

REVISTA ECO-PÓS

<http://www.pos.eco.ufrj.br/ojs-2.2.2/index.php/revista/index>



The Future of Feminist Theory: Dreams for New Knowledges

Elizabeth Grosz

Revista Eco-Pós, 2010, v. 13, n. 3, pp 38-52

A versão online deste artigo está disponível em:

<http://www.pos.eco.ufrj.br/ojs-2.2.2/index.php/revista/issue/view/25>

Revista do Programa de Pós-Graduação em Comunicação
Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro

Informações adicionais da revista Eco-Pós

sobre: <http://www.pos.eco.ufrj.br/ojs-2.2.2/index.php/revista/about>

e-mail: ecopos.ufrj@gmail.com

Política de Acesso Livre

Esta revista oferece acesso livre imediato ao seu conteúdo, seguindo o princípio de que disponibilizar gratuitamente o conhecimento científico ao público proporciona maior democratização do conhecimento.

The Future of Feminist Theory: Dreams for New Knowledges

Elizabeth Grosz¹
Rutgers University



RESUMO

Dado que o feminismo não conseguiu um dos seus objetivos fundamentais, a criação de uma profunda igualdade ou a constituição de uma verdadeira e autônoma prática, na qual as mulheres escolhem por si as definições de si mesmas e do seu mundo, ideal representado nas filosofias da diferença sexual – agora pode ser tempo de, mais uma vez retomar a questão. Não no intuito de prever o que será a teoria feminista no futuro, mas de investigação do que poderia ser, talvez até mesmo o que deveria ser. A preocupação não é extrapolar a teoria feminista como a conhecemos hoje. Em vez de perguntar: o que a teoria feminista pode se tornar no futuro? Como ela vai mudar? Como continuará a mesma? Ou seja, em vez de prever o que pode ocorrer com a teoria feminista, aqui quero discutir algo que parece muito próximo, mas é realmente muito diferente: a questão do que a teoria feminista deve ser, os meus anseios de um pensamento feminista futuro. O que é a teoria feminista no seu melhor? Qual é a sua contínua promessa radical? Como ela está localizada em relação a outros saberes? O que pode aspirar a teoria feminista? Como podemos construir saberes, técnicas, métodos e práticas que produzam novos tipos de sujeitos e novas relações sociais?

PALAVRAS-CHAVE

Feminismo • Teoria Feminista • Comunicação

Much has changed in the last twenty years regarding feminist theory and practice, although there are of course continuities and the elaboration of ongoing questions that remains pressingly the same. Although women remain

¹ Professora do Departamento de Estudos Feministas e de Gênero na Rutgers University. Também vinculada às universidades de Bergen, Noruega, e de Sidney, Austrália. Autora de importantes obras nas temáticas que interseccionam corpo, sexualidade, espaço, tempo e materialidade, dentre elas, *Chaos, Territory, Art: Deleuze and Framing of Earth*, 2008, *Time travels: Feminism, Nature, Power*, 2005, e *Space, Time and Perversion: Essays on Virtual and Real Space*, de 2001.

secondary and subordinated to men in economic and political terms – indeed the economic disparity between the average wages of men and women is greater now than it was a decade ago and the number of women who function as political leaders is lower now than a decade ago – it is also true that many new questions, issues, problems have emerged that were unrecognized or even non-existent twenty years ago: religious fundamentalisms and terrorism existed but not as globally-linked phenomena; globalization itself was a dream more than an economic reality; queer theory had yet to emerge as such from its origins in lesbian and gay struggles; Marxism and psychoanalytic theory represented ideal radical intellectual positions by which culturally variable relations could be analyzed and understood in universally relevant terms; and class analysis, through its extension and reorientation, provided a model by which the position of women, colonized subjects, and indeed all social minorities, could be recognized and analyzed and their oppression understood and integrated into a single model. And perhaps most strikingly in terms of the generation of feminist theory, women's and gender studies programs and departments have proliferated throughout universities and institutions of higher learning, have become relatively professionalized and institutionally incorporated. In many contexts this means that feminist theory – the unique contribution of feminist programs and departments that needed to be added to their interdisciplinary focus – has become in many situations normalized, rendered into an entity, a knowable thing, surrounded by and aligned with history and methodology courses, even as it remains highly contested and without any agreed upon content, canonical texts or named authors.

Given that feminism has not succeeded in either of its competing and contradictory aims – either the creation of a genuine and thorough-going equality which reveals the fundamental sameness of humanity underneath or beyond all its morphological and representational variations; or the constitution of a genuine and practical autonomy, in which women choose for themselves how to define both themselves and their world, the ideal represented in philosophies of sexual difference – it may now be time once again to raise the question, not of predicting what feminist theory will be, but of inquiring into the much less depressing question of what it could be, perhaps even what it ought to

be.

My concern is not with extrapolating feminist theory as we know it today into the future (such projections, while rarely accurate as predictions beyond the short term, are usual more reliable indices of contemporary anxieties and desires). Instead of asking the question: what will feminist theory become, in the future? How will it change? How will it remain the same? That is, instead of predicting what feminist theory will be here I want to address something that seems quite close but is actually very different, the question of what feminist theory could be, what my dream of a future feminist thought should be. What is feminist theory at its best? What is its continuing radical promise? How is it to be located relative to other fields of knowledges? Relative to the range and variety of interests of women understood in all their differences? Relative to what remains unsaid, unspoken, unrepresented in other knowledges? To what can feminist theory aspire ? How can we produce knowledges, techniques, methods, practices that bring out the best in ourselves, that enable us to overcome ourselves, that open us up to the embrace of an unknown and open-ended future, that bring into existence new kinds of beings, new kinds of subjects and new relations to objects?

Concepts

Foucault's conception of power as a series of relations of force that utilize whatever tactics it can – including the production of truth – is today a more accepted understanding of power than the pervasive concept of power as a form of falsehood or ideology that seemed to fascinate the previous generation of feminist theorists and other radical scholars of race, class and ethnicity. Knowledges are weapons, tools, in the struggles of power over what counts as truth, over what can be used to create new systems, forces, regimes, techniques, none of which are indifferent to power. This is not to say that those discourses aspiring to the status of truth, and to be included in the canon of knowledge(s) are not really true; only that truth itself, which requires quite onerous conditions for statements to be included as true, is always already an effect of

power, and a condition of power's ever more effective operation.

If Foucault concentrates on truth, particularly of the kind that is produced in the 'sciences of man,' the human sciences, within disciplines such like psychology, sociology, criminology, economics, biology and so on, he never really addresses the field within which his own work is usually classified – that of theory, or perhaps, if we understand the term in its broadest and least academic sense, philosophy (dare we call theory by its real name?), a field that, if it relies on truth at all, requires a very different understanding of what truth is and how it functions.

Foucault does not address those discourses that do not directly aspire to truth, but nonetheless aim to generate certain political, social or cultural effects, what is called 'theory.' This is much more the concern of his contemporaries, Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, who ask the question: what is it to think? What is philosophy? What is a concept? In addressing the question of what is feminist theory, and what could it become we need to understand first what theory is and might become. For this, it seems to me that Deleuze and Guattari's work is, if not indispensable, then at least extremely useful: they enable us to understand, in keeping with something like Foucault's understanding of power and its investments in 'games of truth,' that concepts, theories, are strategies, struggling among themselves with forces and effects that make a difference, that are significant beyond themselves insofar as they become techniques by which we address the real. In addressing the question, what is feminist theory, we are primarily addressing the question of what it is to think differently, innovatively, in terms that have never been developed before, about the most forceful and impressive impacts that impinge upon us and that thinking, concepts, theories can address if not resolve or answer.

Feminist theory, at its best, in its ideal form, is about the generation of new thought, new concepts (at least as much as if not more than the critique of existing knowledges), not so much new truths, which must meet onerous and normalizing conditions to be part of the true, but new thinking. So we must ask, along with Deleuze and Guattari in their final collaborative work, What is Philosophy? (1994) what is a concept? How is philosophy, theory, especially

feminist philosophy, feminist theory, a practice involved in the production of concepts?

To simplify Deleuze and Guattari's position, we can say that 'in the beginning' – a beginning understood in evolutionary terms – there is chaos, the whirling forces of materiality without limit, without boundary. Life emerges from the chaos of materiality through chance, through the protraction of the past into the present, that is, through the production of virtuality, latency or potential which adds to the materiality of chaos the possibility of finding some order, of extracting enough consistency to enable life to elaborate itself, to bifurcate and experiment with difference, with the constitution of individual and collective variability, from which natural selection is made possible. Only when the evolutionary elaboration of life reaches a certain complexity do concepts come to function as forms for the generation of order. Concepts are one of the ways in which the living address and attempt to deal with chaos, the overabundance of order, which surrounds them (other ways include the functive, which orders science, and percepts and affects, which organize the arts).

Concepts emerge, have value and function only through the impact of problems, problems generated from outside. Concepts are not solutions to problems – for most problems, the problem of gravity, of living with others, of mortality, have no solutions – only ways of living with problems. They are the production of immaterial forces that line materiality with incorporeals, potentials, latencies: concepts are the virtualities of matter, the ways in which matter can come to be otherwise, the promise of a future different from the present. Concepts are ways in which the living add ideality to the world, transforming the givenness of chaos, the pressing problem, into various forms of order, into possibilities for being otherwise. Concepts are practices we perform, not on things, but on events to give them consistency, coherence, boundaries, purpose, use. Concepts do not solve the problems that events generate for us: they enable us to surround ourselves with possibilities for being otherwise that the direct impact of events on us does not. So concepts are not answers, solutions – we tend to think that solutions eliminate problems when in

fact the problem always coexists with its solutions – but modes of address, modes of connection – Deleuze calls them ‘movable bridges’ (23) – between those forces which relentlessly impinge on us from the outside to form a problem, and those forces we can muster within ourselves, harnessed and transformed from outside, by which to address problems. This is why concepts are created: they have a date, often also a name, they have a history that seizes hold of them in inconsistent ways, making of them new concepts with each seizure and transformation insofar as each concept has borders that link it up to and evolve it with other concepts.

Perhaps most interestingly, concepts cannot be identified with discourses or statements, which means that concepts can never be true. Truth is a relation between propositions and states of affairs in the world; concepts are never propositional because they address, not states of affairs, but only events, problems. Events are, by definition, problems insofar as they are unique unrepeatable conjunctions of forces that require some kind of response under peril of danger. For Deleuze, one of the mistakes of institutional philosophy is to collapse the concept into the proposition, to assert questions of truth in place of questions of force.

We need concepts in order to think our way in a world of forces that we do not control. Concepts are not means of control, but forms of address that carve out for us a space and time in which we may become what can respond to the indeterminate particularity of events. Concepts are thus ways of addressing the future, and in this sense are the conditions under which a future different from the present – the goal of every radical politics – becomes possible. Concepts are not premonitions, ways of predicting what will be; on the contrary, they are modes of enactment of new forces, they are themselves the making of the new. The concept is what we produce when we need to address the forces of the present and to transform them into new and different forces that act in the future.

Thus the concept is indispensable to addressing the new, not through anticipation or forecasting but through the task of opening up of the real, of the outside, that it performs. The concept is thus the friend of all those seeking

radical social change, who seek new events and new alignments of forces. The concept does not accompany revolutionary or radical change (change has to be accomplished in its own terms, in the field or territory in which it functions) but render it possible by adding incorporeals to the force or weight of materiality. The concept is how living bodies, human bodies – that is, male and female bodies of all types – protract themselves into materiality and enable materiality to affect and transform life. The concept is one way in which life attaches itself to forces immanent in but undirected by the present. Along with the percept and the affect, the concept is how we welcome a people to come, a world to come, a movement beyond ourselves rather than simply affirm what we are.

In short, theory is never about us, about who we are. It affirms only what we can become, extracted as it is from the events which move us beyond ourselves. If theory is conceptual in this Deleuzian sense, it is freed from representation – from representing the silent minorities that ideology inhibited (subjects), and from representing the real through the truths it affirms (objects) – and is opened up to the virtual, to the future which does not yet exist. Feminist theory is essential, not as plan or anticipation of action to come, but as the addition of ideality, incorporeality to the horrifying materiality of the present as patriarchal, racist and ethnocentric, a ballast to enable the present to be transformed.

The force of concepts

Feminist theory, as the production of concepts relevant to understanding women, femininity, and social subordination more generally, and welcoming their transformation, is the production of new concepts, concepts outside, beyond or at the very limits of those concepts that have defined men, women and their relations up to now. Both patriarchal and feminist theory address, each in their different ways, an intractable and irreducible problem, the problem of sexual difference, the problem of morphological bifurcation, the production of two difference types of bodily form and consequently two different types of subjectivity, two different types of being, two types of

corporeality and possibly two types of interests, values and practices, who cannot without loss be understood through or reduced to a singular, universal or purely human model. This is a problem that every society however small (whether human and animal) must face, an ongoing event that cannot be evaded but for which there is no solution. How the two sexes are to co-exist is a question that life itself, in its unpredictable variability, addresses in an ongoing way without universal solutions, for it is one of the pressing frameworks (along with birth, illness and mortality) that every society must manage if it is to continue.

Sexual difference is managed in two contrary ways through patriarchal and feminist conceptualizations: for patriarchy, the task is to ensure a certain or guaranteed precedence of masculinity and male privilege even as sexual difference remains open-ended and to be resolved or lived through various strategies. For feminism the task is to seek either a more equitable distribution of resources between men and women (for liberal and Marxist feminism) or the possibility of dual sexual symmetry entailed through an acknowledgement of sexual difference. Each is a contestatory relation, a struggle, that attempts to bind or unbind certain forces through the elaboration of concepts that highlight and singularize, specify and surround these forces. Each struggles to generate concepts that bring into existence a future that serves its interests. I do not want to suggest here that there is any parallelism between these two sets of concepts, that they directly engage with each other, or that they are mutually defining – patriarchy and feminism are not two protagonists in an evenly matched struggle for feminism is the very excess and site of transformation of patriarchy. Instead, their relations are more discontinuous, open-ended, each calling into existence its own constituencies, its own future peoples, its own landscape of events without direct reference to the other.

Theory, whether patriarchal, racist, colonialist or otherwise, is one means – certainly not the only one – by which we invent futures, one intense practice of production, like art, like economic production, like many other kinds of labor, that makes things – in this case, concepts – that did not exist before, that opens up worlds to come. The production of concepts is by no means a privileged

production (indeed, within capitalism its value is quite minimal!) but it is nevertheless a necessary condition for the creation of new horizons of invention, just as theory is by no means the only path to social change but remains a necessary condition for the creation of new frameworks, new questions, new concepts by which social change can move beyond the horizon of the present. Although struggles at the level of ‘practice’ are obviously crucial for the accomplishment of social change, without concepts, concepts which both face chaos, and extract from it some of its uncontained force while providing us with a minimal order with which to address and frame it for our purposes, we have no horizon for the new, no possibility of overcoming the weight of the present, no view of what might be, only the inertia of what is. Without concepts, without theory, practice has no hope, its goal is only reversal and redistribution, not transformation.

The New

At its best, feminist theory is about the invention of new practices, positions, projects, techniques, values. Feminist theory must understand and address what is and has been in attempting to pre-apprehend and control what might come into being – to that extent feminist theory is committed to ‘critique,’ the process of demonstrating the contingency and transformability of what is given – there needs to be a production of alternatives to patriarchal (racist, colonialist, ethnocentric) knowledges and also, more urgently and less recognized, a freedom to address, make and transform concepts, so that we may invent new ways of addressing and opening up the real, new types of subjectivity, new relations between subjects and objects.

To be more explicit, the emphasis feminist theory places on certain questions needs to be reoriented and directed to other concerns. I do not want to suggest that these issues are useless, for each has had and will continue to have its historical significance for feminist thought; rather, I would like to see their dominance of the field end, and new questions be asked. There are four areas of feminist concern that I believe it would be good now to displace in favor

of other issues, other questions:

1. The overwhelming dominance, even among those who lament its existence, of identity politics, the concern with questions of the subject's identity, experiences, feelings, affects, agency and energies. The multiplication of subject positions, the opening up of the subject to all the vagaries of a hyphenated existence as class, race, gender and sexually specific being, the proliferation of memoirs, the overwhelming emphasis on the personal, the anecdotal, the narrational, while important for a long period of feminism's existence, have now shown us the limit of feminist theory. To the extent that feminist theory focuses on questions of the subject or identity, it leaves questions about the rest of existence untouched. Feminism abdicates the right to speak about the real, about the world, about matter, about nature, and in exchange cages itself in the reign of the 'I': who am I, who recognizes me, what can I become? Ironically, this is a realm that is increasingly globally defined through the right to consumption, what the subject can have, own, and become.

This focus on the primacy of the subject has obscured two issues: the one relates to what constitutes the subject that the subject cannot know about itself (the limits of the subject's subjectivity, the content and nature of the agency or agencies that we can attribute to a subject); and the other relates to what is beyond the subject, bigger than the subject, outside the subject's control. The subject does not make itself; the subject does not know itself. The subject seeks to be known and to be recognized, but only through its reliance on others, including the very others who function to collectively subjugate the subject. We need to ask with more urgency now than in the past: if the subject strives to be recognized as a subject of value in a culture which does not value that subject in the terms it seeks, what is such recognition worth? And once the subject is recognized as such, what is created through this recognition? To focus on the subject at the cost of focusing on the forces that make up the world, we lose the capacity to see beyond the subject, to engage with the world, to make the real. We wait to be recognized instead of making something, inventing something which will enable us to recognize ourselves, or more interestingly, to eschew recognition altogether.

I am not what others see in me, but what I do, what I make. I become according to what I do, not who I am. This is not to ignore the very real differences between subjects and their various social positions; only to suggest that these differences, and not the subjectivity between which these differences are distributed, are the vehicles for the invention of the new.

It is the inhuman work of difference, rather than its embodiment in human 'identity', 'subjectivity' or 'consciousness', rather than its reflection in and through identity, that interests me now. I am more interested in those differences that make us more than we are, recognizable perhaps for moment in our path of becoming and self-overcoming, but never fixed in terms of how we can be read (by others) or how we classify ourselves, never the basis of an identity or a position. Instead of seeing difference as the external and pre-configurable relation between two distinct objects or things, difference in itself must be considered primordial, as a non-reciprocal emergence, that which underlies and makes possible all identities:

...instead of something distinguished from something else, imagine something which distinguishes itself – and yet that from which it distinguishes itself does not distinguish itself from it. Lightning, for example, distinguishes itself from the black sky but must also trail it behind, as though it were distinguishing itself from that which doesn't distinguish itself from it. (D&R: 28)

Difference is the point at which determination, the lightning, meets the undetermined, the black sky. This difference in itself is continually subjected to mediation, restructuring or reorganization – to a neutralization – through being identified with entities, things. Whatever identity there may be – lightning has the most provisional and temporary form - difference is that movement of self-differentiation, that movement of internal differentiation that separates itself from the difference that surrounds and infuses it: difference produces its own differentiations from the undifferentiated.

2. Linked to the preeminence of the subject is the privileging of the epistemological (questions of discourse, knowledge, truth and scientificity) over the ontological (questions of the real, of matter, of force or energy). Epistemology is the field of what we, as knowing subjects, suitably qualified, can and do know of the objects we investigate, including those objects which are

themselves subjects. Thus it makes sense that in a politics of intellectual struggle, epistemological questions have prevailed, and have come to displace or cover over ontological questions. The whole of twentieth-century thought has followed this trajectory – the translation of (metaphysical) questions about the real into epistemic questions of the true – which is also a translation of the categories relevant for the object into those concerned with the subject. Feminist theory needs to turn to questions of the real, not empirical questions regarding states of affairs (for these remain epistemological), but questions of the nature and forces of the real, the nature and forces of the world, cosmological and historical forces. In short, it needs to welcome again what epistemologies have left out: the relentless force of the real, a new metaphysics.

This means that, instead of further submersion in the politics of representation, in which the real can only ever be addressed through the lens imposed on it by representation in general and language in particular, where ontology is always mediated by epistemology, we need to reconsider representational forces in their impact on the mediation of the real. We need to reconceptualize the real as forces, energies, events, impacts that pre-exist and function both before and beyond, as well as within representation. This opens us up to a series of new questions and new objects for feminist interrogation, not just social systems but also natural systems, not just concrete relations between real things, but relations between forces and fields, not just economic, linguistic and cultural analysis but also biological, chemical and physical analysis, not just relations between the past and present, but also between the present and the future.

3. Tied in with these two points, feminist theory needs to affirm, rather than the subject and what it knows, and the cultural which constitutes, defines and limits this subject, what is inhuman in all its rich resonances. This is entailed in the very idea of difference itself.

The concept of difference, ironically, does link together various categories of subject, various types of identity, all of the human, not through the elaboration of a shared identity, but through the common variation or difference that the human, in all its modalities, asserts from the inhuman, both the sub-

human (the material, organic and living worlds) and the superhuman (the cultural, the collective, the cosmic and the supernatural). This perspective, which inserts cultural and political life in the interstices between two orders of the inhuman – the pre-personal and the impersonal – provides a new framework and connection, a new kind of liberation for the subject, who understands that culture and history have an outside, are framed and given position only through the orders of difference that structure the material world

A future feminism needs to place the problematic of sexual difference, the most fundamental concern of feminist thought, in the context of both animal becomings (we have tended to oppose culture to nature, to see culture as variable and nature as fixed) and in relation to the becomings microscopic and imperceptible that regulate matter itself. Sexual difference – the bifurcation of life into two morphological types, two different types of body, two relations to reproduction, two relations to sexuality and pleasure, two relations to being and to knowing – is not only our culture's way of regulating subjects, it is the way in which the dynamic natural world has generated a mechanism for the production of endless variation and endless difference. Sexual difference is an invention of life itself which the human inherits from its prehuman past and its animal connections here and now.

We have devoted much effort to the social, cultural, representational, historical and national variations in human relations. We now need to develop a more complex and sophisticated understanding of the ways in which natural forces both living and non-living frame, enrich and complicate our understanding of the subject, its interior and what the subject can know. In other words, feminism needs to direct itself to questions of complexity, emergence, difference that the study of subjectivity shares in common with the study of chemical and biological phenomena. We need to understand in more explicit terms how newness, change, the unpredictable are generated, what mechanisms are available, perhaps below or above the level of the social, to explain the very unpredictability of social and political change. These are no longer the concerns of cosmologists and physicists but also of those committed to social and political change. And finally,

4. Perhaps the very notion of separate forms or types of oppression, or the notion that various forms of oppression are recognizable, systematic and distinct if overlapping structures needs to be reconsidered. I certainly do not want to suggest that there is no such thing as oppression, but I would like us to reconsider the terms by which this is commonly understood. Oppression is made up of a myriad of acts, large and small, individual and collective, private and public: patriarchy, racism, classism, ethnocentrism are all various names we give to characterize a pattern among these acts, a discernable form. I am not suggesting that patriarchy or racism don't exist, and don't have mutually inducing effects on all individuals. Just that they are not structures, not systems, but immanent patterns, models we impose on this plethora of acts to create some order. What exists, what is real, are these teaming acts – the acts of families, of sexual couples, of institutions and the very particular relations they establish between experts and their objects of investigation, the acts of teachers and students, of doctors and patients, of migrants and those whose roots are long-term to a nation. Patriarchy, racism and classism are the labels we attach, for the sake of convenience, a form of short-hand, to describe this myriad of acts that we believe are somehow systematically connected.

There is no self-contained system of patriarchy that is capable of being connected to a self-contained system that is racism to form an intersectional oppression: there is only the multiplicity of acts, big and small, significant and insignificant. If we understand this multiplicity configures in unique ways for each individual, yet enables shared patterns to be discerned for those who share certain social positions then we will not confuse these acts for a latent order or worse, for a coercive system. Instead, we will be able to see, not just how socially marginalized groups are discriminated against, but the agency and inventiveness, the positive productivity that even the most socially marginalized subjects develop or invent through the movements they utilize and the techniques that even marginalization enables them to develop. The acts that constitute oppressions are also the conditions under which other kinds of inventions, other kinds of acts, become possible. Perhaps there are only differences, incalculable and interminable differences for us to address – no systems, no identities, no intersections, just the multiplying force of difference

I believe that race, class, gender and sexuality, although they appear static categories and are of course capable of conceptually freezing themselves through various definitions for various purposes, are precisely such differences that cannot be determined in advance. What it means for, say, a poverty-stricken woman in Sri Lanka, or a working class lesbian in Japan, or a single mother in Brasil remains to be determined and it is wishful thinking on the part of the analyst or activist to believe that these differences can be represented by first person voices, or measured by any 'objective' schemas (no voice ever represents a group, category or people without dissent; and no categories are so clear-cut and unambiguous that they can be applied willy-nilly without respect for the specific objects of their investigation): it remains an open-question, to be negotiated by each generation and geography in its own, unpredictable terms.

I dream of a future feminist theory in which we no longer look inward to affirm our own positions, experiences, beliefs but outward, to the world and to what we don't control or understand in order to expand, not confirm, what we know, what we are, what we feel. Feminist theory can become the provocation to think otherwise, to become otherwise. It can be a process of humbling of the pretensions of consciousness to knowledge and mastery and a spur to stimulate a process of opening oneself up to the otherness that is the world itself. At its best, feminist theory has the potential to make us become other than ourselves, to make us unrecognizable.

Bibliography

- Gilles Deleuze and F Guattari (1994) *What is Philosophy?* Translator Hugh Tomlinson and Graham Burchell, New York, Columbia University.
- Carol Pateman and E Gross (eds) (1986) *Feminist Challenges. Social and Political Theory*, Allen and Unwin: Sydney.