Stuart Hall and Feminism: revisiting relations

Stuart Hall e feminismo: revisitando relações

ANA CAROLINA D. ESCOSTEGUY*

Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Rio Grande do Sul, Graduate Program in Communications.
Porto Alegre – RS, Brazil

ABSTRACT

This article firstly addresses Stuart Hall's account of the contributions of feminism to the formation of cultural studies. Secondly, it deals with the development of feminist criticism in the context of cultural studies, especially in England. Following this line, it retrieves Hall's ideas on the problematic of identity(ies). This dimension of his work is the third approach to be explored, a subject also relevant in feminist theoretical production. The paper additionally points out matches and mismatches of such developments in the Brazilian context. Finally, it concludes that the theme deserves in-depth analysis, especially as the topic of identity plays a central role in current political practice and feminist theory.
Keywords: Estudos culturais, Stuart Hall, feminismo, identidade

* PhD in Communication Sciences from the University of São Paulo, Professor at Pontifical Catholic University of Rio Grande do Sul and CNPq Researcher. Author of *Cartografias dos estudos culturais: uma versão latino-americana* (Belo Horizonte: Autêntica, 2002).
Orcid: http://orcid.org/0000-0002-0361-6404
E-mail: carolad@pucrs.br

RESUMO

Este artigo aborda, em primeiro lugar, a narrativa de Stuart Hall sobre as contribuições do feminismo para a formação dos estudos culturais. Em segundo, trata do desenvolvimento da crítica feminista no âmbito dos estudos culturais, sobretudo ingleses. Nessa trajetória, resgata as ideias de Hall sobre a problemática da(s) identidade(s). Essa dimensão de sua obra constitui a terceira via explorada, tema também relevante na produção teórica feminista. Sinaliza, ainda, encontros e desencontros desses desdobramentos no contexto nacional. Por fim, conclui que o tema merece uma análise em profundidade, sobretudo porque a questão da identidade ocupa lugar central na mesa da prática política e da teoria feminista atual.
Palavras-chave: Cultural studies, Stuart Hall, feminism, identity

STUART HALL'S theoretical and political legacy has multiple dimensions. Much has already been written, both before and after his death in 2014, regarding the issues he raised, acknowledging his wide-reaching influence in different academic areas. One suggestion of a recent study compiling the repercussions of his work in Latin America is Mato (2015). However, there is scant bibliography on his affinities and relations with feminism (Escosteguy, 1998), especially on which reflections proposed by the author reveal links with feminist theoretical debate. That is the challenge assumed by this paper.

Firstly, it addresses the author's account of the contributions of feminism to the formation of cultural studies. Secondly, it deals with the development of feminist criticism in the context of cultural studies, particularly in England, which gives special attention to the problematic of the media. This approach identifies the existence of four periods, with Hall's ideas on identities emerging in the transition between the second (1980s) and third (1990s). This conceptual input has stimulated many debates, and its potential impact on feminist studies has been felt from that time to the present. This dimension of his work is the third aspect to be explored. Finally, the development of a fourth wave, which has not yet dissipated and which remains centered on identity claims, is identified at the turn of the 21st century.

If, on the one hand, following Hall's account of the contributions of feminism to cultural studies – even though his version is disputed by both feminists at the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies[1] (originally founded in 1964 at the University of Birmingham, England) and those who only later became associated with cultural studies[2] – is a safe course, on the other hand, attempting to sketch a few ideas about Stuart Hall's reflections that may have influenced feminist criticism is a much more provisional and contingent task.

Due to the scarcity of available documentary records that reveal and/or mark out the latter course, evidence is mainly sought in accounts about contemporary feminist theories, especially those that establish links with cultural studies and are connected to media criticism. Moreover, the insufficiency of this analysis is readily acknowledged, inasmuch as it uses reports that are not confined to cultural and media studies. This is, therefore, a necessarily limited account, and one motivated by my academic affinity with the theme. Still from a methodological point of view, in an attempt to commit to a contextual analysis, a prominent feature of cultural studies, matches and mismatches between Stuart Hall's thought and feminist studies in the Brazilian context are tentatively indicated.

1. As is the case of Charlotte Brunsdon.

2. Ann Gray, for example.

1970: ON THE INTERSECTION BETWEEN FEMINISM AND CULTURAL STUDIES

Stuart Hall describes feminism as an "interruption" that altered a practice accumulated in cultural studies in the early 1970s, causing a "theoretical noise." It is inevitable to recover the forcefulness of the metaphor used by that intellectual to refer to this rupture.

> We know it was, but it's not known generally how and where feminism first broke in. I use the metaphor deliberately: As the thief in the night, it broke in; interrupted, made an unseemly noise, seized the time, crapped on the table of cultural studies. (Hall, 2003b: 209)

Associated with an act of invasion hatched on the outside and at first glance charged with negativity, it is a denunciation of feminism which, in Skeggs's words (2008: 670), sounds "dirty."

Passionately denying Hall's version, Brunsdon (1996: 280) says:

> When I first read this account, I immediately wanted to unread it. To deny it, to skip over it, to not know – to not acknowledge the aggression therein. Not so much to deny that feminists at CCCS in the 1970s had made a strong challenge to cultural studies as it was constituted then and there, but to deny that it had happened the way here described [by Hall].

In other words, for her, this account of Hall's does away with the *war of position* waged at the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, precisely during the period in which he was director (1968-1979). In the 1970s, the existence of a double confrontation inside the Centre was already acknowledged. Within the context of feminist political practice, the demand was for the occupation of spaces by female students and the recognition of their importance; in the theoretical debate, the efforts of feminists – among them Angela McRobbie, Charlotte Brunsdon herself, Dorothy Hobson, and others – emerged to include the gender dimension in the current discussion, centered mainly around Marxism and the problematic of class. According to them, "the patriarchal assumptions [of the Centre] distorted the results of any attempt at cultural analysis or research, contributing to relegate the female half of the human race to relative obscurity" (Schulman, 1999: 212).

In another statement, Hall mentions how he and Michael Green, realizing the importance of the issues surrounding feminism, "invited" a few feminists

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to project questions related to the movement, since cultural studies was "sensitive" to the gender issue.

> At a certain point, Michael Green and myself decided to try and invite some feminists, working outside, to come to the Centre, in order to project the question of feminism into the Centre. So the "traditional" story that feminism originally erupted from within cultural studies is not quite right. We were very anxious to open that link, partly because we were both, at that time, living with feminists. We were working in cultural studies, but were in conversation with feminism. People inside cultural studies were becoming sensitive to feminist politics. Of course, what is true is that, as classical "new men", when feminism did actually emerge autonomously, we were taken by surprise by the very thing we had tried – patriarchally – to initiate. Those things are just very unpredictable. Feminism then actually erupted into the Centre, on its own terms, in its own explosive way. But it wasn't the first time cultural studies had thought of, or been aware of, feminist politics[3]. (Hall, 2003c: 428)

In addition to these statements, when reflecting on how he faced the demands of the Women's Studies Group, he estimates that his position as CCCS director contributed to exacerbate the internal confrontation with feminists.

> I was supervising them, I was running the seminars, you know, what can you do? I tried to flatten the hierarchy as far as possible, but you can't flatten them entirely, and it was an impossible position for me. I was represented as being more hostile than I actually was. (Hall apud Davis, 2004: 129)

Despite the counterproductive metaphor, the admittedly patriarchal position, and the acknowledgment of his own resistance, Hall (2003a) recognizes that the outbreak of feminism in cultural studies was positive, estimating that the intervention reorganized the agenda of cultural studies in theoretical terms and regarding the configuration of new objects of study. Some of those aspects are detailed below.

After retrieving Hall's position concerning the role played by feminism in the constitution of cultural studies and, above all, in its reconfiguration, the next step is to map out the changes that marked the establishment of feminist media criticism[4] in England. Hall's formulations on identities will emerge throughout this process of continuities and digressions. Alongside the unfolding of the English trajectory, a few particularities of feminism and the incipient formation of feminist cultural analysis[5] in the Brazilian context are pointed out.

3. In an interview to the author in September 1998, Michael Green partly disagreed with Stuart Hall's version, stressing the difficulties to determine the beginning of relations between feminism and cultural studies..

4. This term is used to designate the tradition developed within cultural studies, mainly English, of the analysis of women from the perspective of gender and the feminist theory, committed to the problematic of media.

5. The label "cultural analysis" or "feminist cultural criticism" is used here for the outlook that is mainly concerned with gender and media relations. Escosteguy (2012) stresses the existence of a mismatch between the strengthening of feminist studies in social sciences since the 1970s and their inexpressive development in communication, at least until the late 1990s, in the Brazilian academic context.

1980: ON THE EMERGENCE OF LINKS BETWEEN STUART HILL AND FEMINIST THEORY

Although feminist criticism entered cultural studies at CCCS through the "back door"[6], its impact can be readily identified and charted over four periods, from the 1970s (more specifically 1973/1974) to the early 21st century. This chronology, it should be emphasized, is used only to indicate changes, and not as a strict division of time or setting of dates.

This section highlight the first two periods – 1973/1974 and 1980 – in the English context, which specifically concerns Stuart Hall. It also addresses, in a pendular movement, the Brazilian context, obviously considering both political and cultural differences. In Brazil, however, the mismatch between feminism and cultural criticism over these two periods is flagrant.

This singularity necessarily occurred *pari passu* with the development of the feminist movement in Brazil. In the early 1970s, Brazilian feminism faced a paradox: while organizing itself in defense of the specificity of women's condition, it established a deep connection with the struggle against the military dictatorship. This resulted in a permanent tension between two vectors, one associated with the struggles that emphasized sexuality, body and pleasure, and the other prioritizing class conflict and/or the struggle for democracy.

During the redemocratization period, the strong political participation of feminists allied with political parties and progressive sectors of the Church often ended up privileging collective objectives over the individual rights of women (Pinto, 2003). Therefore, such characteristics, of both the Brazilian feminist movement and the Brazilian sociopolitical setting, contributed to undermine issues related to culture – and the media – in the horizon of the feminist debate at the time.

These two periods – feminism during dictatorship (1970s) and redemocratization (1980s) – roughly coincide with the initial links between feminist criticism and cultural studies in 1973/1974 and the passage to a second phase, in the 1980s, in the English context.

One of the first studies produced at the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies to reveal a connection with feminist criticism is the paper "Images of Women in the Media" (1974 apud Escosteguy, 1998), which mainly theorizes on women's subordination to the capitalist system. In 1975, the first edition of *Resistance through Rituals: youth subcultures in post-war Britain* (Working papers in cultural studies, n. 7/8) (Hall, Jefferson, 1975) has only two chapters focusing on female youth culture. The others ignore the existence of the gender debate, from both the theoretical and empirical point of view. Still during this period, the collection *Women Take Issue* (Women's

6. An expression used by Almeida (1997/1998: 46).

TStudies Group, 1978 apud Escosteguy, 1998) is hailed as the pioneering production of the Women's Studies Group, founded in 1974 within the Centre as an exclusive group for women.

Generally speaking, the studies of this period express an equal position between feminism and women, that is, all women suffer with patriarchy and, therefore, share common experiences. This stance expresses a discourse that affirms the condition of being a woman. Thus, those studies analyzed in a practical way how the dominant media discourses reinforced traditional gender roles and a sexist view of society. And although they sought to problematize subordination and inequality between women and men, destabilizing biological determinism and shifting the weight of economic determinations, they nevertheless focus on a core of predetermined attributes, revealing a unifying and universalizing burden. Angela McRobbie and Jenny Garber's (2014) initial effort to highlight differentiated forms of female youth subculture resistance, related to class, generation, and gender, emerges as a preliminary challenge to that homogenizing posture.

However, the creation of a group exclusively focused on women's problems, shared only by them, led to the creation of two spheres of cultural studies: one focused on culture issues in general and another specifically related to the feminist problematic, which, in turn, caused a split within the actual group. Nonetheless, what mattered most at the time was to mark out a specific area of activity within the academic community capable of outlining new objects of study.

However, it is worth noting that, although expressed in other words, there persists to this day a split regarding the feasibility of a cultural studies practice devoted to gender issues. Basically, the division would be between those who claim that this

> link would afford a view of women's position in society through various forms of cultural expression, thus enabling a more diversified and less unifying analysis. It would also allow the participation of the feminist project in a more comprehensive cultural context, taking care, however, to preserve its specific characteristics. (Almeida, 1997/1998: 40)

And, opposing them, would be those that criticize

> this kind of confluence, [since] it would lead to a breakdown of women's studies, as they would risk losing their specificity by allying themselves with other forms of cultural expression. (Ibid.)

Be that as it may, a new stage in the cross between feminist criticism and cultural studies was instituted in the mid-1980s with the rupture of the discourse of women's sisterhood. While in the 1970s what was affirmed was a condition of women, in the 1980s such universalization was rejected. Therefore, if at first feminist concerns were more centered on equality issues, attention is now drawn to differences between women.

The book *Feminism for Girls* (1981), organized by McRobbie and McCabe, uses the term "girls" to establish a sense of the existence of differences within an overly globalizing and comprehensive notion such as that of *woman* (apud Escosteguy, 1998).

> So if there is a first phase of the encounter between feminism and CCCS, beginning perhaps in 1973-4, I would suggest that its final text is the 1981 McRobbie and McCabe collection, *Feminism for Girls*, which, in its use of both "*feminism*" and "*girls*" suggests some distance from the 1970s. This book also marks the end of the first phase with its much stronger sense of problems with the category "*woman*" and of *difference between women*. (Brunsdon, 1996: 278) [Author's italics].

Another phase[7] would then be in process, reorienting analyses, themes and, mainly, theoretical changes. In the opposite direction to a homogeneous totality that integrated women and erased mainly issues of race, ethnicity, generation, sexual orientation, among others, the construction of gender identity and its actual historical character start gaining prominence.

This departure coincides with the expansion of the agenda of themes that starts being investigated from the perspective of cultural studies, integrated with an agenda of feminist media criticism. For example, interest in romantic fiction, melodrama and soap operas, considered as *female genres*, narrative structures primarily serving a female target audience; and focus on the pleasure derived from the consumption of those very products, viewing them as a source of both ideology and resistance[8].

Attention to products of popular mass culture provided by such cultural artifacts, more specifically in the sphere of entertainment and pleasure, was coined by Corner (1996) as "popular culture project" as opposed to "public knowledge project," centered on the relations between State and media, and between "serious" media texts and those of a factual nature.

Corner's criticism also stresses that in engaging in objects of study linked to the "popular culture project," excessive attention is paid to the microprocesses that occur in daily life, one of the preferred areas of feminist criticism research, to the detriment of focus on structural relations between media and

7. According to Brunsdon (1996), another phase would be characterized in the individual works, produced as of 1981, by Hobson, Coward, Carby, McRobbie, Mort, Winship, Weedon and herself.

8. Although manifestations of mass popular culture were already part of the sphere of cultural studies since Richard Hoggart's inaugural work, *The Uses of Literacy* (1973), it is herein considered that the gender perspective and feminist thinking offer a differentiated and singular view of similar objects.

society, characteristic of the other line of study. In the former, analyzing what is "experienced" and understanding social relations from a personal perspective are central (Gray, 1997). On the other hand, if the domestic is inevitably part of the private, it is a sphere where relations of power, domination and oppression are expressed, therefore being marked to a great extent by the political. Thus, the problematization of political space carried out by 1970s feminism, under the banner of "the personal is political," resonates powerfully – even in the 1980s – in feminist media criticism.

This other phase of cultural analysis, in addition to incorporating new themes, reveals changes in theoretical framework, some of them just cited. However, others relate to redirecting research to women's experience *vis-à-vis* the aforementioned media texts, that is, to the understanding that meaning is not a property of the actual text, but is constituted in the interaction between subjects, texts and contexts.

Besides the huge differences in socio-historical formation and political contexts experienced in England and Brazil during the 1980s, the theoretical issues and objects of study predominant in the academia of both countries reveal an evident detachment. In Brazil, feminist studies will only start gaining importance in the late 1970s[9], and their interests are mainly focused on issues of work, health, abortion and violence (Pinto, 2003). Therefore, questions of media and women, media and gender, and female consumption of popular mass culture products were not yet on the horizon of feminist concerns.

In England, the aforementioned change of course addresses a link between feminist media criticism and the problematic of the subject and issues of identity, especially of gender. On the other hand, it is the experienced conjuncture that gives meaning and pertinence to Hall's "autobiographical" account (2003b: 200) about certain moments and theoretical legacies in cultural studies. The powerful rupture produced by feminism can be summed up in the openness to understanding both the personal and political sphere and the consequences in identifying new study problematics; in the expansion of the notion of power, previously linked solely to the public sphere, to the private sphere; in the attention to the revealing issues of gender and sexuality, associated with the very category of power; in the inclusion of themes concerning the subjective and the subject; and, lastly, "[in] the reopening of the 'closed frontier' between social theory and psychoanalysis" (Ibid.: 208).

From this point on, it may also be possible to think that

there is no question that Hall's engagement with feminism and post-structuralism was transforming. Not only did his own work take a turn towards the thorny

9. This is not to say that a more complex range of possibilities did not exist in terms of feminist political practice. For example, Biroli and Miguel (2015) argue that in Brazil in the 1970s, there were already within the black movement organized groups asserting the specificity of black women.

questions of identity and subjectivity, but he had experienced the reality of the gulf between intentions and practice, and the hidden resistances that surfaced without warning. (Davis, 2004: 129)

From the point of view of this paper, the conceptual relations between Hall and feminist theory can be established from this phase on, in this case bearing on feminist media analysis. This is so because his first experience with feminism happens in the private sphere and is prior to the challenges faced on the subject as CCCS director. In any case, this encounter between personal and intellectual trajectory indicates that ideas respond to the social transformations that challenge those who conceive them, that is, the struggles and conflicts experienced constitute their political and intellectual practice.

1990: ON THE AFFINITIES BETWEEN HALL AND FEMINISM

As argued above, the affinities between Hall's theoretical concerns and feminism can be perceived as of the second (1980s) phase of feminist criticism, especially in England. In claiming that gender establishes the subject's identity as much as class, ethnicity or nationality, feminist theory asserts a position that transcends the earlier perspective of identifying the construction of *gender roles* in society, typical of the analysis of the first phase of feminist criticism. Alongside this shift, Hall's intellectual trajectory and feminist criticism converge in undoing the idea of the fixed and stable identity of the subject.

This approach develops over the second half of the 1980s, when Hall becomes more concerned with the problem of identity from a theoretical standpoint, although the theme is not new in his work. In *Policing the Crisis* (Hall, 1978), the racial issue, thematized in the sociopolitical analysis of the British context, is the embryo of the theoretical debate that will continue throughout the 1990s.

This theme – the racial issue – unfolds in "Gramsci's Relevance for the Study of Race and Ethnicity" (Hall, 2003a), which retrieves Gramscian categories that the author considers productive to analyze racial culture and *racially* structured social phenomena, also highlighting the need to incorporate historical specificity, including the national and regional characteristics of the contexts under scrutiny.

In that same period, Hall produces what is perhaps his first autobiographical text, "Minimal Selves" (1993). There he will acknowledge his migrant nature and his "long political education" in the discovery of being black. For him, being black is an identity that has to be learned and can only be recog-

nized at a given moment. He insists that the self relates to a set of real stories, that identity is linked to the recognition of differences and that it cannot have a totally unified sense.

This reveals a period of theoretical convergence between feminist criticism, at least with one of its aspects, and Hall's theoretical path[10], even though the former is more focused on gender issues and the latter on the racial issue.

Regarding the relations between feminist criticism and cultural studies, during the 1990s there is a third period in which, theoretically, a variety of elements had to be taken into account in constituting the female condition.

It is acknowledged that any feminist point of view must necessarily be presented as partial because although women may share common interests, these are not universal. Such a stance goes against the feminist discourse that up to a given moment had appealed to the common oppression suffered by women, with a call for unity that erased differences between them. The analysis moves away from a limited idea of the social construction of male and female roles/functions towards a much more multifaceted approach, which re-dimensions the supposed differences/identities between women and men.

In other words, the shift from the defense of equality to the recognition of differences between women, begun in the 1980s, at least in the context of feminist media criticism, becomes even more compelling. The understanding of the "gender" category as social construction is associated with the idea that identities are relationally defined and, from a given moment, no longer exclusively via the female-male pair. For example, the racial and gender split blended by black feminism illustrates this type of stand, as well as the notion of intersectionality, quite usual in the Anglo-Saxon context.[11]

The terms of this debate tighten the bonds between a feminist perspective and Hall's reflection, which claims that

> identity becomes a "moveable feast": formed and transformed continuously in relation to the ways we are represented or addressed in the cultural systems which surround us. It is historically, not biologically, defined. The subject assumes different identities at different times, identities which are not unified around a coherent "self." Within us are contradictory identities pulling in different directions, so that our identifications are continuously being shifted about. (Hall, 1999: 13)

For Hall, these relations transform and impact what politics is about: the constitution of units in difference. That transforms the sense of political engagement that must necessarily reject binaries and assume contingency or its

10. See Escosteguy (2003a; 2003b), which outlines Hall's intellectual course.

11. For further details on these views, see Biroli e Miguel (2015).

dependence on other events and contexts. Hence the need for repositioning over time and, in the face of different circumstances, forming new alliances.

Although the feminist movement arose from the banner of equality, "as of the late 20th century, important lines of feminist thought will reject universalism in favor of something that will be called 'politics of difference'" (Miguel; Biroli, 2014: 64). This position, however, is ambivalent. If, on the one hand, it criticizes liberalism for its defense of the principle of universality, on the other it is considered that

> giving up the universal implies the inability to present a comprehensive alternative to the existing liberal order. After all, the claim that social order must benefit all without privileges has always been characteristic of progressive movements, as well as the uncompromising defense of the notion of equality among all human beings. (Ibid.)

This theoretical arsenal exposes complex challenges for political practice and splits contemporary feminism "between the defenders of 'identity' and the partisans of difference(s)" (Richard, 2002: 157). A dilemma, still in process, for feminist political practice.

> For the former, the vector of identity – which no longer possesses its previous substantialist meaning – functions as a (still necessary) reunification principle of the excessively loose fragments in which "post" relativist dispersion has propelled us. The latter view as normal the existence of "differences that confuse, disorganize, and render ambiguous the meaning of any binary opposition," because those fragmentations multiply the margins and discursive locations, besides stimulating the displacements of enunciating positions demanded by the new heterogeneous multiplicity of the self. (Richard, 2002: 157)

In Brunsdon's analysis (1997) in the same decade, feminism became popular, especially through the presence of issues such as domestic violence and sexual harassment on the public agenda. In Brazil, the conjuncture once again leaves its particular marks, characterizing the existence, according to Pinto (2003: 93), of a "diffuse feminism."

> If, on the one hand, the 1990s were not particularly conducive to the expansion of social movements, with most of them actually suffering a reduction, on the other conditions were created in this period for their demands to be largely incorporated by public discourses. This occurs both in the northern hemisphere and in

countries such as Brazil, which is more resistant to such demands, for cultural reasons and for always having to deal with very urgent issues, at least at the political level. (Pinto, 2003: 92)

In the sphere of media studies in Brazil, feminist criticism made little progress over this period (Meirelles, 2009). For example, in a review of Brazilian research on media reception practices in the 1990s, it was observed that although more than half of those studies emphasized women as informants, the issue of gender relations was not part of the main theoretical framework. The term "gender" was more commonly used to indicate a sexual distinction between female and male, although when women were called upon to talk about their relationship with the media or with a media product, they revealed how they view themselves as women (Escosteguy, 2004). Thus, interest in gender issues will only actually thrive and reach greater heights in the 2000s.

THE TURN OF THE CENTURY AND THE PRACTICE OF FEMINISMS

At the turn of the 21st century a fourth development in the relationship between feminist criticism and media studies is identified, particularly marked by the context of post-feminism. The nature of post-feminism has been a subject of considerable dispute, which is not surprising in the feminist sphere, where much is debated to conclude that the debate must continue, as claimed by Elizabeth Lobo, one of the most respected Brazilian feminists in the 1980s. Certain views consider post-feminism as both an evolutionary process and a "new consensus" uniting different groups in favor of a return to traditional family values, that is, there are theses circulating in feminist ranks and also in conservative circles[12] (Hawkesworth, 2006).

A cunning version which is difficult to oppose is the one emerging from and circulating in the media. For Angela McRobbie (2006), media culture, through the label of post-feminism, effectively erases the movement – its struggle and history – by spreading the idea that it is dated and serves no function. For the author, via pleasant and humorous texts that, contradictorily, are as much affiliated with neoconservative values regarding gender as they are integrated with processes of a more liberating nature, power relations are constructed and reconstructed, developing a "new gender regime" that aims to regulate the ways of being through the actual discourse of choice (McRobbie, 2008). Thus, the achievements are presented as the fruit of individual trajectories and not of the feminist movement or of the conflicts established in its history. Therefore, in the English context of feminist me-

12. As this aspect is not the focus of this paper, it merely recognizes the existence of multiple versions regarding the issue, highlighting the one linked to what is understood herein as feminist media criticism.

dia criticism, identity issues remain at the heart of the analyses, though not only in the manner mentioned above, but through a plurality of perspectives. However, this quest to delineate the subject of feminism somehow echoes the conceptual framework of identities launched by Stuart Hall, which in turn enables political action – of particular importance in the practice of feminism(s) today.

In Brazil in the last few years, a few young female researchers have also been exploring this perspective in an important effort to thematize the intersection between issues of identity, feminism/post-feminism and the media (for example, Lana; Leal, 2014; Lana; Corrêa; Rosa, 2012; Leal, 2014; Messa, 2006). This is one of the lines of research associated with feminist media criticism, which has gained increasing visibility and expression, attuned to the international debate. For the first time there is a certain degree of convergence between the development of Brazilian studies and those carried out in the English context, both obviously marked by local contexts. In addition, this reveals that despite the continued efforts of the media discourse to pronounce the end of feminism, there is still much to research and talk about.

Therefore, it would be worth asking together with Hawkesworth (2006: 740): "What is the significance of the premature burial of feminism, given the enthusiasm and variety of proliferative forms of feminist theory and practice?" The author herself, after going over a series of possible interpretations, concludes that it is fundamentally "a continuous effort to undermine feminist struggles for social justice" (Ibid.). Even so, both the revival of the feminist movement – especially by young people via new means of political activism in the blogosphere – and the renewed interest in themes associated with theoretical diversity that marks contemporary feminism in the academia of both countries are hopeful indications that the "theoretical noise" caused by feminism in the sphere of cultural studies and especially in media criticism has much to reverberate. And the issue of identity, a fundamental problematic in Stuart Hall's reflections, remains at the core of feminist studies and its political practice. ◼

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