



# NEWSLETTER

Issue No 6 November 1991

## Editorial

The newsletter is expanding with each issue, and beginning to establish a character. The reviews section is now quite large, and has a much larger number of reviewers, and a wider range of books. The conference information section is also growing.

If you would like to review for the newsletter, you would be very welcome: you should write to Margaret Whitford, the reviews editor. Note that she has made a particular request for anyone who is interested in reviewing *Determined Women* edited by Jennifer Birkett and Elizabeth Harvey.

We've included a list of books reviewed in the last few issues, so that it is easy to see where to look for them.

At the Wolverhampton meeting we had a discussion about the difficulty of finding out about events in good time. People felt they missed things because they did not know about them. So we would be glad if people would contribute information that they have about conferences, workshops, lectures, exhibitions, and anything of the sort that would be of interest to women in philosophy. We have included a flyer with this issue, to try and improve this part of the network - any suggestions about what else might be done?

This issue also contains news about future meetings of the society, and reports from the last couple of meetings. We also have news from abroad, news of jobs, and some requests for networking on particular research topics.

Nobody has commented on our decision to circulate the membership list, so we are doing it again. But if you want to comment about this or anything else to do with the newsletter we would be very pleased to hear from you.

We expect the next issue to be circulated in May 1992. All contributions by 30 April at the latest.

*For most of you your subscriptions are now due.*

*If you have not already sent in your subscription for this academic year, send it now on the enclosed form - and THE TREASURER HAS CHANGED. Your subscriptions should now be sent to Kimberley Hutchings at Wolverhampton Poly. And thank you Paula for all the work you have done for the Society.*

*Margaret Whitford  
Morwenna Griffiths*

## RESEARCH DETAILS FOR NETWORKING:

*Hilary Rose* (WYCROW, University of Bradford):

Problems of Knowledge - particularly knowledge of the natural and social world.

Hilary adds: I am trying to set up a network on women and science. It would need philosophers of science/knowledge. It's still only a hope but perhaps I'll have more to say at the next mailing. WATCH THIS SPACE.

*Jill Marsden* (University of Essex):

I am writing a PhD thesis on Nietzsche's thought of 'the eternal recurrence of the same' and its relevance to themes in modern continental philosophy.

*Susan Strickland* (Dept of Philosophy, University of Hull)

Feminist epistemology: subjectivity; experience/standpoint theory; situated knowledge/a revised concept of objectivity/defending some sort of idea of 'reality', the world, getting things 'right', such that beliefs can be judged more or less 'true', adequate or accurate than others/other kinds or concepts of knowledge by acquaintance or recognition, knowledge 'how to', bodily knowledge cognitive sensory or mental states/an idea of knowledge that does not operate in terms of dichotomies, oppositions hierarchies, dualisms/that does not necessarily operate via language.

Plus: all matters relating to Women's health, fertility, reproductive 'rights' etc.

*Pam Hirsch* (Anglia Higher Education College)

The life work of George and Barbara Leigh Smith Bodichon - their theory and practice in terms of art and activism. Their friendships with other women reconstructs the mid-Victorian feminist network. This is a PhD in the area of aesthetics.

*Merl Storr* (Centre for Women's Studies, University of York)

The hierarchy of the sense and the privilege of vision/the gaze in Western theories of the subject, specifically in freudian/lacanian psychoanalytic theory. My chief concern is with the way the privilege of the gaze works to construct gender/sexual difference within such theory. Issues raised in the course of the research include the female body and its representations: the relations between the Imaginary and the Symbolic: feminine eroticism: language, desire and the en-gendering of the subject.

*Sarah Chatwin* (Essex)

Embodiment of Merleau Ponty and Adorno: feminist perspectives on the body; monstrosity and the aesthetics of the 'ugly'.

*Diana Coole* (Dept of Politics, University of Leeds)

Feminism and poststructuralism/postmodernism-especially with regard to the future of a womens' politics in a postmodern age.

## SWIP NEWS AND VIEWS

The next SWIP meeting will be held in Oxford on Saturday

14 March 1992. Anyone wanting further details should

contact Meena Dhanda, Balliol College, Oxford, OX1 3BJ.

The cost for the meeting will be £5 waged; £2.50 unwaged.

More details will be circulated nearer the time.

### CHILDCARE

At the Women in Philosophy meeting in Wolverhampton the problem of providing creche facilities for meetings and conferences was raised again. One possible solution to the problem of the extortionate costs that are incurred through the need for insurance etc. is to get in contact with a Social Services registered childminder who lives close to the venue and to see whether they are prepared to look after the children in their own home. This avoids the problem of having to arrange insurance because any childminder who is registered with Social Services already has their own insurance. Also as the childminder is on "home territory" the problem of providing a suitable venue with the appropriate toys, activities etc, is overcome. This method of providing creche facilities was used at the Warwick University Feminist Philosophy workshop earlier this year and proved very effective, particularly because the only outgoing was the payment to the childminder and therefore we were able to pay her well above the standard rate for childminding without making the workshop fees prohibitive. Whilst it is clear that this method may not prove feasible in all situations, eg. for venues in the centre of large cities or where large numbers of children are concerned, it provides another possible option to consider when the perennial problem of childcare arises. Lists of registered childminders are readily available from all local Social Services offices.

*Helen Chapman*

## NEWS FROM ABROAD

### A SCANDINAVIAN SWIP HAS JUST BEEN FOUNDED ELIN SVENNEBY REPORTS:

The Nordic Symposium for Women in Philosophy was held at "Nordens Folkliga Akademi", Göteborg, Sweden, 4-6 October 1991. The theme for the conference was "Identity-Autonomy-Language". We were 43 eager participants from Sweden, Norway, Finland and Denmark. Each country had a main speaker who had been given a very free choice concerning her perspective on the theme.

The first lecturer was Elin Svenneby from Norway. Her lecture was called: "I speak, thus I act?" She was wondering about what it means to come to one's own terms as a woman philosopher. She tried to establish a dialogue between Descartes's meditations and Arendt's philosophy of action. The second speaker was Kirsten Klercke from Denmark. Her lecture was called: "Philosophy - voice without identification". Starting with Plato's metaphor in The Republic where he likens the philosopher to an orphan or a homeless woman, Klercke reflected on the meaning and experience of being a female philosopher. The third speaker should have been Raili Kauppi, from Finland on "Reason and Identity". Unfortunately she had fallen ill and could not come. Her lecture will be included in the proceedings from the symposium. Lilli Alanen from Finland kindly agreed to take her place and gave a speech on Descartes where she discussed some of the problems in his philosophy about ideas and mental objects. The fourth speaker was Ulla Holm from Sweden. Her lecture was called "Praxis, hexis and habitus" and circled around the Aristotelian concept of praxis, fundamentally as movement, more precisely as different types or kinds of movement. Hexis as a person's way of acting, her having or not having different kinds of competence, and how such competence is achieved, was one of the central problems in her lecture.

After the lectures we had lively discussions and in between them there were "workshops" concentrating on different aspects of the theme of the conference. Things were well arranged and the atmosphere was pleasant, but noisy, for of course, philosophers are strong individuals, practised and autonomous speakers who enjoy plurality as much as unity!

Anyway, in the last discourse, constitution of the network, we managed to come to "clear and distinct" agreement on our laws, surprisingly quickly, through a mass of both cognitive as well as bodily movements. The initiative for the network, as well as for the symposium, came from the three Swedish women philosophers Ulla Holm, Eva Mark and Annika Persson, who are all working on doctoral theses in philosophy at the University of Göteborg.

It is our intention from now on to arrange a conference every second year in different Nordic countries. The next symposium will be held in Norway in 1993. And the proceedings from Göteborg will be published, in English.

For further information, contact Elin Svenneby, Filosofiseksjonen, ISV Universitetet, N-9000 Tromsø, NORWAY.

## GREEK FEMINIST PHILOSOPHY

Voula Lambropoulou from the department of Philosophy in the University of Athens has been teaching 'Philosophy of the Sexes' and 'Feminist Issues' since 1981. In 1984 she started the Journal *Hypatia*, which therefore pre-dated the American one by a year. It is unfortunate that they persisted in using the same name, even though she had informed them about the Greek Journal.

The Greek *Hypatia* accepts articles written in English. Both Morwenna Griffiths and Margaret Whitford have copies if you would be interested in seeing one, or in offering contributions to it. Or you could write directly to Voula Lambropoulou, University of Athens, Pythias 56, 11364 Athens, Greece.

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## A RUSSIAN CONNECTION

Anne Seller is hoping that T A Klimenova will be visiting her at the University of Kent. Her paper, 'Feminism and postmodernism' is to be published in *Philosophy East and West*, 42(2) 1992. You might want to invite her to give a seminar when she arrives which will help her travel in this country. If you are interested, contact Anne.

## LECTURES, CONFERENCES, EXHIBITIONS AND CALLS FOR PAPERS

### A Different View

works selected by Christine Battersby  
from the Rugby Borough Council Collection of  
Twentieth Century British Painting

The exhibition includes an essay on  
Christine Battersby's 50% male/female selection  
and space and time.

**Exhibition Dates 30 September - 30 November 1991**

The Mead Gallery  
Arts Centre  
University of Warwick  
Coventry CV4 7AL

## FORTHCOMING PHILOSOPHY LECTURES

Mary Midgley

“Philosophical Plumbing” : The Impulse to Philosophise

10 January 1992 at

Royal Institute of Philosophy, 14 Gordon Square, London WC1. 5.45 pm

Brenda Almond

Philosophy and the Cult of Irrationalism

7 February 1992 at

Royal Institute of Philosophy (address as above) 5.45 pm

Martha Nussbaum

[Title to be announced

King's College Philosophy Society

18 February 1992 at

King's College Philosophy Dept., East Wing, Main Building,  
The Strand, London WC2. 5.30 pm

Martha Nussbaum

Concepts of Therapeutic Argument in Ancient Philosophy

(Issues in Medical Ethics Series)

5 March 1992 at

Committee Room, King's College, London (address as above), 3.30 pm

Nancy Cartwright

Quantum Interference

(British Society for the Philosophy of Science)

20 January 1992 at

London School of Economics, Graham Wallas Room, Houghton St.,  
London WC2 at 5.15 pm

Nancy Cartwright

[Title to be announced]

10 March 1992 at

Philosophy Department, King's College, London (address above) at 5.30 pm

porto

**CENTEK**

Lena Karbin  
Luleå University  
951 87 Luleå  
Sweden

### Information concerning registration and general inquiries

Ann-Christine Haupt  
Luleå University  
951 87 Luleå, Sweden  
Phone internat. +46 920 915 70  
Telefax +46 920 720 40

Lena Karbin  
CENTEK  
Luleå University  
951 87 Luleå, Sweden  
Phone internat. +46 920 917 75  
Telefax +46 920 990 20

### Information concerning scientific matters

Ewa Gunnarsson  
The Swedish Center for Working Life  
Box 5606  
114 86 Stockholm, Sweden  
Phone internat. +46 8 790 96 06

Cynthia Cockburn  
83 Bartholomew Rd.  
London NW5 2AH, Great Britain  
Phone internat. +44 71 482 56 70

### Organizing Committee

Alena Bartek  
Cynthia Cockburn  
Ewa Gunnarsson  
Ann-Christine Haupt  
Lena Karbin  
Christina Mörtberg

The Conference is sponsored by The National Swedish  
Board for Technical Development and Luleå University

### Deadlines

Abstract of papers submitted: October 31, 1991  
Acceptance of papers notified: December 10, 1991  
Manuscripts of papers submitted: March 15, 1992  
2nd Announcement available: December, 1991

An international conference on

# GENDER, TECHNOLOGY AND ETHICS

June 1-2, 1992  
Luleå, Sweden



1st Announcement and  
Call for Papers

**Forum**

Forum för kvinnor  
i forskning och arbetskiv  
vid Högskolan i Luleå

Luleå University, Centre for Women in Research and Working Life

## INVITATION

An international conference on Gender, Technology and Ethics will be held at Nordkalotten Conference Centre in Luleå, Sweden, June 1-7, 1992.

The conference is organized by the Centre for Women in Research and Working Life at Luleå University.

The Centre has the pleasure of inviting everyone interested in the subject of gender, technology, and ethics to participate in the conference.

Welcome to the conference!

  
Ann-Christine Hänge

### Aims

Behind the talk about women getting into technology remains the question; is it necessary for women to change anything or would technology change women for better or worse? Throughout society it is recognized that theoretical and ethical issues are involved in technological choice. The question is, what are the particular concerns contributed by feminism?

The aim of the conference is to bring together researchers concerned with science, technology and ethics, and to develop a feminist perspective and influence in this area of inquiry. The main objective is to:

- discuss empirical research
- develop theory and methodology
- form a network for researchers

The conference can also be seen as a part of formulating a framework for a Nordic and Swedish research programme in the area.

### Programme

The programme will include plenary, invited, and contributed paper sessions as well as working seminars. The themes of the conference are:

- **Science and technology in feminist thought**  
What are the various feminist viewpoints on scientific knowledge?
- **Gender and technology**  
What are the key questions at a theoretical level?  
What is the gender relation between masculinity and femininity and technology?  
What methods could be used in studying gender in relation to technology?
- **Ethics in technology**  
What values does feminism bring to the analyses of technology?  
Under what circumstances would women develop different technology and use existing technologies in different ways?

Invited speakers confirmed to date are:

Ann-Jorun Berg, Cynthia Cockburn, Ewa Gunnarsson, Bente Rasmussen, Hilary Rose, Louise Waldén.

### Language

The language of the conference is English.

### Call for papers

You are invited to submit a paper for presentation at the conference. Please send your abstract, not more than 1 page, to the organizing committee, Lena Karbin, CENTEK, Luleå University, 951 87 Luleå, Sweden not later than October 31, 1991. The author will be notified on acceptance of the paper not later than December 10, 1991. Final manuscript, 10 pages, should be submitted not later than March 15, 1992.

The proceedings will contain both invited and contributed papers and will be distributed to participants upon registration.

### Social programme

There will be a pre-conference tour in the northern part of Sweden on Saturday, May 30, and Sunday, May 31, 1992.

### 2nd announcement

The 2nd announcement will be distributed in December 1991 and will include information on the programme, the registration fee, accommodation, travel and the final registration form.

## PRELIMINARY REGISTRATION FORM

- I plan to participate in the conference
- I plan to present a paper at the conference (title and abstract enclosed)

Please type or use a visiting-card

Family name

First name

Company/Institution (in English, please)

Mailing address

City with postal code

Country

Telephone

Telefax

Please return this form as soon as possible, but not later than, **October 31, 1991** to

CENTEK  
Lena Karbin  
Luleå University  
951 87 Luleå  
Sweden

We would also ask that you relay this information to others who are involved in women's issues research, or to anyone for whom this conference might be of interest.

# CONFERENCE

## WOMEN & THE HISTORY OF PHILOSOPHY:

### Genre, Canon, Audience

**GIRTON COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE**

**13-14th APRIL 1992**

The conference will focus on the philosophical activities of women from the 17th to the 19th centuries in order to consider whether the study of woman philosophers challenges received accounts of the history of philosophy and traditional canons of great philosophers. Particular questions to be addressed include whether some of the conceptions of philosophy that hold sway in this period are more hospitable to women philosophers than others; whether there are any specifically female styles or kinds of philosophy; whether women philosophers have characteristically been constrained to write in genres not typically employed by their male counterparts.

Main speakers will include:

Dorothy Atkins (LORAS COLLEGE)

**GEORGE ELIOT AND SPINOZA**

Gillian Beer (CAMBRIDGE)

**TOPIC TO BE ANNOUNCED**

Stuart BROWN (OPEN UNIVERSITY)

**THE ROLE AND INFLUENCE OF WOMEN IN PHILOSOPHY FROM THE 1690'S**

Michele Le Doeuff (C.N.R.S.)

**SOME CONSIDERATIONS ON THE ENLIGHTENMENT**

Eileen O'Neill (CUNY AND HARVARD)

**EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY WOMEN PHILOSOPHERS AND THEIR FATE IN HISTORY**

Letizia Panizza (LONDON)

**ELENA TARABOTTI IN THE CONTEXT OF 16TH AND 17TH CENTURY ITALIAN DEBATES**

There will also be a workshop session for shorter papers. The conference will end with a panel discussion led by Martha Bolton, Lisa Jardine, Onora O'Neill.

The conference will commence at 2.00 on Monday 13th April and end late afternoon on Tuesday 14th April. It will be preceded by the BSHP AGM.

Enquiries should be addressed to Dr. Sarah Hutton, School of Humanities and Education, The Hatfield Polytechnic, Wall Hall Campus, Aldenham, Herts WD2 8AT, England.

# CALL FOR PAPERS

The Friedrich Nietzsche Society  
will hold its 2nd Annual Conference  
at Middlesex Polytechnic  
(Trent Park site) Cockfosters  
on Friday April 24th - Saturday April 25th 1992.

INVITED SPEAKERS INCLUDE

DANIEL CONWAY    DAVID CONWAY    RONALD HAYMAN    LIAM O'SULLIVAN  
HENNING OTTMANN    RICHARD RORTY    KENNETH WHITE

There is no particular theme for this conference,  
as we hope to have around 20 papers  
running in parallel sessions  
on a diversity of topics,  
such as the following :

Nietzsche and -the Nineteenth Century

- Nationalism
- Morality
- Religion
- Socialism
- Sexuality
- Language

If you would like to offer a paper please contact Dr Carol Diethe,  
Middlesex Polytechnic, Queensway, Enfield EN3 4SP

**UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK  
FEMINIST PHILOSOPHY  
WORKSHOP 1992**

**CALL FOR PAPERS**

The Warwick Feminist Philosophy Reading Group will be holding a two day Workshop on Saturday and Sunday the 25 and 26 of January 1992.

The title of the Workshop will be:

**"WHERE IS WOMAN?"**

- Philosophy's Woman: Where does she come from? Does she generate her own map(s), or is she to be located within an already existing cartography? Or does she perhaps fall out of philosophical space altogether? -

Proposed papers may address the theme from any perspective and with reference to any philosophical position.

Abstracts must be received by December 1.

Any woman interested in contributing or attending please contact,

**Kath Jones  
65 Kensington Road  
Earlsdon  
Coventry  
CV5 6GG**

**PAPERS FOR SIGNS**

Hilary Rose has been elected to the editorial board of *Signs* with a view to helping increase the non USA publishing. So if you submit anything, send her a copy and she will try to keep an eye on it.

## **JOBS FOR PHILOSOPHERS**

**UNIVERSITY OF IOWA, Iowa City, IA. Assistant Professor** (not limited to beginning level). Tenure-track. 2 courses each semester, graduate and undergraduate level. PhD Supervision. AOS: Political Philosophy. AOC: Another major area of philosophy. In filling this position the University of Iowa seeks to address the manifest imbalance with respect to gender and underrepresented minorities in the department. Therefore, we especially encourage women and minorities to apply. The University of Iowa is an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Employer. Interviews will be conducted at the Eastern Meetings in December.

**Send complete dossier and a sample of written work, to  
Richard Fumerton,  
Search Committee,  
Dept. of Philosophy,  
The University of Iowa,  
Iowa City, IA, 52242.**

**Deadline for receipt of application: December 6.**

## **WOMEN : A CULTURAL REVIEW**

is bringing out an issue on 'Gendering Philosophy' in 1992

### **CALL FOR PAPERS**

Short items (2000 - 3000 words) on this theme should be sent to

**Professor Isobel Armstrong or Dr Helen Carr  
English Department  
Birkbeck College  
Malet Street  
London  
WC1E 7HX**

**by end February 1992**

I have received a copy of Determined Women  
(description attached) from the publishers.  
Does anyone want to review it? Please let me know.  
Margaret Whitford

## X DETERMINED WOMEN

Edited by Jennifer Birkett, University of  
Strathclyde, and Elizabeth Harvey,  
University of Salford

Images and categories that have shaped Western women's sense of themselves in the 20th century are looked at in this interdisciplinary collection of essays, which bring together the perspectives of literary criticism, social history, and linguistics. Contributions about the status of women in Canada, France, East Germany, Great Britain, and the U.S. show both the similarity and diversity of women's experience in a world determined by patriarchal assumptions, where women's only hope of change lies in developing a determination of their own. Sylvia Plath, Alice Walker, and Storm Jameson are among the writers whose ambition and authenticity are examined.

CONTENTS Acknowledgement • Introduction, Jennifer Birkett & Elizabeth Harvey • Private Fantasy and Public Intervention: Girls' Reading in Weimar Germany, Elizabeth Harvey • Double Determined: The Ambition of Storm Jameson, Jennifer Birkett • The Negative of a Person: Media, Image and Authenticity in the Work of Sylvia Plath, Stan Smith • A Question of Inheritance: Canadian Women's Short Stories, Coral Ann Howells • Whistling Like a Woman: Alice Walker, Jennifer Birkett • Beyond Paper Heroines: Maxie Wander's *Guten Morgen, du Schöne* and its Reception in the GDR, Patricia Harbord • Sexism in French: A Case Study, Robin Adamson • The Castration of Cassandra, Helga Geyer-Ryan

*A Barnes & Noble Book.*

January 1991 224 pp.

ISBN 0-389-20950-3—\$46.75

## REVIEW SECTION

Brenda Almond *The Philosophical Quest*

Almond's book opens with a familiar idea: philosophy is the quest for truth, involving the intellectual virtues of honesty, openness, impartiality and independence of mind. What is novel about the structure of this introductory work is that she demonstrates that the practice of these virtues leads inexorably from the questions one naturally asks about one's own immediate concerns to the fundamental issues of metaphysics. So the quest begins with Kant's second question 'What ought I do?'. From the dilemmas of personal morality, we move on to the problems of the political sphere. Then, since political debate is revealed as a Babel of competing claims, all of them supposedly rationally supported, the enquiring reader must learn to recognise good from bad arguments and is therefore introduced to formal logic and scientific reasoning. Since scientific reason demands correct empirical judgements, we need to ask how our knowledge of the empirical world is mediated, and hence we are introduced to questions of meaning and reference in the philosophy of language. Philosophy of language leads, via the issue of innateness, to philosophy of mind, to artificial intelligence and to the question of free will. And reflections on the compatibility of our belief in human free will with the concept of a causally determined universe leads finally to the great subjects of traditional metaphysics: God, Nature and the soul. The penultimate chapter focusses therefore on the Stoics and Spinoza, after which the final chapter on pragmatism seems a mite anti-climactic.

Almond's book is a highly competent and engaging example of the tour-of-the houses genre of philosophical populism. But we should maybe ask of such texts, not whether they are done well, but whether they should be done at all. Too much is covered in too short a compass to enlighten the uninitiated: too little said about each issue to benefit the more informed. Socrates and the Stoics, Descartes and Spinoza, shine through nevertheless. But one suspects that the general reader will not find herself much closer to understanding twentieth century analytical philosophy after reading this or any other such compressed exegesis.

Deborah Fitzmaurice  
Dept. of Philosophy  
University of Essex.

*Applied Philosophy: Morals and Metaphysics in Contemporary Debate.* Edited by Brenda Almond and Donald Hill. Routledge 1991.

This is a wide ranging collection of papers in the broad area of applied philosophy. The papers are grouped usefully under five broad headings: the environment; personal relationships; terrorism, war and conflict; justice and equality; ethics and medicine. In the first section, 'The Environment', one of the central themes is the debate, centring on 'deep' ecology, about the intrinsic or merely instrumental value of the natural world. The opening paper by R M Hare, for example, takes the view that the only entities to which we can owe duties in the context of the environment are sentient beings; this is balanced by T L S Sprigge's paper arguing that non-sentient nature has a value, independent of human or animal consciousness.

Section Two, 'Personal Relationships', starts with a paper by Brenda Almond examining three basic kinds of human relationships and concluding that personal bonds, as against the rival claims of religious or political ones, have fundamental moral priority in the lives of human beings. In contrast, Paul Gregory contends that the demand for sexual exclusivity and the ideal of a single, central relationship are both undesirable and unrealistic. Edgar Page, in a paper examining parental rights, argues that these are to be justified, not solely in terms of those things necessary for the wellbeing of children, but by the special value of parenthood in human life.

The section dealing with terrorism, war and conflict contains two papers dealing with the morality of terrorism, one by Haig Katchadourian arguing that, in all of the four forms he identifies, terrorism is morally wrong according both to the principles of 'just war' and the concept of human rights and one by Gerry Wallace in which a comparison of terrorism with area bombing arrives at a less certain conclusion. Papers by Douglas P Lackey and M Krisan debate the question of the unique moral evil of the Holocaust; other contributions address the inability of the dominant view of moral theory to deal with the case of Oscar Shindler and the case for pacifism as founded on the idea of respect for human life.

Justice and Equality starts with a debate on the concept of justice between Julian Le Grand and Anthony Flew and includes papers on the welfare state, arguing that it should be seen, not as a form of personal insurance, but as an expression of community, on market equality and on paternalism and the law.

The final section on ethics and medicine deals with a mix of topics including a debate on surrogacy centring on the rights of the surrogate mother; an analysis of arguments against the sale of bodily parts and an examination of the basis of privacy and confidentiality in medicine. Two final papers deal with the use of the term 'pre-embryo' to deny that human beings as such begin at conception and with recent attempts to redefine death.

This is a useful collection, both in terms of providing a sample of some of the key debates in applied philosophy in an accessible and structured format, and in illustrating the wide range of topics and the variety of approaches that are included in its scope.

*Cei Tuxhill*

***AIDS - A Moral Issue: The Ethical, Legal and Social Aspects.* Edited by Brenda Almond. Macmillan, 1990.**

This collection of papers is divided into three sections which examine the subject of AIDS from the medical, the community and the personal perspective. The first section begins with a summary of the clinical and scientific background setting out the basic structures and properties of HIV, its routes of transmission and the consequences and natural history of infection. This provides a background against which subsequent papers discuss particular aspects of HIV and AIDS. These include an examination of the social and ethical issues which are peculiar to people with haemophilia who are HIV positive or have developed AIDS; the moral dilemmas involved in AIDS and pregnancy; issues concerning the medical obligation of confidentiality and possible judifications.

for its being overridden in those cases in which an individual who is HIV positive is deliberately putting others at risk and a comparison of liberal and utilitarian approaches to some of the dilemmas met with in the treatment of people with AIDS.

The community perspective includes papers discussing the role of the media in relation to AIDS; the contribution of prejudice against homosexuality to the hostility to people with AIDS in contrast to attitudes to cervical cancer and a comparison of the responses of the law in the USA and Britain and the legal implications of the illness, with the main factor being identified as a need to balance the rights of individuals to freedom with the rights of the public to be protected from threats to health.

Papers in the 'Personal Perspective' section deal with ways of dealing with the threat of death, in particular questions of suicide and euthanasia; the inappropriateness of the more virulent of the religious reactions to AIDS and the need for compassion and care rather than condemnation and with the general ethical implications of the disease for, among other things, sexual attitudes and behaviour, particularly amongst the young, euthanasia and the right to information and assistance to suicide.

The book brings together a number of variety of perspectives on HIV and AIDS and deals with a some of the central issues that are involved, both the wider social issues of prejudice, testing, legislation and discrimination and the more particular ones of confidentiality, choice death and euthanasia.

*Cei Tuxhill*

**Rosi Braidotti. *Patterns of Dissonance*. Polity 1991. £12.95 PBK.**

The main theme of this book is an exploration of the relationship between feminism and the much-vaunted crisis of modernity as it has appeared in post-structuralist philosophy. It correspondingly falls into two main sections: a feminist re-reading of those theorists (concentrating on Lacan, Derrida, Foucault and Deleuze) who have been to the fore in the articulation of this crisis; and a philosophical re-reading of feminist theorists (including Behaviour, Rich, Daly, Kristeva, Irigaray) in an assessment of what each of them has to offer in the face of it.

Braidotti's concern is to find ways of negotiating the post-structuralist collapse of the classical subject which would allow women to make positive affirmation of sexual difference, rather than relegating the feminine to the status of fantasy or metaphor for the crisis in masculinity. In doing so she both charts a genealogical map of feminism and philosophy and her itinerary through them, and provides the reader with a source or tool box of theoretical concepts with which to continue and expand that itinerary for herself. The result is an impressive breadth of reading (which does have its drawbacks - one sometimes misses a depth of discussion in dealing with complex or unfamiliar issues). The book constitutes an exposition of the premises and deeper theoretical foundations of Braidotti's other more recent work (on strategic essentialism and bodily materialism) rather than a substantive advance on her current position. It is written in an engaging and accessible style, although it is not an introductory text - it assumes a certain grasp of psychoanalysis, deconstruction and so on.

Braidotti characterises the feminist philosopher as an acrobat walking a tightrope stretched above the void: her own acrobatics in this erudite book are energetic and sure-footed. Her passion for the importance of feminism and philosophy is infectious, as is her optimism for the future of both. This book is an invaluable source for anyone interested in the dialogue between feminism and post-structuralist philosophy, and an inspiring example of feminism unafraid. Highly recommended.

Merl Storr

**Lorraine Code, *What Can She Know? Feminist Theory and the Construction of Knowledge*. Cornell University Press p/b \$14.95.**

The question to which this book addresses itself is: is the sex of the knower epistemologically significant? Code is fully aware of the likely objections to the claim that it is, and attempts to steer a careful course between two positions that have set up a central tension in feminist thought; on the one hand she rejects any kind of appeal to an essential femininity; on the other hand, she does not want the specificity of women to disappear in a postmodern plurality of interests and subjectivities. Epistemologically significant does not mean epistemologically definitive or totally determining, she says, and the onus of proof is not on those who claim that sex is relevant to knowledge claims, but on those who declare their neutrality.

Code's view is that we must see knowledge as having both subjective and objective components. 'Objectivity requires taking subjectivity into account' (31). Thus she rejects the position that scientific knowledge, physics above all, should be the privileged epistemological paradigm, and suggests an alternative paradigm: knowledge of other people. 'Knowing other people is at least as worthy a contender for paradigmatic status as knowledge of medium-sized everyday objects.' (37) She goes on to criticise the ideal of 'autonomous man' as both a moral and an epistemic ideal. But criticising equally the feminist 'maternal knowledge' paradigm, she offers instead the model of 'friendship' as a suitable moral, political and epistemic paradigm. The point is not to produce a new moral or epistemological theory, but to examine ways of *being* moral agents and creative, responsible knowers. Thus, although she criticises the Kantian moral hero, she appeals to Kant's epistemology for her model of a creative interplay between subjective and objective elements, against the Cartesian 'project of pure enquiry'. Two further chapters discuss the institutionalisation of knowledge and the effect of institutions on women's credibility and authority, and their sense of themselves as knowers. Since a collectivity or community is necessary for validation, knowledge should never be considered as though it were independent of its context. Here, she offers ecology as a paradigm.

As a feminist epistemologist, Code wants to remain in dialogue with the mainstream, while maintaining a critical stance both towards the mainstream and towards alternative feminist theories. There are four themes in particular which are reiterated throughout the book. Firstly, Code is concerned with the emancipatory potential of theories, and she assesses theories with an eye to their emancipatory strategies. Secondly, she is concerned with responsibility and accountability; she refuses to sever epistemology from ethics. Paradigms are not innocent, she argues, not even in the physical sciences. Her models of friendship and ecology, and of knowledge as a conversational process,

are offered for further dialogue and discussion. The task of the feminist epistemologist, she argues, is to remap the epistemic terrain, taking into account the political considerations that are implicated in knowing. The aim is not to produce a new epistemological theory (a 'feminist epistemology'), but 'to remap the epistemic terrain into numerous fluid conversations' (309). Thirdly, she is concerned particularly not only with the status of knowledge but also with the status of the knower. What one knows has to be legitimated, but it is much harder for a woman to achieve legitimation. Thus knowledge is a social and political project, and involves authority to speak. And finally, she stresses the creative aspects of the construction of knowledge - we are not merely passive observers, but actively involved in the process of making knowledge.

Code's work is thoughtful, careful and very clear. Her critical discussions of various feminist paradigms (Ruddock, Bordo, Scheman, Whitbeck, Belenky et al. etc.) are particularly useful. Perhaps she repeats just a little too often the formula: 'what feminists need to do is . . .' However, this does not detract from the book's substantial qualities. Undergraduates and MA students will certainly find it accessible, informative, and a stimulus to further thought.

Margaret Whitford

Arleen B Dallery and Charles E Scott, *The Question of the Other : Essays in Contemporary Continental Philosophy*, SUNY Press, \$18.95 p/b

This collection of essays suggests that postmodern, continental philosophy has ethical implications which are relevant to feminism (at least, this is what the blurb says). It presents interpretations of Husserl, Nietzsche, Derrida, Levinas, Irigaray, Foucault, Lacan, Heidegger and Sartre, focusing on questions of *the other* in phenomenology and its postmodernist successors. Unfortunately, the feminist reader has to make her own connections; there is no editorial introduction to point us in certain directions, and few of the contributors seem to have any real sense that the philosopher they are writing on has any relevance outside a department of philosophy; it's not clear either that all the essays keep the theme clearly in mind - it would be stretching it a bit to say that Foucault essays have much to do with *the other*. I'm afraid I found this collection rather dull.

The main reason I'm reviewing it is to discuss Linda Singer's essay: 'Defusing the Canon: Feminist Rereading and Textual Politics'. Singer begins with the asymmetry between feminist philosophers and their non-feminist colleagues. We read *their* tradition (we have to); they do not read our books (they do not have to). As a result, we do not read their canon in the same way. This leads her to ask questions about the canon, *the* history of philosophy: 'The rhetoric of "the history of philosophy" suggests a seamless chronology that effaces the mechanism of its construction, as well as the principles of inclusion, exclusion, and their justification in terms of an ultimately circular logic' (104). The threat posed by feminism calls into question the nature of philosophy; it raises the spectre of philosophy's contingency and groundlessness, and hence threatens its legitimating status. It is not accidental, she suggests, that philosophers will tend to present feminism as *antithetical* to philosophy. The question her article addresses is: what is the point, for feminists, of continuing to reread the canon? It is really the best way for feminists to direct their energies? Why is philosophy such a seductive

discourse? The appeal of philosophy, she suggests, lies in its promises of possibilities of self-transcendence, empowerment and emancipation through knowing. But 'to approach philosophy as a feminist is also to confront a place from which one has always already been exiled' (107).

The rest of the article discusses the pros and cons of the various strategies adopted by feminists in philosophy. Singer argues strongly that we must not *reduce* feminism to a sub-domain of philosophy (eg Plato's recommendation of education for women, J S Mill's advocacy of equal rights, etc.) To retain its force, it must retain its links with a historically specific social movement. Similarly, we must not continue to 'reiterate narratives of exile' (112), when we should be thinking about making a place, a dwelling for ourselves. And finally, even deconstructive readings, 'readings against the grain', have their limitations, insofar as they too risk disconnecting feminism from agency. Singer argues that feminist thought has in a sense come of age: 'We need to address the questions we have produced ourselves, rather than those we have inherited' (115) - questions around authorisation and legitimacy, knowledge and power, the relation between emancipation and models of truth, and so on.

Some people will think Singer goes too far; others will find her not radical enough. Either way, she provides a valuable lens to help bring into focus what we think we are doing and where we might be going.

Margaret Whitford

**Christine Di Stefano, *Configurations of Masculinity : A Feminist Perspective on Modern Political Theory*, Cornell University Press, p/b \$10.95**

Christine Di Stefano's book draws on object-relations theory to illuminate the paradigms of modern political thought. Her case studies are Hobbes, Marx and J S Mill. Her main argument is that 'the modern project of autonomy, of secular self-creation, is gendered' (xii), which sounds quite familiar. However she is worth reading, as her analyses are intelligent and illuminating. She uses feminist literary criticism as a set of resources for reading her theorists, and the combination of political theory and reading techniques (looking at features of style as well as explicit arguments) is a good one. She is aware of the dangers of applied psychoanalytic theory, but uses it to shed light on the models and paradigms which, she argues, (like Code above) are not innocent and certainly not ungendered. Each of the three theorists - Hobbes, Marx and Mill - develops a theory of "man" - heroic man, productive man and self-disciplined man, respectively - which is defined with reference to a feminised "other", an image that 'bears a striking resemblance to the figure of the mother in psychoanalytic discourse' (13). All the weight of what modern political man rejects is transferred on the the forgotten (m)other. In some ways, the argument is quite similar to that of the early Irigaray in *Speculum*, for example, that this (m)other 'functions as a representational support for the gendered masculine subject of modern political theory' (19). At all events, Di Stefano is able to show quite convincingly that the portrait of human nature supplied by each theorist is, to say the least, loaded with value and with affect. Thus, as an interpretive strategy, Di Stefano is seeking "to return the masculine to its own 'language'" (27, quoting Irigaray), to show that the theoretical "self" in each case is a masculine one. In the final chapter, the author

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situates herself vis-à-vis other feminist theory. She is not advocating an alternative political theory; she is also quite cautious about postmodernism, feeling that it often fails to connect with politics (cf. her paper in Linda Nicholson (ed.), *Feminism/Postmodernism*). She is putting forward a groundclearing operation, displaying particular constructions of masculinity - in a specific field of discourse - in order to make space for women to become 'the agents of their own representation' (189). It's a lucid, focused and thoughtful book which students working in political theory would do well to read.

Margaret Whitford

**Michele Le Doeuff *Hipparchia's Choice: An Essay Concerning Women, Philosophy, etc.* (Blackwell, Oxford, 1991) £14.95 p/b**

Study or the spinning-wheel: this was Hipparchia's choice, and is the French title of Michele Le Doeuff's text. The aim of this, the first of two columns, is to delineate conceptions of philosophy and of feminism which, viewed from where we stand now, have an admittedly utopian content. Were this utopia to be realised, it would be one in which women could be as 'at home'; in the professional academic world of philosophy as we have been assumed to be (by men) in the world of domesticity.

Le Doeuff is a philosopher and a feminist. Her book is about herself and her concerns: the current state of philosophy and of the women's movement in France, not taking either of these in isolation from the other, but experimenting with a way of speaking as a woman committed to both.

The text is divided into four notebooks. In the first of these, Le Doeuff problematises, considers, assesses and tries to negotiate the difficulties of speaking as woman, feminist and philosopher. She is disarmingly honest about this: 'Basically, I am not so much going to discuss a subject as to disgress a great deal in trying to talk about it' (p.46). And indeed the book does range far and wide, yet it has a central focus, that of the figure of Simone de Beauvoir (the second volume, we are promised, will revolve around Mary Wollstonecraft). The second notebook examines the nature of the relationship between the philosophies of Sartre and de Beauvoir; the third looks at aspects of their personal relationship, examining how Sartre's self definition as philosopher structured both his personal relationships and his philosophical writings, and looking at the concomitant effects on de Beauvoir, as she negotiated the space left available to her. In the fourth notebook, we are in the realm of the political/judicial. Le Doeuff explores the nature of the women's movement in France, 'a school for disorientation' (p.230), and puts forward some basic lessons which this school should have taught, its political demands and the intellectual reorientation required to accommodate these.

The 'Etc.' of the subtitle is important to Le Doeuff, and her book is far richer than can be captured in a few lines. This is a text which is personal, political and philosophical; it is studded with stories, jokes and examples that make it hugely alive, engaging, engaged and entertaining. At once scurrilously amusing and deeply serious, this book is a joy to read because reading it is like conversing with a friend.

Sarah Chatwin

Luce Irigaray, *Marine Lover of Friedrich Nietzsche*, trans. by Gillian C Gill, Columbia University Press, \$40.50.

*Marine Lover* has a reputation for being difficult and inaccessible. It is true that it is a multi-layered text, and that probably only someone as steeped as Irigaray herself in the texts of Western philosophy could appreciate all its nuances of meaning. The book is an address to, and a meditation on, Nietzsche's work. There is also another intertext that several commentators have already pointed to: Derrida, whose own meditation (if that is the word) on Nietzsche and 'the feminine' in *Spurs* has inspired so much commentary. And the text is certainly dauntingly allusive. However, if, when reading *Marine Lover*, one concentrates on the voice of the speaker - particularly if one has been sensitized by feminism - one can hear certain clear and unmistakable themes.

One way of approaching the book is to see it as a triptych, three versions of the same story in three different registers, the voice of the marine lover, the voice of the philosopher and the voice of the prophet. The first part of the book, 'Speaking of Immemorial Waters', is a prose poem. The speaker, a woman (a lover, the sea etc.) addresses a man (Nietzsche, Derrida, the sailor/navigator etc.). The marine lover, who is not quite dead, is not quite alive either, 'dwelling in death without ever dying' (28), and her most urgent plea is to be given the space to live, to grow and to become, for 'the enchantment of living' is endless movement, open to 'the unforeseen and imponderable surge of life. That can never be fixed in any definitive form' (59). But she has been entombed, buried alive, and deprived of sustenance. 'He' is guilty of arresting her 'movement of becoming', a phrase which recurs in Part I like a leitmotif. Women have been the axis, or axle, the still centre which enabled men to go out and conquer the world (21, 25). But there has come a realisation that this role may be a kind of living death.

The first part is essentially an exploration of a cultural phantasy. Part II, 'Veiled Lips', offers a more philosophical account of the phantasmatic structure of Nietzsche's philosophy. For Irigaray, philosophy is a system set up to defend against the fear of death. The shield is woman, or, to be more exact, woman's 'castration'. This account depends on an oedipal interpretation of philosophical truth and the function of 'woman' in philosophy.

The implicit account in Part II, that philosophy is complicit with and an instrument of patriarchy, is confirmed by the final part. Part III, 'When the Gods Are Born', is an account from the perspective of the forgotten woman, of the gods who figure so prominently in Nietzsche's work: Dionysos, Apollo and Christ. In Irigaray's reading, what is foregrounded is the fate of the mythological women that surround the gods - mothers, sisters, daughters. Irigaray sees the Greek myths as a record of a time when an earlier matriarchy was giving way to patriarchy, and her interpretation indicates, first, the marks of the struggle, and then, the more tranquil period of 'oblivion' which has obliterated and continues to obliterate the traces of a maternal genealogy. Irigaray risks the prophetic and the utopian here, in her attempt to write a new founding myth for our age, in which the maternal genealogy would be restored. She suggests that we may be on the brink of a new era, and she is - heroically - attempting to write its founding narrative.

The translation is very readable, although this is not of course a book that can be read fast.

[A longer version of this review will appear in *Free Associations* in 1992.]

Margaret Whitford

The Milan Women's Bookstore Collective, *Sexual Difference : A Theory of Social-Symbolic Practice*, Indiana University Press p/b. Paolo Bono and Sandra Kemp (eds), *Italian Feminist Thought : A Reader*, Blackwell p/b £14.95 and h/b.

In 1990, there was a spate of publications, memoirs and personal accounts by women who had been active in the early days of the WLM. The tone of many of these was nostalgic : the great age of feminist activism and collective action was already over; feminism seemed to have lost its way; could one even speak of a women's movement in the nineties? *Sexual Difference* offers a way of thinking about the difference between the seventies and the present, and despite the disparity between the Italian situation and the British, puts forward an analysis which may well be of value for women in Britain too. It comes in the shape of a history of Italian feminism, written quite specifically from the point of view of the Milan Women's Bookstore Collective. That early explosion of public demonstrations, they say, was but a way of "reacting against the feeling of powerlessness" (85) and is no longer appropriate to the task of a new situation. The intensity generated between women by those early struggles was not enough in itself to build new social formations on. In the years that followed, 'no longer are only love, dinners, flowers and dances involved, but also money, deadlines, work and power' (84). Virginia Woolf spoke of a room of one's own, but this must be understood not in purely individual terms, but also in social and symbolic terms as : 'a symbolic placement, a space-time furnished with female gendered references, where one goes for meaningful preparation before work, and confirmation after' (26). In short, rejecting the discourse of emancipation and equality (freedom from oppression, equality with men) for reasons which are clearly and cogently expressed, they propose the concepts of female freedom (freedom to . . . ) and recognition and gratitude in relations between women, in which disparities - of power, talents, abilities etc. - are recognised and become sources of empowerment rather than occasions for envy. The bind in which women find themselves, they argue, is the difficulty of reconciling the female demand for commonality ('we are all oppressed - therefore the same') with the strength of each women's own specific desires (135). The notion of a female symbolic order or female social contract evolved as a way of moving beyond this oscillation between individual achievement (at the price of abandoning other women) and solidarity (at the price of remaining stuck in a static state of oppression). Desire is a central concept at issue : women have great difficulty 'in expressing their desires exactly and pursuing their own interests consistently' (85), particularly when these desires bring them into conflict not only with men but also with other women.

'The expression of desire is confused with the imposition of a norm' (100) and significant differences (e.g. more or less oppressed, etc.) become sources of guilt rather than empowerment, while 'an ardent desire is enough to create a possible disparity between human beings' (133). Thus the feminist struggle for rights and justice is displaced by a

different kind of problematic : the dynamic which motivates one to struggle for them in the first place.

The book introduces us to the concepts of genealogy, the symbolic mother, double militancy, *autocoscienza* (the Italian version of consciousness-raising), 'the practice of the unconscious', female authority etc. : a whole vocabulary of a feminist reflection that, because of the vagaries of translation, has unfortunately reached us rather later than that of French feminism.

Many of the somewhat ephemeral documents of Italian feminism which are discussed in *Sexual Difference* are reprinted in the compendium *Italian Feminist Thought* which, among other things, includes the often-referred to and memorably entitled *Sputiamo su Hegel* [Let's Spit on Hegel] (Carlo Lonzi 1970), the Milan Women's controversial *More Women than Men* (1983) and several texts by Luisa Muraro, one of the members of the Milan Women's Collective, and also one of the founders of the Verona Women's Philosophy Group, *Diotima*. *Italian Feminist Thought* is thus a useful text to read alongside *Sexual Difference*, because it provides a bit more context - essential if one is to get a clear sense of what the Milan women are arguing. (I also recommend Mirna Cicioni's article : 'Love and Respect Together' : The Theory and Practice of *Affidamento* in Italian feminism' in *Australian Feminist Studies* No. 10 (1989) pp 71-83.)

In her introduction to *Sexual Difference*, Teresa de Lauretis, while mentioning some of the reservations that might be expressed about this theory of socio-symbolic practice, also suggests that it is 'as startlingly radical a notion as any that has emerged in Western thought' (12), 'an epistemological rupture in the continuum of Western thought' (13). I suspect it could introduce a new thinking and a new momentum into women's practice (e.g. into groups of women in philosophy, to take an instance close at hand), where the nitty-gritty issues of 'money, deadlines, work and power' may be raised, but where there is not always a relevant feminist political vocabulary in which to discuss them.

Margaret Whitford

**Sean Sayers and Peter Osborne, *Socialism, Feminism & Philosophy : A Radical Philosophy Reader* Routledge 1990.**

This is one of those books which looks promising and turns out to be disappointing. It consists of a selection of articles, all previously published in the 1980s in *Radical Philosophy*, and organised into three sections: Feminism and Philosophy; Socialism and Philosophy, and Nature and Human Nature.

The first disappointment is the number of papers by women, 4 out of 12 contributions. (13 if you include the introduction). At times, the male contributors betray a gob-stopping lack of awareness: for example Chris Arthur, in the introduction, citing his own paper as an example of "a critical scrutiny of what the (male) luminaries of the philosophical tradition have had to say about women". Secondly, there is no attempt to explore the links between feminism, socialism and concepts of nature and human nature. Indeed, the section on socialism is reminiscent of the bad old-days on the left which promoted the resurgence of the feminist movement. Written entirely by men,

largely about books by men about Marx, discussing marxist theory as if women did not exist.

The section on feminism and philosophy contains a piece by Grimshaw, (one of the livelier in the book), exploring the tensions in writing feminist philosophy, one by Arthur analysing Hegel's view of women, primarily in response to another article on Hegel, not republished here, an article by Ross Poole on Morality, Masculinity and the Market, in itself an interesting analysis, but of only incidental concern to feminists, a piece by Parsons on feminism and the logic of morality, providing an over-view of feminist critiques of morality, and suggesting that they reveal the need for revisions in moral epistemology . . . and so on, I am tempted to say. This range of papers reveals my dissatisfaction with the book as a whole: the material is dated, recapitulating positions we have become very familiar with, (a warning against publications put together in this way); the interest in feminism often seems incidental to some other concern of the writer; much of it reads like a rather elite group talking to themselves in voices presumed to be objective and somehow out-side the positions that they look at. Reé's piece on proletarian philosophers revealed to me the roots of my discontent. This book is written by and for people who primarily identify themselves as academic philosophers, concerned to enliven that activity, but not to depart from its view of the proper way to do the subject. At least Reé is aware of the conflict.

Its a sad reflection. Radical Philosophy was once a breath of fresh air in the academy, and has long been a friendly presence for those of us battling with entrenched views of what philosophy is. But now it is in danger of becoming a reflection of the institution it sought to enliven: using deadening forms of language and abandoning passionate commitments in order to "measure up", and even worse, I suspect putting "feminism" into a title because someone has told them it will sell books. And we all know that the academic's first duty is now to make and sell books, without too much thought for what s/he needs to say, or who needs to hear it. Its time for Radical Philosophy to re-open the discussion of what we are all about.

Anne Seller

**Margaret Whitford *Luce Irigaray, Philosophy in the Feminine*, Routledge 1991. 241 pp.**

Margaret Whitford's book on Irigaray was published this summer, I amongst many I would guess, have found Irigaray's work daunting to approach and eagerly awaited this book to ease the path. Hopefully this newsletter will receive other discussions of the book from readers who can agree with or take issue with Margaret's interpretations from their own reading of Irigaray herself.

For those readers who come from a very different philosophical tradition from her own there are two main hurdles which have to be overcome in confronting Irigaray's writing. One is her language, which is metaphorical and in its own way mythical. This use of language is central to her philosophical project, and there is no way of neatly and literally reconstructing her positions into the orderly argument form some of us cannot help but be attached to. The second hurdle, for those unused to its background, is her use of a psycho-analytic model to interrogate philosophical positions. What Margaret's book helps us to see is the inter-connectedness of these two aspects of Irigaray's project.

Central here is the distinction between interdependence of the Imaginary and the Symbolic. The Imaginary is, most minimally, the realm of unconsciousness phantasy (although the book alerts us to richer and more complex uses of the term). The Symbolic is the conceptual and theoretical framework in which we articulate our philosophical, and other, views. To uncover the Imaginary informacy our Symbolic requires attention to the language, ways etc with which a position is articulated. An example here would be Irigaray's discussion of Plato's cave. We tend to assume that we can purify this, other philosophical accounts of their imagery, articulate their theories of the sensible and the conceptual, the real essences of things, and then appearances; and then, independently of their expression, assess their validity. Irigaray however, uncovers the imaginary underlying such philosophical positions - on which they remain dependent; the association of the sensible with the female, the residue which is left behind on the route to the transcendent, the invisible condition of the possibility. She also opens up the possibility of a transformation of this imaginary with new images and new myths, which comes with it the possibility of a re-articulated symbolic, eg, sensible and embodies transcendent subjects, a rationality which is fertile, a model of knowledge which is "connubial, rather than predalorg and grasping" (p219). It's almost unnerving to see how this method can work in producing new positions within the symbolic realm.

Irigaray is dealing with a single problem, in its multiple aspects; the absence of an exclusion of woman/women from the symbolic/social order, and their representation as nature" (p170). In this she shows a starting point with Lacan who sees 'woman' in the symbolic order as characterised in terms of a 'lack' or an absence, the residue which culture transcends their which has outside of discourse. Irigaray, however, unlike Lacan, does not regard the symbolic order as closed. She wants to reclaim "woman" for women, real women who do, of course, appear in the social order and utilise the symbolic one. She therefore sees the urgent task as the transformation of 'woman' in the symbolic order; to enable women to speak as women: This change in the symbolic requires a corresponding female imaginary, new myths, ideals and images. It is in the context of this project that we can place her use of the imagery of the female today to suggest new ways of relating between women and women, and women and men. It is not however a project that she can promote alone. It must be a collective endeavour.

It is an endeavour, however, which insists on sexual difference. In this respect Irigaray has gained many entics, and been regarded as essentialist for insisting on a distinctive female imaginary, and a distinctive voice for 'woman' within the symbolic. Within the interpretation of this book, however, Irigaray is neither a biological or psychic essentialist. The womans voice on which she insists is something to be created rather than uncovered. Contemporary moves away from the masculine subject to multiple subjectives are however resisted. They simply by-pass the possibility of woman as subject. This position in the symbolic order has to be established before multiplicity can be celebrated - otherwise women have simply been silenced again.

Irigaray's project, as presented in this work is an exhilarating one, even for those of us who may accept less of the Lacanian account of our current symbolic order than she does. This book is informative and challenging and will lead to a much wider discussion and appreciation of Irigaray's work. Don't miss it!

*Kathleen Lennon*

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- Sara Ruddock *Material Thinking: towards a politics of peace* Women's Press.
- Elizabeth Spelman *Inessential Woman* Women's Press
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