



Feminist Frontiers

NINTH EDITION

Verta Taylor | Nancy Whittier | Leila J. Rupp

F E M I N I S T F R O N T I E R S

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Nancy Whittier

Leila J. Rupp





FEMINIST FRONTIERS, NINTH EDITION

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About the artist: *Ginger Green*

I grew up in Indianapolis where I attended John Herron School of Art and Design. My family led me to the Florida Keys, where my style originated. I call it urban island folk with a Caribbean flair. It's characterized by its whimsical look and vibrant colors, inspired by the sun, sand, and surf of island living.

If you would like to contact me, e-mail me at: artbyginger@aol.com

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*In memory of our mothers,
who in different ways raised us all to be strong women*

*Alice Taylor Houston
(1926–2008)*

*Sally Anne Kennedy
(1933–2007)*

*Sidney Stanton Rupp
(1912–1995)*

ABOUT THE EDITORS

VERTA TAYLOR is Professor and Chair of the Department of Sociology and affiliated faculty member in Feminist Studies at the University of California, Santa Barbara. She teaches courses on gender and sexuality, feminism, and social movements and has won numerous teaching awards, including the Ohio State University Distinguished Teaching Award, a Multicultural Teaching Award, an Outstanding Faculty Award from the Office of Gay, Lesbian, and Bisexual Student Services, and a University Distinguished Diversity Enhancement Award.

Taylor is the coauthor, with Leila J. Rupp, of *Drag Queens at the 801 Cabaret*, which won the 2005 book award from the Sex and Gender Section of the American Sociological Association, author of *Rock-a-by Baby: Feminism, Self-Help, and Postpartum Depression*; and coauthor with Leila J. Rupp of *Survival in the Doldrums: The American Women's Rights Movement, 1945 to the 1960s*. In addition, she has published numerous articles in scholarly journals and edited volumes.

In recognition of her lifetime of scholarship on women, Professor Taylor was the 2011 Recipient of the American Sociological Association's Jessie Bernard Award, and she has been honored by Sociologists for Women in Society (SWS) with its Mentoring Award and Feminist Lecturership Award. In 2008, she also received the John D. McCarthy Lifetime Achievement Award for her scholarship on social movements, and, the Simon and Gagnon Award for her career of scholarship in sexualities.

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State, which received the 2010 Charles Tilly Award for Best Book Published in Collective Behavior and Social Movements from the American Sociological Association Section on Collective Behavior and Social Movements; *Feminist Generations: The Persistence of the Radical Women's Movement*; and co-editor of *Social Movements: Identity, Culture, and the State*. Her work on the women's movement, activism against child sexual abuse, social movement culture and collective identity and activist generations has appeared in numerous scholarly collections and journals.

LEILA J. RUPP is Professor of Feminist Studies and Associate Dean of Social Sciences at the University of California, Santa Barbara, where she holds affiliated appointments in the Departments of History and Sociology. A historian by training, she teaches introductory women's studies and courses on sexuality and women's movements. She received an Academic Senate Distinguished Teaching Award in 2008 and while teaching at Ohio State University won the Ohio State University Distinguished Teaching Award, a Multicultural Teaching Award, and an outstanding teaching award from the Ohio Academy of History. She also won awards at both Ohio State and the University of California for her contributions to gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, and queer students. She is the author of *Mobilizing Women for War: German and American Propaganda, 1939–1945*, *Worlds of Women: The Making of an International Women's Movement*, *A Desired Past: A Short History of Same-Sex Love in America*, *Sapphistries: A Global History of Love between Women*, and coauthor, with Verta Taylor, of *Survival in the Doldrums: The American Women's Rights Movement, 1945 to the 1960s* and *Drag Queens at the 801 Cabaret*, which won the 2005 book award from the Sex and Gender Section of the American Sociological Association. In addition, she has published numerous articles in journals and edited collections.

P R E F A C E

The first edition of *Feminist Frontiers* was conceived in the late 1970s at a time when many women inside and outside academia were beginning to recognize and challenge male domination. At the time of its publication, only a handful of books and anthologies written for classroom use presented a feminist perspective on women's lives.

The evolution of this book through nine editions reflects both the success of the women's movement and the incredible development of feminist scholarship over the past decades. Women's studies courses have blossomed and spread to campuses in even the most conservative regions of the country. Feminist scholars have, in the meantime, refined and enlarged our understanding of how gender inequality operates and how it intersects with other systems of domination based on race, ethnicity, class, sexuality, nationality, and ability. There is no doubt that the situation of women has changed since the publication of the first edition of *Feminist Frontiers*. Gender inequality has not, however, disappeared.

We write this preface to the ninth edition of *Feminist Frontiers* with pride and excitement. We are proud to be part of the continuing women's movement; and we are excited about the burgeoning knowledge about how gender is connected to class, race, ethnicity, sexuality, and other differences and how forces of globalization in the contemporary world shape the experiences of women. We feel fortunate to be writing, teaching, and learning at a time when feminist thought and research are flourishing and deepening, despite the challenges we face both nationally and globally. It is, simultaneously, a time to enjoy the bounty of feminist scholarship and to sow new feminist seeds.

In this edition of *Feminist Frontiers*, we highlight the impact of new technologies on women's lives and women's activism. The Internet is everywhere, shaping

the way we present ourselves, communicate with each other, learn about the world, meet people, locate resources, organize, work, and engage in activism. Recognizing the pervasiveness of these new ways of being in the world, this ninth edition offers ten selections that focus on or include an analysis of online interactions or that originally appeared on the Internet.

We developed *Feminist Frontiers* for use as the major—or supplementary—text in courses on women's studies, gender studies, or the sociology of women or gender. Because this book offers a general framework for analyzing women, society, and culture, it can also be used as a supplementary text in introductory sociology classes and in courses on social problems, comparative studies, and American studies.

Although we have retained some of the articles from previous editions of *Feminist Frontiers*—particularly writings that have become feminist classics—the book has been updated to include more recent scholarship. We have added nineteen new selections and one heavily revised article. For the first time, we have eliminated the boxed inserts, allowing more in-depth coverage of a range of topics. We have continued to select readings that emphasize the diversity of women's experiences and the intersections of gender with race, ethnicity, class, sexuality, nationality, and ability. As in previous editions, the introductions to each section contain focused summaries of the readings and their relationship to each other, as well as discussion questions for each reading.

ORGANIZATION

Feminist Frontiers is organized into four major parts, each introduced by a sociological and feminist analysis.

Part One: Introduction begins with a section representing the diversity of women's experiences

and gender systems. That is followed by a section titled “Theoretical Perspectives,” which presents social constructionist and intersectional theoretical approaches to gender. **Part Two: Gender, Culture, and Socialization** has two sections, “Representation, Language, and Culture” and “Socialization.” **Part Three: Social Organization of Gender** has five sections, providing readings on work and the economy, families, sexualities, bodies, and violence. **Part Four: Social Change** includes articles on global politics and the state and on social protest and feminist movements.

CRITERIA FOR SELECTION

As we set about selecting articles for this edition, we found an abundance of excellent pieces. We used the following criteria for choosing what to include:

- We wanted each selection to be engagingly written and accessible in style and language to readers from different disciplinary backgrounds.
- As a testament to the tremendous growth in the depth and complexity of feminist scholarship, we sought selections exploring a wide range of theoretical and substantive issues.
- We wanted this anthology to reflect a diversity of racial, ethnic, class, sexual, and cultural experiences.
- Given the increasingly powerful forces of globalization in our contemporary world, we looked for articles that attend to the processes of globalization.
- We sought to capture the cross-disciplinary nature of gender research. We looked for articles that explored the impact of new technologies on the lives of women (and men).

CHANGES IN THE NINTH EDITION

The ninth edition contains nineteen new articles and one selection that has been heavily revised., representing the most current scholarship and public debates and expanding our coverage of issues important to feminist scholarship. We have deleted dated pieces while retaining readings that are classic in the field.

Central topics that continue to receive coverage in this edition include social constructionist theories of

gender; feminist intersectionality theory; gendered and raced beauty standards; racialized gender socialization; gender, race, and ethnicity in the workplace; marriage and family issues; diverse sexualities; body issues; reproductive rights; violence against women; globalization; women and welfare; women’s movements; and queer politics.

Additions to the text focus on new technologies and their impact on women’s lives and experiences. These articles include **danah boyd** on “Sexing the Internet,” **Sophia DeMasi** on online dating, **France Winddance Twine** on the use of the Internet to find surrogate mothers, **N. Tatiana Masters** on men’s antirape Web sites, **Marisa D’Mello** on Indian women technology professionals, **Anita Harris** on young women’s use of the Internet and social networking sites, and **Moya Bailey** and **Alexis Pauline Gumbs** on young black women’s use of the internet. In addition, both **Jennifer Klein** and **Eileen Boris’s** article on home care and **Laurie Essig** and **Lyn Owens’s** on marriage originally appeared online. Other new additions include articles on such topics as disability oppression, gendered borderlands, gender on the Internet, heteronormativity in children’s films, gender in children’s clothing, racialized gender in the work of home care, the disadvantages of marriage, online dating, hooking up, girls kissing, transgender people at work and in intimate interactions, the politics of surrogate motherhood, girls’ violence, men’s online antirape activism, welfare mothers and constructions of motherhood, the gendering of information technology work in India, globalized militarization, young women’s use of online cultures, and young black feminists’ online activism.

NEW READINGS IN THE NINTH EDITION

Every section has been updated with new selections. Section 1 ends with an article by **Eli Clare** on his attempt to climb Mount Adams despite his cerebral palsy, an experience that leads to a consideration of disability oppression. This section also restores the full version of **Audre Lorde’s** classic piece “The Master’s Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master’s House.” Section 2 adds a piece by **Denise Segura** and **Patricia Zavella** on the gendered borderlands of spaces between and within the United States and Mexico.

Section 3, "Representation, Language, and Culture," adds **danah boyd's** reflections on the consequences of required identity markers on the Internet. Two added articles in Section 4, on socialization, provide new perspectives: **Karin Martin** and **Emily Kazyak** analyze the messages on romance and sexuality in films marketed to children, and **Catherine Newman** tells the story of her son who loves the color pink.

In Section 5, "Work," **Jennifer Klein** and **Eileen Boris** contribute an article about the work of home care and the efforts of poorly paid home care workers to organize to improve the conditions of their labor. Section 6, "Families," adds a consideration of the arguments against marriage.

Four new pieces appear in Section 7, "Sexualities." **Sophie DeMasi** looks at online dating, **Elizabeth Armstrong**, **Laura Hamilton**, and **Paula England** consider the advantages and disadvantages of hooking up and relationships for college women, **Leila Rupp** and **Verta Taylor** ask what is going on when young presumably straight women kiss and make out with other women, and **Kristin Schilt** and **Laurel Westbrook** compare the reactions of women and men to transgender people at work and in intimate relations. Section 8, "Bodies," offers **France Winddance Twine's** analysis of the race, class, and global dynamics of gestational surrogacy. Section 9, "Violence Against Women," adds **Laurie Schaffner's** article on girls' violence and **N. Tatiana Masters's** analysis of men's antirape activism and the construction of masculinity on antirape Web sites.

Section 10, "Global Politics and the State," includes new articles on poor women's resistance to the labeling of women on welfare as bad mothers (**Karen McCormack**), the impact of gender on Indian women working in information technology (**Marisa D'Mello**), and the consequences of and means of resisting globalized militarization (**Gwyn Kirk**).

Section 11 offers a revised and updated consideration of the history and continuity of the U.S. women's movement (**Alison Dahl Crossley**, **Verta Taylor**, **Nancy Whittier**, and **Cynthia Fabrizio Pelak**) and new articles by **Anita Harris** on the political possibilities of young women's engagement with online cultures and **Moya Bailey** and **Alexis Pauline Gumbs** on young black women's online research and activism.

CONNECTIONS AMONG SECTIONS

Many of the articles in *Feminist Frontiers* make connections to topics covered in different sections, a sign of the multiple intersections of women's studies. For example, the concept of intersectionality, illustrated in the diverse and complex experiences covered in Section 1 and outlined in the theoretical articles in Section 2, can be traced through **Kimberlé Crenshaw's** classic article on violence against women of color in Section 9 and **Andrea Smith's** consideration of reproductive politics in the context of race, class, and ability. That we cannot talk about gender without acknowledging the ways that it is raced and classed is central to **Pierrette Hondagneu-Sotelo's** article on Latina domestics, **Jennifer Klein** and **Eileen Boris's** on home care workers, **Hung Cam Thai's** on Vietnamese marriages, **Becky Wanggaard Thompson's** on eating disorders, **France Winddance Twine's** on surrogacy, **Karen McCormack's** on women on welfare, **Marisa D'Mello's** on Indian women technology professionals, and **Lila Abu-Lughod's** on Muslim women.

Likewise, global forces appear throughout the volume, not just in the section on global politics: in **Denise Segura** and **Patricia Zavella's** and **R.W. Connell's** theoretical articles in Section 2, **Yen Le Espiritu's** analysis of cross-national socialization practices in Section 4, the pieces on Korean manicurists and Latina domestics in Section 5, the article on Vietnamese marriages in Section 6, the consideration of African genital cutting in light of cosmetic labial surgery in the United States and global gestational surrogacy in Section 8, **Grace Chang's** article on Asian women workers fighting globalization, the piece on Indian women in the global software economy, **Gwyn Kirk** on globalized militarization, and reflections on Muslim women in light of the "war on terror" in Section 10, and the overview of women's movements in Section 11.

Other issues, too, cross sections. Transsexuality, transgenderism, and intersexuality appear in **Paula Gunn Allen's** reflections on being Native American, **Suzanne Kessler's** consideration of surgery on intersexed infants, **Susan Stryker's** article, **Kristin Schilt's** and **Laurel Westbrook's** article on transgender people, and **Cathy Cohen's** article on queer politics. Other connections across sections focus on work, bodies, disability, beauty, youth, motherhood, and migration.

SUPPLEMENTS

Companion Web site

The *Feminist Frontiers* Web site proves general information about the book and offers separate areas for students and instructors.

For the Student

The “Student side” of the site is organized to correspond to the eleven sections of the text. There are practice test questions, an annotated list of Web links, and a link to Census 2000 updates.

For the Instructor

Instructor’s Manual: The Instructor’s Manual is organized to correspond to each section of the text. It offers learning objectives, discussion questions, summaries of the key points of the section introductions and readings, suggestions for assignments and exercises, and an annotated list of Web links.

Test Bank: The Test Bank offers multiple-choice, short answer, and essay questions on the section introductions and individual readings.

Visit the companion Web site at:
www.mhhe.com/taylor9e

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excellent work on the Instructor’s Manual and other supplements for this edition. Nicole Raeburn provided research assistance and revisions of the Test Bank for earlier editions of the book, and Lisa Leitz put her charisma as a teacher to use in developing a previous version of the Web site. We continue to benefit from the work of Kegan Allee on an earlier edition. In addition, we are grateful to Eileen Boris and Laury Oaks for sharing with us their experiences teaching the previous edition and suggesting potential articles. Finally, we express our appreciation to students in our classes on the sociology of women, sex and gender, queer studies, and women’s studies at Smith College and the University of California, Santa Barbara. They have contributed to the development of this anthology by their thoughtful responses to potential articles.

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Verta Taylor
Nancy Whittier
Leila J. Rupp

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PART ONE

INTRODUCTION

What is gender? Our gender affects how we think about ourselves, the ways we interact with each other, the kinds of relationships we form, and our positions in our communities. As an element of social relationships, gender operates at multiple levels to categorize and distinguish people. But gender is also about social institutions that distribute power, resources, and status among various groups of women and men. Gender also interacts with race, class, ethnicity, and sexuality. In other words, gender means different things, and has different consequences for status and power, depending on race, class, ethnicity, and sexuality.

What does it mean to be a woman? Thinking about women's experiences is a complicated task because women have as many differences from each other as commonalities. On the one hand, women everywhere suffer from restrictions, oppression, and discrimination because they are living in patriarchal societies. Yet gender is not the sole influence on any woman's life. Race, ethnicity, class, sexuality, age, nation, region, and religion shape women's experiences. Moreover, these differences intersect with each other. For example, Asian-American women of various ages, sexual orientations, classes, and ethnic and national origins have different experiences.

The experience of being a woman is quite different for distinct groups of women. For a white, upper-class, heterosexual, American woman, for example, femininity might entail being economically dependent on her husband, maintaining a delicate and refined physical appearance, and achieving social influence through child-raising and volunteer work. Womanhood for a middle-class African-American woman might mean providing financial support for her children, holding influential and respected positions within her church and community, yet being stereotyped by the dominant white culture as sexually promiscuous or unintelligent. For a Mexican immigrant to the United

States, femininity might mean being a good mother—which, as Denise Segura and Patricia Zavella suggest in Section 2, may mean working long hours at low pay in order to support her children.

The experiences of men are similarly varied. Although men benefit from power and privilege over women, some groups of men also exercise power over other men, while other groups of men are excluded from economic or political influence due to their race, class, nationality, or sexual identity. To understand the position of a particular man, in other words, we must consider his gender, race, class, sexuality, age, and so forth, in order to understand the particular advantages and disadvantages he faces.

In short, gender is defined in various ways for different groups. Gender definitions bring with them a distinct set of restrictions and disadvantages for members in each group, as well as privileges and sources of power or resistance. The task for you as students, and for scholars of gender, is to recognize patterns of male dominance while simultaneously recognizing variations.

As if matters were not complex enough, individuals also have unique constellations of experiences. Each of us has our own story to tell. Each of us has multiple alliances and identifications with groups that shift through time and social context. The religious identity of childhood may be shunted aside during young adulthood, for example, only to be reclaimed in later years. Self-definitions as heterosexual may give way later in life to new identities as lesbian or bisexual. As biracial or bicultural or mixed-religion daughters, we might identify with the heritage of either parent or both. In addition, we have different degrees of allegiance to the gender standards of our particular groups. Some of us adopt prescriptions about masculinity or femininity wholeheartedly, others reject those prescriptions, and still others adopt some aspects of socially approved gender standards

and reject others. Some of us identify strongly with the category—woman or man—to which we are assigned, while others identify as transgendered and seek either to identify with the other gender category or to construct an alternate gender identity. Although social forces such as sexism, racism, heterosexism, and class inequality shape our biographies, it is as individuals that we experience and make sense of our lives.

The task of feminist scholarship, and of this volume, is to illuminate the social and structural roots of our gendered experiences while simultaneously recognizing the complicated and unique factors that shape our lives. Feminist research builds upon and links two levels of analysis: structure and biography. The structural level looks at social institutions and cultural practices that create and sustain gender inequalities, and it links those inequalities to other systems of oppression, such as racism, ageism, and homophobia. The biographical level honors each individual's expression of her own experience. It pays attention to how individuals represent themselves and recognizes personal voice. As a result, we can learn how difference and commonality are structurally rooted and personally experienced. We can see how larger social forces affect our own and others' lives.

Feminist research is not just about analyzing the ways that social structures shape and restrict the lives of women. Of course, it is important to document the inequalities faced by various groups of women and to examine the ways that women have been oppressed and victimized based on gender. Experiences such as discrimination in hiring and pay, sexual violence, and legal subordination, for example, are undeniably central to gender. Yet feminist scholarship also emphasizes the sources of power that women find: how they define themselves, influence their social contexts, and resist the restrictions that they face. The articles in this volume view women not as passive victims of patriarchal social structures, but as actors who exercise control over their own lives, find pleasure and fulfillment, and resist social constraints.

Further, feminist research is not just about documenting women's experiences. It is about recognizing the ways that gender shapes the lives of both women and men and analyzing a broad system of gender. The gender system affects not only the lives of individuals but the organization of other institutions in the larger society. By documenting

the influence of social structures on gender and highlighting individuals' complex mixture of domination, resistance, and complicity, feminist scholarship leads us to rethink the structural changes necessary to meet the needs of actual women and men.

Feminist theory and scholarship on gender, then, face a broad set of questions. Approaches to answering these questions vary enormously; we hope that you will recognize disagreement and debate, as well as cooperation, in the readings that follow. There are, however, some shared assumptions that run through the selections in this book.

First, feminist scholars view gender as pervasive, as part of every feature of social life and individual identity. It is impossible, therefore, to analyze any part of social life as if it were gender neutral. As a result, feminist scholars challenge the male bias hidden under claims of scientific objectivity in academic research. As you read these essays and those in other classes, ask yourself how the social conditions and practices of doing research reinforce or challenge gender inequities.

Second, feminist researchers understand systems of oppression as interlocking. Race, class, ethnicity, sexuality, and other systems of domination affect how one experiences gender. Therefore, although gender is a basic fact of social life, women and men in different positions in society experience their gender and the power or oppression that results from it differently. Just as feminist researchers challenge knowledge claims about "people" based on research on men, they question knowledge about "women" based on research on white, middle-class women.

Third, feminist scholars experiment with new ways of doing research, rethinking the relationship between the researcher and the researched. The scientific method of research assumes that there is a separation between the scholar and the subjects of research and that this separation is necessary to produce "objective" and "valid" research. Feminist researchers challenge this tenet. Treating women as "objects" of research contravenes feminist goals of equality by elevating the researcher's agenda and perspective above those of the researched. One of the major questions of feminist thought is how to do research that empowers both the researcher and the researched. How do we create social research practices in which researcher and researched collaborate in the process of interpreting the world? For some, the solution has been to

write about their own lives; some acknowledge directly how their own biases affect their work; others study groups of which they are a part; still others do “participatory” or “action” research in which the researcher and the researched determine together the topics, methods, goals, and political action to follow from the project, so that the scholar is a participant in the project, but not its leader.

These are not only theoretical concerns; they are important ethical questions. What right does a scholar have to write about another person’s life? How should we write about the lives of those who are different from ourselves? How can we use the skills and privileges of academic practice to diminish social inequality?

We invite you to engage in reading, thinking about, and doing feminist research. We hope that you will consider some of the central questions that run through this book. What are the commonalities and differences among

women or among men? What, if anything, do women or men of different classes, races, or sexualities share in common? We hope that you will reflect on the complicated balance between oppression and resistance, between the pervasive influence of society and the ways that individuals and groups define themselves and carve out meaningful lives. We encourage you to discuss your ideas, to debate the issues this volume raises with your friends and classmates, to agree or disagree with the authors here, and to come to your own conclusions. We hope, too, that through this engagement you will consider how gender has shaped your life and how gender intersects with the other systems of inequality that affect you. We hope as well that you will share your understandings with others, becoming a researcher yourself and a theorist of your own and others’ lives so that you might help empower us all and transform society.

SECTION 1

Diversity and Difference

Gender shapes women's and men's lives in complex ways, and scholars are interested in understanding these experiences in ways that can contribute to positive social change. Women everywhere face male dominance in various manifestations. Yet differences among women arise from factors such as race, ethnicity, class, sexual orientation, age, geographic region, and religion. Further, not all men possess the same advantages or social power. Men of subordinate racial or ethnic groups, social classes, or sexual orientations may have power relative to women in their own group but be subordinate in some ways to other men and to women in more powerful groups.

The readings in this section discuss points of similarity and difference among women and among men. Although these readings give only a sampling of the varied and rich experiences of women and men, they begin to illustrate the vast range of meanings that gender has for women and men in different groups. These readings also provide some key analytical frameworks and concepts for understanding the tension between the significance of gender as a category by which people are grouped and the ways that gender is shaped by other forms of inequality and social distinctions.

The readings in this section examine the distinctions among women's experiences by showing how race, ethnicity, and age shape the lives of specific groups of women. The first reading in this section, Kimberly Springer's "Being the Bridge: A Solitary Black Woman's Position in the Women's Studies Classroom," tackles the similarities and differences among women directly. Recounting her experiences as a

women's studies student and campus activist, Springer shows how being a black woman in a predominantly white feminist context pushed her to serve as a "bridge between cultures, races, and theories." For Springer, activism includes teaching and writing about black feminism and working to bring black feminists together outside of academia as well. What does Springer's experience suggest about how connections and coalitions among different groups of women might occur? Why are these connections important, and how are they limited? For Springer, activism and academic work are inextricably linked. Do you agree with her that scholarly study of gender must be linked to activism for social change? Why or why not?

Peggy McIntosh adds to Springer's analysis by focusing on the often-unrecognized ways that white women benefit from their racial category. In a classic piece, "White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack," McIntosh discusses the taken-for-granted systems and practices that privilege white women over women of color. She argues that much of what white women take for granted in daily life is in fact a result of their dominant social status. Documenting her own white privilege helps her understand how she benefits from this system and shows that racism cannot change through individual attitudes alone, but requires change in social institutions. How does her list of benefits from white privilege change your understanding of racism? How does it change your understanding of gender inequality, or of the degree to which women of different races share oppression in common? Can you think of other advantages to add to her list? If you are a member of

another privileged group, can you construct a list of the benefits you receive by virtue of your gender, class, sexual orientation, religion, or nationality? If you are a member of a subordinated group, can you list some of the ways you are disadvantaged? Most readers will have some statuses that grant them privilege (such as white skin, male gender, heterosexuality, U.S. nationality, youth, or Christian religion) and some statuses that disadvantage them (such as nonwhite skin, female gender, lesbian or gay or bisexual sexual orientation, non-U.S. nationality, age, or non-Christian religion). In what ways do the forms of privilege and disadvantage that you possess interact?

Paula Gunn Allen suggests that assumptions about what it means to be a woman in Anglo-European culture do not hold in American Indian cultures. In "Where I Come from Is Like This," she draws on her bicultural experiences to explore the contradictions between the images of women embedded in Anglo and American Indian culture. The images of American Indian women she grew up with are ones of "practicality, strength, reasonableness, intelligence, wit, and competence," in contrast to Anglo-American ideas about women as "passive and weak." Again, we see the difficulty of generalizing about women's experiences. What are the assumptions about women that are part of your own culture?

Audre Lorde, in "The Master's Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master's House," also emphasizes the difficulties of accurately analyzing how systems of oppression affect people's lives. Lorde argues in this classic piece, excerpted here, that feminists must critically examine their own use of dominant concepts. She suggests that academic knowledge is based in an institution that historically has excluded women and people of color, and she asks whether academic knowledge can undermine the inequalities on which it is based. Do you think that the "regular" methods of scholarship and science are adequate to the task of understanding the diversity among women and the

complexity of the gender system? Are the "master's tools" able to challenge social inequality? Will new tools be necessary? What might they be? Lorde argues that encouraging women to talk to each other at the points of their differences promotes growth, creativity, and social change. Do these conversations across differences happen on your campus?

In the final selection in this section, "The Mountain," Eli Clare writes about how disability and societal attitudes about it affect his experience of his own body. The metaphor of the mountain serves as a way to look at how the American emphasis on individual struggle and triumph is magnified when it's applied to disabled people, who are celebrated for "overcoming disability," what Clare calls being a "supercrip." When disabled people are caught between the model of the supercrip, social and physical barriers, and the danger of others' pity or institutionalization, Clare shows, the emotional consequences are intense. Ultimately, he seeks to understand her own body as "home," with his unique experiences of bodily ability and impairment as well as childhood abuse and rural white working-class culture.

Why do you think Clare uses socially stigmatized words like "gimp" and "crip"? What does he mean by the "lure of overcoming"? Can you think of other examples in which people want to overcome their social or bodily categories? For Clare, being queer, a tomboy as a child and genderqueer as an adult, shapes his experience of his body and how others respond to her. Think about cultural images of disabled people. How does gender affect these depictions? How do these depictions reflect the idealization of the "supercrip"? Think about your own experiences of your body—your abilities and impairments, your physical experiences, and how others respond to your body. How are these experiences similar to and different from Clare's? How do "place and community and culture" affect your own sense of yourself, your body, and what Clare calls "home"?