

Navigating Between Globalizing and Deconstructing the Feminist: What Route for Gender and Development?

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Resumo

Esta comunicação questiona o papel e a legitimidade da abordagem “género e desenvolvimento” (GAD) à luz das críticas pós-modernas das categorias universais. Começa por analisar os progressos alcançados e as dificuldades encontradas na transição de estratégias denominadas como “mulheres no desenvolvimento” (WID) para estratégias denominadas como “género e desenvolvimento” (GAD). A seguir, examina as implicações das críticas pós-coloniais, que abordam as questões políticas de representação, para a aplicação do projecto feminista às iniciativas de desenvolvimento, através de uma discussão dos conceitos de “orientalismo” e de “discursos de desenvolvimento”, dando também voz às feministas do Sul.

Palavras Chave

Feminismo, Postmodernismo, Desenvolvimento

Abstract

This paper questions the role and legitimacy of “gender and development” (GAD) approaches in the light of postmodernist critiques of universal categories. It begins by addressing the progress made and the difficulties encountered in the transition from “women in development” (WID) strategies to “gender and development” (GAD) strategies. The paper then goes on to assess the implications of post-colonial critiques of the politics of representation for the application of the feminist project to development interventions, through a discussion of the concepts of “orientalism” and “development discourse” as well as by giving voice to non-Western feminists.

Key Words

Feminism, Postmodernism, Development

Introduction

This paper attempts to explore the implications of "postmodernist" critiques of Western feminism for theories of gender and development (GAD). "Development" has already been deconstructed by authors such as Ferguson (1990) and Escobar (1995) and GAD is beginning to succumb to a similar process as it faces the agonising questions posed to Western feminism by the postmodernist deconstruction of universal categories. GAD can consequently be attacked on two interrelated fronts: firstly as part of the Western hegemonic discourse of development and secondly as part of an equally hegemonic Western discourse of feminism. Are we to conclude that there is no role left either for the feminist movement or for GAD? This paper challenges such an assumption by searching for alternative routes that lead away from the disempowering position of the "postmodernist corner".

The term "postmodernism" means different things to different people, and I would agree with Featherstone that it is "irritatingly elusive to define" (1991:1). It is an umbrella concept that has been applied in a range of fields within the arts and social sciences. From a historical perspective it could be described as a break from modernity, from all of the grand theories that characterized the Enlightenment (Featherstone, 1991:3). For the purposes of this paper I shall use the term to refer to a particular strand of postmodernist thought which is concerned with analysing the relationship between knowledge and power through the practice of discourse analysis (Foucault, 1980). I shall discuss the ideas of two authors both of which deconstruct Western dominant discourses in order to demonstrate how they exercise power over a socially constructed non-Western "Other". Firstly, Said's ideas on "Orientalism" (1978) and secondly Escobar's critique of the "Development Encounter" (1991, 1995). The consequences of "postmodernism" for Western feminism will be explored, with a view to analysing the strengths and weaknesses of such an approach, both on its own terms and in terms of its application to the feminist movement and to GAD. Firstly, however, I shall give a historical outline of why GAD was put onto the agenda of development.

From women in development (wid) to gender and development (gad)

Ester Boserup's "Women's Role in Economic Development" (1970) marked a watershed for development thinking and practice in relation to the role played by women in the Third World. She claimed that women were made invisible in the development process by androcentric planners who focused exclusively on women's reproductive role and ignored the fact that they were also farmers and that they consequently played an important role in production (1970:54-60). Boserup argued in favour

of integrating women into mainstream development and in 1975 the UN Decade for Women was launched in Mexico. The term "Women in Development" (WID) was coined and WID Ministries and agencies were set up, however, their results proved to be disappointing. Himmelstrand claims that the agencies were given low status and meagre resources in terms of money and personnel. They also lacked sufficient authority to be able to formulate policies and to function as pressure groups within government structures (1990:103). By the end of the Decade for Women it had become apparent that isolating women as "the problem" only served to marginalize them even further. Addressing the subordination of women required contextualising the unequal relations between women and men at a political, social and economic level. Popular beliefs with regard to the biological determinants of gender differences needed to be challenged with evidence of the social construction of gender. The WID perspective consequently lost favour and the concept of "Gender and Development" (GAD) emerged in development thinking. However it is much harder to incorporate into policy and so many development agencies still isolate women as specific "targets" in their projects and programmes. Nevertheless, training is an area in which the potentials of a GAD perspective have been explored (Kabeer, 1994:264-305).

The development from a WID to a GAD perspective is related to the Western feminist project of combating the unequal power relations between women and men. However, post-colonial critiques have also emerged to focus on the unequal power relations between the North and the South. Supposedly "objective" Western knowledge is deconstructed revealing its political nature and what passed as "truth" is shown to be only discourse and representation (Hobart, 1993, Escobar, 1991, 1995). Accordingly feminism can also be deconstructed as a dominant discourse from the West and it is for this reason that feminists cannot afford to ignore post-colonial critiques of the politics of representation.

Post-Colonial critiques, orientalism and the development encounter

Said addresses the issue of representation by uncovering the political nature of supposedly 'pure' knowledge in his analysis of Western discourses of the Orient, for which he coined the term 'Orientalism': "a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient" (1978:3-9). He analyses Orientalist texts as evidence that they are only representations and not "'natural' depictions of the Orient" (21).

Although Said makes no direct references to Western feminism the implications of his critique are very clear: the notion of an international sisterhood based on a shared experience of women's subordination is not a "'natural' depiction" of women's position world-wide, but simply a

representation: a totalizing discourse from the West. Although this argument undermines the feminist movement - which draws on women's shared experiences of male oppression - feminists cannot afford to ignore it because it has been voiced by women from the Third World. In relation to the widespread practice of purdah, for example, Mohanty claims that Western feminists wrongly assume that it is an indication of the universal oppression of women through sexual segregation. She explains that the meaning attached to the practice varies according to the cultural, ideological and historical context and takes issue with the "analytical leap" made by Western feminists from describing the widespread practice of wearing a veil to asserting that its general significance is male dominance. Such an approach overlooks the potentially subversive aspects of the practice of purdah (1988:75). "A Statement on Genital Mutilation" by African women is another example which warns Western feminists that "they must avoid ill-timed interference, maternalism, ethnocentrism and misuse of power. These are attitudes which can only widen the gap between the Western feminist movement and that of the Third World" (AAWORD, 1983:219).

Escobar addresses the politics of representation through an analysis of Western discourses of development. His critique of "development" is related to Asad's analysis of anthropology's relation to colonialism in "Anthropology and the Colonial Encounter" (1973):

"Does not development today, as colonialism did in a former epoch, make possible 'the kind of human intimacy on which anthropological fieldwork is based, but ensure(s) that intimacy should be one-sided and provisional' (17), even if the contemporary subjects move and talk back? In addition, if during the colonial period 'the general drift of anthropological understanding did not constitute a basic challenge to the unequal world represented by the colonial system' (18), is this not the case with the development system? In sum, can we not speak with equal pertinence of 'anthropology and the development encounter'?" (1995:14-15).

Just as colonialism was portrayed by the Western powers to be part of the natural order of things, Escobar argues that a similar process has occurred with development. Development agencies have contributed towards the naturalization of the development discourse, by identifying local people as "problems" and setting themselves up as legitimate solutions. Labels such as 'small farmers' and 'illiterate peasants' have been used to socially construct their clients who are then reduced to traits and turned into 'cases' in need of professional treatment. The wider political context is consequently defused since relations of unequal power masquerade as natural, evolutionary and rational processes (1991:661-667).

Escobar argues in favour of suspending the naturalness of development discourse (1991:675) and comments directly upon the relations between Western feminists and Third World women:

"The study of gender as difference (Trinh 1989) has to be told from a non-ethnocentric feminist perspective. The difficulties are clear enough, for this entails developing languages through which women's oppression can be made visible cross-culturally without reinforcing - actually disallowing - the thought that women have to be developed and traditions revamped along Western lines" (1995:189).

Both Said and Escobar emphasize the need to find new forms of representation that are not implicated in imperialistic power structures, (although neither of them offer any viable solutions, a point which I shall return to later). How has the feminist movement responded to these challenges? Are Western feminists doomed to reproducing oppressive power relations through what could be coined the "Feminist Encounter"?

"Cultural Feminism" and the "universal" woman

All feminists would agree that challenging dominant discourses in order to allow marginal voices to be heard is a worthy project. After all, the feminist movement itself is an "outsider" discourse, born out of the experience of marginality (Bordo, 1990:141). The implications of the post-modernist and post-colonial critiques described above have consequently been taken on board by feminists. One response that has been designated as "Cultural feminism" has been to attempt to distribute power equally in respect to theorizing among all groups of women, by arguing that all cultural expressions of the identity of women are equally relevant, so that there is no philosophical means by which one may be chosen over another in terms of justice or politics (Persram, 1994:284-5). Another response which goes beyond affirming the incommensurability of different women is to deconstruct the actual category of "woman". This entails recognising that women's apparent shared gender identity is fragmented by such a multitude of other identities including; class, ethnicity, nationality, religion, age and sexual orientation that the category of "women" ceases to have any analytical value.

The problem with both of these approaches is that in the attempt to avoid generating oppressive discourses of the "Other", Western feminists talk themselves into a "postmodernist corner". The egalitarian approach leaves the feminist project caught in a politically conservative and ineffective relativism (Persram, 1994:284-5). If hierarchies cease to exist because everything is relative then nobody has the authority to take decisions which renders the practice of policy making impossible. This has disempowering consequences for GAD because as Kabeer argues to "accept a plurality of views that are essentially incommensurable. denies the possibility of a theoretically informed practice" (1994:82). The deconstruction of the universal category of "woman" also undermines any basis for solidarity in the feminist movement and is essentially nihilistic.

There is clearly no easy answer to the question of how to "avoid the traps of essentialism, universalism, relativism and nihilism" (Persram, 1994:288). It is a problem that is being tackled not only by feminism but also by anthropology, other social sciences and literary criticism (Clifford and Marcus 1986, Said 1978). However, many feminists have pointed out that these mainstream postmodernist critiques are gender blind - indeed this is one of their major criticisms of Foucault's work (Ramazanoglu, 1993). Feminist claims against postmodernism have consequently argued that it is too soon for women to subject their alternative Enlightenment to scrutiny (Nicholson, ed., 1990).

What choices are feminists left with? Can they afford to take heed of postmodernist critiques when the consequences are so dire? Should they simply ignore them as indeed most of the GAD literature appears to have done? (It is probably more legitimate to reverse this statement and argue that postmodernist critiques are directed towards an elite audience and consequently ignore and exclude others). Or is there a third option? Fortunately, many feminists who have taken on board "postmodernism" have not swollen it hook, line and sinker. Before going on to analyse their arguments, I shall consider some of the problems of postmodernism by taking a more critical approach towards the critiques of Escobar and Said.

Postmodernism: a counterhegemonic discourse?

Although Said and Escobar emphasize the need to find new forms of representation that do not reproduce repressive power relations neither of them offers any solutions, as Said himself confesses:

"Perhaps the most important task of all would be to undertake studies in contemporary alternatives to Orientalism, to ask how one can study other cultures and peoples from a libertarian, or a non repressive and non manipulative, perspective. But then one would have to rethink the whole complex problem of knowledge and power. These are all tasks left embarrassingly incomplete in this study" (1978:24).

Neither has Said managed to study Western discourses "from a libertarian, non repressive and non manipulative perspective" because he homogenizes the West by producing his own counter hegemonic discourse of "Occidentalism", denying the possibility of alternative Western discourses. A similar criticism can be levelled at Escobar's critique which homogenises development by failing to distinguish between the development initiatives of large, centralized bureaucratic agencies and the initiatives of smaller, decentralized ones that work much closer to the "grassroots". In the parallels that Escobar draws with Asad's analysis of the unequal power relations between colonial anthropologists and local people he seems to have overlooked Asad's conclusion:

"It is a mistake to view social anthropology in the colonial era primarily as an aid to colonial administration because bourgeois consciousness of which social anthropology is only a part, has always contained profound contradictions and ambiguities and therefore the potential for transcending itself" (my italics 1973:18).

Could not a similar parallel be drawn with social anthropologists working in development today? Is Escobar not guilty of creating essentialized positions? In the same vein feminists could argue that Western feminism has been homogenised by postmodernist critiques which create essentialized and deterministic positions:

"In the context of our specific history I believe that feminism stands less in danger of the 'totalizing' tendencies of feminists than of an increasingly paralyzing anxiety over falling (from grace?) into ethnocentrism or "essentialism" (Bordo, 1990:142).

A final problem with the critiques of Said and Escobar is that they are based on the analysis of texts outside of their social contexts, so that they disregard the network of formal and informal contacts through which discourses of the Orient and of development are generated. This raises the question of how relevant or influential the texts actually are in everyday practice and to what extent discourse analysis is of use for the feminist project. Feminists have already indicated the limitations of discourse analysis for understanding the nature of female subordination, by pointing to two aspects of women's experiences of male dominance which conflict with Foucault's concept of power:

"First, women's experiences suggest that men can have power and their power is in some sense a form of domination, backed by force. Secondly, this domination cannot be seen simply as a product of discourse, because it must also be understood as 'extra-discursive' or relating to wider realities than those of discourse" (Ramazanoglu, 1993:22).

Given the limitations of postmodernist "theories" to what extent does the feminist project need to accommodate them?

The search for adequate theory: at what price?

Bordo's analysis of post-modernist and post-colonial critiques makes an important distinction between questions of theory and of political practice. She argues that in their attempt to address gender as difference feminists unwittingly excluded women of colour, lesbians and other women whose history or culture they failed to take into account. However, the challenges of these marginalised voices (such as that of the "Statement on Genital Mutilation" by African women referred to above), arise "out of concrete experiences of exclusion (which) were neither grounded in a conception of adequate 'theory' nor did they demand a theoretical response". Postmodernism, on the other hand, "shifts the focus of crucial feminist concerns about the representation of cultural diversity from practical contexts to questions of adequate theory". The result is that attention is diverted away from the mechanisms

through which women's subordination operate towards introverted deliberations by feminists in search of 'politically correct' representations. The feminist movement is silenced and disempowered (1990, p138).

Is the search for adequate theory worth paying the price of political inaction? Many feminists think not, however, they need not dismiss the theoretical dilemmas of postmodernism on practical grounds alone because if postmodernist thought is taken to its logical conclusions it "deconstructs" itself.

One of the major theoretical challenges posed to feminists by postmodernist thought is that of how to theorize the split or multiple "subject" of feminism (Butler and Scott, ed., 1992, pxiv). The "universal" category of "woman" is fragmented by categories of race, ethnicity, class, religion and so forth. Black feminists, for example, claim to have difficulty in separating the issues of race and class from that of gender, issues which cuts across the "universal" binary categories of "women" and "men". (Combahee River Collective, 1992,p135). However, it is important to realize that the argument can be turned on its head: the categories of race, ethnicity, class and religion are also fragmented by the issue of gender. Why should feminists agonize over the fragmentation of the category of "woman" when the other categories that cut across it are equally fragmented by the issue of gender and by each other? The fact that people "occupy" a range of different categories that cut across each other makes each category equally valid or invalid.

If feminists must disregard the category of "woman" due to its limitations then it follows that all other categories should be disregarded too. Analyses of the categories of ethnicity and nationality for example, which are powerful collective identities, have been deconstructed until there is virtually nothing left (Barth, 1969, Gellner, 1983). Such an insight, however, has not erased these categories from the minds of millions of people. Could the same not be true for the categories of "woman" or "gender"? As Di Stefano argues: "in our haste to deconstruct gender as a harmful illusion we may fail to grasp (its) tenacious rootedness in an objective world created overtime and deeply resistant to change" (1990, p77). This is not to deny the importance of analysing the social construction of categories nor is it to advocate essentialized fixed positions. Haraway points out that there is "no way to 'be' simultaneously in all or wholly in any of the...positions structured by gender, race, nation and class" (quoted in Persram, 1994, p291).

According to Persram the significance of this - which she identifies as a kind of "historiographic practice" - lies in its "concern with universality or globality not *over* difference and heterogeneity, but *through* it" (ibid.). There is no need to search for a complete and total position because no single discourse is legitimate enough to speak for the whole of reality. As Bordo puts it: "all ideas (no matter

how 'liberatory' in some contexts) are condemned to be haunted by a voice from the margins awakening us to what has been excluded" (1990, p138).

Does this mean that feminists can only speak for themselves? Spivak advocates a historical critique of one's position as a way of breaking through the notion of essentialized categories . Her response to "I am only a bourgeois white male, I can't speak" is:

"Why not develop a certain degree of rage against history that has written such an abject script for you that you are silenced. Then you begin to investigate what it is that silences you rather than take this very deterministic position - since my skin colour is this, since my sex is this, I cannot speak" (1990, p62-3).

To recognise the limitations of a theory or category does not necessarily imply denying it any political or strategic use. As Butler and Scott argue the category of "women" still has its uses as long as feminism presupposes that it "designates an undesignatable field of differences, one that cannot be totalized or summarized by a descriptive identity category" (1992, p15).

Persram argues that universal categories need not be rejected but must be contextualized:

"It is not enough to simply state the *existence* of universal, gendered oppression; feminists must be willing to investigate the *ways* a universal might operate, thereby rendering greater legitimacy to the category as a universal. In this kind of conceptualization the related problems of universalism and relativism are confronted, and, to a large extent, overcome" (1994 p300).

Having recognised the limitations of postmodernist "theories" for feminism Bordo concludes that postmodernist thought is better understood as a tool for analysis than as a theoretical framework for wholesale adoption (1990:136). It is important not to brush aside the insights that feminism has gained from postmodernist critiques. Deconstruction need not be a nihilistic practice and can be a useful tool for understanding the ways in which categories have been socially constructed. It can facilitate the acquisition of a critical distance on gender which is central to the feminist project. As Kabeer argues, the subordination of women is often concealed because it is 'naturalized' and so women experience it as an inevitable part of their lives (1994:253). For the rest of this paper I shall discuss different approaches towards incorporating the feminist project into development.

Development as a contested concept

The different ways of approaching the issue of gender in development practice depend upon the different meanings policymakers attribute to the concept of development. Despite the limitations of his critique of Western development discourses discussed above, Escobar's work is important because it draws attention to the ways in which the meaning of development is contested between different groups. He indicates the need to investigate indigenous discourses of development and the question

of resistance (1995:215-217). Boserup's appeal for the integration of women into development (1970), for example, has been criticised by Mohanty for reducing the concept of development to economic progress (1988:61-88). However, as Escobar himself has recognised, the processes through which "globalisation" may have shaped development discourses make it difficult to refer to clear cut, fixed binary oppositions between Northern and Southern discourses of development:

"The fact that women in many parts of the Third World want modernization has to be taken seriously, yet the meaning of this modernization must not be taken for granted. Often it means something quite different from what it means in the West and has been constructed and deconstructed as part of the development encounter" (1995, p189).

Kabeer describes development planning as "a process of struggle over concepts, meanings, priorities and practices which themselves arise out of competing world-views about the final goals of development" (1994 p289). The degree to which policymakers are prepared to deal with the issue of gender relations depends on what they consider those goals of development to be.

From the technical to the political

The goals of development in Boserup's critique were fundamentally economic, drawn from the principles of modernization theory which perceived development to be:

"an evolutionary, unilinear process of change which took societies from their pre-modern status through a series of stages towards the final destination of modernity. Each stage was different and superior to the previous one, so development was depicted as a cumulative process of improvement in living standards..." (Kabeer, 1994, p16).

Boserup's only criticism with modernization was that it had failed to benefit women. She argued that economic progress was only enjoyed by men because they were able to acquire the necessary skills for employment in the "modern sector", whilst women's positions deteriorated because their lack of education and training left them behind in the ever shrinking "traditional sector", where their productive roles were ignored by planners. Characteristic of modernization theory was Boserup's conviction that the so-called "traditional" attitudes and values of women also needed to be changed. Her main policy recommendation was consequently to improve planning tools so that the productive roles of women would be recognised by policymakers, and the necessary education and training be provided so that women could compete equally with men for employment in the "modern sector" (1970, p139 - 212).

The dual systems approach of modernization theory has been criticized for making an invalid distinction between so-called "traditional" and "modern" societies because "traditional" societies are no longer perceived as being at an earlier, inferior stage of development.

Nevertheless, the WID perspective that emerged from Boserup's critique was important because it provided a means of overcoming the "invisibility" of women to policymakers. However, its approach could be likened to the use of a magnifying glass in a laboratory because it focused on women as "the problem" to be resolved, abstracting them from the social contexts of their lives, producing a very general category of "woman". Important differences between women were consequently overlooked and hence the emergence of post-colonial critiques challenging the concept of a global sisterhood.

Another problem with Boserup's critique is that her call to integrate women more fully into the development process was essentially a technical argument. Relevant here is Escobar's critique of development discourses which demonstrates that development planning is not simply a neutral, technical process. Kabeer points to the scepticism voiced by the Association of African Women for Research and Development (AAWORD) with regard to the notion that better information and improved planning was all that was required to resolve the multifaceted problems that women faced (1994, p34). The failure of the WID ministries to deliver the goods for women, already mentioned above, is an indication of the inadequacy of a merely technical or bureaucratic approach. These institutions were not created on a tabular rasa because as Staudt points out:

"Gender is a social construction that differentiates men and women in ways that become embedded and institutionalized in the political and bureaucratic authority of the state" (1990, p10).

The shift from the technical perspective of WID to the politics of gender relations in GAD reflects a very different notion of the goals of development: the concern in modernization theory with efficiency in maximizing resources is challenged with the question of equity in the redistribution of power and resources. The "problem" is no longer to be found inherent in individuals but rather in the unequal power relations between them - and in the case of GAD between women and men. A GAD perspective consequently involves an analysis of the gendered nature of social, political and economic relations in society. In this respect it is more sensitive to post-colonial critiques than WID because the category of "woman" is generated from within the local political context (Mohanty, 1988:61-88). However, a GAD perspective also introduces the notion of structural conflict between women and men which has been contested by women in the South. Barrios de la Chungara from Bolivia, for example, states in her pamphlet written for peasant women that their struggle against subordination should not "degenerate into a struggle against our husbands" and she distinguishes the women's struggle in Bolivia from Western feminism which according to her "means that women must fight against men for the right to smoke and drink as they do" (in Davies, 1983:41-49).

A GAD approach is far more likely to encounter opposition because unlike WID it challenges the unequal power relations between men and women. However, the words from Barrios de la Chungara

cited above are a reminder to policymakers that the readiness to confront opposition to change can blind them to the forms of technical, social and economic interdependence that exist between women and men. Conflict may be only part of the story (Kabeer, 1994, p273-4). This is an important point for development agencies because when they try to put a GAD approach into practice the challenge of generating relevant theory through local, contextual analyses is often a difficult one.

Gender training and local processes

Gender training is one of GAD's key strategies for helping women and men question the assumptions that underpin socially constructed gender inequalities. One of the issues that this kind of training raises is that of arbitration. When a "gender trainer" is faced with opposition not only from men but also from women how is he or she to respond? Can "false consciousness" be a part of the vocabulary of gender training, and if so whose "consciousness" is to be chosen as the standard against which to be compared? Gender trainers can find themselves in a compromising position which raises many of the issues discussed above in the post-colonial and post-modernist critiques, (cultural relativity, Western dominant discourses, totalizing theories and so forth). The paper seems to have come full circle. Although it is beyond the scope of this paper to try and resolve the issue of false consciousness at a theoretical level the following comments suggest that it does not necessarily have to become part of the "gender trainer's" vocabulary. Firstly, Molyneux points out that opposition from women need not be interpreted as "false consciousness" because it could merely be the result of a strategy in a trade-off between short term and long term interests (cited in Kabeer, 1994, p228). Scott's analysis of everyday forms of peasant resistance is relevant here ("Weapons of the Weak", 1985). Secondly, Kabeer's justification for devising empowerment strategies for women that build on "the power within" is not founded on notions of "false consciousness" either:

"It is the very restrictions on women's life choices that help to curtail their ability to "know" other ways of being and to engage in the analytical process by which their structural rather than their individual interests as a subordinated category come more clearly into view. Women may be aware of the circumscribed nature of their lives without necessarily knowing what to do about it." (1994, p229).

There is a danger of gender training falling into the traps of a WID approach by failing to take into account the significance of local processes. However, it is equally important to bear in mind the point made by Bordo in relation to criticisms which attack gender generalizations as *in principle* essentialist or totalizing: "Such charges should require concrete examples of *actual differences* that are being submerged by any particular totality in question" (1990, p139).

Conclusion

This paper has attempted to take the feminist project and theories of gender and development along a route that navigates - although somewhat precariously - between globalizing and deconstructing the feminist. Having salvaged them from the claws of postmodernist critiques my conclusion is that like true sailors they should pass through every port eager to learn from the new perspectives that each one has to offer. Probably the most important insight of all that a postmodernist perspective has to offer is that "there can be no monolithic explanation, all-encompassing narrative, and totalizing theoretical enterprise in any discourse that considers itself critical" (Persram, 1994 p303). Whilst feminism and GAD can most certainly benefit from this perspective there is no need for them to put down the anchor.

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