I would like to take as a point of departure the central premise that higher education should contribute to the creation of an emancipatory social project aimed at the reduction of economic inequalities and the promotion of social justice and democratic governance. In this context, there are two major challenges to postmodernism: The first questioning is that raised by critical theory, particularly feminism, regarding the possibility of struggle under postmodernism. The second emerges from globalization—a major sociocultural and economic force affecting the world and its institutions, including the university.

What we call postmodernism is an amalgam of the thought of various philosophers, notably the four French writers Lyotard, Foucault, Derrida, and Baudrillard [1]. Seldom read in the original, their ideas—formulated in the 1970s and 1980s—have been interpreted in multiple ways, with varying degrees of approximation to the original statements. As Lather puts it, postmodernism is "a codename for the crisis of confidence in Western conceptual systems" (1994, p. 102). However, there is consensus in the literature of the social sciences that some of the key concepts of postmodernity include the undecidability of texts, the rejection of great truths ("totalities"), the avoidance of moral judgments, the acknowledgment of the subjective, and there cognition of fluid and fractured identities.

Although there have been attempts to combine postmodernism and critical theory, let me argue that such a union is far from easy and may be valid only if some of the principal arguments of postmodernism or critical theory are erased.

The Challenges from Critical Theory

Both postmodernism and critical theory pay attention to ideology, which is seen by both as the construction of arbitrary notions of normality. But in critical theory there is one ideology that is “better” than others—the ideology that moves people toward a democratic and nonexploitative society. Critical theory, thus, relies on a normative discourse. Many postmodernists, in contrast, avoid normativity. Derrida denies the possibility of values when he argues that all systems of belief are arbitrary. Lyotard puts on an equal plane all kinds of narrative when he asserts that grand-narratives have lost their credibility, be they speculative or emancipatory (cited in Stehr, 1997, p. 24). Foucault brings attention to the multiple forms of microscopic power, but in the process institutional power that consistently discriminates against marginal groups becomes blurred. Baudrillard talks about the end of history, the social, politics, and single meanings, while offering no alternatives or strategies for resistance.

An emancipation project must be built on the notion of an ideal society. To do so, proponents of such a project have to commit themselves to certain standards in processes and to specific objectives. These means and ends are arbitrary in the sense that they are human constructions, but they reflect values that we have come to consider fundamental to a human and humane existence after learning from history the feats and foibles of our nature.

But, if metanarratives are invalid and universal truths are rejected in favor of heterogeneous, localized truths, how can we engage in an emancipatory process that calls for the
recognition of universal values such as freedom, justice, and equal rights for all citizens? The avoidance of master narratives to favor instead local understanding and local resistance in the end subverts the process of struggle for social democracy because while local struggles are essential, local struggle must ultimately coalesce with other local struggles to make demands collective and thus more powerful. Paradoxically, in critical theory one needs globalizing qualitative concepts for ethical and esthetic decisions; at the same time, one needs to fight other totalizing concepts. Feminism, as a form of critical theory, shares with the Frankfurt School the belief in the role of reason in emancipating human beings from all forms of domination (Leonard, 1990) and it recognizes two totalities against which it fights: patriarchy and capitalism [2].

According to critical theorist Anyon (1994), we must seek ways to unite micro and macro issues, "What is needed is to transcend such oppositions, redefine labels like micro-macro, and focus not only on local manifestations or on abstract, structural characteristics, but also (and explicitly) on the relationships between them" (p.126). Anyon, as others before her (particularly C. W. Mills), affirms that we need middle range theories that link micro and macro. In her view, useful theory cannot be ad hoc and applicable to only one locale (1994, p. 129).

Since postmodernity does not talk about social exploitation in concrete terms, it does not identify exploiters and much less does it take position on how to disarm them. The critique against postmodernity along these lines is that it has failed to produce a sustained critique of class inequalities, racism, sexism, and economic inequality (McLaren and Farahmandpur, 1998) or, worse, that it has denied the pertinence of overarching theories such as patriarchy, racism, and capitalism (Walby, 1992). Concrete identification of targets is needed because as Anyon observes, "a useful theory must be capable of enactment" (1994, p. 129). Without a referent or "addressee," critical theory is bankrupt on its own terms (Leonard, 1990).

Taking feminism as a point of reference, it is clear that by applying discourse analysis frameworks of postmodernity to the study of gender, one is more sensitive to women's identities, voices, and experiences; that is, the researcher focuses on the particular and the everyday, thus capturing aspects of gender domination and contestation difficult to observe through quantitative approaches. Feminism's awareness of the local and diversity, however, was not borrowed from postmodernity. In many instances, feminist theory has emphasized the micro ("the personal is political" observation by Kate Millett) and the need to consider diversity among women of color (particularly through the writings of bell hooks and Patricia Hill Collins). More recently, it is considering how forms of femininity and masculinity are negotiated daily. But feminism has also understood that, in order to engage in a critique of the social relations between women and men and of their positioning in society, we need to consider the collective in the form of institutions and macrosocial structures. We must also see relations between women and men not only as relational but also as oppositional forces. This implies developing a strong identity as women, and differentiating it from men. It also implies naming allies, enemies, and bystanders (for an illustration of this in educational interventions see Stromquist, 1996).

A disarming effect of postmodernity, especially upon efforts to achieve the equality of women, is the charge that in setting "women" as a category, we are (a) failing to distinguish the great variety of experiences and conditions linked to being a woman and (b) contributing to the creation of the same binary categories we are trying to destroy. Both charges are very depoliticizing. Actually, feminism is a modern project. As Molyneux correctly affirms,

One of the most significant contributions of feminism has been the development of a new perspective on social and political life, one which not only reveals its profoundly unequal and gendered character, but which requires a reassessment both of the priorities of states and of the normative social order (1998, p. 242).
Feminism rejects patriarchal truth, but would not replace it with an amorphous sets of beliefs. It would replace patriarchy with a new social order where hierarchies are reduced and where social markers (gender, class, race) no longer shape people's fates. Different identities should not have equal entitlements to the same forms of recognition and legitimacy. Thus, while feminism recognizes that there are multiple views behind every social event, it affirms that not every voice has the same political value in reality and that there are voices expressed by dominant groups who maintain a hegemonic position in society. Feminism pays attention to universalizing the experience of women. In fact, despite national differences, the feminist movement has expanded across national boundaries and has succeeded in fostering new values and common demands (Gelb, 1990, p. 154).

Feminism argues for the importance of fighting the grand narrative of the white male-centered social sciences, attempts to understand how women experience their subjectivity, and recognizes the existence of many voices and points of view that situate women's truth. At the same time, feminism also seeks to make human rights applicable to men and women and extends these rights to all countries and cultures. The political aim of feminism is the recognition of universal truths and values such as freedom and equal rights. Therefore, in feminist theory there is room for new (and better) universals.

Postmodernism considers all identities fluid. This is positive inasmuch as we do not have to accept predetermined realities and can both conceive and accept that persons can forge new conceptions of self in better ways than previously. But this view of identity also has its limitations. The description of identity as something fluid and unstable weakens the cause of the disadvantaged and marginalized group, which must form alliances on the basis of a common identity. This is the case for women, for blacks, for indigenous populations. To assert that identities are mutable, on the one hand, raises hopes of transformation, but it also lessens the need to organize and mobilize for social transformation; it also reduces the legitimacy of spokespersons to speak for their group since those identities--being constantly shaped and reshaped--cannot be pinned down to specific claims or group projects. A similar critique can be made of postmodernism's recognition of differences and diversity underlying every "identity." Such being the case, group claims dissolve into a fragile coalition of highly flexible identities and thus not worth defending. For feminists, postmodernism emphasizes self and difference rather than unitary themes of solidarity and coherence (Nzomo, 1995). If under postmodernism no universal reality or explanation of societal problems is to prevail, how are concepts such as justice and knowledge to have universally acceptable criteria or meaning?

Postmodernity is based on an ontological principle that the human subject is constructed in and through the structures of language and ideology. Thus, two key concepts, text and deconstruction, organize the postmodern perspective. The postmodernist assertion that meaning in the text is always indeterminate (which in itself is a universalizing view) obviates our need to question other actors. How, then, do we protect individuals and their sense of agency under an analytical frame that is predicated on abstract accounts of identities and subjectivities and in which ideology is delinked from material experiences and conditions? If the main effort centers on discourse analysis--as is the case in postmodernism--how do we recognize agency as expressed in actual struggle against undesirable conditions? Postmodernity would help us to see how difference is created. But since all differences are equally valid, what insights does it bring to the process of change?

Postmodernism has been accused of introducing free-floating signifiers, instead of recognizing specific historical subjects. Agger (1993) observes that according to postmodernism there is no stable subject capable of making claims of truth about an external world in unambiguous language. Postmodernism has been further criticized for transferring personal agency to language by its treatment of the "subject," through frequent assertions that indicate that
it is more important to talk of subjectivity than agency. The focus is on the text rather than on the person and his/her claims. While much is gained by examining discourse, as Anyon agrees, "What gets lost in the production and promotion of abstract theory is the power of people fighting for change in concrete situations" (1994, p. 128). Moreover, the production of theoretical discourse (whether by postmodernists or by others) cannot be accepted as the only form of political resistance.

Some postmodernist argue that by examining differences, we can detect how privilege is created and how the opinions of others are silenced. But, can we? Under critical theory yes, but postmodernity does not have a concern with values such as privilege and power. Further, postmodernism does not subscribe to moral principles as guide to social action (Stehr, 1997). Postmodernism has serious limits for feminism, for a logic of difference, past a sensible point, is theoretically incompatible with the logic of democracy (Soper, 1991).

While critical theory calls for reflection on these differences, postmodernism calls for reflexivity. Graham and Doherty (1992), among others, consider that this reflexivity often dissolves experience into a plurality of perspectives, so in fact it is "not reflection but an infinity spiral of contemplation" (p. 209). Some of the strongest messages in postmodernism point to the indeterminacy, ambiguity, and chaos in the real world. This in turn has been associated with cynicism and passivity, creating a subject that is powerless to change either itself or society.

Deconstruction is a postmodern contribution that enables us to see clearly how many of the categorical oppositions of social analysis are socially constructed. Here, both postmodernists and critical theorists agree in considering that discourses are essentially political because they have the power to assign legitimacy (Anyon, 1994). But, postmodernism goes further by considering that all texts are undecidable. This, then leads to relativism. In this regard, Agger objects thus, "Although freedom cannot be attained without passing through subjectivity, it is meaningless without a ground in community, which, I have argued, requires theoretical commonality above all else" (1993, p. 158).

Methodologically, postmodernism prefers qualitative analysis to quantitative studies for understanding the world. This is indeed a preference it shares with critical theory and feminist theory. The narratives that postmodernists offer, however, refrain from taking a political stand or making them contribute to cumulative truth. As Constas states (1998), social sciences cannot merely equate the role of the humanities and produce nice literary stories--there need to be some standards of what constitutes valid research. It cannot be "everything goes." We must commit ourselves to conclusions and even policy recommendations. If we do not, others--with less understanding of the social world--will make the recommendations for us.

To draw clear conclusions about one's research is to claim that one's views constitute a legitimate form of knowledge. Legitimization is the process of instilling or granting power to discourse that allows us to act, at least temporarily, as if we have knowledge about a certain issue, such as education. Unfortunately, much of the postmodern writing on education shuns this activity as it struggles to find a safe egress from the legitimation crisis of our 'postmodern times' (Constas, 1998, p. 30).

The writings of Foucault have contributed to our understanding of the social world significantly by highlighting the multiple forms that power takes--from the macrolevel of institutions to the capillary of person-to-person transactions. They have also made us aware of the many ways to see an event and the large variety of voices among social actors, including voices that become suppressed. Yet, his views also can be used to paralyze political practice. According to Foucault, micorelations of power continually reproduce situated systems of discourse that create particular versions of the human subject (gender, the family, the state, science); his insistence on the micro forms of power diminish attention to the forms of sustained
and institutional power of hegemonic elites over disenfranchised social groups. Foucault, then, presents a double-edged sword for feminism: he disengages us from simplistic and dualistic accounts of power; simultaneously he renders obscure many important experiences of power specific to women (Deveaux, 1994). Foucault calls for identity contestation but his analysis seems to diminish the importance of personal and group definition and affirmation. In view of all this, Foucault's model of power does not allow for an understanding of systematic injustice (Deveaux, 1994).

Critical theory acknowledges the multidimensionality of power relations but upholds the role of agency and social movements in effecting social change—efforts clearly directed against domination (Morrow and Torres, 1995). Gramscian thought, a major ingredient in critical theory, maintains that the establishment of a classless society and the building of a collective will must be achieved through an intellectual and moral reform (Morrow and Torres, 1995). In contrast, postmodernity views political affiliation as the mythic residue of modernist grand narratives (Agger, 1993).

The Challenges of Globalization

In recent decades, enormous influences of economic, informational, and cultural nature have been affecting both rich and poor countries. These influences, collectively defined as globalization, reflect a set of changes that augur benefits for industrialized countries, with greater access to resources from developing countries and through domination of information technology. Amin, an African sociologist, sees the process of globalization as an activation of five monopolies by central countries: the technological monopoly, control of worldwide financial markets, unfettered access to the planet's natural resources, control of media and communications, and the monopoly of weapons of mass destruction. "These five monopolies taken as a whole define the framework within which the law of globalized value operates. The law of value is the condensed expression of all these conditions and is scarcely the expression of an objective 'pure' economic rationality" (1996, p. 8). Amin's views are shared by many scholars in the developing countries.

Some observers see globalization as creating and reflecting a postmodern world, with multiple and fluid identities, with less loyalty to the state, and thus a new logic. But globalization is creating also a new socioeconomic order with new priorities and hierarchies and with a homogeneous culture based on increasing levels of consumption. In this respect, the fractured world predicted by postmodernism is less the case than a single but distorted modernity, where the emphasis on science and technology is not to improve our humanity but rather to abuse practices regarding differences, variety, and use. Globalization is introducing changes in both structure and discourse.

Paulston (1998) argues that postmodernity attacks Eurocentrism and seeks to open the practice of knowledge to postcolonial experience and to non-Western cultural codes and interpretation. In his view also, postmodernism introduces "shifts from time to space, from facts to interpretations, from grounded positions to narrative readings, from testing propositions to mapping perspectives" (p. 3). But while postmodernism talks of a world in which differences are recognized and multiple voices emerge, the reality is that in the global political and economic scene, state governments are being eroded and the power of transnational corporations and international banks is becoming greater. Values are being shaped externally and in the process there is a breakdown in communal relationships and the unbridled emergence of greater individualism (Watson, 1998). As de la Garza Toledo has well written,

Today, despite postmodernist concepts and perspectives, our lives are becoming more global, with a directionality characterized by a new international division of labor, by processes of productive flexibility that do not cancel out the domination
of capital over labor; if it is true that the working class has been defeated in this restructuration (defeated and not simply conflated with the masses), it has not disappeared but has been recomposed in forms that are now in process. Directionality is also in retreat when observing the role of the state in the economy and in neoliberalism, socialist and communist projects are also in crisis, no doubt; but this does not authorize postmodernity (unless it contradicts itself by attempting to predict the future) to deny that future rigid-flexible hegemonies can be structured" (1993, p. 146).

Education in many institutions, both secondary schools and universities, is being redefined to mean essentially training. The impact of globalization on American universities is already discernable. Many have become more like corporate entities--having to disperse their activities in search of clients while still fighting to preserve their core purposes and abilities (Rosenzweig, 1998).

In times of competition and reduced resources, institutions engage in exploitation, not exploration. This means universities will have little inclination to seek ways to increase ethnic representation or produce curricula more attuned with social needs. Ironically, while postmodernism and feminist theory have brought new concerns to academia, concurrent globalization tendencies have increased the degree of hierarchy, individualism, and competition within the university and among universities (Blackmore, 1997). Globalization is moving universities into greater competition with one another and forcing them to work on principles of comparative advantage predicated on the ability to satisfy consumer and market demands [3]. In this new logic, reward is based on commodity production, not on critical thought. The professoriate is thus under pressure to abandon their political engagement.

**Implications for Pedagogical and Political Practice within the University**

At present, there is an unusual juxtaposition of critical understanding derived from postmodernity and critical theory with pressures to engage in training and commodity production derived from globalization. Let us examine these pressures along the following four lines.

1. **The Professor as an Emancipatory Intellectual**

   Postmodern proponents would say that education is not neutral. But so have many others before them, notably Gramsci, Althusser, Freire, and feminist thinkers.

   Under postmodernism there is no authority of the expert (Stehr, 1997). Since universities are based on expertise, then, their role should be greatly diminished. In contrast, under critical theory, teachers and professors would be viewed as cultural workers who must offer an emancipatory model of authority. Professors, therefore, must address notions of representation (for instance, common sense notions of identity and difference and the various dominant modes of representation existing in society) (Morrow and Torres, 1995).

   Postmodernism and several social movements, including feminism, have rendered problematic the basic assumptions and concepts of a number of disciplines. For example, in the field of international relations, feminist thought has contributed to shift the concept of "security" from national security to one that encompasses also poverty, environment, and violence as multidimensional and multilevel phenomena and has brought well attention to their occurrence in the household and lower levels of the social world. In discussions of political/military security, feminist theory is looking at what happens during wars rather than at their causes and thus at women who traditionally take care of children and at the causes and consequences of the rape of women (Peterson, 1992). The contributions of these new perspectives remain to be systematically identified and analyzed.

   Today, the professoriate is attacked from two sides. On the part of postmodernity, professors are questioned for believing themselves experts. On the part of globalization,
expertise is reserved only for that which contributes to the production of market goods. Expertise in the social sciences, in the arts, and in the humanities has been greatly devalued. This trend may only increase after intellectuals lose their role as social critics. Tierney and Rhoads (1993) advocate the creation within the university of "communities of difference" where people confront and honor their own identities but also develop dialogue across the racial, class, and gender barriers that currently exist. This suggestion is valuable; it would seem, however, that current globalization forces operate against this.

In Latin America the public university has been at the forefront of intellectual critique, fighting against market influences, and preserving its autonomy from the state (Brunner, 1986). On the other hand, many of the new private universities emerging in Latin America are jumping on the bandwagon of globalization and training professions in business and technology management, with little concern for rational-critical arguments, and with limited attention to "democratic modes of conflict resolution" (Conaghan, cited by Grindle, 1996). Many scholars in the region consider that the expansion of private higher education has contributed to more social stratification, which should increase the intellectuals' need to engage in social analysis and critique.

2. The Role of Subjectivity in Knowledge Creation

There is consensus coming from both postmodernity and critical theory on the importance of subjectivity. There is a space, albeit small, in the university today to consider alternative pedagogies. A radical pedagogy would seek both to work with subjectivity and to change it. Since ideology is based on the unconscious, it is not a subject that can be taught. Students will have to understand how they participate in ideology through a reconsideration of their own experiences and needs, the logical outcome of the fact that all knowledge is a product of social relations (Morrow and Torres, 1995).

Attention to subjectivity is bound to increase the recognition of diversity of experiences among subjects. In discussing the question of gender, for example, it is one thing to call for observance of differences among women; it is another to call for the abandonment of women as a category. Postmodern feminist pedagogies emphasize the positionality of the instructor, the deconstruction of dichotomies such as rationality-affectivity, and the importance of marginalized voices in the curriculum and in the classroom (Lather, 1994). These pedagogies also introduce the notion of identity as fluid; yet, the importance of the subject "woman" remains.

The importance of subjectivity in the understanding of social phenomena will have consequences on research methods. Within the social sciences at least, useful methods will be ethnographic interviewing, discourse analysis and deconstruction of texts, testimonials focusing on experiences of the subject, ethnomethodological inquiries, and studies of rhetoric and representations of scientific ideas.

3. The Role of Objectivity in Knowledge Creation

Postmodernism has received serious criticism from scholars who are committed to social transformation and who have been influenced by the thought of Gramsci, Althusser, and Habermas. Holding together the views of these scholars is that material conditions, while not the sole determinants of social relations, cannot be ignored in favor of discourse analysis. In other words, discourse shapes people's subjectivities and might create at times identities that are fluid and unstable, but there are clear material consequences upon the formation of identity and some of these identities are not only stable but are difficult to change because both material and ideological factors hinder transformation.

Dominant symbols of representation are important but so also are the material conditions that structure everyday life. Cultural politics are grounded in the social relations of the material world. McLaren and Farahmandpur express the following critique of postmodernism:
Postmodern theory has made significant contributions to the educational fields by examining how schools participate in producing and reproducing asymmetrical relations of power, and how discourses, systems of intelligibility, and representational practices continue to support gender inequality, racism, and class advantage. For the most part, however, postmodernism has failed to develop alternative democratic social models. This is partly due to its failure to mount a sophisticated and coherent opposition politics against economic exploitation, political oppression, and cultural hegemony (1998).

Postmodernity may be paying too much attention to the formation and reproduction of culture, and not enough to the fact that social relations are grounded in the material forms of production. McLaren and Farahmandpur (1998) remind us that we should not (and cannot) replace the social division of labor and the surplus labor that structures it by information and the circulation and consumption of "sign value." Authentic agency cannot be replaced by symbolic mediation because the nature of subordination in society is not merely a cultural fight.

How can postmodernity contribute to democratization projects if it upholds the relative value of all views? We need to have universal criteria for evaluating the validity of truth claims. Concepts such as human rights are central to the development of a democratic society (McLaren and Farahmandpur, 1998). Not every truth-claim is equally valid, since at present truths-claims conceal asymmetrical social and economic power by some groups over others. Postmodernity opposes regimes of truth (functionalism, positivism, Marxism), yet we need explanatory frameworks. For instance, women need to engage in large-scale historical narrative and social theoretical analysis of domination and subordination (Udayagiri, 1995).

4. Potential Areas for Research under Postmodernist and Critical Theory Frames

Several issues remain to be empirically validated; they would greatly benefit from cross-national comparison. The importance of this type of comparison is advanced here on two accounts: the modernist idea that patterns of commonalities among countries (and thus generalizable knowledge) may be discovered, and the postmodernist assumption that learning about different settings may alert us to the specificity of the subjectivities and historical contexts in each case. A few of these issues are listed below:

(a) So far, deconstruction and difference have been used mostly for discourse analysis. It remains to be seen to what extent they could be exploited for political mobilization processes. Barriteau (1995) and Buenfiel (1997) consider that the fluid nature of social relations can help us plan for political action, that it can help us understand better how multiple relations of subordination make it difficult to launch an onslaught against patriarchy. This is an empirical proposition that needs testing.

(b) Research is also needed on the shifting status of fields within the university. In what ways and to what extent are science and technology gaining precedence over the humanities and social sciences? If the role of science and technology indeed increases, it would be useful to understand the subjectivity of scientists in these fields, to see what status metanarratives acquire in their disciplines, and to assess to what extent the creation of "communities of difference" has possibilities.

(c) If discourse is so important in shaping identities, then special research efforts should be conducted to understand how the existing media, which is becoming increasingly global, is shaping social identities and to what extent the emerging similarities (or differences) are helping toward the constitution of politically aware subjects.

(d) Introspective research of the university is needed. For instance, how are universities acting (if at all) to preserve ethnic diversity among faculty and students in the light of pressures
from economic rather than social forces? Here, research that distinguishes between the discursive and material bases of identity formation would be crucial.

**Conclusions**

The emergence of postmodernity does not mean that modernity has been surpassed, much less that it has been discarded. Modernity is a philosophy with many flaws and in several instances some of the expectations we associate with it have not been realized. The certitude of the prevailing power of reason and the assumptions about linear change have been challenged by empirical evidence and the trust placed on enlightened elites has been diminished by their self-serving behavior; yet, we still have a sense of the utopia we want to achieve, of the values we consider worth struggling for. For many of us, as for Habermas, modernity is an unfinished project, not a useless project. In highlighting that many regimes of truth have an oppressive character, postmodernity raises a major challenge to those seeking a transformed society. Certainly, the intention is not to replace one regime of power with another. How to attain a democracy that is simultaneously sensitive to difference and diversity is the challenge of the 21st century.

Postmodernity is not a project but a new way of looking at the social world. In the meantime, while postmodernists reflect, and while critical theorists think of forms to encourage individual and collective action, the world is passing us by in the form of globalization. The influence of globalization is moving the world toward greater uniformity, yet more solid hierarchies between countries and between institutions of higher education.

Postmodernity has made substantial perceptual and conceptual contributions to the analysis of our social world. Through its contributions and those of feminism and critical theory as well, we are much more sensitive to the embedded and timebound nature of truth, of the importance of the subject, of the conflation of power and knowledge. Postmodernity rejects but has not been able to replace completely the use of dichotomies. From a critical theory standpoint, dichotomies are useful, particularly in the production of political critique and strategies for transformation.

**Addendum:** Following the presentation of this paper and that of William Tierney (The Autonomy of Knowledge and the Decline of the Subject: Postmodernism and Comparative Education) and the opening of the floor for discussion, Yvonna Lincoln stated that postmodernism was stronger in questions of ontology and epistemology and less so in matters of axiology and the ethical system. I found her comment profound and most accurate. To develop the axes of action and normativity in postmodernism will call for creativity well beyond the original assertions of postmodernism. The time may have arrived. After all, there is broad consensus that knowledge is socially constructed. It is our task to see how we render compatible principles that now appear to be in serious tension.
Notes

[1] Additional contributions have been made by the writings of Lacan, Vattimo, Laclau, Mouffe, and Rorty.

[2] There are several variants of feminism. I present here one that seeks to transform the asymmetrical power relations between women and men as well as to introduce a new cultural understanding. In this context, I subscribe to the view that feminism represents the third-generation of critical theory (after Horkheimer, Adorno, and Marcuse, who sparked the first, and Habermas, who initiated the second [Agger, 1993]).

[3] In several developing countries, especially those affected by structural adjustment programs imposed by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, there is an added globalization challenge to higher education: the belief that its budget should be drastically reduced and students asked to bear a substantial part of the costs.

References


