Women's Philosophy Review

Stella Sandford & Alison Stone **Guest Editors**

Christine Battersby **General Editor**
Dept of Philosophy, University of Warwick, Coventry CV4 7AL, UK
(C.Battersby@warwick.ac.uk)

Margaret Whitford **Book Reviews Editor**
French Department, Queen Mary and Westfield College, Mile End Rd,
London, E1 4NS, UK

Alessandra Tanesini **Administrative Editor**
Philosophy Section, University of Cardiff, PO Box 94, Cardiff, CF1 3XB, UK
(ATanesini@compuserve.com)

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EDITORIAL

The two highlights of this issue are Miranda Fricker's interview with the influential US philosopher, Naomi Scheman, and Irene Gedalof's thoughtful review essay of some of the most important and recent feminist engagements with Foucault. Since Scheman's own feminist philosophy is profoundly influenced by Wittgenstein and Gedalof is herself in debt to Foucault for her perspective on theory, there would seem at first sight to be little in common between these two opening pieces. Foucault and Wittgenstein, it would seem, belong to different philosophical traditions.

Look carefully enough, however, at the Wittgenstein described by Scheman and any apparent incommensurability simply disappears. This is particular evident when focussing on Foucault's recently—posthumously—published writings on ethics in which the notion of a 'form of life' plays a key role. Like the Wittgenstein sketched here by Scheman, the question of what might be a homosexual form of life seems important to Foucault's thinking.

But if the two philosophers can be compared, their conclusions cannot be aligned. On the one hand, Wittgenstein—as depicted by Scheman—is a philosopher who feels profoundly 'not at home' in the world (17). However, although he was unable to identify with the culture that he found himself living in, he was also unable to imagine any particular alternative that might be better. The 'form of life' that provided the structures and the intelligibility of his localized world was one in which there was no place for an ethics that was politically based.

Foucault also is often 'not at home' in his environment. As we learn often in the live interviews that he gave, he felt alienated above all from the French cultural, and provincial *milieu* in which he was reared. However, Foucault escaped from France: not only geographically—to Tunisia, Sweden, Poland and the USA—but also historically. Indeed, his engagement with the past histories of Europe and its institutions is focussed always on finding the 'singular' that escapes the universal, and the alien or the foreign that is concealed within the apparently familiar or everyday. By showing that the 'homely' is, after all, not so familiar,

and that it has behind it a history that is capable of shocking us out of our complacencies, Foucault provides himself (and us) with a lever for political change.

Scheman talks movingly of the sense 'sadness' that emanates from the work of the late Wittgenstein. This is the sadness of a philosopher who emphasized that who and what one is can only be intelligible within a form of life, but who then could not 'envision a world in which he might be able to move around without consulting maps made by other people' (18). Wittgenstein's work evokes a community: there is in the later work, after all, no possibility of a private language. The 'we' comes first: the 'I' learns what it is through being immersed in the language of others.

It is ironic, therefore, that the Wittgensteinian self seems so desolate. Scheman's Wittgenstein seems like a man looking at the 'beetle in the box' of his private sensations and mourning the fact that there is no language that is not a common language with which to describe what he sees. Maybe it was because the reverse of perspective was too new and too radical. Wittgenstein evokes a community, but he seems to position himself always on some internal margin, both alienated and 'other'. Like Sophocles' Antigone (at least in Hegel's version which purports to describe 'woman'), Wittgenstein is 'the eternal irony in the community'. The playful language games and jokes do not stop him being also the enemy within.

For Foucault, by contrast, there is both more individualism and yet also more emphasis on the illusory, fragile or historically contingent nature of the ego as we imagine it. Since the community is less of a 'given' for Foucault than for Wittgenstein, there is also more possibility of working to change the individual via changing the community.

For Foucault 'a way of life can yield a culture and an ethics' in a way that is both singular, yet not isolating. He goes on in this passage from *Ethics: The Essential Works, Vol. 1* (Allen Lane, 1997, 138) to argue that to be 'gay' is 'not to identify with the psychological traits and the visible masks of the homosexual but to try to define and develop a way of life'. As such, Foucault advocates not asceticism but 'ascesis': 'the work that one performs on oneself to make the self appear which, happily, one never attains' (137). And Foucault imagines a homosexual ascesis: a manner of working on the self and inventing (not discovering) 'a manner of being' that is still improbable. It is this imagination of other as-yet-unthought and unrealized alternatives that makes Foucault's life seem less tragic that Wittgenstein's—despite the fact that Foucault died of AIDs in 1984.

As we move into the 21st century, Foucault's inventive imagination of other 'forms of life' provides a beacon of hope. Although Foucault died in 1984, it is his optimism that is more characteristic of the *fin de millennium*, rather than the *fin-de-siècle* melancholy that seems to hang over Wittgenstein's work. What has been left behind is Wittgenstein's sense of profound alienation in living as a homosexual and Jewish 'abnormal' in the period between the two European wars. Present-day modes of 'otherness' are not easier—are often, indeed, still fatal—but are less politically trapped in the pessimism of thinking community as a 'given'. For Foucault traditions are historically contingent: societies and ages (and also languages and discourses) are also non-homogeneous. The 'other' is not an Antigone, on the margins of the community, but is a singular that is everywhere present if only we look. As such, traditions, communities and cultures are subject to alteration. This makes the task of ascesis one that is open to political change.

It would be a mistake to suggest, however, that an engagement with Wittgensteinian language games or forms of life is philosophically outdated. Wittgenstein provides a framework for feminists to start analyzing the 'games' that philosophers (and non-philosophers) play. His analysis also helps us imagine different (less alienated) ways of sharing a language and of being in a community. The conversation between Miranda Fricker and Naomi Scheman makes this very clear as together they draw on Wittgenstein, and as together they explore just what sharing a commitment to feminist philosophy entails...

Christine Battersby
University of Warwick

Women/Philosophy—In Conversation
no 6 in a series of WPR Conversations

PHILOSOPHICAL DIASPORA
An Interview with Naomi Scheman

Miranda Fricker

MF: One of the themes central to your work is the constructed nature of social identity. In 'Queering the Center by Centering the Queer' (1997) I was interested particularly in the bit where you're talking about the idea of being 'born into' being a Jew, or 'born into' being a woman. I think that phrase is meant to acknowledge a certain passive relation to identity, while avoiding any kind of essentialism. You present it as a 'genealogical' and a 'historical' idea, this being born into an identity, but I want to ask you whether you'd be happy with the claim that it's also a biological relation of sorts (genealogical in the literal sense!), and so whether you'd be happy with being interpreted as offering a non-essentializing construction on the way certain social identities are biologically heritable?

NS: Well, biology is going to be relevant in all kinds of ways, and a number of feminist theorists have written about the ways in which the flight from essentialism has driven us away, not only from biology, but even from the body more generally, and I agree that such approaches are really problematic. There are a couple of ways in which something that falls in the category of the biological is relevant to the identities discussed in that paper. Certainly, being born to Jewish parents is, let's say, a matter of biology, and it raises interesting questions about adoption. A baby adopted by a Jewish family would be brought up Jewish, and as a member of that family, but certainly a child biologically born of

Jewish parents, or even of a Jewish mother, who was adopted by non-Jewish parents, could *discover* that they were Jewish. And that makes sense to us in a way that discovering one is Christian just doesn't parse, it just doesn't make sense. So there is the genealogical and historical notion of Jewish identity which—although not in one's genes in the sense that one could discover a gene for it or anything like that—is carried by biological parentage, though, of course, not only in that way.

MF: So, for someone who wants to take the category of the 'real' seriously, in various different ways (let's say, for now, in connection with social identity, rather than in connection with psychological states, which maybe we'll come to later) I guess there's a lot to say about the different things which can be meant by 'social construction'. If I understand you rightly, there's a kind of social construction that will be properly understood as explicating the notion of the real, of what's really there in an ordinary sense. I mean, social identities are real—right?—the way other socially constructed entities (Universities, for example) can be real. Perhaps those sorts of entities are socially constructed through especially well-entrenched and historically stable discourses, whereas other constructions are less discursively, and so less ontologically, stable. Does that tally with your approach to the realness of social identity?

NS: Yes, I think so. I think it's important to have a notion of reality that's context-dependent, and that isn't all or nothing. That seems to me to be extremely important—that things can be, as it were, more or less real. And more or less real in different contexts and for different purposes. I've learned a lot from the work that Michael Root has been doing, arguing for real social kinds, although we differ in a number of ways (Root 2000a and 2000b). He's more inclined to think that although the realness of kinds is relative to a time and place, there is one right answer that the social scientist doing

proper social science would come up with about the realness, say, of race in a particular time and place. But I want context-dependency to come in at an additional level so that these questions get asked: 'Who wants to know, and why do they want to know?' 'What's going to be done with taking this to be real?' 'Real for what purposes?'

MF I see, and is the requirement that we ask those questions basically anti-ideological? I mean, is it that we need to keep claims about the real in check to make sure they are not in the service of power relations in some unjust way, so that insisting on the questions is basically a methodological safeguard?

NS: I think that's certainly a large part of it. It seems quite like the caveats that Marx and Engels give us about the word 'natural'. When you see it you ought to throw down a red flag (advice that they notoriously failed to take when it came to sex and gender!). So, yes, very often 'real' is being used to mean 'out of our hands', and even if it doesn't mean out-of-our-collective-social-practice-hands, it can still be taken to mean out of the hands of me-the-one-who's-making-the-claim-about-reality.

MF: But in order to satisfy realist or materialist intuitions 'real' has got to mean 'out of the hands of the individual' in some sense, hasn't it?

NS: Well, right, but there's a difference there. It is out of the hands of the individual in that we can't just make it up. But the practices by which I describe reality are connected to the practices that constitute reality. And in fact that's something that Michael Root is coming increasingly to recognize in his work. That is, that social scientists using the concept of race, for example, are engaging in a practice that helps to reify the concept that they're using, even if they think that ultimately it ought to go away. So I think that this is really important: that when I describe something as real, it isn't just that in order to do so I must be sufficiently enmeshed in the practices to understand the language and so on, but rather that my doing it *is* a doing in the world. So it's our complicity that I want to get at.

MF: That's a really interesting distinction between—if I can put it this way, but tell me if it's somehow distortive—those interpretative moves which do constructing work and those which simply do describing work. But I'm not sure what kind of distinction it is exactly. One doesn't find it in Wittgenstein, I think, and nor in the social philosophy literature. I'm thinking here of the work of Peter Winch, for instance (Winch 1958). We've just got these interpretative practices that we're engaged in, and through which the social world is constructed—so long as we're applying our concepts competently. Full stop. It's difficult immediately to see where your distinction between constructing work and describing work is going to come in.

NS: Well, I really want to focus on the *doing* part of this. If I'm in a culture that's quite different from my own, and I wander around for a bit, not interacting very much, and then I go away, and write out my description, then either it will have some effect on the people I'm describing, or it won't. The distinction rests on real, material differences. So, for example, increasingly when western anthropologists go into other cultures and do this describing work, there isn't any firewall to stop the descriptions going back. So even for those descriptions that seem quite remote, quite detached, done by somebody who hasn't had any role in the constructing work, there's no telling—I mean it's an open empirical question—when those descriptions enter into construction.

Now some of the things that are socially constructed in our lives are constructed very, very deep, from practices we are barely aware of and which have gone on

with very little change for a long time. In such cases the description seems utterly on the surface—I mean, maybe we're using concepts which we know we made up yesterday. So our descriptive practices look, and often *are*, considerably shallower and less entrenched than the constructive practices. But these are empirical, material questions, concerning who is doing what, and what the effects are of what they're doing, and what actually happens. Something that is purely descriptive now can end up many years later being constructive because of something we never could have foreseen.

MF: I see. That seems like a very clear distinction: between a description's having and not having a causal impact on local constructive practices. It reminds me that the idea of being a participant in a practice has different elements. One is the causal relation you've picked on, which is, as you say, a material matter. But there's another aspect to being a participant that one might find especially in ethical interpretative practices. I'm thinking of the question: To what extent does a speaker identify with the concepts she's using? Bernard Williams, for instance, discusses this in relation to 'thick' ethical concepts (Williams 1985). Even though we can carry on using concepts which reflection has led us to disown—concepts such as 'chastity' or 'chivalry', for example—when we use them, we do so in inverted commas. We're going in for a piece of, as it were, cognitive tourism. Now identification isn't a material matter, but a psychological one. Does that make sense to you, that identification is typically another element in what it takes to be a participant in a constructive practice?

NS: Yes, I think it makes a lot of sense. And I like the way you put it in terms of cognitive tourism, because that really does suggest many of the questions I want us to keep in mind. Very often, as tourists, we think of ourselves as having no material effect on the places we're touring, when in fact we do. Also, sometimes interpretatively speaking we're not as detached as we think. Inverted commas are sometimes called shudder quotes, and sometimes shudders start permeating, so that moods of ironic detachment become part of the cultural scene, and nobody seems quite to be meaning the words they're using. When that happens, I think we often use terms with a sense of being quite certain that we don't really mean them, and yet we may be fooling ourselves about that. It might be that we're actually meaning those words more whole-heartedly than we think.

MF: Absolutely. It's interesting that we talk about 'shudder quotes'—or here people often call them 'scare quotes'—

NS: Yes, in the US too.

MF: —Both of those are fearful terms, as if the word must mean something bad. But although one reason quote marks can be appropriate is to signify full-on critical disownment, there are other ways in which they can be appropriate where there's no *critical* attitude at all. Especially in a multicultural society, there will be many occasions where someone might want to use a word while acknowledging that it's not quite their own. In fact, mere age differences are enough to generate this phenomenon: as when parents might use teenagers' terms for things when talking to their teenage children, but somehow signaling that they're not quite speaking as themselves, on pain of sounding ridiculous.

NS: This also gets back to the point that I was making in the *Companion to Wittgenstein* piece about the diverse ways in which different people inhabit the same form of life (Scheman 1996b). The ironist, for example, is not a non-inhabitant of that form of life. She's inhabiting it distinctly differently, but she *is* inhabiting it. And also, as in my suggestion of how there can be a growing sense of irony in a culture, there can be many, many people who are ironic participants in a form of life. When that

happens, the form of life is going to be different as a result.

MF: You have recently argued for what one might call a social constructivist view in the philosophy of mind, so that even desires can turn out to be established through shared interpretative practices (Scheman 2000). You make use of Wittgenstein's wonderful example of love, where the question of whether or not someone now *loves* another is settled in the future, depending on subsequent actions and interpretations. I'm wondering how much the retrospective relation in question is a genuinely *constitutive* one, rather than only a *justificatory* one.

NS: Okay. Usually when faced with that distinction I want to problematize it or reject it altogether. But in this case I want to say that if what's going on is merely that only in the future would I be justified in saying that back then it was love, I would want to resist that, because it encourages the idea that it already really was love, even though nobody was in a position to know that it was.

Now that's going to be true of lots of things which we wouldn't think of as socially constructed. There either is or is not a certain kind of formation on the back side of the moon, for example. Nobody is currently justified in saying it's one way or the other, but when we get there we will be able to. And I want to say, no it's not like that. That is, what is going on between two people at a certain time has a number of possible histories, and unless you're going to be a hardcore determinist, there are lots of ways to go. Some of those ways are matters for decision. That is, people can decide whether these feelings are socially inappropriate or otherwise problematic, so that I'm going to pathologize them, try to distance myself from them, or in some other way try to pull myself back from them. Or not.

I mean there are all kinds of things which can happen which are more or less matters of our own decision.

Or sometimes, of course, we make those decisions but those decisions don't work—that's notoriously what happens. In any event, all of this, at this early stage, is very open, and then time goes by and something happens. And so now when we look back and we look at that whole pattern, it can be just *true* to say that it was love. Whereas under one of these alternative histories it just wouldn't be true. But up to a certain point the very same things have gone on—all of the molecules have been in all of the same places.

MF: That's very interesting. I mean it seems to me to be an example of how the hermeneutical nature of our psychological states points us to anti-individualism. Your take on anti-individualism in your recent paper in *The Cambridge Companion to Feminism in Philosophy* (Scheman 2000) and, interestingly enough, in that very, very early piece in *Discovering Reality* (Scheman 1983) where you're talking about the same issues—

NS: Yes, I've been trying to make that piece make sense to philosophers ever since!

MF —Aha! Well, I suppose for many people it's very counter-intuitive that what psychological states we're in should depend both on other people (collective interpretative practices) and also on what happens, on how things pan out in the future. It generates a curious displacement—both laterally across social space and vertically through history—of what we originally might have thought of as a little nugget in the head of the individual.

NS: Exactly. So supervenience becomes rather empty, because you can't even restrict it to the entire universe up to now.

MF: Yes, it becomes especially unclear what the subvenient element can possibly be.

NS: Right. This gets at what I think is one of the largest ways of thinking about what I've been doing, and it goes back to the general question of what we mean by social construction. One of the things I think is really useful about spending time doing things like theorizing transsexuality or being a secular Jew—doing things which are nowhere near the ordinary subject matter of analytic philosophy, but off in women's studies, or queer theory or post-colonial studies—is that what you're thinking about are various politicized matters of life and death subject-positions. What I want to say is, talk of social constructedness only makes sense, only shows up, when someone needs to object to the construction, when it rubs someone the wrong way.

MF: What implications does that have for any contrast you might want to hold on to between social facts, which are constructed, and natural facts, which are not, or not in the same way?

NS: Okay. What you seem to asking is: 'Is there an ontological distinction between the constructedness of the social world and the constructedness of the physical world?' What I want to suggest is that there are two senses of constructed. One is the material–physical, which involves the moving around of bodies in space. The other is the discursive. But when people talk about the discursive they often fail to attend sufficiently to the way that constructing the family, or the university, or a kinship system, requires bodies being in certain forms of contiguity with other bodies, or the actual construction of houses for people to live in, or of buildings for there to be seminar rooms in, and so on. There's really a mesh of material construction and interpretative construction.

Well, I think there's something analogous in the constructedness of the physical world. That is, as we know the physical world, as we move around in it and learn about it, we interact with it physically, we move bits and pieces of it around as we take some chunk of it into the laboratory or bombard it with electrons, or whatever. So, what I want to say about the interpretative practices which structure the physical world is that at the limit they are Kantian, in the sense that we cannot describe them, and the attempt to do so pushes at limits beyond which we can't go. We can only acknowledge something as a construction by saying something of the form, 'I object', or 'this hurts', or 'this doesn't work for me'.

MF: And that's what we lack in relation to what Kant calls the categories?

NS: Right, exactly. And when we're at that stage, then we can't talk about them, we can't see ourselves doing any constructing.

MF: So conflicts can arise between different theories about the natural world, but there would come a point where conflict could no longer arise, and that point presumably couldn't fall much short of Kantian categories—thinking in causal terms, or in terms of the passage of time, for instance. So when the possibility of critical disagreement runs out, that's when we hit some kind of a 'given'?

NS: Yes, except that I want us always to be humble about knowing *when* we've reached that point, and remain open to having somebody dissent. People—even quite conservative people—say, yes we need to open up the sciences to people who've been excluded as a matter of justice, but of course it won't change the content of any of that science. And I want to say, well, yes, I grant you it seems in many cases unlikely that it would, but how do you *know*? You're not in a position to tell. So let's do what we have to do as a matter of social justice, and then wait and let the epistemological and ontological chips fall where they may. We won't know until we try.

MF: No telling in advance ...

NS: Exactly. Now when we catch ourselves doing the constructing, the constructing no longer really works. But what is that 'catching ourselves'? Well, as long as the constructing remains substantively empty—Kantian—you can't really catch yourself, nor can someone else catch you out at using the caregories.

MF: To catch oneself out, or to be caught out, is presumably for the thought to arise that there's an alternative, a better, way of going on. If I can put it in terms of concept application, the moment of being caught out is a moment where one's own concepts are put into question by the availability of some (perhaps half-formed) alternative. And the Kantian idea can be construed in terms of the unintelligibility of someone objecting to our using, say, causal concepts, or concepts of time. Being 'caught out' is essentially a *critical* moment.

NS: Exactly, and that's why in doing feminist theory, postcolonial theory, and so on, you get to bring it back to the core questions of modern philosophy: realism, objectivity and so on—the core epistemological and ontological questions. This is why I think the answer to the question posed in *The Cambridge Companion to Feminism in Philosophy* that you and Jen have done is such an important one: What is the relevance of feminism or feminist theory for philosophy more canonically conceived? And an exciting nub of an answer to that is that we have ways of addressing the basic questions when we see how they look from the perspectives of people for whom what we do is uncomfortable, or hurtful, or ...

MF: ... exclusive?

NS: Yes.

MF: I can see a wonderful, whole methodological picture emerging here! Supposing one starts out in the academy as a philosophy student, one might find it intellectually illuminating to *leave*—to go off to different intellectual countries where (in particular) questions of difference are more alive and taken more seriously than they are in the analytic tradition—and then come *back* and see how different the concerns of philosophy look. It's as if one has to go away to gain a sense of how analytic philosophy has been socially constructed—how it perhaps excludes some people, to see that we didn't have to ask just these questions or in these ways, and that there are other, perhaps more inclusive ways, of going about our business as philosophers. It's as if we have to quit philosophy now and then in order to generate the critical friction that makes it possible to catch ourselves out.

NS: Yes, that's a lovely reflexive application of what I was saying. Analytic philosophy has naturalized itself (in the Marxist sense—it's presented itself as ahistorical); we have to find ways of challenging the naturalization.

MF: I'd like to bring up Wittgenstein again here, because you've used his philosophy in working out ways that constructive conceptual practices can be exclusive, and I'm interested in your attitude towards your tole as an interpreter of his work. What constraints do you take there to be on you as someone who wants to use his ideas for politicized intellectual purposes which the historical Wittgenstein would not, perhaps, have recognized as his own?

NS: I think there's no 'perhaps' there—we can be quite certain that he wouldn't have liked them at all! In fact it would be very, very hard to do the sort of work that I and others are doing if Wittgenstein were still alive.

Wittgenstein was so profoundly not at home in the world, in any particular part of the world he tried locally to inhabit. He found the culture around him one

with which he couldn't identify at all, but I've never found anything in his writing which envisioned any particular alternative, and he certainly never was remotely allied with movements for political change. So there is an enormous sadness in the later Wittgenstein, where the idea that one is only intelligible within a world, or form of life, is being expressed by somebody who didn't feel at home, and who didn't (so far as I can tell) envision a world in which he might be able to move around without consulting maps made by other people. What I and others have found in Wittgenstein is a way of articulating that sense of not-at-homeness in connection with some way of trying to find a world in which—as Sabina Lovibond says at the end of her book (Lovibond 1983)—one can speak one's words without using inverted commas.

MF: Quentin Skinner once suggested it as a constraint on interpreting historical figures that (if I remember rightly) one couldn't attribute to them any idea which an ideal version of the historical them couldn't have been brought to acknowledge. Even though your interest is far from simply exegetical, I wonder if you find that idea applicable to your relationship with Wittgenstein's work?

NS: I think I have trouble grasping the counterfactual. And I don't see myself as getting Wittgenstein right, as being in that sense a 'good reader'. Not that I reject that project, but I don't think I can take it on. I don't know that I have it in me to be a 'good reader' of philosophical texts. It requires a certain kind of love that allows one to enter the author's world, even if a world which is in some sense idealized, and I don't think I can do that. It does too much violence to my self. Judith Fetterley has a book called *The Resisting Reader* (1978) in which she writes about canonical American novels as constructing the readers of those novels as men who look at women in a certain way. So for the woman reader to occupy the

place of the reader as constructed by those novels is to occupy a place in which she views herself in a way that does violence to her. And so she urges the woman reader—since she doesn't want us not to read these texts—to resist occupying the constructed reader position. I read philosophical texts that way, and that precludes certain kinds of 'good interpretation', because I refuse to be what is in some sense that text's ideal reader. I won't do that to myself.

What I want to do instead is find ways of bringing Wittgenstein into my world, but without being held to his consenting in any way! I want to be judged not on historical but on philosophical terms. That is, my worries about misinterpreting Wittgenstein arise in the form of questions about whether my reading him differently would be better, *given* the reasons why I and others are interested in reading him.

MF: I think that that idea we get from feminist literary theory—the idea of resisting the constructed reader position—is a brilliantly apr one in relation to one's position as a feminist philosopher. And it strikes me that it's in a (very accidental) harmony with the ahistorical methodology of analytic philosophy. The conceit of ahistoricism in philosophy (for all its capacity to obscure difference) can give one a strange intellectual freedom—you don't have to *obey* any text, or any particular transitions a given philosophical idea has gone through historically. Does that make any sense to you, or do you find it too charitable towards the ahistorical method in philosophy?

NS: Well, I think that there are some crucial differences. I don't think I want to see what I'm doing using Wittgenstein as quite such a matter of de-contextualizing. Rather, it's to take seriously the context that we're in, and I see myself in the context of a number of interlocking political movements. Part of the problem with analytic philosophy, as we've inherited it, is that it doesn't

interpret itself against its own historical background. But I think this wasn't true of modern philosophy as it first emerged.

I mean, to take the obvious examples of Descartes or Locke, to read them is to read people who were utterly steeped in the political, social, economic changes of their times, and who write with full awareness that they're helping to bring new forms of subjectivity and personhood into the world. The historical locatedness of those texts tends to get lost. That is, their canonization has consistently, in large part, wrenched them out of their very salient historical contexts. So part of what I want to do is to put them back, and so with Wittgenstein. I want to say, look at the world that he was in. He believed himself in some sense to be, if not homosexual, then at least to have strong homo-erotic feelings, and those gave him a sense of himself which was deeply problematic—that's historical. He believed himself to be in some deep and important sense a Jew, and that gave him feelings of alienation and anxiety—that's historical. I mean he wrote through the Holocaust; his family needed to be rescued from it. These ways of feeling in and of the world, but also not-in and not-of the world, occur in a time and place, and that awareness is always just below the surface of his writing. Now, I don't know what would happen if I were to be able to pluck him from his time and place and take him round my world, but what I want to say is he would write differently now.

MF: On this question of how a philosopher's social environment can constrain or liberate critical thought, I remember I was very struck, when you gave a talk to the Birkbeck Philosophy Society a year or more ago, by something you said about pedagogical practice being of fundamental philosophical importance to you. Does its importance relate to something we've mentioned already, that one needs from time to time to quit the concerns of the academy, and take the time to listen to a different, real and concrete set of problems and reactions, in order to re-fuel one's critical faculties?

NS: Yes, I mean I like that point about pedagogy, because it really gets at why it's been so important for me over the years to have a significant number of mature students. The resistance that young students offer tends to be less interesting, I find, than the more specifically articulated forms of resistance that can come from mature students—their resistance stems from a sustained commitment to other projects and other people in their lives.

MF: How far is it the case, for you, that the eventual destination of any given movement away from academic philosophy (whether listening to students' resistance, or writing in queer theory, say) is always philosophy, if perhaps of some improved, more self-critical kind? I mean, do you see your own intellectual journey as *essentially* philosophical, as always ultimately directed at doing philosophy better?

NS: Well, I wouldn't want to say that it's *the* aim, but it certainly is an important and central aim. I think one way of answering that question is through the mutual embedding idea ... that is, I really care about the world being in some small way a better place because I'm in it. I mean that sounds really hokey, but it is what I learned about work from my parents. It had to do with finding something you absolutely loved, and which made the world better. That, for me, has most centrally to do with feminism and other liberatory movements. But I am a philosopher—that's what I'm trained as, and that's what I do best, and so it's a place where I think I can try to make some difference. If I didn't come back, then I'd be failing to bring back what I knew to that part of the world in which it might help make a difference.

MF: In that way, there's something deeply positive (though not necessarily optimistic) about your interaction with

Wittgenstein. His philosophy was, at least from one point of view, profoundly anti-philosophical, and I'm reminded of what you said about Wittgenstein not having available to him the critical tools that would have allowed him to criticize a form of life from within, so that philosophy might have helped nurture a less troubled experience of, say, homosexuality. But for you, by contrast, as someone who's committed to a habit of leaving philosophy in order to bring new ideas back to it, your work implies a positive conception of philosophy as an ongoing critical process, which is capable of constantly re-inventing itself through its interactions with new aspects of the social world.

NS: Yes, that's true, though one of the intellectual liabilities that I have connects with this. Well, I mean Marx diagnosed it in his critique of Utopian socialists: having an overly concrete view of what the future ought to be like. I have a tendency to read and write philosophy in the light of an overly concrete view of what its future should be like. A number of my teachers and peers have been critical of me over the years for that—suggesting that I was overly positive and constructive, instead of savouring the more negative moment in Wittgenstein's philosophy of trying to keep us from getting carried away. I accept that criticism as a valid one, although I do think in a certain sense the tendency is necessary. I mean, without it, it can be very hard to keep going with the work. But, certainly, I do need to sustain a greater scepticism than I find natural about what the future ought to hold.

MF: Something all philosophers, and perhaps especially feminist philosophers, have to retain a certain scepticism about is the power of *philosophy* to bring about change.

NS: Yes, that's a problem Wittgenstein—and Marx—identifies. You know: thinking that ways of changing the world are going to come from our thinking it out from

first principles in our heads. Our philosophical ambitions need to incorporate a modesty of intellectual goal, and we need to hold that in balance with a radical politics which has content, and is fuelled by a vision of a *better* world, and not merely the playfully deconstructive moment of 'Ah! What fun, it's a *different* world'.

MF: That raises a question that occurred to me while rereading some of the pieces in *Engenderings*. In one of them you say postmodernism is best understood not as a philosophy, or even a methodology, but just as a label for the world we're now in. Do you still hold with that?

NS: Of course there are so many different ways of using the term 'postmodernism', one has to be clear which one is being used at any given time. I do think there are distinctively modern problems and ways of going about solving them which are increasingly contested and found problematic, so that various thinkers and social movements are trying to articulate projects that are different from those we can identify as modern. I think that's happening, and should be happening, and I'm on the side of its happening. But there's a tendency, on all sides, to think that letting go of modernity is to let go of anything that does the work of grounding, to suppose that anti-foundationalism leaves us groundless. That's what's behind the working title of another collection of essays I'm thinking of pulling together, *Shifting Ground: Margins, Diasporas, and the Reading of Wittgenstein*.

To talk of the ground—the material stuff that's literally under our feet, and the actual world that surrounds us—is to draw attention to the concrete material relationships between what we do over here, and what various 'they's do over there. It's to ask what effect our activities may have on what other people do elsewhere. So, for example, the question of relativism seems a historical question from a time when there was very little

interaction between different cultures. The question of relativism as traditionally posed—'could there be something which was true here, but which contradicted what was true there?'—is a very different question now that what people do in one part of the world has consequences for what people do elsewhere. If we pay attention to interrelationship, and to what we actually do, then I think we gain a very different way of thinking about questions which have traditionally been played out only in very abstract terms.

MF: The stuff on social construction is especially important in this context, isn't it ... Given our philosophical inheritance is one which tends to present us with a stark choice between some as-if god-given foundationalism and an anything-goes relativism, then it's kind of obvious that the way forward is in the middle-ground of working out different strengths of social construction.

NS: Yes, and for me that really relates to atheism. The seriousness of atheism is to understand that we are in each other's hands, and that's it. That doesn't mean it doesn't matter—that's what mattering *is*. We matter to each other, for each other, with each other. That we make all kinds of differences in each other's lives, and we don't need somebody outside of all that to tell us that that matters. We have to start taking that seriously. So I think what philosophy needs to do is grow up, and stop resting its own seriousness on something outside of any form of human practice.

MF: Yes, it needs to grow out of a state which—in one of my favourite metaphors from you (Scheman 1996a)—is like an infant's being unable to walk without the illusion that she is externally supported, when in fact she can already walk perfectly well without any such support. Philosophy has to grow out of its need to posit foundational support.

NS: Right. There's nothing to be done but to try to take the best care we can of the world, and of those we are in the world with—and the rest is history.

Naomi Scheman, University of Minnesota (US)
Miranda Fricker, Heythrop College, University of London (UK)
London, July 1999

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FOUCAULT AND FEMINIST THEORY

A Review Essay by Irene Gedalof

Most of the anglophone feminist engagement with the work of Michel Foucault has occurred in the fifteen years since his death in 1984. In that time, critical feminist appropriations, reinterpretations and adaptations of various aspects of his work have become a key reference point for scholarship in the areas of philosophy, social, political and cultural theory, social and legal studies, and colonial and postcolonial history and politics.[1] Despite the fact that Foucault had so little to say to and about women and feminism, feminism has persisted in finding him a productive, if not always unproblematic, partner in conversation.

In this review essay, I focus on the debates which have developed within feminist theory over the last fifteen years that address three areas of Foucault's work: his model of power and the body; his work on ethics and the self; and the implications of his work for feminist politics.

Body/Power

Irene Diamond and Lee Quinby's 1988 book *Feminism and Foucault: Reflections on Resistance* brought together some of the first anglophone feminist appropriations of Foucault. The focus in many of these pieces was on questions of the body and power, and this has remained a consistent area of interest for feminist engagements with Foucault. A number of these early contributions argued for the usefulness of Foucault's model of disciplinary, productive power to rethinking feminist approaches to the body. In particular, the essays by Sandra Lee Bartky, Susan Bordo and Jana Sawicki, each of which was subsequently developed into book-length studies, remain important reference points for later feminist engagements.

Disciplined or Docile Bodies?

Bartky's article and her 1990 book *Femininity and Domination* aimed to 'examine those disciplinary practices that produce a body which in gesture and appearance is recognizably feminine'

(1990, 65). She draws on Foucault's model of disciplinary power working through surveillance and normalization to argue that

> in contemporary patriarchal culture, a panoptical male connoisseur resides within the consciousness of most women: they stand perpetually before his gaze and under his judgement. ... The disciplinary power that inscribes femininity in the female body is everywhere and it is nowhere; the disciplinarian is everyone and yet no one in particular. (72–4)

Bartky's emphasis is on the ways in which productive power constrains women. She argues that even when modern patriarchal power requires greater mobility for women, to participate in wage labour, to maintain high levels of consumption, to reproduce the investment of power in the body represented by a glorification of youth and fitness (Bartky, p. 80), the internalized gaze means that women carry that feminized body-in-space around with them, and remain constrained even as they are mobile. What she does not particularly consider is what unintended enabling effects that productive power might also produce; her principal message, therefore, is one that suggests a rather monolithic hold of power over women's bodies and sense of self. In response Elizabeth Grosz has argued that productive power should not be seen as rendering women 'merely passive and compliant' (1994, 144). The body's

> enmeshment in disciplinary practices is the condition of the subject's social effectivity, as either conformist or subversive. ... Patriarchal power relations do not function to make women the objects of disciplinary control while men remain outside disciplinary surveillance. It is a question not of more or less but of differential production. (144)

Bordo's early articles (1988, 1989) also use the Foucauldian framework of normalizing power to examine body disorders such as hysteria, anorexia and agoraphobia and to look at the ways in which women's 'potential resistance is not merely undercut but *utilized* in the maintenance and reproduction of existing power relations' (Bordo, 1989, 15).

In her more recent work (1993a and 1993b) Bordo has fine-tuned her reading of Foucault's model of power. First, she wants to put Foucault's specific contributions to theories of body/power in the broader context of feminism's own development of the field. Second, she argues that what is so useful in Foucault in his reconceptualization of modern power as non-authoritarian, non-conspiratorial and non-orchestrated and yet nevertheless highly effective (1993b, 190).

Bordo challenges those who conclude that Foucault's model of power leaves no space for a structural analysis of either systematic inequalities or of possibilities of resistance. For her, Foucault's model of power relations allows for instabilities which always contain possibilities of pleasure and enablement (192–3). At the same time she argues against overemphasizing the possibilities of disruptive, resistant contestations (194). Especially in relation to questions of body appearance, the body's malleability or plasticity, and the possibilities of individual choice for 'self-fashioning' remain, she argues, largely constrained within a frame of normalization rather than resistance (196–8), even as they re-appropriate symbols of resistance.

Sawicki's article, which reappeared as part of her 1991 book, *Disciplining Foucault*, uses Foucault's model of productive power and its relation to bodies and sexuality to reframe debates within US feminism over questions of sexual politics (1988). In her book, she uses a similar approach to reconsider debates over mothering theory and new reproductive technologies (1991). Sawicki's approach, continued in her more recent contributions (1996), is to start from questions that feminist theory and politics have thrown up, and to ask what a Foucauldian approach can offer that is distinctive in terms of framing these problems, identifying both how it allows different questions to be asked, and where it might highlight the points of resistance in dominant discourses. In linking her theoretical discussions to specific challenges of feminist politics, Sawicki's book remains one of the most productive extended engagements with Foucault to date and she has consistently argued that a Foucauldian approach to power and bodies opens up possibilities for new forms of resistance.

However, a more critical strand within feminist writing sees Foucault's model of the body and power leading to a characterization of women as passive objects, constructed by the workings of power into 'docile bodies'. Both Linda Singer (1989) and

Nancy Hartsock (1989, 1990) questioned the usefulness of Foucault's model of power for the possibilities of feminist resistance, and I will return to their arguments in the final section. Lois McNay's 1992 book *Foucault and Feminism* has also been an influential reference point for feminist critics taking this view. McNay's take on Foucault relies on positing a rather radical break between what she identifies as his 'docile bodies' stage, in which she places his 'undifferentiated theory of power' (McNay 1992, 5) and the later work of the last two volumes of *The History of Sexuality* and the interviews and short articles that were produced around the same time, that signify his 'turn to the self' and ethics.

As we will see later, a number of feminist appropriations of Foucault take issue with this discontinuous reading and argue for much greater convergence between Foucault's view of productive power and his later work, and indeed on the need to think both aspects together. McNay's 'docile bodies' thesis relies heavily on certain parts of Discipline and Punish (Foucault 1977b) (and in particular that unfortunate phrase itself) and engages rather less with Foucault's emphasis on productivity and proliferation in *The History of Sexuality, Vol. 1* and the interviews and articles produced around it.

A more extensive engagement with these texts might have complicated the admittedly rather relentless image of normalizing disciplines that emerges in *Discipline and Punish* (what Sawicki has called its tendency to a 'totalising rhetoric of decline' (Sawicki 1991, 98). Nevertheless, for McNay there is a contradiction between Foucault's theoretical concept of power as multivocal and unstable, and his historical analyses of disciplinary power which present instead a 'centralized, monolithic force with an inexorable and repressive grip on its subjects' (McNay 1992, 38). By focusing excessively on institutions instead of the individuals who are subject to power, by positing his notion of bio-power as a 'fundamental constitutive principle of the social realm', Foucault's 'subjected and practised body' becomes, according to McNay, a totally passive body, stripped of any notion of individuality or experience on which to base resistance (38–47). Power is located 'exclusively in external and impersonal mechanisms and institutions' (82).

McNay's reading of Foucault's model of power continues to inform a number of more recent feminist critiques. (See the editor's Introduction and several articles in Ramazanoglu (1993), and Deveaux (1996).) Yet it seems to me that these readings fail to follow through on the full implications of Foucault's move from seeing power as repressive to power as productive. Foucault's move calls for a shift from a logic of repression, exclusion and abjection to one of proliferation and productivity. Within such a logic, power requires not passive bodies, impersonal mechanisms and monolithic forces, but knowable, useful bodies and subjects. Contrary to McNay's reading, disciplinary power makes no sense unless it becomes highly personal and internalized:

> What makes power hold good, what makes it accepted, is simply the fact that it doesn't only weigh on us as a force that says no, but that it traverses and produces things, it induces pleasure, forms knowledge, produces discourse. (Foucault, 1977a, 119)

Power 'needs' to be able to make bodies useful in specific ways, to enable subjects of a particular kind, in order to be articulated. Individuals are not only the 'inert or consenting target' of power, they are 'always also the elements of its articulation' (Foucault 1976, 98).

To be sure, a model of power which positioned women only as docile bodies and dominated objects would be of little use to feminism; yet such a reading of Foucault remains highly contentious. On the other hand, a theoretical approach to power and bodies which fails to consider sexual difference, or which takes the male/masculine body as norm, also poses serious difficulties for feminist appropriations. This is a second theme around which feminist debates over Foucault's view of the body have centred.

Whose Body?

Just how androcentric was Foucault's approach to power and bodies? Is the problem one of a failure to consider the details of women's specific positioning within power relations, an enterprise better left to feminism anyway, or are there conceptual 'blind-spots' within Foucault's framework which make it impossible to address questions of sexual difference? Rosi Braidotti has

argued that 'when Foucault speaks of the body, he is (almost always) speaking about the man's body', so that 'the notion of power which Foucault develops rests on a masculine view of the body (and its power effects)' and that this 'constitutes a flaw in his articulation of politics with the materiality of the body' (Braidotti 1991, 95) For Braidotti, then, Foucault has not only failed to fill in the specific details of women's bodies and women's positioning in power relations; the problem rather is that women are somehow outside the frame of his problematization altogether.

Grosz has also argued that since Foucault rarely speaks of sexually specific bodies, we have to assume he believed, 'along with the rest of patriarchal culture, that the neutral body can only be unambiguously filled in by the male body and men's pleasures' (Grosz 1994, 156). For Grosz, Foucault fails to ask a whole series of questions about sexual difference that are crucial to his model of power and bodies. Do different bodies require different inscriptive tools to etch their different surfaces? Does power's inscription produce bodies as sexually different? Is there a quasi-biological or even natural continuum of (sexual) differences between bodies which power divides and organizes in specific ways? Alternatively, does power help constitute the differentiated biologies and pleasures of bodies? (156). If the body is a sexually indifferent 'blank page' for Foucault, as Grosz suggests, then these questions fall outside the frame of his problematization.

This relates to a second point of debate. Does Foucault hold on to some notion of a pre- or extra-discursive, 'neutral' body that then becomes a basis for transgression and resistance? Foucault's enigmatic appeal to the promises of 'bodies and pleasures' at the end of *The History of Sexuality, Vol. 1*, as well as some of his more problematic statements regarding rape (Plaza 1981, Braidotti 1991) and paedophilia, have all fuelled this particular debate within feminism.

This can relate to androcentrism in a number of ways. By seeing all 'sex', including sexual difference, as a product of a deployment of sexuality and seeing only a neutral, unmarked body as standing outside this, there is no space in which to consider the specifically female body as a site of resignification or resistance. But at the same time, as Grosz remarks above, the unmarked, neutral body has repeatedly 'stood in for' the male

body in the history of Western thought. Thus the apparently neutral transgressive body leaves no space for the specifically female, but allows the specifically male body to sneak in under the guise of universality. Additionally, the working of unequal power relations based on sexed bodies (or other differentiated bodies, delineated by race and age, for example) can also fall out of the frame.

For Grosz, Foucault never clearly explains what the appeal to bodies and pleasures might mean: do they pre-exist power, or are they 'neuralgic points within the deployment of sexuality that may be strategically useful? (Grosz 1994, 156). Elsewhere in her text, Grosz suggests a possible answer to this question, although she does not develop it herself. She writes that the body, for Foucault, is a 'resistant yet fundamentally passive inertia'; its

> materiality also entails a resistance and thus also (potential) modes of resistance to power's capillary alignments. It is a kind of passivity, capable of being mobilized according to the interests of power or in the forms of subversion, depending on its strategic position. (146)

In this view the source of resistance is in the body's location or positioning—its appropriate or inappropriate, normative or disruptive locatedness. This would suggest a reading of bodies and pleasures that looks not for some extra-discursive 'excess' or essence that stands beyond or outside power relations, but rather one that sits mote comfortably with Foucault's model of productive and unstable power relations as generating unintended resistances. Such a position, with its emphasis on specific locatedness, might also be more amenable to a feminist concern for sexual difference.

Judith Butler in *Gender Trouble* also reads Foucault as presuming a pre-discursive 'blank' body on which power is written, and which might constitute a pre-discursive multiplicity of bodily forces that can 'break through the surface of the body to disrupt the regulating practices of cultural coherence imposed upon that body by a power regime' (Butler 1990, 130).

Butler bases her discussion not on the 'bodies and pleasures' remark in *The History of Sexuality, Vol. 1*, but on Foucault's analysis of the 19th century French hermaphrodite Herculine Barbin. For her, the problem is not that sexual difference falls outside the frame, but that Foucault provides no genealogy of the bounded

body itself, taking it as given. This might have been the basis for considering the sexed/gendered assumptions behind the neutrality of the bounded-body model, and for bringing sexual difference into the frame by considering the leaky female body. However, Butler is more interested in its implications for the discursive production of the transgressive homosexual body as boundary-trespassing pollution, and its discursive links to AIDs as a 'specific modality of homosexual pollution' (132).

Such an approach to Foucault, which is less interested in his androcentrism and failure to take on issues of sexual difference, and more interested in gauging the extent to which he is useful in destabilizing all claims to coherent identities, is one that Butler is to consistently develop in her later engagements, to which I will return below.

Linda Alcoff locates Foucault's blindspot in the area of pleasure, arguing that for Foucault 'pleasure is a force that can be taken up, used, incited, fomented and manipulated, but is not itself discursively constituted' (Alcoff 1996, 108). This leads Foucault to take a problematic position on paedophilia, in which his attention to power relations seems dangerously suspended. This blindspot has, according to Alcoff, led to appropriations of Foucault such as that of Gayle Rubin (1984), in which power relations are evacuated from a celebration of a 'radical sexual politics', in which it is too easily assumed that there is a clear dividing line between transgressive sexual pleasures and practices on the one hand, and 'sexual coercion, assault and rape' on the other (113–4).

Alcoff argues that Foucault's own understanding of productive power needs to be turned back onto this blindspot to put considerations of power relations back into the frame in considering 'pleasure'. In particular when considering children, she argues, we need to be able to consider how power, discourse and desire are being configured (121): how power intervenes in constituting discourse, in adult representations of children's desire that interpret the child's expressions within a system of meaning based on the adult's (124); and how the child's differential power positioning within discursive games of truth might influence the possibilities of both 'consent' and of interpreting and respecting the differences of a child's sexual discourse (126).

M. E. Bailey reads Foucault's bodies and pleasures much more positively. For her, these bodies and pleasures remain embedded in power relations and offer no more (and no less) than the possibilities of 'strategic redeployment' from within those power relations (Bailey 1993, 115). However, this is more of an assertion on her part than a clearly worked out argument. E. L. McCallum also suggests that Foucault's 'bodies and pleasures' can be interpreted more positively for feminism, in terms of both gender and power (McCallum 1996). McCallum argues first that, given the absence of an analogous term to 'gender' in the French language, anglophone appropriations of Foucault have been too quick to assume that Foucault's '*sexe*' is always about 'sex', and never about 'gender'.

In McCallum's counter-reading of Foucault gender becomes the 'essence' of the networks of power and their effects that Foucault labels 'sexuality' and 'sex'—and here essence is to be understood, in a Heideggerian sense, as involving the conditions of possibility, the conceptual framework of resources, forces and powers that organize the possibilities of difference and that enable sexuality to come into being (84–5). Further, she argues that

> the thinking that links essential truth to sex/uality is that which inhabits the binary gender framework in which men are the privileged category; this is the structure of our thought within the deployment of sexuality, and those who articulate this discourse are 'men', whatever their biological gender. (91)

Foucault's call for 'bodies and pleasures' is, she argues, addressed instead to '"people" we can only begin to imagine' who might inhabit a 'differently-ordered power–knowledge schema' that is not constrained by the limitations of the prevailing binary gender framework (91).

McCallum's challenging reading of *The History of Sexuality, Vol. 1* may make a case for suggesting that 'gender' was there all along in Foucault; what she doesn't really address, however, is the absence, or at least rarity of 'women', which is also critiqued from quite a different perspective by another set of feminist commentators. As we saw above, for Grosz, Butler and Alcoff one of Foucault's problems is the assumption of a 'neutral' pre-discur-

sive body, which is one of the places where his androcentrism might work.

Kate Soper, on the other hand, reads Foucault as leaving no space for 'a pre-discursive, or extra-discursive body and reality and this, for her, feeds into a number of problems for feminism. First, 'to dismiss the idea of a "spontaneous" feeling is to undermine the feminist demand for a "reclamation" of the body and the expression of an "authentic' desire"' (1993, 33). Second, it suggests an overemphasis on discursive production over material, i.e. economic and political, conditions (33–6). Third, it leads to promoting a desexualized and decontextualized form of 'bodies and pleasures', privileging an individualistic conception of the self (38).

Soper's fourth problem draws on Foucault's reading of the Lapcourt incident in *The History of Sexuality Vol. 1*. This concerns Foucault's reading—notorious particularly amongst feminists—of a 19th century case of sexual abuse of a young girl as one of 'trivial' or 'simple bucolic pleasures'. Soper warns that a theoretical framework which allows no space for a pre- or extra-discursive reality can leave the door open to dismissing or downplaying any set of new discourses, including feminism, in the same way.

For Soper, then, Foucault leaves no space in which to consider the effects of power at anything other than the level of subjective experience: the socio-economic conditions of women's subordination are left outside the frame (1995, 24). Similarly, Ramazanoglu (1993) asserts that Foucault treats 'material bodies as wholly irrelevant to explanations of sexual and other social relations' and that his

> version of social construction does not resolve problems about how we understand the body from the vantage point of subordinated women's bodily experiences. (1993, 7)

Maureen Cain (1993) and Monique Deveaux (1996) make similar claims that link what they identify as Foucault's resistance to considering the extra-discursive or the material to an inability to consider women's specificity. For Ramazanoglu, as for Soper, this is also linked to what she identifies as Foucault's resistance to any kind of structural analysis of women's systematic subordination (Ramazanoglu 1993, 9–10).

A final way in which feminist theorists have questioned the androcentrism of Foucault's view of bodies and power is through the question of relationality in Foucault's model. Ros Diprose argues that Foucault's focus tends to be on the singular, individualized body normalized through the clinical gaze. What needs to be added to this is a consideration of the relations between two sexualized bodies in the clinical encounter (1998, 36–9).

Jon Simons (1996, 179–87) argues that Foucault's view of subjectification is limited in working through a model of the isolated body/self and in not thinking about the role of relatedness and mutuality that is part of the subjectification process. In particular, women's roles as mothers and professional carers need to be seen as intrinsic to the workings of productive power. Simons thus joins other feminist appropriations of Foucault in insisting on finding a place for sexual difference within a Foucauldian framework. This question of relationality also is key to feminist debates over Foucault's work on ethics and the self, and its implications for feminist politics. However, before moving on to these points, I want to look at a final set of feminist engagements with Foucault's work on power and the body, which centre around the work of Judith Butler.

Performativity and Foucault

Foucault's work on the productive and normalizing effects of power in producing bodies, subjects and identities is one of Butler's key reference points for her genealogical critiques of gender (in *Gender Trouble*, 1990) and sex (in *Bodies that Matter*, 1993). Her description of the ways in which 'sex' and bodies are 'materialized' owes much to Foucault's understanding of the 'productive and ... materializing effects of regulatory power (Butler 1993, 9–10). Like Foucault, Butler argues that both regulation and the possibilities of resistance are produced through this process. Because norms need to be continuously reiterated and rearticulated, because bodies need to be rematerialized, there is always the possibility for rearticulations that call into question 'the hegemonic force of that very regulatory law' (2).

Butler is best known for conceptualizing identity and bodies in terms of 'performativity'. Performativity is not in itself a

Foucauldian concept, but remains, in Butler's usage, in some sort of conversation with a Foucauldian understanding of the relationship between power, knowledge and subjects. In a 1994 interview, Butler makes this link herself when she describes her trajectory to the concept of performativity:

> I begin with the Foucauldian premise that power works in part through discourse and it works in part to produce and destabilise subjects. But then, when one starts to think carefully about how discourse might be said to produce a subject ... it's useful to turn to the notion of performativity ... . Then I take a further step, through the Derridean rewriting of Austin, and suggest that this production actually always happens through a certain kind of repetition and recitation. (Butler 1994, 33)

Butler's move from a Foucauldian model of productive power to the notion of performativity and its possibilities of transgressing and challenging prevailing norms, has become a popular one for feminists engaging with Foucault. We see her trajectory followed by a number of the authors assembled in Hekman (1996), including Honi Fern Haber's work on the transgressive possibilities of the muscled woman (Haber 1996), Jon Simons on subversive performativity and mothering (Simons 1996, 196–204), and Moya Lloyd on the possibilities of alternative modes of engendering (Lloyd 1996, 254).

Margrit Shildrick, too, ends her careful application of a Foucauldian model of disciplinary power to biomedical discourses of the body, with an understanding of resistance framed in terms of Butler's concept of performativity (Shildrick 1997, 59–60). More negatively, Deveaux reads Butler's deconstructive project of 'displacing gender' (Deveaux 1996, 229) as *the* paradigmatic representative of a Foucauldian approach and uses this to argue against the usefulness of Foucault for feminist politics.

What none of these readings of Foucault through or with Butler seem to address, however, is that, with the concept of performativity, Butler is also taking a significant step away from a Foucauldian approach to bodies, power and language. For Butler, the subversive potential of performativity lies in two of its constituent aspects. First, the norms one is called to identify with

(e.g. 'masculine' and 'feminine') are not themselves fully stable or exhaustive (Butler 1993, 187–8); and, second, the normative force of performativity works, not only through reiteration, but also through exclusion and through constructing a 'constitutive outside'. These exclusions 'haunt signification as its abject borders or as that which is strictly foreclosed' (188).

To make both these points, Butler has to move away from Foucault—who, she argues, does not lend sufficient weight to this gesture of exclusion (35)—and advance towards both Lacanian psychoanalysis and Derridean deconstruction. But in doing so, she turns to models of language, and of power, that produce an unresolved tension with the Foucauldian strands that remain in her work. A Derridean privileged focus on language as a single symbolic system sits uneasily with a simultaneous Foucauldian focus on 'historically analyzable practices' and the symbolic systems these use (Foucault 1983, 369). The focus on exclusion also sets up an unresolved tension in Butler's work, between Foucault's understanding of power as productive, multivocal and diffuse (Foucault 1978, 150), and one which conceptualizes power in terms of the taboo and the negative.

Butler's essay 'Sexual Inversions' (in Hekman, 1996) seems to continue this process of moving towards a model of power that works more and more through abjection and exclusion, and therefore Foucault seems less and less useful to her project. Here, Butler challenges Foucault's understanding of modern power as being more about managing life than controlling death. She argues that, in the current context of contemporary discourses that code homosexuality in terms of death via AIDs, and of practices of AIDs medical research that apportion resources which determine life and death, 'death can not be the limit of power but its very aim' (Butler 1996, 72).

In response to Butler, one could argue that Foucault's move was never a simple one 'from death to life', as she suggests, but rather a move from 'to kill and let live' to 'to make live and let die' (Foucault 1978). Such a model of power does not expel death, but holds life and death, production and exclusion in interdependent tension, in ways that do not fit easily into binary paradigms. Yet Butler seems to want to re-impose that binary logic in her insistence on the primacy of death, exclusion a

abjection, and to move further away from Foucault's model of productive power in the process. I return to Butler's uneasy relationship with Foucault's model of power, and its implications for feminist politics, below.

Self and Ethics

A second major focus for feminist engagements with Foucault centres on his late work on practices or technologies of the self and ethics, represented by the last two volumes of *The History of Sexuality* (1985, 1986) and the shorter interviews and articles produced around the same time. How to understand this later work is a subject of some debate within feminist theory, both in terms of its relationship to Foucault's earlier work on power, disciplinary practices, the body and sexuality, and in terms of its implications and usefulness for feminism.

Was Foucault's 'turn to the self' a radical break with his earlier work that reinstates, to some extent, a modernist allegiance to an autonomous self and Enlightenment normative principles, as McNay suggests (McNay 1992)? Was Foucault celebrating the practices of the self and processes of subjectification of the ancient Greeks and Romans which, as he noted himself, functioned in terms of an economy and logic that excluded women altogether? If so, this celebration would be, as Braidotti has argued, highly problematic for feminism (Braidotti 1991, 96). Does the turn to the self and a 'stylistics of existence' in the late Foucault signal a privileging of the self in isolation? If so this would seem to be another move which would sit uneasily with a feminist concern for relationality, and for situating the self in a broader social, political and cultural context.

Moya Lloyd presents one of the strongest sympathetic readings that argues for a basic continuity between Foucault's earlier and later work (Lloyd 1996), and for the pertinence of the 'whole package' to feminism. For her, Foucault's trajectory offers a 'two-course strategy' or 'doubled politics' (243), in which his politics as ethics or stylistics of existence needs to be twinned with his politics of refusal or critique.

I will return to Lloyd's arguments for a Foucauldian feminist politics below. Here, I want to note only that she makes a case for

understanding Foucault's turn to the self and ethics in the context of his earlier work on the normalizing and regulatory effects of power relations. In this context, the ethical work of practices of the self is seen as creative and experimental, focusing on those points of tension within prevailing power relations where change is possible and desirable (245). For Lloyd this ties in with Foucault's understanding of freedom as a practice or process, a repeated subversion and transformation of power relations in the production of the self (246). But this production of the self, of promoting new forms of subjectivity is, in Lloyd's understanding, always undertaken within a field of constrained possibilities. It occurs not outside the context of constraints of power relations, but is exercised by a situated subject working with the socially available options, the patterns found within a culture (257).

In a more critical if still sympathetic reading, Jean Grimshaw agrees that Foucault's turn to ethics and the self contains much that could be pertinent to women and to feminism (Grimshaw 1993, 58–61, 65). But she argues also that many of the specifics of Foucault's turn to the self prove disappointing to feminism. She identifies three points, all of which bring us back to the issue of the place of gender, sexual difference, and androcentrism in Foucault's framework.

First, the conception of the self that emerges from Foucault's work is, according to Grimshaw, 'thin': its focus is on surfaces and bodies, and avoids 'deep' feelings, compassion and intimacy. Related to this, what appeared as mechanisms of self-surveillance and discipline in his earlier work, which proved so useful to feminism, are re-presented as instances of creative self-mastery. Grimshaw asks Foucault to remember his own warning that 'nothing is innocent'; particularly when, in contemporary culture, so many forms of self-surveillance are highly gendered, we need to be attentive to the differences between creative self-mastery and internalized normalization (66–7). Second, there is little attention in Foucault to the importance of sociality, mutuality and collectivity in these practices of the self (68). Third, there is little attention to the effects on others of the practices of the self Foucault explores (68). Both these 'blindspots' are problematic for feminists interested in ethical issues of context and relationality.

Soper has also argued that the ethics that emerges from Foucault's later work seems to be a private and masculine affair of self-mastery and authorial creation (Soper 1993, 41). Jon Simons, too, argues that Foucault's blind spot concerning women's and particularly mothers' role in processes of subjectification can lead to a solipsistic view of technologies of the self (Simons 1996, 184).

McNay argues that Foucault makes too great claims for the possibilities of 'self-stylization' that overlook the gendered structural constraints on who can and cannot take up certain practices (McNay 1992, 80). For her, Foucault overemphasizes the isolated self as against a feminist concern for intersubjectivity (157); this is manifested in his emphasis on the act of choice itself, rather than the content of acts and their impact on others (159), and in his emphasis on the self in relation to itself, rather than as embedded in and formed through social interaction (163–4).

In response to this, however, Lloyd counters that it is not clear that Foucault ever claimed that self-stylization alone could overcome all aspects of normalization. Additionally she asks why it should be assumed that acts of self-formation have to be conducted in isolation (Lloyd 1996, 256). Indeed for Lloyd, it is because these practices of the self occur within the social that they can and do have a public impact or cultural resonance: 'the most radical instantiations of practices of the self are those ... that provoke a critical, querying reaction' (258).

McNay's 1992 book remains the most extended feminist examination of Foucault's later work and also stands somewhat alone within feminist scholarship in positioning the late Foucault as a (flawed) Enlightenment thinker. As I suggested above, this reading of the late Foucault relies on a contentious characterization of the early Foucault and his model of power, and sets up a rather stark disjuncture between an early emphasis on power as domination, in which there is no place for agency or resistance (1992, 66) and a late turn towards a theory of an autonomous self (3–4) able to 'exercise his critical judgement free from the influence of dominant beliefs and desires' (90).

Within this framework, McNay argues that Foucault's idea of practices of the self offers much that is useful for feminism, including a more complex, layered version of difference that suggests more productive ways of understanding the intersections of gender, race, class, etcetera, to produce a multiplicity of individual subject positions (64–5). Similarly, she argues that,

> Foucault's reworking of the Enlightenment notion of autonomy challenges feminists to shift tactics from an insistence on a distinct and cohesive 'feminine' identity to a consideration of what women might become if they intervene in the processes that shape their lives (115).

Ultimately, though, McNay concludes that Foucault fails to be consistent in his allegiance to the Enlightenment principles she ascribes to him, because he refuses to make 'any definitive statement about the normative basis of his ethics' (117). Building on Nancy Fraser's earlier critique (1989) of Foucault's normative confusion, McNay gives us a Foucault who has an implicit allegiance to 'an Enlightenment discourse of political values' (McNay 1992, 140). Although this discourse includes 'the notion of autonomous political practice of the individual, free speech, and the overcoming of dominations of truth by institutions and other power blocs' (141), McNay's Foucault fails to make this allegiance to Enlightenment discourse explicit, or to follow through on it thoroughly.

In contrast, Lloyd argues that Foucault 'returns' to the Enlightenment, not to retrieve a set of principles or concepts which he has explicitly rejected, but rather to 'revivify a critical posture ... the philosophical ethos he identifies as "a permanent critique of our historical era"' (Lloyd 1996, 253). What underpins these different readings of Foucault is, as Lloyd has noted, quite different feminist attitudes towards 'the nature of political activity' (256), and the implications of Foucault's work for the possibilities of feminist politics. I turn to the debate on this issue in the next section.

Politics and Social Change

From its earliest engagements, anglophone feminist writing on Foucault has been split between two opposed opinions regarding the question of politics. Both sides of this debate agree that Foucault's work challenges many of the assumptions about what constitutes effective politics; where they differ is in seeing this

challenge as promising or dangerous. For those who think that there are serious problems with conventional models of emancipatory and identity politics, Foucault offers a welcome complication of old certainties. For others, his work undermines some of the key analytical and normative elements assumed necessary to any effective resistance.

Singer revealed some of these assumptions when she argued that

> if deployments of power are always local, variable and unstable, as Foucault argues, we can no longer conduct political analysis in terms of an oppositional logic between classes, genders, and included and excluded groups. (Singer 1989, 144)

Alcoff also argued that Foucault's appeal to micro-politics without an analysis of the overall structures of domination leaves feminists politically disarmed, and without a normative basis on which to make political judgements (Alcoff 1990). Hartsock's influential 1989 and 1990 critiques argued that Foucault deprives women of the possibility of making knowledge claims that are seen, not just as subjugated or disruptive, but as primary and constitutive of a different sort of world (1990, 121).

Nancy Fraser was one of the first feminist theorists to take issue with Foucault's failure to provide a 'single, consistent normative strategy' (1989, 31). This undermines the possibilities for radical change based on organized communities of oppression and resistance. Fraser argued that Foucault errs in equating 'totalitarian' with 'totalizing', 'normalizing' with 'normative' (56) and that he makes an impossible, deceptive and potentially dangerous claim to do away with any normative basis for resistance. While she recognized, with Foucault, that there is no 'normative archimedean point for political critique' (63) and that any political vocabulary can be co-opted and strategically reversed, she argued that, in the absence of a convincingly articulated alternative, movements for radical change must still rely on the language of rights: 'the standards we have are the standards we have' (64).

As noted above, McNay builds on Fraser's analysis of normative weaknesses in Foucault to argue that feminism needs recourse to both a general explanation of social dynamics and a metanarrative of justice (McNay 1992, 7). However, McNay also asserts that in Foucault there is an 'unresolved tension between his commitment to emancipatory social change and his refusal to outline the normative assumptions upon which such change should be based' (8). Again there is an underlying assumption that effective models and necessary standards of emancipatory politics exist, and are being denied in Foucault's work.

For McNay, this includes a clear normative framework that can only function from a position of transcendence, that is a subject-position that allows us to stand outside the parameters, framework or logic of an undesirable power relation, in order to name it as undesirable and to imagine how it might be changed (McNay 1992, 90–1, 140–1). Others have focused on Foucault's resistance to a recognizable structural or systemic analysis in which to locate the sources of women's oppression and resistance. (See, for example, Soper 1993, Ramazanoglu 1993, Ramazanoglu and Holland 1993.)[2]

For Ramazanoglu and Holland, Foucault fails to offer a clear sense of what might constitute fundamental change that cannot be re-appropriated by the status quo, suggesting that without such a normative vision of the future, no significant change is possible (1993, 253–60).

In contrast, those feminists who find Foucault's work more politically promising begin from the assumption that there are serious problems with the models of identity and emancipatory politics that have informed feminism to date: that 'the standards we have'—to borrow Fraser's phrase—are not necessarily the standards we ought to settle for. Sawicki has argued that a Foucauldian model of power ought to be seen as a challenge to re-think feminist politics, especially in relation to questions of differences between women. Understanding that power works through a multiplicity of social relations opens the door to a multiplicity of arenas of resistance, and turns difference into a resource rather than a liability. Concurrently, the tendency to reify difference is resisted if one understands that one of the ways in which power works is through categorizing and classifying difference (Sawicki 1991, 26–7).

It follows as well that if the body is a site of intersection of multiple forms of power, feminist theory should resist reductive attempts to locate a single or determining power-effect in the

female body, whether it be sexuality, maternity, appearance, etcetera (89). For Sawicki, Foucault's resistance to closure and absolutes opens the door to feminist reconsiderations of a politics of uncertainty (105–7). There are, for Sawicki, good historical reasons for feminists to be wary of universalist history and master schemes for social transformation; the rise of new social movements in the West are already putting into question binary models that privilege one particular struggle as primary to emancipatory politics (97).

According to Sawicki, feminists have good reason also to appeal to Foucault's

> negative freedom, that is freedom to disengage from our political identities, our presumptions about gender differences, and the categories and practices that define feminism. (101–2).

Biddy Martin argues similarly that Foucault's analysis of power as capillary, and of resistance as multi-sited, may be of more use to feminists than totalizing theories of power such as liberalism and Marxism (1988, 3–20, and see also Hekman 1990).

Responding to Fraser and McNay's critique of a disabling normative vacuum in Foucault, Grimshaw reads Foucault as problematizing—rather than jettisoning—general principles of equality, justice and mutuality (Grimshaw 1993, 58–61). Foucault, for her, offers the important recognition that general principles provide no guarantee in politics; their specific applications are always a good deal messier and inconclusive. Feminist politics can benefit from Foucault's recognition that those principles need constant interpretation and reinterpretation, and that feminism is not immune from unequal power relations and their effects.

While some suggest that Foucault can be useful to feminism in his 'deconstructive' or critical mode, but less useful as a reconstructive advocate of change, Grimshaw argues that these two aspects cannot be separated out so clearly. Foucault's critique is bound up with (cautious) reconstructive implications for politics and ethics. These rule out certain kinds of politics (e.g. liberating a true self, identity or desire, identifying a single source of oppression, a belief in perfect equality), but at the same time at least imply the possibility of other kinds, based on ambiguity, contradiction and complexity.

Lloyd has also argued that rejecting the model of emancipatory politics with an autonomous, foundationalist subject changes the nature of politics, but does not do away with the possibility of politics altogether (Lloyd 1996, 258–9). For her, Foucault opens up the boundaries of the political in a number of ways (242). He challenges the logic of identity politics by arguing that the 'we' should not be previous to the political questions it aims to resolve, but should rather be the 'result—the necessarily temporary result—of the question as it is posed in the new terms in which one formulates it' (Foucault 1984b, 385, cited in Lloyd 1996, 245).

For feminism this means that the differences between women cannot simply be disposed of by finding a unity beneath the difference; unity is rather a production that is always shifting and unstable (245). For Lloyd, a Foucauldian feminist politics challenges the need for a position of transcendence from which to act, as McNay argues, and the desirability of a pre-drawn map of fundamental change, as Ramazanoglu suggests.

Foucault's 'doubled politics' of critique allied to self-fashioning instead aims to produce sites of contestation over the meanings and contours of identity, and over the ways in which different practices are mobilized, from within the heart of dominant culture and power relations (250). It offers no guarantees in advance about which contestations or practices will bear fruit; but, for Lloyd, this is also part of Foucault's understanding of freedom as a practice, an incessant evasion of normalization through subversion, refusal and resignification, and not as 'emancipatory social transformation' (251).

How such a politics of uncertainty might be actualized in specific conditions remains a challenge for feminists engaging with Foucault. As I noted above, for many to date, the preferred strategy has been to turn to Butler's notion of performativity. Certainly Butler's own insistence on the possibilities of effective politics without a foundational subject owes much to her understanding of Foucault's model of productive power (see especially Butler 1992), as does her insistence that it is possible to turn

> power against itself to produce alternative modalities of power, to establish a kind of political contestation that is not a 'pure' opposition, a 'transcendence' of contem-

porary relations of power, but a difficult labour of forging a future from resources inevitably impure. (Butler 1993, 241)

But, as I have also noted above, there are limits to the extent to which Butler's notion of performativity in particular, and her overall view of power, language and identity in general can be made to 'fit' with a Foucauldian model. Those wanting to develop the possibilities of a Foucauldian feminist politics would do well to expand their repertoire of strategies and tactics beyond Butler.

One possible area for this expansion is suggested by Sawicki who, while acknowledging Butler's contributions, also points to the ways in which Donna Haraway's elaboration of cyborg- and affinity-politics builds on a Foucauldian basis to imagine ways of constructing political unities without relying on a logic of appropriation, incorporation and taxonomic classification (Sawicki 1996, 168–9). For Haraway (1991), the 'we' of feminist politics should be seen, not as a taken-for-granted ground or resource, but as an ongoing, difficult and possible achievement, a formulation with strong Foucauldian resonances. Exploring the practical political implications of such Foucauldian formulations remains an important challenge for future feminist scholarship.

Irene Gedalof
University of North London

Notes

1 See, in particular, Ann Laura Stoler's important work to recover and reconsider the place of 'race' in Foucault's later work, and to consider its usefulness and limitations in colonial and postcolonial contexts, which I regret not being able to discuss here (Stoler 1995).

2 A further point of disagreement between feminist theorists concerns whether to consider Foucault as a largely idealist or materialist thinker. Almost without exception those who agree with Soper that Foucault takes his distance from 'materialist premises' (Soper 1993, 36), and is primarily concerned with questions of discourse and representation, find his politics threatening to feminism.

In contrast, those who claim to find a Foucauldian approach enabling for feminism tend to characterize his work as materialist, or at least as problematizing the conventional idealist/materialist divide by insisting on the interdependence of discursive and material practices. In addition to those discussed here see also Hekman (1990) Hennessey (1993) and Barrett (1991) for 'materialist' readings of Foucault.

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BOOK REVIEWS

Becoming Divine: Towards a Feminist Philosophy of Religion
Grace M. Jantzen, Manchester University Press 1998
h/b £45 0 7190 5354 4, p/b £15.99 0 7190 5355 2

At the outset Grace Jantzen states her aims in this wide-ranging text with admirable clarity: to explore the possibilities of a feminist philosophy of religion beyond mere critique of the standard debates of Anglo-American academia. Prior attempts at such a critique had led her to a repressive repetition of those debates which endorsed the very masculinist structures she sought to reject. In order to set forth alternative structures, she turns to the strategies of continental thought, particularly psychoanalysis and deconstruction.

By adopting another way of thinking, she is able to propose a 'divine becoming' intended to challenge every aspect of the philosophy of religion. A good deal of the text is therefore concerned with introducing continental thought to those within that discipline, as well as with demonstrating its merit for a feminist philosophy of religion. While its lucidity and accessibility ensures that it will be of interest to any feminist, this is a text faithful to its title in its preoccupation with transforming a discipline.

Jantzen certainly succeeds in making the standard debates of Anglo-American philosophy of religion appear truly tedious and constipated, stuck in the concepts of a scientific Christian modernity. From her analysis it would seem that it is a discipline with a mistaken identity, more concerned with the Christian theology of post-Reformation individualism than with philosophy proper—other religions are treated as anthropological curiosities.

By examining the work of Richard Swinburne and Brian Davies, among others, Jantzen replays psychoanalytical arguments against the given, rational and unified ego in favour of the constituted subject who becomes. She deconstructs the general 'text' of the philosophy of religion to demonstrate its dependency upon a theist/atheist binary: one which supports the same conception of God as rational, transcendent, disembodied, unique and omniscient—in short, a God who is masculine. What is more, Jantzen argues that this conception partakes of a Western symbolic steeped in necrophilia, which renders access to the divine primarily a matter of salvation in the after-life.

While Jantzen's response to this scenario is to open up Anglo-American philosophy of religion to its continental Other, it is to Luce Irigaray in particular that she owes inspiration for her project. The contours of Jantzen's argument for becoming divine are shaped by Irigaray's thought—by Irigaray's insistence upon a passional divine formed through desire rather than in the image of a unique rational being. However, Irigaray is not discussed at length, although her writing is frequently cited in the form of chapter epigraphs along with that of mediaeval mystics whom Jantzen finds a creative resource for a feminist religious symbolic. This is disappointing, since a more detailed engagement with Irigaray might have been illuminating for Jantzen's own project, particularly in addressing the problems of a specifically gendered notion of the divine.

Where Irigaray is discussed, her thought is closely associated with Derrida's—an unfortunate typographical error on p. 73 actually attributes a quotation from Irigaray to him. This does not in any way detract from the rigour of the text and Jantzen's scrupulous fairness in her discussion of other positions. This error does perhaps inadvertently point to a primacy attributed to Derrida's thought which is not uncommon. Even if specific aspects of his work are criticized, feminist appropriations of continental thought often display a reverence for his strategies which, from the *feminist* point of view, might be worthy of more scepticism.

Jantzen's thought is particularly engaging here when she deals with other feminist writers—theologians and philosophers alike—with the aim of developing a possible feminist symbolic. She is critical of those, such as Rosemary Radford Ruether and Elisabeth Schussler Fiorenza, who attempt to locate the source of feminist theology in women's experience. The diversity of that experience is nevertheless viewed as valuable and positive if it is theorized as constructed experience, a procedure Jantzen undertakes with the assistance of standpoint theory. She argues that experience can then contribute to creating a feminist religious symbolic, though it must be accompanied by an engagement with the texts of the Christian tradition given their enduring relevance to creating and maintaining the Western symbolic.

Indeed, it is by returning to biblical texts that Jantzen finds

support for her alternative philosophy of religion, which is based on an idea of flourishing as opposed to death and salvation. Flourishing is a metaphor for human life that entails inner dynamism and potential for fruitfulness; it is a positive philosophy of openness, love and community. It relates to Jantzen's definition of human beings not as Being-unto-death but as *natals*, and which draws upon the work of Adriana Cavavero and Hannah Arendt. Aside from highlighting important feminist philosophy, Jantzen's discussion of the latter in particular is fascinating, especially in the way she juxtaposes Arendt's thought with Levinas in order to consider an ethic of natality.

To attribute such philosophical and possibly ontological significance to the fact of birth is very much a 'breath of fresh air' as Jantzen argues. She demonstrates its potential for radically transforming the Western symbolic and its religious structures, not least in the emphasis it lends to the relationship between self and other which is continuously negotiated. What is more, while she justifiably refuses to reduce natality to motherhood, we are also spared the idea that it can be analysed apart from actual birth and motherhood. However, in Jantzen's elaboration it is unquestionably a utopian notion, open to criticisms similar to those levelled at Irigaray. The exhortation to love here is overwhelming. Conflict is not denied, but it is largely attributed to the masculine necrophilic symbolic (and indeed to men), and forms no part of a flourishing of natals, whose primary concern would be justice in the context of community.

For Jantzen this text is a bridge between two philosophical traditions and an opening towards a feminist religious symbolic. She forms that bridge and creatively furthers Irigaray's idea of becoming divine, developing a distinctively pantheistic stance in contrast to the latter's double divine. She touches upon the issue of why becoming should be divine, but her refusal to dwell on that issue means that she is unlikely to convert trenchant outsiders to religious discourse, however illusory that 'outside' might be. Rather, *Becoming Divine* provides a wealth of resources for philosophers of religion, and for feminists open to the divine, to make a 'religious' contribution to transforming masculinist culture.

Alison Martin
Derby

At the Heart of Freedom: Feminism, Sex and Equality
Drucilla Cornell, Princeton University Press, 1998
h/b £28.50 0 691 10289 74, p/b £9.50 0 691 02896 6

This is an important and exciting book, falling within the discipline of feminist legal studies and, more generally, within feminist philosophy. Here, Drucilla Cornell continues to develop her unique position, first proposed in her last book, *The Imaginary Domain: Abortion, Pornography and Sexual Harassment*, in which she combines a philosophical principle, derived mainly from a reworking of Kant, with a concrete legal principle. (The legal principle is to work as a test to be applied in court cases.) She brings to bear a philosophical analysis to practical feminist issues, such as adoption, the meaning of the 'family' and international human rights.

Whilst Cornell addresses problems that have arisen from feminist debates—and reactions to feminism, within the US—her aim, as illustrated by the chapter 'Troubled Legacies: Human Rights, Imperialism and Women's Freedom', is to produce an approach to law that is generally applicable. She is situated within the liberal tradition in the US and therefore appears to be throwing down the gauntlet to her liberal contemporaries, showing how her feminist position must be accepted if they are to be consistent with their own arguments. This is a pragmatic, but also potentially dangerous, move. It entails the possibility of losing the more radical edge that is explicit within her work when she stresses the importance of socialism, critical race theory and issues of sexuality as well as feminism. Within the more radical frameworks, simply adding women into the existing social structure will not suffice. However, she does address these problems, along with the arguments against rights, in detail.

Cornell proposes a new solution to the old problem of equality/difference, whereby women are caught between the need to argue that they should have the same rights as men because they are just like men and the need to have rights that are specific to women. She argues that women should have rights, not as women, but as persons. However, she avoids the problem of the male being viewed as the neutral measure, as the paradigm case of what it means to be a person, by her open-ended definition of the term 'person'. Here, she draws from and reworks Kant's

meaning of the term. Central to her argument is the emphasis she places upon freedom. For Kant the person was free if *he* could abstract himself from his own circumstances and desires and make a decision based purely upon reason. For Cornell, the person is free if s/he can go beyond the limits dictated by stereotypes, to imagine her/himself differently. This imaginative leap is a collective experience, as illustrated by Cornell's reference to our collective imaginary or 'imaginary domain'.

To become a person is described by Cornell as 'a project', which we should all have equivalent rights to pursue. This links with her selective use of Lacan. To be a person involves being able to imagine yourself differently, both consciously and unconsciously. In keeping with liberalism, there should be no definition, in law, of what it is to be a person, just as there should be no pre-existing definition of what it is to live a good life. Each person should be allowed to explore what it means to be a 'person' through a social acting out of his or her identity. The law, Cornell argues, should provide space in which to act out identity, without imposing any definition of what it is to be a person. She lays particular emphasis upon sexual identity which—*contra* Foucault—is viewed as central to our self-definition from the start.

Unfortunately, Cornell's 'project of becoming a person' often sounds like the US image of treating the person as an 'enterprise' in which the courts are set up as neutral arbitrators between individuals. Cornell is an activist who is not naïve about the conservatism of the courts but appears willing to run the risk of fighting liberals in their own territory to produce positive practical outcomes for women. Her work raises interesting questions about the relationship between theory and practice, sometimes as a subtext to her work. Just as her early hero, Adorno, stressed the need to engage with contemporaries, so she deals with her liberal contemporaries in the US, such as Richard Dworkin and Rawls, who are mostly unlikely allies of feminism. The fact that her approach to theory is both eclectic—drawing from a wide number of theoretical sources—and also focused upon the cashing out issues of practical concern makes her work both exciting and very original.

The way in which her proposed legal test meshes with the philosophy is detailed. In a reworking of Kant and Rawls she uses

the following argument: we may not be free and equal as things stand. Nevertheless, we should be treated as if we were free and equal persons in law. Therefore, the question 'would free and equal people agree to this decision?' should be asked every time judges decide a particular case.

Whereas Rawls' use of Kant entails asking the question 'what would free and equal people agree to?' only as a thought experiment, Cornell wants to keep the question in play in reality. Rawls envisages that if people (actually 'heads of household' envisaged as men) were asked to devise legal principles, without being told where they would be positioned within a social hierarchy, they would produce a fair system. They would come up with the fixed rules that Rawls then supplies! Cornell wants to have the same question repeated in court (as a legal principle) to promote the rights of women and other 'minorities'. So, for example, women would not agree to put up with having pornographic pictures in the workplace, because when the question is asked 'would free and equal people agree to this?' the answer is 'no'. Further, free and equal persons would not agree to this treatment because it undermines their 'project of becoming a person' by imposing someone else's fantasy upon them.

This rights-claim cannot be defeated by the argument that women are not, in reality, free and equal. The point is that they should be treated as if they were. This is part of her argument in favour of her 'utopian' vision. Linked with this, she argues that the central role of freedom (in women's claim for rights as persons) means that women avoid claiming equality on the grounds of any similarity with men. They are to be given political recognition as persons, with the right to represent their own sexuate being. (She uses the term 'sexuate' to bring together issues of both sex and sexuality to subvert the legal position in the US—and UK—in which discrimination as to sexuality tends to be neglected.) Against criticisms of utopianism, she also argues that whatever social transformations are possible cannot be known in advance.

If I have concerns about this framework, it is not that it is utopian. Cornell does not make suggestions that could only work in a utopia. If anything, she works in the opposite direction, giving practical legal solutions to legal controversies that have occurred in the US. Her discussion of the dreadful US case of *Johnson Controls*, in which women were prevented from working in a highly paid area of work unless they had been sterilized, to avoid the risk to any foetus from lead exposure, is anything but utopian. Whilst recognizing that nobody should have to endure such risks, she argues that it should be for women to weigh up the risks to their health compared to their need to work.

Whilst raising feminist issues about protective workplace legislation, this is broadly reminiscent of the English nineteenth-century tort cases in which employers were not viewed as liable for unsafe working conditions. In language similar to Cornell's, but employed for an entirely different purpose, it was argued that employees were free and equal and could choose for themselves whether or not to work in these unsafe conditions! This argument was used to prevent employees suing employers for the resulting injuries. Cornell, who describes herself as a socialist and a feminist, does not ignore the economic imperative under which workers submit to unsafe conditions. Her solution—to argue for women to be allowed to choose for themselves—is not utopian. A more 'utopian' solution would, at the very least, be to refuse those conditions for everyone.

Whilst Cornell's analysis of Kant appears central the arguments developed in this work, her politics are not derived from it. The same applies to her engagement with other theorists, including Lacan. She makes some imaginative suggestions for legal reform, particularly within the area of adoption (which is sensitive to the stigma of the 'birth mother' who has been forced to give up her child by economic and/or political circumstances) and these suggestions are strengthened by an excellent discussion of the broadened definition of the family. Whilst these do not necessarily rely upon her stated conceptual framework, they are none the worse for that. Thus, this book often works well without needing to rely upon the philosophy that is used as its justification.

Janice Richardson
Staffordshire University

The Story I Tell Myself: A Venture in Existential Autobiography
Hazel E. Barnes, University of Chicago Press, 1997
h/b £21.00 0 226 03732 0, p/b £12.00 0 226 03733 9

This book deserves to be much better known. There are few enough autobiographies by women philosophers, and this one is acutely observed, beautifully written, and a work of philosophy in its own right. For the 21st century researcher interested in what it was like to be a woman philosopher in America in the middle years of the last century, this is an important historical document. More importantly, it offers one woman's philosophical meditation on the choices that she made and that gave shape to her life.

Best known for her translation of Sartre's *Being and Nothingness*, Hazel Barnes was a key figure in the introduction to Existential philosophy in North America and, indeed, to the English-speaking world. As well as lecturing on Existentialism and writing numerous philosophical articles on the subject, she also authored several works in her own right, including *Humanistic Existentialism: The Literature of Possibility* (1959), *An Existentialist Ethics* (1967) and *The Meddling Gods* (1974).

The Story I Tell Myself opens with an account of growing up in a Christian fundamentalist household in North Pennsylvania in the years between the two World Wars. (Hazel Barnes was born in 1915.) It then moves into a compelling narrative of the series of intellectual conversions that led Hazel Barnes from being a teacher of classics to a professor of philosophy: one, moreover, who allied herself intellectually with the philosophical atheism of the French Existentialists. Implicit within the text is also a narrative of retirement and growing old, and a story of female/female friendships, told not in the confessional mode, but with old-fashioned modesty. Thoughtful (often acerbic) comments on discourse theory, deconstructionist philosophy and the 'new' feminisms accompany Barnes' insistent asking of the Sartrean question, 'Have I outlived the project that was my life?'

Barnes identifies as a feminist, but also clearly signals her feeling that she belongs to an earlier generation: one that stresses 'equality' above difference (202ff.). 'As everybody knows, the avant-garde is eventually transformed by passersby into the rear guard,' she remarks ruefully, but without self-pity. 'If you ride the crest of the wave, you go down when it does' (170). Clearly Barnes is aware that her particular mode of Existentialist feminism that was once so fashionable has 'gone down' (at least temporarily).

One would like to hope that the 1999 celebrations of the 50th anniversary of the publication of *The Second Sex* might have provided some comfort to Barnes. But it seems somewhat doubtful, given her caustic comments on some of the new readings of Beauvoir. Kate and Edward Fullbrook's *Simone de Beauvoir and Jean-Paul Sartre: The Remaking of a Twentieth-Century Legend* (1994) is picked out for special critique. Barnes believes that the Fullbrooks overstate Beauvoir's creativity, by suggesting that *she* was the most original philosopher and that Sartre was incapable of writing philosophy without her help.

Since Hazel Barnes is usually associated with a defence of Sartre's philosophical position (including defences of Sartre's ontology against feminist critics who found his metaphorics of 'holes' and 'slime' sexist), it is particularly interesting to discover that Barnes felt in some respects closer to Beauvoir and Camus than she did to Sartre. As Barnes puts it, she found Sartre less appealing than Beauvoir or Camus partly because she found 'a certain abrasiveness' in him as a 'person'—a person she never met, except in print—and partly because 'in spite of Sartre's specific plea for the necessity of putting persons before ideas, his concern for others seemed to me more abstract, less emphatically compassionate' than that found in Beauvoir or Camus (161).

I found Barnes account of her failure to meet Sartre in 1957 during a visit to Paris (154) almost painful. There was a muddle about Sartre's diary which Barnes tries—but without much conviction—to blame on his secretary. She then goes on to remark: 'I never tried [to meet Sartre] again, partly because I realized that neither Sartre's English nor my oral French was adequate for the kind of conversation I wanted.' I could not help wondering whether a male philosopher who had done so much for Sartre in America—and who had immersed himself so thoroughly in Sartre's ontology whilst also developing and critiquing that system—would have surrendered in so defeatist a fashion to the impossibilities of a philosophical conversation with the 'master'. In places Barnes clearly recognizes that she is also an original and important philosopher, but she also has a tendency to situate her-

self as *just* a commentator and 'imperfect' translator of his Sartre's voice. The narrative that she tells of her treatment by publishers and other Sartrean scholars shows why this woman philosopher who claims not to have experienced overt discrimination, nevertheless gradually started to limit her ambitions.

Barnes did finally meet Beauvoir in 1984, and there is a carefully nuanced account of this encounter between 'the cat and the queen' (181 ff.). We learn that Beauvoir was in many ways for Barnes 'the apotheosis of the woman I wanted to be' (185). Perhaps because of this identification, Barnes unfashionably—but, I think, correctly—refuses to situate Beauvoir as the victim in the Sartre/Beauvoir pairing. On the other hand, this leaves Barnes with a problem. As somebody who is clearly herself in woman-centred relationships, Barnes is bothered by Beauvoir's explicit and emphatic denial of sexual relationships with women when, as we now know, this was clearly untrue. Barnes professes herself pleased that she did not know of the autobiographical material in the *Journals* and *Letters To Sartre* at the time of the meeting in 1984. Beauvoir clearly 'failed miserably' in maintaining the honesty in relationships that Barnes has made part of the project of her own life.

I have long been interested in the question of why so many women philosophers in the mid-20th century seem to have been drawn towards Sartre. After all, there weren't that many women in the profession, and yet some of the most important books on Sartre were written by women. As well as Hazel Barnes, books by Iris Murdoch and Mary Warnock also come to mind. In this respect, *The Story I Tell Myself* provides some fascinating insights. We see how the ontological frame that Sartre develops allows Barnes to think about questions of relationality and selfhood that have mattered so much to women. At the same time we are allowed to see that Barnes herself values the life of the mind above sexual, or even familial, relationships. If to be an intellectual is (as it is sometimes jokingly defined) to value books and ideas above sex, what Hazel Barnes provides us with is the life of an intellectual. Indeed, in this respect she seems to be more of an intellectual than either Sartre or Beauvoir!

We know that Beauvoir had difficulty in conceiving of herself as a philosopher at all and instead situated herself as a 'novelist' and 'writer'. I think Barnes does manage (despite her intellectual modesty) to conceive herself as a philosopher, and not simply as a translator and commentator. The story she tells shows that she is right so to do. Indeed, it is this existentialist autobiography that functions as her most notable contribution to philosophy. Indeed, it would provide an ideal text on a number of undergraduate (and graduate) philosophy and literature programmes, and also for courses on women's studies and autobiography.

Barnes uses the Sartrean notion of the 'singular universal' in constructing the narrative of her life (xii ff.). She explicitly positions the account that she provides of her own uniqueness as a singular existent as somewhere between the brief philosophical autobiogtaphy offered by Sartre in *Words* and the more expansive account provided by Beauvoir's four volumed autobiography (xviii). In '"I am not a philosopher": Simone de Beauvoir and the Delirium of Genius' (*WPR* 12, 1994) I have argued that it is particularly difficult for a *woman* philosopher to think of herself both as individual—as uniquely herself—and yet also representing the universal. For me, one of the most interesting and moving things about *The Story I Tell Myself* is watching a renowned woman philosopher trying to explore her own specificity, whilst also trying to align herself with *universal singulier* of Sartrean ontology and ethics. It's a fascinating account that is scrupulous in its attempt at self-honesty. Read it!

Christine Battersby
University of Warwick

Moral Understandings: A Feminist Study in Ethics

Margaret Urban Walker, Routledge 1998
h/b £45 0 415 91420 5, p/b £12.99 0 415 91421 3

The 'moral understandings' of Walker's title are the understandings that more or less successfully hold together a community that is, among other things, a moral community. They are the shared understandings that pick out and make intelligible the activities and concerns that are the matter of morality. As a feminist study in ethics, this is a book that draws on the now familiar criticism of the 'justice' tradition in moral philosophy. The 'theoretical-juridical' model, in Walker's terms, is said to provide

a template for moral theorizing in the 20th century, at least that which is taken seriously.

It has become fairly commonplace in feminist ethics and beyond to contrast the 'ethics of justice' with the 'ethics of care'. However, like many feminists, Walker is dissatisfied with this alternative. Although the care perspective articulates the way in which some women's voices have been silenced at the expense of the voices of some men, it by no means provides a voice for all women, or for all of those men who have also suffered exclusion. Further, where claims are made to represent 'women's' experiences, feminist ethicists fall into the same epistemological trap that they began by challenging.

Nevertheless, Walker contends that the ways in which credibility and authority have been contested by feminists provide examples of a 'critical epistemology' (57), according to which claims to represent moral life are questioned and the partial character of those with intellectual authority is brought back into view. It is just this kind of critical epistemology that we need for moral understanding and which forms the backbone of Walker's 'expressive-collaborative model' of moral inquiry (9).

Understanding morality requires an understanding not only of specifically moral matters, but also of the social worlds within which moral worlds are enmeshed. Moral knowledge is socially situated, and more importantly, since people's social situations differ, different people will know different things. The expressive–collaborative model interrogates the alleged authority of some of these knowledge-claims at the expense of the discrediting or simple disappearance of others. Here there is a call for 'transparency': for a view of 'what is really there' (216). Are things the way that we think they are, in particular are they as good as we think they are, or could they be better?

This quest for transparency can only take place within a particular social world, however, and so what we are looking at is not something that might be called 'real' morality, but 'actual socially embedded practices of responsibility' (204). Further, when we recognize that these practices embody differentials of power, then by focusing on those points where there is inequality or unevenness, we can bring into view previously hidden, excluded and subjugated experiences, testimonies and knowledges (220).

There is far more to this book than a short review can cover. In particular, the central strategy of 'charting responsibilities' deserves more attention, as do Walker's meditations on the problems of cross-cultural criticism. Here Walker's concern is not only with what we can say about the moral practices of others—and she holds that we are sometimes justified in saying that our practices are better than theirs—but also with what we are entitled to do in response to this. There are of course epistemological questions about the nature and scope of moral authority, but added to this we have to look at the history of 'missionary zeal' and at some of the policies and practices that have been justified in its name.

A further notable feature of Walker's argument is her focus on utilitarianism rather than Kantian deontology as indicative of the problems inherent in the theoretical-juridical model. Her analysis of Henry Sidgwick's *Methods of Ethics* (1874) casts new and illuminating light on the continuing dominance of utilitarian reasoning within the justice tradition, despite its many and well-documented weaknesses.

This focus contrasts with much of what has been written on the ethics of care, where Kantian deontology is targeted, often in a way that does not give due credit to its comparative richness. Indeed, Walker acknowledges the value of certain features of deontology (92). However, in chapter 8 Walker's account of 'stereotype vulnetability' suggests that there are serious obstacles to the deontologists' project of testing moral principles through trying to imagine oneself in the place of another—at least where this consists in trying to imagine what it is like to be that other, and where this involves a retreat from the social world.

This is certainly a book that I would recommend to those interested in feminist ethics and feminist epistemology. Those who are unfamiliar with Walker's work will find this an accessible introduction; those who have followed the development of her thought will find it satisfyingly rich.

Susanne Gibson
St. Martin's College, Lancaster

Feminist Thought: A More Comprehensive Introduction
Rosemarie Putnam Tong, Westview Press 1998
h/b US$69 0 8133 3332 6, p/b £17.28 0 8133 3295 8

The first edition of *Feminist Thought* published in 1989 was at the time regarded as one of the most invaluable guides through a wide diversity of complex, feminist thought. This second, more comprehensive, edition shares all the virtues of the first. Rosemarie Putman Tong has that rare gift of being able to critically grapple with, yet fully respect, the substance of widely differing feminist critical approaches. In turn the reader is guided to think critically, respectfully and sympathetically. Although well aware that much feminist thought deliberately resists categorization, Tong has categorized theories because she considers that feminist thought is old enough to have a history of its own.

This second edition retains categories established in the first edition—liberal, radical, Marxist and socialist, psychoanalytic and gender, existentialist, postmodern—although extending and updating them. The two entirely new sections on multicultural and global feminism, and on ecofeminism add two major areas of feminist thought. The book as a whole is an invaluable starting point for any student or teacher of feminist philosophy, feminist theory, or women's studies.

Rosemarie Putnam Tong makes useful connections between feminist theories of leading feminist writers whose work she analyses, and she points to the feminist practices which might flow from those positions. For example, she writes that global feminists are committed to the task of dispelling misunderstandings and creating alliances between third world women and first world women. The Egyptian writer, Nawal el Saadawi, has complained that 'Western women often go to countries such as Sudan and "see" only clitoridectomy, but never notice the role of multinational corporations and their exploited labor' (*Third World Women and the Politics of Feminism*, eds Mohanty et al., 224). The consequence, in practice, is that the same American woman who attends protests against clitoridectomy may not be willing to attend protests against the multinational corporation that pays her or her partner a substantial salary.

That the personal is political has been a long-held tenet of feminist thought, and in Tong's new book it is extended to the

understanding that the local is global and the global is local. So, if a birth control device is rejected in the United States because it has been shown to damage women's health, feminists should insist that the company producing it does not try to sell it to third world women. Feminists from the first world and the third world—radically different worlds—need to form particular kinds of allegiances: the kind of relationship Aristotle defined in *Nichomachean Ethics* as being a 'partner in virtue and a friend in action' (Tong, 245). As bell hooks has explained, 'women do not have to eradicate difference to feel solidarity. We do not need to share common oppression to fight equally to end oppression' (*Feminist Theory: From Margin to Centre*, 1984, 404).

Ecofeminism, as Tong explains it, is strongly related to global feminism; the dimension it adds is the focus on human beings' attempts to dominate the nonhuman world. Rachel Carson, in her 1962 book, *The Silent Spring*, has warned that 'man's assaults upon the environment ... the contamination of air, earth, rivers and sea with dangerous and even lethal materials [will undoubtedly] shatter or alter the very material ... upon which the shape of the future depends' (16–23). The first world, in its colonizing fervour, frequently has little respect for local knowledge and needs.

Vandana Shiva, in her 1989 book, *Staying Alive*, wrote of the way the Indian forest was viewed by British imperialists as a timber mine, rather than as a central mechanism for soil and water conservation. The consequence of the splitting of life-giving and life-maintaining functions of the forest from its commercial value has been the destruction of essential ecological processes to which forests and trees contribute. The struggles of women, tribal peoples and peasants, who are guided by a sense of the forest as a life-support system, are further being shattered by reductionist science and biotechnologies.

Whereas in the 19th century raiding operations for third-world countries' goods were masked under imperial rhetoric of 'civilizing the natives', in the 20th century an arrogant masculinist science made spurious claims of superiority. Today markets and factories in the first world define as 'improvements' devasting damage the new biotechnologies impose on the third world. Where life itself has come to be seen as a commodity, feminist

thought may offer vital sites of resistance.

Pam Hirsch
Homerton College, Cambridge

Sexual Consent
David Archard, Westview Press 1998
h/b £37.95 0 8133 3081 5, p/b £13.00 0 8133 3082 3, £13.00
Loose Women, Lecherous Men: A Feminist Philosophy of Sex
Linda LeMoncheck, Oxford University Press 1997
h/b £37.50 0 19 510555 9, p/b £17.99 0 19 510556 7

In recent months the media have been full of references to 'sex': to sexual acts, to sexual relations, to sexual perversion; to falsehoods, morality and truth; to lies, cover-ups and exposures; to private and public matters. *Sexual Consent* and *Loose Women, Lecherous Men: A Feminist Philosophy of Sex* provide constructive alternatives to media sound-bites and partisan debates about 'sex'.

LeMoncheck's *Loose Women, Lecherous Men* offers a well-researched argument for a feminist philosophy which adopts 'a view from somewhere different' on sex and sexuality. This view is different from 'the view from nowhere' and 'the view from somewhere better'; it is neither a universal point of view nor a particular privileged viewpoint.

The 'view from somewhere different' expects conflict on all issues related to sex; it accepts the absence of clear guidelines on sexual practices to allow for change; it involves becoming more comfortable with disagreement than consensus. But LeMoncheck insists that 'sexual difference' should replace 'sexual perversion'/'normality'. So, for instance, sado-masochism is not labelled perverse: it is an example of sexual difference; but this does not mean different from the norm. Acceptance of sexual difference dissolves the distinction between 'the norm' and 'the perverse'.

Moreover, this view from somewhere different requires the energy and the effort to enable world-travelling; these are requirements lacking in the views from nowhere and from somewhere better. 'World-travelling' refers to the significant capacity of imaginatively engaging with the other; learning how to engage with different perspectives involves learning how to listen empathetically. Here LeMoncheck has appropriated Maria Lugones' conception of world-travelling to describe the way in which feminist philosophers of sex can acknowledge the bias and limitation of their own social location and still seek less partial knowledge and greater understanding than can be achieved by either claiming neutrality or trying to be everywhere.

LeMoncheck supports her view with a distinctive take on feminist epistemology; world-travelling does not mean the end of rational deliberation about what we can know. Instead it demands imagination and rational discussion to achieve knowledge of sex in different social locations. Yet LeMoncheck includes the prescription that we do not claim sexual perversion when reports of sex conflict with our notions of normality. Thinking in terms of sexual difference is, instead, supposed to 'open questions of the normative status of a variety of sexual practices and preferences' (101).

Yet is this feminist philosophy too ambitious in its recognition of both sexual exploration, passion and pleasure, and sexual oppression, subordination and domination? Can feminist philosophers consistently argue that under capitalism the sexual oppression of women decisively undermines any possibility of female sexual pleasure or any 'reasonable' standard for female sexual expression, whilst also claiming that sexual liberation has allowed women to explore their sexuality, desire and passion?

LeMoncheck insists that both the cultural feminism (with its emphasis 'on the ways gender oppression informs sexuality') and the sex-radical feminism (with its emphasis 'on the ways that sexual liberation informs gender') can be held together in a dialectic between gender and sexuality (97). Nowhere is the consequent complexity—or contradiction—more threatening than in discussion what LeMoncheck terms 'sex work' (114). Sex work (such as prostitution and sado-masochism in pornography) shows 'the interplay of the subject/object dialectic'. To acknowledge this interplay is important if we are not to forestall discussion and polarize the 'debate on the meaning and morality of sex work' (116).

LeMoncheck's chapter titles represent her tour of sexual topics, including promiscuity, pornography, prostitution, men's sexual intimidation of women', as well as the question 'What is a

feminist philosophy of sex?'. The desire for empathetic understanding which motivates the adoption of the 'view from somewhere different' results in an impressive range of references and sources, and makes this a valuable source for developing a feminist philosophy of sex.

The focus and scope of David Archard's philosophical analysis of sexual conduct is much narrower—yet his book, *Sexual Consent*, directly confronts the complexity in judging sexual practices. As such, Archard's book addresses some of the epistemological and ethical judgments concerning sexual conduct that are left unresolved by LeMoncheck's account.

Archard focuses on a popular belief: whatever takes place in private between consenting adults should be allowed; or, that whatever is consensual and harms no one else is permissible. Here the distinction between public and private conduct is at work. Archard begins his analysis of what might be meant by 'consent' and what role it should play in the context of sexual activity with 'Questions of Consent'. Archard then looks at the role of convention in sexual consent (chs 2–3) and examines a number of cases in which the standard conception seems inadequate (ch. 4).

In chapter 5 Archard addresses directly the Principle of Consensuality that 'a practice, P, is morally permissible if all those who are parties to P are competent to consent, give valid consent, and the interests of no other parties are significantly harmed'. The next three chapters assess the limits of the Principle of Consensuality considering areas of sexual conduct, including incest, prostitution and sado-masochism' (ch. 6), the age of sexual consent' (ch. 7) and rape (ch. 8).

Archard's analyis of sexual consent reaches a test case in discussion of prostitution and sado-masochism—an equally crucial case for LeMoncheck's world-travelling. But, within Archard's terms, buying and selling sex (in the case of prostitution) and the harmfulness of sado-masochistic practices produce the 'worry' that 'the Principle of Consensuality remains inadequate to a proper evaluation of the sexual activity in question' (98).

Archard's goal is to demonstrate both that it is far from simple to claim that 'there is only one rule on the sex game, and that's consent', and that the rule of consent 'is not so evident that it is or should be the only rule of the game' (148). He uncovers

two sets of problems with the popular belief about sexual consent. First, there exist questions about whether there is a robust and plausible understanding of consent which can play its appropriate role in the Principle of Consensuality. Second, there exist questions about whether, however consent is understood, the Principle of Consensuality supplies a sufficient or adequate moral evaluation of all sexual activity. Archard concludes that the problems raised by these questions may be serious enough to persuade some people to give up the popular belief about consent. But he does not necessarily advocate this.

Archard's critical study of a central rule concerning sexual conduct does clarify the terms of an important political critique of liberalism by feminist and communitarian philosophers. The critique challenges the particular theory of the individual and society which attributes normative status to the rule of consent in public and private conduct. Yet Archard exposes the decisive weakness of this: the critique holds for only a certain conception of consent. Hence he advocates a revised conception of consent which does not depend upon atomistic assumptions about individuals and their actions: crucially, this would acknowledge that we are 'social creatures'. Archard urges that we not abandon too lighrly the popular rule of consent in matters of sexual conduct.

These two timely books have different styles and goals; one aims to achieve comprehensive understanding and the other critical analysis, while both authors acknowledge the complexity in matters of sexual practice. Both are worth reading in order to consider and imagine possible philosophical responses to the increasingly popular reports about the sexual conduct of men and women.

Pamela Sue Anderson
University of Sunderland

Daring to be Good: Essays in Feminist Ethico-Politics

Bat-Ami Bar On and Ann Ferguson (eds), Routledge 1998
h/b £37.50 0 415 91554 6, p/b £12.99 0 415 91555 4

This book is exciting, it probes the connections between ethical and political problems. Its challenge is timely. The temptation to yield to academic specialization in writing political theory *or* ethics furthers splits in Western thought that feminism tries to

subvert. In ancient Greek philosophy, ethics and politics are inextricably linked: the just or good individual and the just or good *polis* are interdependent. All moves to resist a division between the right and the good—between justice, reason and politics, on the one hand, and values, feelings and private ethics, on the other—must be encouraged. The challenge to explicate feminist ethico-politics is crucial and I welcome this important book.

Bat-Ami Bar On and Ann Ferguson provide a clear Introduction with a genealogical sketch of the public/private, politics/ethics split. They acknowledge that even those feminist discourses that seek to rethink politics and ethics still tend to reproduce these splits, in ways that are demonstrated by their focus or entry point to issues.

Bar On and Ferguson explain current debates in terms of two differing camps. One camp is concerned with rethinking politics. Its members deconstruct liberal political theory and include Beyla Benhabib, Wendy Brown, Bonnie Honig, Chantal Mouffe, Susan Moller Okin, Anna Yeatman and Iris Marion Young. The editors accuse this group of being silent on the kinds of ethical values and political strategies that feminists should be pursuing. The other camp is described in terms of rethinking ethics camp. Its members are engaged in creating alternative ethical visions and political practices. Included here are Kathryn Pyne Addelson, Sandra Lee Bartky, Ferguson, Marilyn Friedman, Carol Gilligan, Virginia Held, Sarah Hoagland, Eva Kittay and Diana Meyers, Audre Lorde, Maria Lugones, Nel Noddings, Sara Ruddick, Penny Weiss and Cynthia Willett. This group is criticized because alternative visions do not confront the problem of justice for those outside one's own communities.

The authors named may reasonably object to these critiques; however the editors point to the urgency of bridging the political *and* ethical. Indeed, the editors admit honestly that the articles in the collection fail. I was disappointed when the authors did not rigorously sustain an ethico-political interdependence. Nevertheless the collection is an excellent indication of how feminists should proceed.

In addition to the Introduction, the collection has seventeen new articles, all insisting that the personal is ethical and political

and requiring a situated ethico-political approach. It reinvokes a politics of the everyday that was central to the New Left in the 1960s.

Part 1 of this anthology examines 'Moral Psychology'. Cheryl Hall suggests that the ability to act ethically and politically requires agency and attention to the psyche's role. This is because the knowledge of what is personally rewarding is empowering in inspiring us to live meaningfully. Bartky discusses bodies' relations to an ethico-political psychology, calling for a radical revisioning of the body that extends our conceptions of beauty to encourage fantasy, play and imagination. Drawing on pregnancy, Susan Dwyer looks at moral agency and embodiment, judgment and action in tandem with the bodily experiences of persons. Bar On discusses everyday violence, particularly the devaluation of humanity and dignity that occurs in Israel and Palestine, where the voices of women from unlike social locations speak of similarities of pain, a will to revenge and a lack of consideration for others. Their perspectives 'have been ethico-politically impoverished by violence' (51).

Part 2 focuses on 'The Ethics and Politics of Knowledge'. Becky Ropers-Huilman maintains that the process of learning and teaching truth is as important as understanding what is truth. Feminist education is thus feminist politics. To secure a politically enriched ethics that is an ethically informed politics, Laurie Ann Whitt is critical of claims to value-neutrality and value-bifurcation. Making reference to indigenist science, she supports critiques of the Human Genome Organisation that patents genes. If a gene is imbued with ancestral life spirit it cannot be an individual's property because it is part of the communal heritage.

Also in this section Lisa Heldke maintains that to act objectively and, therefore, responsibly requires understanding one's connections with others' needs, desires and interests. Victoria Davion, using the example of rape, maintains that the importance of listening to the voices of marginalized subjects is a matter of good science as well as of social justice. Reflexivity requires openness about the politics of research. Positional honesty incorporates ethical values into epistemology. Also in Part 2 Renee Heberle criticizes feminist epistemology for privileging the sub-

ject at the expense of the constitutive qualities of the object of knowledge.

Part 3 looks at 'Identities and Communities'. Chris Cuomo and Lori Gruen call for a stronger ecological consciousness that extends moral orientation to nonhuman animals. Jane Flax argues forthrightly that effective feminist politics and ethics require intersubjective multiplicity: a theorizing that moves beyond metaphors of intersections to encapsulate contradictory positions. Lugones writes of the relation between politics and Latina lesbian sexuality. Addelson and Helen Watson-Verran demonstrate how a 'feminist ethics has to be suitable for a feminist way of life' (13). Addelson focuses on a community family shelter she is involved in, and Watson-Verran expands on her educational programme in an Australian Aboriginal community. They wield moral theory as a feminist ethic, combining professional, disciplinary, academic lives with the way of life of folk communities.

Part 4 deals with 'Policy'. Dion Farquhar examines the feminist politics of reproductive technologies and pornography. Ferguson defends a feminist radical pragmatism as a context-based ethical approach. With regard to prostitution, she maintains we need ideal and transitional moralities and ways to negotiate between them, hence expands categories of morally basic, risky and forbidden practices. Sarah Begus extends these categories to adolescents' usage of long-acting hormonal contraceptives. Nancy Campbell, in criticizing the gendered nature of care, calls for feminist ethics to be based on political claims about how power and vulnerability are produced through policy for pregnant drug addicts.

Daring to be Good helps to imagine how feminist ethics can become more politically effective. It draws out the political ramifications of feminist ethics. As the editors note, most of the articles do not fully achieve a *feminist ethico-politics*. However, this is an excellent and provocative collection for students and academics that highlights the connections between ethics and politics.

Elisabeth Porter
University of Ulster at Coleraine

Simone de Beauvoir's The Second Sex*: New Interdisciplinary Essays*

Ruth Evans (ed.), Manchester University Press 1998
h/b £40 0 7190 4302 6, p/b £13.99 0 7190 4303 4

At one time, existentialists and (post)structuralists were set up as adversaries, in an intellectual engagement in which it was necessary to take sides. It is becoming clearer now the extent to which the two 'parties' occupy the same intellectual space, and are, despite their differences, on speaking terms. This argument is made in Ruth Evans' introduction to a new collection of interdisciplinary essays on *The Second Sex*, where she suggests that we can now recognize in Simone de Beauvoir's still astonishing 1949 text 'the uncanny recurrence of preoccupations that supposedly arose after it was written' (3). Her essay appeals to Lyotard, Michel de Certeau and Judith Butler for interpretative schemas, re-evaluating *The Second Sex* in the light of recent theory.

And in effect, when questions of *representation* and *style* and even *performance* are foregrounded, Simone de Beauvoir does look quite different. Only recently, around the time of her death in 1986 and after, she was being described as 'male-identified' and anti-women. The present collection, with its focus on Beauvoir's stylistics, her rhetorical strategies, her use of irony, her representational tactics, and her citationality, shows that it is possible to see Beauvoir with fresh and less hostile or ambivalent eyes.

The cover shows a collaged woman resembling Simone de Beauvoir; one can see where strips of paper have been pasted on, but it is not clear that under the strips of paper there is anything more real—it looks as though there is yet another mask or layer. The effect is curiously disturbing. No doubt that is what is intended, since the intent of the essays is to dislodge settled perceptions of Beauvoir and open up *The Second Sex* to the play of interpretations. In this respect, the essays by literary critics—from both French and English Departments—are more illuminating than those by philosophers.

Margaret Atack's paper links Beauvoir's demythifications with Roland Barthes's *Mythologies*, again showing the continuities between theorists who are often assigned to different 'sides'. Her main point, however, is to argue that English readers of the text

miss the way Beauvoir presents 'the discourses of the other, those she is arguing against, as a voice in the text' (50). *The Second Sex* is a multivocal text which dramatizes arguments about gender relations. The difficulty of working out who speaks and who is spoken echoes Beauvoir's theoretical point, the investigation of the 'mechanisms by which the individual internalizes and identifies with beliefs and processes which are neither discovered nor owned by the individual' (41).

In a similar vein, Lorna Sage argues—startlingly but persuasively—that Simone de Beauvoir is best understood as an anti-realist: 'a writer who systematically destabilised the relations between past and present, work and world on which realism depends' (97). She compares Beauvoir with practitioners of the French 'new novel' with its deep suspicion of the world-view, stylistics and psychology of the 19th-century novel. Beauvoir would have hated the idea of reproducing the world as it is, in classic realist mode. Her project was always iconoclastic; she strove to re-invent and re-create: both her self (in writing) and the world. Sage thinks that she has been read much too literally. I take Sage to be suggesting that feminists may be politically radical, but political radicals may often be conservative—not to say backward-looking—when it comes to reading literary texts.

Nicole Ward Jouve writes her contribution as a fictional dialogue between three women who are adroitly characterized and delineated, so that the open-ended dialogue about Beauvoir in which they engage is located very precisely in the specifics of their own history and passions. As a fable about the contingencies in the reception of Beauvoir, her essay may be read alongside that of Catherine Rodgers' account of the French reception of *The Second Sex* and its formative effect on the consciousness of the women who later became prominent in feminism.

The surprising—yet not surprising—finding of the interviews Rodgers carried out with well-known French feminists was the latter's refusal to recognize their connections to Beauvoir. Cixous is the paradigm case here: '"Beauvoir is not an enemy ... she is no one, nothing"', she says. The essay indicates that the right to call oneself 'feminist' is in itself still a bone of contention. As Lorna Sage points out, a partial explanation of this can be found in *The Second Sex* itself, in Beauvoir's view that all

revolutionaries must flout the figure of the mother (110). Beauvoir prophetically foresaw her own likely fate.

The two essays by Catriona Mackenzie and Stephen Horton are more recognisably philosophical. Mackenzie looks for internal tensions and contradictions in Beauvoir's argument, while Horton sketches out some of the reasons why Beauvoir has not been taken seriously by the analytic tradition.

I strongly recommend this collection, which is accessible enough for undergraduate readers, and sophisticated enough for specialists. It brings a breath of fresh air to the study and understanding of *The Second Sex*. Rather than being presented as an untouchable icon who must be either automatically defended or, alternatively, thrown off her pedestal in the revolutionary impulse, Beauvoir has been inserted into an intellectual tradition which poststructuralism has enabled us to retrospectively construct.

Margaret Whitford
Queen Mary and Westfield College
University of London

Feminisms

Sandra Kemp and Judith Squires (eds), Oxford University Press 1997

p/b £11.99 0 19 289270 3

This book raises some profoundly important questions that, in my view, resonate beyond the boundary of feminism or feminist theory. From the perspective of whom can any of us write? What kinds of generalization is it possible to make? Is autobiographical writing the 'truest' or the most valid? My training as a philosopher taught me to believe that the more impartial and unbiased the evidence that is presented in support of a truth claim, the more likely it is that the claim is true. But this collection, on the contrary, offers evidence of precisely the opposite view.

Many of the pieces challenge, in what is now a familiar feminist refrain, the possibility of writing in a universal way about 'woman' or 'women of the south' or 'lesbian women'. Instead, some of the richest pieces are those that foreground their theoretical pronouncements with an autobiographical note. As Elspeth Probyn puts it, 'the testimonies of individual women tor-

tured and raped deeply challenge any notion of extrapolation to a global women's community.' Gloria Anzaldua's writing on 'illegal' Mexican women ('*La mujer indoumentada*'), bell hooks quoting Sojourner Truth's famous speech and Cora Kaplan, writing very differently in psychoanalytic vein about her own personal 'history', all privilege the individual and the experiential against the universal.

Whilst autobiography is one route through this question, the book provides a balance of opinion with Kate Soper presenting some powerful arguments in favour of the universalizing voice. The book indeed, presents, through judicious and careful selection and editing of material, a nuanced outlook on a number of issues: sexuality, epistemology, technology and subjectivity. Almost all of the material has been published before, and some of it seems quite dated now, so what is new about this book is the way in which the material is put together. I find the final section on technology the most interesting, partly because I have not seen the articles selected here put together in quite this way anywhere else.

In their Introduction the editors write: 'we—the editors—have worked on the assumption that the theoretical feminism which emerges from academia is valuable, notwithstanding its (apparent) exclusivity' (5). They suggest that early feminism (in the 1960s and 1970s) stressed an emphasis on the social and material, whilst later feminism has moved to focus, to a greater extent, upon symbolic and representational issues—questions of power/vision and knowledge. The arts, humanities and philosophy, they argue, have replaced sociology as the major arenas in which feminist theorizing takes place.

My only reservation about the book is that the authors sometimes fail, in the overall presentation of the book, to do what many of the articles argue should be done. That is, they sometimes write as though they are presenting *the* view of feminism and not just one interpretation of feminism. The assumptions outlined in the previous paragraph are one example of this kind of thing.

Many self-proclaimed feminists in Britain, for example, would question that view of the history of feminism. Feminists who have been working for years with women who have been

abused, for example, would not find their history in this book. Even amongst academic feminists in the UK, there are many who would be sceptical about this way of writing. In her 'Generations of Feminism' Lynn Segal, for example, has written recently in *Radical Philosophy* (no 83, 1997) about the distortion of her own memories that come from 'totalizing' histories of feminism that make the claim 'In the seventies, feminists believed in ... '.

This raises an issue that I would like to discuss in a little more detail. The issue is this: the book opens with a section labelled 'Academies', but rather than containing pieces about the Academy in general, the section is dominated, with a few notable exceptions, by pieces by literary theorists. This selection of writing is absolutely in keeping with the theoretical outlook articulated by the editors in their introduction to the book. Yet it is nonetheless a choice of articles, and it is quite likely that, if the editors had been located in a different country and had had different histories, they might have made different choices. Nonetheless, the choice does, in my view, reflect something significant about the academy in the UK and the US. Feminism has had a significant effect upon some disciplines: it has altered the way sociological theory is conceived, and it has had a significant effect upon cultural studies and literary theory. Yet it has had almost no discernible effect at all upon the discipline that the editors place at the heart of feminist theorizing—philosophy.

Debates in mainstream epistemology, for example, proceed as though feminist standpoint theory had never existed. Thus US feminist philosophers, on the whole, feel marginalized in their discipline, and some of the speeches at the very large international congress of philosophy that took place in Boston in the summer of 1998 confirmed them in their marginalization. Yet there is another kind of marginalization. UK feminist philosophets, of whom there are quite a number, are barely represented in this volume. (Kate Soper is the one exception.)

At the moment, in some sections of the Academy, there is a growing interest in post-colonial studies. The Enlightenment, according to the outlook, actually perpetuated the interests of the few—European, mostly white, mostly male—in the name of a generic commitment to rationality, liberalism and equal rights for all. There is, however, a big difference between the Europe of

the 18th century and the domination of the US in the world market today. White North Americans' self-definition as 'Europeans' masks this difference. It is possible that Europe is 'other' to the US and that this phenomenon of Europe as 'other' to the US is reflected in the field of feminist philosophy. Often, feminist philosophers in the US define the nature of the problems and the mode of their investigation. Feminist philosophers writing *outside the US* find that their issues are defined by their US counterparts.

The book *Feminisms* unwittingly exemplifies this phenomenon. Its editors are based in the UK, but they seem unaware that there is plenty of good UK feminist philosophical writing on standpoint theory, for example, that takes the debate further than the articles presented in this book. Many of the articles presented here have in fact been extensively criticized by UK feminist philosophers. The phenomenon I am pointing to is an example of a process of 'othering' that is not often picked up, and one that has ocurred in a discipline where it is the feminists who have been the most vociferous in criticizing the universalizing tone of much philosophical writing.

This book privileges the marginal over the universal, but nevertheless carries on a kind of marginalization which relates to my own experience. Every book, however, has to present a choice of material, and this one offers, particularly to the reader new to the subject, a very useful menu of articles.

Alison Assiter
University of the West of England

Consciousness in Action

Susan L. Hurley, Harvard University Press 1998
h/b £34.50 0 674 16420 2

Over the past ten years or so, there has been a huge flurry of publications dedicated to the attempt to tease out the philosophical implications of recent research in the various branches of science which bear in one way or another on the topics which have been of traditional concern to philosophers of mind—empirical psychology, cognitive neuroscience, artificial intelligence, evolutionary theory, etc. One might have thought, indeed, in the light of the vast quantity of this literature, that it was now simply impossible for a philosopher engaged in this part of the field to ignore scientific developments in such areas. But many philosophers have remained sceptical about the relevance of empirical work to their concerns and interests, due partly, no doubt, to the fact that much of this literature has not been very effective in its attempt to show how scientific advances can shed new light on venerable philosophical questions.

It takes a rare talent to navigate a course which neither risks losing the reader in over-detailed presentation of empirical results or theoretical frameworks, nor skimps on the kind of patient explanation which alone can serve to ground an adequate discussion of their significance. It can be difficult, too, for such work to avoid completely the charge of conceptual confusion, as writers struggle to express in traditional philosophical vocabulary the insights of scientific research which in many cases challenges the very conceptual frameworks which that vocabulary presupposes.

Susan Hurley's *Consciousness in Action* steers admirably clear of all of these common pitfalls. It is a collection of thematically related essays which together constitute a marvellously impressive attempt to challenge some common philosophical presuppositions about the mind, mainly, though not exclusively, by detailed reflection on a wide range of empirical work in psychology. Hurley's main target is what she calls the Input-Outpur picture of perception and action—the idea that perception and action can be treated respectively as input and output to the mind. She argues convincingly that this model confuses the personal with the sub-personal level of description of a human being—on her view, though it is possible to speak coherently of 'inputs' and 'outputs' to the complex causal system which subserves the interactions of a subject with her environment, we should not think of these inputs and outputs as inputs and outputs to a *subject*, nor, correspondingly, should we identify them, respectively with perceptions and actions.

In support of this view, Hurley describes a number of different phenomena. Some of these involve the normal effects of certain conditions on ordinary human subjects. By contrast, others are the result of pathological conditions that arise, for example, in cases of commisurotomy, hemineglect and the like. What Hurley shows, using these example, is that how things seem per-

ceptually frequently depends non-instrumentally on what a subject is trying or planning to do. The instrumental dependence of perception on action is familiar enough: how we move, for example, determines what is in our field of vision, and thereby affects the input to our perceptual system, having consequences for perceptual experience. But the dependence of perception on experience can also be non-instrumental.

I will take just a single, easily comprehensible, example from the many intriguing cases that Hurley considers. When someone with paralysed eye muscles tries to glance to the right, the world appears to jump to the right, even though the pattern of light falling on the retina is completely unchanged. In such a case, perceptual content depends not only on input from the environment, but also on feedback from the motor system. Such cases challenge our normal presupposition that perception and action can be considered as largely independent of one another; rather, the way the world appears may be much more intimately related to our intentions and our anticipations of our own activity.

Does it matter if the Input–Output picture of perception and action is problematic? Hurley does a good job of showing how we unthinkingly assume such a model in connection with a number of different philosophical issues. She argues that it lies behind the difficulty we have in accommodating certain peculiar empirical phenomena without appealing to what she terms 'partial unity' of consciousness—i.e. without admitting cases in which though states a and b are co-conscious and states b and c are co-conscious, states a and c are not co-conscious.

Hurley maintains also that such a model shores up what she calls the Duplication Assumption: the idea that we can make sense of the thought that internal physical states might be duplicated in different environments. But the Duplication Assumption is also presented as integral to many of the thought experiments which frame the current debate about internalism and externalism. By the end of the book, it is hard to doubt Hurley's claim that we need a different way of thinking about the relationships between perception, action and subjectivity, nor that in the search for a new paradigm it will be essential to take account of the kinds of empirical results that Hurley describes.

Helen Steward
Balliol College, Oxford

Philosophies of Science/Feminist Theories
Jane Duran, Westview Press 1998
h/b £46.50 0 8133 3299 0, p/b £13.95 0 8133 3325 3

Written with admirable lucidity and in an eminently readable style, Jane Duran's recent book leads the reader through different aspects of the critique of science as it has developed in reaction against the positivism of the Vienna Circle. The book is a good example of how it is possible to introduce students and newcomers to a vast and awkward philosophical terrain yet avoid the pitfalls of oversimplification.

As its title suggests, the book is particularly relevant to anyone interested in feminist work. Duran treats the idea of science's androcentricity as an important development in the critique of science; and she devotes chapter 6 to a treatment of how various feminists' work relates to empiricism. There are individual sections on Donna Haraway, Sandra Harding, Lynn Hankinson Nelson, Ruth Hubbard and Helen Longino, and one section that discusses papers from Kathleen Lennon and Margaret Whitford's *Knowing the Difference* collection, explicitly to provide a UK counterpoint to the US line-up).

If feminist work in philosphy of science is to be properly understood, it is essential that it be placed in the broader context of the rise of naturalism and historicism. This is not without its risks. Duran is too ready to present 'socialized epistemology' and 'naturalized epistemology' as obviously kindred projects. Quinean naturalization has very little to do with the insight that inquiry is a social or 'embodied' enterprise. (His naturalism retains the empiricist dogma that if there is empirical knowledge there must be some conceptual impingement—some 'surface irritation'—from the world.) But perhaps the more involved problems of the territory's mapping cannot be expected to receive an airing in an introductory book. Duran's purpose is to provide an overview of the place of feminism in philosophy of science and science studies, and anyone concerned that feminist work should be seen to be at the centre of our developing critical understanding of science will value her contribution immensely.

Miranda Fricker
Heythrop College, University of London

Feminist Social Thought: A Reader

Diana Tietjens Meyers (ed.), Routledge 1997
h/b £55 0 415 91536 8, p/b £19.99 0 415 91537 6

When feminist philosophers began to integrate their politics into scholarship, the areas they first worked in were the areas of ethics and social and political theory. The reason why this happened is understandable, because feminism strives to transform social relations whilst much moral, social and political philosophy seeks to 'account for ethical interpersonal relations and to explicate and defend just social, political and legal institutions' (1). The growth of outstanding feminist literature in this area is testimony to feminism's scholarship and to the fact that feminist ethics and feminist social/political theory are well-established intellectual fields. This is an excellent *Reader*. I strongly recommend this anthology as an essential part of your library.

The editor, Diana Meyers, explains her rationale for the organization and selection of material. She avoids organizing the collection in terms of major philosophical traditions, on the grounds that feminist philosophy has broken radically with many of these traditions. Instead, the collection highlights salient issues in contemporary feminist scholarship and the significant advances feminist philosophers have made. Concentrating on feminist ethical, social and political thought Meyers has aimed for a depth of coverage. The cross-section of articles represent a wide spectrum of feminist thinking, but is overwhelmingly dominated by American and Canadian thinkers. Pieces by Luce Irigaray, Julie Kristeva and Genevieve Lloyd feature in Part 3 of this book and Chantal Mouffe in Part 5. However, the inclusion of some more Australian and European material would have given it further balance.

The collection is large (772 pages) and contains a total of thirty-nine articles plus the Introduction. The book covers seven main topics. Part 1 is on constructions of gender; Part 2 is on theorizing diversity: gender, race, class and sexual orientation; Part 3 is on figurations of women/woman; Part 4 features subjectivity, agency and feminist critique; Part 5 is on social identity, solidarity and political engagement; Part 6 is on care and its critics; and Part 7 is about women, equality and justice.

Running through these topics are overlapping themes, and the Introduction usefully signals the relevant chapters that connect to thematic links. Thus, if a reader's interests lie in gender, the pertinent chapters are listed for gender roles, gender psychology, rhetoric of gender and cultural representations of gender. Or a reader could follow feminist work on care and justice, women's care-giving, equality and justice, family and women's diversity; the pertinent chapters are again sign-posted. The task of providing a reading 'roadmap' is different to an index and is a welcome tool for busy researchers.

The articles date back to Gilligan's 1977 article on 'a different voice' (in Part 6) and Chodorow's 1979 article on gender and psychoanalytic theories of difference (in Part 1). More recent pieces include Mann's 1994 work on pornography (in Part 4), Calhoun's 1994 writings on lesbian sexuality (in Part 2), with the most recent being Meyers' own 1997 chapter on the family (in Part 4).

Other authors include in Part 1 Young, Ferguson, MacKinnon, Bartky and Butler; in Part 2 Fraser and Nicholson, Lugones, Spelman, Abel and King; in Part 3 Crenshaw and Kittay; in Part 4 Patricia Williams, Scheman, Babbitt, Jaggar and Frye; in Part 5 Hartsock, hooks and Haraway; Part 6 features also Ruddick, Baier, Held, Card, Friedman and Moody-Adams, whilst Part 7 comprises Wendy Williams, Littleton, Benhabib and Joan Scott.

This is an extremely valuable collection, one that I know I will lift off the shelf many times. It is also an excellent reader for students. Many teaching courses can be built around any of the seven sections of the book. I recommend the book highly as an essential addition to everyone interested in feminist social thought.

Elisabeth Porter
University of Ulster at Coleraine

Women and Spirituality

Carol Ochs, Lanham MD, Rowman & Littlefield, 2nd ed. 1997
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'Spirituality' is the religion of postmodernity. It is a religion without hierarchies or institutions, without creeds or dogmas,

without official places of worship or shared traditions. Like other postmodernist enterprises it is eclectic, individualistic, and more remarkable for its breadth than its depth. What it lacks in coherence and structure it often makes up for in vitality and imagination. Carol Ochs's book, *Women and Spirituality*, is an example of this kind of spirituality, tailor-made for the post-religious, postmodern woman who is still enough of a traditionalist to want to conform to western ideals of motherhood and the caring role of women in society.

Ochs writes out of a context which is primarily influenced by Judaism and Christianity, but she weaves into her spiritual vision insights drawn from a range of thinkers and traditions including Baruch Spinoza and Meister Eckhart, D. W. Winnicott and Sigmund Freud, the Desert Fathers, the Buddha, Jewish Midrash and the Bible, all in the space of 158 pages. She paraphrases John Dunne's definition of religion as 'insight into the common experiences of humankind' (149), and her book arose out of her 'appalled' discovery that none of the texts of the western spiritual tradition was written 'from the viewpoint of a woman who was both a mother and happily married' (1).

Basing her vision primarily on the experience of motherhood, Ochs explores the contours of a women's spirituality which seeks to go beyond the post-Enlightenment values of western culture with their emphasis on scientific knowledge and Kantian categories of the understanding, to a more relational and experiential way of knowing which is firmly rooted in the realities of this world. She suggests that 'Rather than understanding love in terms of space, time, quantity, antecedent, and consequence, we are to understand those conepts in terms of love' (51). Her book offers an exploration of the spiritual potential of experiences of conflict and suffering, birth and death, love and solitude, and she addresses themes of mothering, ageing, caring and loss with warmth and sympathy so that I suspect many women will find this an inspiring and indeed comforting book to read.

I was particularly fascinated by her brief explanation of the significance of Moses being told to remove his sandals when standing on holy ground. Ochs explains that in traditional Judaism, adherents are prohibited from wearing leather shoes on three occasions: during the week of mourning following the death of a next-of-kin, during communal mourning for the destruction of the temple, and on the day of atonement, Yom Kippur, because it is when we stand and feel the holy ground beneath our feet that we resist the desire to flee from death and suffering.

This glimpse into the Jewish significance of holy ground made me wish that Ochs had been less diffuse in her study, and had offered more of these illuminating insights into the beliefs and values of one particular religious tradition. The scope of a book like this is both its strength and its weakness. While I suspect every reader will find something of value in a work which encompasses so many perspectives, the attempt to be all-inclusive can also create a sense of exclusion. By constantly refetring to 'we', Ochs makes assumptions about her reader which occasionally irritate.

There is an unresolved and largely unacknowledged tension in the book between individualism and relationality, between learning from shared beliefs and traditions and creating one's own personal spirituality out of experience. Ochs does put a great deal of faith in women's abilities to use their own experiences as a sound basis for learning and personal development, but I suspect the reality is more complex than she suggests. Surely we learn because we find ourselves on the muddled and unsatisfying frontline where experience encounters meanings and beliefs already given. Experience alone is a good deal less accessible and intrinsically meaningful than Ochs seems to suggest.

I also wonder about Ochs's idealization of motherhood. As a mother, I thought she did not give sufficient acknowledgement of the fact that so much of what we learn through motherhood is learned from harsh experiences of frustration, failure and guilt, rather than through our capacity to be endlessly nurturing and caring towards our children (or perhaps I'm just not as good a mother as Ochs). I also wonder if women who are not mothers will find their own spiritual experiences addressed in this book, given its emphasis on motherhood. (As an aside, I found it an amusing irony that a book which seeks to fill a spiritual gap by being written from the perspective of a happily married mother, has a picture of Joan of Arc in a suit of armour on the front!)

Many women today feel a need to find a form of spiritual expression which is free of the authoritarianism and patriarchal structures of the mainstream religions, and books such as this play a valuable role in addressing that need and creating spaces in which women might explore and discover their own spirituality. Yet there is also much that is sacrificed when one turns aside from the richness and insight of traditions which have developed over hundreds and sometimes thousands of years of human experience. Thus, I also wonder if this kind of self-help spirituality really does provide the resources to explore and express the range of joy and suffering which make up the language and vision of the world's established religious traditions.

All in all, then, for women seeking to find greater meaning in their rites of passage through life, Ochs offers an engaging and at times inspiring vision of the possibilities for creating a women's spirituality which caters for the needs of today. Ultimately though, I think this is a book which benefits from being read alongside, rather than instead of, the traditions from which it derives its insights, and which are not quite as monolithic nor as androcentric as Ochs suggests.

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