

Disciplined or Punished? The Future of Graduate Education in Women's Studies

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Abstract

This article considers the ways in which graduate programs in women's studies and the students in those programs are challenged by the still-present emphasis on disciplinary training. It discusses some methodological, ethical, and programmatic questions associated with running graduate programs in women's studies, and some practical recommendations in response, ones that resist making a choice between either sustaining or abandoning women's studies programming.

Résumé

Cet article considère les façons dont les programmes d'études des femmes du deuxième cycle et les défis que doivent relever les étudiantes de ces programmes qui continuent à mettre l'accent sur la formation disciplinaire. Il discute de certaines questions méthodologiques, éthiques, et programmatiques associées avec l'administration des programmes d'études des femmes, et de certaines recommandations pratiques en réponse, celles qui résistent de faire un choix entre soutenir ou abandonner la programmation d'études des femmes.

Introduction

The purpose of our dual-authored essay is to consider the ways in which women's studies¹ graduate programs and the students in those programs are challenged by the still-present emphasis on disciplinary training. While there is currently much talk about the importance of interdisciplinary inquiry, there is little structural and institutional support for interdisciplinary programs. Many institutions still struggle with how to evaluate the workload and scholarship of faculty who have a home department but also cross-teach in women's studies. And when departmental jobs are advertised for which graduates from interdisciplinary programs are qualified to apply, hiring committees are often suspicious of the pedigree of graduate applicants who were not trained in the discipline within which the job is advertised.

The title of this essay, playing off Michel Foucault's critique of disciplinary structures, reflects our concern for the degree to which women's studies graduate students are "punished" for their lack of "discipline."² As we suggest in our remarks below, there are methodological, ethical, and programmatic questions associated with starting and running graduate programs in women's studies. As former directors (graduate and undergraduate) in Loyola's Women's Studies Program, we have taught women's studies courses, served on interdisciplinary thesis and dissertation committees, and evaluated applicants for our graduate program. Thus, we have had to consider these issues at various levels. We hope this essay might begin a dialogue among our colleagues and students in Canada and the United States (US) concerning the aims, purposes, and pitfalls of graduate education in women's studies. We will necessarily be speaking from within a US

context given our familiarity with American universities and women's studies scholarship. However, we have noted that women's studies programs in Canada face some of the same programmatic and political challenges as we do.

In the first half of this essay, Pamela Caughie considers whether women's studies should resist the push toward discipline status and instead infiltrate the new interdisciplines. In the second half, Jennifer Parks addresses some of the particular ethical concerns that arise with regard to graduate programs in women's studies. Together in the conclusion we consider the intersection of the disciplinary and ethical concerns we raise, offering some practical recommendations that resist making a choice between either sustaining or abandoning women's studies programming. Instead, we will recommend acknowledging and working with the tension rather than trying to resolve it.

PART ONE

The risk of failure of women's studies is the risk of its very own success.
(Jacques Derrida 1987)

Ten years ago Wendy Brown asked: "To what extent is women's studies still tenable as an institutionalized domain of academic study, as a circumscribed intellectual endeavor appropriate as a basis for undergraduate or graduate degrees?" (Brown 2005, 116-17) She ties this question directly to feminist success: "Given the very achievements of feminist knowledge about foundations, identities, and boundaries over the last two decades, what are the intellectual premises of women's studies now?" (2005, 117). Playing off the title of our essay, I would like to question, with Brown, the institutional as well as professional implications of our own success. Have we been disciplined (or disciplined enough), and if so, have we been punished in the process?

On the one hand, women's studies, especially at the graduate level, is decidedly undisciplined insofar as it is an interdisciplinary field emerging out of

challenges to traditional disciplinary knowledges and methodologies. Though we may have degree-granting programs and even department status, in many cases our course listings and core faculty cross disciplinary boundaries. In both the US and Canada, typically only 50%-60% of required courses for a graduate degree must come from within the women's studies program: the rest can be electives from other departments. By comparison, traditional departments rarely if ever require courses from outside their graduate programs.³ In "Discipline and Vanish," Ellen Rooney (1996) argues that women's studies' interdisciplinarity requires an analysis of the disciplinary organization of knowledge as, for example, in requiring students to take courses outside the field. To the extent that women's studies has successfully challenged disciplinary models and methods, transforming the contributing disciplines rather than simply borrowing from them, it has risked being punished by a university structured by those very disciplines. That is, as the epigraph from Derrida suggests, it may be its very success at changing disciplines, rather than its succumbing to disciplinary structures, that marks its failure.

Yet as I sat down to write this paper, an appeal from our Women's Studies program came across my email:

The Women's Studies program would like your assistance in compiling a list of non-cross-listed courses that would function as ideal electives for Women's Studies graduate students. Although it is understood that graduate courses dealing with gender and sexuality as central themes are already cross-listed, we would like to have a list of courses that perhaps deal less centrally with questions of gender and sexuality but would still include, or be conducive to, feminist inquiry and thereby allow students to develop projects focusing upon issues of gender and sexuality. The guidelines

or this list of suggested electives for Women's Studies students would be that at least twenty percent of the course material should focus upon issues of gender and sexuality and that students would be given the opportunity to explore those issues in their own research and writing.

At first I thought that this appeal is moving in the right direction by extending feminist inquiry to topics other than women, gender, and sexuality, and moving into new disciplines where we haven't traditionally offered courses. And yet, that 20% gave me pause, not only because it requires only minimal attention to gender and sexuality, topics central to a women's studies education; but also, and more importantly, because what was determining the cross-listing of a course was the material to be covered and not the type of inquiry. This is not to suggest that women's studies should have a methodology; indeed, by defining a shared research identity and mission, we risk reproducing rather than critiquing disciplinary structures. But I would say that the fact that we do not have a research identity leaves us begging for a little attention, at least 20% worth. In this case, we are clearly borrowing from other disciplines rather than transforming them, undermining our interdisciplinarity and its implied critique of the disciplinary organization of knowledge. This kind of appeal strikes me as a symptom of the problem of graduate education in women's studies. Without the disciplinary status "signified by the claim to a distinct theory and method," as Wendy Brown puts it, women's studies must beg other disciplines to give us some courses, thereby allowing those disciplines to establish our presence, and legitimacy, within the institution.

On the other hand, the problem may not be that women's studies is "undisciplined." Rather, we may have disciplined ourselves, through the establishment of departments and graduate programs in women's studies over the past decade, to such an extent that we no longer have the kind of impact on new area studies that we once had on traditional fields.

Getting our own faculty lines and even departments, our own budgets and staff support, our own majors and graduate programs and our own journals and conferences, has established our disciplinary identity and our authority in the institution. And yet such success risks isolating us from new fields of knowledge as we become focused on our own administrative issues and curricular needs. Bidy Martin, in that same 1997 issue of *differences* in which Brown's essay first appeared, asserts that women's studies has succumbed to a certain insularity. It has come "to replicate rather than challenge entrenched wars between the disciplines" (Martin 2001, 355). For Martin, it is not its lack of a disciplinary identity but its very status as a discipline that limits women's studies' transformative possibilities. Its institutional and professional status has given women's studies a certain "professional caché," she says, and thus it is not in a good position to take the lead in the transformations it began. Robyn Wiegman agrees, writing in her introduction to *Women's Studies on Its Own*, that she finds it "absolutely critical for Women's Studies as a field to refuse to discipline itself into a singular object of study" (Wiegman 2002, 11). Brown and Martin, like Wiegman, also caution women's studies against an identity-based disciplinary identity. Martin reminds us that we can't claim marginality as we once did when there is no center against which to measure it (Martin 2001, 361). This "evacuation of the center," as she calls it, has been effected by gender and transgender studies, global studies, technology studies, bioethics, etc. - areas of research that seem to decenter not just women's studies but the very organization of knowledge that gave rise to it. Rather than undermining women's studies, as Canadian scholars Margrit Eichler and Meg Luxton worry that the emergence of fields such as sexuality and masculinity studies may do (Eichler and Luxton 2006, 82), new interdisciplines may offer opportunities for cross-fertilization, even at the risk of a stable disciplinary identity for women's studies.

Perhaps women's studies needs, then, to return to the days when we infiltrated various established disciplines (e.g., sociology, history, literature and philosophy, which are also housed in departments), mainly because we didn't have one of our own. Only now we need to focus on a more diffuse target: namely, those newly emerging interdisciplines that often are not located in one department or school or building, interdisciplines such as bioethics, disability studies, and urban research and public policy. Our impact on these new fields today seems to be serendipitous, dependent more on having feminist faculty in the departments where courses are cross listed or co-taught than on any concerted effort to reshape the knowledge and methods of those area studies. Rather than cross list courses from other departments, I, for one, would prefer to see women's studies provide courses for other disciplines, especially new interdisciplinary endeavors, to promote its "extension of feminist knowledge into domains that will have no obvious connection to the field's self-narration" (Wiegman 2002, 5). For example, why not allow a feminist methodology course offered through women's studies to count for the research tool requirement in another graduate program? Astrid Henry writes: "new ways of envisioning feminist theory require that we expand our notions of interdisciplinarity to imagine how feminist studies can intermingle with other fields of study that may or may not be grounded in analyses of gender" (Henry 2006, 1720). Such cross-fertilization among women's studies and other interdisciplines provides one way to negotiate the tension between being disciplined or punished.

But are we in a position to do this now? And the question remains: what is the best position from which to launch this assault: from within a discipline or degree-granting program, or from without? Without a disciplinary identity, especially one no longer grounded in a social identity (i.e., women), who are we who are bringing about this transformation?

Clearly my remarks here are symptomatic of the problem, exposing, as they do, my own ambivalence - not a personal ambivalence, I would argue, but a structural one. I have argued elsewhere that the problem of disciplinarity is a problem of identity, and given that social identity was the focus of our institutionalization as an academic movement, that makes identity issues all the more pressing for women's studies.⁴ The threat of destabilizing boundaries is all the stronger when social identity organizes the field. Martin and Brown also argue that identity itself is the problem, that the notion that women's studies' identity, and identity as such, is now at risk and should be questioned (Martin 2001, 379). As Brown writes, "Thus, paradoxically, sustaining women's studies as an intellectually and institutionally radical site rather than a regulatory one - in short, refusing to allow gender and women's studies to be disciplined - are concerns and refusals at odds with affirming women's studies as a coherent field of study" (Brown 2005, 122-23). Brown understands this as a specifically historical argument. Developing feminist scholarship and teaching across disciplines has been important; "we" are everywhere and "we" were brought into being by this fight: "But the strategies and ambitions that produced this effect at one historical moment," she argues, "are not necessarily those that will sustain or enhance it at another" (2005, 132). True, yet I draw a different conclusion from this historical insight than Brown, asking not whether the institutional strategies that once formed this intellectual endeavor now work against it, but whether we don't need to reproduce those institutional strategies in new interdisciplines even while we change our intellectual strategies to account for a changing scholarly conversation.

Brown ends by asking whether the teaching of feminist courses has to be done in a degree-granting program or whether "mainstreaming" might be more effective (2005, 134), so that we develop students' knowledge of feminist theories and histories within other departments, or, I would add, new

interdisciplinary programs (2005, 134-5): "The story of women's studies suggests that our current and future contests over meaning and knowledge...should probably avoid consolidating victories in the form of new degree-granting programs in the university" (2005, 135). Have our departments and graduate programs served to consolidate victories, though, especially given that my program at least is still begging for courses, faculty, and budgets? Or is it instead that by consolidating feminist inquiry in the form of programs and degrees, our victories - however limited - were enabled? In other words, isn't the disciplinarity that Brown says women's studies should resist the very sign of our success? As Jennifer Parks suggests in Part Two in her discussion of Judith Kegan Gardiner, there was a time when such forms of consolidation were necessary, however much they may not be reproducible, or even desirable, today (Gardiner 2003).

These debates over women's studies disciplinary status date back at least ten years, to the Fall 1997 special issue of *differences* in which Wendy Brown's essay first appeared. What does it mean that we have been worrying over these issues for ten years, and that Wendy Brown can reprint her 1997 essay in her 2005 book? What does it mean that Canadian feminists, too, are still concerned about the risks of passing down the institutionalized project of women's studies at this moment in our history (Braithwaite *et al.* 2004)? And what does it mean that programs such as ours at Loyola are only now, as they move to include gender studies, revisiting the question of our curriculum and are still focused on cross-listing as a solution to under-representation in the curriculum at large? Why have we (or have we?) made so little progress in addressing these disciplinary issues?

The idealization of a discipline, says Marjorie Garber in her book, *Academic Instincts*, always comes from those outside the discipline, and that is why disciplinary envy, she says, is a structure of desire (Garber 2001, 65). Garber is writing about

academics' desire to cross disciplinary boundaries, seeing other disciplines as having something - some coherence, relevance, or influence - that we would like to claim as our own. But her argument about how disciplinarity works as a structure of desire also helps to account for our (that is, women's studies') desire for a discipline, a room of our own within the academy, some kind of representation. As I have argued elsewhere, disciplining interdisciplinarity, then, is not a solution to the problem of disciplinary identification but yet another example of how it works. Disciplinary identity is perverse insofar as it serves as a way of fending off the anxieties that stem from an absence of disciplinary integrity in an institution that sustains itself through disciplinary distinctions. You can't have a pure discipline, Garber writes, but purity is precisely the idealization disciplines desire (2001, 53). Disciplinary identification is a perversion, then, of the essentially impure, corruptible, and interdisciplinary status of any knowledge. Our ambivalence about our disciplinary identity may be a problem, but it is not one we will resolve by either disciplining ourselves or remaining undisciplined. It may be more strategic (not to mention therapeutic) to embrace our ambivalence, and our lack of integrity as a discipline.

PART TWO

Caring requires me to respond with an act of commitment: I commit myself either to overt action on behalf of the cared-for or I commit myself to thinking about what I might do.

(Nel Noddings 1984)

As an educator and administrator in Women's Studies, I have often experienced a moral pull - an inner tension - in teaching and recruiting for a Master's Degree in Women's Studies. The concerns I have were often confirmed in my conversations with prospective students who would call the office to make inquiries about the program at Loyola. I would pick up the telephone to begin a conversation that soon became very

familiar: "I'm interested in applying to your Master's degree program - is there any funding available?" No. "Do you have a PhD program, or any kind of joint program for admitting students into an MA/PhD?" No. "Do you have any faculty with an appointment solely in women's studies?" No. I would usually become somewhat embarrassed at this point, since I did not want to make it sound as though we lack a thriving graduate program in women's studies; but nor did I want to extend false hope to applicants in search of full funding and some assurance of doctoral studies to follow.

As I discussed applications, fees, course load, and program requirements with prospective graduate students, had several conversations with each of them, and gained some sense of their interests and future goals, I began to develop serious moral qualms about what I was doing: Was it right - that is, morally right - to promote my graduate program, encourage students to apply, and allow them to pay exorbitant tuition fees (not to mention room and board, transportation, and other costs involved in relocating to pursue graduate studies), especially knowing that a Master's degree in Women's Studies places them in a kind of disciplinary no-man's-land? The mostly young women that apply and enroll in our program take on huge debt loads, raising the question of whether admitting them to these graduate programs is an ethical practice, especially while strong disciplinary boundaries persist beyond women's studies. More specifically, as an adherent to a feminist ethic of care, I wonder whether it is a caring act to allow and even encourage young women to pursue women's studies at the graduate level, given the disadvantage to which the degree may put them when applying to doctoral programs or when going on the job market.

The problem I worry over is the result of the disciplined and disciplinary nature of the academy, the place in which women's studies programs find their homes. As a number of scholars have indicated, the academy remains heavily disciplined such that the growing number of programs within the

university are still seen as "real" discipline "wannabe"s. Faculty from within departments still see women's studies scholarship as derivative, dilettantish, and rootless, treating it like a wayward child looking for a home. Traditional departments are, as a result, generally suspicious of and hostile to students with Master's degrees from interdisciplinary programs or - when hiring - those graduates with interdisciplinary women's studies doctoral degrees.

If one considers again the e-mail that Pamela Caughie mentions in Part One of this paper, an interesting ethical dilemma arises that relates to the disciplinary question she raises. Concerning the request for courses that might be cross-listed with women's studies (courses that contain at least 20% material focusing on gender and sexuality), Caughie notes that "Without the disciplinary status...women's studies must beg other disciplines to give us some courses." This is exactly the problem for those students doing the graduate degree in women's studies: they resent the mere 20% course content they often find in their courses, but if we give them the 100% content that they desire, we may do them potential future harm. In essence, if we give the students what they want, the very fulfillment of their desire may result in a serious disadvantage as they enter the job market. The ethical dilemma rests wherein one must decide whether to give the women's studies students what they want, even if in so doing one may be disadvantaging her students.

But the ethical dilemma of admitting students into non-funded Master's programs where there is very little likelihood of admission into PhD programs is not unique to women's studies. On the contrary, even within traditional disciplines we must face the ethics of taking students' money, time, and dreams of employment knowing that it is unlikely a PhD degree or a job will be the end result. In my own home department of philosophy, we offer a Master's in Health Care Ethics that is not funded, that does not place students in the best position in terms of pursuing PhD programs, and that certainly will not lead them

to a job in the end. For that matter, the job market in philosophy is so competitive that few of our graduates find full-time, tenure-track positions. So, an objector could respond, here women's studies is not any different from the traditional disciplines or departments. These ethical questions are created by and within academia, and are not peculiar to women's studies programs.

I want to suggest that women's studies degree programs are especially well suited to raising these ethical issues, however, and to pointing us in helpful directions to deal with them. For, even though traditional departments must consider these ethical issues, women's studies has, out of necessity, developed an especially strong self-awareness regarding its place in the academy, its goals, and its proper future directions. Given the recent genesis of women's studies, which comes out of not just scholarly interests and concerns but also activist ones, it has the unique capacity to lead rather than follow in terms of ethical analysis of disciplining practices. Disciplines with a clear departmental status, like philosophy, history, and English, have held that status for so long that the critical edge in considering such issues has, one might say, become dulled. If one examines where much of the concern regarding disciplinary practices is coming from, one finds that much of the discussion is going on within feminist journals, or at women's studies conferences. While the ethical problems faced by women's studies programs may not be peculiar to women's studies, its theoretical resources for dealing with such problems are uncommonly good.

Let me develop what I consider to be the grounds for thinking that women's studies should be the moral compass, so to speak, in considering ethical issues in connection to graduate studies and graduate students. First, as a marginalized area of scholarship, it has developed a critical stance on its own practices, purposes, and goals. If one considers, for example, the degree to which women's studies scholars have debated the question of its "fit" within the university, one can see a high degree of self-reflexivity and

willingness to self-critique. Women's studies theorists have addressed, in various ways, the challenge of interdisciplinarity within a highly disciplined institution, and the paradoxes that arise from women's studies' move toward professionalization through graduate education (see, for example, the debate between Caughie, Kitch, and Gardiner in *Feminist Studies*, 2003). Judith Kegan Gardiner describes her early years as part of a women's studies teaching collective at the University of Illinois, Chicago, as follows:

Our explicit ideology was to empower our students....For years, all teaching collective meetings and all our women's studies organizational meetings ended with a round of criticism and self-criticism in which each person was encouraged to speak. This exercise was sometimes perfunctory, but it also provided genuine opportunities to hear from the quiet, to revisit too speedy a consensus, to articulate afterthoughts, and to share feelings of doubt, anger, or elation....We sought to achieve democratic, egalitarian, communal, empowering, non-hierarchical, antiracist, antisexist, antihomophobic and anti-imperialist relationships in teaching and learning that would act within the classroom as foretastes of an alternative university and, ultimately, a better world. (Gardiner 2003, 410)

Gardiner goes on to say that the narrative about women's studies' early beginnings should not be taken naively: "It needs to be historically situated and reevaluated for its meaning for the present, for its political investments and potential dangers, including the danger of continuing with an old story when new conditions have rendered it obsolete" (2003, 410). As she points out, from its beginnings women's studies has been concerned with what I will call ethical practice.

Women's studies programs have also been responsive to cultural change and to shifts in academia. This responsiveness is

relevant to ethical analysis, since arguably part of what it means to "do" feminist ethics is to be sensitive to context, and to be open to revision and change (Gilligan 1987; Noddings 1995; Tronto 1989). As an example of this responsiveness, consider the ways in which women's studies has shifted focus over time from addressing issues that mostly come out of younger women's lives (reproductive issues, abortion, child care, work) to those that address older and old women's lives (menopause, ageism, caregiving, longevity). When contrasted with the settled nature of studies in philosophy, where very little has changed with respect to the canon, one notes a remarkable degree of responsiveness in women's studies' emphasis and scholarship (Braithwaite *et al.* 2004).

Women's studies has also, by necessity, developed a particular awareness of structures of power and how they affect marginalized persons. In the academic context, this means that it has a heightened awareness of power structures, and how they affect staff, faculty, undergraduate and graduate students. Women's studies scholars have advanced discussions within institutions about the "chilly climate," sexual harassment and abuse, affirmative action, and other institutional ills. For example, in 1995 the Chilly Collective editors published a text that reports and comments on climate issues as they affect women faculty in Canadian universities, arguing for and demonstrating the importance of addressing the environmental roots of women's continuing inequity both within and outside contemporary academia. As this collection indicates, women's studies is best situated to consider ethical as well as social/political issues that others often miss.⁵

Finally, from my experience, women's studies has shown a commitment to programmatic growth and development, but not at the cost of program integrity. While as the Graduate Program Director for Women's Studies at Loyola I often had concerns about accepting new graduate students - in terms of having good and numerous course offerings, having funding to support the students, and

having a strong infrastructure to give them a sense of belonging - we have always kept our number of admissions low enough to reflect our commitment to offering a strong and intimate program for our students. When one hears from directors of other women's studies programs and departments, the story of controlled growth, of ascertaining that the support and funding would be in place before moving forward with graduate programs or stand-alone majors, is often told. This is an ethical stance in that it refuses to allow the push for money-generating programs to trump concerns for those who will be graduate students in those programs.

So, I suggest, women's studies is arguably better suited than traditional departments and disciplines to address ethical issues associated with graduate education. However - and this is an important caveat - I do not think that we have been doing enough to address these ethical concerns that I have mentioned. Indeed, in doing some preliminary research for this paper, I could find very little women's studies scholarship that addresses these ethical concerns. As Caughie's references suggest, there is a great deal of literature on the problem of interdisciplinarity within the university, and the worry that women's studies is becoming increasingly professionalized and selling out to the traditional university structure. But no work that I have seen addresses the ethics of women's studies graduate education - the ethics of admission, charging hefty tuition fees and placing students in doctoral programs and on the job market. These are issues that I believe we have a duty to consider, and that women's studies should take the lead in addressing.

Judith Gardiner is correct in commenting that there is a "danger of continuing with an old story when new conditions have rendered it obsolete" (Gardiner 2003, 410). Indeed, women's studies has changed a great deal over the decades - witness the current trend to switch from "women's studies" to "women's and gender studies" at many universities. With such change comes a call to continued

responsiveness, and to finding new ways to deal with both novel problems and those that will not go away. So, for example, a return to the kind of consciousness-raising groups that Gardiner was part of in her early women's studies days would not, I think, be appropriate given the current styles and modes of thinking of our young students, who come out of a completely different generation. Consciousness-raising had its time and place, but new methods for teasing out and communicating problems must be devised.

Conclusion

Having raised these ethical concerns and disciplinary issues, we affirm that women's studies is best suited to address them. Rather than setting up a false binary - choosing to either sustain or abandon our programming - we recommend acknowledging and working within the tensions we outline in this essay. We argue that it is better to continue running women's studies programs even with - and especially because of - the aforementioned programmatic and ethical challenges. Indeed, we argue that feminist theory and practice require that we "live the tension," refusing to choose one horn of the dilemma and thereby engage in the binary thinking that is part of traditional theory.⁶

We therefore recommend the following as our two-pronged approach to addressing the problems noted in Parts One and Two of this essay.

Program Recommendations:

1) Women's studies faculty and administrators should search high and low, and petition loudly at their home institutions, for scholarships, assistantships, and any forms of funding that can be found for women's studies graduate students. The lack of funding for our students is very symbolic of the fact that they might not be worth the money; it is also a reflection on the lack of institutional value held by women's studies. Quite often it is a problem of where such funding will come from, since there is usually no department status backing women's

studies programs. We should also consider alternative sources of scholarship money, such as foundations and other organizations that are concerned with gender issues. And when our universities appeal to us for their annual fund raising campaigns, women's studies faculty can donate to their programs to support endowed chairs or graduate scholarships.

2) We should very consciously practise a principle of informed consent in carefully informing prospective students about the reality of academia, which is still almost exclusively department and discipline-based. While it should not be the case that graduate students in women's studies programs are disadvantaged when applying to PhD programs in traditional disciplines, the fact is that they are and we should warn them about this likelihood.

Also in the spirit of informed consent, we recommend including in our curricula courses on the history and psychology of disciplinarity, not just courses on the history of feminism or women's studies. By teaching this history, women's studies programs would train graduate students to be very conscious of the disciplined nature of academia, and would make clear the complicated terrain that students are entering when pursuing graduate studies within interdisciplinary programs.

Networking Recommendations:

3) We should create much stronger feminist networks across the universities, so that when women's studies students apply to departments for PhD studies, or when they are on the job market, we have a network of faculty who are looking out for these students and strongly supporting their applications.

4) In addition, we need to extend our work to centers and networked public culture, linking work inside and outside the academy, rather than primarily work from within programs and departments. As Keith Louise Fulton reminds us, "Feminist praxis links the theories and practices of women's groups, activists, and writers, who work sometimes within the universities but more frequently across these institutions, forming national and

international networks" (Fulton n.d.). And yet, paradoxically, we need to sustain those programs and departments if we are to have any authority in the institution and if we are to train students for work in these centers and networks.

If ever there was a time when a global network of feminist scholars, activists, journalists, politicians, and community leaders was sorely needed, it is now. To resist the structure of disciplines, we need to identify the issues that will determine future research as well as shape public discourse. Because of our keen awareness of even the most subtle eruptions of gender politics, feminists are well trained to see the broader implications of issues which move beyond gender and are of vital concern to national politics. We recommend that women's studies programs around the world develop a web-based, virtual initiative, dedicated to collecting, correlating, and disseminating writings by feminist scholars that can provide a kind of collective memory, restoring a sense of tradition that can help us make connections among disparate and seemingly unrelated news items. We offer WIN - Women's Initiative Network - as one possible acronym.⁷

And what will be the measure of success? How will we know whether, in adopting these strategies, women's studies is becoming more conservative or subversive? Whether it reproduces the same disciplinary structures or transforms them (and if the latter, how will we know when the transformation is achieved)? Here we close with a quote from Jacques Derrida:

This may not answer the question, but one way of dealing with these problems, not necessarily with women's studies, but on the whole, is to try to do both things at the same time, to occupy two places, both places....And what is the measure? You must check everyday what is the measure....There is no general device. (Derrida 1987, 201-02)

Endnotes

1. We use lower case when referring to the field and upper case when referring to the titles of specific programs.
2. In *Discipline and Punish* (1979) Foucault argues that "the art of punishing, in the regime of disciplinary power," specifically education, takes a peculiar form: "it *normalizes*" (original emphasis). The question our title raises is to what extent is women's studies punished for resisting normalization, or for simply failing to conform to the dominant model of disciplinarity within the institution?
3. For example, an MA degree at Simon Fraser University in British Columbia requires six courses, only three of which must be in the Women's Studies Program; at Loyola University Chicago an MA requires eight courses, only two of which must be from the Women's Studies Program. At York University in Toronto and Ohio State University, at least a third of the required courses for the PhD may come from outside Women's Studies.
4. Some of the material in this paper comes from Pamela Caughie's "Professional Identity Politics."
5. See also Paula Caplan (1993) and Christine Overall (1998).
6. In her article "Politics of/and Backlash," Ann Braithwaite indicates a similar willingness to live the tension within feminist theory and women's studies. She states: "I also want feminisms - both mine and that of others - to be about a continual process of questioning and challenging, not a product or series of beliefs or issues that I hold myself or anyone else accountable to" (2004, 28).
7. It was recently brought to our attention that this acronym has been used by the Canadian Federation of Humanities and Social Sciences, though we have been unable to find an organization by that name on their website. We did find one such acronym, Women's International Networking (W.I.N.), an organization devoted to empowering and connecting business leaders, though it is now defunct. But even if there is another such organization with similar aims, having two would be a "WIN WIN" situation.

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