who has written extensively on freedom and subjectivity, in positively evaluating Beauvoir’s views about situated freedom.

On a related theme, Kruks contributes an essay to this anthology, “Reading Beauvoir With and Against Foucault,” in which she argues that Beauvoir preserves a place for agency, ethics, and responsibility, even in the face of powerful external sources of discipline and control. Although Kruks does not take up Beauvoir’s involvement in the Boupacha case, the theme of her essay could be brought to bear in that period of her work, showing how Beauvoir’s analysis of women’s situation retains a place for individual resistance. Her essay also relates to another aspect of Caputi’s essay in which she raises the criticisms of Frantz Fanon and other French-Algerian intellectuals who questioned Beauvoir’s motives in supporting Boupacha, perhaps seeing it as another example of the patronizing relationship of the colonizers to the colonized, motivated by the desire to preserve French honor (Caputi 118). In this regard, Fanon’s skepticism toward liberal French intellectual support seems to reflect something of Foucault’s awareness about the insidious effects of power relations. More specifically, as Kruks has pointed out, for Foucault, none of our actions is innocent of power relations, and in this way, our actions may be complicit with the very sources of control that we seek to dislodge. However, as she also notes, the conclusion is not that we should refrain from acting in accordance with our values, fearing our complicity with power; rather, we must “make explicit the values implied by our actions, while recognizing our responsibility for the power effects they produce” (68).

In summary, this work contains several excellent, wide-ranging, but focused essays; although a slim volume, it provides us with much to think and rethink in relation to Beauvoir’s methodology, her ethics, and her eventual entrance into radical politics in the Algerian War period.

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Reviewed by Jane E. Hindman, San Diego State University
Is it just me, or has the onset of our new millennium provoked nostalgia for times past? Among critics and rhetoricians in English studies, an apparently significant momentum for restorative projects is appearing in revivals of modernism (for example, Elizabeth Flynn’s *Feminism Beyond Modernism*), Marxism (Sandra Harding’s *Standpoint Theory Reader* and Nancy Hartsock’s *Standpoint Theory Revisited*), and process theory (Lisa Ede’s *Situating Composition*). If I were cynical (and I sometimes am), I’d say that such recasting of what we’d previously “proven” to be outdated and ineffectual is—like the cyclical fluctuations in the length of women’s hemlines—not only predictable but also profitable. On the face of it, then, it seems that theory, like clothing, is an adornment requiring and reflecting capital and thus must be changed regularly lest we tire of the same old body.

Such a comparison is, as I said, cynical. It’s also simplistic. However, that doesn’t mean it isn’t applicable. So I can be skeptical of nostalgia for the beliefs, values, and theories that not so long ago I was taught to disallow; I’m compelled to scrutinize them carefully, on the lookout for latent co-optation of effective resistance and suppression of difference. At the same time, my commitment to difference equally obliges me to consider seriously any venture that promises to honor the tension within the epistemologies and values of divergent world views. I’m most swayed by a scholar’s search for an ethical means for both to thrive. Thus, I’ve mined recuperative projects such as the ones I’ve cited and found some real gold.

Accordingly, I approached *Body and Story: The Ethics and Practice of Theoretical Conflict* with great expectation. The title’s juxtaposition of discourse and materiality suggested that author Richard Terdiman and I share a commitment to philosophies of embodied rhetoric that forego the Western tradition’s usual bifurcation of the two. Likewise, the subtitle’s implied promise—to consider not just the procedures but also the ethics of what we professionals actually do when we wage our theory wars—seemed sure to contribute to my own efforts to theorize a discursive ethics of professional practice that requires us to be accountable to and respectful of difference. Confirming my intuitions, the book jacket explains Terdiman’s intent to challenge the binary between Enlightenment rationalism’s conception of language as inherently referential to and
separate from materiality and postmodern textualism's conception of language as constitutive, a notion that Terdiman captures in his reference to Derrida's infamous claim, "There is no 'outside the text'" (1). The book jacket's further tantalizing pledge—that it "offers a new approach to the problem of conflicts between irreconcilable but equally compelling theoretical ideas"—guaranteed my high hopes.

And, at least initially, those hopes were met. Terdiman's proposition that we consider theories rhetorically—that is, that we see them as "situated, motivated, and modulated choices" rather than as "antagonistic or bipolar contraries"—makes good sense as a means for exploring the larger question that informs his book: "what is the function of 'theory' when theories contradict each other?" (10, 3). The specific contradiction at issue? "It appears as if we either have to sign on to Poststructuralism or fight it like the devil" (10). To uncover the stakes in this "seemingly irreconcilable theoretical dilemma" (10), Terdiman historicizes theory. As does Flynn's distinction between modern, anti-modern, and postmodern categories of feminism, and as do Harding's and Hartsock's differentiations between methodological advantage and epistemological foundationalism in standpoint theory, Terdiman's endeavor reveals not just the roots of but also the crucial subtleties within postmodernity that intellectuals' agonistic debates have discounted.

Such an endeavor is vital to working through the stalemate posed by the current theoretical impasse (and not just for the cynical reason that we academicians need something new to publish lest we perish). In this aspect I set great store by *Body and Story*. What doesn't work for me is its fascination with an obscure (to me anyway) eighteenth-century author as the means for contemplating such a crucial concept as the relationship between bodies and texts: Terdiman's examination of the interface of "fictionality, corporeality, and an inflection in the theory and practice of representation" centers, he tells us, on Denis Diderot (10); most specifically and often referred to is one of Diderot's lesser works, *La Religieuse*. This study comprises most of part one of his two-part volume. I'll admit that my disappointment in having to trudge through the weighty slough of those one hundred pages may be attributed in part to my ignorance of Diderot and my only passing knowledge of eighteenth-century French history. I doubt, however, that I'm alone in this lack. I'm also convinced
that some, if not most, of the \textit{JAC} audience will share my impatience with elaborate and extremely complex analyses of lesser aspects of unfamiliar texts, particularly when those clever but labyrinthine interpretations are presented as the primary evidence for Terdiman’s arguments concerning material practices.

Similarly cavalier in its disregard for the consequences of ignoring his readers’ material conditions is Terdiman’s generalization that contemporary readers are apathetic about or even unaware of issues of accuracy and legitimacy in textual representations. By claiming that “current theories of textualism create a pressure toward discarding the category of \textit{deception},” Terdiman justifies having to return to a moment in the early history of modernity in order to find readers “staked so intensely upon affirming the power of texts to capture or reference materiality” (53, 54). I disagree with his characterization of present readers, even academic ones: while the pressure to cast off the notion of textual deception as well as the distinction between “fact” and fiction certainly does exist in select theoretical contexts, it’s by no means the general rule in discursive practice, nor even in some prominent academic theory. For instance, even a passing familiarity with feminist theories of female writers’ “anxiety of authorship” and struggles to figure themselves as subjects demonstrates a point that Terdiman assumes contemporary readers will find so unusual he must underscore it: “Representations can hurt” (33). I’m skeptical, then, of Terdiman’s need to travel to the Enlightenment to find readers intent on retaining referentiality in texts.

Instead, he could have considered the contemporary reading public’s indignation in discovering counterfeit representations. Take, for example, the controversy that resulted from Oprah Winfrey’s televised confrontation of and retraction of her support for James Frey, author of the second highest-selling book of 2005, \textit{A Million Little Pieces}. Oprah herself and millions of readers across the nation (including a legion of press and publishing pundits) were outraged by Frey’s decision to recast his autobiographical novel about his own recovery from alcoholism as a memoir in order to get it published. Contemporary audiences apparently insist that authors substantiate their claims to veridicality. Contrary to Terdiman’s claim that “in our post-Enlightenment inheritance we may feel we have sorted out these cases” (76) is the plethora of public
discourse dedicated to considerations of the authenticity of Frey’s book. As New York Times critic Michiko Kakutani recognizes in her discussion about the controversy, “[This is not] about truth-in-labeling or the misrepresentations of one author. . . . It is a case about how much value contemporary culture places on the very idea of truth” [New York Times 17 Jan. 2006].

Contemporary examples such as the case of A Million Little Pieces could have provided germane, straightforward, material examples for considering—and refuting—Terdiman’s understanding of how materiality constrains texts, much more so than analyses of Diderot’s La religieuse did. It’s unfortunate that Terdiman’s evidence isn’t more accessible since his purpose in examining it is so crucial—namely, to demonstrate just how rarefied are academic arguments for the purported detachment of language from materiality even in the present day. Contemporary examples such as the one I suggest are also more useful because they undermine Terdiman’s conviction that academics’ notion of “free” language distinguishes Enlightenment from postmodern readers; likewise, they could have anchored Terdiman’s discussion much more materially.

Despite his reliance in “Part 1: The Consequentiality of Bodies” on these examples from dated and esoteric texts, I found Terdiman’s argument for a negotiation between materialist and textual theories provocative in “Part 2: The Conflict of Theories,” especially in the chapter entitled “The Epistemology of Difference.” Terdiman’s case therein for the inadequacy of postmodernism’s account of the epistemology of difference is meticulously detailed, relatively accessible, and crucial to his project, so I’d like to rehearse it at length. In a nutshell, his claim is this:

The problem at the heart of textualist theory is its compression of the relationship we conceive between language and its other. In such a dispensation, this other fades away. And this is happening just when we would want the other’s difference to be vivid and demanding. (134)

Acknowledging the poststructuralist counter-argument that Derrida’s notion of “dissemination” does reproduce difference, Terdiman explains
that “these [that is, “dissemination” and “différance”] are probably not the differences we need most urgently to foreground in the construction of the world that faces us. Dissemination pulls everything back into language, and that is where the monologism arises” (134). When we consider the problem that Others pose to textualist theories, Terdiman tells us, we recognize that models of textualism have little ability to “project and represent the limitations on our control which characterize the perverse resistance of what I have been terming ‘materiality’” (146). Granted, he continues, poststructuralists’ attributing agency to “a super­individual entity variously named ‘language’ or ‘ideology’ or ‘reason’ or ‘desire’... is a viable view” that “works”; unfortunately, however, it doesn’t work very well just where we need it to: in the articulation of how difference is possible and how to apprehend, process, and respond to it. . . . So partly the attraction of what I’m calling “materiality” lies in capturing the arduousness and challenge of what diverges so much from what we might have imagined or uttered—a response to a problem; a model for conceiving of the world. (147)

Our conception of difference between or among material readers is most commonly figured as conversation, more specifically, a conversational dialogue the most classic example of which is Socratic. According to Terdiman, though, Socrates’ process of elenchus provides only a “truncated” model of difference, for it depends on the primary speaker’s demonstrating the lack in the other’s beliefs and bringing them into convergence. A more complete version of difference, Terdiman contends, depends on “a perspective irreducible to ours and able to sustain itself quite as well as we think we sustain our own. That’s alterity” (148). This more full-bodied version of difference—which, following Certeau, Terdiman calls “heterology”—emerges from “impeded or stressful communication” that resists resolution because it “pulls in the other direction from language” toward materiality; “it is an alteration not in medium but in ontological mode” (149).

In the most crucial move of his argument for an epistemology of difference, Terdiman claims not just parity but privilege for that ontological mode of alterity. He justifies that privilege by using Hegel’s allegori-
cal explanation of the effects of structures of domination, the "differential possibility of knowledge" (154). Within a common hierarchy of power and authority, which Hegel’s allegory stages between the Lord and the Bondsman, the superior figure's—the Lord's—initial dominance is destabilized by the "unassimilably different position occupied by the 'inferior' figures like the Bondsman" (155). Through the alienating process of redefining himself and his reality via the dominator's language, the subordinate figure "acquires a mind of his own" (Hegel, qtd. in Terdiman 155). Thus, the "Bondsman then turns out to be in fuller contact than the Lord with the world and its oppositions" (155). The subordinate’s epistemological position is privileged because "he knows what, from his superior position, the Lord can’t know" (155). Terdiman advocates this epistemology of difference not simply for its capacity to rejuvenate knowledge-making but also because it provides "an ethics [that] ... underlies the heterological project: uncompromising commitment to an egalitarianism for which the old (now sadly suspect) name was humanism" (151).

In considering his articulation of the ontological power of difference, readers will surely concede that Terdiman’s painstaking argument—the reversals of superiority it enables, the new and more comprehensive knowledge it generates, and the civilized ethics that inform it—provides sufficient evidence. What I question though—and again—is why he needed to travel to the eighteenth century to recover humanism when perhaps a more uncompromising commitment to egalitarianism is right in front of him, namely, feminism.

Readers familiar with standpoint theory or even with more general feminist arguments for positionality will certainly recognize their relevance to Terdiman’s project as well as their capacity to concretize Hegel’s allegorical point; in fact, the precise purpose of standpoint theory is to demonstrate the ontological advantage to the Other’s standpoint. Further, readers who’ve made a commitment to egalitarianism are also quite likely to invoke W.E.B. Du Bois’ notion of the “double consciousness” afforded to “black folks” compelled to understand the dominator’s perspective as well as their own, a concept central to early and current feminist, postcolonial, and ethnic studies theories. Despite their palpable presence, however, Terdiman does not meaningfully acknowledge these
powerful theories' explanations for how Other's access to a knowledge eclipsed by the perspective of dominance makes possible a fuller account of the material reality within which power structures operate. In a footnote to his recitation of Hegel's allegory, he does mention that “we can find versions of such an epistemology in versions of feminist theory (e.g., “standpoint theory”) which argue for the singular perspective on social existence provided by women's consciousness. . . . Postcolonial theory offers analogous models of such reversal” (155). But apparently he prefers to rely on fiction and allegory as his primary paraphernalia.

Thus, even in the more useful second half of the book, I once again encounter what I see as its central problem: it fails to recognize the immateriality in its argument for the predominance of materiality. Terdiman offers only the most cursory acknowledgement of feminists' influential, effective, and materially focused explorations of the same apparent contradiction between representation and experience that informs his project. Furthermore, he recognizes only an abstract motive for mediating that contradiction, namely, that it could be “productive for comprehension” of how theories “solicit or command allegiance” (10) or ethically central to understanding the “realities of a much more refractory globalizing world” (237). The feminist project, on the other hand—most particularly feminist standpoint theory—depends upon representing, rather than erasing, difference so that power can recognize that at least some aspects of women's lived experience (their anxiety of authorship, for instance; the literal and figurative threat of rape; the disparity in pay scale and emotional labor of women's and men's work) are not universal and are not entirely discursively contained. The concrete purpose of feminists' theorizing that and how materiality constrains language is to confirm that oppression operates in a “real,” physical realm that exists even if and when language cannot name it.

Consequently, I urge readers like me who resist Terdiman's recuperation (which is also a co-optation of effective resistance) of materiality to turn instead to work such as Nancy J. Hirschmann's “Feminist Standpoint as Postmodern Strategy” in The Feminist Standpoint Reader: Intellectual and Political Controversies. Addressing the apparent impasse between material experience and discursive constructions, Hirschmann poses her
notion of a “materialist moment” as an “interface between the possibility of a prediscursive ‘concrete reality’ on which standpoint feminism logically depends and the postmodern emphasis on the constantly shifting discursive character of such ‘reality’” (325). The notion of “materiality” admits the postmodern tenet that discourse “makes ‘real,’ or ‘materializes,’ the concrete conditions of women’s lives,” that discourse makes it possible to speak authoritatively about the experiences. However, Hirschmann’s concept of materiality also acknowledges the standpoint contention that “materiality can challenge discourse: that women’s experience simultaneously sits in contradiction to discourse with a partially independent reality” (325). Thus, a “materialist moment” is the dual positioning of experience as both discursive and nondiscursive that makes feminist critique and resistance possible; it offers feminists a place to “stand” to the side of dominant discourse and so enables a different discourse, one that comes not just “out of other discourses but out of something more immediate and concrete” (326–27).

Quite unfortunately, Terdiman’s discourse never accomplishes that, despite its implied commitment to considering practice. In my own commitment to practice, I, like Terdiman, lament the ways that what he calls “contemporary doxa” (which I call disciplinarity) has marginalized materiality: “the enterprise of theory which in the past few decades has flourished within the discipline of literary and cultural studies . . . has directed its attention away from the elements in practice and in experience which might undermine the seductive theses that sustain textualism” (186). However, I must disagree with his claim that “it is rare to find anyone wondering what might be urged as a mechanism or modality limiting [the] supposed sovereignty” of language and pleasures of the text (186). You just have to know where to look. Hirschmann, for instance, provides a convincing argument less convoluted, more accessible, and more material than those offered in Body and Story. Much more importantly, Hirschmann’s theorizing turns to practice and experience; like other effective feminist critiques, hers recognizes that at stake in the Other’s embodied knowing is change, change in any and all conditions—discursive and non—that erase, domesticate, resist, discipline, misrecognize difference and sustain dominant practices. And in order to change those practices, we must situate them, offer thick descriptions of
their local contexts from the native's—the Other's—point of view. Because it does not accomplish or even attempt that task, and as cynical as my reading may be, I must say that (at least in part 1) I see Richard Terdiman's *Body and Story* as an example of conditions that sustain dominant practice.

Let me reiterate that I appreciate the detailed and persuasive appeal of Terdiman's articulation of the epistemology of difference. I recognize that its lack of engagement with feminists' more topical and invested considerations of the same issues will surely be attractive to some; I may even borrow it myself if and when I need to address readers who recoil at the very mention of the Other "F" word. I grant that *Body and Story*'s reinscription of disciplinary practices that co-opt difference and undermine its generative power is conceivably an unwitting material consequence; what's more, I recognize that such reinscription is just this side of inevitable, particularly in disciplinary practice. As Terdiman himself claims in his all too brief and abstract consideration of the material consequences of the practice of theory,

> The division of intellectual labor has fostered the increasing separation of these alternatives [between theoretical models]. Those who work at texts tend to write about their work with them in a way that gives circular justification for their activity and even its truncation with regard to other realms and other tasks. (161)

Perhaps I myself am reproducing that circularity—since obviously feminist contributions are the ones I most value—by faulting Terdiman for minimizing feminist contributions to the theoretical problem he tackles as well as ignoring the materiality of his own language. As a rationalization, then, and as my final observation on *Body and Story*, I will again invoke Terdiman himself, letting him have the last words, for in this case his are words I can get behind:

> Issues of professional and disciplinary prestige circulate here in ways we need to tease out of the high-theoretical ratiocination by which we justify methodological choices. These motivations need not only to be identified but to be undermined. (161)