



Feminism and the Abyss of Freedom

Linda M. G. Zerilli

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In contemporary feminist theory, the problem of feminine subjectivity persistently appears and reappears as the site that grounds all discussion of feminism. In *Feminism and the Abyss of Freedom*, Linda M. G. Zerilli argues that the persistence of this subject-centered frame severely limits feminists' capacity to think imaginatively about the central problem of feminist theory and practice: a politics concerned with freedom.

Offering both a discussion of feminism in its postmodern context and a critique of contemporary theory, Zerilli here challenges feminists to move away from a theory-based approach, which focuses on securing or contesting "women" as an analytic category of feminism, to one rooted in political action and judgment. She revisits the democratic problem of exclusion from participation in common affairs and elaborates a freedom-centered feminism as the political practice of beginning anew, world-building, and judging.

In a series of case studies, Zerilli draws on the political thought of Hannah Arendt to articulate a nonsovereign conception of political freedom and to explore a variety of feminist understandings of freedom in the twentieth century, including ones proposed by Judith Butler, Monique Wittig, and the Milan Women's Bookstore Collective. In so doing, Zerilli hopes to retrieve what Arendt called feminism's lost treasure: the original and radical claim to political freedom.



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