



WOMEN'S PHILOSOPHY REVIEW

(previously the NEWSLETTER)

Issue No 10 November 1993

EDITORIAL

A section in the Newsletter for Papers

We have decided to go ahead with expanding the Newsletter by making a space to publish short papers. We hope that people will submit papers to us, and take advantage of the newsletter to get some feedback on their ideas.

Judging by previous experience, (e.g. the review section and short pieces in the newsletter) we will have to establish the section before people begin to send us things without waiting to be asked. However, our hope is that people will send things in - rather than us relying on our networks. So if you do have something for us, please send it in, or, if you prefer, write to us first, to see if it would be suitable.

We are delighted to publish a short paper by Jennifer Hornsby in this issue. In the next issue we will publish a paper by Anne Seller called: Whose postmodernism? (Note that in both cases copyright is retained by the author.)

As soon as you do begin to send in papers, publication criteria will have to be established. We suggest the following criteria and the following process of refereeing. WE WOULD WELCOME ADVICE AND SUGGESTIONS ABOUT THIS! AND, OF COURSE, WE WILL RAISE IT AT A FUTURE SWIP CONFERENCE BUSINESS MEETING.

Criteria

- Less than 6,000 words - but shorter is preferable.
- Explanatory, rather than decisive, and provocative if you wish.
- No particular philosophical or feminist line is required.
- And of course, interesting, readable, lively, earth-shaking, original, rigorous, illuminating . . .

Process

Anyone who would be willing to referee papers should send in their names, and their areas of specialist interest. Anyone wanting to referee would have to guarantee to return papers with comments within three weeks.

NOTE THAT WE STILL WELCOME SHORT ARTICLES FOR THE NEWSLETTER ON WOMEN AND PHILOSOPHY, TEACHING PHILOSOPHY, ETC. WE ALSO STILL WELCOME REVIEWS OF BOOKS YOU HAVE FOUND VALUABLE OR INTERESTING. In this edition we include a short article by Sarah Richmond, numerous reviews, and a number of 'books received' which could be reviewed in later editions.

The deadline for the next edition is 30.4.1994.

*Morwenna Griffiths,
School of Education, University of Nottingham, NG7 2RD.
Margaret Whitford
Department of French, Queen Mary and Westfield College, Mile End Road, London E1 4NS.*

SWIP BUSINESS

Subscriptions

If you have not subscribed for 1993/94, please fill in the new form and send it with a cheque to Kimberley Hutchings at SHASS, Wolverhampton University, DUDLEY, DY1 3HR.

The possibility of starting a direct debit system is still being investigated. (More news in the next newsletter!)

List of Subscribers

The list of subscribers is becoming so long that we have decided to leave it off the back of the newsletter. If anyone wants a copy for any reason (networking, publicising events, etc) please write to Morwenna Griffiths, School of Education, University of Nottingham, NG7 2RD. It is available as a list, or in the form of address labels.

Conferences

These will only happen if someone organises them! We need volunteers! Moya Lloyd is the SWIP co-ordinator and link person for conferences. Please read her article about it on page 3.

Publicity

Women in philosophy are often professionally isolated - whether or not they work in philosophy departments. Please help by publicising SWIP and SWIP events. We would be glad if you could publicise the Dundee Conference (for instance, by photocopying the relevant page from the Newsletter) and distribute the leaflets explaining SWIP. (More leaflets are available from Morwenna Griffiths, School of Education, University of Nottingham, NG7 2RD.)

CONFERENCES

CONFERENCE UPDATE from Moya Lloyd

Unfortunately there will not be a SWIP meeting this November since no one volunteered to take on its organisation. There will, however, be a meeting next March in Dundee, which Lily Forrester has agreed to run. Thank you Lily!

It is vitally important that we do not lose the momentum around meetings that has been gathering over the last few years, and that we try to keep up the practice of two sessions a year. But, in order to do that we need as many people as possible to run those meetings. SWIP meetings, in the past, have taken many different forms: from fairly small workshop-type gatherings with a dozen or so people, to a one day lecture programme (along the lines of the Oxford conference), to a combination of plenary and panel sessions (such as the recent Warwick and Cambridge conferences). Some have been fairly regional, while others have attracted people from all over the country. The wider the range of conferences and workshops the better.

So if there are any SWIP members who would be prepared to organise the meeting - small or large - in October/November 1994, please write to me now.

To give some guidance on the logistics of conference organisation, I've put together a tip sheet which I'm happy to send to anyone who would like it. In addition, if anyone else has information or advice that they think might be helpful about running conferences/seminars (particular dos and don'ts for instance) then please either pass it on directly to me, or send something into the newsletter.

I'm also happy to take suggestions for particular conference themes, alternative kinds of meetings (would anyone fancy organising a reading weekend structured around set texts, for instance?), and to compile a register of potential paper-givers which could all then be circulated to potential conference convenors.

Please don't hesitate to get in touch. Anyone wanting an informal chat about the possibility of putting on a session can contact me on (0902) 323462 (work); or (0902) 756542 (home).

WE NEED LOTS OF VOLUNTEERS!!

Please note that from 1 January 1994 I can be contacted at:

Moya Lloyd
Department of Politics
The Queen's University of Belfast
Belfast BT7 1NN
(0232) 245133

ASWIP one-day conference will be held in Dundee University on Saturday, 26 March 1994. Anyone interested in giving a paper should contact:

Lily Forrester
Department of Philosophy
University of Dundee
Dundee, DD1 4HN
Tel: 0382 23181 Ext 4672

Women's Studies
Cultural Studies

University of Exeter

The Romance of Place

16 April 1994

A one-day interdisciplinary conference concerned with the construction and function of images of place. Women's Studies and Cultural Studies contributions are especially welcome.

Two likely strands are:

- Functions of Place in Romantic Fiction
- Constructions of Cornwall

Titles of 20 minute papers and your phone number to:

Ella Westland
University of Exeter (Cornwall Office)
Hayne Corfe Centre
Sunningdale
Truro
TR1 3ND

Tel: 087 2-74503 (24 hour answering machine)
0726 842356 (h)

British Sociological Association - Annual Conference

Sexualities in Social Context
28 - 31 March 1994
University of Central Lancashire

The focus of this conference reflects both a growing interest amongst sociologists in the understanding of human sexualities, and a rapidly expanding research base on a wide range of contexts and areas. The new sociology of sexuality is not only casting a new light on sexual behaviour itself, it is also illuminating a wide range of issues, from gender to race, from class to the dynamics of power relations. This conference will provide the opportunity to link the existing theories and practice of sociology with a range of challenging new perspectives.

Potential themes include:

- The Social Construction of Sexuality
- Sexuality and the Law
- Love, Trust, Romance
- Intimacy and Relationships
- Sexuality and Health
- HIV and AIDS
- Sexual Identities
- Religion, Sexuality and Gender
- Education and Sexuality
- Science, Technology, Epistemology
- The Future of Sexualities
- Representations of Sexuality
- Sexuality and Social Policy Issues
- Sexuality and Power

Please send abstracts (250 words) for papers and round tables to:

Vicki Merchant
Delphi Building
University of Central Lancashire
Preston PR1 2HE

The organisers reserve the right to refuse papers.

University of Texas at El Paso

International Conference for Women in Higher Education

6-8 January 1994
University of Central Florida

Dr Sandra Meyer
Director, Women Studies Program
University of Texas at El Paso
500 West University, El Paso
TX 79968 USA

CITIZENSHIP

& CULTURAL FRONTIERS

CONFERENCE

14-17 SEPTEMBER 1994

CALL FOR PAPERS



Staffordshire
UNIVERSITY

Among the proposed keynote speakers are:

ANDREW BENJAMIN

GEOFF BENNINGTON

SHIRLEY CHEW

STEVEN CONNOR

C. LYN INNES

ALAN SINFIELD

ROBERT YOUNG

Citizenship is occupying a central role in contemporary political, critical and cultural debates. It cuts across the discourses of nationalism, colonialism, and modernity, and provides a critical terrain for analysis of cultural difference, class, race, gender and sexual politics. We are organising an international conference which will investigate these intersections of interests and address the cultural and political frontiers "citizenship" represents in a changing geo-political map. What are the political limits of this concept and what is its status in the cultural production of identities in a "postmodern" world? If you are interested in these questions and wish to contribute to the conference please complete and send the tear-off slip by 30 November 1993.

(TEAR OFF)

I would like to give a paper (suggested title/topic) _____

Name _____

Address _____

RETURN TO DR AZZEDINE HADDOUR
SCHOOL OF ARTS, PO BOX 661, STAFFORDSHIRE UNIVERSITY, COLLEGE ROAD,
STOKE-ON-TRENT, ST4 2XW
TEL 0782 573479/573217

New Journal: NORA, Nordic Journal of Women's Studies.

NORA is a new interdisciplinary journal of women's studies, published in English.

NORA will be a channel for women's research from all disciplines. Emphasis will be placed on showing a Nordic profile in women's research, with regard to both content and theoretical and methodological approaches. NORA aims to discuss and examine the realities and myths of women's lives in the Nordic countries, historically and today.

At the same time NORA is *international in scope*, offering a forum for theoretical debate, dialogue and information on research of general interest to feminist scholars and scientists. NORA acknowledges the need to speak across borders, challenging academic, linguistic and national limits and boundaries. Considering the diversity of women's experiences within the Nordic countries and the broad spectrum of viewpoints and approaches that characterizes modern research on women and gender, NORA encourages papers that have a comparative and interdisciplinary perspective and are theoretically self-reflective.

Feel free to photocopy and distribute this leaflet to friends!

Manuscripts for NORA must be in English and should not exceed 20 pages. All papers deemed appropriate for NORA will be seen anonymously by two referees. Equal consideration is given to all manuscripts in English from any country.

Manuscripts should be sent in four copies (and preferably with a disc) to the editorial address.

The first issue of NORA will be published in the beginning of 1993.

Editorial address:

Torill Steinfeld
NAVFs Hov
Sendakerveien 99
N-0483 OSLO, Norway
Fax: +47 2 22 55 71

Business address:

Scandinavian University Press
P.O. Box 2959 Tøyen
0608 OSLO, Norway
Tlf: +47 2 67 76 00
Fax: +47 2 67 75 75

Please send to: Scandinavian University Press, P.O. Box 2959 Tøyen, 0608 Oslo, Norway
US address: Scandinavian University Press, 200 Meacham Ave., Elmont NY 11003, USA

- Please enter my subscription to NORA from Volume 1, 1993.
ISSN 0803 8740, 2 issues per year. Postage included.
Airspeed delivery worldwide. Prepayment required

SUBSCRIPTION RATE:

- Private subscription, NOK 195 (outside Scandinavia)
SEK 150 (in Sweden), NOK 160 (in other Nordic countries)
 Institutional subscription, NOK 330 (outside Scandinavia)
SEK 275 (in Sweden), NOK 295 (in other Nordic countries)
 Please send me a free sample copy of NORA

PLEASE TICK ONE BOX

- Cheque enclosed Please send invoice
 VISA Eurocard Mastercard AmEx Diners

Card No.: _____ Expiry date: _____
Make cheque payable to Scandinavian University Press and staple it to your order form

NAME/ADDRESS (CAPITALS) _____

SIGNATURE _____

DATE _____

International Conference

THE POLITICS OF IDENTITY, SECULAR CRITICISM,
AND THE GRAVITY OF HISTORY

The Work of Edward Said

University of Warwick
4-6 March 1994

The politics of identity, is the problem: the failure to take account of and accept, the migratory quality of experience, that everybody is a migrant or an exile. **Edward Said**

This conference takes its inspiration from the pioneering texts of Edward Said whose life-work has been devoted to challenging the legitimacy of both geographical borders and intellectual boundaries. This conference will bring together people who have developed their work in terms of a critical confrontation with Said's example with others who have been raising similar kinds of questions but from different intellectual trajectories.

Sessions on:

- Philosophy and cultural identity (violence and European Metaphysics)
- Political theory and imperialism
- The politics of secular interpretation
- Said and poststructuralism; Said and liberal/literary humanism
- Form and ideology (the possibility of contrapuntal criticism)
- Transculturation
- Nomads and citizens

Speakers include:

Edward Said

Lisa Ahmed, Robert Bernasconi, Brian Cheyette, Laura Chrisman, Simon Critchley, Moira Ferguson, Jonardon Ganeri, Paul Gilroy, Subhi Hadidi, Ernesto Laclau, Neil Lazarus, Jane Marcus, Masao Miyoshi, Aletta Norval, Bhikhu Parekh, Jonathan Ree, Jacqueline Rose, Michael Sprinker, Gauri Viswanathan, David Wood, Robert Young.

For details contact

Dr K Ansell-Pearson
Conference Director
'The Politics of Identity'
Centre for Research in Philosophy and Literature
University of Warwick
Coventry
CV4 7AL

VIEWS

Sex Selection

What is sex selection? The phrase, which (without explanation) is rather obscure, has been adopted to refer to a particular *kind* of sex selection: the practice of selecting the sex of a baby in advance of its conception. The issue became a live one in this country early in 1993 with the opening of the private London Gender Clinic, which offers a 'treatment' which, they claim, will establish sex-selected pregnancy. Prospective parents now have the chance, if they have the money, to try and determine the sex of their child in advance. A sperm separation technique is applied to the father's sperm, and separates the 'boys' from the 'girls': the mother is then inseminated with the sperm which will give rise to a child of the desired sex. (At least, that's the theory: the Clinic advises that the success rate of their technique is 70-75%).

Late in April this year I attended a one-day conference in London organised by the BMA on the subject of sex selection. The aim of the conference, clearly, was to bring together professionals who might be expected to have views on the matter. So there was a doctor, to comment on the dubious scientific validity of the technique currently being sold; a lawyer, who discussed the legal aspects to the selling of sex selection services; a researcher who described the attitudes of different ethnic communities in Britain; a philosopher, to consider the ethics of the question; and a social anthropologist, to describe the possible cultural impact of the development.

I enjoyed the day, although I was still unsure, at the end, what I thought about sex selection. (Part of my motivation in writing this report is that I want to know what other people think). The issue was approached by most speakers in terms of a rather obvious conflict between goods: choice and freedom, on the one hand, and the danger of unwelcome, and perhaps unforeseen, consequences of that choice on the other. Libertarianism, more or less, versus paternalism: in the very liberal atmosphere which prevailed there was scarcely a mention of the religious opposition to the idea of sex selection (interfering with God's will, nature, etc.) although there has been fiercely-voiced opposition of that kind in Britain. At BMA House the tone was rationalist, polite and secular: a group of concerned professionals, seeking agreement about the correct way forward for a decent society. Of course, the speakers could hardly claim to speak for the public at large, or that their viewpoints were neutral. Nor do I believe that the decision should be left to them. But between them they covered a lot of ground.

Robert Winston, Professor of Reproductive Medicine at Hammersmith Hospital (and godfather to many a test-tube baby, it appears) explained the Ericsson technique (which is franchised to the 'gender clinics') and emphasised that it had not, so far, been scientifically validated. This, alone, would be enough to raise doubts about the legitimacy of selling treatment based on it; in addition, Professor Winston was unhappy about the lack of medical regulation of such clinics, where the staff's expertise and resources are likely to be far inferior to hospital-based ones. His worries, then, were about the potential exploitation of customers and the reliability of the sellers.

Jonathan Glover, the philosopher from Oxford University, drew attention to the imbalance between the sexes which could result from parental choice: would people choose boys rather than girls? In fact, in this country it looks as if the sexes are equally popular with parents: it seems likely, however, that in societies where greater sex-based inequality makes sons more of an economic asset to their families than daughters, choice would lead to an imbalance in numbers. And in Britain the idea that the *eldest* child should be male (followed by a sweet little sister) is still popular: what would be the cultural consequences of a whole generation of girls with older brothers? Might sex selection reinforce existing inequality, prejudice and stereotypes? Isn't the 'commodification' of children being taken a bit far? Might it not be unfair on the children of the future to allow them to grow up in 'parent-designed' conditions whose effects we can have no idea of? On the other hand, if parents who already have a daughter, say, prefer their second child to be male for the sake of 'variety', is that preference reprehensible? Furthermore, it's possible that sex selection would lead to a smaller population growth, as those parents who produce *x* children of the 'wrong' sex before they strike lucky would have a short cut.

Marilyn Strathern, Professor of Social Anthropology at Manchester University, made some excellent points. She criticised two dominant assumptions of the debate: (i) the idea that the important thing to consider, in evaluating the effect of sex selection, was the *consequences*, (particularly demographic consequences) of the practice (ii) the idea that the option of selecting the sex of one's child would straightforwardly amount to an extension of parental *choice*. Against (i), she pointed out that even if the availability of sex selection made no demographic difference - supposing, for example, that parental choices cancelled each other out and left the 'natural' balance quite undisturbed - it would be quite wrong to conclude that there would be no major disturbance in social life. The *existence* of the 'choice' would, by itself, make an enormous difference to people's lives. If it is already the case that many women go through pregnancy surrounded by relatives and friends with different hopes and ambitions for the expected child, how would things be in a situation in which the parents could settle the child's sex in advance? It is doubtful whether the existence of such a 'choice' would be enjoyable for those involved. Against (ii), Strathern argued that few people would have the basis they would need for the decision they made: in most cases it is a vision of the *particular* child which drives preferences for one sex over the other, not an abstract preference for *any* boy, say rather than *any* girl. But no-one can know, before a child has even been conceived, what kind of boy or girl it will be. So what would parents be 'choosing' between? We should remember, too, that 'choosing on the basis of sex alone' is just what the legislation against sex discrimination was designed to outlaw.

The BMA Ethics committee's initial conclusion was that sex selection was not in principle objectionable. They added two provisos: that it would not be ethical for abortions to be carried out for that reason, and that those selling the 'treatment' for selection should not be allowed to make unproven claims about its efficacy. The medical profession remains divided, however, with many doctors quite opposed to the idea. So far we have no legislation on the issue.

None of the speakers described their viewpoint as 'feminist'. Nonetheless, sex selection

has been of concern to feminists, and it is easy to see why: it represents a development in reproductive technology which will affect pregnancy and parenthood, and women are still far more involved than men in raising children. And many feminists suspect that the repercussions will be harmful to women's interests.

I'd be very interested to hear what other readers of this newsletter think. In particular, I was struck by a comment I heard one conference participant making to another at the end of the day: she said that the entire debate had been set up in the wrong terms, and that the framework and methodology used were quite inappropriate. What might she have meant? Perhaps people would send their comments in and the discussion could continue in future issues of the journal.

Sarah Richmond
Department of Philosophy
University College of London

Meena Dhanda, (University of Wolverhampton) has written a response to Sarah Richmond's article. It is called 'Arguments for and against "sex"-preselection'. She situates the arguments in the context of real people in the choices available to parents in India. This article will be published in the next issue, in May.

We congratulate Meena. She has an article in the new book edited by Catherine Audard, *Le respect: de l'estime à la déférence: une question de limite* which has won the 24th grand prix littéraire des lectrices, 1993. Other contributors include Michele Le Doeuff whose session at the Oxford conference was so inspiring. Christol Vidal writes: 'This collection shows writers and philosophers drawing on their reflections and their experience to give a judicious and complete perspective on respect. The concept of respect is analysed from all points of view, in its connections and its consequences. The philosophy which emerges from accounts such as that of Meena Dhanda, for example, about untouchables in India, is thus made accessible to the wider public.'

NEWS

Women and Philosophy in the Philippines

We have received a request for papers from Dr Celeste Botor in the Philippines. If you have any off-prints or spares of your papers on feminist philosophy she would be very grateful to receive them.

She writes:

"We just had a successful seminar-conference on sexual harassment in school and workplace. I lent the materials you sent me on Women, Power, Knowledge [papers from the Leeds Conference] to some faculty members in the Women Studies Center of the University of the Philippines, and to my students in a doctoral seminar in Philosophy of Education. The materials you sent to us will provide the universal concepts as well as the contextualization in England. My students will provide the Filipino context.]

She would be grateful if you could send more papers to her at:

Dr Celeste Botor
Department of Educational Foundations
College of Education
University of the Philippines
Dillman Quezon City
Philippines

BOOKS RECEIVED

If you would like to review any of the books received (described below) please contact Margaret Whitford promptly at Department of French, Queen Mary and Westfield College, Mile End Road, London E1 4NS. 071 775 3370.

Gerardine Meaney, *(Un)like Subjects: Women, Theory, Fiction*, Routledge 1993.

(Un)Like Subjects deals with the relationships between women and writing, mothers and daughters, the maternal and history. Gerardine Meaney addresses the questions about language, writing and the relations between women which have preoccupied the three most influential French feminists and three important contemporary British women novelists. Tracing both fiction and theory as texts, the author traces the connections between the theorists - Hélène Cixous, Luce Irigaray and Julia Kristeva - and the novelists - Doris Lessing, Angela Carter and Muriel Spark. Gerardine Meaney's reading of the work of these six major women writers explores new forms of women's identity, subjectivity and narrative and demonstrates how theoretical and literary texts can illuminate each other to bridge the gap between theory and literary criticism. *(Un)like Subjects* is a book which will provide readers with a new way forward, opening up a relatively unexplored method of argument with verve and originality. (Publisher's blurb)

Flora Tristan, *Utopian Feminist: Her Travel Diaries and Personal Crusade*, Selected, Translated and with an Introduction by Doris and Paul Beik, Indiana University Press 1993.

A child of both the French and industrial revolutions, Flora Tristan (1803-1844) became a bold social critic and political activist. Assuming personal freedoms enjoyed by few women contemporaries, she devoted herself to the cause of universal justice. Europe was engulfed in liberation movements during the early decades of the nineteenth century, and it was in this cauldron that Tristan wrote and proselytized. The works selected and translated by Doris and Paul Beik reflect the experiences that shaped Tristan's politics and philosophy; The introduction and headnotes trace Tristan's life and describe the social and intellectual milieu of nineteenth-century France. Several pieces are here translated into English for the first time. Included are excerpts from *Women Travelers* (1835), *Peregrinations of a Pariah* (1838), the novel *Méphís* (1838), *Promenades in London* (1840), *Worker's Union* (1843), and *The Tour of France* (posthumously published in 1973), which chronicles her strenuous efforts to organise members of the French working class. (Description on back cover)

Donna Dickenson, *Margaret Fuller: Writing a Woman's Life*, Macmillan 1993.

This is the story of an unrepresentative woman: one who had to script a new woman's life. Yet it is also the narrative of the emblematic woman of her time. After Margaret Fuller's death in 1850, even the male writers with whom she was friendliest - Emerson and Hawthorne - made her life and work a no-man's land, in the ways documented for a later generation by Sandra M Gilbert and Susan Gubar. What befell Fuller's reputation

has happened to that of many women writers, but it happened to her first. This lively new study is the first to be completely based on an authenticated edition of Fuller's letters. Donna Dickenson highlights the contrast between the script written for Fuller to play from the unmarked grave, and the one she actually wrote for herself by living it: as a revolutionary in Italy, a feminist, editor and social critic in America, and a woman writing a new kind of life. (Blurb on inside cover)

Hypatia, special issue on Lesbian Philosophy, Vol. 7, No. 4, Fall 1992, edited by Claudia Card, Indiana University Press.

Anne Maclean, *The Elimination of Morality: Reflections on Utilitarianism and Bioethics*, Routledge 1993.

Do philosophers possess moral expertise? Is utilitarianism the only rational basis for ethical decisions? *The Elimination of Morality* combines a critique of utilitarianism with an argument for the futility of bioethics. Anne Maclean challenges the conception of reason in ethics central to both and argues that a philosophical training confers no special authority to make pronouncements about moral issues. She proposes that pure utilitarianism eliminates the essential ingredients of moral thinking. (Blurb on back cover)

* * *

The following books received are not the sort of book we normally review in the newsletter. Postgraduates working in relevant areas of philosophy might like to write in for them, without any commitment to review.

Norman Malcolm, *Wittgenstein: A Religious Point of View?*, edited with a response by Peter Winch, Routledge 1993.

"I am not a religious man: but I cannot help seeing every problem from a religious point of view" (Ludwig Wittgenstein). Such were Wittgenstein's words to his friend Drury. This, the last work of the distinguished philosopher Norman Malcolm, is a discussion of what Wittgenstein may have meant by this and of its significance for his philosophy. The book concludes with a critical discussion of Malcolm's essay by Peter Winch. (Blurb on back cover)

G E Moore, *Selected Writings*, ed. Thomas Baldwin, Routledge 1993.

G E Moore, more than either Bertrand Russell or Ludwig Wittgenstein, was chiefly responsible for the rise of the analytic method in twentieth-century philosophy. This selection of his writings shows Moore at his very best. This is a collection for all students and teachers of philosophy. (Blurb on back cover) [Includes: The Nature of Judgement, Truth and Falsity, The Refutation of Idealism, Sense-Data, Hume's Theory Examined, External and Internal Relations, A Defence of Common Sense, Is Existence a Predicate? Proof of an External World, Certainty, Being Certain That One Is In Pain, Moore's Paradox, Letter to Malcolm.]

REVIEWS

Linda Alcoff and Elizabeth Potter (eds), *Feminist Epistemologies*, Routledge 1993, p/b £12.99.

The last few decades have seen a challenge to the universality and neutrality of knowledge claims across a range of academic disciplines, a challenge in which feminist work has made a major contribution. A consequence of this has been that epistemology, traditionally concerned with the evaluation and justification of knowledge claims, has moved from the somewhat esoteric world of philosophy into the centre stage of contemporary culture. Contemporary feminist work is exploring the epistemological issues thrown up by the recognition of the masculinity (in multiple ways) of much of our accepted knowledge, and it is some of the diverse responses to this recognition that form the context of this present work.

A starting point for most of the contributors is the necessary implicatedness of the subjects of knowledge in the knowledge which they produce (see in particular the opening paper by Lorraine Code "Taking Subjectivity into Account"). This is not simply the mark of individual and private subjectivities but a consequence of structural, social and historical positioning. Although this takes the contributors away from a "natural kinds" model of representation and understanding, towards some version of a social constructionist view, a common theme through many of the papers, (Code, Harding, Longino, Nelson), is the insistence that this can be put together with belief in a reality constraining what can be said, to which all knowledge claims must remain answerable.

Sandra Harding, ("Rethinking Standpoint Epistemology: What is Strong Objectivity?"), continues the themes of *Whose Science? Whose Knowledge?* She insists that including the context of discovery into our evaluative procedures *increases* the objectivity of our knowledge. She gives epistemological privilege to *marginal lives* as the *starting points* of our epistemological projects, a starting point from which the exclusions and ideological assumptions of dominant knowledges can be made clear. Such privileging of marginality, however, is challenged by Bat-Ami Bar On, ("Marginality and Epistemic Privilege"), who signals a rare dissenting voice in the collection with regard to the need to concern ourselves with traditional epistemological justificatory questions. (She quotes Audre Lorde "the master's tools will never dismantle the master's house"). Bar On argues that we must be alert to the multiple centres of power, problematising divisions into margin and centre, and the idealising of the agency and perceptions of those deemed marginal. For her we only need such legitimating moves if we are uncertain about our authority as knowledge creators. Helen Longino, ("Subjects, Power and Knowledge: Description and Prescription in Feminist Philosophies of Science"), takes issue with Harding in a different way. Starting our projects in diverse marginal lives will lead to contested knowledge claims which will require some epistemic criteria to evaluate. For Longino such criteria emerge from the critical practices of epistemic communities, marked by the presence of disparate knowledge claims and democratic and egalitarian methods for their resolution.

Insistence on the role of communities in epistemology, in contrast to the previously

paradigmatic individual knower, is echoed in a number of the papers (Code, Nelson, and Potter as well as Longino). Although Harding recognises that knowledge is a communal rather than an individual affair there nonetheless appears to be a tension between the marginality privileged in her account and the use of community in many of the other writers. The very conditions for democratic epistemological communities seem to be undermined by the differentials in power which yield the marginality to which Harding is attending. In the papers by Lynn Nelson, ("Epistemological Communities"), and Elizabeth Potter, ("Gender and Epistemic Negotiation"), the concern with communities is intertwined with a recognition of the holistic nature of evidential support, support which invokes wide ranging assumptions beyond the 'observational' base recognised in much scientific thinking. Potter here gives a thoroughly informative account of the context in which Boyle's "Ideal Law of Gases" came to be accepted, unpicking the class and gender structures this process invoked, in a way that extends the recognition of the masculinity of knowledge in a challenging way into the content of natural science theories. The recognition of the holistic nature of evidential support also leads to an insistence that our epistemological claims should be developed in an interdependent way with our substantive knowledge claims in other areas. (Nelson, Kathryn Pyne Addelson, "Knowers, Doers and Their Moral Problems".)

No-one now thinks that feminist epistemology is going to yield a homogeneous 'women's way of knowing' or draw attention to a homogenous 'women's perspective'. Women's lives are too diverse for that. This volume does, however, yield several examples where following Harding's directive to start with women's lives, striking insights into the nature of knowledge itself can be a result. An issue for several of the writers is the paradigmatic position which has been given to propositional knowledge, within traditional epistemology. Code opposes to this a conception of knowledge which takes knowing people as its paradigm. Linda Alcoff and Vrinda Dalmiya, ("Are 'Old Wives Tales' Justified?"), explore the kind of experiential knowledge which it may be necessary to be a woman to grasp, eg. the experience of child-bearing. Susan Babbit, ("Feminism and Objective Interests") emphasises the role of transformative experiences in producing non-propositional understanding, which undermines liberal conceptions of rational decision making.

This collection, with the exception of Elizabeth Grosz from Australia, is made up of North American and Canadian contributions and reflects the terms of the debate as it has, importantly, been articulated there. Grosz's paper, ("Bodies and Knowledges: Feminism and the Crisis of Reason"), is the only one to explore the issue of sexual difference in a way that reflects the debate in Europe. Grosz sees the way in which the female body has been inscribed as the unacknowledged condition of dominant conceptions of reason. The development of alternative conceptions requires alternative modes of inscribing female bodies. As an example of this Grosz considers the work of Luce Irigaray.

This is an excellent collection, useful for graduate and undergraduate courses in which issues of feminist epistemology feature, and required reading for anyone interested in the current stage of the debate.

*Kathleen Lennon
University of Hull*

[This review is forthcoming in *Journal of Gender Studies* 1994].

Women and Reason

A Mind of One's Own: Feminist Essays on Reason and Objectivity, ed. Louise M Antony and Charlotte Witt, Westview Press 1993. Available from Westview Press Oxford p/b £17.95.

Women and Reason, ed. Elizabeth D Harvey and Kathleen Okruhlik, University of Michigan Press 1992, h/b \$39.50.

Cartesian Women: Versions and Subversions of Rational Discourse in the Old Regime, Erica Harth, Cornell University Press, h/b \$42.85, p/b \$15.35.

Muse de la raison: La Démocratie exclusive et la différence des sexes, Geneviève Fraisse, Alinéa 1989.

Cooking, Eating, Thinking: Transformative Philosophies of Food, ed. Deane W Curtin and Lisa M Heldke, Indiana University Press 1992, available from Open University Press, h/b £33.50, p/b 15.99.

Historically, as Geneviève Fraisse argues in *Muse de la raison*, the question of women's capacity for reason tends to arise in situations where grounds are being sought for their exclusion from political power. The argument that women's reason is absent, inferior or defective is used as a justification for exclusion and is fundamentally not an empirical issue. Fraisse's book on the arguments around equality in post-revolutionary nineteenth century France examines the gymnastics engaged in by various public voices as they negotiated the contradictory demands of theoretical equality (including equality of the sexes) but *de facto* exclusion of women from the public sphere in which they might have tried to claim their rights. For the stress on reason also meant that - even after the French Revolution, after 'democracy' had been officially installed as a political regime - when women wanted to argue for inclusion in educational or other institutions, for greater equality in marriage, or for any other social or political reforms, they were obliged to situate themselves on the argumentative terrain already set out, i.e. to defend first of all women's rational capacities. Social or political arguments were thus turned into ontological arguments about women's rationality.

These arguments were ultimately less to do with women's possession of reason, than with conceptions of women's *place*. Similarly, Erica Harth, in *Cartesian Women*, points out that whereas men in seventeenth-century France could come and go between the *salons*, presided over by women, and the *académies* (the only places where one could have access to knowledge and discussion about recent scientific advances and discoveries), women had no access to the *académies* at all. Seventeenth-century women seized on Cartesianism because of its premise that 'the mind has no sex', but discovered fairly rapidly that the body - which did have a sex - was excluded from the places where the accompanying mind might have had a chance to feed on the most advanced thought and learning available. What emerges from historical accounts is that it is impossible to think adequately about reason if we confine ourselves to ontological terms (i.e. ontology understood as pre-given or pre-ordained nature). It is not a question of women's capacities, but a question of how they - women or their capacities - are represented, and the reasons for, or the consequences of, these representations.

From this point of view, *Women and Reason* seems to me the more interesting of the first two collections, since it explicitly takes a contextual view of accounts of reason: 'One of the guiding principles informing the development of this collection of essays is the belief that global accounts of rationality must be supplemented with, tested against, and sometimes corrected by more closely focused, discipline-specific analyses' (p.1). There are four essays on the seventeenth century including an excellent essay by Kathleen Okruhlik on the different meanings of objectivity, two essays on artistic creativity and its gendering, an essay on the gender representation of George Eliot, two essays by social scientists, and three essays by feminist philosophers (Jagger, Bordo and Code - all three are reprints unfortunately). The emphasis on history and context leads to 'an exploration of rationality's many different historical manifestations and their varied implications for feminists' (p.2). Although there is clearly much work still to be done here, the book's stress on historical accounts or representations of reason is a real strength and does much to open the way for alternative representations and constructions by women. The approach here leaves little for the ontological account of reason to get a grip on, since the move from ontology to history deemphasises any claims to essentialist links between reason and sex or gender. I recommend that this collection be read in conjunction with Erica Harth's excellent *Cartesian Women* which provides a much fuller account of the fate of seventeenth-century female followers of Descartes or *cartésiennes*. There is also a useful essay on the English *cartésiennes* by Margaret Atherton in *A Mind of One's Own*.

The aim of the editors of *A Mind of One's Own* was a catholic one - to include essays which 'span a full range of positions concerning the value of reason and objectivity for feminist thought - from those arguing that the traditional notions are fine as is, to those who think that they need to be reconceptualized in the light of feminist thought, to those who reject them altogether' (p.xiv). About half of the essays are attempts to show that 'traditional' theories (Aristotle, Hume, empiricism, contractarianism, Kant, Quine) are able to offer adequate responses to critiques developed by feminism and/or postmodernism. There are also two essays on Catharine MacKinnon's 'feminism unmodified', a defence of a feminist materialism against the elision of the body in feminist or postmodernist thought, a subtle account by Genevieve Lloyd of the metaphor of maleness, a more radical challenge by Naomi Scheman to the legacy of Cartesianism, a defence of feminist metaphysics, and the above-mentioned historical essay on women and Cartesian reason.

It is a much more explicitly 'philosophical' collection than *Women and Reason* - all the contributors except one work in philosophy departments. As a result it is also narrower and more focused in scope, which is both a strength and a weakness. On the one hand, the conception is a timely one, since debates over the usefulness of reason and objectivity for feminists have been on the agenda for some time, and the essays should provide ample material for further discussion and exploration. However, *A Mind of One's Own* comes across as curiously defensive. Several of the writers seem to feel the need to defend their right to be interested in, say, Aristotle or Hume, which makes me think that there must be some (real or imaginary) hostile or suspicious questioner lurking in the background, challenging the relevance of dead white male philosophers and their masculine phallogocentric ways of thinking. This defensiveness says a lot, it seems to me, about the intellectual ambiance in which the contributors are writing, and I did feel that

the implied audience of *A Mind of One's Own* was a rather narrow one, which detracted from the overall interest of the collection. The restricted focus makes the potential audience smaller than the subject-matter warrants. I thought the editors could have done more to take into account their international audience; for example, there is a real failure to engage significantly with currents in contemporary European (or Australian) thought.

Whether one thinks, with Fraisse, that conceptions of reason are used to *justify* the state of society, or whether one thinks, with Harvey and Okruhlik, that conceptions of reason influence and shape conceptions of the social order, it is clearly no longer possible to discuss rationality as distinct from its representations and the ways in which those representations intertwine with representations of other kinds - of sex, of society, of the person and so on. Thus in *A Mind of One's Own*, I found Genevieve Lloyd's essay more interesting than the others precisely because of its focus on representation. Lloyd is also the only contributor who focuses on a specific representative of postmodernism (Derrida), rather than a broadly formulated notion, in her analysis of the dangers of a modern Cartesianism, that is, falling back on a sexless ideal of knowledge, for, as she points out: "The alleged sexlessness of reason is already part of the symbolic structure. The idea of the sexless soul coexists with the maleness of reason, despite the appearance of tension' (p.77).

In this respect, I should like to draw attention to some recent work by the Australian philosopher Penelope Deutscher whose article on Saint Augustine in *Australian Feminist Studies* (no 15 Autumn 1992) attempts to identify the structure of the gendering of reason. Drawing on Derrida, and to a certain extent Irigaray, Deutscher argues that the sex/gender distinction and conceptions of reason as masculine, are dependent on a transcendental vanishing point ('god' in traditional terms) in relation to which man is sometimes alike, sometimes 'other' or 'feminine'. 'The identity of the man of reason is therefore dependent on the establishment of god's identity' (p.47). Since 'god' is insubstantial, however, his attributes can shift, introducing shifts into the meaning of both 'masculine' and 'feminine'. Whatever aspect of 'man' is in excess of the definition of his identity (at any given point) is transferred on to the feminine. There is a kind of 'theological' thinking at work, Deutscher argues, which can be found in the shifting terms of the sex/gender debate. The apparently secular man/woman opposition is supported and legitimated by a hidden structure, a man/divine dichotomy in which the terms are not stable, because the identity of one of the two terms (the divine) is, in Derrida's terminology, continually deferred. On this analysis, what one would need to do is look for the structure of deferral and identify the transcendental which has replaced the traditional god of theology in secular thought. (Truth? Science?).

Finally, *Cooking, Eating, Thinking* links the concerns of an ethic of care with a critique of western rationality, and the editors would not be surprised by my apparently abrupt transition from the transcendental to the materiality of food. Like Harvey and Okruhlik, the editors of *Cooking, Eating, Thinking* see the western philosophical tradition 'not as an independent, academic body of texts and "ideas", but as a set of attitudes and practices that have come to shape the everyday lives of ordinary people' (p.xiv). They present the collection as a 'reader in the philosophy of food'; almost all the pieces, except the four editorial sections, are reprints, many of them fairly familiar (from Plato and the Bible to

Audre Lorde, Susan Bordo and Maria Lugones), some of them less well-known (excerpts from Buddhist texts, poems by Joyce Carol Oates, the French theorist Jean-François Revel, Native American narratives). There are four sections. The first argues for the importance of seeing food as a philosophical issue; the second argues for a different conception of personhood: a food-based conception which is ecological rather than atomist; the third challenges the traditional theory/practice, abstract/concrete hierarchy; the fourth looks at the social and political significance of food.

As Lisa Heldke, one of the editors, points out, it is easier to see food in terms of its social and political significance than in terms of its conceptual challenge to western epistemology and ontology. However, whether or not one agrees with the arguments and approaches, I don't think feminists will experience any 'shock of the new' in relation to the connections mapped out here. The problems with an atomist conception of the self and the autonomy of the moral agent; the problems of a subject/object epistemology; the effects of the mind/body dichotomy on attitudes towards the body; all these are areas which have already been explored, though not on the whole through the lens of food. It's an interesting and highly readable collection, and would probably work best (as the editors intend) if used selectively for teaching purposes. The topics provide a concrete and accessible way in to what may be thought of as rather abstract issues of philosophy.

Margaret Whitford
QMW, University of London

Somer Brodribb, *Nothing Mat(t)ers: a Feminist Critique of Post-modernism*, Spinifex Press, 1992, 178 pp, p/b £10.95.

It's difficult to know how to review this book, because it invites a lot of discussion. Brodribb's aim, briefly stated, is to provide a feminist critique of post-modernism which is grounded in the materiality of the female body - a form of "strategic essentialism". But the book is in fact deeply disappointing, and even worrying.

Other feminist theorists have already made intellectually and politically vital arguments for forms of strategic essentialism which seek to combat the racist and other exclusions of which feminist theory is often justly accused. Brodribb's essentialism, however, has its conceptual roots in the white Radical feminism of the 1970's, and she takes an "add black women and stir" approach to the problem of racism in feminist theory: she makes a short (one page) statement in her introduction on the importance of non-white women's works as a source of "understanding difference", but her own work contains little discussion of non-white feminist theory (or indeed of racism itself), and black and ethnic minority feminist issues are nowhere acknowledged as agendas in their own right. Where the "Third World" is discussed, it is usually as illustration of a universal, a-historical and trans-cultural "patriarchy"; and where black women writers are cited, it is usually only to back up white women's arguments. It's ironic, to say the least, that one of the black women thus appropriated is Audre Lorde, whose famous "open letter" takes Mary Daly to task for exactly this kind of racism in *Gyn/Ecology* - a book which Brodribb quotes enthusiastically. Indeed Daly is one of the few women writers who is quoted enthusiastically: Brodribb presents feminist writers who diverge from her own position not just as incorrect, but as not even feminist. Thus Gayle Rubin is "phallic";

Mary Poovey is "masculine-biased"; Hélène Cixous "should take a Women's Studies course'. The critiquing of post-modernism (which here includes Foucault, Derrida, Lacan, Irigaray) is ham-fisted and unoriginal; arguments tend to collapse into rhetoric, and ideas to be expounded rather than discussed. All this combines with bad proofing and a tiresomely apocalyptic writing style to make reading this book a thoroughly depressing experience. Frequent citations of other feminist texts serve only as reminders of the intellectual clarity and political sensitivity which are all too lacking here.

It is worrying that texts such as this should still be produced in the name of feminism: it suggests that even the most basic political lessons have still to be learned, and that conceptual thought is still too easily replaced by dogma. Readers in search of intelligent feminist critiques of post-modernism, or of politically adept arguments for feminist essentialism, are strongly advised to look elsewhere.

Merl Storr
University of North London

[Spinifex Press books are available in Britain from: Spinifex UK, PO Box 181, Haywards Heath, West Sussex RH17 7YZ. Tel: 825 - 790 - 336, fax 825 - 791 085. Please include £1.50 for postage].

Drucilla Cornell, *The Philosophy of the Limit*, Routledge 1992, p/b £10.99.

Drucilla Cornell is concerned with the problem of difference and the law. In a mass society such as the USA, she argues, the law increasingly finds itself in a position where it is not merely administering 'justice', but cannot avoid legislating between different conceptions of 'the good life'. Her quintessential example (it appears elsewhere in her work) is the clash between the homosexual and the fundamentalist Christian who believes not only that homosexuality is wrong because forbidden by God, but also that it should therefore be legally proscribed.

In Cornell's view, most of the available frameworks appealed to by jurisprudence (post Kantian, Habermas, Gadamer, Rawls, Nagel, Rorty) are inadequate because they appeal to a notion of community or a solidarity which is what gives rise to the problem in the first place.

She begins with a chapter on Adorno, whose importance is that he 'continually questions whether or not there can be a truly "self-transparent" solidarity within the frame of mass society' (36). The larger part of the book, however, is devoted to a defence of a reworked version of Derrida's deconstruction (which she calls here 'the philosophy of the limit'), buttressed by insights derived from Levinas and Lacan. She maps out an approach which both maintains the ethical aspiration to a non-violent relation to otherness, while recognising the ethical as a receding boundary. We cannot do without the ideal of community, yet community is in its nature violently exclusive: 'Deconstruction exposes how the very logic of the establishment of community draws boundaries that by necessity leave some out' (61).

In the second half of the book she defends deconstruction against claims that it is both

sceptical and nihilist, and puts forward, against legal positivism, a conception of justice as *aporia*: 'The philosophy of the limit . . . protects justice from being encompassed by whatever convention described as the good of the community' (118).

Cornell uses her sources as springboards and can be quite cavalier in her interpretations. She freely admits, for example, that she is going beyond what Derrida himself would claim. But the results can be both brilliant and stunning. Cornell is someone who shakes things up, and for this reason alone she is worth the effort of trying to follow the leaps and transitions of her arguments. She is a bracing and vigorous thinker, and her 'deconstruction' of 'community' is important and salutary. I thought there was a question left hanging at the end, to do with a problem that seemed to hover but was never addressed head-on. Throughout the book, women are positioned as the observers for whom the American legal system is not a 'marvel' but a 'monster' (158). They are positioned, that is, as those to whom violence is done. But the logic of Cornell's argument is the inevitable link between community and violence. If women are to lose their victim status, become 'insiders' rather than 'outsiders', they will need to confront directly their implication in the community's 'inescapable responsibility for violence' (157). Cornell's work certainly offers a perspective in which to think about this question; perhaps her next book will focus on it more explicitly

Margaret Whitford
QMW, University of London

Kathy Davies, Monique Leijenaar and Janine Oldersma (eds.) *The Gender of Power* (Sage, 1991) p/b £10.95.

It is somewhat ironic that the title of this edited collection should be *The Gender of Power*, for far from offering an account of the ways in which the concept of power reflects phallogocentric assumptions or is grounded in androcentric practices, all of the contributors to this volume share the conviction that power is a neutral analytical tool that can be deployed to illuminate relations of inequality (be they gendered, classed, or racialised) in determinate social contexts. There is, therefore, no attempt made to formulate an explicitly feminist theory of power - or, indeed, a theory of power *per se* (although the many meanings attached to the term 'theory' in the book make it difficult sometimes to follow this line of argument). Instead the main aim of the text is to explore how existing social theories on power - specifically those of Foucault, Bourdieu, Giddens, Lukes, Gramsci and the materialists Goody and Tambiah - can be used to uncover gendered inequalities. In order to do this, each chapter is grounded in a specific case-study (e.g. on marriage, women's political participation in post-Allende Chile, and women in Dutch HE). The explicit goal here is to demonstrate the need for very specific and concrete analyses of the workings of power when discussing gender (as opposed to the development of all-embracing theory of power).

However, despite expressions that extant social theory can be deployed for feminist ends, what becomes clear to the reader is that it is not, in fact, so easy to apply these theories to the question of gender inequality without considering the ways in which the gender blindness of their male authors inflects some of their key assumptions. Unfortunately not all of the contributors do this. (See the chapters by Meyer, and Delsing.) Indeed some seem prepared to endure a number of contortions in order to continue to match the theory to the case-study. (See the piece by Risseuw.)

Overall, what emerges from this volume is a set of conclusions sketching the contours of a specific (feminist?) agenda for power. Power should no longer be thought within the 'oppression paradigm' (men as power-holders, women as the victims of power). Instead consideration needs to be given to the ways in which women act to negotiate power situations; and to the generative or enabling capacities of power (*contra* its oppressive dimensions). No one 'theory' of power is capable of accounting for 'gender relations in all contexts, for all women, and at all levels of social life' (16); instead a microanalytics of power is required that offers particularised explanations of power relations. A kind of pick 'n' mix approach should be preferred to the 'grand theory' of previous statements. Only then can gendered power relations be adequately understood.

Despite my continued reservations that one cannot simply dip into social theories in the *ad hoc* manner proposed, this book does serve a very useful purpose in returning power to the centre of the feminist stage. Too often explicit contemplation of the question of power is jettisoned in favour of a presumption that power is self-evidently a property accorded to (most) men but denied to (most) women. This book makes clear the ways in which the machinations of power are more subtle, widespread and multiform than it sometimes appears. Further, the clarity of presentation means that it is also a text that can usefully be included on student bibliographies.

Moya Lloyd
University of Wolverhampton

Jean Bethke Elshtain, *Power Trips and Other Journeys: Essays in Feminism as Civic Discourse*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1990. Distributed by Eurospan. h/b £24.50.

In this collection of essays, Jean Bethke Elshtain's commitment to "politics as the art of the possible" (xii) sets the parameters of the debate for her examination of issues central to contemporary American civic discourse. Referring to herself as a "populist intellectual" (xviii), Elshtain eschews totalizing discourses and standpoints, preferring instead to engage in what she refers to as "an endless series of contests over meanings" (xviii). Arguing against feminist philosophers who adopt the category of woman as a basis for analysis of social and political issues, Elshtain claims to refuse the position of "all-knowing judge" (xvii) which she suggests results from such a theoretical stance. Consequently, while many of the issues raised in these essays are specific to the American political context in which Elshtain writes, this volume will have broader appeal to all those interested in the effects that the sometime paradoxical ideal of Western liberal democracies have on women's lives - questions of identity and community, freedom and difference, social responsibility and individual rights.

To those familiar with Elshtain's work, it will come as no surprise that in this volume we see her again affirming the nuclear family as the cornerstone of democratic politics. Elshtain has come under fire from several corners for this affirmation in the past, primarily for the uncanny resemblance it bears to the US Republican Party's manifesto of "a return to family values" (and now oddly enough, to that which is being heralded by the British Tory Party). While Elshtain does not argue for a *return* to family values,

she does insist on a theoretical defense of traditional two-parent families claiming that "the recognition and acceptance of plural possibilities does not mean each alternative is equal to every other with reference to specific social goods" (60). Her privileging of the traditional nuclear family stems in part from a belief that the family provides among other things the ultimate social good for democracy - it keeps alive a potential for democratic revolt as the locus of particularity in a social world increasingly affected by a centralized, powerful, impersonal bureaucratized state.

There is, however, a different kind of nostalgia permeating this set of essays. Throughout the volume, there is a lament for a lost sense of community - a lament for what she sees is precisely at stake in the family debate: "our sense of self, responsibility, and place" (88). The turn to the community as offering a check on rampant individualism is emerging as a pervasive theme in contemporary writings on liberal democratic thought and while it would be tempting to place Elshtain's work within this context, it would ultimately be misleading. In the centerpiece of the essays, entitled "The Power and Powerlessness of Women", Elshtain identifies with those resisting totalitarian regimes and advocates a vanguard position for women - a politics of resistance of sorts. She has a deep mistrust of centralized power; and the trend toward ceding responsibility for personal relations to the state seems to bear for her all the hallmarks of totalitarianism. Instead of being the totalizing system which has had deadly consequences for women, one senses in her account that the patriarchal "lost community" for which she mourns provided a check on centralized social control and "antidemocratic bureaucracies" (92).

Elshtain's warning against the entanglement of contemporary feminism with ever newer methods of technocratic social control is one that can be heeded without an embrace of her redefinition of such "essentially contested concepts" as child abuse, rape, and pornography. Many of the issues raised in this collection are emerging as important topics of debate and Elshtain's answers to dilemmas faced by feminists wishing to engage with prevailing civic discourses are certainly unsettling and provocative ones.

Monique Rhodes
University of Massachusetts

Daniela Gobetti *Private and Public: Individuals, households, and body politics in Locke and Hutcheson*. Routledge 1992 h/b only, £35.00

I found this book both demanding and enjoyable, closely argued and scholarly, but with political relevance today. Gobetti traces the emergence of our present-day assumptions about the public/private distinction in Natural Law theorists, particularly Locke and Hutcheson, with a view to both reconceptualizing what constitutes the political, and arguing for the importance of political participation in this conceptualized sense.

Once it was argued that all individuals are proprietors of the self, a new theory of politics was called for, but these new theories often led to contradictions between claims of universal political agency while limiting citizenship to heads of households. Gobetti focuses on these conflicts using what she calls the jurisdictional analysis: asking who can do what. Agency is based on proprietorship, but what can be owned can be alienated in different ways and to different degrees. Thus the boundary between public and

private becomes moveable. Earlier theorists used the theory either to dispossess completely, or to politicize all social relations, and all of them defined political power by the power of life and death. Locke gets over these difficulties with his theories of conjugal society, an area seen as separate from the political and not requiring the use of force. (Ironic laughter in the ante-chamber, and Gobetti gives an excellent analysis of the problems with this). She then focuses on the other right which is alienated in Lockean civil society, that of interpreting the law of nature. This expands the public realm from mere enforcement to the development of public norms, and as our view changes of which actions endanger others, so the boundary between public and private shifts (e.g. smoking, euthanasia).

Gobetti argues that by engaging in moral life by evaluating the implications of what we do, we participate in the public sphere. Hutcheson developed a notion of morality which could be considered public, because all (including wives) can participate in it; it is concerned with issues of regard to all, and develops norms binding on all. Thus only the state can enforce, but the public elaborates those norms which are the basis of what will be enforced. Gobetti uses this to argue for a public domain in between the legal and the area of private morality, wherever we set about trying to balance out individual and collective welfare. It is up to us to define the boundary between public and private by participating in this public realm, and liberal theory requires cultural politics.

It is impossible to do full justice to the subtleties of the argument here. This is not an undergraduate book, but people trying to reconstruct undergraduate political theory courses to take account of feminist ideas will find it a considerable resource, and it should not be missed by anyone working in the area of natural law theory or the public/private distinctions. Make sure that your institution has a copy in the library.

Anne Seller
University of Kent

**Nancy Hirschmann *Rethinking Obligation: A Feminist Method for Political Theory*
Cornell University Press 1992. New York \$17.55.**

This book argues that liberal theory, in both its classical and contemporary forms, cannot accommodate women, primarily because of its premise of the disconnected, rational, self-interested person, who can only become obliged through his consent. Hirschmann argues that liberalism proclaims the voluntary nature of all obligation, whilst relying on people (mostly women) fulfilling duties which have not been chosen. The individualism of the public sphere is only possible because of the community values and practices of the private sphere

Hirschmann then uses the explanation of gender differences provided by object relations theory to develop a different perspective for understanding moral theory: that of connectedness and care as opposed to separation and rights. She uses the same source to develop a feminist standpoint theory (which relies heavily on Hartsock), and so develops her basis for arguing that liberal theory is founded on fundamentally masculinist assumptions about the nature of knowing. She is then able to develop not only a feminist critique of such central concepts as autonomy, subjectivity, freedom and recognition,

but a feminist political theory which has notions of reciprocity and mutuality at its heart, and relies on notions of conversation and participation. Such a theory asks "How should I act?" rather than "How did I get my obligation?" Finally, she concludes with a discussion of post-modernism, arguing that while a feminist post-modernism is impossible because it dissolves the category of woman, we should aspire to a post-modern feminism which recognises our differences and partialities (and is very much modelled on the rainbow coalition).

This brief summary will contain little that is new to those familiar with the field. Indeed, the book's strength lies in its weaving of the theories that US feminism has developed over the past fifteen years into a single structure and conclusion. This is also its weakness, for instead of concisely developing her own thesis, we are treated to a sort of encyclopaedic tour. This is irritating if you are familiar with the theorists discussed and daunting if you are not, making the book immensely long and unreadable. There seems to be an increasing tendency to write in this way, as if we cannot develop our views without placing them in relationship to what everyone else is saying, and perhaps we should discuss why. It makes discussions parochial (or imperialistic?). Although Hirschmann discusses Irigaray and Kristeva, you are left with the impression that feminist philosophy is really an American enterprise, and it makes feminist philosophy appear inaccessible to all except the initiated, unlike "male-stream" philosophy.

It is a pity that the inaccessibility will probably mean that Hirschmann's arguments will not be taken up, for they are often subtle and innovative (for example, her attempt to rework standpoint theory so that it avoids essentialism and exclusivity) and often challenging (for example, her view that we should take obligation as a given, and create freedom, rather than vice versa), if sometimes blinkered (for example, she seems unaware of any difficulties with participatory democracy, particularly from a feminist perspective). The book is a valuable resource, both for finding out what American feminist philosophers are up to, and for stimulating suggestions about a considerable range of issues and thinkers, from Hegel to Gilligan. I am glad to have it on my shelf to dip into, but wouldn't recommend it to students.

Anne Sellar
University of Kent

Voula Lambropoulou, *Women in Papadiamandis' Works: Gender and Sex - A Feminist Approach and Interpretation*, University of Athens Press, Athens 1992. 4,500 drachmas (approx £15). Available from Kardamitsas Bookshop, 8 Ippokratous St. Athens.

Alexandros Papadiamandis (1851-1911) is considered to be one of the greatest, if not *the* greatest of, fiction writers that modern Greece has produced. His numerous works (mostly short stories, but also three historical novels and a number of poems) are still admired for their wit and their vivid, although somewhat peculiar and obsolete language.

What they are most admired and studied for, however, is the amazingly realistic way in which they describe nineteenth century life. Having lived in a epoch when literature was considered to be a reflection of life, Papadiamandis offers us a panorama of the

customs, the habits, the mentality and the way of life of our great-grandparents. He gives us rich and interesting information about practically every single aspect of everyday life, ranging from childbirth to marriage and from local festivals to funeral customs, both in rural Greece (especially the island of Skiathos, where he was born and brought up) and in the bourgeois setting of Athens, where he studied and later worked as a journalist and translator. That is why he rightfully deserves to be called the Dickens of Greece.

The wealth and the realism of his descriptions has called the attention not only of literary critics, but also of historians and ethnologists. Lately, as it should be expected, it has also attracted the attention of a Women's Studies researcher, Mrs Voula Lambropoulou, Professor of Philosophy at the University of Athens.

In her latest book, *Women in Papadiamandis' Works*, Mrs Lambropoulou has carefully selected and tactfully commented on those extracts from Papadiamandis' works which refer to female life and habits, thus foregrounding Papadiamandis's deep interest in the pains and sufferings of the women of his time.

Papadiamandis was raised in a family with four sisters, and, Mrs Lambropoulou says, he 'was deeply moved, he suffered and he sympathised with the grief and the agony of the hard endeavouring women of his time. He admires the female sex and overtly despises the opposite one. He knows better than anyone else what goes on within a family and what responsibilities have to be carried by women. This implies that he does not want women to be slaves. The female gender deserves a better luck, honour and understanding.' It is of significance that Papadiamandis has dedicated 42 of his short stories and two of his novels to the female sex, that is he has given them female titles.

Mrs Lambropoulou's book makes nineteenth-century Greek society show forth in a most vivid and realistic way; its reading helps us realise deeper what we modern women have come to be by realising what our foremothers used to be.

Marisetta Georgoulea
University of Athens

[This is a shortened version of a much longer review; readers interested in the original should contact the reviewer at 1 Elatias, Kypseli, Athens, Greece. We think the book is probably in Greek. The author is a member of SWIP and will be known to all those who attended the Leeds conference.]

Iris Murdoch, *Metaphysics as a Guide to Morals*, Chatto and Windus 1992, h/b £20.00.

I have always appreciated and respected Iris Murdoch's work, even when I found myself in deep disagreement, so I turned to this book with considerable expectation. I have to report that the experience was disappointing. It is opinionated and rambling, and alienates the would-be sympathetic reader. What I discovered from reading it - what the reviews in the quality press didn't talk about - is that Iris Murdoch has set up her argument for the importance of moral philosophy as a kind of heroic struggle for the soul or consciousness of the ordinary person. On the celestial side: Plato. On the infernal side: Derrida. Unlike Milton in *Paradise Lost*, however, she does not have the necessary

respect for her adversary. Although she does admit, about halfway through, that Derrida is 'a remarkable thinker, a great scholar, a brilliant maverick polymath, a *pharmakeus*' (290), he has one failing which vitiates all his qualities : he is not a philosopher. Over and over again she repeats : structuralism seems 'singularly lacking in philosophical reflection' (49); Derrida 'is not strictly a philosopher' (151); 'Wittgenstein is plainly a philosopher whereas Derrida is not' (290). (I pass over the misleading description of Derrida as a structuralist, since she is using structuralism as a generic term to refer to post-phenomenological philosophy employing the language paradigm. But it does perhaps indicate a failure to read with the close, careful, scrupulous attention that she recommends as a philosophical virtue.)

The reasons for the demonisation of Derrida eventually become clear. The only philosophy worthy of the name is moral philosophy (216). Truth-seeking is central to this enterprise, and it is almost indistinguishable from religion : 'We need a theology which can continue without God. Why not call such reflection a form of moral philosophy' (511-12). Since the 'nightmarish schemata' (168) of structuralism appear to her to abandon the quest for value (197, 100), truth (194) and the importance of the individual (196), and - *horribile dictu* - they are not *lucid* (197) - she can conclude : 'it is not really philosophy' (203).

Derrida is important enough to be argued with, and even his most enthusiastic followers would want to argue with him at times. But Iris Murdoch never gets to grips with the real problems, because she is too busy turning him into a bogeyman, while at the same time managing to sound patronising and dismissive (as though he wasn't even demonic enough to be taken seriously). (She does this with Freud too. He may be a 'great thinker' (296), but some of his concepts are simply 'weird' (111).)

The desire to put forward her own version of philosophy could have been put into effect quite adequately and cogently without the dualistic framework of light and darkness which seems to me a novelistic effect: the need for a villain perhaps, so that truth can emerge even more illuminated and shining at the end. For this reader, it simply didn't work and I soon switched off.

I did not receive a review copy by the way, although I wrote to the publishers to ask for one. (If I had, I would have asked someone more in tune to take on the review.) So this review makes no claim to being a fair account; it is my immediate reaction to the experience of reading *Metaphysics as a Guide to Morals*. If any reader of the newsletter has had a more positive reaction to this major opus (520 pp) of one of our foremost living (women) philosophers, perhaps you would like to write in with your view.

Margaret Whitford
QMW, University of London

Martha C Nussbaum, *Love's Knowledge: Essays on Philosophy and Literature*. Oxford University Press, 1992 p/b £13.95.

In *Love's Knowledge*, Martha Nussbaum is concerned with the role of the emotions in 'the good life' for the individual. Through several papers, she develops a theory of the emotions, where emotions are taken to have a cognitive content, i.e. some sort of reasoning or judgement is ascribed to them. Emotions are important for an individual's flourishing, and also in public reasoning. In the search for the 'good life', not only are we to be guided by knowledge, but also by feelings. Nussbaum asks: "Should we in fact exclude our bewilderment and our hesitation from the deliberative process? Should we automatically mistrust the information given us by our fear, our grief, or love? Should we in fact go for theories that embody generality and universality . . .?" (p. 175).

Nussbaum's answer is 'No!' Rather, she agrees with Aristotle's notion of 'practical wisdom' which requires getting something right, not just simply by following rules, but through a trained 'perception' developed from the right sort of experiences. Where can we get this kind of experience, this kind of 'perception'? Through reading literature, through works which dwell on particulars. Through these works, we can gain practical wisdom in a way which we cannot simply by reading philosophical texts which emphasise generality. How to act and how to feel in certain situations is what concerns Nussbaum, implying that there are right and wrong emotions for particular situations, and that we can learn what these are; i.e. we can arrive at practical wisdom through literature.

The question, 'How should one live?' is one of the basic philosophical questions, a question which is also the concern of literature, though not all works of fiction, presumably, can stand as works of moral philosophy. Nussbaum concentrates on the works of Dickens, Henry James, and Proust. In these works, we are introduced to characters and their experiences and we, as readers, can enter into particular situations and relationships, thus developing our own understanding of the world and of the people in it. In so doing, we can increase self-knowledge in a way which is not easy to do through the generality of philosophical texts. I agree that this is more likely to happen with works of literature, but, I believe that we can use certain works of philosophy in the same way. One example might be the 'Parables of Kierkegaard' (Ed. T. Oden; Princeton, 1989). As a philosopher, Kierkegaard also finds story-telling important for communicating and teaching about emotions, thus enabling the reader to gain self-knowledge.

Without the content of emotions, Nussbaum believes that knowledge is incomplete; yet many theories of knowledge or rationality, as taught and practised, have striven to exclude emotional content, such content being thought of as irrational. Mr. Gradgrind, in 'Hard Times' puts such theories into the educational process: "they make every attempt to cultivate intellect and none at all to cultivate 'fancy' and emotion . . ." (p 81). Gradgrind is incapable of compassion at a distance yet this emotion is important in public life; e.g. in political leadership where an empathy for those governed must surely lead to a better form of government. In reading *Hard Times*, we can learn what it is that Gradgrind lacks and what makes his way of educating his pupils empty and irrelevant. We need emotion and concern when we deal with other people, for without these

feelings, judgement is blind and incomplete. What the correct emotion is for the situation, we can learn from literature.

Life is not simply a matter of rationality, but is much more complex and if: "You are going to see life as it is, you have to be willing to be perplexed, to see its mystery and complexity; consoling simplification brings dullness of vision" (p.207).

Nussbaum puts forward a strong case for the role of literature in ethical understanding, in a book which is beautifully written and contains a wealth of literary reference. Her work can certainly not be accused of 'dullness of vision'.

Lily Forrester
Dept of Philosophy
Dundee University

Paul Patton (ed.) *Nietzsche, Feminism and Political Theory*, Routledge 1993, p/b £12.99.

As a wry observer of the vagaries of history, one suspects that Nietzsche might have relished the irony of his recent association with 'progressive' discourses. Indeed, the critical reappraisal of Nietzsche's philosophy has been one of the most intriguing trends in recent feminist theory. In many ways this new collection of essays continues the fashion set in the 1970's by Derrida's *Eperons* [*Spurs*] to attend to the differential and transgressive potential of Nietzsche's "styles"; at the same time it marks a pronounced shift in tone and emphasis. While most contributions display an informed sensitivity to the problematics of "textuality", the play of the signifier is manifestly less important than the implications of Nietzsche's philosophy for praxis. It is to be noted that the publisher's claim that 'each essay applies Nietzsche's work to current debates in feminist and political theory', signally overstates the case. Some pieces are wholly expository, others make no mention of feminism or politics. Pieces which were evidently not written specifically for this volume may have tangential relevance (the title of Grosz's essay 'The Stomach for Knowledge' must be mystifying to all those unfamiliar with Nietzsche's discourse on alimentation). This notwithstanding, the collection does have the merit of including both clear, introductory pieces directly addressing the interrelations of Nietzsche's philosophy to feminism (Ansell-Pearson, Conway) alongside more complex arguments and specialist engagements (Diprose, Opper) with no piece presuming extensive familiarity with current "Nietzsche-reception".

A recurrent theme across the volume appears to be the relation between feminism, politics and Nietzschean "perspectivism". In this respect, Daniel Conway's contention that Nietzsche's perspectivism foreshadows the postmodern strategies of Donna Haraway is valuable. He points out that the "privileged" vantage point of subjugated groups (inhabiting both dominant and marginal discourses at once) is itself perspectival and has no epistemic claim to purity - as he takes the feminist standpoint theory of Sandra Harding to imply. One might wish to challenge the suggestion that the goal of perspectivism is to aggregate viewpoints to 'gain a more objective understanding of the world' given that Nietzsche speaks of gaining greater "objectivity" with respect to just *one* thing. However, Conway's essay has the virtue of genuinely attempting to read contemporary feminist texts in the light of Nietzschean philosophy. In a different

context, Penelope Deutscher reinforces the perspectivist line by indicating the dangers inherent in garnering quotes to endorse any position, a tendency perhaps exhibited by Ted Sadler who in arguing that "rank-order" 'presupposes the supra-perspectival truth which the post-modernists deny', fails to address the implications of his own position as transcendent arbiter of Nietzsche's views on truth and freedom.

A second theme threading through several of the papers is the logic of *ressentiment* and "slave morality". Marion Tapper's controversial appeal to feminists not to collude with the normalising machinery of power forms part of an argument against political correctness. Although supplying little hard evidence to support her empirical claims Tapper issues a timely warning against the 'unreflecting complicity in the modern forms of power' displayed by certain feminists *within* the Academy. Just as the ideology of the zealous slaves inhibits the autonomy of the masters, the feminist surveillance and monitoring of political credentials of co-academics is seen as prohibitive. This said, Tapper's inference that feminists highlighting gender bias in notions of truth and objectivity must jettison the concepts entirely is a blatant caricature of contemporary feminist insight.

The essays devoted to political theory are less controversial and set out largely to establish the way in which Nietzsche differs from Hobbes, Rousseau, Marx and English genealogy. Whilst this is undeniably useful it would have been interesting to analyse the work of thinkers such as Deleuze and Guattari who have pursued some of the more radical political implications of Nietzsche's philosophy - a possibility hinted at in Paul Patton's introduction but never ultimately realised.

The collection as a whole has a pragmatic feel. Whilst the debt to the French Nietzscheans is omnipresent there is a refreshing absence of Derridean metaphorising of the "feminine" and greater attention to the social subject-position of women. Surprisingly the collection is light on feminist ethics, which will be a disappointment to some. There is also rather too much similarity amongst the secondary material cited, with dire tracts such as Nehamas's *Life as Literature* resurfacing with horrifying frequency. This collection of essays will no doubt become an important resource for feminist philosophy but if anything it is perhaps too ready to domesticate Nietzsche's thought to more liberal discourses of difference and to political goals that would have made their patron wince.

Jill Marsden
Bolton Institute of Higher Education

**Linda Singer, *Erotic Welfare, Sexual Theory and Politics in the Age of the Epidemic*,
Routledge 1993. p/b £10.00**

In this first and only book by Linda Singer, the image of the epidemic, both real and metaphorical - and more particularly of AIDS as the paradigmatic contemporary example - is taken as a major ground on which the disciplinary power of sexual discourse incites, stylises and regulates all at once. The territory presupposes a more than passing acquaintance with the middle years of Foucault, though Singer, as one would expect, always turns the spotlight on the way in which sexual difference underwrites the significance of bodies, pleasures and powers. Baudrillard, too, is

positioned as a marker - of the commodification of erotic danger and desire - but Singer sees herself not as simply recycling or reworking postmodernism's privileged tropes, but as 'playing with the remains of dead men, ruthless pillaging, taking what's needed and leaving the rest' (23). Indeed she is never less than conscious of her position as a feminist/philosopher, and what it means to reflect on the relationship between sex, power and philosophy. Consequently she works simultaneously on reading against the grain of textual politics, as she explains in 'Defusing the Canon', and on engaging with sexual politics as they are articulated in and over the bodies of women. And she uses her analytic skills to great effect in showing how what she calls 'the logic of contagion' permeates from its epicentre in HIV / AIDS to refocus a conservative reconstruction of pleasure. The coincidence of 'safe sex' and the nuclear family within that discourse has of course its own horribly ironic dangers for women.

But does it all work? I have long admired Linda Singer's verve and style, but ended up feeling that perhaps the book promises more than it could deliver. This is not the author's failing, however, as much as the circumstances in which the text was put together. Following Singer's death from cancer in 1990, an existing but unfinished manuscript for *Erotic Welfare* was edited by Judith Butler (who provides an excellent introduction), and has been published subsequently alongside six previously available essays. Certainly the main text picks up on and carries forward many of the arguments set out in those essays, but it is sometimes repetitive and inevitably lacks the clarity and flow of Singer's other work. But yes, the gains finally outweigh the frustration. As Butler points out, Singer was one of a small handful of women working in that particular way. Perhaps her tantalising testament will stimulate others to develop for themselves the transgressive power of a polymorphous postmodern feminism.

Margrit Shildrick
University of Warwick

REVIEW INDEX

NEWSLETTER 1 (MAY 1989)

- Lorraine Code, Sheila Mullett and Christine Overall (eds) (1988) *Feminist Perspectives Philosophical Essays on Method and Morals* University of Toronto Press.
- Irene Diamond and Lee Quinby (eds) (1988) *Feminism and Foucault : Reflections on Resistance* Northeastern University Press
- Feminist Review (1989) no.31 Spring Special Issue : *The Past Before Us : Twenty Years of Feminism*
- Linda Nicholson (1986), *Gender and History : The Limits of Social Theory in the Age of the Family* Columbia University Press
- Denise Riley (1988) 'Am I That Name?' : "Feminism and the Category of "Women" in History' Macmillan
- Caroline Ramazanoglu (1989) *Feminism and the Contradictions of Oppression* Routledge
- Dorothy Smith (1987) *The Everyday World as Problematic : A Feminist Sociology* Open University Press.

NEWSLETTER 2 (JAN 1990)

- Jeffner Allen and Iris Marion Young (eds) *The Thinking Muse : Feminism and Modern French Philosophy* Indiana University Press
- Ann Ferguson *Blood at the Root* Pandora
- Ann Garry and Marilyn Pearsall (eds) *Women, Knowledge and Reality* Unwin Hyman
- Elizabeth Grosz *Sexual Subversions* Allen and Unwin
- Dalia Judovitz *Subjectivity and Representation in Descartes* Cambridge University Press
- Michèle Le Doeuff *he Philosophical Imaginary* Athlone
- Michèle Le Doeuff *L'Etude et le rouet* Seuil

NEWSLETTER 3 (JUNE 1990)

- Alison Assiter *Pornography, Feminism and the Intellectual* Pluto Press
- Judith Butler *Gender Trouble : Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* Routledge
- Jane Flax *Thinking Fragments* California University Press
- Penny Forster and Imogen Sutton (eds) *Daughters of De Beauvoir* The Women's Press
- Diana Fuss *Essentially speaking : Feminism, Nature and Difference* Routledge
- Donna Haraway *Primate Visions : Gender, Race and Nature in the World of Modern Science* Routledge
- Jane Heath *Simone de Beauvoir* Harvester Wheatsheaf
- Marianne Hirsch *The Mother/Daughter Plot* Indiana University Press
- Kathleen Lennon *Explaining Human Action* Duckworth
- Toril Moi *Feminist Theory and Simone de Beauvoir* Blackwell
- Linda Nicholson (ed.) *Feminism/Postmodernism* Routledge
- Andrea Nye *Feminist Theory and the Philosophies of Man* Routledge
- Mary O'Brien *Reproducing the World* Westview Press (Boulder, Colorado)

Sara Ruddick *Maternal Thinking : Towards a Politics of Peace* The Women's Press
Elizabeth Spelman *Inessential Woman* The Women's Press
Sylvia Walby *Theorising Patriarchy* Blackwell
Elisabeth Young-Bruehl *Mind and the Body Politic* Routledge

NEWSLETTER 4 (JANUARY 1991)

Alison Assiter *Althusser and Feminism* Pluto Press
Gemma Corradi Fiumara *The Other Side of Language : A Philosophy of Listening*
Routledge
Jean Graybeal *Language and 'The Feminine' in Nietzsche and Heidegger* Indiana
University Press
Lynn Hankinson Nelson *Who Knows : From Quine to a Feminist Empiricism* Temple
University Press
Andrea Nye *Words of Power : A Feminist Reading of the History of Logic* Routledge
Dorothy Smith *The Conceptual Practices of Power : A Feminist Sociology of Knowledge*
University of Toronto Press
Gail Tulloch *Mill and Sexual Equality* Lynne Rienner Publishers Inc.

NEWSLETTER 5 (JUNE 1991)

Kathryn Pyne Addelson *Impure Thoughts : Essays on Philosophy, Feminism and Ethics*
Temple University Press
Sandra Lee Bartky *Femininity and Domination : Studies in the Phenomenology of
Oppression* Routledge
Joan Cocks *The Oppositional Imagination* Routledge
Susan J. Hekman *Gender and Knowledge : Elements of a Postmodern Feminism* Polity
Press
Nancy Holland *Is Women's Philosophy Possible?* Rowman and Littlefield
Mary Lyndon Shanley and Carole Pateman (eds) *Feminist Interpretations and Political
Theory* Polity Press
Elizabeth Kamarck Minnich *Transforming Knowledge* Temple University Press
Kate Soper *Troubled Pleasures* Verso
Iris Marion Young *Throwing Like a Girl and Other Essays in Feminist Philosophy and
Social Theory* Indiana University Press

NEWSLETTER 6 (NOVEMBER 1991)

Brenda Almond *The Philosophical Quest* Penguin
Brenda Almond and Donald Hill (eds) *Applied Philosophy : Morals and Metaphysics in
Contemporary Debate* Routledge
Brenda Almond (ed.) *AIDS - A Moral Issue : The Ethical, Legal and Social Aspects*
Macmillan
Rosi Braidotti *Patterns of Dissonance* Polity Press
Lorraine Code *What Can She Know? Feminist Theory and the Construction of Knowledge*
Cornell University Press
Arleen B. Dallery and Charles E. Scott *The Question of the Other : Essays in
Contemporary Continental Philosophy* SUNY Press

- Christine Di Stefano *Configurations of Masculinity : A Feminist Perspective on Modern Political Theory* Cornell University Press
- Michèle Le Doeuff *Hipparchia's Choice : An Essay Concerning Women, Philosophy, Etc.* Blackwell
- Luce Irigaray *Marine Lover of Friedrich Nietzsche* trans. Gillian C. Gill, Columbia University Press
- The Milan Women's Bookstore Collective *Sexual Difference : A Theory of Social-Symbolic Practice* Indiana University Press
- Paolo Bono and Sandra Kemp (eds) *Italian Feminist Thought : A Reader* Blackwell
- Sean Sayers and Peter Osborne (eds) *Socialism, Feminism and Philosophy : A Radical Philosophy Reader* Routledge
- Margaret Whitford *Luce Irigaray : Philosophy in the Feminine* Routledge

NEWSLETTER 7 (JUNE 1992)

- Jennifer Birkett and Elizabeth Harvey (eds) *Determined Women : Studies in the Construction of the Female Subject 1900-1990* Barnes and Noble
- Drucilla Cornell *Beyond Accommodation : Ethical Feminism, Deconstruction and the Law* Routledge
- Donna Dickenson *George Sand : A Brave Man, The Most Womanly Woman* Berg Women's Series
- Moira Gatens *Feminism and Philosophy* Polity Press
- Hypatia vol. 6 no. 3 Fall 1991, Special Issue : *Feminism and the Body* ed. Elizabeth Grosz
- Sandra Harding *Whose Science? Whose Knowledge?* Open University Press
- Louise Levesque-Lopman *Claiming Reality : Phenomenology and Women's Experience* Rowman and Littlefield
- Jennifer Lorch *Mary Wollstonecraft : The Making of a Radical Feminist* Berg Women's Series
- Eva Mark and Annika Persson (eds) *Proceedings of Nordic Symposium for Women in Philosophy* Nordic Network for Women in Philosophy no. 1
- Biddy Martin *Woman and Modernity : The (Life)-Styles of Lou Andreas-Salomé* Cornell University Press
- Susan Moller Okin *Justice, Gender and the Family* Basic Books
- Jennifer Ring *Modern Political Theory and Contemporary Feminism : A Dialectical Analysis* SUNY Press
- Jana Sawicki *Disciplining Foucault : Feminism, Power and the Body* Routledge
- Nancy Tuana *Woman and the History of Philosophy* Paragon House
- Renee Winegarten *Simone de Beauvoir : A Critical View* Berg Women's Series
- Iris Marion Young *Justice and the Politics of Difference* Princeton University Press

NEWSLETTER 8 (NOVEMBER 1992)

- Else M. Barth *Women Philosophers : A Bibliography of Books Through 1990* Philosophy Documentation Center, Bowling Green State University
- Claudia Card (ed.) *Feminist Ethics* University Press of Kansas
- Eve Browning Cole and Susan Coultrap Brown (eds) *Explorations in Feminist Ethics* Indiana University Press

- Gemma Corradi Fiumara *The Symbolic Function : Psychoanalysis and the Philosophy of Language* Blackwell
- Elizabeth Frazer, Jennifer Hornsby and Sabina Lovibond (eds) *Ethics : A Feminist Reader* Blackwell
- Elizabeth F. Kingdom *What's Wrong with Rights? Problems for Feminist Politics of Law* Edinburgh University Press
- Tamsin E. Lorraine *Gender, Identity and the Production of Meaning* Westview Press (Boulder Colorado)
- Rita C. Manning *Speaking From the Heart : A Feminist Perspective on Ethics* Rowman and Littlefield
- Diana T. Meyers *Self, Society and Personal Choice* Columbia University Press

NEWSLETTER 9 (MAY/JUNE 1993)

- Michèle Barrett, *The Politics of Truth : From Marx to Foucault*, Polity Press.
- Seyla Benhabib, *situating the Self : Gender, Community and Postmodernism in Contemporary Ethics*, Polity Press.
- Gisela Bock and Susan James (eds), *Beyond Equality and Difference : Citizenship, Feminist Politics and Female Subjectivity*, Routledge.
- Teresa Brennan, *The Interpretation of the Flesh : Freud and Femininity*, Routledge.
- Elisabeth Bronfen, *Over Her Dead Body : Death, Femininity and the Aesthetic*, Manchester University Press.
- Nancy Fraser and Sandra Lee Bartky (eds), *Revaluing French Feminism : Critical Essays on Difference, Agency and Culture*, Indiana University Press.
- Helen Bequaert Holmes and Laura M. Purdy (eds), *Feminist Perspectives in Medical Ethics*, Indiana University Press.
- Anne Phillips, *Engendering Democracy*, Polity Press.
- Susan Sherwin, *No Longer Patient : Feminist Ethics and Health Care*, Temple University Press.
- Janna Thompson, *Justice and World Order*, Routledge.
- Else Viestad, *Kjønn og ideologi - En studie av kvinnesynet hos Locke, Hume, Rousseau og Kant [Gender and Ideology - An Investigation of the Image of Women in Locke, Hume, Rousseau and Kant]*, Oslo : Solum Verlag.

NEWSLETTER 10 (NOVEMBER 1993)

- Linda Alcoff and Elizabeth Potter (eds), *Feminist Epistemologies*, Routledge.
- Louise M Antony and Charlotte Witt (eds), *A Mind of One's Own: Feminist Essays on Reason and Objectivity*, ed. Westview Press. Available from Westview Press Oxford.
- Elizabeth D Harvey and Kathlee Okruhlik (eds), *Women and Reason*, ed. University of Michigan Press.
- Erica Harth, *Cartesian Women: Versions and Subversions of Rational Discourse in the Old Regime*, Cornell University Press.
- Geneviève Fraisse, *Muse de la raison: La Démocratie exclusive et la différence des sexes*, Alinéa.
- Deane W Curtin and Lisa M Heldke (eds), *Cooking, Eating, Thinking: Transformative Philosophies of Food*, Indiana University Press, available from Open

University Press.

Somer Brodribb, *Nothing Mat(t)ers: a Feminist Critique of Post-modernism*, Spinifex Press.

Drucilla Cornell, *The Philosophy of the Limit*, Routledge.

Kathy Davies, Monique Leijenaar and Janine Oldersma (eds.) *The Gender of Power*, Sage.

Jean Bethke Elshtain, *Power Trips and Other Journeys: Essays in Feminism as Civic Discourse.*,
Madison: University of Wisconsin Press.

Daniela Gobetti *Private and Public: Individuals, households, and body politics in Locke and
Hutcheson.*, Routledge.

Nancy Hirschmann *Rethinking Obligation: A Feminist Method for Political Theory*, Cornell
University Press.

Voula Lambropoulou, *Women in Papadiamandis' Works: Gender and Sex - A Feminist
Approach and Interpretation*, University of Athens Press, Athens.

Iris Murdoch, *Metaphysics as a Guide to Morals*, Chatto and Windus 1992.

Martha C Nussbaum, *Love's Knowledge: Essays on Philosophy and Literature.*, Oxford
University Press.

Paul Patton (ed.) *Nietzsche, Feminism and Political Theory*, Routledge.

Linda Singer, *Erotic Welfare, Sexual Theory and Politics in the Age of the Epidemic*,
Routledge.

Speech Acts and Pornography

Jennifer Hornsby

In isolating some ground to make this discussion of manageable proportions, I have come to focus my remarks in the direction of a specific target. The target is Ronald Dworkin. I argue that, in his work on free speech, Dworkin misses the point of those women whom he addresses on the subject of pornography. He misses the point, I believe, because he helps himself to some erroneous views about the workings of language. I shall try to show this by challenging Dworkin's interpretation of Catharine MacKinnon's claim that 'Pornography silences women'.

My remarks come in five parts: the first three prepare the ground for an account of *silencing* which I offer in the fourth and by reference to which I criticize Dworkin in the fifth.

1: Pornography

In 1984, Catharine MacKinnon and Andrea Dworkin brought an amendment to Indianapolis's civil rights ordinance. If they had eventually been successful in the courts, the legislation would have made it possible for individual citizens of Indianapolis to sue in civil court both to put a future ban on the publication of specified sexually explicit material and to collect damages for the harm that its publication had done. Their idea was that women have a right not to be silenced, and should be empowered to defend that right.

One of the objections to the MacKinnon/Dworkin amendment that Dworkin (Ronald Dworkin now) has elaborated on at some length is that it is contrary to the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution. This particular objection is irrelevant to the argument I am concerned with here. Dworkin gives an account of what justifies the protection of free speech, and he supposes that his account vindicates a liberal, anti-censorship attitude towards pornography. Insofar as Dworkin was concerned to show this, the precise Constitutional situation is neither here nor there. I want to assess some of Dworkin's thinking on its merits. The Indianapolis legislation enters the debate because it raises the good question, on which we can bring theory to bear, of whether citizens might ever make the case that publication of certain material is contrary to their civil rights. This question, not the possible practical implications of an answer to it, is my concern here.

The MacKinnon-Dworkin legislation comes in for another reason. It contained a definition of pornography, which I shall take over, as follows:

Pornography .. is the graphic sexually explicit subordination of women through pictures or words ..
[It] includes women dehumanized as sexual objects, things or commodities;
enjoying pain or humiliation or rape;
being tied up, cut up, mutilated, bruised, or physically hurt;
in postures of sexual submission or servility or display;
reduced to body parts, penetrated by objects or animals, or presented in
shown as filthy or inferior; scenarios of degradation, injury, torture;
bleeding, bruised or hurt in a context which makes these conditions sexual.

2: Free Speech

Speech is not the main ingredient in the definition of pornography, which may be 'pictures or words'. And this aspect of the definition seems right: most of the material that we think of as pornographic is photographic or cinematic, even if text, written or spoken, attaches to it. On the face of it, then, a defence of people's right to speak freely (or more generally their right to produce verbal material, whether spoken or written) is not automatically a defence of their right to publish pornographic material. Consider Mill's famous argument. Mill said that if someone's opinion is right, then preventing him from expressing it "deprives [others] of the opportunity of exchanging error for truth", if wrong, then "[another]

loses the livelier impression of truth produced by its collision with error"; so either way, it will be better if people can state their opinions than if they cannot. This argument finds value in free speech which derives from the value of truth. It does not work to protect people's freedom to publish photographs, because photographs are not things we can readily assess for truth and falsehood. So it might seem as if arguments concerned with free *speech* will not be especially important in relation to pornography.

Part of the answer to this is simple: of course what liberals defend is the right to free speech *and expression*. Mill's is only one argument. Many traditional liberal arguments in the area are clearly intended to bring speech and other modes of expression under a single head. Dworkin says, in outlining what he calls the constitutive justification of the right to free speech, 'It is a feature of a just political society that government treat all its adult members as responsible moral agents'. Dworkin's idea is that a person would be treated as less than responsible if his expressive powers were curbed; it makes no difference now whether that person wants to express himself in speech, or wants to take photographs (say of women being cut up, tied up, mutilated, and shown as filthy or inferior) as a means of expressing himself.

Well, Dworkin's introduction of the idea of responsibility seems to me to provide only a feeble attempt at legitimizing the activities of pornography's purveyors. For his conception of the responsible citizen is of someone who has 'a responsibility to express his convictions out of respect and concern for others, and out of a compelling desire that truth be known, justice served and the good secured'; and I doubt that those who profit materially from the pornography industry can be credited with such high-minded motives. But the present point is that it has to be acknowledged that there are aspects of the liberal justification of people's right to publish pornography which do not use the idea of freedom in the use of language as such. And with that acknowledged, it may be unclear why consideration of language use and of *speech acts* can play a part in evaluating Dworkin's arguments against feminists on the subject of pornography.

To understand the different sorts of arguments that liberals use, I think we need to distinguish, in the area of human expression, between what works cognitively and conveys some propositional message, and what does not work like that. Where language is used to make statements, it comes under the first head. But where language is used in writing fiction, it comes, with graphic material, under the second head. The distinction is between forms of expression which straightforwardly evince the beliefs of the expresser; and forms of expression which do not do that. An extreme example of the first sort would be explicitly advocational speech — for instance where I try to persuade you of something by arguing for it. An extreme example of the second sort would be abstract art — for instance, where someone paints a picture but (as we might put it) there is nothing she is saying in painting it.

There could be debate about how sharp this distinction is. (I think myself that it is not a very sharp one, but that it is needed nonetheless to appreciate the different goals of arguments like Mill's and Dworkin's.) But what we need to notice here is that even if the distinction were a sharp one, so that there were two utterly different forms of human expression, that would not show that the distinction served to divide up two separate areas of human activity. For it is not as if the advocational use of language was one self-contained institution, and any other use of our expressive resources was something quite else. In the actual practice of life, cognitive expression and other forms of expression are in obvious ways interdependent. What people say affects the moral and aesthetic climate in which they say things; and the aesthetic and moral climate can affect what they see fit to say. So when it is maintained, for instance, that "pornography silences women", we have to recognize the influence of one group's non-cognitive expression on another group's cognitive, linguistic expression.

The pornographers' right which is in question is the right freely to go in for expression which typically is not speech; but the freedom of women we have to consider really does include their freedom of (literally) speech.

3: Language Use

Dworkin, in good liberal company, conceives protection of the right to free speech as the promotion of a negative liberty, where a negative liberty is something you have unless someone interferes with you. Free speech is easily achieved on this model: having the usual human cognitive resources, and a vocal apparatus, a person just is free to speak unless someone else presents actual obstacles. But I think that the model is founded in a misconception about the way language operates: it is as if uttering words which make up a sentence of a language were always enough to get a thought across. To put my criticism in the terms of J.L. Austin's "speech act theory", the model assumes that speech is a matter of *locution* simply; and it ignores *illocution*. I want then to present an account of *illocution* in order to expose the inadequacy of Dworkin's conception. (It is an account I believe in independently of thinking about issues of pornography or freedom or about anything said by any Dworkin whether Andrea or Ronald.)

A speech act account of language use is one which imposes a coherent pattern on all the very many things that may be done on any of the very many possible occasions when a bit of language may be used. When someone makes an utterance there is an *action* of hers (what Austin called a 'fixed physical thing'). But in the case of any such action, there are many things that the speaker does — many *acts* she performs. Each speech act corresponds to a grouping of speech actions. And a principled way of organizing speech acts provides a framework into which the particularities of occasions on which one or another is done can potentially be fitted so as to provide for full and fully illuminating redescriptions of speech actions. The classification of speech acts into sorts which Austin got started can be thought of as a means of imposing system onto the actual data of linguistic communication.

Austin's own overall classification was a three-fold one: into locutionary, illocutionary and perlocutionary acts. There is little agreement about how exactly these classes should be marked out, and especially about the boundary between illocutionary and perlocutionary. My own suggestion is that the distinction between illocutionary and perlocutionary is a distinction between what is of proprietary concern to an account of language and what is not: some features of speech actions flow from something in the nature of linguistic communication itself, and those features constitute those actions as of certain illocutionary acts; but there are acts people do using language that no account of language as such can be expected to cover, and those are perlocutionary acts. Illocution may then be seen as at the heart of language use: a concern with locution is a concern with language-specific meaning, and a concern with perlocution is a concern with effects that uses of language may have. But whatever specific set of sounds people use — so that they do specific locutionary things —, and whatever they may be trying to achieve by using language — so that they may do specific perlocutionary things —, people have to do illocutionary things to communicate.

I think that Searle brought to notice the crucial element of illocution (though he did not see that as what he was doing). He illustrated it for the particular illocutionary speech act of *telling A that p*: 'If I am trying to tell someone something ..., as soon as he recognizes [that I am trying to tell it to him], I have succeeded Unless he recognizes that I am trying to tell him [it], I do not fully succeed in telling it to him'. What a person relies on, then, to tell someone something is the hearer's being open to the idea that she might be telling him what in fact she means to tell him: unless he can readily entertain the idea that she might be doing this, he could hardly take her to be doing it; when he does take her so, he is in a state of mind sufficient, with her utterance, for her having done it.

On this account of *telling*, it invokes (what I call) reciprocity. Reciprocity is the condition of linguistic communication. It obtains when people are such as to recognize one another's speech as it is meant to be taken, and thus to ensure the success of attempts to perform speech acts. When reciprocity obtains, there are things that speakers do simply by being heard as doing them. The hearer is

now a complementary party to speech actions: the speaker's doing what she does with her words is the product of her attempt and the hearer's recognition of it.

When reciprocity is seen as the key to illocution, illocution can assume its proper place in an account of language use. Communication by words requires that speakers should produce recognizable sounds: a language, or system of locution, needs to be in place; and a hearer obviously relies upon knowing what thought a speaker's sounds are such as to express. But communication is a relation between people, and it requires understanding on an audience's part attuned not only to the significance of the sounds the speaker produces, but also to her intended performances. Whatever the particular language, it is a condition of its normal successful use — of speakers' intended communicative acts actually being performed — that people be sufficiently in harmony, as it were, to provide for recognition of speaker meaning. The speaker then exploits, in addition to a language (a way of interpreting patterns of sounds) the existence of reciprocity.

I think that the illocutionary is best circumscribed in a way that presupposes a background of reciprocity. We can say: X-ing is an illocutionary act if and only if the following gives a sufficient condition of its being done: the speaker's attempt at X-ing results in an audience's taking the speaker to X. If that is right, then illocutionary acts, like nearly all other acts, are characterized by reference to certain sorts of effects (or results, or consequences, or upshots) that actions may have. But the relevant effects, where illocutionary acts are concerned are very special: they are effects on listeners of taking them some way, and the way an action is required to be taken to be (if it is to be some illocutionary one) is precisely the way that it is meant, by the speaker, to be. (Someone's doing what she wants with words, which may consist in her having further [perlocutionary] effects beyond the immediate illocutionary ones, is then dependent on her doing the illocutionary thing that she intends.)

The definition I have suggested does not require much of an illocutionary act: it says only that it is enough to do one to be correctly thought to do it. It gives no guarantee that any hearer will actually realize that a speaker did what she in fact meant to do; and it does not rule it out that a speaker might do some illocutionary thing even where no-one thought she meant to. So the definition says that your recognizing that I meant to tell you something is enough for me to have told it you, but it does not say that you have to have recognized that I meant to tell you something in order for me to have told it you. Searle allowed for the possibility of an illocutionary act (like telling) being done without any help from a hearer by introducing "full success". His idea (I think) was that an illocutionary act not recognized by the hearer as done is not fully successful. What Searle said was 'Unless [my hearer] recognizes ... I have not *fully succeeded* in telling him [something]'. And there is surely something right about thinking of illocutionary acts performed without the use of reciprocity as in some sense defective (or less than fully successful): someone who performs an illocutionary act despite the fact that her action does not have the effect characteristic of that act, is not understood. Shared understanding is illocution's point. "Perfect" illocutionary acts are done invoking reciprocity, we might say.

4: Silencing

Relating illocutionary acts (like telling someone something) to reciprocity shows how such acts can be peculiarly easy to perform: provided that you can get the words out and have a suitably receptive audience, there is no possible obstacle to your full success. The relevant effect, which is simply its being understood by the person addressed, and which constitutes the action as e.g. *telling someone something*, is an effect that it will ordinarily have without any contrivance on the speaker's part. But there is a counterpart of the fact that illocutionary acts can be peculiarly easy to perform: they can be *impossible* successfully to perform. Just as it is more or less automatic that your attempt at an illocutionary act is successful when certain socially-defined condition obtain;

so, when certain conditions do not obtain, you simply cannot perform any such act. Just as reciprocity may secure communication, so the absence of conditions that ensure reciprocity may prevent communication. To the extent that reciprocity fails you, you have been deprived of illocutionary potential.

I believe that we can understand silencing by thinking of the silenced person as someone deprived of illocutionary potential. The silenced person does not have it in her power to do with language what she might want to.

An example, which may fit such a description of a silenced person, is the woman dealing with a sexual advance from a man.

Judge David Wild once said

Women who say no do not always mean no. It is not just a question of saying no.

The judge was in the process of recommending the acquittal of a man accused of rape; he wanted the court to believe that the woman had meant "yes" by *No*. But there is another construction to put upon his idea that 'it is not just a question of saying no'. To perform the illocutionary act of refusal successfully, an utterance of the word "no" is not enough: to refuse successfully a woman must be understood as attempting to refuse. But a woman may mean to refuse, but be unable successfully to refuse, because a condition of her having successfully refused — that she be recognized as attempting to refuse — is not satisfied.

(Notice how 'successfully' works here. There can be an illocutionary act even when the speaker has not been fully successful in Searle's sense. And taking the woman's part against the judge, of course we shall say that she did refuse, and say this assuming that she was sincere and without thinking about how she was actually taken. The judge, however, wanted to put the woman's sincerity into question. He hoped to create a presumption of the woman's having been insincere; and if she had been insincere, then indeed there would not have been any act of refusal on the woman's part. Where such a presumption is in place, the demands on the audience lapse, and it becomes impossible for a speaker with however much sincerity she actually utters 'No' to be *taken* to refuse. Thus can the Judge sow the seeds of doubt about sincerity: where she might have hoped to rely upon reciprocity, the Judge can exploit the possibility of a lack of reciprocity.)

It requires some explaining, of course, how there could be circumstances in which a word that is suited for refusal cannot be used to perform a perfectly good illocutionary act of refusing. But this is easily explained if we believe that embedded within the social practices in which our speech actions happen is an unwritten code of behaviour. I mean a code according to which men have uncontrollable sexual urges; women who do not behave and dress with great circumspection are ready and willing to gratify those urges, but will feign unwillingness, whether through decency, or through deceitfulness, or through a desire to excite. If the idea were widespread that this is how men are and how women conduct themselves, and if the code informed men's expectations, then situations in which the reciprocity of intention and recognition required for a woman to refuse a man were lacking would be common. A woman confronted by a man with sex on his mind could not (successfully) refuse him by saying 'No'.

Silencing is the process of depriving of illocutionary potential. We now see how it might work: it may work by affecting people's mind-sets and expectations in such a way that reciprocity fails. Where reciprocity does fail, what someone might attempt to do, she will not be recognized as attempting to do, thus cannot be understood as having done, and therefore, given the nature of illocution, simply cannot (successfully) do.

Sexual refusal is the chosen example here for two reasons. It is a relatively straightforward example to describe. And it is plausible that pornography might have effected the silencing. (For this to seem plausible, it is not necessary to suppose that each individual man who cannot take attempted refusals for what they are is himself a big consumer of pornography, but only that pornography

assumes its place in an endemic system of subordination.) Sexual refusal is only an example, however.

In order to see silencing as widespread — to see that there may be examples of very different sorts —, one needs to appreciate that illocution embraces such apparently simple acts as *stating*, and to appreciate too that reciprocity can be a matter of degree. In the straightforward case, on which linguistic communication depends, speakers simply are taken to be doing the illocutionary things that they mean to do. In a certain climate, women, in certain situations (I have suggested) will not be taken to be doing the illocutionary things that they mean to. But there can be cases where, though it is not impossible for someone to do an illocutionary thing, the expectations she confronts ensure that her doing it is not the straightforward matter that communicating might ordinarily be: a person may be partially silenced, as it were.

And silencing is typically a *cumulative* process: we cannot readily point to particular instances which are pieces of silencing, though we may be able to think of things that some people regularly do which plausibly contribute to the process. At the level of the meanings of individual words, we are familiar with the idea of cumulative linguistic change: a word acquires a new meaning when it has been used enough by enough speakers as if it had that meaning; speakers' intentions then determine what other speakers are saying. Just as non-standard usages of individual words can cumulatively affect our locutionary acts (our language), so the distribution of pornographic material may affect our illocutionary acts (our use of our language). Pornography's dissemination may create, or may sustain, sets of expectations that bear on how people are taken when they speak. (So too of course may the distribution of superficially inoffensive material. It would take me far afield to consider the relative influences of different sorts of cultural products—the banally sexist and the notably misogynist.)

Catharine MacKinnon did not have anything so specific as my example in mind. She was concerned quite generally with the role of pornography in demeaning women. To put it in a style that Dworkin understands, she was concerned about a mechanism that works to reduce women's voice in democratic politics. My claim is that the promulgation of a demeaning view of women can have the effect of rendering women relatively powerless parties in communicative exchanges because it affects the reciprocity that is a precondition of illocution. For women as for men, the illocutionary acts that they are able to perform are only those they may be taken to be performing. But men more than women have determined when reciprocity obtains. I think that much of the rhetoric of silencing, as it is used in writings about the oppression of women and of other groups, not only in those of MacKinnon's writings where pornography is the agent of silencing, might be understood by reference to this sort of account.

5: R. Dworkin v. Feminists

Dworkin thinks that the claim that pornography silences women has an especially important place in the debate between liberals and some feminists about pornography and freedom. He is right about this. If the feminist is going to address the liberal in his own terms, then her most powerful challenge will come when she claims that pornography presents a conflict *within* the liberty of free speech-and-expression. And when we say that pornography silences women, we are not saying merely that the ills inherent in pornography's production and consequent upon its publication *compete* with those other goods which are constituted by citizens' possession of free speech and expression. The idea that women are silenced is, rather, the idea that pornographic publication can present an obstacle to free speech itself — to its possession by women. What this means is that however strong a justification of free speech and expression could be offered (however "absolute" a citizen's right to it), it could not remain unchallenged

that pornography's producers and purveyors ought to have it, so long as it is allowed that women ought to too.

Dworkin considers the argument that

some speech, including pornography, is silencing, so that its effect is to prevent other people from exercising their negative freedom to speak. . . . A woman's speech may be silenced not just by noise intended to drown her out but also by argument and images that change her audience's perceptions of her character, needs, desires, and standing, and also, perhaps, change her own sense of what she wants.

But he thinks that the argument relies on a confusion. He accepts that private citizens who took away other citizens' liberty by preventing them from *saying* what they wish would need to be stopped. And he even accepts that the consequence of allowing some ideas to be heard is that 'other ideas will be misunderstood, or given little consideration, or even not be spoken at all because those who might speak them are not in control of their own public identities and therefore cannot be understood as they wish to be'. But these consequences, Dworkin claims, are not themselves curtailments of the liberty to speak. He says:

Only by characterizing certain ideas as themselves "silencing" ideas - only by supposing that censoring pornography is like stopping people from drowning out other speakers - can they hope to justify censorship within the constitutional scheme that assigns a pre-eminent place to free speech. But the assimilation is nevertheless a confusion.

The account of silencing provides a ready answer to this. No confusion is involved in thinking that stopping pornographic publication is relevantly like stopping people from drowning out speakers. Silencing is an act whose effect is to render difficult or impossible certain illocutionary acts. In that respect it is exactly like drowning out. And that means that it is like drowning out in exactly the respects in which advocates of free speech object to drowning out. Silencing works more subtly than drowning out, it is true: silencing renders people not literally inaudible but unable to communicate. So it is not quite right to say of the silenced speaker, what can evidently be said of the drowned out speaker, that she might just as well have kept her mouth shut. But from the point of view of the silenced person herself, who will not be taken as she would mean to be taken, there is evidently something pointless about her making the noises she does — she cannot do what she intends to do by making them. If caring about free speech is a matter of caring about people's powers of communication, about an ability to do illocutionary things, then there is reason to stop the cumulative process of silencing if there is reason to stop people drowning one another out.

One further similarity between drowning out and silencing must be noticed. But this is now a similarity which might be thought to spoil the argument against Dworkin. Although drowning out and silencing both work on language, neither of them needs to use language. To drown someone out, you do not have to speak: you can use drums if you want to; you have only to make enough noise to render the speaker inaudible. Similarly you do not have to use language to silence; and when pornography is thought of as silencing, then (as I noted) it is usually not language, but the publication and scrutiny of graphic material, which is the silencing agent. This means that, if we were contemplating empowering people to put a halt to pornography which silences them, we could not simply compare pornographers' freedom of speech as against women's freedom of speech. We have rather to consider the pornographers' right to express themselves freely as set against women's right of free speech.

Well, Dworkin speaks of citizens as 'having as much right to contribute to the formation of the moral or aesthetic climate as they do to participate in politics'. And that makes it seem that he thinks that a right to free expression (to have one's productions contribute to the climate) is on a par with the right to free speech. I quoted some remarks of Dworkin defending all citizens' right to free expression; they struck me as feeble used in relation to pornography. And if all Dworkin's arguments here were as feeble as I found that one, then in a competition between pornographers' desire to express themselves and women's

desire to communicate, the free speech of women would win out.

Yet Dworkin himself appears to think it goes the other way. It seems that he thinks that someone's right to free expression can actually trump someone else's right to have the freedom of speech which participatory politics requires. What he has said (and it is a thought he has expressed more than once) is this:

It would plainly be unconstitutional to ban speech directly advocating that women occupy inferior roles ... even if that speech fell on willing male ears and achieved its goals. So it cannot be a reason for banning pornography that it contributes to an unequal economic or social structure, even if we think that it does.

Setting aside the appeal to the U.S. Constitution (whose irrelevance here I noted initially), and paraphrasing, we find Dworkin saying this: 'You wouldn't want people who believed that women are inferior stopped from trying to persuade others of women's inferiority, would you? So if there are people who express themselves in such ways as to perpetuate arrangements in which women are treated as inferior, but who do not actually ever come out explicitly with the opinion that women are inferior, then you would want even less to stop them.' This is a curious sort of inference. And when it is acknowledged that the 'unequal economic or social structure' is one in which the losers are deprived of powers of communication, it results in the idea that pornography, working as it does in subtle ways to render women unfree to speak, requires more protection than advocational speech, whose processes and effects are more transparent.

I suggest that Dworkin argues as he does because he has not understood what is claimed about the mechanism of silencing. He fails to see that communication using speech is not a matter merely of getting out some audible sentences (it is not a matter merely of *locution*); so he cannot admit that there could be processes which played the same role in shaping *illocutionary* possibilities as advocational speech plays in shaping beliefs, but whose playing of that role might ordinarily be more or less hidden from most of us.

If I am right in my diagnosis of Dworkin, then we must not allow the liberal to help himself to the superficial account of speech which ignores illocution and which has made it possible to think of freedom to speak as a negative liberty. It is an important task for feminists to situate the debate about pornography in an account of language which takes it seriously as a social institution among others. What I have said about silencing is meant as a contribution to that task.

REFERENCES

The quotation from J.S. Mill is from *On Liberty* (London, 1859).

Ronald Dworkin's defence of the views I have contested is in "Liberty and Pornography", *New York Review of Books*, Aug 15 1991 (reprinted in *Isaiah Berlin: A Celebration*, eds. Edna and Avishai Margalit (Hogarth Press, London 1991, from which quotations here are taken), and in "The Coming Battles Over Free Speech", *New York Review of Books*, Jun 11 '92.

For the claim of Catharine MacKinnon I have interpreted, see "Francis Biddle's Sister: Pornography, Civil Rights and Speech", in her *Feminism Unmodified* (Harvard '87).

J.L. Austin's *How To Do Things With Words* (Oxford, 1961) introduces the idea of the *illocutionary*. The quotation from J.R. Searle is at p.58 of *Speech Acts: An Essay in Philosophy of Language* (Cambridge, 1969). I defend the notions of illocution and reciprocity used here in my "Illocution and Its Significance", *Foundations of Speech Act Theory: Philosophical and Linguistic Perspectives*, ed. S.L. Tsohatzidis (Routledge, forthcoming).

The quotation from Judge Wild is from a summing up, as reported in *The Sunday Times*, 12 Dec., 1982. But he was not the last to speak in this vein: Judge Dean, 1990, summing up, (quoted in *The Times*, 10 Jun. 1993), said 'As the gentlemen on the jury will understand, when a woman says 'No' she does not always mean it. Men can't turn their emotions on and off like a tap like some women can.'

Rae Langton's "Speech Acts and Unspeakable Acts" (forthcoming) is a source of inspiration, and of useful examples, including the particular example of sexual refusal used here (though I treat it rather differently from her).