farthest by gay or gay-identified and lesbian theoreticians bent on disturbing, not to say dismantling, heterosexuality. What gender is or was to feminism, sexuality is to the antihomophobic critical approach Sedgwick seeks to articulate in her most recent work, *Epistemology of the Closet*.

Between Men

If, after Foucault—and he has his detractors—one adopts a periodization that places the invention of homosexuality (as well as hysteria-femininity) in the Victorian era, it follows that works of fiction produced in that era should occupy a privileged position in the study of the engenderment of the novel. The last of Herman Melville's great sea novels, *Billy Budd*, has thus come to occupy a central position in the emerging field of gay studies. In Sedgwick's words, it has "made a centerpiece for gay, gay-affirmative, or gay-related readings of American culture, and for readings by gay critics" (*Epistemology* 92). The Foucauldian matrix of many recent gay or gay-related readings is most apparent in their attention to the presence in late-Victorian and turn-of-the-century works of the very taxonomizing discourses that serve to police and contain a dangerously mobile desire (D. A. Miller). Consequently, Foucault-inspired gender criticism has, like most other forms of applied theory, produced its own distinctive thematics: the thematics of disciplining. Some of the most provocative gay-gender studies today focus on the process whereby what is figured in literature is the very production of homosexuality as a category. Whereas an earlier generation of gay critics denounced the pathologizing of homosexuality (Freudian psychoanalysis fares no better here than it does in early American feminism), more recent critics study its invention, thereby denying the view of homosexuality as a transhistorical essence and provoking a debate on essentialism that is every bit as virulent as that in feminism (Boswell). On the one hand, a gay-affirmative critic such as Robert K. Martin asserts in his reading of *Billy Budd* that the novel

is "above all a study of repression" (107), and he takes it as a given that one of the principal things being repressed is homosexual desire: "In this homosocial world, charged with sexual potential, only strict control of the homosexual can prevent a mutiny" (108). On the other hand, Sedgwick in her very Foucauldian reading suggests that what is being produced in *Billy Budd* is homosexuality. She asserts that the same discursive mechanisms that produce homosexuality also work to break down the opposition between the normal and the pathological, the essential and private and the circumstantial and public homosexual male, that is, between Captain Vere and Claggart.

Tragically, much of the energy animating gay-gender studies today derives from the renewed urgency of the fight against homophobia in the age of AIDS (Edelman). As demonstrated by the critical studies of the way fiction sets in place a rigidly binary heterosexual model of human desire, the cost of inventing a stigmatized homosexual male is a form of scapegoating, of which Billy Budd's exemplary punishment is only the most spectacular example. Though no analysis of homophobic discursive practices such as those surrounding AIDS can prevent a single death, one of the remarkable achievements of gay theory is its effectiveness against practices designed to make people with AIDS, chiefly homosexuals, culpable for their illness.

Between Women

At the outset, I alluded to the process of producing this essay; in turning to the question of lesbian studies, I would like to return once again to this process, because part of it involved circulating outlines of nearly all the essays in this volume for commentary among a wide and representative body of MLA members. No section of my essay provoked more spirited responses than the preliminary outline of what follows. What seemed unacceptable was my plan to focus not on the major figures that had emerged from the canon-building stage of lesbian studies—Gertrude Stein, Adrienne Rich, and Monique Wittig—but on the equally important but far more ambiguous (because bisexual?) figure of Colette. These objections are noteworthy because they reveal the controversial nature of this topic. No one contested my equally debatable choice of *Billy Budd* as a focal text for my discussion of gay studies (rather than, for example, Walt Whitman's more obviously affirmative and centrally canonic *Song of Myself*), but my non-choice of texts by Stein, Wittig, and Rich provoked dismay. This dismay points not just to my own difficulties as an "outsider" to get it right but also to important unresolved tensions between feminist and lesbian studies, especially with the emergence of gender studies. What I had failed to make clear in my outline was my reason for wanting to go slightly outside the canon for my exemplum: The canonization of the great lesbian writers, I reasoned, corresponded roughly to the era of gynocriticism and feminist canon building. I was attempting to chart, looking ahead to the future, the effect of gender (and cultural) studies in the

area of lesbian criticism and theory. My error, as I see it now, was unwittingly to reduplicate a typical phallocentric gesture by expecting lesbian-gender studies to fit neatly into the template of gay-gender studies.

Not that the two fields do not share crucial assumptions. Lesbian theorists, most notably Wittig, were among the first to point to the imbrication of heterosexuality and gender and to call for an escape from gender, which Wittig describes as "the linguistic index of the political opposition between the sexes" ("Mark" 64). Because a woman is defined through her difference from man within the binary gender system, Wittig, in an essay entitled, in homage to Beauvoir, "One Is Not Born a Woman," concluded that, "Lesbians are not women" (110). Lesbian and gay studies differ significantly, however, in their views on sexuality. In gay studies, the escape from what Barthes called the "binary prison" of sex and gender (*Roland Barthes* 133) goes hand in hand with the embracing of sexuality; in lesbian studies, sexuality is in fact no more a given than is gender. And this brings us to *Sula*.

In her ground-breaking 1977 essay, "Toward a Black Feminist Criticism," Barbara Smith argued that Toni Morrison's 1973 novel *Sula* could be read as lesbian, not because, as she recognized, the central female characters, Sula and Nel, were lovers, but because their relationship was suffused with an eroticized affectivity and furthermore was set in the context of a far-reaching critique of the institutions of heterosexuality (marriage and family). It is perhaps no accident that Smith proposed such a provocative and seemingly perverse interpretation of one of the most popular and widely commented on novels by a contemporary black woman author. As many critics have argued, in a harshly (hetero)sexist and racist society, female bonding or "woman-identification" (Bethel) has offered black women a unique means of survival: hence the prominence of female friendship in such novels as Zora Neale Hurston's *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, Alice Walker's *Color Purple*, and Gloria Naylor's *Women of Brewster Place*; hence also the symptomatic silence surrounding black women's sexuality (Spillers). The eroticization of black female friendship in the modern American black women's novel is the flip side of the appropriation of sexuality by women of the dominant white majority.

Although Smith's classification of *Sula* as a lesbian, indeed an "exceedingly" lesbian, novel is controversial—Morrison herself has registered her dissent—it raises a crucial debate about the definition of lesbianism. Some theorists, following Rich, subscribe to a broad definition of lesbianism that spans a "continuum" from female friendship to sexually consummated woman-woman relationships ("Compulsory"); others, following Catharine R. Stimpson and Barbara Christian among others, define lesbianism as necessarily sexually embodied. The very existence, within the spectrum of lesbian theory, of a significant debate over the centrality of sexuality in defining lesbianism reveals an important difference between lesbian and gay studies, one that mirrors what Sedgwick describes as "an asymmetry in our present society between, on the one hand, the relatively

an asymmetry between male and

continuous relation of female homosocial and homosexual bonds, and, on the other hand, the radically discontinuous relation of male homosocial and homosexual bonds" (*Between Men* 4–5). In other words, because male homosexuality threatens patriarchal society in a way that female homosexuality does not, male homosexuality is more strictly coterminous with sexual practices than is female homosexuality; there is no gay continuum.

But there is a further, significant trend in much current lesbian theory: Sexuality is not positioned in as unproblematically central a position as it appears to be in gay theory, and gender too is differently sited. It is precisely because of the debates over the proper place of sexuality in defining lesbianism that the place of gender is problematized otherwise. Parting company on this score with Wittig's radical and complete escape from gender, contemporary lesbian theorists seem to want to hold onto at least a shadow of gender, the role-playing inherent in the very notion of gender, as a means of subversion; in a spectacular display of "female fetishism" (Schor), lesbian theorists (Case; de Lauretis, "Sexual Indifference"; Butler) seek to appropriate gender roles simultaneously (e.g., butch and femme), while radically rejecting the fiction of stable gender identities. Thus, Esther Newton, in an influential rereading of what is generally held to be "the single most popular representation of lesbianism in fiction" (de Lauretis, "Sexual Indifference" 161)—Radclyffe Hall's 1928 novel *The Well of Loneliness*—makes the case for the novel's "mannish lesbian" protagonist, Stephen Gordon. Instead of deploring Hall's uncritical acceptance of the discourse of turn-of-the-century sexology that views homosexuality as resulting from tragically mismatched bodies and desires—the so-called trapped-soul paradigm that pervades many contemporary fictional texts—Newton sees it as the only means available to Hall to body forth lesbian desire. In other words, the trappings of gender—including costume and transsexualism, which are areas of crucial significance in lesbian-gender studies—must be donned both to denaturalize gender and to represent lesbian desire adequately.

Feminist and gender studies have been in the vanguard of what we might call the differencing of the American university; the critique of phallocentrism in all its ramifications has changed aspects of our professional activities ranging from the way we define our objects of study to the way we treat the "third women" (Gallop, "Annie Leclerc") who type our manuscripts and clean our offices. This is not to say that the institutions in which we study and teach have become, under the effect of feminism and gender studies, intellectual or workers' paradises or that they have ceased to discipline their subjects as institutions do; for they have not. There is struggle at the seminar table between increasingly fragmented constituencies, and yesterday's marginal subjectivities are always in danger of becoming tomorrow's gatekeepers. But, and for me this *but* makes all the difference, today's students need no longer check their subjectivities at the door. And our readings of all texts are therefore the richer.

Suggestions for Further Reading

The quickest way for the beginner to get her or his bearings in the ever-expanding library of feminist and gender studies is to consult a combination of anthologies, introductory overviews, and a selection of representative or influential works. Many of these sources include substantial bibliographies that can in turn suggest further readings. In addition to those works already mentioned in the essay, I would recommend Toril Moi's *Sexual/Textual Politics: Feminist Literary Theory* and Gayle Greene and Coppélia Kahn's *Making a Difference: Feminist Literary Criticism*, both of which give the reader a sense of the main issues in feminist criticism, before the arrival of gender and postcolonial studies. Elaine Showalter's edited volume *Speaking of Gender* marks the emergence of gender studies as a distinct field. Among the recent anthologies on gender and the question of men in feminism, I suggest two companion books edited by Linda Kauffman, *Gender and Theory: Dialogues on Feminist Criticism* and *Feminism and Institutions: Dialogues on Feminist Theory*, as well as Joseph A. Boone and Michael Cadden's *Engendering Men*. Two works that might provide a useful entry point into the area of Marxist feminist literary and cultural analysis are Judith Newton and Deborah Rosenfelt's *Feminist Criticism and Social Change: Sex, Class, and Race in Literature and Culture* and Cora Kaplan's *Sea Changes: Essays on Culture and Feminism*. For a diverse series of essays on the problems raised by the articulation of feminism and poststructuralism, see Elizabeth Weed's *Coming to Terms: Feminism/Theory/Politics*. Read side by side with Cheryl A. Wall's more theoretical *Changing Our Own Words*, Joanne M. Braxton and Andrée Nicola McLaughlin's *Wild Women in the Whirlwind: Afra-American Culture and the Contemporary Literary Renaissance* provides an excellent introduction to a wide spectrum of current black feminist literary criticism.

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