Q

R

What can be known and how? Narrated subjects and the Listening Guide

ANDREA DOUCET
Carleton University, Canada
NATASHA S. MAUTHNER
University of Aberdeen Business School, UK

ABSTRACT This article grapples with the question of '*what* can be known?' about research subjects and *how* we can come to know them. Set against a backdrop of theoretical tensions over the concept of subjectivity in feminist theory, our article makes a three-fold argument. First, we argue that theoretical impasses between critical and constructed subjects can be addressed through the evolving concept of a *narrated subject*. Second, we suggest that this concept needs to be further interrogated by asking what can be known about narrated subjects both *inside* and *outside* of narrative. Third, we argue that greater attention must be given to *how* narrated subjects can be operationalized within research methodology, and we suggest that an emerging interpretive approach, the Listening Guide, provides a multi-layered way of tapping into methodological, theoretical, epistemological, and ontological dimensions of the narrated subject.

KEYWORDS: *knowing subjects*, *Listening Guide*, *narrated subject*, *narrative turn*

Introduction

Dilemmas in knowing, especially coming to know others, have long preoccupied feminist theorists and qualitative researchers. Within discussions of feminist epistemologies, some of the tensions involved in knowing others have been highlighted through three recurring questions: '*who can be a knower?*', '*what can be known?*' and '*how do we know what we know?*' (Code, 1991; Alcoff, 1996). The middle question, '*what can be known?*' is the subject of this article. It is a question that has provoked a number of lines of inquiry. At a theoretical level, it has generated an extensive debate concerning the ontological and epistemological character of subjects and subjectivities. In the context of empirical research, discussions have focused around *what* can be known about *others*, and specifically whether we can access any degree of authenticity of our research subjects. A further area for reflection has been *how* we can come

to know research subjects in the context of qualitative research, and what kinds of subjects are highlighted by different research methods.

We develop a three-fold argument. First, we argue that the 'narrative turn' (Mishler, 1986) with its attention to narrated subjects offers a way out of seemingly polarized debates on subjectivity. Second, we explore continuing tensions over knowing subjects both *inside* and *outside* of narratives. Third, we ground the question, '*how can subjects be known?*' through briefly describing an emerging interpretive approach, the Listening Guide.

Theoretical and applied conceptions of subjects and subjectivities

Given the deep commitment to understanding, explicating, and improving the lives of women as subjects, it is not surprising that debates about subjectivity have been particularly heated within feminist theory and its many intersections with postmodern and poststructuralist theories. As Diane Elam (1994: 69–70) describes it: 'some of the fiercest battles between deconstruction and feminism have been fought over just what role subjectivity should play'. Perhaps one of the 'fiercest battles' over conflicting conceptions of subjectivity occurred in the mid-1990s between two well-known contemporary feminist theorists, Seyla Benhabib and Judith Butler. In a nutshell, the crux of their exchange revolves around whether the subject is *located in* or *constituted by* social, cultural, and discursive contexts. For Benhabib, on the one hand, a feminist conception of the subject must only be *situated*, and not *constituted*. In her view, a 'strong' postmodern or poststructuralist position means that the subject 'dissolves into the chain of significations ... (and) into yet "another position in language" with the ensuing disappearance of concepts of intentionality, accountability, self-reflexivity and autonomy' (Benhabib, 1995: 20). Butler, on the other hand, argues that it is not sufficient to conceptualize subjects as merely *situated* within social settings or contexts. Rather, subjects are *constituted in* and through power/discourse formations, so that there is no subjectivity outside of a power/discourse matrix (Butler, 1995).

Benhabib's and Butler's positions must be seen as 'largely caricatured accounts of the claims each in fact seek to make' (Webster, 2000: 6). Indeed, they are fragments of much larger debates revolving around contrasting genealogical and interpretivist conceptions of subjectivity (Ferguson, 1991), and feminist assessments of Foucault's varied conceptions of subjects (Foucault, 1990[1976]; McNay, 1993; Deveaux, 1994; Macleod and Durrheim, 2002). Furthermore, this theoretical debate is mirrored at the level of empirical research. For example, feminist standpoint researchers as well as particular kinds of qualitative interpretivist (Ferguson, 1991) and naturalist (Gubrium and Holstein, 1997) research often assume some essence of experience or subjectivity to make claims about what it is that people say or do. Such research is informed (implicitly or explicitly) by the assumption that it is possible to access some form of agentic and intentional subject, even if it is a subject which might be

'multiple, heterogeneous and contradictory or incoherent' (Harding, 1992: 65). As Hollway and Jefferson astutely point out, qualitative researchers can remain caught in the 'transparent self problem' and the 'transparent account problem' (Hollway and Jefferson, 2000: 3) whereby respondents' accounts are assumed to give direct access to authentic aspects of their experiences and lives.

On the other hand, researchers working broadly within what Ferguson terms the genealogical or deconstructionist end of a continuum of subjectivities posit non-unitary, non-essential, and fragmented subjects. Some researchers influenced by these ideas have utilized Foucauldian-inspired discourse analysis to examine interview transcripts or texts as functions of discourse. Working broadly within questions posed by Foucault in his earlier work, lines of questioning include: 'under what conditions and through what forms can an entity like the subject appear in the order of discourse; what position does it occupy; what functions does it exhibit; and what rules does it follow in each type of discourse?' (Foucault, 1977: 137–8). Here, an interest in subjects becomes 'subjectification as subjection', a theme common to both Foucauldian constructionism and Lacanian psychoanalysis, where 'the subject is understood as a discursive effect' (McNay, 2003: 140). A recurring critique of this approach, which resonates with Benhabib's critique of Butler's performative theory of gender as deterministic, is that feminist researchers who draw on poststructuralist conceptions of subjects often struggle with how to theorize resistance and agency in their research subjects.

The impasse between subjects who structure their lives and subjects who are overly structured has been tackled in different ways. In an attempt to address the perceived 'death of the subject' (Nicholson, 1990; Rosenau, 2002), many feminist scholars have sought to combine feminist critical theory with postmodernist and poststructuralist approaches. Taking a 'soft', 'skeptical', or 'affirmative' postmodern position is one where discourses are viewed, not as completely determining, but rather as both enabling and constraining. Addressing these issues theoretically, Nancy Fraser, for example, has argued that the Benhabib–Butler debate is polarized around a 'false antithesis' and that it is possible to blend the insights of both so that 'a culturally constructed subject can also be a critical subject' (Fraser, 1995: 71). Grappling with these issues in empirical research, Bronwyn Davies' work on children is illustrative of a 'soft' poststructural position in that subjects are positioned in discourses while also being active agents taking up discourses (Davies, 1992, 1993; Honan et al., 2000). Similarly Davies and Harre (1990: 46) argue that subjects are positioned so that 'a possibility of notional choice is inevitably involved because there are many and contradictory discursive practices that each person could engage in'.

In our view, while this is a creative compromise, it can also be seen as epistemologically untenable, in that it both denies agency while reinstating it at the same time. Furthermore, as McNay (2003: 140) points out, such a position constructs agency principally through *resistances*, rather than through a fuller

consideration of 'the differing motivations and ways in which individuals and groups struggle over, appropriate and transform cultural meanings and resources'.

A second way of 'bringing the subject back in' (Rosenau, 2002) is the turn to psychoanalytic concepts and theories in order to recover a subject from within discourses and provide a way of accounting for the choices that people do in fact make (Weedon, 1987; Hollway and Jefferson, 2000; Frosh et al., 2003). Wendy Hollway and Tony Jefferson, for example, have brought psycho-analytic concepts into empirical qualitative research by drawing on the psy-choanalytic claim that 'human purposiveness is achieved via unconscious processes; processes whose creativity and capacity for resistance to external force is in contrast to conscious states of intentionality' (Hollway and Jefferson, 2000: 149). Clearly, 'there has been an increasing interest in the use of psychoanalytic ideas within a sociological framework' (Clarke, 2006: 1153), particularly through the work of psycho-social perspectives in qualita-tive research methodology (Hollway and Jefferson, 2000; Clarke, 2002). Nevertheless, such approaches still leave open questions relating to the onto-logical status that we accord to our research subjects. That is, are we giving voice to research subjects or to research subjects' *stories?*

Turning towards a narrated subject

Our own approach to facilitating an 'ontological return to the subject' (Stern, 2000: 109) has been to rely on insights proffered by the 'narrative turn'. Our argument is that an effective way of working out of the impasse between con-structed or critical subjects is the concept of a 'narrated subject'. This concep-tion of subjects has appeared in the work of feminist scholars as a way of responding directly to this issue. For example, Somers (1994) and Somers and Gibson (1994) argue 'that it is through narrativity that we come to know, understand, and make sense of the social world, and it is through narratives and narrativity that we constitute our social identities' (Somers and Gibson, 1994: 58–9; see also Bruner, 1991; Stanley, 1993). Lois McNay (2000: 9–10) is also a key proponent of this position. Arguing against 'Foucault's idea of the self', which 'does not really offer a satisfactory account of agency', as well as the more materialist accounts in feminist standpoint theory, which can 'too easily slip into a celebration of these experiences as somehow primary or authentic', she maps out an active, yet constantly changing, *narrated subject.*

Settling on the concept of a narrated subject as a way of responding to the question 'what can be known about narratives?', we were still left with three key questions. First, we continued to puzzle over what can be known about subjects *inside* of narrative. The Benhabib-Butler debate cast a shadow over us: is the subject narrated in language or discourses only? And if so, does this return us to Butler's position of the absence of a pre-discursive subject or pre-narrative subject (see also Bruner, 1991)? Second, we asked what can be

known about subjects *outside* of narratives. That is: is there a deeper subject behind the story? Or is the narrated subject all there is? Finally, we wanted to know *how* narrated subjects could be known; that is, how can they be accessed, interpreted, and written about in our scholarly work?

In grappling with these questions, a particularly influential piece on our thinking was Liz Stanley's (1993) poignant personal and theoretical writing about her mother's changing self in the last days of her life. As her mother lay dying in hospital, Stanley reflected on how she could not fully know her, given that her mother's self was changing from a rather coherent one towards one where her self-hood was unraveling. As Stanley's account powerfully highlights, there are palpably painful challenges involved in knowing someone, even where one has shared an intimate relationship that spans a lifetime. This raises the question about what, if anything, researchers might come to know about subjects with whom they share only fleeting research relationships. Yet there are other lessons from Stanley's reflections on trying to know her mother as a subject that apply to research relations and narrative inquiry more widely.

WHAT CAN BE KNOWN ABOUT SUBJECTS INSIDE OF NARRATIVE?
With regard to what can be known about subjects *inside* of narrative, Stanley articulates the idea of the narrated self, or subject, as intrinsically relational. She writes (1993: 206): '"(S)elf" does not exist in isolation or inter-relationship with other selves and other lives and is grounded in the material reality of everyday life; and a key part of this material reality is formed by the narrations of selves and others'. This is an important point because it underlines a view of narrated subjects who are not constituted in language or discourse but are constituted in relation to other subjects and to the 'material reality of everyday life'. Such a position is further supported by Benhabib's recent thinking where, building on her earlier work of selves-in-relation, she moves to a view of inter-relational selves in narrative and a 'narrative model of the subject' where agency is still present within these narrations. Maintaining still that Butler's rejection of intention in speech acts remains problematic for feminist theory, Benhabib's view is that subjectivity is present in the subject's '*use of language, and not in language itself*' (Benhabib, 1999: 354).

WHAT CAN BE KNOWN OF SUBJECTS OUTSIDE OF NARRATIVE?
This discussion also sheds light on the question of what can be known *outside* of narrative. In spending time with her mother through 'just being there', 'attending to her gestures and expressions' as well as via more traditional research tools ('transcribed tapes of some 50 or so hours of conversations' and 'a research diary'), Stanley visibly struggles with knowing and not knowing her mother. As she describes it, she held the 'nagging suspicion that somehow, somewhere my mother as I had previously known her was still "there"... "beneath" or "behind" or "beyond" *this* self. While intellectually "knowing better", emotionally I retained a sense of the "false" and "real" selves of my mother' (Stanley, 1993: 209).

In our own earlier work, we too clung to the idea of knowing 'real selves' of our research subjects (Mauthner and Doucet, 1998, 2003). We felt that there was a deep subjectivity 'beneath' accounts and that, if we worked diligently and reflexively, we could indeed come to know it. Stanley's work has helped us move to a position whereby we believe that, although there is a 'knowing but experiencing subject' (Stanley, 1993), we cannot, however, fully know that subject. That is, there may well be something 'beneath' or 'behind' or outside narrative; nevertheless, all we can know is what is narrated by subjects, as well as our interpretation of their stories within the wider web of social and structural relations from which narrated subjects speak. As eloquently articulated by Plummer (1995: 168):

> *Whatever else a story is, it is not simply the lived life.* It speaks all around the life: it provides routes into a life, lays down maps for lives to follow, suggests links between a life and a culture. It may indeed be one of the most important tools we have for understanding lives and the wider cultures they are part of. But it is not *the* life, which is in principle unknown and unknowable.

COMING TO KNOW NARRATIVES

In response to our third line of inquiry, which relates to *how* we come to know narratives, Stanley's account highlights that how we come to know narrated subjects relies strongly on the role of our own subjectivities in knowing. In analysing her diary-writing about her mother and her interpretations and changing understandings of her mother's self, she identifies what she terms 'referential and anti-referential currents', writing:

> 'The diary extracts themselves question their own referentiality ... they centre differences of understanding and interpretation between oneself and those of others and ultimately are concerned with the absence of referentiality between my understanding and that of other people, between my writing and the events this writing is ostensibly "of"' (Stanley, 1993: 211).

This points to the need for constant reflexive writing on the part of the researcher to chart and document how relations between researchers and their subjects are always in ontological flux and subject to endless interpretation.

Working from these three points on narrated subjects and what we believe can be known about subjects both inside and outside of narratives, we now turn to ask: how then can we come to know narrated subjects in research practice? One way that we have found particularly useful in our research practice is a multi-layered interpretive approach called the Listening Guide. Developed by scholars at the Harvard Graduate School of Education and used and adapted in diverse multi-disciplinary projects (Brown and Gilligan, 1992; Mauthner and Doucet, 2003; Gilligan et al., 2005), this approach to qualitative data analysis provides a way of working reflexively with both critical and constructed subjects and with translating epistemological conceptions of relational narrated subjects into research practice.

Narrated subjects in practice: The Listening Guide

The Listening Guide employs multiple and successive 'readings' of interview transcripts 'each time listening in a different way' (Brown, 1998: 33). Our version of this guide advocates a flexible approach to the number and types of readings that can be done, depending upon the nature of the topic under investigation. Nevertheless, we have remained committed to conducting four readings, as described below, which intertwine reflexively constituted narratives, relational narrated subjects, and constructed and critical subjects.

READING 1: RELATIONAL AND REFLEXIVELY CONSTITUTED NARRATIVES

The Listening Guide's first reading of interview transcripts is a reflexive reading of narrative. The narrative portion of this reading varies depending on one's particular disciplinary and theoretical orientation (Riessman, 2002). Our own approach has been to combine the basic grounded theory question, which is 'what is happening here?' (Charmaz, 2006), with elements from narrative analysis such as an interest in recurring words, themes, events, chronology of events, protagonists, plot, subplots, and key characters (Mishler, 1986; Elliott, 2005)

   While tracing for central story lines, this reading also offers a practical guide for 'doing reflexivity' (Mauthner and Doucet, 2003). Specifically, the Listening Guide suggests the utilization of a 'worksheet' technique for this reading whereby the respondent's words are laid out in one column and the researcher's reactions and interpretations in an adjacent column (Brown and Gilligan, 1992). This allows the researcher to examine how and where some of her own assumptions and views – whether personal, political or theoretical – might affect her interpretation of the respondent's words, or how she later writes about the person. This process can occur at varied stages and, where applicable, between different members of the research team. However, we cannot know everything that influences our knowledge construction processes, and there are 'degrees of reflexivity', with some influences being easier to identify and articulate during the research, while others may only come to us many years after completing our projects (Mauthner and Doucet, 2003: 425). Moreover, the selectiveness of our observations with their alternating 'referential and anti-referential currents' must be constantly underlined so that reflective writing is viewed as a form of narration and 'that what appears in these narrations is a selection only' (Stanley, 2002: 144).

READING 2: TRACING NARRATED SUBJECTS

A second reading of interview transcripts attends to the particular subject or narrator in the interview transcripts, and to how this person speaks about her/himself and the parameters of their social world. In concrete terms, we conduct this reading by utilising a coloured pencil to trace the 'I' in the interview

transcripts. This process centres our attention on the active 'I' who is telling the story, amplifying the terms in which the respondent sees and presents her/himself while also highlighting where the respondent might be emotionally or intellectually struggling to say something. It also identifies those places where the respondent shifts between 'I', 'we', 'you' or 'it', which can signal varied meanings in the respondent's perceptions of self (Stanley, 2002). This 'I' reading puts the narrator in the transcript at the centre, at least for one heuristic moment. Its simple yet powerful effect is in reminding us to listen to how narrators speak about themselves before we speak of them (Brown and Gilligan, 1992: 27–8).

This reading for the 'I' resembles what Somers refers to as *ontological narratives*. It draws attention to the temporal and relational aspects of narratives as well as to the subject's own understanding of how she/he fits into a given narrative. Within this perspective, narratives provide subjects with identities, and allow them to speak about who *they believe they are*. 'Ontological narratives make identity and the self something that one *becomes'* (Somers, 1994: 61), and reading for the 'I' gives us access to this emerging narrated self.

READING 3: READING FOR RELATIONAL NARRATED SUBJECTS

Our third reading of interview transcripts is a reading for social networks, and close and intimate relations. It is informed by feminist theoretical critiques of individualist conceptions of agency, and their replacement with relational concepts of subjects (e.g. Benhabib, 1992, 1995; Stanley, 1993). It resonates with Somers' (1994) notion of 'analytic rationality' where all narrated subjects are understood as intrinsically relational and as part of networks of relations. Echoing Stanley's work, this is a reading that recognizes the narrated self-in-relation. It further underlines an approach to narrated subjects who are not constituted in language or discourse, but rather in relation to other subjects (Benhabib, 1992, 1999).

READING 4: READING FOR STRUCTURED SUBJECTS

A fourth reading of interview transcripts focuses on structured power relations and dominant ideologies that frame narratives. This reflects a concern to link micro-level narratives with macro-level processes and structures. It can be viewed as an example of what Somers (1994: 620) calls 'conceptual narratives' – that is, 'concepts and explanations that we construct as social researchers'. Conceptual narratives, she further writes, seek to 'reconstruct and plot over time and space the ontological narratives and relationships of historical actors, the public and cultural narratives that inform their lives, and the crucial intersection of these narratives with other relevant social forces' (Somers, 1994: 620). This reading, along with the other three readings, also aligns closely with Benhabib's position on subjectivity, rather than Butler's, in that it posits subjects-in-relation, subjects with a 'fundamental dependence on the webs of interlocution that constitute it' (Benhabib, 1995: 354), and narrated subjects that

are structurally located within grand or macro-level narratives. These stories rely, in turn, on how researchers re-tell and reconfigure them. As Benhabib asserts, this is not 'a coherent plot that moves predictably from beginning to end. Rather, because one's life narrative exists in a web of narratives with the stories that others will tell to make sense of themselves, there will always be 'retelling, remembering, and reconfiguring' (Benhabib, 1999: 348).

Conclusions

In this article, we have argued that the concept of 'narrated subjects' provides a path out of impasses between critical or constructed subjects and that the Listening Guide methodological approach offers a way of operationalizing epistemological concepts of relational narrated subjects in research practice. We also grappled with key questions that continue to be asked about this evolving concept of a narrated subject, concerning what is *inside* or *outside* of narratives and *how* we can come to know them. In relation to the question of what is *inside* narrative, we maintain a position more aligned with Benhabib than Butler – that is, we argue for an ontological concept of subjects-in-relation over a position that posits subjects constituted by language or discourses. As for the issue of whether there is a subject *outside* of narrative, we suggest that there are 'knowing because experiencing subject(s)' and that subjects act with intentionality and agency. Nevertheless, even if we do hold that there are subjects *beneath, behind* or *beyond* narrated subjects, we also contend that, as researchers, we cannot come to fully know them.

  In response to the question of *how* we can come to know subjects, we briefly introduced the Listening Guide interpretive approach and its successive layers of reading narratives. Combining a reflexive and multi-layered approach to knowing narrated subjects, it also simultaneously works with critical subjects through their 'ontological narratives' and constructed subjects through highlighting the 'conceptual narratives' within which everyday narratives are told and heard.

REFERENCES

Alcoff, L.M. (1996) *Real Knowing: New Versions of Coherence Theory*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
Benhabib, S. (1992) *Situating the Self*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
Benhabib, S. (1995) 'Feminism and Postmodernism', in S. Benhabib, J. Butler, D. Cornell and N. Fraser (eds) *Feminist Contentions: A Philosophical Exchange*, pp. 17–43. New York and London: Routledge.
Benhabib, S. (1999) 'Sexual Difference and Collective Identities: The Global Constellation', *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 24: 335–62.
Brown, L.M. (1998) *Raising their Voices: The Politics of Girls' Anger*. Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press.
Brown, L.M. and Gilligan, C. (1992) *Meeting at the Crossroads: Women's Psychology and Girls' Development*. Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press.

Bruner, J. (1991) 'The Narrative Construction of Reality', *Critical Inquiry* 18: 1–21.

Butler, J. (1995) 'Contingent Foundations', in S. Benhabib, J. Butler, D. Cornell and N. Fraser (eds) *Feminist Contentions: A Philosophical Exchange*, pp. 35–58. New York and London: Routledge.

Charmaz, K.C. (2006) *Constructing Grounded Theory: A Practical Guide through Qualitative Analysis*. London: Sage.

Clarke, S. (2002) 'Learning From Experience: Psycho-Social Research Methods in the Social Sciences', *Qualitative Research* 2(2): 173–94.

Clarke, S. (2006) 'Theory and Practice: Psychoanalytic Sociology as Psycho-Social Studies', *Sociology* 40(6): 1153–69.

Code, L. (1991) *What Can She Know? Feminist Theory and the Construction of Knowledge.* Ithica, NY: Cornell University Press.

Davies, B. (1992) 'Women's Subjectivity and Feminist Stories', in M. Flaherty and C. Ellis (eds) *Investigating Subjectivity: Research on Lived Experience*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Davies, B. (1993) *Shards of Glass. Children Reading and Writing Beyond Gendered Identities*. Sydney: Allen and Unwin.

Davies, B. and Harré, R. (1990) 'Positioning: The Discursive Production of Selves', *Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour* 20: 43–63.

Deveaux, M. (1994) 'Feminism and Empowerment: A Critical Reading of Foucault', *Feminist Studies* 20: 223–47.

Elam, D. (1994) *Feminism and Deconstruction: Ms. en Abyme.* London and New York: Routledge.

Elliott, J. (2005) *Using Narrative in Social Research: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches.* London: Sage.

Ferguson, K.E. (1991) 'Interpretation and Genealogy in Feminism', *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 16: 322–39.

Foucault, M. (1977) 'What is an Author?', in M. Foucault (ed.) *Language, Countermemory, Practice*. Ithica, NY: Cornell University Press.

Foucault, M. (1990[1976]) *The History of Sexuality: 1, An Introduction.* London: Penguin.

Fraser, N. (1995) 'False Antitheses', in S. Benhabib, J. Butler, D. Cornell and N. Fraser (eds) *Feminist Contentions: A Philosophical Exchange*, pp. 17–43. New York and London: Routledge.

Frosh, S., Phoenix, A. and Pattman, R. (2003) 'Taking a Stand: Using Psychoanalysis to Explore the Positioning of Subjects in Discourse', *British Journal of Social Psychology* 42(1): 39–53.

Gilligan, C., Spencer, R., Weinberg, K.M. and Bertsch, T. (2005) 'On the Listening Guide: A Voice-Centered Relational Method', in S.N. Hesse-Biber and P. Leavy (eds) *Emergent Methods in Social Research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Gubrium, F. and Holstein, A. (1997) *The New Language of Qualitative Method.* New York: Oxford University Press.

Harding, S. (1992) 'Rethinking Standpoint Epistemologies: What is "Strong Objectivity"?', in L. Alcoff and E. Potter (eds) *Feminist Epistemologies*, pp. 49–82. New York: Routledge.

Hollway, W. and Jefferson, T. (2000) *Doing Qualitative Research Differently: Free Association, Narrative and the Interview Method.* London: Sage.

Honan, E., Knobel, M., Baker, C. and Davies, B. (2000) 'Producing Possible Hannahs: Theory and the Subject of Research', *Qualitative Inquiry* 6(1): 9–32.

Macleod, C. and Durrheim, K. (2002) 'Foucauldian Feminism: The Implications of Governmentality', *Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour* 32(1): 41–60.

McNay, L. (1993) *Foucault and Feminism: Power, Gender and the Self.* Boston, MA: Northeastern University Press.

McNay, L. (2000) *Gender and Agency: Reconfiguring the Subject in Feminist and Social Theory.* Cambridge: Polity Press.

McNay, L. (2003) 'Agency, Anticipation and Indeterminacy in Feminist Theory'. *Feminist Theory* 4(2): 139–48.

Mauthner, N.S. and Doucet, A. (1998) 'Reflections on a Voice Centered Relational Method of Data Analysis: Analysing Maternal and Domestic Voices', in J. Ribbens and R. Edwards (eds) *Feminist Dilemmas in Qualitative Research: Private Lives and Public Texts,* pp. 413–31. London: Sage.

Mauthner, N.S. and Doucet, A. (2003) 'Reflexive Accounts and Accounts of Reflexivity in Qualitative Data Analysis', *Sociology* 37(3): 413–31.

Mishler, E.G. (1986) *Research Interviewing: Context and Narrative.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Nicholson, L. (ed.) (1990) *Feminism/Postmodernism.* New York: Routledge.

Plummer, P. (1995) *Telling Sexual Stories.* New York: Routledge.

Riessman, C.K. (2002) 'Analysis of Personal Narratives', in J.F. Gubrium and J.A. Holstein (eds) *Handbook of Interview Research*, pp. 331–46. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Rosenau, P. (2002) *Post-Modernism and the Social Sciences.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Somers, M.R. (1994) 'The Narrative Constitution of Identity: A Relational and Network Approach', *Theory and Society* 23(5): 605–50.

Somers, M. and Gibson, G. (1994) 'Reclaiming the Epistemological "Other": Narrative and the Social Constitution of Identity', in C. Calhoun (ed.) *Social Theory and the Politics of Identity*, pp. 37–99. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.

Stanley, L. (1993) 'The Knowing Because Experiencing Subject: Narratives, Lives, and Autobiography', *Women's Studies International Forum* 16(3): 205–15.

Stanley, L. (2002) 'Shadows Lying Across Her Pages: Epistolary Aspects of Reading "The Eventful I" in Olive Schreiner's Letters', *Journal of European Studies* 32: 251–66.

Stern, D. (2000) 'The Return of the Subject: Power, Reflexivity and Agency', *Philosophy and Social Criticism* 26(5): 109–22.

Webster, F. (2000) 'The Politics of Sex and Gender: Benhabib and Butler Debate Subjectivity', *Hypatia* 15(1): 1–22.

Weedon, C. (1987) *Feminist Practice and Poststructuralist Theory.* Oxford: Blackwell Publishers.

ANDREA DOUCET is Professor of Sociology at Carleton University. *Address*: Sociology at Carleton University, Ottawa, Canada K1S 5B6. [email:andrea_doucet@carleton.ca]

NATASHA S. MAUTHNER is Reader in Management at the University of Aberdeen Business School. *Address*: University of Aberdeen Business School, Edward Wright Building, Aberdeen AB24 3QY, Scotland, UK. [email: n.mauthner@abdn.ac.uk]