Organization @ 20

Is the 'F'-word still dirty?

A past, present and future of/for feminist and gender studies in Organization

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Introduction

Anti-performative management and organization theorising (MOT) shares with feminist/gender studies an emancipatory ideal located in the critical social sciences. We explore in this paper how the two have, in papers published in Organization in its first 20 years, been mutually informative, and suggest ways of developing more fruitful interactions.

Our aim, in looking back and looking forward at gender/feminist theory and *Organization,* is to advocate a broader recourse to feminist/gender theorists that will facilitate more insightful understanding of organizations and working lives. We firstly look backwards, and suggest that although feminist theory has been drawn on quite widely in *Organization*, the influence of major feminist theorists and much sophisticated feminist thought is limited. Secondly, we illustrate the richness of feminist thought for MOT through brief vignettes of a small number of major feminist theorists whose work merits closer attention. Thirdly, we turn from *theorists* to *theory*, discussing just three of the many different feminist perspectives that, we argue, are invaluable for developing politically oriented organization theories. Pragmatism dictated our choice of theorists and theories; the limits of space mean we can only hint at the treasure-house that is feminist theory.

Looking backwards: female, feminists and feminism in Organization 1994-2012

Nikki Townsley's (2003) analysis of gender in *Organization*'s first ten years proved, to her surprise, to be celebratory: 'I did not expect to find the range of insights, contributions, or connections. *Organization* research in all of its diversity has clearly contributed to the field's understanding of gender, power, and organization over the past

ten years' (2003:644). The subsequent decade has seen *Organization* continue this tradition, albeit without sufficient recourse to new bodies of feminist theory and major theorists.

Organization's emergence was concurrent with 'third-wave feminism'. Second-wave feminists were accused of having, since the 1960s, constituted a hegemonic feminism that privileged white, middle-class, heterosexual women. The 'name-object "third-wave feminism"' signal[led] an 'important shift in the strategic consciousness of feminist ideology/praxis' (Garrison, 2004:33). The category 'woman' was argued to homogenise women, ignoring heterogeneous female identities. Third-wave feminism is postcolonial and poststructural, located knowingly in a globalised, transnational world. As we will show, *Organization*'s authors both hark back to second wave feminism and keep pace in many ways with third wave feminism.

Are women allowed to speak through *Organization's* pages? Female authors are not necessarily feminist authors, and although crass body counting essentializes women and men, at the same time it ensures that a history of women's silencing is not perpetuated in its pages. This essentializing which, to paraphrase Hall (1993), valorises the very ground of that which we are trying to deconstruct, is sometimes strategically necessary (Spivak, 1990). A rather unscientific head count of authors in *Organization*'s two decades shows male authors have outnumbered female authors two-to-one (approximately 288/130 M/F until 2003 when the journal had four editions a year, and approximately 345/170 since 2004 [six editions per volume]). If there are two men for every woman writing critically-focused management papers, this crude way of accounting for women's presence may demonstrate equality of opportunity for publishing in *Organization*. Space does not allow listing of the numerous papers in *Organization* which use the word 'feminist' in their title or abstract, the vast majority of whose authors are female. Some continue to raise awareness of patriarchy and inequalities in organizations. For example, Wilson (1999) argued that the 'ideology of patriarchy' continues to socially produce and construct differences between women and men that are made to appear 'natural'. Others are more 'third-wave', such as a special section in 2000 which illustrates how *Organization* facilitates innovative discussions of gender and organizations. Five papers explored one

project that failed in its aim of changing the gender structures of one organization (Coleman and Rippin; 2000; Ely and Meyerson, 2000; Hearn, 2000; Meyerson and Kolb, 2000; Symposium Team). Gender was understood as 'an abstract organizing principle of organizational life, an axis of power that manifests in knowledge systems and concrete organizational policies, practices, and everyday interactions that appear to be gender-neutral' (Hearn, 2000:599).

Third-wave, transnational feminism features regularly in *Organization*: Sandra Harding (1996) argued the merits of feminism for exploring how European-American scientific knowledge is a powerful but 'unmitigatedly local' (1996:488) knowledge system. In the same special edition Ferguson (1996) argued that feminists should analyse their own 'ethical complicity in the perpetuation of neo-colonial domination relations between North and South' (1996:572). Her analysis has continuing implications for feminist and critical research more generally – there cannot be one of us who does not need to 'destabilize our given identities and uncover our horizons of ignorance' (p.579).

More recently, gender theorists' focus has turned away from feminism *per se* and towards diversity, reflecting the ubiquity of diversity policies in organizations (for example, Zanoni, 2011). Authors continue to explore how masculinities as well as femininities are constructed (for example see Panayiotou, 2010). There is a sense however of missed opportunities: the subtleties and nuances of feminist theorizing that go beyond social constructionism or gendered forms of discrimination are largely ignored. Rare but insightful examples of Organization's authors using feminist ideas to inform organization theory include Newton (1996) who uses feminism to critique postmodernism, while Rhodes (2000) draws on feminist theory to problematize 'research'. These authors illuminate possibilities for using feminist/gender theory in more innovative ways. Thomas and Davies (2005) exemplify how this may be done. They identify a shared core concept in critical MOT and post-structural feminist theory, resistance, and develop feminist theory's micro-politics of resistance for MOT.

So we could say women's voices and feminist perspectives are fairly well represented in *Organization*. It compares well with similar journals such as *Human Relations (*Simpson and Lewis, 2005; Maranto & Griffin 2011)*, Organization Studies (*Wilson, 1996; Tyler

and Cohen, 2009; van den Brink et al. 2010), *Journal of Management Studies* (Knights and Kerfoot, 1992), *Management Learning* (Fenwick, 2005), and even *Academy of Management Review* which includes a paper by Ely and Padavic (2007) on complex interactions between gender, identity and power.

However, some caveats: despite recognition of gender's importance to MOT it remains somewhat marginal, its poverty in stark contrast to the riches of feminist theory more generally. Further, engagement with the work of major feminist theorists/theory is under-developed, with few drawn on in depth. Finally, feminist theory is used overwhelmingly by female authors, suggesting 'feminism' may be something of a ghetto in which (essentialized) women can be safely contained? But that feminist research is published in a generalist journal and thus may reach a wider readership is cause for celebration.

In sum, *Organization* publishes a range of feminist-inspired papers that continue to develop understanding of gender processes and inequalities in organizations. It avoids ghetto-ization of feminist thought through ensuring its access to a broad readership. *Organization*'s first 20 years has laid the groundwork for more sophisticated engagements with feminist/gender theories for understanding organizations.

Looking forward (1) Feminist theorists

One area of concern is the limited appearance of major feminist theorists' work in *Organization.* Organizational scholarship is dominated by the grand ideas of male theorists and researchers who 'focus their referencing on a relatively small band of scholars and do not incorporate pluralist appreciations' (Marshall, 2000:171). Feminist theorists deal with issues of major concern to MOT, such as language, identity, emotion and power. Luce Irigaray, Julia Kristeva and Hélène Cixous to name but a few explore these issues in depth, so their absence is truly perplexing. Some papers are now appearing that draw in depth on major feminist theorists, but they only scratch the surface of what is possible. We illustrate this with brief overviews of just a few feminist theoreticians to illustrate the sophistication of such work to those not yet familiar with feminist theorists.

Judith Butler

Butler is one of our foremost contemporary philosophers (Schrift, 2001). Her works (too numerous to list in the space available) originally focused on sex, gender and sexuality, such that she is a leading feminist thinker and an acknowledged major influence upon queer theory (Parker, 2002). She legitimates and licenses the 'unanticipated reappropriation' of her body of theory 'in areas for which it was never consciously intended' (Butler, 1990:19), and indeed her more recent work has turned to developing a new, more general left-wing politics (Butler, 2004; 2006). Although Butler's work is influential across the arts, humanities and social sciences, its influence within organization studies remains limited, despite Borgerson's (2005) powerful advocacy and educational endeavour and Kenny's (2010) exemplar of its power for understanding organizations. Butlerian philosophy has been used largely to explore the performative accomplishment of sex and gender in the workplace (Tyler and Cohen, 2008; 2010; Kelan, 2009). That Butler can inform broader aspects of organizational analysis is shown by Harding's (2003) exploration of the relationship between reader and the management textbook; Ford and Harding's (2004) demonstration of how organization and employees are mutually imbricated; and Hodgson's (2005) study of 'oppositional practice' in white-collar work. Butler's work is referenced more widely in organizational literature but often to support arguments rather than as a powerful explanatory framework. There are also some examples of a casual mis-reading of her work. Management theory is thus in the early stages of applying the work of this major philosopher.

Donna Haraway

Donna Haraway's work, notably the 'cult' *A Manifesto for Cyborgs* (1985) is of 'monumental status' (Hayles, 2006). She aimed to subvert the essentialising foundational myths of socialist feminism, developing the cyborg as an 'extended metaphor or conceit ….: the figure who, exaggerated, … highlights traits or provides a focus for a complex argument' (Shields, 2006:209). Haraway's cyborg takes Foucault's analysis into the post-industrial conditions of late modernity (Braidotti, 2006), that is, into 'technobiopower'. Haraway's cyborg and later work on 'companion species' offers a process ontology that challenges dominant representations of subjectivity. When discussing Haraway's work

we discuss an author 'who has already had more formative effects on current thinking and practice than most (Thrift, 2006:194) although not in MOT, despite its appositeness for MOT scholars. Czarniawska and Gustavsson (2008) use the *Manifesto* to analyse the portrayal of women in science fiction films, but do not develop its potential. Parker's (1998) paper hints at the fruitfulness of Haraway's thesis for MOT through her 'ironic cultural politics' and its insights into how all the technologies of organization - bodies, computers, buildings, titles – attain meaning relationally.

Hélène Cixous

Hélène Cixous an artist, playwright, philosopher and educational innovator, is one of the most celebrated and versatile feminist thinkers of our time. She is most well known for her invention and propagation of a new way of writing from the body and her contribution to the feminist struggle for emancipation. However, Cixous's political commitment extends to opposing all forms of repression of the mind and body and counteracting exclusion on the basis of identity, through creating new languages and rhetorical devices. Cixous's path breaking work *The Laugh of the Medusa* (1976), written as an essay/manifesto, is a call for women to awaken and claim back what was foreclosed to them by centuries of masculine domination in thought and philosophy. She proposes Medusa as a symbol for women's multiplicity, and argues for women's participation in public life to oppose masculine rhetoric. This involves reclaiming their sexuality and creating their own new language to express their subjectivity. In what came to be known as *l'écriture feminine,* she gives a first-hand account and demonstration of what that new way of writing could achieve through allowing feminine desire to re-define the symbolic order. The writing differently that Cixous has pioneered is a means of affecting change as: 'that writing is precisely the possibility of change, the space that can serve as a springboard for subversive thought, the precursory movement of a transformation of social and cultural structures' (Cixous, 1976: 879). The work of Cixous has been little utilized in MOT. Exceptions include Cooper (1992) and Fotaki (forthcoming), who employ her ideas of gender as a mediation between fluctuating possibilities to dispense with bipolar oppositionality that dominates much of the research in the field of organization and management.

Luce Irigaray

Equally influential is Luce Irigaray, who shares with Cixous an interest in psychoanalysis and the role of language in constituting female subjectivity. Irigaray reads the work of grand male philosophers such as Plato, Nietzsche and Levinas against the grain with an aim to denounce the sole representation of women in relation to and through male discourse. Irigaray has also taken Lacan's key tenets about the imaginary structure of the symbolic, to theorise on the position of woman in the social order and reject uncritical psychoanalytic discourse that reproduces the structure of sexual difference as an ontological predicament. This she contends is achieved through applying phallogocentric discourse as a universal system of significations that is meant to represent both women and (all) men. In the '*Sex that is not One'* (1985) she articulates her theory of sexual difference through which women are devalued and made in/significant. Her lucid exposition of the habitual relegation of the feminine to the position of matter, material or object against which the masculine defines itself in Western thought (Irigaray, 1985), contributes greatly to unearthing the importance of the phantasmatic foundations behind the social position of woman. In so doing she confronts the implications of Lacan's work in perpetuating woman's (lack of) representation in science, culture and philosophy. However, it is the absence of adequate linguistic, social, iconic, theoretical, mythical, religious and abstract scientific symbols for woman 'by which to represent herself' (1985) that has the most detrimental consequence. We are at the early stages of seeing Irigaray's work deployed in MOT for exploring the exclusion and sexualisation of the female body in the workplace (Fotaki, 2010; Bell and Kenny, 2011).

Looking forward (2) Feminist theories

In addition to major feminist *theorists* there are bodies of feminist *theory* that could take a critical MOT in new directions that would apply to gendered beings generally (including men, who often seem absent from gender). Word limits allow us to do no more than introduce just three areas that illustrate how feminist thought can take forward a

critical politics of organization studies, and/or be used to generate new questions or new ways of thinking. We chose our own current intellectual passions and sources of inspiration to illuminate this potential.

Intersectionality

Theorization of intersections of multiple inequalities is a central issue in gender theory with wider applications for understanding cosmopolitanism, hybridity, multiculturalism, globalisation (Walby, Armstrong and Strid, 2012) and, in our case, organizations. Scholarship on intersectionality brings organizational gender studies into the 21st century. Specifically, it addresses a gap in knowledge regarding how, in organizations, gender intersects with ethnicity, race, religion, non-heteronormative forms of sexuality, age, disability and other attributes, and what might be the impact of these intersections on working lives[1].

This lack of knowledge can be remedied by introducing theoretical insights from feminism, queer theory, postcolonial theory and theories of subjectification. This requires new frames for capturing how in organizations power, inequality and social identity are intertwined, become enmeshed and shape each other. Among many potential contributions the issue of hybrid, fluid and multiple identities and the political significance of identifying and linking internal organizational processes with external societal processes (Holvino, 2010) stand out. However, relationships between different social categories including race, sexuality, age, disability or class, and particularly how these *intersect* with each other and with gender, are rarely explored in MOT (Holvino, 2010; Special Issue of *Organization,* 2010, 17:1). This is somewhat surprising given that intersectionality is a central frame of analysis in contemporary gender studies (Valentine, 2007), where earlier presumptions of the homogeneity of women's experiences are now regarded as naïve and politically dangerous, and the importance of understanding the complexities of intra-categorical subject positions (McCall, 2005) acknowledged.

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[1] The EU Directives name only six grounds for legal action on illegal discrimination: gender, ethnicity, disability, age, religion/belief and sexual orientation while class is excluded on the grounds that it is not 'justicable' inequality (Walby, Armstrong and Strid, 2012)

Theories of intersectionality have been used since the 1980s to explore the complexities and contingencies of identities, relationships and behaviours. It is known that the multiple disadvantages experienced by those positioned at the intersections of various markers of difference (see bell hooks, 1981) are far from being straightforward sums of the component parts forming subjects' identities. That is, the assumption that 'one form of oppression would be merely additive upon another [is] simplistic but also dangerously essentialist because it involves an implicit ranking of disadvantage' (Valentine, 2007: 13). What is not known is how some of these effects are experienced while at work, nor indeed if organizations can ameliorate some of the issues. For example, intersecting attributes of otherness occasionally level each other out or may be advantageous, as reported by women foreign scientists, suggesting that organizations play a part in constituting intersecting identities (Czarniawska and Sévon, 2008) although the specific role of foreignness or gender remains unknown. Holvino (2010) has proposed the idea of simultaneity of gender, race and class at work to reconceptualise processes of identity formation through institutional and social practices. Various other metaphors including traffic intersections (Crenshaw, 1989), roundabouts (Garry, 2011), axes (Yuval-Davies, 2006) or egg 'curdle-separation' to denote the inseparability of oppressions (Lugones, 2003), were proposed for describing intersectionality.

Such richness of imagery underpins diverse and cutting edge theorizing that has powerful implications for contributing to, enriching or even redefining central debates in MOT. Crenshaw (1991) introduced the term 'intersectionality' to highlight the invisibility of violence against black women in both 'white' feminist and anti-racial struggles against oppression, arguing that political and structural inequalities are not reducible to each other. Power and the role of the powerful must be analysed (Walby, Armstrong and Strid, 2012), but definitional closure avoided as the strength of intersectionality as a theoretical frame and a way of thinking about difference, power and disadvantage lies in its open-endedness, incompleteness or even fuzziness (Davis, 2008).

Another tension for theorizing intersectionality is the emphasis on stability of categories (a necessary precondition for recognition) and fluidity between them (to acknowledge change). Yet another body of research originating in the work of feminist post-colonial theorists (Lugones, 2003) argues for inseparability of various identities into their sub-component parts and instead proposes an intersectionality frame in which new merging categories are understood as 'curdled': retaining various aspects of disadvantage in a new hybrid identity (Garry, 2011). Lugones (2007) introduces a systemic understanding of gender constituted by colonial/modernity in terms of multiple relations of power. Finally, there is debate about the importance of various attributes and categories (Hancock, 2007), which if intertwined with a neo-liberal project of emancipation via choice, allows the so defined 'diversity' to take priority over claims on the basis of equality (Walby, Armstrong and Strid, 2012:230).

This powerful strand of feminist theorizing will prove to be of importance in understanding organizations and working life in the next decade. Its promise lies in offering us new theoretical tools to re-theorize various forms of otherness as they manifest themselves in organizations and society, as well as counteracting any forms of exclusion that such misrecognition could give rise to.

The politics of recognition

The politics of recognition replaces monological with dialogical conceptions of the subject. It is influenced by Hegel's thesis of the need for recognition from the other in the constitution of self-hood and subjectivity. To be denied recognition, or to be misrecognised, is to suffer distortion of one's relation to one's self and injury to one's identity. The politics of recognition is therefore concerned with identity politics: without recognition, identity cannot be manifested in emancipatory ways; groups are instead renounced, sidelined and/or stigmatised. Recognition politics demands that sites of existence be made for stigmatized groups, where subjects become recognizable. The concept of recognition therefore emphasises the embodied, practical and cooperative character of the self-other relation as dialogical, situated in cultural and social contexts

and generated through embodied practice. It highlights the centrality of intersubjective relations to social (McNay, 2008) and organizational life, and how absence of recognition leads to abjection. This is particularly pertinent to organizational analysis for exploring the effects of divisions into dominant/subordinate relations such as leader/follower, manager/managed, professional/unskilled, knowledge/manual worker.

Honneth's (1996) earlier work on 'affective recognition' emphasizes the damage done by negative recognition, in our examples as follower/managed/unskilled/manual:

> 'we owe our integrity ... to the receipt of approval or recognition from other persons. [Negative concepts such as "insult" or "degradation"] are related to forms of disrespect, to the denial of recognition. …[S]uch behaviour is injurious because it impairs these persons in their positive understanding of self — an understanding acquired by intersubjective means.'

Nonrecognition or misrecognition can 'inflict a grievous wound, saddling people with crippling self-hatred' (Taylor, 1994). From such a perspective, organizational hierarchies inflict stigmatising injuries to those in subordinate positions.

Nancy Fraser's (2000) response to Honneth called for a feminist politics of recognition, adding the binary man/woman to our list of abject positions. She develops a politics of redistribution that firstly proposes that 'members of misrecognized groups reject [demeaning] images in favour of new self-representations of their own making, jettisoning internalized, negative identities and joining collectively to produce a self-affirming culture of their own ….. The result, when successful, is 'recognition': an undistorted relation to oneself (109–110).

Women should reject the negative identity of 'being woman'. Secondly, Fraser develops a thesis of justice that relates the cultural-symbolic and socio-economic spheres:

> (i) cultural-symbolic injustice is entrenched in social patterns of representation, interpretation and communication. Examples include cultural domination (being subjected to patterns of interpretation and communication associated with another culture and alien/hostile to one's own); non-recognition (being rendered invisible

in one's culture); and disrespect (being routinely maligned or disparaged). Remedies include revaluing disrespected identities; recognising and positively embracing cultural diversity; or (more radically) wholesale transformations of societal patterns of representation, interpretation and communication; and

(ii) socio-economic injustice includes exploitation (appropriation of the fruits of one's labour to benefit others); economic marginalisation (confinement in poorly paid or undesirable work); and deprivation (denied an adequate material standard of living). Remedies include redistribution of income, labour, and other political/economic restructuring.

The relevance of these arguments for MOT are clear: they enable us to understand better the everyday organizational experiences of subordination and inferiority. Psychoanalytical feminist theory, notably Benjamin (1988; 1995), illuminates further the effects of denial of recognition: it destroys subjectivity.

Benjamin's analysis emphasises that being recognised as the inferior 'woman' to the superior 'man' is a form of mis-recognition, but her arguments lead to the contention that male and female employees are all reduced to the female position and thus denial of subjectivity. Benjamin argues (1995) that interactions between culture and psyche in the West refuse subjectivity to the woman. This results in the interplay of domination and submission between male/female or masculine/ feminine, between dominant (who may be male or female but who stake a claim to rationality and are the seducers) and submissive (who may be male or female and who are cast as non-rational, emotional, nurturing and seduced) (Benjamin, 1995).

She shows how mutuality of reflexive recognition (1998:21) between self and allows us to know ourselves is vital for self-constitution. Yet need for acknowledgement by another is paradoxical: we require both assertion of the self (freedom/lack of need for recognition) and recognition (need for the other/dependency) results in struggles for control (1998:31). Freedom is represented by the father figure and public space, and communion by the mother figure and the private. Benjamin argues, importantly, that men and women alike yearn for *both sides* of these binaries. The masculinity of organizational

public space (Collinson and Hearn, 1996) 'not only eliminates the maternal aspects of recognition (nurturance and empathy) from our collective values, actions and institutions. It … vitiates subjectivity itself' (Benjamin, 1988: 217). When subjects submit completely to masculine organizational norms, recognition is denied and subjectivity is lost (Benjamin, 1988).

A politics of recognition therefore offers potential for understanding experiences of being abjected while at work; it challenges dominant interpretations of management and leadership and provides another critical lens through which the subtleties that make working lives so fraught are entrenched in modernity's presumptions of how to do work.

Reading feminist readings of Greek myths and tragedies to read organizations

Rather than exploring specific theoretical perspectives, this section illuminates the value of ranging within feminist writings for inspiration for new ideas or different ways of interpreting. One example must suffice: feminist analyses of Ancient Greek culture, specifically Sophocles' tragedy, *The Antigone,* an 'iconic text' offering itself to many appropriations (Fleming, 2006:184). The rationale for turning to the past is both permission to imagine different futures for people so circumscribed by history that possibility for thought is closed off (Cixous' argument), and illumination of how past myths continue to structure present experience (Irigaray's position) (Zajko and Leonard, 2006). The Greek tragedies offer 'multiple codes' that help appreciation of ambiguity and 'refusal of easy closure' (Foley, 1995:131).

Antigone is one of the four children of the incestuous relationship of Oedipus and his mother/wife Jocasta. Her two brothers having slain each other in battle, Antigone breaks a ruling of Creon, the king, banning burial of one of the brothers. Incensed, Creon has Antigone walled up in a cave. She hangs herself, as a result of which her fiancé, Creon's son, Haemon, kills himself in front of his father, Creon's wife then kills herself, leaving the king a broken man. This seems a very long way from contemporary organizations, but feminist interpretations of the tragedy stimulate new ways of thinking for MOT.

Butler's (2000) magisterial analysis of *The Antigone* firstly challenges the culturally hegemonic Oedipal narrative: it is a conservative account of family-bound and

heterosexist cultures that not only describes but sustains such cultures. Secondly, she illuminates how subjects define themselves through the language of their powerful other, and thus she 'brings into crisis the stability of the conceptual distinction between them'. She further offers a critique of social laws – we should interrogate them to expose their position as 'contingent social norms' (30) that are often so taken-for-granted their existence is hardly noticed. Finally, Butler's analysis demonstrates the friability of gender identities: *the Antigone* questions masculinities and femininities. In terms of MOT, at the very least Butler's reading provides us with questions to ask of our research participants such as: in what voice do they speak? Can the terms 'organization' and 'employee' sustain their independence from each other? What cultural laws are at work in this interview transcript which prescribe and proscribe possibilities of being, doing and thinking? Understanding of contemporary experiences is thus extended.

Other feminists also ask, in reference to Freud's choice of Oedipus rather than Antigone as his archetype for the psyche, what is foreclosed by 'rendering one imaginative device and narrative an authoritative canon' (Pollock, 2006:89) and what would be made possible using different imaginative devices? The artist Bracha Ettinger's response (in Pollock, 2006), arising from her interpretation of *Antigone*, is a matrixial border space, where matrix, or womb, countermands phallic imaginaries. That is, 'the condition of being humanly generated and born is an ethical ground *ab initio*, a form of linking ….. that appears transgressive to a phallic autism when its archaic foundations are activated and invoked politically, ethically, aesthetically, symbolically as the basis for human thought and action' (Pollock, 2006:104). In other words, rather than psychoanalytical theory's isolated ego, the matrixial border space emphasises co-emergence of subjectivity and thus connectedness and, it follows, a responsibility towards the other. This too brief and too simplistic summary of Ettinger's work, similar in many ways to the ethics developed in Butler's recent work, offers a different way of thinking about organizational ethics. It leads to such questions as: what wounding is done when 'the manager' or 'the leader' is separated out and awarded priority and privileges over others? What forms of harm are enacted through subordination to another's right of dictating how one should spend one's working days?

These questions relating to an emergent organizational ethics are stimulated further by other feminist readings of the tragedy. Chanter (2010) suggests it can be used to bring about an epistemic shift through identifying and registering how regimes of suffering render some pain meaningless: we need new ways of understanding what suffering means. Could we therefore start to concede that the boredom of many jobs is not inevitable but is an affront that needs to be challenged? Sjöholm (2010) looks to *the Antigone* and to Sappho for an alternative to Foucault's history of Eros. Her argument is that rather than male/female we should distinguish between active/passive and imagine an erotics that goes beyond sex. Could an erotics of organization, in which lust for power desires that organizational actors take the passive role, contribute to contemporary re-readings of working lives? In the same volume, Bernstein's (2010) sympathetic re-reading of Hegel's account of *the Antigone* is of recognition of an absence in Greek ethical life both of any concept of a self independent of its roles, and knowledge of any self expressing a singularizing 'who' through its actions. It is the woman, *Antigone,* who carries for Hegel the task of instigating the 'I' or the 'me', separate from a collectivity of roles. Does this not have parallels with much textbook theory and job descriptions, where the person does not exist separate from her/his role? How therefore can there be an organizational ethics towards subjects, if organizations do not recognise the existence of subjects?

These initial thoughts, inspired by the fecundity of feminist interpretations of a classic text, provoke ideas, at present only nascent, for a powerful new ethics of organizational lives. At the least, feminist ways of reading and writing, steeped within critical perspective on power relationships, offer MOT ways of seeing and thinking differently. They help stimulate questions we should ask of contemporary organizations but might not have thought about. Just one short foray into an area of feminist thought that seems to have no connections with organization theory generates a list of questions that may lead to theory or practices only as yet dimly perceived.

Conclusion

We have argued that *Organization* is, by and large, a 'feminist-friendly' journal. However, there remains a largely unexplored treasure-house of feminist ideas that offer much potential for developing sophisticated, innovative, highly informed analyses of organizations and working lives So as to introduce some of these gems to *Organization* we have summarised too briefly some aspects of feminist thinking that are intellectually exciting, thought-provoking, and offer great potential for taking forward critical analyses of organizations. We have suggested that they offer potential for new theoretical perspectives, a new politics and a new ethics of organizations, and can help stimulate different ways of thinking.

However, is there the danger that feminism's political power will be diluted if it is turned by an anti-performative MOT to tackling subordination more generally? Could not women be weakened by such a betrayal? Would privileged, white males benefit? This is the other side of the ghetto-isation of feminist theory: is not the lack of use by men of feminist ideas politically appropriate? Our response is firstly that this presumes a binary divide between men and women, one that is challenged by poststructuralist gender theorises of male and female speaking subjects. Secondly, feminist thinkers such as Irigaray, Kristeva and Butler draw on male philosophers, carefully critiquing any further privileging of the male, so there is potential for influence to run in the opposite direction without damaging the political imperative of feminism. Thirdly, if feminism's power to 'liberate' women were generalised to oppressed identities more generally, then women of all races, classes, creeds, genders and religions would also benefit, as indeed would men.

Another issue is the need to address the call for more cross- and inter-disciplinary working that featured in both the founding and tenth anniversary editions of Organization. As well as feminism's influencing anti-performatve MOT, MOT's critical approach should contribute to feminist theory. There is some evidence that this is happening but in only a limited way, notably in the sociology of education. However, feminist theory is used across the arts, humanities and social sciences, so it provides a *lingua franca* whereby we can debate and discuss issues with literary theorists, artists, philosophers, historians, geographers, etc. In that way the strength of organization theory, in its provision of a rich and textured elaboration of how gendered assumptions operate within

institutions and the possibilities for change, can be percolated throughout the arts, humanities and social sciences.

But for feminist MOT to inform feminist theory and politics more generally requires, pragmatically, that feminist/gender journals are included in the lists of journals recognised by university business schools. Given the demands of Lyotardian performativity in business schools (we must now publish in top journals or perish) feminist MOT authors have little option than to ignore the possibilities of publishing in journals not included in that list. *Organization* offers such a space; we have outlined above some ways in which to take advantage of its generosity.

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