PART TWO

AMENABILITY

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The work of this book so far has been concerned with how stories about Western feminist theory's recent past are told and with some of the implications of these stories both for feminist theory itself and for its connections with broader social stories about gender and feminism. There are several points of engagement that have emerged from this inquiry, namely the narrative and grammatical form of the stories told and what I have been arguing is the particular amenability of these forms for other stories. My interest throughout has been on how a range of feminist stories connect with one another, over and above the ways in which they might be different from one another, when one attends to the form of storytelling. In this segue, I want to reflect on what this approach has facilitated, both in terms of the internal dynamics of Western feminist theory's accounts of its past and present and in terms of the implications of these dynamics for related areas of inquiry. In particular,

my focus here is on the ways that a feminist desire to distance ourselves from uses of gender or feminism within which we do not recognize ourselves over-relies on the capacities of a feminist subject to carry the burden of that difference, and in so doing is likely to miss important points of overlap that link a range of narratives about the feminist past and present.

RESONANCES

As I hope I have shown through previous chapters, the three dominant narratives that account for shifts over time in Western feminist theory—those of progress, loss, and return—intersect with and inform one another, despite the claims to difference each narrative makes. These narratives are partial and motivated, speak directly and indirectly to one another, and seek to displace one another as the primary account of what has happened in feminist theory's recent past, as well as what needs to happen next. They occupy overlapping times and spaces, sometimes jostling for position within a single account, sometimes directly challenging each other's logic and the status of the feminist subject of a particular strand. Thus, as we have seen, feminist loss narratives implicate the subjects of feminist progress narratives as misguided and as variously apolitical, myopic, or self-serving; while feminist progress narratives construe the subjects of loss narratives as inappropriately nostalgic and previous "generations" of feminist theory as beset by problems of essentialism and exclusion. Return narratives draw on both these strands, asking the feminist subject of the present to renew her political commitment to the best aspects of feminist politics while remaining sceptical of universal claims that we now know to have damaging consequences. Return narratives ask us to circle back in two senses, then: to what remains valuable before a cultural turn seduced us into the abstractions and proliferations progress narratives erroneously celebrate; and to a more productive political and intellectual frame of mind than loss narratives represent. All three narratives are connected at the level of content, then, in terms of what they agree with, refuse, and advocate, and aspects of each narrative can be found across and within individual accounts. Together, they make up the "presumed" of Western feminist stories, and together they make it hard to think about telling these stories in other ways.

One reason for the success of these conversations across the dominant strands of Western feminist storytelling is that they make sense at a range of levels. While each narrative ascribes different value to what has happened in feminist theory over the last forty or so years, the shifts thus described do remain largely consistent. As I have mapped throughout part 1 of the book, the similarities of narrative form include the common endorsement of decade markers and transitions, shared concepts and binaries, hierarchical ordering of value, and a mobilization of tropes such as "generation" or "the political" in order to secure appropriate affective responses in the reader as well as the writer. These narrative techniques form the backbone of Western feminist storytelling and are what allow for easy movement across strands and the establishment of these particular narratives as self-evident, as held in common within the field. Their persuasiveness is facilitated by these overlaps. This is particularly important for return narratives, as we know, which often endorse elements of progress or loss narratives but require a reflexive transition as part of their momentum. The shared terms and chronology underpinning these narratives allow for contests over feminist value to be resolved without having to revisit what we think has happened in Western feminist theory in the recent past: we are required only to value those shifts differently, not to abandon them altogether.

These internal resonances across narratives are also what enable a strong affective relationship to feminist storytelling in the moment of reading or writing. We (writers and readers of feminist theory) do not hover above the narratives we are engaged with, do not evaluate them from a third point external to that dynamic process. As I hope I have shown thus far, we are in fact partly constructed as Western feminist subjects in and through our participation in the narratives I have been analyzing. We agree or disagree with the narrative strand we encounter partly through how it constructs us, what kind of subject it promotes to the status of "feminist subject," and what that means for our own claims so to become. Sometimes we are explicitly marked as successful or as failed subjects of feminism in terms of loss narratives' indictment of professionalized feminists, for example; sometimes this is more implicit, as when return narratives cajole us into a more pragmatic frame of mind. But in both modes, a feminist reader of these narratives is called to and located, and her acceptance of or resistance to that call positions her as an appro-

priate or inappropriate subject of feminist theory in the present of reading and as a participant in Western feminist historiography. Should she refuse the terms of that interpellation altogether, refuse the framing of available options, she cannot be understood as a participant in the "common sense" of Western feminist theory, and will remain peripheral at best. The feminist reader is thus highly motivated to remain staked in these narratives. And as I highlighted in chapter 2, in relation to my own stakes in refusing the terms of loss narratives, knowing how these narratives work does not necessarily precipitate their transformation.

It is this shared nature of Western feminist storytelling—narrative and affective—that has led me to use the citation tactics that I have throughout part 1. Rather than seeing these understandings of what has happened in feminist theory as individual, I have attempted instead to flag that commonality. Citing journal place and time rather than author, I have situated these narratives not only as shared by a group of individuals, but also as *institutionally* resonant. They are located through peer review, journal history and practice, and by subsequent citation in other journals and so forth. Particular narratives are more or less popular or unpopular in certain spaces and at certain times, and pressure to frame one's work by invoking a particular past comes and goes, as many of us know from experience. The consequences of not getting this right are often brutal in contexts where publishing in the right venues determines one's academic status and research income for institutions.[1] I discuss my citation tactics more fully in the introduction, but here my point is that our reading and writing of Western feminist stories locates us institutionally rather than only in relation to individual others, or in a more abstract political sense, and that this is rarely given sustained attention. By "institutionally," here, I mean that the meanings of these narratives cannot be fully understood through attention to authorial intent, but require a focus on the resonances between these narratives and others, the loose web of connections that make up the spaces of "feminist theory."[2]

There is a further implication that arises from my citation of place and time over author here: these resonances across and between narratives situate us as feminist subjects in ways we are not fully in control of. I have already suggested this means that our choices as to what kind of feminist subject we might (wish to) become are limited, but there is another point I want to make too, concerning the relationship between these narratives

and broader practices. Narratives of progress, loss, and return are enacted not only in journal, editorial, and textual spaces, but are produced and reproduced in sites that we routinely (or occasionally) inhabit. They certainly shape what it means to work as a feminist theorist within the academy, but they also produce a relationship to related areas of knowledge production, such as activist, nongovernmental, and policy spaces. This is the case whether or not these spaces are directly claimed or inhabited by a particular feminist theorist. I do not mean here that the Western feminist stories I have been mapping act somehow hypodermically to give other spaces meaning, but that they operate both as ways of understanding those spaces and as responses to spaces that impact Western feminist stories in turn.

To represent these narratives in this *impersonal* way through my citation tactics, then, is already to be concerned with the overlaps between story and space, memory and practice, across a range of sites. The field of Western feminist theory is always wider than its context of production and its utterances. This is most visibly the case in terms of activism, often a clear structuring presence in feminist theory irrespective of whether a feminist theorist is, or considers herself, so engaged, but it is also true for arenas that may not be named though draw on similar debates, utterances, and concerns. To restate this important point here, whether or not one writes directly about gender or feminism in terms of their activist or mainstreamed mobilizations and manifestations, to write feminist theory is always to be positioned within a broader field. For the Western feminist stories I have been tracing, indeed, questions of political change and activism are embedded in the structure of the narratives. They often underwrite the affective pull of endorsing one narrative thread over another, a pull that is central to the ways in which these stories are felt (individually and intersubjectively) as personal. They may describe aspects of individual experience, of course, otherwise we would remain unconvinced of their truth, but the repetition and modes through which they are articulated are held in common, as I have suggested throughout. Thus the issue of transformation, of what the broader relevance of theory might be, is, one might say, part of the DNA of feminist theory. To be a good feminist theorist is to be able to account for this broader resonance and relevance: it is hard to imagine feminist theory otherwise. But it is precisely this affective pull that allows these narratives to represent their

crux as struggles between good or failed feminist subjects, that overstates the difference a feminist subject position will necessarily make to how narratives work, and that allows a feminist eye to be deflected from the politics at work in her own invested construction. In these respects, and as I detail further in the final two chapters of the book, my citation tactics comprise a deliberate attempt to highlight, diffuse, or mobilize the *affective intensity* that I have identified as part of what secures feminist narratives of progress, loss, and return. These citation tactics flag both the importance of "the field" for feminist theory and the ways in which political attention to this field is usually sidelined in favor of battles between individuals or collective investments.[3]

ANACHRONISM

One feature of Western feminist stories that links a range of diverse narratives is the paradoxical positioning of feminism itself as over, or as anachronistic. This might indeed be understood as one of the defining overlaps between the narratives I have been tracing, a central feature of their common political grammar. In the stories I have been tracing, in each narrative vein, feminism is always surpassed. The difference between the narrative strands is partly a question of the affective quality of its passing, certainly, yet it is always surpassed. In progress narratives feminism's plurality and fragmentation is celebrated, and the focus on "other" aspects of difference or coalition claimed as an ethical or political good in contrast to past essentialism. Feminist theories and politics that focus on gender alone (rather than its intersections with "other" vectors of difference) are cast as anachronistic, as belonging to another era, one of irreconcilable error. At points feminism is transcended altogether. In loss narratives unified feminism is understood as having been abandoned for an apolitical emphasis on critique (and more ambivalently, difference or identity, as we have seen), leaving feminist theory incapacitated and its proper subjects stranded in the present. This loss of proper feminist theory and politics is most fully expressed in terms of grief for an era now past, its subject consigned to the fate of anachronism described by progress narratives. In return narratives effective feminism has again been left behind and we can all agree the task is to rescue it from an early grave. We can only do this by acknowledging the damage done and seeking to reinvigorate the past

through present concerns; without this attention and commitment, feminism will continue to occupy the past rather than the present. Feminism's loss is common to all three stories, yet feminism is no less strong an object for its chimera-like status. A significant paradox is that this attachment to feminism's demise appears to be a precondition for the take-up of feminist subject status in the present, a precondition that provides key momentum for all three narratives. Whatever else they hold in common, progress, loss, and return narratives recognize the importance of a link between feminist theory and politics and see this as the primary way of evaluating theory as feminist or otherwise. The demise of feminism is thus struggled with from positions that value feminism—however defined—in one way or another and that seek to reinstate it in recognizable form. It is lost, but the commitment of a feminist subject (theorist *or* activist) can precipitate its return. This is one reason why so much time is spent on chiding or persuading those perceived as lacking in that commitment into a more productive frame of mind. But in my view the narrative connections between feminist and other stories about gender politics are too consistent and too embedded for a feminist subject alone to carry the burden of responsibility for political alignment. And as I elaborate more fully in the final chapter of the book, the desire for a feminist subject to do this work leads to epistemological and political dead ends that are impossible to negotiate without thinking through the stakes of this desire.

Part of my argument for the moment is that it is not only these interlocking Western feminist stories and their contested subjects who have "lost feminism," and this in itself may be reason enough to remain sceptical of feminist repetition of such loss. As I have indicated throughout, that demise, whether inflected as success or failure, is a narrative precondition for a range of other stories that do not presume a feminist subject in the present, nor have any interest in restoring her to her former glory. Quite the opposite. The postfeminist discourses that Angela McRobbie critiques, for example, make central a subject who disavows or repudiates a feminism whose gains she inherits (2008). She makes little sense except through her repeated difference from feminism, a difference marked by its success (Scharff 2009): thus, we no longer need feminism because its achievements have made it redundant. This kind of postfeminist discourse is most prevalent in Western media representations of gender equality, and indeed that equality is consistently enacted through assertions of young

women's and girls' independence and freedom from feminism. But this is not any old freedom. It is the freedom to be feminine, to be sexually attractive—and available—to men (Gill 2007).

Thus postfeminist discourse, as I highlighted in the introduction to the book, requires the rejection of feminism through the repudiation of particular figures—angry man-haters, lesbians, castrating mothers—and so constructs a strange yet powerful vision of both feminism's successes and its psychopathologies. The successes are always understood as reproductive (the pill) or economic (inclusion in the workforce) and the failures as individual or collective excesses, whereby the pleasures of femininity are abandoned and men are precipitated into repeated crises.[4] While understandable back then, the story goes, the inheritors of feminism's gains today need not pay the same price. Indeed, heterosexual femininity itself can constitute evidence of liberation in postfeminist discourse, where within feminism it is often understood to signify the opposite. While feminist theorists of a range of intellectual and political positions may wish to distance themselves from such postfeminist claims, and understandably enough, we should be wary of jumping to instantiate this difference so hastily. It seems important, first, to address the ways in which postfeminist accounts such as these do in fact resonate directly with progress narrative characterizations of the 1970s as essentialist and uniform, as well as with loss and return narratives whose nostalgia is frequently for an equally imagined feminist past. Without this attention we risk reproducing these narrative similarities in the same moment as insisting on their incommensurability.

At a transnational level, we know from work in feminist political economy that the fantasy of Western gender equality as already achieved is essential for the linked fantasy that a particular model of economic development will give rise to the universal good life, including women's empowerment and opportunity (Peterson 2003; Zalewski 2007). We also know from feminist work in critical development studies that this coupling must of necessity ignore any decrease in quality of life that "gender agendas" have wrought in developing countries, as well as any directly detrimental impact on the lives of women that free market models produce (Bhavnani, Foran et al. 2003; Kašić 2004). We may also be critical of cynical agendas of warmongers whose perverse and unsustained interest in gender equality masks these economic interests (Treacher, Pai et al.

2008). Further we may want to point to the ways in which the fetishization of particular female figures as "the most oppressed" by Western powers with little real interest in sustainable gender equality works against local and transnational feminist efforts to critique and intervene to transform power relations detrimental to women (Braidotti and al 1994; Cornwall, Harrison et al. 2007). As a consequence, we may want to complain about the harnessing of feminist concerns to nonfeminist, indeed often anti-feminist, aims, and distance ourselves from their agendas (Grewal and Kaplan 1994; Duggan 2003), pointing to the co-optation of those concerns and the absolute difference between these and feminist perspectives. In short, we usually want to insist on the difference a feminist subject as well as a feminist approach makes in such endeavors. The difference between good and bad "gender agendas" might thus be understood as directly related to the presence or absence of a feminist subject respectively.

I do not believe that this absolute distinction between feminist and nonfeminist mobilizations of gender discourse can or should be sustained, however. Indeed this scepticism on my part is a primary motivation for the arguments in the book as a whole. If we insist on the self-evident difference a feminist subject makes, the points of co-extensiveness of Western feminist narratives and the institutional sites in which gender is mobilized (both with or without a feminist subject) are more likely to be missed. The Western feminist narratives of progress, loss, and return that I am concerned with participate in these institutional scenes at least to the extent that they share both the same lost object (however inflected), the same chronology, and (in return narratives) the same sites of imagined repudiation or renewal. Insisting that the difference between feminist narratives of progress and loss and the gendered temporality of global governance is the presence of a feminist subject who remains critical is to miss the relationship between the *structure and techniques* of Western feminist stories and their broader institutional life. This is bound to have the effect of reducing rather than increasing accountability for these resonances, overstating, I think, the distinction between narrative and subject.

How to detach, even if we wanted to, this transcendent subject from the problematic epistemologies that I have been tracking and that she is a subject of? Further, how might we begin to resolve the contests over who occupies that privileged position of feminist subject? Clearly, given the competing narratives I have been tracing, not all such subjects self-

declared would be recognized by others. Who decides which subjects count? If, as suggested in the last chapter, part of the work return narratives do is to produce agreement about the past, present, and future of Western feminist theory, does this suggest that only materialist feminist subjects can take up this position of distinction? And what then to do with the formative exclusions—of queer and postcolonial perspectives, for example—that underpin this agreement? We might want to point to the irony here of an ideal feminist subject whose difference from "compromised gender agendas" is dependent on her own erasures of feminist historical complexity, her own generation of a singular teleology for Western feminist theory.

Centring the feminist subject in order to rescue the political project of feminism from its gender equality cousins does other kinds of work too. Not only does her position as boundary marker between "good" and "bad" uses of gender discourse protect both feminism and feminist subjects from scrutiny, but it also encourages blanket judgments about what falls outside the charmed circle. So gender mainstreaming projects are easily characterized as entirely devoid of feminism, entirely co-opted by Western reconstruction agendas, or on the flip side, as wholly pragmatic and thus beyond critical judgement about epistemological impact. Thus feminist theory is easily reduced to a kind of luxury, a prior engagement to be abandoned in the face of necessity, rather than an ongoing project of understanding the world with transformation in mind. Or, to take another familiar contemporary example, Muslim women's agency is often either fetishized in a "secular" Western feminist desire not to be culturally insensitive or ignored altogether and such subjects sutured to patriarchal traditions in reductive ways. Which boundary markers are erected depends largely on who has won the competition to occupy the political border in the first place, on who is understood to be able to make a judgment that means something in the site under consideration. Insisting that the difference will always be the presence or absence of a feminist subject misses ways in which institutional manifestations of a range of (post)feminist discourses are themselves contested sites in which subjects are complexly staked and identified. I want to suggest, then, that while it is clear that discourses of "the demise of feminism" operate differently depending on who is articulating them, where, and to what ends, and that one important variable in those operations is whether the subject claims or rejects a feminist subject

position, the political *resolution* to these differences cannot simply be to reinsert a feminist subject, appealing though that may be to those already so invested.

SEXUAL FRAMINGS

It is not gender equality on its own that is given a specific temporality both within and outside feminism. Gender discourse is fully imbricated with sexual discourse in its postfeminist modes, too, as suggested above in the figure of the liberated young Western woman, in whom femininity and heterosexuality are fused. The characterization of sexual and gendered freedom as part of Western modernity has a fuller discursive life than this somewhat isolated figure might initially suggest, however. As I explored in chapter 3, when framed as "merely cultural" (Butler 1997; Fraser 1997), intellectual and political concern with sexuality is also framed as Western or Westernized. As discussed more fully in that chapter, in loss or return narratives, sexual freedoms or identities are constituted as privileged objects of inquiry, as apolitical preoccupations when compared to global harms and the need for redistributive justice. In feminist return narratives in particular, sexual freedom and its theorization are consistently pitted against "other"—and I have argued, frequently racialized—human rights in a global frame. In short, as in both progress and loss narratives, claims for sexual freedom will always be trumped by claims for attention to racialized harm, except where sexual harm can be theorized as the result of patriarchal culture or global racial inequalities (as in the examples of trafficking or sexual violence). More recently, claims for sexual rights are understood as needing to be balanced against the claims to citizenship that those imagined to be hostile to sexual rights, or to conceive of them differently, may make. Thus sexuality is pivotal in Western feminist historiography, its rising sign marking a turning point between eras pre- and postcultural turn. In loss and return narratives, our postfeminist heroine can provide the perfect alibi in terms of evidence of how damaging this emphasis on sexual freedom can be, indeed. But it is precisely the fact that this ring fencing of sexuality—and particularly identities associated with sexual freedom—as Western is not a position claimed by feminist or other progressive political theorists alone that should raise alarm bells.

Those postfeminist accounts of sexually saturated gender equality in

Western media and popular culture resonate with these more directly transnational concerns with sexual rights in formative ways. When claimed as a clearly good thing, sexual freedom (whether heterosexual or homosexual) also tends to mark the superiority of Western, and particularly secularized, contexts, over those understood as less modern, more patriarchal and religion-bound. As Joan Scott's recent work on what have become known as "the headscarf debates" in France shows, the understanding of sexual liberation as Western can also be easily harnessed to a conflation of sexual liberation and gender equality, which consistently reduces the latter to the freedom to exercise (hetero)sexual independence (2007). In Scott's analysis, Muslim "veiled women" can thus be positioned as self-evidently unequal on the basis that they do not make themselves available to an outside (implicitly male) gaze. Importantly, within this frame, women's equality or inequality more generally can be directly read off their visual self-representation: covered equals sexual constraint equals gender inequality; uncovered equals sexual assertiveness equals gender equality. It is also partly through rendering gender equality as sexual equality that the *temporal distinction* between Western democratic and "other" states or cultures is secured. The latter will become the former when gender (which is also to say sexual) equality has been achieved, and this entry into modernity will also be readable through the freedom (which is to say relative uncovering) of women's bodies. In my reading here, there is a direct relationship between postfeminist media representations of feminism as anachronistic and repressive and representations of Muslim women as patriarchal dupes. The links are secured in the figure of the sexually liberated young Western woman (who does not have to be white as long as her embodiment can be clearly read as "Western"). As with the sense of feminism itself as lost, the sense of sexuality as a Western concern, prerogative, or problem is a widespread position, one that gains fuel from the assumption of sexual equality's absolute difference from other political agendas.

We can begin to see how the relationships between sexual and gendered freedom and repression map transnationally as well as temporally, then. And in this geopolitical context, it is no real surprise that contemporary homosexual identities, understood as Western, are also claimed as part of what makes Western states and subjects more advanced than other states and subjects (particularly Muslim and/or Middle-Eastern and/or

African). As is now well documented, and as I flagged towards the end of chapter 3, the introduction, or attempted introduction, of "citizenship tests" that gauge responses to images of "gay couples"[5] embracing or holding hands in a range of European contexts as a precondition for suitability of entry to Western democracies for would-be migrants, singles out Muslims for particular surveillance (Massad 2007; Butler 2008b; Haritaworn, Tauquir et al. 2008). Such tests mark Muslim subjects as more likely to be homophobic, and predictably enough pay scant attention to the ways in which these imagined havens for sexual minorities are themselves contested sites of sexual meaning and safety (see Cruz-Malave and Manalansan IV 2002; Luibhéid and Cantú Jr 2005; Puar 2005; Luibhéid 2008).

As the work on the sexual torture of prisoners at Abu Ghraib has also indicated, acts culturally associated with homosexuality (such as sodomy) have also been taken up as tools for transgressing the supposed incommensurabilities between Muslim and secularized positions, with the aim of breaking down Muslim subjectivity as part of a violent sovereign project (Tétreault 2006; Puar 2007). The use of sexuality as a temporal and geographical marker of modernity, then, needs to be contextualized as ethnically and religiously marked, and also as reinforcing gendered oppositions. While men's patriarchal homophobia must be left behind as anachronistic in these framings, women are compelled to leave behind outdated attachments to both patriarchal heterosexual modes and segregationist attachments to women (in familial, intimate, or political manifestations). It is unsurprising, then, that in the harnessing of sexuality and gender discourse to transnational regulation, lesbian desire is undertheorized and consistently invisible.[6]

It is tempting in such a discursive complex to want to distance oneself from a focus on sexual identities and freedoms altogether, given the highly problematic mobilizations of these as *de facto* Western, as I have been discussing. Sexuality might perhaps be said to be the new "gender" in terms of the weight it carries in discourses of coercive modernity. I might well want to ensure that I come down firmly on the side of the Muslim migrant thus abused or denied citizenship, or the veiled woman whose face must be seen to be visible within a Western heteronormative sphere if she is to be granted self-determination. One can see the appeal of abandoning sexuality as a relevant epistemic or ontological starting point for

political analysis on the basis of these current manifestations, turning instead to the material harms its invocation inaugurates. Or indeed, one might want to point to the various ways in which sexuality as freedom or constraint is constructed in different spaces and places, as I have attempted to do in previous work (Hemmings 2007b), and to challenge the consistent privileging of Western sexual identities (including the kinds of exclusions they enact) in such analytics and practices. One might even want to challenge the value of using Western sexual identity categories at all on the basis of both inaccuracy and potential for regulatory control, as well as in order to establish a more open sexual epistemology.

Such approaches constitute direct ways of pointing to the co-optation of a progressive sexual agenda for conservative ends and of insisting that queer theorists and activists must be vigilant to ensure that a fight for sexual freedom does not reinforce power relations that govern global flows of people and commodities (Hennessy 2000). They also constitute good analytic and political arguments for the importance of an intersectional approach that foregrounds the relationship among and across vectors of power over the privileging of the single axis. But against the persuasiveness of these positions, I have lingering doubts about the longer-term epistemological and political transformations they are likely to effect. One doubt concerns the question I have already raised about the dangers of reproducing the oppositions between sexuality and "other" political vectors of power. In the desire to free oneself from the use of sexual equality in Western discourse—as signalling the end of gender discrimination, or as the "ur" sign of modernity—one risks reproducing the false temporal and geographical separations that the reification of sexuality as a manifestly different site of power actually facilitates. To restate what I think is an important point, in Western feminist return narratives sexual freedom emerges as a uniquely cultural concern, less serious and more superficial than the real issues of global injustice framed as more appropriate objects of inquiry and intervention. In terms of sexuality's a-feminist resonance, we might also say that the links between discourses of sexual liberation, gender equality, and global regulation (in terms of migration and war) only confirm this sense of sexual freedom as a "red herring" in political terms.

Yet for these overlaps to chime effectively, one has already to have accepted that sexual freedom or sexual identities do indeed map tem-

porally and geographically in these ways, and only in these ways, or, that when they do not, the terms themselves must of necessity be abandoned. An acceptance of the sexuality/materiality opposition leaves us ill equipped to deal with the ways in which "materiality" here is racialized and spatialized in Western feminist historiography already. This opposition, ironically enough, prevents us doing the real intersectional work required for a more complex analysis of the mobilization of "sexuality" in relation to "race" and "gender" that is frequently called for in accounts that read sexual discourse for the truth of "sexual freedom." "Sexuality" and "race" can be brought together, perhaps, but have already to be understood as independent terms of analysis and ontological referents. A second doubt about the value of leaving behind an emphasis on sexual freedom because it is perniciously Western, then, concerns the ways in which this leaves such proclamations (that sexual freedom has been attained) curiously unchallenged. Whatever postfeminist discourse proclaims, young Western women *do not* occupy self-evident positions of increased sexual agency, competency, or control, either compared to their own mothers or compared to non-Western women. This is not to say that young Western women never evidence sexual agency either, of course, but to say that this is not a de facto characteristic of this subject. Neither, of course, do Muslim women straightforwardly evidence a rejection or acceptance of secular sexual mores in direct relation to covering or uncovering, as is often presumed.[7] And neither, indeed, does it seem sufficient to imply that because gay freedoms are being mobilized against Muslims (and others) in Western citizenship tests that the concept of "gay freedom" is de facto anti-Muslim.

Let me be careful to be clear here. I am not suggesting that theorists who critique uses of Western sexual identity categories as part of global regulation make the direct claim of the previous sentence. But when critiques ask only how sexual discourse is mobilized in such contexts, who it belongs to and implicates, and what work it does in opposition to migrant subjects or detainees, they run the risk of reproducing the very opposition (between sexuality and "real politics") that grounds the temporality otherwise abhorred. When such arguments either stop at the critique or anticipate that there is a clear "side" to be taken in such debates, and that once taken, the politics of a given position will be secure, sexuality is once more reified as different from—opposed to—a politics of

migration, or antiwar politics. There are several consequences of this reification, not least the difficulty of being able to conceive of "identity combinations" that do not assume internal antagonism—e.g., gay Muslim. Further, the "antisexuality" position assumes that non-Western religious, cultural, or political movements cannot be accused of homophobia without that being understood as the imposition of a Western imperialism. It seems urgent to untangle these threads and resist such opposed understanding of political spheres, both in order to challenge the exclusions of sexual discourse and to continue to have something meaningful to say about homophobia in local and transnational contexts. This is particularly important in light of the ways in which women are often absent from debates about sexual asylum or homophobic violence, which, as I have argued, is partly to do with the ways in which gender and sexual discourses are epistemologically and temporally linked. As Jacqui Alexander, Jyoti Puri, and Ratna Kapur among others have argued, sexual identity as Western freedom or preoccupation can easily slip into sexual identity as Western decadence in postcolonial nation-building discourses that seek to control the sexuality of women in particular (Alexander 1994; Puri 2002; Kapur 2005). At the very least, then, an account of the damage done to political analysis by imagining sexuality as cultural, and thus in Western feminist historiography, as Western, seems timely—at least as timely as accounts that emphasize the racialized exclusions of sexual identity when reified as border marker. Here, in particular, I would want to advocate for the importance of attention to overlaps across positions often thought of as distinct, over and above articulations of oppositional political positions imagined to be free from Western taint.

GENERATIONS

The shared attachment to feminism's demise in Western feminist storytelling resonates with a much broader range of understandings of gender and feminist positions, as I have been suggesting, including those understandings Western feminists are heavily invested in disidentifying themselves from. My argument has been that a too singular focus on marking the distinctions between politically progressive and politically conservative uses of gender discourse fails to attend sufficiently to the narrative continuities across those uses, and that this is likely to reproduce rather than

alleviate the problems identified. Here, I want to explore a further aspect of the linear temporalities I have been critiquing within Western feminist storytelling, namely that of generational discourse. My interest in so doing is both to extend the discussion of the impact of narratives of progress, loss, and return on what academic feminism can imagine as its present and future and to explore one dominant way in which the independent status of the Western feminist heroine is secured, against the complexities of time and space that mark the field of inquiry. I have reflected on the question of generation in the telling of Western feminist stories at different moments in the book so far, but most particularly in chapter 2, where I sought to unpick its function as a way of glossing over political and theoretical tensions otherwise less easily displaced. Here I carry forward these reflections to consider its role as a universal trope in managing spatial, geographical, and temporal difference within feminist theory.[8]

Western feminist stories of progress and loss use generation as a way of making sense of the shifts feminist theory is presumed to have made. If, as I have suggested, these stories rely on a decade-by-decade approach, it is also the case that these different periods house different authors, of different ages. The present is always occupied by the authors who press on or look back in ways that reflect their own theoretical and political investments. For example, in loss narratives the author positions herself as part of a previous generation: she can look back and appreciate what was lost or what can be reclaimed. The past, when she was young, was brighter and more political; the present and future are doomed, or indeed hopeful, to the extent that she is listened to and her theoretical and political position reinvigorated. Loss of political and theoretical integrity thus occurs both outside of her control and (implicitly or explicitly) outside of her age group, as the professionalized who come after and the even younger who come now are frequently cast as irredeemably self-serving, ahistorical, or apolitical. Attachment to the certainty that feminism is either over or entirely compromised must in this context be seen as one way of ensuring that the subject of feminism remains the same, indeed remains co-extensive with the author of loss narratives. In progress narratives, in contrast, an older generation's errors are moved away from, and the naïve attachments of the then young are replaced by dynamic investments in multiplicity and coalition of the *now* young. Previous generations of feminists do not understand contemporary political or theoretical concerns; in-

deed, that lack of understanding remains crucial for a new generation's sense of itself as progressing, as leaving older issues (and subjects) behind. In these narratives, the intellectual convictions and political will of young, old, or in between are assumed to be radically different and our lives fully differentiated from one another's. It is rare indeed that these narratives represent or imagine common attachments or interests across the decades.[9] In return narratives, feminist generations can (finally) come together to embrace the future, but what must be relinquished—epistemologically and ontologically—remains generationally distinct.

Generational logic more generally has already been critiqued within feminist theory for a range of compelling reasons that I would endorse, namely that it represents the past and present through generational struggles within a *family drama*, as inevitable and bound to be reproduced with each successive "generation" (Roof 1997; Probyn 1998; McMahon 2005). Feminism is thus locked into a psychoanalytic dynamic of vigorous supersession (by the younger) and melancholic nostalgia (of the older), and figures both mothers and daughters as themselves always bound in antagonistic relation. In this respect, generational narratives are heteronormative and homosocial, as they assume women's cross-generational relationships with one another can only be hostile. Luce Irigaray and Judith Roof have both cautioned further that such hostility has at its root the assumption that both mother and daughter want the father/phallus/power, and thus intergenerational competition is always about sameness masquerading as difference (Irigaray 1985a; Irigaray 1985b; Roof 1996). And it is Julia Kristeva who most famously theorizes generation geographically as well as temporally, insisting that "consideration of generations of women can only be conceived of in [such a] global way as a succession, as a progression in the accomplishment of the initial programme mapped out by its founders" (1981: 194).

There are other related reasons to be wary about the use of generational discourse. It is, in my view, deeply ageist within this heteronormative frame. Even where hostility is replaced with mentoring and encouragement, on the one hand, and recognition and respect, on the other, the assumption remains that feminist theory cannot but be passed on to the "next generation," as though only the young, or young-ish, could carry its flags and burdens. I have before me an image of a relay race where the baton is either carried forward or dropped, the moment of touch a singu-

lar one of transmission. The baton passer drops back once the burden has been passed, watching proud or critical from the sidelines. One cannot be both passer and inheritor at once, of course, and inheritors must also pass on the baton or else run round and round the same ground until they collapse. For those selfish daughters who refuse to be mothers, their barren inheritance is redundancy and exhaustion. Believing themselves forever young, convinced of their own regenerative capacities, they just do not know when to step aside. Such visions are heterosexist insofar as they assume the failure to age gracefully can only be narcissistic and irresponsible and have at the centre of the feminist scene a critical daughter tutting at her mother's embarrassing performances. In generational narratives, creative, political, intellectual feminist space is never shared beyond brief moments of encounter, transitional moments for the young who are the only real subjects of linear narratives (the rest of us are dead or dying). Impossible here to grasp the possibility of feminist spaces of friendship, desire, affiliation, and productivity that produce variegated historical accounts whose subjects (of any age) shuttle back and forth between their own and others' memories, representations, and fantasies of past, present, and future.

To return to Kristeva, generational narratives of feminist history are invariably spatially and temporally universalizing, insofar as they presume a uniformity of "progression" and a singular subject passing on that history to a successor subject who is recognizable and recognizes *that* history. The model is *de facto* developmental, assuming a common object and end across geography, though in fact imposing a singular, dominant story as shared.[10] As discussed throughout the book thus far, a shared global feminist future requires the fantasy of a shared oppressive past, already moved beyond in the West, but culturally present for the South and East. The Western feminist progress, loss, and return narratives with which I am concerned reproduce geographical as well as sexual power-relations, in that they privilege an abstract generational discourse over located historical or geographical specificity. They make little if any reference to context, despite the fact that we know, for example, that institutionalization of feminist thought is extremely uneven across time and space. Within Europe alone, feminist theorists teach and conduct research and publish in radically different circumstances and with varied degrees of financial and intellectual support.[11] A loss narrative that critiques feminism for its in-

creasing professionalization and abstraction thus takes one particular exception as the model, and then blames feminism in general for this development; a progress narrative that critiques feminism for its continued adherence to identity categories now that "woman" has been thoroughly deconstructed does the same. Or to ask the question a different way, since the majority of feminist theorists globally work in constrained conditions, in and out of the academy, with or without funding, often for little or no remuneration, who are we talking about when we assume feminism as a knowledge project has lost or transcended its (identity) politics?

Generational framing of Western feminist stories sees others as more or less invested in feminism by prioritizing time over context. There are individual as well as political reasons for the use of generation as explanation for shifts in Western feminist theory too. Even where differences of generation within feminism are positively viewed, it is the differences between cohorts of feminists, rather than similarities across time and space, that are emphasized and that are understood to mark generation as such (O'Barr 2000; Thorne 2000; Calloni 2003). Thus, as discussed in chapter 2, generational accounts reproduce the assumption of a linear progression of Western feminism and feminist theory, one in which those positioned as passing on their inheritance may have achieved much, but they must also be "left behind": they are ontologically as well as theoretically or politically anachronistic. Those posing as inheritors are ceded a legacy and a debt, both of which have to be honored, and be seen to be honored (Wiegman 1999a; Adkins 2004), if the brutal transfer of relevance is to be mediated. For Western feminist stories what this means is that the affect infusing feminism's demise is always also one of personal loss or liberation, but never accountability. "Generation" is in fact precisely what allows affective investment in the feminist subject to remain positive at the individual level. To retain relevance if passed over, those inheriting may be marked as unworthy or ungrateful; to refuse duty, those passing on can be disrespected or forgotten. If feminism has been lost, or if it remains as anachronism, then this is always someone else's fault. A previous generation clung too long to outdated modes of political unity; a current generation of feminist academics lacks political vision; a presumptive generation of young women has abandoned feminism entirely. The young or old are superior or inferior, their concerns unrecognizable, their perspectives myopic and narcissistic (Sherry 2000). Generation allows loss without

responsibility and progress without obligation. The tension is familial in the worst ways. It reinforces the violent Oedipalization of "inheritance" (Kristeva 1981; Roof 1997) and underscores its heteronormative dynamics.

Considerable work has to be done to retain the temporality of Western feminist storytelling as generational, partly in order to mediate the stark empirical inaccuracy of what is represented. Different generations, we presume, are different ages, with the old being those "left behind" and the young being the beholden or else the carelessly forgetful. When does a generation begin and another one end when we are describing communities of practice? When do I become a different generation from my students, for example? When our distance in age is sufficient for me to have birthed them? When their interests look too different from mine to be recognized? When I sludge my way to the bathroom in the morning, rather than leap up with enthusiasm to meet the new day? Or simply by virtue of having students in the first place? In fact, of course, the young and old, and ages we can only presume lie in between, are subjective, overlapping positions, even in flat empirical mode. Rosalind Gill expresses similar doubts about the empirical accuracy of generational claims in feminist theory in her review of Natasha Walter's *The New Feminism*, noting, "Even though I am almost the same age as [Walter], I felt . . . old, unreconstructed and cynical" (2000: 140–41). Because Walter represents her own position as "new" and her cohort as "young," Gill's differences in perspective work to place her "before" Walter historiographically. Generation thus carries the weight of what might better be characterized as theoretical or political differences of opinion manifest in the present, rather than across time. In effect, generation is performative: reading Walter makes Gill feel old, and this makes sense because the political and affective conditions for understanding certain feminist attachments as anachronistic are already in place. Generational discourse thus not only substitutes change over time for contest or concurrence in the present, but further, acts as a mechanism for obscuring these contests or concurrences, deflecting these onto (naturalized) ontological differences.

INSTITUTIONAL MAPS

The theoretical and affective deflection of contest onto generation marked in Gill's discourse, above, can also be traced in debates about the proper

name of the field of inquiry. As I have explored elsewhere, arguments over whether we should call the field "women's studies" or "gender studies" in particular tend to instantiate a chronology as well as a theoretical or political intervention (Hemmings 2006). Those in favor of the designation "gender studies" often locate it as a necessary shift within a Western feminist progress narrative. In this context gender studies is consistently understood to represent the expansion of the field to include masculinity studies, transgender studies, queer studies, and postcolonial studies, a set of linked interests beyond "women" as a unified or isolated category (e.g., Fernández-Kelly 2000; Gillis, Howie, et al. 2004). Gender studies may also be claimed as an appropriate term for interventions within social policy, development studies, or international relations, where the focus is articulated as on gender *relations* over women's interests per se. In this sense gender studies is positively claimed to describe shifts in perspective both within and outside the academy. In the process women's studies is frequently represented as both politically and intellectually anachronistic, and importantly as part of an earlier generation of institutionalization (see Threadgold 2000). The claiming of gender studies as a theoretical and political advance is thus often a constitutive part of Western feminist progress narratives and directly links these with both Third Wave political formations and gender mainstreaming endeavors.[12]

In contrast, and rather unsurprisingly, the claim that "women's studies" best designates the field tends to inflect this same history as one of depoliticization, represented through the attempted neutralization of women's studies' transformative capacities (e.g., Klein 1991). Within loss narratives in particular, "gender studies" becomes a sign of the desire for institutional acceptance and evidence of the loosening of ties between academic feminism and a broader transformative agenda (Evans 1991; Demoor and Heene 2002). Or it is cited as evidence of the increasing instrumentalization of the field in the context of mainstreaming agendas (Kašić 2004), signaling precisely the loss of a feminist agenda in ways I have indicated above. Alternatively, claims for women's studies over gender studies may emphasize the importance of that history as central to what the field means (Wiegman 2003) or as a site that appropriately houses (rather than prevents) debates over the meaning of "woman" that characterize the international, institutional life of this diffuse project (Griffin and Braidotti 2002). These last efforts, in particular, situate the refusals of "gender

studies" as historically informed and resolutely European respectively. They also mark the belief that no single designation could finally and accurately represent the field.

What remains common to many of the debates I have had to simplify above is the *temporal* separation of women's and gender studies. Women's studies is consistently represented as coming first, subsequently to be displaced or contested by gender studies. Thus Diane Richardson and Victoria Robinson ask of gender studies, "Should we welcome [them] . . . or should we be critical?" (1994: 11), as if participants in both the field and the naming debates all occupied the same questioning location at the outset, namely women's studies. Since this is clearly not the case—hence the debate—the question serves to reproduce the teleology of inheritance that marks these arguments as generational. Women's studies is marked as original, with gender studies as the (young) upstart whose behaviour remains subject to parental correction. This generational portrayal of women's studies and gender studies emphasizes the two as entirely separate projects with distinct subjects and objects. It detracts from any analysis of the complex interactions and overlaps among projects thus named, always knowing in advance who and what constitute a properly political feminist project. To this extent, gender studies advocates are likely to miss the ways in which whatever we call the field, gender tends to (re)attach to women whether we like it or not. And women's studies advocates are likely to miss the different histories and locations within gender studies, some of which may indeed be resolutely apolitical, some of which most assuredly are not. Further, similarities across the institutional life of the field, whatever it is called, overlaps across curricula, and pedagogic approaches, for example, are likely to be overlooked when the name itself is understood to signal radical differentiation across time and space. Even in an institutional context in which the move from women's to gender studies *is* an accurate description of historical shifts, in other words, this does not in itself tell us very much about the different ways in which that position may be occupied.[13]

In a U.K. graduate context such as the one I teach in, named the Gender Institute for many of the reasons articulated above but mainly because of institutional constraint, teacher and student attachment to "gender studies" as the descriptive term for the field may be shared or contested but often for quite different reasons.[14] Thus, one participant in this space may

endorse gender studies because of their interest in and commitment to intersectionality or deconstruction; another may find it a useful term because of its broader institutional recognition in policy and development studies, but prefer the term "women" in rights contexts; yet another may have hoped that a space so named would have attracted more men into it and worry about the slip of gender into women's studies the scarcity of male graduate students is understood to represent. And by the end of a given year, each of these positions may have shifted on the basis of experience and debate. Faculty may similarly embrace or resist the designation of our working site, as suggested by the range of titles we have individually adopted, or been encouraged to adopt. We occupy the space of the Gender Institute and teach its Masters and PhD Programmes in Gender under the following designations: Reader in Feminist Theory; Lecturer in Gender, Development and Globalisation; Lecturer in Gender Theory, Culture and the Media; Professor of Gender and Political Theory; Lecturer in Transnational Gender Studies; Lecturer in Gender and Social Science; Professor of Economic Geography and Gender Studies; Visiting Professor of Sociology and Gender. In addition to the clear marking of disciplinary positions within what is an interdisciplinary institute, these differences also mark a range of inflections within the field, and reflect upon one another when seen in context. I chose my own title, Reader in Feminist Theory, out of a desire to mark my intellectual and political attachments within gender studies, but I realize here that it also marks a dissonance or discomfort with "gender studies" (a discomfort I would also have with "women's studies"), or a potential framing of the other titles as somehow not feminist. Naming here does considerably more than mark a linear history, and it raises many of the same concerns pertinent to spaces named "women's studies" in a range of other institutional contexts. A linear account of loss or progress in relation to women's or gender studies always fails to get at the texture of struggles over meaning and practice, and a generational view of transition must always displace engagement with the mirroring across different positions in favour of their antagonisms.

But this chronology—from women's to gender studies—is inaccurate from another perspective too. Not only does it ignore the animated negotiation of these terms that characterizes the life of the field, it also proposes a located set of shifts as universal, as already indicated. Women's studies may be the term originally chosen for the entry into the academy of a

feminist knowledge project, but this point of origin is not common to all contemporary manifestations of that project. While the United States, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Australia, and others may share that trajectory, this is not true for academic institutionalization across most of Scandinavia, India, Central and Eastern Europe, Italy, or France, to name just a few examples. In these and other contexts gender studies is as likely as women's studies to be the name of the initial forays into the academy, or indeed, academic feminism may nestle within disciplinary contexts, unnamed as separate from its particular forms of (inter)disciplinary critique and invention. There may be little separation between policy or mainstreaming and gender studies in some contexts, and barely any direct relation in others, but what is common is that women's studies is not their point of origin. Indeed, it can only be framed as such if we understand this international institutional unevenness in terms of a time lag, a transhistorical developmental narrative that holds those "origin sites" up as everyone's past, even if only imaginatively. The generationalism of debates about the proper name of the field, then, mitigates against analysis of a complex institutional present, and also obscures a sense of the field as genuinely transnational. Indeed, the differences in how people occupy a space like the Gender Institute, which houses mostly non-British students from across Europe, North America, Latin America, East Asia, and parts of Africa, are in part a reflection of that transnational unevenness and the contests over meaning that occur when concepts and debates themselves travel (Bal 2002).

To conclude this section, generational celebrations and laments within Western feminist storytelling prevent attention to contest over precisely the histories they purport to describe. They reinforce the heteronormative dimensions of linear histories, and act counter to international, institutional analyses of both the field and its effects. Further, generational accounts turn attention away from epistemological differences within Western feminist theory and frame the recent past in primarily ontological terms. As suggested, a generational account can be used both to explain the absence of a feminist subject of both postfeminism and gender in global governance and to ensure that the responsibility for feminism's demise always remains someone else's. Generational temporality allows for the necessary separation between good and bad uses of "gender" and preserves the space for restitution for the appropriate feminist subject

(usually whoever is speaking). While it seems that generational accounts will always have a winner and loser, it is worth remembering that generation always produces a tension. The young may inherit a feminist legacy (whether they want to or not), but they are also expected to learn from their elders, who may turn out to have been right all along. Family dramas may be temporarily resolved, but they are also de facto bound to be replayed. The key here is that generational accounts propose a *dynamic,* and thus always hold the possibility of the "return" of the cast-out family member. The playing out of relational affect—wounding, injury, betrayal (Wiegman 1999a)—is significant, then, because it refigures restitution, both of past perspectives and, importantly, of the neglected subject.

UNRAVELING

Thus far in this chapter I have been interested in flagging ways in which the political grammar of Western feminist stories overlaps with broader discursive meanings and practices of gender and feminism. My point has not been to establish cause and effect, as if the structure and content of feminist narratives of progress, loss, and return could be understood directly to produce postfeminism or the relations between sexuality and gender in a global regulatory framework, or indeed vice versa. Rather, my attention has been drawn to the narrative similarities that allow resonance across accounts rather than to what are often presumed to be disjunctures between them. Thus, across a broad range of accounts of gendered meaning in a contemporary global sphere, *including* Western feminist accounts of the recent past, feminism is left behind, sexual identity is tethered to specific locations, and transformation must needs occur in contexts always already constructed as lagging behind in both gender and sexual equality. These chronologies reinforce understandings of the "non-West" as developmentally lacking and as needing guidance from those inhabiting modernity.

In Western feminist stories the narrative amenability I have been tracking is further secured through use of generational discourse that substitutes change over time for a focus on theoretical and political contest. In reifying generation as a key factor in losses or gains in feminism, the individual subject of Western feminism is privileged over attention to geopolitical or institutional differences across time and space. This is, of

course, not entirely surprising, given that feminist theory and practice are always saturated with a sense of political urgency and responsibility, which means that whether or not one takes up an appropriate feminist position is key to how politics is presumed to work. It is paradoxical, perhaps, that it is precisely the individual and collective passions required by feminism that lend themselves to a prioritization of good over bad affect in consideration of what makes feminism different. A good feminist subject must, in these narratives, be both heroic and marginal, conditions that propel generational, often bad-tempered, certainties over consideration of ambivalence or incommensurability.

If, as I have been suggesting, the political grammar of Western feminist stories is thus amenable to temporal and geographical hierarchization in a global frame, particularly when gender and sexuality are at stake, then continued insistence on the difference a feminist subject makes will only compound the difficulties at hand. If, as I would want to insist, these global orders of meaning that mobilize gender and sexual discourse for profoundly inequitable and violent ends are pernicious, then it is important that we consider the fullest possible range of interventions into their expansive logic as well as particular execution. Reflexivity concerning the amenability of feminist storytelling seems a minimum requirement for sustainable transformation under such circumstances. Certainly, ongoing argument over the proper subject and object of feminism *as distinct from* other modes of gender discourse seems misplaced at best, and unlikely to disrupt the narrative amenability I have been discussing. Assumptions about what singular genre of feminist theory, method, and practice can renew lost feminist capacities fall into two related traps, in my analysis. They consolidate understandings of feminism as anachronism, on the one hand, and propose one response as most significant, which is in fact to say one feminist subject, on the other. In this respect I am concerned with prioritizing attention to contest and the terms of resolution of those contests over and above an emphasis on particular subjects as a priori suited to transformative politics.

This approach has clear sympathies with Judith Butler's project in *Gender Trouble* (1990), in which she sought to separate the subject of feminism from its presumed object, and with a range of poststucturalist feminist accounts that call the hidden "I" of political attachment to account.[15] But the diagnosis of the problem is only one part of the politics of

this project, and my proposed interventions differ from Butler's emphasis on parody or variant repetition in shifting gendered signification. This project focuses more particularly on the importance of narrative formation, and thus the political potential of renarration itself. By "renarration" here I do not mean the proposing of an alternative history or histories of feminist thinking, since this would similarly instantiate an ideal feminist subject (and object) of that history. Nor am I making an argument for relinquishing feminism because of these pitfalls.[16] As already indicated in my introduction, however, the desire to be entirely free from a corrective account is always bound to fail; the difference is primarily a question of focus. Instead I am interested in experimenting with alternative *ways* of telling feminist stories (rather than telling different feminist stories as such) that start from resonances and meanings that the dominant narratives I have thus far been concerned with act to obscure.

The last two chapters of this book elaborate two attempts to renarrate Western feminist stories in ways that foreground the importance of textual tactics for transformative politics. Chapter 5, "Citation Tactics," returns to the politics and practices of citation I have been teasing out thus far, while chapter 6, "Affective Subjects," explores alternatives to the singular grammar of the Western feminist subject I have been interested in. In both chapters my primary concern is with what lies just out of focus in the Western feminist stories I have been mapping, as I endeavour to fold these obscurities back into dominant accounts. In so doing my aim is both to shine a spotlight on the politics of narrative and to refigure the subjects and objects of feminist narrative to different effect. This aim is clearest in chapter 5, however, where I "recite" Western feminist narratives of progress, loss, and return from the perspective of "citation absence" in contrast to the over-valuation of particular citation traces in dominant accounts. Further, in both chapters my attention is focused on the significance of affect in narrating and renarrating feminist stories, though it is a more sustained area of inquiry in chapter 6, as the title suggests. If, as I have been arguing throughout, affect is central to how narratives of progress, loss, and return work to produce appropriate feminist writing and reading subjects, then renarration will also both utilize and reframe affect in turn. Thus, I focus on the importance of affect as central to how narrative meaning is secured, but also as an ideal critical starting point for renarration. Finally, in both experiments I centre on the question of the politics of

history as produced in the present. While both chapters are concerned with renarration of Western feminist history, they do so from the perspective of historiographical imagination in the present, rather than the truth of the past as the primary guide to contemporary politics and theory. This difference is significant in that it highlights the historicity of the present as multiple and open, and thus feminism as amenable not only to conservative mobilizations, but also to the political renarrations I advocate here, or that a reader may also imagine.