Rethinking Women’s and Gender Studies

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What if students claim to have been transformed (or "personally empowered as women") by a Women's and Gender Studies class that was neither about empowerment nor women?

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This ill-defined, endlessly-elastic term is used in punitive ways to chastise the Women's and Gender Studies practitioners whose scholarly projects or theoretical orientations stray too far from the practical—and thereby political—applications that activism is said to represent.

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Within a besiegement mentality, an insistence on ideological purity makes sense: every compromise seems a concession, one step closer to letting the walls crumble and the enemy in.

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Neither a Women's and Gender Studies community nor a community of women who is presumably freed by Women's and Gender Studies work can be sustained, politically or intellectually, when in our field we have so successfully dispelled the notion of a common history.

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CHAPTER 10  IDENTITY (POLITICS)
SCOTT LAURIA MORGENSEN

Interventions by critical race, Indigenous, and transnational feminisms locate Women's and Gender Studies as a potentially crucial site for theorizing identities and politics within the power relations of a colonial and globalized world.

CHAPTER 11  QUEER
JENNIFER PURVIS

Women's and Gender Studies is always already queer.

PART 4  SILENCES AND DISAVOWALS

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ANN BRAITHWAITE

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CHAPTER 13  HISTORY
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