

## PART I: What Is the Subject of Women's Studies?: The Possibility of Women's Studies. Wiegman, Robyn

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**Abstract:** Part 1 of the book Women's Studies for the Future: Foundations, Interrogations, Politics is presented. Written by Robyn Wiegman, it discusses the possibility of women's studies. Feminism in U.S. academy during the early 1970s was less an organized entity with courses listed on bulletin boards and often taught for free. Although it is now doing quite well in the U.S. academy, academic feminism had gone apocalyptic. She argues that the possibility of women's studies resides in analyzing U.S. academic feminist discourse.

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## PART I: What Is the Subject of Women's Studies?: The Possibility of Women's Studies

In the early 1970s, feminism in the U.S. academy was less an organized entity than a set of practices: an ensemble of courses listed on bulletin boards and often taught for free. Positioned outside disciplines and institutional economies, feminism was a renegade knowledge, one whose academic illegitimacy demonstrated the movement's central claim concerning women's systemic exclusion. Today, it is surely safe to say, things have greatly changed: general education courses across the United States routinely take up the study of women and gender, while a familiarity with feminist scholarship has become an established part of doctoral competency in many fields. Once fledgling women's studies programs have become departments and their tenure-line faculty are now engaged in a national movement to develop autonomous PhD degrees. From this perspective, academic feminism in general and women's studies in particular are doing quite well in the U.S. academy. And yet, since the early 1990s, there has been growing uneasiness, often overt despair, among feminist scholars about the agenda, languages, and political consequences of feminism's academic enterprise. That decade began, let us recall, with a tonal shift so significant--think of *Conflicts in Feminism* and *Feminism without Women*--that Carla Kaplan would describe it in 1992 as a burgeoning "language of crisis."<sup>(n1)</sup> Kaplan's assessment grew more resonant across the decade, as scholars found *Feminism beside Itself* (1995) and *at Cross Purposes* (1997) before it was declared in *Critical Condition* (1999).<sup>(n2)</sup> By the new century, academic feminism had gone apocalyptic, by which I mean that political optimism over its future disappeared beneath widespread anxiety, anger, and fear. Who was to blame? Was it the villainy of the corporatism of "the university in ruins," as Bill Readings so evocatively called it?<sup>(n3)</sup> Or the right's well-funded ideological dismantling of political movements on the left? Perhaps it was the backlash against identity-based claims to rights and knowledge in both

the U.S. public and academic spheres? Critical attention to any of these would begin to measure the multiple and powerful assaults against leftist projects of all kinds, assaults that have radically transformed not only the meaning of political struggle in recent years but the very conditions under which alternative futures can be imagined and pursued. But rarely does apocalyptic narration, as I call this proliferating genre, turn to social or historical explanation as a means for deciphering recent transformations in the power and political presence of feminism as a world-building force. Instead it finds political failure in academic feminism's institutional success. The narrative routes to failure are by now commonplace: the theft of activism generated by the seductions of poststructuralist theory, the fragmentation of the unity of women created by the proliferation of identities, and the loss of collective commitments arising from the privatizing ambitions of professionalization. In each of these formulations, the apocalyptic narrates the academic against feminism, thereby establishing a history of the political present that views academic institutionalization as a betrayal of the political urgencies and critical vocabularies that inaugurated the project thirty years ago. Adrift from the political anchor of the past, academic feminism thus comes to figure the impossibility of a transformed and transformative feminist future.

Readers familiar with recent debates about the past and future of women's studies as a field understand the referential weight of the word impossibility used in the sentence above. No essay on the internal dynamics of women's studies has been more important and more controversial than Wendy Brown's 1999 "The Impossibility of Women's Studies."<sup>(n4)</sup> Special panels have been organized to discuss it, and numerous scholars, many published in this volume, have thought it crucial to critique or defend. Not only the title, which bristles with negativity, but the special issue it appeared in, ominously called "Women's Studies on the Edge," make it a likely contribution to the apocalyptic archive. Add to this the fact that Brown's most provocative argument--against consolidating contests "for freedom and equality... in the form of new degree-granting programs"--arises from what she takes to be the failure of academic institutionalization, and one might be hard pressed not to view the essay as endemic of the dystopic bent of last century's final decade.<sup>(n5)</sup> But while it raises the specter of a dramatic ending, "The Impossibility of Women's Studies" stakes out its critical position on far different terrain than that of apocalyptic narration: poststructuralist theory is not, for Brown, debilitating; differences among women have not robbed the field (or feminism) of an originary coherence; countering professionalization by returning to the agendas, discourses, and affects of social movement will resuscitate nothing. Indeed, the problem of women's studies is its conflation, in her words, of "the political with the academic," and she drives this point home by insisting at her essay's end that the time now is for sustained and deliberate "thinking."<sup>(n6)</sup>

I want to follow Brown's lead and imagine how to transform her anti-apocalyptic negativity into the conditions that can generate, as my title proposes, the possibility of women's studies. This entails turning the apocalyptic narrative on its head: instead of lamenting the divergence between women's studies and feminism, I operate from the suspicion that contemporary feminism, in whatever formulation you name, is not adequate to the knowledge project built in its name. I also assume that any attempt to define feminism's future according to the modes of articulation arising from politics as we inherit them today does not forestall the forces of institutionalization. It simply institutionalizes--as object or method, value form or critical language--a truncated and presentist political order, one that casts our political imaginary as adequate to what the future will need to know. Beneath the

arrogance of this perspective is a kind of desperation, borne no doubt from the difficulty of what I think of as the mean time: the time not of revolutionary beginnings or celebratory arrivals but of the endless demeaning of the ideals and grammar of left-leaning political change. Against this arrogance and desperation, I emphasize contingency and unknowability in order to begin to imagine women's studies as something other than compensation for the unrecoverable loss that the future, by definition, always is. Because the future never belongs to those who imagine it, we need curricular agendas, departmental cultures, and affective relationships to feminism that offer students institutional histories--along with the contingent futures they beget--that neither demand nor rehearse the shape of our own. This begins not in the resolution of the problems that arise from the non-identity of women's studies and feminism, but in developing our ability to sustain, interrogate, and inhabit them.

Before showing how "The Impossibility of Women's Studies" helps us conceptualize these matters, I want to trace in more detail the plot lines of apocalyptic narration. To that end, I focus on another controversial essay from the end of the 1990s, Martha Nussbaum's "The Professor of Parody." For Nussbaum, U.S. academic feminism, influenced by poststructuralism and embodied in the work of Judith Butler, interrupts feminism's historical continuity by abandoning both practical politics and "the suffering of women" in order to luxuriate in theoretical pleasure.<sup>(n7)</sup> To fight this situation, Nussbaum seeks to return feminist theory to "concrete projects" aimed at transforming laws and institutions, which Janet Halley has critiqued in another context as a version of U.S. "governance feminism"<sup>(n8)</sup> and which Nussbaum defends as the necessary means to ward off theoretical collaborations with "evil."<sup>(n9)</sup> Brown, as we already know, deplores such privileging of the political over the academic and calls instead for feminist intellectual practice to grapple with the limitations of its inaugurating conceptions of both identity and power. She thus turns to law not, as does Nussbaum, to identify a proper destination for academic feminist commitments, but to trace the incoherence of subject formation that likewise haunts women's studies. By reading these essays together, I parse their idioms of failure in order to understand something about how U.S. academic feminism today can occupy such contradictory terrain, being too theoretical and not theoretical enough, too politicized or not political enough. In the end, I offer my own contingent positivity for women's studies by imagining it as the institutional site that simultaneously makes legible these contestations and provides the opportunity for their ongoing deliberation. I argue that the possibility of women's studies resides in generating the analytic perspective necessary for apprehending the most paradoxical features of U.S. academic feminist discourse today: its struggle with the forms and consequences of academic feminism itself.

! By most political and historical definitions, feminism is a resistant force. It operates most generally as an argument against political systems, ideological discourses, and cultural practices that have organized not only the subordination of women and the feminine but all human activities, qualities, and potentials through narrow, often dimorphic, frameworks of various kinds, including but not always limited to gender. In this, its project remains temporally constrained: coming after, forging a response, being responsive to some kind of failure (called freedom or democracy or revolution or even, less ambitiously, women's equality). For academic feminism in the United States in general and

for women's studies in particular, the reactivity of its origins has always strained against the desire to originate--to create new traditions, generate original theories, and inaugurate an autonomous field of study that goes beyond correcting the partialities of traditional disciplines. Feminist scholars have repeatedly cast the drive toward institutionalization as a consequence of feminism's original emergence in social movement, and it has ridden this self-defined insurgency until anxieties about the academy seemed impossible to ignore. Witness Biddy Martin's provocative title, "Success and Its Failures."<sup>(n10)</sup> We might read the contradiction between error and achievement evoked here as the effect of discovering, somewhat after the fact, what institutionalization would extract. This would be one way of understanding the pain of revolutionary desire as it confronts the limitations that institutionalization materializes. Name it post-exuberant despair.

It is rarely a generous reading that is offered to account for the mood swing in academic feminism. More often, present worries are cast as the consequence of various avoidable errors: theory's abandonment of politics, or one generation's belligerent disregard of another, or the triumph of professional upward mobility over collective struggle. Regardless of the specifics, the point here is that narratives that explain the present regularly feature academic feminism's own coining to institutional power as a betrayal of the modes of political engagement identified with social movement. Martha Nussbaum's well-known lament against the work of poststructuralist feminism in general and Judith Butler's work in particular reiterates the ideal of an originary academic feminist project and demonstrates how the apocalyptic narrative is entangled with a geopolitical imaginary that symptomatically maintains the United States as its center. While Nussbaum does not link her critique of feminist theory to women's studies directly, her assumptions about how objects and protocols of study can guarantee a relation of justice to women reproduce many of the key characteristics of apocalyptic narration.

Written as a manifesto for a return to "old-style feminist politics," Nussbaum's "The Professor of Parody" takes Judith Butler's scholarship as symptomatic of a theoretical shift in feminist academic work, a shift that has profound generational dimensions. Readers familiar with it will have no trouble, I am sure, remembering the ferociousness of the critique whereby Butler, as representative of "the new feminism," is said to write in a "teasing, exasperating way," to use obscurity to create "an aura of importance," and to bully the reader "into granting that, since one cannot figure out what is going on, there must be something significant going on."<sup>(n11)</sup> Beneath the obscurity, Nussbaum finds "shopworn notions" and a "narrow vision for the possibilities of social change."<sup>(n12)</sup> Plato and John Stuart Mill, she asserts, already gave us Butler's main idea that "gender is a social artifice" and Catherine MacKinnon and Andrea Dworkin already gave feminist theory an understanding that "social forces go so deep that we should not suppose we have access to ... 'nature.'"<sup>(n13)</sup> Evincing a "dangerous quietism," Butler is said to lack a "sense of the texture of social oppression and the harm that it does."<sup>(n14)</sup> The essay ends on this note: "Hungry women are not fed by [Butler's theory], battered women are not sheltered by it, raped women do not find justice in it, gays and lesbians do not achieve legal protections through it.... The big hope ... for a world of real justice, where laws and institutions protect the equality and the dignity of all citizens, has been banished. ... Judith Butler's hip quietism is a comprehensible response to the difficulty of realizing justice in America. But it is a bad response. It collaborates with evil. Feminism demands more and women deserve better."<sup>(n15)</sup> In critiquing Butler's theoretical practice and political commitments (not to mention her sentence

structure and rhetorical habits), Nussbaum's essay is a call to arms for a feminism driven by its political claim to the real: to "the material conditions of real women," "real bodies," "real struggles," and the "real issue of legal and institutional change."(n16) To be trained on the real is, in her terms, feminism's historical inheritance and U.S. academic feminism's critical, at times distinctly moral, imperative.

In her contrast between old-style and new feminism, Nussbaum deploys the apocalyptic narrative's familiar temporal construction, defining the present as that which destroys the future and thereby privileging both the political projects and the theoretical discourses of the past. Like other authors of the apocalyptic narrative, she too pits the academic against feminism by writing the academy as other to the real. "Feminist theory has been understood ... as not just fancy words on paper; theory is connected to proposals for social change.... Indeed, some theorists have left the academy ... [to] address ... urgent problems directly."(n17) In this framework, the academy functions to interrupt feminism's political time by exchanging a focus on legal routes of redress for theoretical and highly linguistic accounts of the social constitution of subjects. Under the auspices of this "symbolic" feminism, young feminists are led to believe that "one need not engage with messy things such as legislatures and movements in order to act daringly";(n18) instead, they learn to "do politics in [the] safety of their campuses ... making subversive gestures at power through speech."(n19) Such a "self-involved feminism," which Nussbaum claims is "easier than the old feminism" is also distinctly American: "It is not surprising," she writes, "that it has caught on here, where successful middle-class people prefer to focus on cultivating the self rather than ... help[ing] the material condition of others."(n20) Thus countering Butler's seemingly narcissistic entrapments in the self, "The Professor of Parody" cultivates a language for social change--"working for others who are suffering" and for "the public good"--that arises at the scene of women's disempowerment and loss.(n21) Coupling these affective attachments to suffering with a definition of the public good as "building laws and institutions," Nussbaum not only gives to old-style feminism the authority and autonomy of an unquestioned relationship of justice to women, but privileges law as equivalent--and adequate--to feminism's pursuit of justice.(n22)

As some of the quotations above indicate, "The Professor of Parody" links its lengthy critique of Butler to the specificities of feminism's development in the U.S. university. But beyond identifying Butler as a quintessentially narcissistic U.S. subject, Nussbaum does not go far in addressing the critical and political consequences of her own focus on the United States. She does criticize new feminism, however, for paying "relatively little attention to the struggles of women outside the United States," even as she must concede, though only parenthetically, that "this was always a dispiriting feature ... of the earlier period."(n23) But because new feminism is, in her account, indicative of "something more insidious than provincialism"--"the virtually complete turning from the material side of life"--she can suspend interrogating the way old-style feminism routinely focused on struggles within the U.S. nation-state.(n24) In doing so, she resuscitates old feminism as adequate to the political imaginary of an increasingly global world. Hence, after delineating the kinds of concrete projects in legal reform and movement politics that the new feminism has abandoned, she can make this claim: "Feminist theory still looks like this in many parts of the world. In India, for example, ... feminist theorizing is closely tethered to practical commitments such as female literacy ... unequal land laws ... rape law ... sexual harassment and domestic violence. These feminists know that they live

in ... a fiercely unjust reality; they cannot live ... without addressing [this] ... in their theoretical writing and in their activities outside the seminar room.(n25) Defining the project of Indian feminism as akin to the work of "the first generation of American feminists," Nussbaum produces the Third World woman of color as a referent for real U.S. feminist commitments and as the authenticating agent through which old feminism can replenish herself. In this dislocation from the United States to India, old feminism is made young again by rendering its activist agenda in the present time of the Third World. Geopolitical dislocation, in short, offers old feminism temporal continuity.

In claiming this continuity, Nussbaum must repress not only contradictions between U.S. feminism's formulation of state-based tactics of intervention and those in postcolonial sites, but also the ways in which postcolonial feminist agendas in the Third World continue to resist the globalizing discourses of U.S. feminism—issues that certainly raise the stakes of the discussion about old feminism's nationalism well beyond the problem that "provincialism" suggests.(n26) As Gayatri Spivak counters in a letter to the editor, "This flag waving championship of needy women ... [s]ounds good, from a powerful tenured academic in a liberal [U.S.] university. But how does she know?"(n27) Nussbaum's essay does not offer an answer to this question. It builds its rhetorical power instead on a temporal order that organizes the present and future of feminism in the U.S. academy according to a narrative of fidelity to an implicitly U.S.-made past, which is to say a narrative that cannot account in any terms other than despair and chastisement for feminism's articulations of power, politics, and subject formation beyond the formulations of activist agencies and political discourse provided by interventions in (and projections of the perfection of) the U.S. nation-state. Ironically, Nussbaum's version of old feminism evinces no complicity with power—not even the power of its global dissemination as the original feminism—because its referential object, Third World "suffering women," exists as the public counter and missionary project to new feminism's purportedly privatized politics and narcissistic abandonment of the real.

For Nussbaum, then, old feminism is the authentic and authenticating project of social transformation, and it is precisely through its sentimental discourse that she sees it as serving as a foundation for global feminist agency. In this, "The Professor of Parody" reiterates a liberal tradition of social change connected to U.S. democratic nationalism and its universalizing affect, thereby resuscitating the Westernized liberal humanist subject that Butler and other poststructuralist feminists have been trying, pointedly, to think both against and without. At the same time, it banishes from consideration the late twentieth-century feminist tradition within the United States and outside it of critiquing the state as the end logic of political reform.(n28) Certainly feminism's articulation of a geopolitical perspective through U.S. antiwar discourses or the Marxian International would lead any assessment of the present in different directions, as would an understanding of contemporary feminist theory that took into account the connections between poststructuralist, critical race, and postcolonial theoretical efforts to challenge the legal and institutional hegemonies of the nation-state as the sole means for political change. But for Nussbaum, the new discourses of feminist theory can only occupy an oppositional, if not antithetical relation to the political, given the ways in which the political is equated with a precise set of projects, analyses, and claims. Hence, she forfeits the opportunity to consider how feminism's entanglements with theory broadly conceived have given depth and texture to a difference previously unperceived between feminism as a national political movement with global desires and feminism as a politicized knowledge project in need of

challenging its own imbrication in U.S. nationalism, Enlightenment modernity, and a sentimental geopolitics of missionary attachment.

My reading of "The Professor of Parody" is not a defense of Judith Butler per se, though readers no doubt sense my considerable lack of sympathy with Nussbaum's strategy for guaranteeing old feminism's futurity. That future of feminism as a monotheistic globalizing politic, narratively equipped with theory as its own fallen angel, is finally too allergic to the possibility of any future that old feminism has not already imagined. By characterizing academic feminism as the force of feminism's depoliticization, Nussbaum reproduces one of the most paradoxical features of old feminism today: she defines it against the very project of institutional intervention it inaugurated in the United States and hence against those discourses through which feminist theorists have come to question, among other things, feminism's historical relationship to national politics, geopolitical imperialisms, and the gendered division of being and knowing (of materiality and theory) in the U.S. university more generally. To the extent that Nussbaum, like other authors of the apocalyptic narrative, reiterates a normative temporality for social change and feminism's own historical becoming, she forecloses all but (a highly condensed version of) old feminism's future. In the process, academic knowledge production and feminism's theoretical battles over the value and meaning of politics and social change are rendered not simply secondary to the real, but the real's most traitorous and energetic enemy.

## II

In her postulation of a referential real as the defining feature of feminist politics, Nussbaum tacitly establishes a model for feminist knowledge production that is familiar to anyone currently working in women's studies in the United States. It views feminism in the academy as fulfilling its political mission by reproducing social activism, which sets the standard of judging the success of the field according to a trajectory of movement (of knowledge, bodies, and practices) into and out of the academy, from the so-called ivory tower to the real. Women's studies thus garners its value by reproducing within the academy the social organization of women as a political sign outside of it, which not only defines the field as a site of belonging in the social identitarian sense but promises to guarantee for it a relation of justice to women. For many feminist scholars, belonging to women and belonging to women's studies are thus completely compatible, if not seemingly identical, as the field's object of study and the subjects who study "her" are (politically speaking) one.

The costs of this configuration of knowledge and politics--and the structure of belonging it has generated--are at the heart of Wendy Brown's "The Impossibility of Women's Studies," which critiques the institutionalization of identitarian political struggles not because such academic projects fail in their obligation to politics, as in Nussbaum's lament, but precisely because making politics the priority "renders dispensable a deep and rigorous [intellectual] basis for women's studies." (n29) In making this critique, Brown emphasizes the "unimpeachable importance" of feminist interventions in university practices of all kinds: "Without doubt we are everywhere now, and without doubt, this 'we' was literally brought into being by the fight to establish and legitimate women's studies." (n30) Nonetheless, she wants to question whether "the strategies and ambitions that produced this effect at one historical moment are ... necessarily those that will sustain or enhance it at another," and

hence she seeks to write the future as an open question.(n31) "The process of watching women's studies falter in the 1990s," she writes, "does not tell us what to do instead. Perhaps the present moment is one ... for thinking."(n32) In arriving at her essay's final word, "thinking," Brown offers a striking reversal of the apocalyptic formulation by engaging feminism's generational battle at its temporal and epistemological core, refusing both to already know politics and to know it as linear narration. As Brown puts it, "What is needed is the practice of a historiography quite different from that expressed by notions of cause and effect, accumulation, [and] origin."(n33)

Brown's critique of the institutionalization of feminism as a politics that subordinates the intellectual helps us take seriously what feminism has come to disavow: that feminism's proliferation in critical and political practice might actually constitute the possibility of generating and sustaining a knowledge project in its name. But while Brown nods repeatedly toward this possibility--toward research and curricula that could inhabit what I think of as the inexhaustibility, indeed, unknowability, of feminism's coherent relation to women, race, power, theory, politics, etc.--in the end she views such work as critically different from women's studies. When she calls for the field to engage postcolonial studies, queer theory, and critical race studies in order to take the "sustaining impulses of women's studies--to challenge the seamless histories, theories, literatures, and sciences featuring and reproducing a Humanism starring only Man--and harness them for another generation or two of productive, insurrectionary work," she understands that to do so would constitute a project rather distinct from women's studies.(n34) Such work, she writes, "will add up neither to a unified and coherent notion of gender nor to a firm foundation for women's studies."(n35) This is the case because the identity-based foundation of women's studies can only function to constrain and contain the problematic she so compellingly diagnoses. "Indisputably, women's studies ... was politically important," she writes, but contemporary women's studies is "politically and theoretically incoherent, as well as tacitly conservative--incoherent because by definition it circumscribes uncircumscribable 'women' as its object of study, and conservative because it must resist all objections to such circumscription if it is to sustain that object of study."(n36)

In launching this critique, Brown is not calling for already-existing women's studies programs and departments to be dissolved, as many of her readers have contended. Instead, she moves between three different but related claims: first, that we need to avoid "new degree-granting programs in the university," which means suspending the institutionalizing project that locates all aspiration for feminist knowledge production in women's studies as an autonomous baccalaureate (and, one assumes, doctoral) field;(n37) second, that the core curriculum of the field needs to be taught in other disciplinary and interdisciplinary sites; and third, that existing curricular projects in women's studies need to be transformed "in name, content, and scope" by the recognition that their organization around singular identity rubrics inhibits their ability to account for the complexities of the subject.(n38) "To the extent that women's studies programs can allow themselves to be transformed," she writes, "they will be renewed as sites of critical inquiry and political energy."(n39) And yet, no matter how much they are "shaped by feminism," because they "will no longer have gender at [their] core ... [they will] no longer [be] women's studies."(n40)

While Brown acknowledges that "the definitions of all disciplines wobble," she finds that "there is something about women's studies, ... and perhaps about any field organized by social identity rather

than by genre of inquiry, that is especially vulnerable to losing its *raison d'être* when the coherence or boundedness of its object of study is challenged."(n41) She thus turns to law to trace the core intellectual problem that haunts all identity-based academic endeavors: their reduction of "the powers involved in the construction of subjects" into singular identitarian domains.(n42) Where Nussbaum cites law as the political enterprise that, in linking gendered, racial, sexual, and class-based discriminations, can provide the answer for feminism as a project of justice, Brown finds law to reflect and inhabit the very paradox that women's studies encounters "in its simultaneous effort to center gender analytically and to presume gender's imbrication with other forms of social power."(n43) Because "the injuries of racism, sexism, homophobia, and poverty ... are rarely recognized or regulated through the same legal categories, or redressed through the same legal strategies, ... legal theorists engage with different dimensions of the law depending on the identity category with which they are concerned."(n44) Such fragmentation within the legal apparatus demonstrates for Brown two crucial points: first, that the social powers at work in subject formation are neither compatible nor evenly distributed across the social field, which means that "formations of socially marked subjects occur in radically different modalities, which themselves contain different histories and technologies, touch different surfaces and depths, form different bodies and psyches";(n45) and, second, that this problem "can only be compounded by programs of study that feature one dimension of power--gender, sexuality, race, or class--as primary and structuring. And there is simply no escaping that this is what women's studies does, no matter how strenuously it seeks to compensate for it."(n46) As a consequence, "the model of power developed to apprehend the making of a particular subject/ion will never accurately describe or trace the lines of a living subject."(n47)

This last statement is one that would receive little rebuttal in contemporary academic feminism, as it defines the very problematic that has animated feminist theory inside and outside the United States for over a decade. Why, then, does Brown locate in the problematic that occupies the field the very substance that necessitates suspending its institutionalization in the present and future? Why does the theoretical difficulty of developing a complex model of power serve as evidence for moving the intellectual project from the institutional site that has most revealed this difficulty and which therefore might have a particular investment in sustaining its analytic pursuit? Why must critical content be compatible, if not coterminous, with modes of inquiry, objects of study, and field domain names; and, hence, why must we be inevitably, even irretrievably, bound to a relation of fidelity to women as our only or only legitimate object of study? Why can't we instead, following Brown's injunction for thinking, not only use the institutional site of women's studies to construct a knowledge project around our refusal to concede to the disciplinary demand now organized by and as women, but do so in an equally belligerent refusal to concede the field name to the inaugurating project of old feminism and its practices, methods, and modes of critical analysis and political judgment? Might we, in short, inhabit the possibility that it will be our failure to reproduce the historical project of women's studies within the field's institutional and degree-granting domain that most profoundly holds open the future?

To pursue these questions, we need to examine not only how women's studies comes to be inhabited, in Brown's account, by affect and not intellect, but how this inhabitation functions in the broader context of identity formation in the contemporary university. As I will discuss, Brown's

solution to the problem of social identity's disciplinary demand--to disseminate the content and course work of women's studies across the university--is one viable option, but it obscures in the end the extent to which the traditional disciplines themselves are identity formations, though of the academic and intellectual, not social kind. My elaboration of this point will open discussion into another one, about the way Brown situates women's studies as the singular habitat for incubating the crisis of racial guilt and monotheistic identity that we might better understand as a symptomatic effect of the U.S. university's own management of national political life and the social forms of difference that erupted into political claims in the mid to late twentieth century. To the extent that Brown seeks to challenge the institution's capitulation to identity's social formation and to release the knowledge of women's studies into the disciplines, she wants to counter, in an almost utopian vein, the effects of the university's management of social difference in favor of a liberated epistemological project, one no longer bound to the project of supplementing, through identity categories, the elisions of U.S. democratic nationalism. But this strategy, as I will show, does not so much liberate the field as exchange one identity form for another, giving to the disciplines the seeming capaciousness to be unmarked by the problematic of affect and difference that for Brown condemns the project of women's studies to an anti-intellectual reproduction of women as a social form. From this perspective, the move to animate feminist intellectual inquiry outside women's studies in the disciplines can end up eliding the field with the problematic of identity that might more cogently be understood as inhabiting the U.S. university in multiple and contradictory ways.

To be sure, Brown does not situate her critique in the national context I am gesturing toward, nor does she address overtly how the impossibility of women's studies she cites is bound up with a history of national political struggle over higher education, state-sponsored knowledge production, and national subject formation. Only in her final paragraph does she identify the geopolitical location of her critical discussion as the U.S. university. But her rendering of the problematic of the field is implicitly predicated on the national political horizons of the inaugurating narrative that now circumscribes it, which I take as both underlying and inciting her desire to differentiate for academic feminism an intellectual project devoted to political thought from the distinctively political demand to defend identity's social coherence that she finds constraining women's studies. From this perspective, Brown might be seen as trying to escape precisely that which Nussbaum seeks to resuscitate: not just an affective tie to what Brown calls in another context "wounded attachments," but the nation-state as the implicit destination for and contestatory arena of feminism's contemporary political imaginary.<sup>(n48)</sup> But why, let me ask again, must this desire to be delivered from wounded attachments and missionary nationalism close the book on the institutionalizing project of women's studies as a degree-granting site altogether? To get closer to some sustaining answer to this question, I want to delve more deeply into the problem of disciplinary identity and its relation to social identity in the broad organization of knowledge in the U.S. university.

### III

To trace the complexity of competing forms of identity formation in the U.S. university, let us return to the departmental scene that Brown uses to open her essay--for it is here, in the difficulties of reforming the undergraduate curriculum in her own department (then University of California, Santa Cruz), that she initially locates the impossibility of women's studies. She writes, "We found ourselves

completely stumped over the question of what a women's studies curriculum should contain. ... Each approach ... [we took] continued to beg the question of what a well-educated student in women's studies ought to know and with what tools she ought to craft her thinking. ... Why, when we looked closely at this project for which we had fought so hard and that was now academically institutionalized, could we find no there there? That is, why was the question of what constituted the fundamentals of knowledge in women's studies so elusive to us?"(n49) Brown lists a number of crucial issues that contributed to this impasse: the multiple divides that have emerged within women's studies between ethnic studies, feminist theory, and queer studies; the proliferation of feminist scholarship into methodologically incompatible domains of knowledge where no "single conversation" emerges; and the inability of gender to adequately configure the complexity of social identity.(n50) "We were up against more than any one of these challenges," she writes, "because we were up against all of them."(n51)

In describing her department's impulse to seek curricular reform, Brown reviews the incoherence that she finds at the heart of the women's studies major where students were asked to pursue both "generic" and "political" inquiries in their four-course set of core requirements: (the generic) Introduction to Feminism, Feminist Theory, and Methodological Perspectives in Feminism, and (the political) Women of Color in the United States.(n52) The requirements thus made legible two animating desires for women's studies: "the desire for disciplinary status signified by the claim to a distinct theory and method ... and the desire to conquer the racialized challenge to women's studies' early objects of study by institutionalizing that challenge in the curriculum."(n53) While Brown views both of these desires as, in the end, impossible ones, she focuses most closely on the way that the women of color course functions as a compensatory strategy for the field's inescapably compromised relation to complex subject formation. As she puts it, the "compensatory cycle of guilt and blame" that accompanies the course is "structured by women's studies['] original, nominalist, and conceptual subordination of race (and all other forms of social stratification) to gender."(n54) And further, "insofar as the superordination of white women within women's studies is secured by the primacy and purity of the category gender, guilt emerges as the persistent social relation of women's studies to race, a guilt that cannot be undone by any amount of courses, readings, and new hires focused on women of color." As such, no resignification, no performative rearticulation, indeed, no possible difference in the deployment of women is possible as gender is rendered "pure" and secure as the sole enabling analytic for the field. The critique launched by feminists of color against the reduction of women to white women can never hit its target, as the category of women remains structurally predetermined to yield an exclusionary result "insofar as the superordination of white women ... is secured by the primacy ... of ... gender."(n55)

Brown's response to this impasse, to the structural impossibility (in her terms) of rearticulating women to yield anything but an exclusionary effect, is to call for teaching the women's studies curriculum in something other than its own degree-granting site. Might we, she asks, move such "basic courses as 'Introduction to Feminisms,' 'Introduction to Feminist Theories,' and 'Histories and Varieties of Women's Movements' ... into the general curriculum of other disciplinary and especially interdisciplinary programmatic sites"?(n56) This solution is particularly interesting given her essay's rumination on the failure of the women's studies faculty to find the "there there" for a coherent women's studies undergraduate curriculum. "Our five core and three most closely affiliated faculty

are trained respectively in American literature, American history, Chinese history, English literature, Renaissance Italian and French literature, Western political theory, European history, and molecular biology."(n57) While Brown notes that all these scholars "have strayed from the most traditional boundaries of these fields," they nonetheless experience the women's studies classroom as the scene of intellectual disappointment as students are not simply unprepared in "the faculty's areas of expertise" but drawn to "some variant of feminist sociological or psychological analysis-- experientially, empirically, and practically oriented--or in studies of popular culture. Yet not one of our core faculty worked in [these areas]."(n58) The chasm thus created between student interest and faculty expertise might be interpreted as the profound difference between two forms of identity production: the social relation of identity that produces political belonging through the experiential and practical in women's studies and the intellectual formation of identity that proceeds from disciplinary training and the academic construction of "expertise."(n59) Where Brown diagnoses the problems of installing the former as the faulty coherence of a women's studies curriculum, she does not detail how the latter identity structure of traditional disciplinarity operates. In this way, her essay relies, contradictorily, on the very distinction between intellectual and social identity that characterizes the impossibility of women's studies in the first place. In the process, the intellectual is implicitly aligned with disciplinary training and given priority in overcoming the limitations of social identity. Such a formulation reverses the value but not the organizing structure within which knowledge and bodies, identities and thought, in the university now move.

It is in this broader context that I want to resituate the impossibility of women's studies that Brown so cogently cites. For while identity studies in general have sought to intervene in the U.S. university by critiquing its practices of excluding particular groups of subjects, they have been less successful in establishing the study of identity as a knowledge project that distinctly challenges the identitarian form of the university's intellectual reproduction in the disciplines. This is the case, it seems to me, regardless of the earliest intentions of programs in identity studies which organized themselves as critical interruptions into disciplinary practices through a foregrounded discourse of interdisciplinarity. Through inter disciplinary frameworks, identity studies sought to overcome the professionalized divide between knowledge domains in the U.S. university (between, for instance, the study of literature and political economy).(n60) And yet, given the academy's own political economy of knowledge production, identity studies have relied and continue to rely on faculty both trained and located in traditional disciplines, which means that intellectual subjective formation as well as intellectual belonging are predicated on the identity and authority conferred by disciplinary structures. This is not to say that scholars experience no abjection in their relation to disciplinary structures, but it is to foreground the fact that knowledge identity is today disciplinarily based, which often has the powerful effect of rendering identity studies solely as domains of belonging precisely in the corporeal identitarian sense that Brown rightly laments. In this dynamic where one may be a woman, one also is a literary critic, political scientist, sociologist, or critical theorist (and often most decidedly so in such interdisciplinary contexts as women's studies!), which means that the turn away from women's studies to escape identity delivers us once again up to it, but in its most powerful professional form. To the extent that knowledge production as we know it today is also an identitarian project, it too binds us to privileged objects of study and their equally privileged modes of inquiry, and it too requires an obligation to forms of coherence that are both arbitrary and contested, if not at times without any justification, other than historical precedent, at all. That these

intellectual identities have come to rest in Enlightened modernity on their dis-establishment from the corporeal does not make them less identitarian; rather it reveals how profoundly shaped by practices of identity formation is the U.S. university on the whole.

Brown's notion that other academic sites are adequate to feminist knowledges in ways that women's studies is not does offer an escape from the affect-laden, wounded state that it has become, but it will not settle the problem of identity's incoherence or the affective dimensions of social difference in the U.S. university today. It is for this reason that the courses she lists for integration into the existent organization of the university by necessity omit *Women of Color in the United States*. That referent and the problematic of a "notoriously fraught relationship" it cannot help but bring are rendered wholly internal to women's studies; indeed, this seems to have no living trace in the dissemination of women's studies courses across the university.<sup>(n61)</sup> While some of Brown's critics have taken this as evidence of her dismissal of race, it is important to distinguish, as she does, the difference between the women of color rubric and the analytic importance of race for feminist scholarship. I would argue, with Brown, against the course's placement in a core curriculum, but on the grounds of its intellectual displacements: how it reduplicates but does not reveal its complicity with the university's broader condescension of race with particularist bodies; how it reinscribes a national political horizon for thinking feminism's relation to race and racialization by constraining the question of "color" within the referential framework of the United States; and how this constraint produces both intellectual and political difficulties for thinking through the challenge of international/transnational/post-national knowledges in the field.<sup>(n62)</sup> At the same time, I would argue, against Brown, that, in order to make race analytically significant, we cannot leave it to the disciplines, to the teaching of *Introduction to Feminism in English*, political science, or history--or any of the various underfunded interdisciplinary sites--to give complexity to the present that "*The Impossibility of Women's Studies*" so cogently charts. After all, it is precisely the existence of women's studies today, as an interdisciplinary institutional domain defined by but irreducible to identity, that could make the movement of courses from women's studies to other institutional arenas productive.

More importantly, the suggestion she offers will not rescue us from the difficult and problematical entanglements of social formation and knowledge production that affect women's studies as part of a national university system that has become increasingly intent on managing diversity. It is the importance of the field's continued grappling with the ease with which identity can be appropriated that allows us to interrogate the histories of national political life that inhabit, in uneven and often inexplicable ways, the university as a social and institutional form. Rather than move out of the site that brings us now to these difficult considerations, we need to rethink the ways in which national epistemologies of political change meet up with, contest, and transform the conception of what and who belongs to women's studies as a field. In other words, only by retaining the problematic within women's studies--that there might be "no there there"--is it possible to render a future of the field that can productively encounter identity as the complex subject production which Brown seeks--and that is predicated, as I have been arguing, on retaining as a political strategy of resignification the nomination of the field as women's studies.

This does not mean, however, that I think Brown is wrong to suggest that academic feminism mobilize itself by teaching what we think of as basic women's studies courses in various sites

throughout the institution. To offer an introduction to feminism in a sociology or English department, instead of such discipline-based mainstay courses as Sociology of Gender or Women and Literature, does offer an important reconfiguration of feminist knowledge. It allows for a different kind of intellectual circulation and the displacement of the stable unity of women and gender in multiple domains. Such mobility, however, cannot be in lieu of the continued reshaping of objects and modes of inquiry within an ongoing project of institutionalizing women's studies, which is to say that the intellectual rigor that Brown calls for can be most productively sustained in relation to the continued function of women's studies as the resignified signature for an extra-disciplinary domain devoted to thinking about and against identitarian projects. The present that Brown calls into thinking as an interruption of the assumptions of the past provides the necessary first move in the reanimation of feminist knowledge production in the U.S. academy, but such a move begets another: a theoretical investigation of the organization of knowledge that structured the field's inaugurating understanding of its object of study and that continues to consign identity-based studies to their most reduced and realist referential function as affect and not intellect, as social particularity and not intellectual complexity. When Brown calls for thinking to interrupt the past's temporal determination of the future, it is this that must be interrupted as well: the particularist reduction whereby the U.S. university's distillation of bodies from knowledge yields an understanding of identity studies as an institutional domain within which the complexity of power cannot possibly be thought.

To say that the study of identity needs more critical thinkers like Wendy Brown might seem inconsistent at this point, but it is precisely because "The Impossibility of Women's Studies" allows us to understand so much that I am compelled to labor over the possibilities of what it does not yet say. Women's studies does "need a combination of, on one hand, analyses of subject-producing power accounted through careful histories, psychoanalysis, political economy, and cultural, political, and legal discourse analysis, and, on the other, genealogies of particular modalities of subjection that presume neither coherence in the formations of particular kinds of subjects nor equivalences between different formations."(n63) But this does not mean that, because "the work ... will add up neither to a unified and coherent notion of gender nor to a firm foundation for women's studies," it will "no longer [be] women's studies."(n64) Why refuse the possibility that attention to the issues she defines will productively contribute to the redefinition, resignification, and redeployment of the intellectual force, frame, and function of the field? If it is women that we must let go of, as along with Brown I believe it is, then we must also refuse the assumption that intellectual domains and their objects of study are referentially the same. The contingent positivity I seek begins here where we commit ourselves to the possibility that the disciplining work of the field's origins has no necessary claim on the future content, scope, and intellectual formation signified by the name.

In this present that is not possibly the same as the past nor a simple predictive platform for the future, academic feminism's attachment to the institution is decidedly insecure. Political failure haunts us on all sides, and we have very little vocabulary outside accusation, injury, and despair for understanding the institutionalizing process of feminism's transit from the street to the U.S. university. While Brown comes closest to offering us the object lessons that identity-based studies might be made to yield, she is finally, paradoxically, too optimistic, as the contemporary U.S. university offers quite literally "no there there" for the study "of the powers involved in the construction of subjects."(n65) The present of thinking that Brown calls for needs to register this

institutional failure, not as preamble to dismissing women's studies as an academic endeavor but in order to extend the critique of identitarian belonging to the disciplinary formations that structure not only women's studies' own internal practices of knowledge production, but the broader shape and scope of the university's organization of bodies and knowledge as well.

#### IV

In "The Impossibility of Women's Studies," Brown suggests that a mode of social belonging has been installed as the political rationale for the field, thereby rendering it an intellectually domesticated site. In doing so, she makes two central claims: first, that degree-granting projects formed around identity actually inhibit critical thought about power and the complexity of the living subject; and, second, that the future productivity of feminist knowledge will be possible, indeed, more probable, outside the institutionalizing project of women's studies as an autonomous curricular entity. I have sought to counter these two claims by positing that the critical diagnosis of the field offered by Brown is not intellectually possible from outside it, that, indeed, it is the productive disparity between the field's own critical horizons and its internal critique that have rendered "The Impossibility of Women's Studies" possible as a critical project. In addition, I have defined a second and equally formidable identitarian project in the U.S. academy, one whose effect of fragmentation is no less intense than the structural incommensurabilities that Brown finds in identity-based programs and departments: the disciplines. In doing so, I have tried to emphasize that within the disciplinary apparatus of knowledge production, one does not simply study literature, politics, or social organization. One is constituted as belonging on an identitarian basis, where the imperative to be a biologist, philosopher, political scientist, even a critical theorist is to participate in an identitarian project; and it is this project that has long been opposed to and in a management relation with notions of identity as a national social form. My purpose in these moves has been to interrupt Brown's determination of an end to the project of institutionalization by arguing that the intellectual transformations she calls for are possible, indeed necessary, for animating the possibility of women's studies, which entails a refusal to relinquish the institutional site to the disciplining presumptions of its inaugurating imperatives.

With institutionalization in the U.S. academy as part of and not antithetical to the future, I have also questioned, through my discussion of Martha Nussbaum, the status of the real and of justice as the twin frameworks within which we understand the critical value of academic feminism in general and women's studies in particular. This fetishization of a real world that exists elsewhere from the university has unfortunately made it difficult to train our attention on the specificities and force of the U.S. university as a political location and productive site for academic feminism's futurity. To say this does not mean that we should think about the world outside the U.S. academy less, but certainly we must stop thinking about it in place of or in simple opposition to thinking about the specific knowledge politics of the university. None of this should be taken to suggest that the U.S. academy is feminism's equivalent or that feminism as a political project can be reduced to its articulation in the academy, either in the United States or elsewhere. Academic feminism in any national scene can never stand for feminism as a whole, and the very notion of feminism as a whole must repeatedly be fractured by feminism's inability to remain identical to itself. At the same time, as I have argued through my discussion of Wendy Brown, feminism as an academic project bears a critical difference

from the models of social movement that may have inaugurated it. To the extent that the idiom of failure laments this difference, as in Nussbaum's essay, it abandons the challenge of feminist engagement in the very institution that absorbs not only Nussbaum's but our own critical labors. To the extent that the idiom of failure turns the other way--lamenting the conflation of the academic with identity-based social struggle, as in Brown--it leaves unarticulated how women's studies might serve as the field domain for plumbing the theoretical and epistemological possibilities of the "no there there" that accompany our struggles against the institutionalized norms that inhibit us: not just of generational transmission and the incoherence of both social and disciplinary identity, but of the democratic elisions of national politics that permeate the organization of knowledge, bodies, and social life in the contemporary U.S. university.

The future of women's studies in the U.S. university that I seek stakes its contingent positivity on following the non-identical, which entails our own historical-national-temporal displacement: a refusal of the apocalyptic narrative's attachment to the idea that the past generates the future or that the future must always stand as a symbolic embodiment of the past. Cast in critical terms, it is a non-identical feminism that slips free of the conundrum of failure that currently encompasses both U.S. women's studies and academic feminism. It does this by offering the possibility that the knowledge that academic feminists will need in different futures is not "our" knowledge, that any particular future and our knowledge will have no necessarily productive relationship, no narrative that makes us live in the present of some future academic feminist time. A non-identical feminism will not be efficient; it will not have the clarity of productive order; it will not seek to guarantee that feminist struggle culminates in a future that we can already know from the vantage point of our present. This is the case because the future that we need is the excess of teleological time, elusive and unmanageable, certainly unable to be historically mandated, politically guaranteed, or subjectively owned. What this means for women's studies is that it is time to rearticulate the content and scope of the field by thinking, as Elizabeth Grosz puts it in another context, of "the radical openness of the future," which entails a turn away from "time, memory, and history" to "conceptions of duration and becoming." (n66) Such concentration on the politics of what I call "the mean time" affirms the possibility that women's studies can exceed its contemporary emplotment as the critical container of U.S. feminism's twentieth-century political subjectivity. In the meantime is the space of duration for academic feminism's non-identical agency, which is to say the space from which its institutionalizing project in the university stands a chance to simultaneously outthink and outlive us all.

## Footnotes

This paper incorporates and revises portions of three previously published works: "Academic Feminism against Itself," *NWSA Journal* 14, no. 2 (summer 2002): 18-37; "Feminism, Institutionalism, and the Idiom of Failure," *differences* 11 (fall 1999-2000): 107-136 (copyright Duke University Press); and "Feminism's Apocalyptic Futures," *New Literary History* 31, no. 4 (autumn 2000): 805-825 (copyright Johns Hopkins University Press). My thanks to Brian Carr and Jody Greene for productive engagements with earlier drafts.

(n1.) See, respectively, Marianne Hirsch and Evelyn Fox Keller, eds., *Conflicts in Feminism* (New York and London: Routledge, 1990); Tania Modleski, *Feminism without Women: Culture and Criticism in a "Postfeminist" Age* (New York: Routledge, 1991); and Carla Kaplan, "The Language of Crisis in Feminist Theory," *Bucknell Review*, special issue: "'Turning the Century': Feminist Criticism in the 1990s," ed. Glynis Carr (Lewisburg, Pa.: Bucknell University Press, 1992): 68-89.

- (n2.) Diane Elam and Robyn Wiegman, eds., *Feminism beside Itself* (New York: Routledge, 1995); Dana Heller, ed., *Cross Purposes: Lesbians, Feminists, and the Limits of Alliance* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997); and Susan Gubar, *Critical Condition* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999).
- (n3.) Bill Readings, *The University in Ruins* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1996).
- (n4.) While Brown's essay appeared in the fall 1997 special issue of *differences*, "Women's Studies on the Edge," I am using 1999 as the publication date of the essay since that is when the volume actually appeared.
- (n5.) Wendy Brown, "The Impossibility of Women's Studies," *differences* 9, no. 3 (1997): 98.
- (n6.) *Ibid.*
- (n7.) Martha Nussbaum, "The Professor of Parody." *New Republic* 220, no. 16 (February 22, 1999): 44.
- (n8.) Ian (Janet) Halley, "Queer Theory by Men," *Duke Journal of Gender, Law, and Policy* 11 (spring 2004): 7-53.
- (n9.) Nussbaum, "Professor," 37, 45.
- (n10.) Bidy Martin, "Success and Its Failures," *differences* 9, no. 3 (1997): 102-131.
- (n11.) Nussbaum, "Professor," 46.
- (n12.) *Ibid.*
- (n13.) *Ibid.*
- (n14.) *Ibid.*, 42.
- (n15.) *Ibid.*, 45.
- (n16.) *Ibid.*, 44, 37.
- (n17.) *Ibid.*
- (n18.) *Ibid.*, 38.
- (n19.) *Ibid.*, 38, 45.
- (n20.) *Ibid.*, 46.
- (n21.) *Ibid.*, 46, 44.
- (n22.) *Ibid.*, 44.
- (n23.) *Ibid.*, 38.
- (n24.) *Ibid.*
- (n25.) *Ibid.*
- (n26.) See Inderpal Grewal and Caren Kaplan, eds., *Scattered Hegemonies. Postmodernity and Transnational Feminist Practices* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994); Inderpal Grewal and Caren Kaplan, "Warrior Marks: Global Womanism's Neo-Colonial Discourse in a Multicultural Context," *Camera Obscura* 39 (September 1996): 5-33; and Inderpal Grewal and Caren Kaplan, "Transnational Feminist Cultural Studies: Beyond the Marxism/Poststructuralism/Feminism Divides," in *Between Women and Nation: Transnational Feminisms and the State*, ed. Caren Kaplan, Norma Alarcón, and Mino Moallem (Durham: Duke University Press, 1999), 349-363.
- (n27.) Gayatri Spivak, letter to the editor, *New Republic* 220, no. 16 (April, 19, 1999): 43.
- (n28.) This critique has been forwarded by a number of scholars, but given Nussbaum's listing of gays and lesbians as among those whom Butler abandons, it is especially important to cite the work of Janet Halley and Gayle Rubin, who trace--against Nussbaum's heroines Catherine MacKinnon and Andrea Dworkin--how feminist remedies for sexual harassment and anti-pornography have become the means for policing non-normative sexualities. See Janet Halley, "Sexuality Harassment," in *Left Legalism/Left Critique*, ed. Wendy Brown and Janet Halley (Durham: Duke University Press, 2002), 80-104; and three essays by Gayle Rubin: "Sexual Traffic," *differences* 6, nos. 2-3 (summer-fall 1994): 62-99; "Misguided, Dangerous, and Wrong: An Analysis of Anti-Pornography Politics," in *Bad Girls and Dirty Pictures: The Challenge to Reclaim Feminism*, ed. Allison Assiter and Avedon Carol (London: Pluto, 1993), 18-40; and "Thinking Sex: Notes for a Radical Theory of the Politics of Sexuality," in *Pleasure and Danger: Exploring Female Sexuality*, ed. Carole S. Vance (New York: Routledge, Kegan and Paul, 1984), 267-319.
- (n29.) Brown, "Impossibility," 98.
- (n30.) *Ibid.*, 96.
- (n31.) *Ibid.*
- (n32.) *Ibid.*, 98.
- (n33.) *Ibid.*, 94.
- (n34.) *Ibid.*, 95.
- (n35.) *Ibid.*
- (n36.) *Ibid.*, 83.
- (n37.) *Ibid.*, 98.

- (n38.) Ibid., 95.  
(n39.) Ibid.  
(n40.) Ibid.  
(n41.) Ibid., 85, 86.  
(n42.) Ibid., 86.  
(n43.) Ibid., 88.  
(n44.) Ibid.  
(n45.) Ibid., 92.  
(n46.) Ibid., 93.  
(n47.) Ibid., emphasis mine.  
(n48.) See chapter 3 of Wendy Brown's *States of Injury: Power and Freedom in Late Modernity* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1995), 52-76.  
(n49.) Brown, "Impossibility," 81-82.  
(n50.) Ibid., 82-83.  
(n51.) Ibid., 83.  
(n52.) Ibid., 80.  
(n53.) Ibid., 81.  
(n54.) Ibid., 93.  
(n55.) Ibid.  
(n56.) Ibid., 97.  
(n57.) Ibid., 82.  
(n58.) Ibid., 81, 82.  
(n59.) Ibid., 92.  
(n60.) As Lisa Lowe has discussed in "The International within the National: American Studies and Asian American Critique" (*Cultural Critique* 40 [fall 1998]: 29-47), it is the organization of the disciplines that bifurcates the realms of culture and political economy, which in turn produces structural antagonisms for accounting for subject construction across various social domains.  
(n61.) Brown, "Impossibility," 93.  
(n62.) For recent critical work on the problems and complexities of the women of color course, see both Rachel Lee, "The Prisonhouse of White Women's Exclusions: Now What? for Women of Color," in *Women's Studies on Its Own*, ed. Robyn Wiegman (Durham: Duke University Press, 2002), 82-105; and Minoo Moallem, "Women of Color in the US: Pedagogical Reflections on the Politics of the Name," in *Women's Studies on Its Own*, ed. Wiegman, 368-382.  
(n63.) Brown, "Impossibility," 95.  
(n64.) Ibid.  
(n65.) Ibid., 86.  
(n66.) Elizabeth Grosz, "Deleuze's Bergson: Duration, the Virtual, and a Politics of the Future," lecture delivered at University of California, Irvine, October 28, 1998.

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By Robyn Wiegman

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