



WOMEN'S PHILOSOPHY REVIEW

Issue No 13 June 1995

CONTENTS

PAGE

Editorial	1
SWIP Business	1
Research Interests for Networking	2
Conferences	2
News	4
Writing without Power: A Conversation with Sarah Kofman	5
Books Received	8
Book Reviews	12
Paper by Jill Marsden	25

EDITORIAL

Could we remind everyone who was vaguely thinking of sending us a paper that we are intending to publish a special *Women's Philosophy Review* supplement later in the year. If everyone who promised or half-promised a paper sends one in, we will have enough papers to go ahead. The deadline is 31 August 1995. Papers may be sent to either Morwenna or Margaret and will be refereed, (so publication date is likely to be spring 1996).

We are a little concerned about rumours that have reached us informally that some women in philosophy feel that the *Women's Philosophy Review* is biased in favour of continental philosophy. We have no editorial policy in favour of one kind of philosophy or another; we are completely dependent on what people send us, or whom we can persuade to contribute. The one criterion is that material should be of interest to women in philosophy.

Proposals for an executive committee to plan future conferences etc. have still not materialised, though we hope that there will be developments on this front later in the year. However, this is perhaps a good moment to warn readers in advance that the subscription to the newsletter will be raised substantially (probably doubled) to fund the travel costs of members travelling to committee meetings once or twice a year.

All queries re membership and subscriptions should go to Kimberly Hutchings.

Kimberly Hutchings (SWIP Treasurer)
Dept of Politics
University of Edinburgh
31 Buccleuch Place
Edinburgh EH8 9JT

All contributions to the *Review* (news of conferences, articles, reviews etc) should go to Margaret or Morwenna.

Morwenna Griffiths
Margaret Whitford

Items for inclusion in the next *Review* should be sent to

Morwenna Griffiths
School of Education
University of Nottingham
Nottingham, NG7 2RD

Phone 0115 951 4484; Fax 0115 979 1506

Margaret Whitford
Dept of French
Queen Mary and Westfield College
Mile End Road
London E1 4NS

Phone 0171 975 5555 Extn 3370; Fax 0171 975 5500

Please note earlier deadlines this year:

Articles for Special Supplement: 31 August 1995

Reviews or news items for autumn edition of *Review*: 30 September 1995

NOTE FROM THE TREASURER

Many thanks to all members for co-operating in the recent update of subscription and membership lists. As of May 1995, we have approximately 115 members and about £850 in the kitty. Although the *Review* has first call upon SWIP funds, this does mean that members organising conferences may be able to get some (limited) help with expenses. Please contact me at the address below if you want to make any inquiries about this. Several members have inquired about instituting a direct debit system of paying subscriptions. Although this would obviously be convenient for long standing members, it is, unfortunately, too expensive in terms of bank charges. Because we are a society rather than a personal account, the bank would treat each debit as a separate item and charge accordingly. I'm sorry about this, but I have talked to the bank and our account is not sufficiently large for charges to be waived. By paying in cheques in bundles as it were, we are able to keep the bank charges low. We will therefore be keeping to the system now instituted in which subscriptions will be requested at the beginning of each year, the next round of payments will therefore not be until 1996!

Kimberly Hutchings (SWIP Treasurer)
Dept of Politics, University of Edinburgh
31 Buccleuch Place, Edinburgh EH8 9JT

RESEARCH DETAILS FOR NETWORKING

Lucie Antioniol, High Beley, St Andrews, Fife, KY16 8LZ. Current interests are:

Philosophy of action and emotion ; the theory of perception and of value.

Meira Frenkel, 384a Finchley Road, London, NW2 2HP. Currents interests are:

- a. Values in Education; c. Problems of Education in Pluralistic Society
- b. Humanistic Education in Modern Technological Society; d. Value of Education in Teacher Training.

Joanna Kerr, Dept of Philosophy, Edinburgh University, David Hume Tower, George Square, Edinburgh, EH8 9JX. Current interests are:

Feminist philosophy in literature; Film and Philosophy; Ethics.

Dahlian Kirby, 37 Kent Street, Cardiff, CF1 7DL. Currently researching a PhD in:

Body ownership, if individuals should be able to do what they wish with their body - especially interested in transexuality (also self-mutilation, anorexia and cosmetic surgery).

Conferences

SWIP CONFERENCE WOMEN IN PHILOSOPHY

University of Sussex
Saturday July 1 1995 10.00 am - 5.30 pm

Speakers include Jean Grimshaw, Sara Beardsworth, Helen Chapman, Kathleen Lennon

Papers will be presented on questions concerning women's exclusion from philosophy; there will also be a discussion panel to consider institutional and practical issues, and hopefully to decide upon what we can do to improve the position of women within philosophy.

For further information, please contact either:

Alison Stone,
Postgraduate Pigeonholes, ENGA, Arts B, University of Sussex,
Falmer, East Sussex (Tel: 01273 725339)

or
Stella Sandford
35 Withdean Road, Brighton, East Sussex, BN1 5BL (Tel: 01273 561875).

Rosalyn Diprose, author of *The Bodies of Women* (reviewed in this issue of the *Review*), will be at Warwick University from Mid September to mid-December 1995, and would be happy to give papers at various venues while she is here, and meet other women in philosophy. If anyone would like to invite her, either to speak, or to participate at a conference, she can be contacted at: School of Philosophy, University of New South Wales, Sydney 2052, Australia. The e-mail number is R. Diprose@unsw.edu.au.

Culture and Identity: City/Nation/World
2nd Theory, Culture and Society Conference
Berlin
10-14 August 1995

The provisional fees will be around 235 Dm (approx £98)

The fee includes: admission to all sessions, opening buffet reception, Friday night party (with rock band), coffee, juices etc in breaks, delegate kit with abstract booklet etc.

Accommodation is available at the Congress Centre

Homi Bhabha will be a plenary speaker; 50 other speakers have agreed to contribute

For further details please contact:
Theory, Culture & Society
Centre for the Study of Adult Life
School of Human Studies, University of Teeside
Middlesborough, Cleveland TS3 7DZ, UK

Tel (44) (0) 1642 342346; Fax (44) (0) 0642 342396
Email: tes@tees.ac.uk

SWIP
IN SCOTLAND

CALL FOR PAPERS

There will be a one day meeting of the Society for Women in Philosophy at the University of Edinburgh on **Saturday 18 November 1995**.

The theme of the meeting will be

Recent Developments in Feminist Ethical and Political Philosophy

The aim of the meeting will be to help to establish a larger SWIP network in Scotland and the North of England, although members from all regions will be welcome to attend.

Please, if you would be interested in offering a paper, contact

Kimberly Hutchings, University of Edinburgh,
31 Buccleuch Place, Edinburgh, EH8 9JT.

Full details of the meeting will be circulated to all SWIP members nearer the time.

NEWS

OBITUARY

Sarah Kofman 1934-1994

Sarah Kofman was born in Paris in 1934 and died October 15 1994. She studied philosophy at the Sorbonne, obtained the agrégation in 1960 and the *doctorat d'état* in 1976. She was *maître de conférences* and then, till her death, Professor of Philosophy at the University of Paris I, Sorbonne. She held the position of invited professor at the Universities of Geneva and California, Berkeley. She gave countless invited lectures, in European universities, then in the United States, in Canada and in Brazil.

Between 1970 and 1994 she published twenty five books, and a great many articles. Most of her books have been translated, some into several languages (Dutch, English, German, Italian, Japanese, Portuguese, Spanish, Serbo-Croat). Her work has been the object of several studies and was the subject of a recent conference at the University of Wales, Swansea.

Her fame comes from the very personal style and the innovative force of each of her works. Some of her books deal directly with philosophy (*Nietzsche et la scène philosophique*, *Socrate(s)*, *Explosion I*, and *Explosion II*). But most are situated at the intersection of two or several disciplines, which shed light on each other. Her first book, *L'enfance de l'art* [The Childhood of Art] reprinted several times, is a study of Freud's aesthetics, placed at the crossing point of psychoanalysis, literary criticism and the history of art. The relation between writing and the unconscious is one of the guiding threads in her work (*Quatre Romans analytiques*). Her studies on Hoffman, Nerval, Diderot, and on fictional characters like Don Juan and Shylock use a Freudian approach with great delicacy to illuminate the existential quality of a literary work, or the lived and necessary quality of what might seem literary choice. She wrote at least two essays on the problem of women (*l'enigme de la femme*, *Le Respect des femmes*). [*The Enigma of Women, Respecting Women*].

What is particularly striking about both her work and her teaching is their engaged and passionate character. Sarah Kofman had an intense relation with the ideas and works she studied, she lived that relation deeply, and

could communicate it to her listeners and her readers. She was an artist as well as a philosopher, for whom words and forms were always bearers of sense, and were not to be dissociated from experience. At a time when different sorts of formalisms reigned in France she always kept an acute sense of the human, active in her respect for the other and her lack of faith in ready-made theory. Her voice is one of the most authentic to be heard among French intellectuals in the last twenty years.

The Jewish question, even if it remained latent for a long time, always accompanied the work of Sarah Kofman. She expresses it in broad daylight in *Paroles suffoquées*, and in her last two books, *Le Mépris des juifs* and *Rue Ordener, rue Labat* (1994). The latter is an astonishing text, written fifty years after the events it recounts, about her Jewish childhood during the war - afraid, hidden, humiliated, her family torn apart. Her father, a rabbi, was deported to Auschwitz, and never returned. A few months after having written these memoirs, she died by her own hand.

Michel Jeanneret
University of Geneva

Rue Ordener, rue Labat, so balanced in its account of a childhood riven by double duty - to her mother, to the woman who hid them -, so human and yet unyielding in its extraordinary picture of the child's experience of the adults around her, is an autobiography that warns of the no-man's land, nor women's neither, between writing and living. The catharsis in this text may be for the reader, worked by a great writer. But for Sarah Kofman outside it, it was as if the denial of her own existence she had undergone (for long periods between the age of four and ten she was barely allowed to move in the places where she was hidden, and this was one of the minor practical inconveniences) had been survived only by a continuous, ever increasing rush of creativity. (She loved painting, and latterly had begun to paint and draw herself.) She was both intense and amusing. Like her person, her work opened, and opens onto vistas of subtle intellectual excitement, complex enthusiasm, extreme awareness of textual and existential density. Let's not forget the price paid.

Marian Hobson
QMW, University of London

**WRITING WITHOUT POWER
A CONVERSATION WITH SARAH
KOFMAN**

[The following interview appeared in *Die Philosophin*, a German journal of feminist philosophy and theory, issue no. 3, April 1991. We are publishing it here with the kind permission of *Die Philosophin*. As no French transcript of the interview was available, it has been translated from Ursula Beitz's German text by Monique Rhodes-Monoc and Akosua Adomako, Tulane University, New Orleans. The translators gratefully acknowledge the assistance of Tina Adomako (Düsseldorf) and Amy C. Hess (Tulane) for assistance in the preparation of the translation.]

Die Philosophin : In your book *Paroles suffoquées* [Strangled Words] (Paris : Galilée 1987), you devote your attention to the question of how one is able to write about Auschwitz, and how, after Auschwitz, one is still able to write at all. The German translation of your book came out in the middle of the "Historikerstreit"¹, a debate in Germany recently renewed by the emergence of information regarding Heidegger's involvement in National Socialism. Therefore the translation is published at a time when many intellectuals begin to doubt whether or not Auschwitz in fact constitutes the caesura described by Adorno. Your book begins with Adorno's reformulation of the categorical imperative, a reformulation which has been the source of much of our thought and debate, in order to prevent the repetition of Auschwitz, so that nothing like this can happen again. In your book, you appear to advocate 'coming to terms' with Auschwitz. Are you deliberately trying to take the other side?

Sarah Kofman : It is not a definite intention of *Paroles suffoquées* to oppose historical revisionism. I have written another text in which I directly refer to that : *Shoah ou la disgrâce*, which I am appending to this interview. [Not reprinted in WPR- Eds.] While I do take a motto from Hegel's *Philosophy of Right* to establish a certain connection between speculative philosophy and historical revisionism, this text was important to me because in attempting to write about the Shoah it became clear to me that after *Paroles suffoquées*, I could no longer write didactically and philosophically. I was forced to write in a quasi-poetic way. Originally I wrote *Paroles suffoquées* for a special edition of *Cahiers de*

l'Herne which was to be dedicated to Blanchot (and which in the end was not published). This is why my reflections on the concentration camps are directed towards Blanchot's point of view about the Jews and the way in which he suggests Antelme's book² should be read. This point of departure explains why I read the death of my father and Antelme's experience of the concentration camps through a literary text like Blanchot's *L'Idylle* - something that surprised a lot of people. This reading was hardly ever referred to by the critics. For me, though, there was a fundamental connection between the biographical (my father), the reflections on Antelme's unique and exceptional work, and the reading of a literary text : in fact I wanted to show, following Blanchot, that literature can in no way anticipate the horror of the camps, for no matter what situation is described, it is always of an idyllic nature. No matter how vivid and stark in expression a literary text is, the comparison between the lived experience of the camps and a literary text can only be an insult to the actual horrors.

Die Ph. : Your attempt to write about Auschwitz is at the same time an ethical demand to write 'without power'. What is the relationship for you between the ethics of writing and the ethics of speaking?

SK : If one writes about the 'inconceivable', then writing must not be in any way grand and authoritative, didactic, or speculative. In writing one must try to leave a space for the silence of those who could not speak: that is writing 'without power'. It must let the immense, vast irreducibility of man shine out, beyond a strength and power which have tried to reduce him, and ultimately to eliminate him. There is, then, an indissoluble connection between the highest ethical demand, which bids us be silent in order to allow the other to speak, instead of killing him, and the highest demand of writing : writing without power.

Die Ph. : The 'strangled words' were dedicated to Robert Antelme and you make constant reference in your text to *L'Espèce humaine* [Humankind], his account of life in a concentration camp. It is a scandal that Antelme's work was not translated into German until 1987. In 1985, Marguerite Duras published her diary entries under the title *La Douleur* [Pain], a work in which Robert Antelme, her husband during the time of the Second World War, figures prominently. In *La Douleur*, Duras describes Antelme's return

from the camps, and her reunion with a physically and psychologically changed man, and her subsequent separation from him. Do you see your text as a reaction to or correction of *La Douleur*?

SK : I am quite astonished by your question. My text is neither 'a reaction to' nor 'a correction of' *La Douleur*. It is not at all in the same category as Duras's more or less autobiographical account, the centre of which is the painful and unbearable experience of waiting for the return of Robert Antelme, her first husband, from whom she was already separated. My text is a theoretical reflection on *L'Espèce humaine*. As the two texts are of a completely different nature, any comparison between them is impossible. It is always the case that whenever Robert Antelme is mentioned, Marguerite Duras is referred to. And yet, *L'Espèce humaine* is a book that exists in its own right quite independently of Marguerite Duras. Robert Antelme died recently (25 October 1990) and almost all the newspapers used his death as an excuse to talk about Duras. I will give you a text to inform your readers about this death : a text in which I speak only of Antelme and his book. [Not reprinted in WPR - Eds.]

Die Ph. : You write about your father who perished in Auschwitz. Your book *Paroles suffoquées* is also dedicated to your father's memory. At the same time the book contains this sentence of yours which J. Altwegg quotes in the preface : 'Unlike Marguerite Duras, it is not my aim to dramatise my personal life but rather to attempt to understand a historical fact. This can only be attempted by excluding the biographical.' Why don't you allow the biographical to play a role? As personal history, is it not bound up with history?

SK : In the foreword to *Paroles suffoquées*, in which J. Altwegg alludes to Duras, it would have been important for me to make clear that I was not making a biographical gesture. It is true that I speak of my father in my book and it was important for me to be able to write his name in this book. When I spoke on *France Culture*, Laure Adler [...] asked me to read this biographical passage: I was unable to read more than two lines. She finished reading the passage in a totally expressionless voice which was cut off from any of the emotion that had prevented me from reading the text. In this respect, I have given no biographical account, because I believe that my personal history is in

the public interest only to the degree that it is grounded in collective history, and insofar as my 'absolute' is interwoven with the 'absolute' of history. Besides, my father was not deported because he was 'my' father but because he was a Jew. That is why I make a point of writing about his death - no matter how uniquely heroic it was - in the context of the death of other Jews, by publishing a page from the Serge Klarsfeld *Memorial* - where my father's name is only one in a long list of numerous other names - in an attempt to preserve its anonymous character.

Die Ph. : That J. Altwegg in the preface of your book makes reference time and again to your personal history - and partly even falsifies it - must be all the more irritating in the light of your claim that the biographical should be excluded.

SK : I was quite displeased that in the German preface to my book, J. Altwegg used my personal history for all to see - incidentally not without mistakes. This takes away so much of the soberness of my text - which is perhaps its essential quality.

Die Ph. : Is it true that you are working on an autobiographical project?

SK : I might possibly write an autobiography one day. At the same time, I keep postponing the decision as though I would in this way postpone the date of my death. Really, I believe that all the work I have put into my writing (my 24 books) gives me the right - and perhaps the duty - to speak about what happened in my childhood. Sometimes I wonder whether the emphasis I have placed on achieving a certain level of fame may have been merely an attempt to gain the right to write this autobiographical account. Up until now, I have written only autobiographical fragments which have appeared scattered in diverse journals. [...] I hope my (female) readers will encourage me to continue.

Die Ph. : In *Paroles suffoquées*, you use concepts like 'duty', 'truth' and in the end even 'humanism'. Do you give these concepts a new meaning?

SK : When I use words like 'duty', 'truth', 'humanism', I put them in quotation marks, in accordance with a Nietzschean gesture which Derrida calls a paleonymic effect. I repeat these old metaphysical words in order to be

able to feud with them while simultaneously shifting their meaning. Take the concept 'humanism'. In footnote 52 (French edition pp.93-94), I write : 'Despite everything that renders this term unacceptable for us, - after the death of God and the "death of man" that corresponds to it - I still want to retain it in order to give it a new meaning, by shifting and transforming it: I keep the term because what other new "word" could allow as much purchase on the old humanism?'

When I said that *L'Espèce humaine* had made a new humanism possible, that was because this book shows that in spite of the vile extraditions of which the deportees were victims, a 'we humans' was possible. It also shows us the indestructible character of alterity in each of us, which is the only thing left that can ground ethics. This 'we humans' does not point to a universal essence, e.g. the universal Reason of the old humanism, for the 'we' has always already been destroyed, thrown off balance, threatened. 'We humans' can no longer sound idyllic because the Auschwitz has irremediably destabilised the image of humanity, as conceived by the entire humanistic tradition. For the fact that humans still exist after Auschwitz means, at the same time, both that the human being is indestructible, and also that there are no limits to the destruction of human beings. That means that in the human being there are two forces which are inextricably linked :

- the power to kill, to forget the Other
- the power to recognise the other, to allow the other his/her voice.

Our task, our 'duty' is to act in such a way that the latter triumphs over the former, and always to bear in mind that the power that made Auschwitz possible can eternally return. The power to kill, to annihilate the other, which is also a human power (neither inhuman nor superhuman) can at any time triumph over the other one.

Die Ph. : What role does the relationship between the sexes play here?

SK : In this book I do not consider the relationship between the sexes. Which does not mean that this 'we humans' points to a universal being without reference to sexual difference. But under certain historical circumstances and from the point of view of what 'we' must do in order to avoid a repetition of Auschwitz, sexual difference is of little importance. 'Not allowing the other to be

forgotten' holds for both sexes. Which also means respecting alterity in the context of sexual difference.

Die Ph. : You write about Auschwitz against a background of critique of 'speculative thought'. What becomes obvious is that there is no mention at all of concrete social relations.

SK : I take concrete social relations into account. But the book's purpose is neither to be all-encompassing nor explanatory. I have already said that its original intent was above all to honour Blanchot.

Die Ph. : In reference to Blanchot, you write that the Jew is the emblematic figure for the challenge of the Foreign, the Outside, Exile. There are several theories that attribute this function to the female in phallogocentric systems. In the dichotomy between the Jew and the non-Jew, would you see an analogy with the difference of the sexes?

SK : What you say about the relationship between the Jew/woman takes up an old topic. The figure of woman and that of the Jew have frequently been compared. They arouse the same horror, the same anxiety. For Freud, it's above all a question of castration. I would personally distinguish between the defensive reaction to women and that towards Jews. In the case of the Jews, what is unbearable is that 'castration' is the sign of election. For example Hitler wanted to steal from the Jews their status as God's chosen people, and to transfer it to the Aryans. But by doing so, he separated election from 'castration', i.e. from the law that is written into the flesh of the Jew through circumcision. He wanted, for himself and for the Aryan, election without castration. In contrast, woman would be castrated but not chosen. The fact that woman is castrated could be considered as a fiction created as a defensive reaction on the part of men who cannot bear the thought of a woman being 'chosen'. That means that the level of representation, she is still the embodiment of the phallic mother, the Almighty, the Law. (See also *Le Respect des femmes* in which I speak about the embodiment of the Law in Kant, and see in Freud *Der Traum der drei Parzen* [The Dream of the Three Fates] where the mother is portrayed as one of the three Fates and represents the harsh necessity of the Law and of death. See also what I say about this in *L'Enigme de la femme* [The Enigma of Women]). If one follows this interpretation, one can see

that in both cases there is a process of splitting [*Aufhebung*] in which election is claimed for the self while the Jew and the woman are left with castration only, which is such a major object of abhorrence, that in order to appropriate election, castration had to be split off and projected in its entirety on to the other.

Die Ph. : Now, nearly fifty years later, many who survived the concentration camps are trying to describe what they experienced. Could your text *Paroles suffoquées* be understood as a problematisation of the difficulty that language is inadequate, that faced with the monstrosity of what they have experienced, the survivors are speechless, and therefore that what they want to convey cannot be expressed in language alone?

SK : In *Paroles suffoquées* - as the title already suggests - an attempt is made to discuss the difficulties of communicating the camp experience through language. This is what all those who have returned from the camps have emphasised : on the one hand, they could not speak without choking; on the other hand, there was no one who was prepared to listen - no one wanted to hear about the inconceivable. Antelme's book is invaluable especially because it makes clear the impossibility of speaking about that which makes every possibility of speech impossible, and it shows that all the same, an ethical necessity exists of bearing witness, of speaking again and again, even while not being able to speak or be heard. The necessity therefore of bearing strangled witness for those who did not have the right to speak : the millions of men, women and children who were turned to ashes.

Paris/Tübingen
December 1990

1) [A long standing dispute that re-emerged during the 1980s, between conservative historians and left-wingers (e.g. Habermas) about how German historians should deal with the Nazi period - Eds.]

(2) Robert Antelme, *L'Espèce humaine*, published in German under the title *Das Menschengeschlecht*, München 1987.

BOOKS RECEIVED

If you would be interested in reviewing any of the following books, please write promptly to Margaret Whitford, French Dept, Queen Mary and Westfield College, Mile End Road, London E1 4NS

Mary Midgley, *The Ethical Primate Humans, Freedom and Morality*, Routledge 1994.

In her new book, Mary Midgley argues that the unrealistic isolation of mind and body in reductive scientific ideologies still causes painful confusion. Such ideologies present crude pictures which are not good science, since they ignore the manifest importance of the higher human faculties. Neither inside nor outside these crude pictures is there any room for any realistic picture of the self. Why should these theories insist on only one kind of answer? There is not just one single legitimate explanation. There are as many answers as there are viewpoints from which questions arise - subjective and objective, practical as well as theoretical. Human morality arises out of human freedom : we are uniquely free beings in that we are aware of our conflicts of motive. But those conflicts and our capacity to resolve them are part of our natural inheritance. Although our selves are in many ways divided, we share the difficult project of wholeness with other organisms. What matters for our freedom is the recognition of our genuine agency, our slight but nonetheless real power to grasp and arbitrate our inner conflicts. [Blurb on inside cover.]

Two new books on law from the States :

Matthew H. Kramer, *Critical Legal Theory and the Challenge of Feminism : A Philosophical Reconception*, Rowman and Littlefield 1995.

Critical Legal Theory and the Challenge of Feminism provides a thorough overview and a refinement of the ideas that underlie critical legal theory. Arguing with the rigour of analytic philosophy and the alertness to paradoxes characteristic of deconstructive philosophy, Matthew H. Kramer begins by exploring the tangled relations between metaphysics and

politics. He then attempts to transform the discourses of the critical legal studies movement by laying out a framework of five general themes : contradictions, contingency, patterning, perspective, and ideology. Kramer calls for a more sophisticated awareness of their paradoxes, explaining why the paradoxes are by no means disabling or demobilizing. Finally, Kramer explores some of feminist theory's major controversies and problems and argues that feminist theory can profit greatly by giving due attention to inescapable paradoxes. This is an important contribution to political philosophy, jurisprudence, feminist philosophy, and metaphysics, with powerful implications for epistemology and literary theory. [Blurb on back cover.]

Ruth Colker, *Pregnant Men: Practice, Theory and the Law*, Indiana University Press 1994.

Ruth Colker's thoughtful provocative, original work deftly interweaves insights from her variegated career as lawyer, teacher and scholar to reveal significant but subtle interrelationships among legal practice and theory, constitutional doctrine and litigation, and feminist concepts of equality and essentialism. Integrating her impressive experiences on diverse legal frontiers, including as an innovative law reform litigator and as a creative legal theorist, Colker offers as an equality-based concept of reproductive freedom that constitutes a complementary, potentially more durable basis for that freedom than the current, embattled, privacy-based concept. [Blurb on back cover. NB This is based on US legal experience and case histories.]

Barbara L Marshall, *Engendering Modernity: Feminism, Social Theory and Social Change*, Polity Press, 1994.

This book examines the debates around modernity and postmodernity from the viewpoint of feminist theory. Marshall argues that, despite the differences between classical debates about modernity and the more recent controversies concerning the alleged 'end of modernity', both sets of debates share something in common: they tell a one-sided story which neglects the role of women and the significance of gender in the formation of contemporary societies. Marshall begins by examining classical social theory and the ways in which women figured as a 'strategic absence'

in classical debates about capitalism and modernity. She then examines a range of more recent debates, including the development of socialist feminist theory and its impasses; the various attempts to theorize subjectivity; the analysis of the role of the state and political discourse in regulating gendered identities; and the claim that the project of the Enlightenment, with its emphasis on autonomy and emancipation, has exhausted itself in the late twentieth century. Marshall is sceptical of the stronger claim of postmodern theorists and she argues that the project of modernity, flawed as it is, still contains considerable potential to ground an emancipatory practice. But she also argues that, if we wish to understand the nature and development of modernity, we must give more attention to questions of gender. Hence, feminist theory, together with post-colonial and anti-racist theories, have the potential to revitalize and enrich a critical social theory of modernity. [Blurb on back cover.]

Kathy Davis, *Reshaping the Female Body: The Dilemma of Cosmetic Surgery*, Routledge, 1995.

In *Reshaping the Female Body*, Kathy Davis argues that cosmetic surgery is less about the beauty system than about how women manipulate the beauty system to meet their own needs. While analysing cosmetic surgery from a feminist standpoint, she claims that women who opt for the 'surgical fix' are not necessarily victims of ideological manipulation, and she draws on actual interviews with women patients to show that cosmetic surgery is a dilemma: both symptom and solution, oppression and liberation, all in one. [Blurb on back cover.]

Jane Roland Martin, *Changing the Educational Landscape: Philosophy, Women and the Curriculum*, Routledge, 1994.

Changing the Educational Landscape brings together the best-known and best-loved essays by the renowned philosopher of education, Jane Roland Martin. The volume documents her enormous reach and power as a thinker and writer, and includes essays on a number of topics - how gender transforms the curriculum, liberal education, knowledge and the disciplines, the hidden curriculum, and sex bias in the history of educational thought. To these and all her subjects, Martin brings a

distinctive blend of philosophical insight, intellectual rigour, personal reflection and a wry sense of humour. The essays showcase for readers Martin's remarkable efforts to reconstitute curriculum studies and her powerful vision of a truly feminist, truly egalitarian educational realm. [Blurb on back cover.]

Nancy Tuana and Rosemarie Tong (eds), *Feminism and Philosophy: Essential Readings in Theory, Reinterpretation, and Application*, Westview Press, 1995.

Another collection from Westview Press (cf. the Alison Jaggar collection in the 'Books Received' section of the last newsletter). Sections include: Liberal Feminist Perspectives, Marxist Feminist Perspectives, Radical Feminist Perspectives, Psychoanalytic Feminist Perspectives, Socialist Feminist Perspectives, Anarcha Feminist and Ecological Feminist Perspectives, Phenomenological Feminist Perspectives, Postmodern Feminist Perspectives, and Perspectives on the Intersections of Race, Class and Gender. The selection is almost entirely North American. Would anyone teaching an introductory course on feminist philosophy like to assess the value of this collection for UK students? [MW]

Hilary Rose, *Love, Power and Knowledge: Towards a Feminist Transformation of the Sciences*, Polity Press 1994.

Hilary Rose's book develops new terms for thinking about science and feminism. She locates the feminist criticism of science as integral both to the feminist movement and also to the radical science movement. She returns to her own groundbreaking work from 1983 on the feminist reconstruction of rationality, drawing on US, UK and Scandinavian research. Rose attends to the political economy of the production of knowledge; and to what does and does not count as knowledge; how women and minorities are affected by these processes is also explored. Because 'biology is destiny' is both an old and oppressive claim made by science, she examines at length the latest and massively resourced claimant - the Human Genome programme - the so-called Holy Grail of the new industrialized genetics. She contrasts Genome's ability to turn leading male molecular biologists into the status of something approaching that of millionaires,

with the resistance of feminism and the commitment of many working biologists, particularly but not only women, who work for and with families confronted by serious genetic disorders. Rose's commitment to feminist resistance against the science and technology of oppression leads her to explore feminist science fiction as an ally of the feminist science critics with its imaginative capacity to explore different futures with different sciences and technologies. [Blurb on back cover]

Katie King, *Theory in its Feminist Travels: Conversations in US Women's Movements*, Indiana University Press 1994.

Katie King examines the development of US feminist theory - its inception, rocky development, and internecine struggles - and creates a new feminist methodology with a multidefinitional approach that could foster greater productivity and more action. King challenges a unitary history of the women's movement, focusing on the production and reception of feminist theory, which has been affected by race, fixed by sexual identity, defined by class and hierarchy, and consumed within politicized systems of publication and distribution. Local feminist discourse, she argues, is constantly rewritten and reinscribed with new meanings as its constituencies shift and travel. [Blurb on back cover.]

Hypatia, *Special issue on Feminism and Peace*, Vol. 9 No. 2, Spring 1994.

Articles address a range of issues concerning the interconnections between feminist philosophy and peace scholarship: an overview of important connections between feminism and peace; visions of non-violence inspired by the story of Alice Hertz's self-immolation; narrative on the connections between personal peace politics, friendship and national identity; a feminist perspective on the effects of patriarchal abuse and militarism on women, children and pets; a historical look, through the works of Wollstonecraft and Woolf, at the psychological and gendered demensions of war; connections between cultural productions (e.g. popular films, novels, visual art work, songs) with nuclear themes and the regular recurrence of the theme of incestuous fatherhood; a critique of women-as-nurturer symbolism, within the present-day patriarchal militarist context; the shared responsibilities of men (as a group) for rape; a feminist critique of just war theory,

understood as a male-generated theory; the motion of feminist justice as centrally related to the search for peace. The volume also contains a review essay and book reviews of important work in feminist peace scholarship. [Extract from editorial.]

Joanna Hodge, *Heidegger and Ethics*, Routledge 1995.

Heidegger and ethics is a contentious conjunction of terms. Martin Heidegger himself rejected the notion of ethics, and his endorsement of Nazism would seem to disqualify him from any debate on ethics. This major new study examines the complex and controversial issues involved in bringing Heidegger and ethics together. Joanna Hodge questions Heidegger's claim that his enquiries were not concerned with ethics. Working backwards through his work, from his assertion in 1964 that philosophy had been completed to *Being and Time*, his first major work, she identifies a repressed ethical dimension in Heidegger's writings on philosophy and metaphysics. The question of ethics, she argues, is in fact central to Heidegger's thought: philosophy, as the totalizing search for a single universal answer to the puzzling question of being, has indeed come to an end; what remains is a radically transformed ethics that does not seek or pretend to provide universal truths. Against current received opinion, *Heidegger and Ethics* retrieves an ethical dimension in Heidegger's thinking; in so doing, it also sheds new light on the role of philosophy in our times. [Blurb on back cover].

For information :

The *Hypatia* special issue on lesbian philosophy, reviewed in issue no. 11, June 1994, has now been published as a book, edited by Claudia Card, under the title *Adventures in Lesbian Philosophy* (Indiana University Press, distributed by the Open University Press, £14.99). It is almost identical to the *Hypatia* version; there is a new introduction, and one additional article on ritual abuse, plus a reprint of a Signs article on Simone de Beauvoir and lesbian connections, but that's about all.

Readers might like to know that Genevieve Fraisse's book, *Muse de la Raison*, which was reviewed in the *Review* No. 10, is now available in English as follows: *Reason's Muse: Sexual Difference and the Birth of Democracy*, University of Chicago Press.

BOOK REVIEWS

MARY WOLLSTONECRAFT

Gary Kelly, *Revolutionary Feminism: The Mind and Career of Mary Wollstonecraft*, Macmillan, 1992

Virginia Sapiro, *A Vindication of Political Virtue; the Political Theory of Mary Wollstonecraft*, University of Chicago Press, 1992 p/b \$16.95

These two books begin to meet a long-standing need, and do it in complementary ways. Though Wollstonecraft's importance in the history of feminism is universally acknowledged, that importance has often been judged to be merely historical, and to reside in her life as much as in her works; her writings have often been disparaged as inept in form and unoriginal, even disappointingly conventional, in content. As a result, the secondary literature on Wollstonecraft has been overwhelmingly biographical. Indeed, till the appearance of the Todd and Butler edition of her complete works in 1989, most of her writings were not available in modern editions, and those that were, were standardly not taught as part of the literary, philosophical or even feminist canon - an indication of her place in the general estimation.

Kelly and Sapiro do not deny the importance for feminism of Wollstonecraft's life story, but contend that the relatively low regard for her writings arises from various kinds of misunderstanding. Their books seek to remedy this and to reassess Wollstonecraft's achievement; they are, so far as I know, the first book-length studies dealing with the whole body of Wollstonecraft's work, and focussed on her works rather than on her life. Sapiro's book includes a useful Wollstonecraft bibliography; Kelly provides none - references are given in the notes. Both present Wollstonecraft as more original, and more successful and interesting in her originality, than she is usually reckoned, but Kelly is primarily interested in her as a writer, Sapiro in her political ideas. Both attribute underestimation of her worth to judgement of an innovatory intellectual enterprise by inappropriate patriarchal standards, urge the need to read her politically and historically, and seek to relate her writing to her social, political and cultural/intellectual context.

However, this relationship to context is integral to Kelly's approach, supplementary to Sapiro's. Kelly relates Wollstonecraft's writing to the two revolutions of her times - the French Revolution and the English cultural revolution (the rise to political and cultural dominance of the professional middle class), which was expressed in, and partly accomplished by, writing and the rise of print culture, and the appropriation of concepts such as subjectivity and femininity in the service of the emerging new cultural/political order. Seeing Wollstonecraft as primarily a cultural revolutionary, both advocating and exemplifying revolutionary change in her writing, Kelly does a much more thorough job of contextualising her, presenting her works chronologically in relation to her life and analysing them in terms of the cultural and social changes both life and works express. By doing so he seeks, often successfully in my view, to transform perception of Wollstonecraft's writing, using his wider canvas to contest readings with a narrower focus (such as for instance Mary Poovey's). The transformation process demonstrates how context changes meaning.

Sapiro, in contrast, is more interested in Wollstonecraft's views on the evils of the existing political order and ways of changing it, and thus in her response to the French Revolution. She provides a very much more detailed and systematic exposition of Wollstonecraft's thought, organising her presentation thematically, and looking to context as necessary to help explain Wollstonecraft's position in relation to an agenda set largely by modern feminist and canonical (patriarchal) political theory (though literary issues and methods are not ignored). Sapiro acknowledges that this agenda is not, and could not be, Wollstonecraft's; nevertheless it shapes Sapiro's interest in her, and hence her exposition of her ideas. Wollstonecraft's life is got out of the way in chapter 1, and plays little explanatory role thereafter, once the serious work of exposition starts. For Sapiro's enterprise is a major exegetical study of the ideas, of a kind familiar in philosophy but not attempted before in the case of Wollstonecraft. Her account corrects many widely-held misconceptions, and persuasively argues that Wollstonecraft's thought has much to offer us today.

Both books offer fresh, lively, often illuminating accounts of works which will be unfamiliar to

most readers. Both are significant contributions to understanding Wollstonecraft - especially when read together. Neither, however, can be regarded as in any sense definitive. But this is not so much a criticism as a comment on the interpretative problem Wollstonecraft poses. Context changes meaning - but context too has to be interpreted. Perceptions of writing, including interpretative writing, depend on where the reader starts from.

How is one to read an exceptionally-placed eighteenth-century woman journalist, occupying hotly contested ground, who wrote in a variety of genres (political polemic, book reviews, educational literature, fiction, history), writing for a living, and therefore extremely fast, often without the luxury of revision - and who nevertheless was in the process of reinventing her genres, her gender, her society, and herself? A writer, moreover, whose unpublished works and letters were subjected to heavy editing and censorship (by destruction and physical mutilation of manuscripts) by her husband and descendants? The materials for a traditionally scholarly reading do not exist - partly because of the way patriarchy treats rebellious women writers. Responses to such a writer will inevitably be conditioned by one's own situation and gender. Other people's readings are liable to make one acutely aware of the hermeneutic circle: it's impossible to understand the parts without a view of the whole, but it's impossible to understand the whole without understanding the parts.

The problem of interpretation is particularly acute for Sapiro, since she is somewhat paradoxically trying to extract the details of a coherent body of thought of a kind canonically presented in systematic political or philosophical theory, from writing which is mostly pursuing quite other and diverse ends - and even when it isn't, is anything but systematic, for a variety of complicated reasons. Kelly, painting a broader picture of Wollstonecraft's development, offers fewer obvious hostages to hermeneutic fortune; nevertheless he too is subject to the hermeneutic circle. To strive for a historical reading is to strive for a kind of objectivity or neutrality, but the writing of history is not theoretically, or politically, neutral. Given all this, separating the text itself from ideological readings of it is ultimately an impossible task; nevertheless it is one that must, in my view, be

attempted, since reading cannot deny the claims of objectivity without descent into arbitrary and solipsistic whim. Objective ground is the ground we can share, and has to be negotiated between readers, as does language itself. This review should be read as part of that negotiation. I was convinced by Kelly (perhaps because I know less about his field), so there is little to negotiate with him. I was not completely convinced by Sapiro, so should indicate why.

I share Sapiro's sense that all Wollstonecraft's work is intensely political, and informed by a coherent body of thought bringing together reason and feeling on the one hand, and private and public on the other; but the details of that thought will probably always remain to some extent controversial. There will always be an appreciable gap between systematizing accounts like Sapiro's and the unsystematic and diverse texts themselves. Those who want to know Wollstonecraft must read her; interpretations can illuminate but cannot transmit her. Sapiro warns us at the outset that she proposes to solve the interpretative problem by the method of *tratteggio*, "a technique developed for conservation of wall paintings, used where portions of a picture have been destroyed. This is a complex and delicate process of making tiny parallel brush strokes that give the impression of filling in the missing parts when one stands back from it . . . although at a distance the composition should be rendered whole, the differentiation between original and retouching should be clearly maintained for closer inspection." (p.xvii)

Sapiro facilitates this closer inspection by lavishly referencing her exegetical claims to Wollstonecraft's text in the Todd and Butler edition; and serious readers of her book would be well-advised to keep this edition to hand as they read. Though I am in broad agreement with Sapiro about Wollstonecraft, more often than not, when I checked her exegesis against her references, I found that, while they could be read as supporting her interpretation, they didn't have to be. This was particularly noticeable in the references to reviews. Besides, given that Sapiro's project is detailed exegesis, I have reservations about basing an understanding of one author's thought on her approving review, or even in one case her approving quotation, of another's. One may quote something approvingly in a review even when it doesn't exactly represent what one

thing oneself. Sapiro's practice here suggests a rather cavalier attitude to interpretative evidence, borne out by her treatment of Wollstonecraft's own reading.

Though Sapiro occasionally mentions authors whose influence Wollstonecraft acknowledges, or for whom she expresses more than usual admiration, she does not seek understanding of Wollstonecraft by supplementing her reading of her with readings of them; there is no systematic attempt to relate Wollstonecraft's texts to those of significant others, except in the case of Burke's own text on aesthetics, which consequently gets extremely, and rather arbitrarily, selective treatment, though acknowledged as critically important for Wollstonecraft. Even when Sapiro ventures into literary criticism to make a point about Wollstonecraft's style, she applies James Boulton's analysis of Burke's imagery to Wollstonecraft's style rather than responding to the style of both authors herself. As a result Sapiro's crucial chapter on Wollstonecraft's *A Vindication of the Rights of Men*, has a disappointingly second-hand and disjointed feel. The moral, I think, is that texts are as hard to read as to write satisfactorily by committee, even when the committee is in one's head.

My objections admittedly represent no more than a different form of *trateggio*, since influences and their significance can't be proved; but I can't help feeling some kinds of *trateggio* are more reliable than others. The paucity of contemporary documentary evidence is no excuse for ignoring the contemporary sources we have. I suspect Sapiro's book might have profited from more of Kelly's historical sense. However, these are minor blemishes in an important and interesting work, which (to my mind) gets most things right. I regret Sapiro's reliance on secondary sources mostly because when she uses her own wit and judgement, as in her last two chapters (on Wollstonecraft and feminist traditions, and Wollstonecraft and canonical political theory) she is so much more interesting and convincing. We should be grateful to both Sapiro and Kelly for being the first to take Wollstonecraft this seriously, and, let us hope, bringing her more unfamiliar works many new readers.

Susan Khin Zaw
Open University

FOUCAULT

Caroline Ramazanoglu (ed): *Up Against Foucault: Explorations between Foucault and Feminism*, Routledge, London, 1993 p/b £13.99

Lois McNay: *Foucault and Feminism: Power, Gender and the Self, Polity, Oxford, 1992 p/b £10.95.*

'[A]ny feminist drawn in to sending love letters to Foucault need be in no danger of reciprocation. Foucault's work is not the work of a ladies' man'. So wrote Meaghan Morris in 1979 and yet here we are in 1994 with two new books again exploring the possibilities of reciprocation. Is Foucault a 'ladies' man, after all?

The edited collection by Ramazanoglu and the book by McNay share one common feature: the attempt to weigh Foucault's ideas against those of feminism, to suggest the creative possibilities which Foucault's work opens up for feminism and to demonstrate the ways in which feminism must reject any wholesale canonical adoption of Foucault's theory, the way, that is, that feminism is up against Foucault. Moreover, part of the project of each text is (rightly) to (re)assert the claims of feminism as a distinctive theoretical project (see Bordo in Ramazanoglu). If Foucault is to work for feminism it can only be limited work, both texts proclaim, for Foucault is profoundly androcentric. This claim is not new, of course. Many previous critics have cited Foucault's so-called gender blindness as reason enough for rejecting him. And, indeed, I felt more than once with the Ramazanoglu collection, that I was hearing an old debate rehearsed.

Up Against Foucault is organised principally around the significance of Foucault's genealogical work for Anglo-American feminism. Specifically, around questions of power, knowledge, identity and the body. In addition, of the ten pieces, there is one by Maureen Cain on Foucault's archaeological method and the implications of extra-discursivity for feminist understandings of feelings and as yet unthought relations. There is also an essay by Jean Grimshaw that focuses explicitly on the promises and disappointments for feminist theory of Foucault's later work; work which is ultimately perceived as offering a masculinist and, therefore, inadequate, unusable, conception of ethical activity. A number of others (including Kate Soper's account of productive contradictions) also consider this later literature).

This book is divided into three sections each containing three chapters. The first covers reflections on the utility of Foucault's *arguments* for feminist theory (Soper, Grimshaw, Cain); the second deals with identity, difference and power (Bailey, Ransom, McNeil); while the final section concerns bodies, and pleasure and the relationship between power and resistance (Bordo, MacCannell and MacCannell, and Holland and Ramazanoglu). While some of these chapters deal in the abstract with Foucault's theory, others apply Foucauldian categories to more concrete case-studies (on the body, young women's experiences of sexuality, and violence against women). As with most edited collections a range of interpretations and positions are on view, from qualified endorsement of a feminist turn to Foucault (Bailey, Bordo, and McNeil) to hesitancy, and resistance (Holland and Ramazanoglu, Soper and Ransom); from the positioning of Foucault as a postmodernist or poststructuralist to his identification as an heir of the Enlightenment still embedded within its paradigms.

The range of material covered, the determination to present feminisms' own distinctive contributions to theory and practice, and the clarity with which the pieces are written make this an interesting and informative addition to the existing literature. For those new to the debates, the chapter by McNeil and the introduction (which contains a glossary, albeit definitionally contestable, of key terms) are good starting points. For those more familiar with the literature, there is still much that is suggestive.

The book by Lois McNay is refreshingly different. Her focus is Foucault's later writings: the aesthetics and, in particular, the ethics. McNay presents Foucault as a thinker in the tradition of the Enlightenment. This involves both the weaker claim that the parameters of Foucault's critical work is set by the problematic of the Enlightenment (its concern with questions of truth, justice, subjectivity and so forth), and the stronger assertion that Foucault 'affirms autonomy as a worthwhile goal of emancipatory politics' (197). The argument is based upon the shift in Foucault's work between the docile bodies of the genealogies (the passive bearers of the marks of power) and the self-forming individuals of the ethics. In moving to a consideration of self-formation, McNay suggests, Foucault relocates himself within the Enlightenment. Indeed, she claims that Foucault restores key Enlightenment themes to prominence in his

work, albeit reworked to accommodate his historicist and genealogical leanings. The problem is that Foucault is not 'enlightened' enough. While recuperating some key themes, he fails to recuperate them all: specifically, he neglects the idea of normative underpinnings. In this respect, McNay is extending to the ethics/aesthetics the kind of critique previously levelled by both Habermas and Nancy Fraser against the earlier works: the charge of cryptonormativism. Foucault, it seems, is still caught in a performative contradiction.

McNay also examines in detail the shortcomings and strengths of feminist ethical theory (especially the work of Chodorow and Gilligan). While offering interesting insights, existing feminine or maternal ethical theory is criticised for its historicist and essentialising tendencies. Foucault provides a useful counter to this. However, his proposals, in themselves, cannot provide the whole answer for feminism, for they contain a number of flaws of their own.

First, all techniques of the self are reduced to the level of self-stylisation, thereby obscuring the differences between practices suggested to and those imposed upon the individual. Second, Foucault's ethics/aesthetics (McNay make little differentiation between the two) are necessarily solitary and isolated, not 'socially integrated activity' (177; see Grimshaw in Ramazanoglu, 68). Self-aestheticisation is, therefore, antithetical to a politics of solidarity such as feminism. In addition, its 'intense subjectivism' (161) compromises its political effects as a strategy for dealing with difference. So, although Foucault's ethical turn may be helpful in illuminating some of the problems of certain universalising tendencies in some feminist ethics, Foucault's work offers only limited mileage for a revisioned feminist account.

McNay is a persuasive critic, and while I am resistant to a number of her conclusions, specifically her categorisation of Foucault as an advocate of the doctrines of the Enlightenment (I think it is the critical attitude demonstrated in the Enlightenment that pulls him), this is an important book. It offers a clearly written, and thorough, critical survey of Foucault's last publications. This, in turn, is balanced by a wide-ranging and equally critically review of recent developments within contemporary (mainly Anglo-American) feminist ethical theory. It is well worth the read!

Moya Lloyd
Queen's University, Belfast

FEMINIST STUDIES OF SCIENCE

Nancy Tuana, *The Less Noble Sex: Scientific, Religious, and Philosophical Conceptions of Woman's Nature*, Indiana University Press, 1993, p/b £11.99

Nelly Oudshoorn, *Beyond the Natural Body: An Archaeology of Sex Hormones*, Routledge, 1994, p/b £13.99

Both these books study the impact of cultural processes upon scientific understandings of femininity, and the reciprocal effect of these scientific beliefs upon everyday thought. Both may be seen as providing further substantiation of theoretical work that has been done in the areas of feminism and science: Tuana by providing evidence of the fundamentally gendered nature of scientific concepts and their roots in metaphysical notions that are equally gendered; Oudshoorn by demonstrating that even sex hormones, which are so often appealed to as evidence of a natural sex difference, are produced historically and are not given facts.

Tuana identifies certain recurrent beliefs about women - that they are less divine, less rational, less moral, more liable to suffer mental illness, less creative, and in need of control by men - as centred upon the fundamental belief that women are less perfect than men (that is, inferior to men). The religious and philosophical forms of these beliefs influence their scientific variants. For example, Plato's view of women as more passionate and less rational than men, and Hesiod's account of woman as the punishment for man's use of fire, influenced Aristotle into thinking of women as inferior, 'mutilated' versions of men. This same belief in female inferiority vis-à-vis a norm of male perfection, Tuana claims, influenced Darwin insofar as he believed that males evolve more fully than females, and tuis are more perfect, more complex. This kind of tracing-through of similar beliefs is repeated in relation to the subsidiary beliefs about women that Tuana has outlined. Tuana concludes that concepts of evolution, rationality and so forth are defined in relation to gender hierarchy, and that such beliefs also infect much modern thought in science, religion and philosophy, and culture more generally. She aims therefore to alert us to the survival of such beliefs so that we can reject them and reconceive difference non-hierarchically.

The problems with Tuana's project are summarised by the author herself in her preface. No theorist is looked at in much detail or for the specifics of their argument - instead, they become examples of the recurring theme of construing difference as inferiority (the ambiguity of Freud's position, for example, is erased). Also, there is no mention of the social context, which explains more precisely why new theories are produced and old theories rehabilitated and reworked. As a result, an overly homogenised picture of the history of beliefs on femininity is produced. Tuana glosses over such differences as a shift in the eighteenth century, described by Thomas Laqueur in *Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud* (1990), from the more metaphysically-based view of women as inferior men to 'an anatomy and physiology of incommensurability' (Laqueur p.6).

Despite the shortcomings of her approach, Tuana does cover some stimulating material, and her accounts of theories incorporate lucid summaries of other feminist work, so that the book is of interest both as an introductory history of misogyny and as an enjoyable résumé of more detailed work.

Oudshoorn's book, in contrast to Tuana's, is very specific in its focus. She studies the particular scientific belief, that women are defined by female hormones, in the social, cultural and disciplinary context of its emergence. Rather than pointing out, as Tuana does, a continuity with past ideas (i.e. that the ovaries were the loci of femininity) her approach enables Oudshoorn to emphasise the radical novelty of the hormonal conception of sex. Such past ideas about ovaries were gradually reinterpreted to produce material, measurable things - hormones - whose factuality could be universally recognised. This scientific project was motivated by the particular interests of pharmaceutical companies, gynaecologists and biomedical disciplines. This stress on historical change and context is more illuminating, in my view, than Tuana's overemphasis on repetition.

However, *Beyond the Natural Body* would have been better if Oudshoorn had explored further the epistemological implications of the idea that scientists materially produce 'facts' such as hormones. If hormones become real in this way, in what sense can Oudshoorn maintain that scientists do not 'discover' reality (p.4)? Could it not be argued that they are proving

the truth of the hormonal conception in their practice? That is, Oudshoorn too quickly assumes that in disproving the empiricist picture of given facts she is refuting any form of realism.

Oudshoorn's focus, moreover, is *too* localised. She rejects the idea that hormone research became focused on women as a result of male power-mongering, stressing instead the specific way that this research fitted into existing structures of gynaecology and medicalisation of the female body, coupled with pharmaceutical companies' requirement of profit. But gynaecology and pharmaceutical interests are not just isolated practices, they are constrained by large-scale structures of capitalism and patriarchy; Oudshoorn fails to note that practices are conditioned by a wider totality as well as by local historical forces.

Nevertheless, I feel that Oudshoorn's is the more significant of these two books, and deserves to be read. Since hormones function as the standard definition of our biological sex, Oudshoorn's work is important in de-naturalising even this very 'obvious' difference and extending our knowledge of how gender produces sex.

Alison Stone
University of Sussex

Carolyn Burke, Naomi Schor and Margaret Whitford (eds), *Engaging with Irigaray: Feminist Philosophy and Modern European Thought*, Columbia University Press, 1994, p/b £12.50.

This high-quality collection of essays on Luce Irigaray is certain to be a key reference in debates about her work. I think it will also feature significantly in future debates in feminist philosophy. The main reason for this is the excellent level of critical discussion the collection contains and the effective way in which it picks up established issues and questions and moves them a step further.

As Naomi Schor's opening remarks indicate, the reception of Irigaray's work has been a lengthy process of evolving interpretations, changing points of focus and often opposing views, in the contexts which have been responsive to her work, mainly the UK, USA and Australia. Moving beyond the stark polarities of essentialism/anti-essentialism

debates which first governed readings of Irigaray in the early days, this essay collection skilfully negotiates all kinds of contested boundaries as well as mapping the story of that interpretation. The disciplines of philosophy, literature, women's studies and/or feminist theory are challenged, crossed and cross-fertilised, and the collection is also sensitive to the differences and similarities between cultural contexts. The promise of engagement really is fulfilled in a genuine sense of productive debate. There is, in addition, an evenness of tone to the collection as a whole which is all the more remarkable when it is clear that the essays have been written over something like a 6 year period. Skilful editing holds the debates together well, giving cohesion, progression and balance, but it is also an indication of the quality of the earlier contributions which have had to stand the test of time.

One of the most important aspects of these essays is their engagement with Irigaray the philosopher. Looking at Irigaray in the context of philosophy has taken some time, partly because it seemed important to establish her work in other contexts first (psychoanalysis, literature and feminist theory for example), and partly because of the need for shifts within philosophy to allow her perspectives to be discussed more fully.

As Margaret Whitford suggests, the critical assessments offered here have (at least) two strengths. First, they plot the debts and influences owing in Irigaray's work in a detailed way, an exegetical undertaking which is vital to the job of contextualising Irigaray in contemporary thought. Hence strong essays like Judith Butler's discussion of Irigaray with Plato and Aristotle on the question of matter and origins, Joanna Hodge on Irigaray and Heidegger and the history of philosophy, Ellen Mortenson on Nietzsche, Heidegger and Irigaray, Pippa Berry on theology and mystics with regard to Heidegger and Irigaray, and Rosi Braidotti on Deleuze and Irigaray are invaluable. Critical and clear, they point up the explicit and implicit philosophical contribution her work makes, as well as indicating, for those not so familiar with philosophical history (or perhaps for the purposes of persuading certain philosophers), places to look for overlaps and cross references. There are also essays which deal with Irigaray in the company of both Derrida and Kristeva; more familiar terrain perhaps, but again the

level of debate is excellent, fresh and critical. Second, Irigaray's philosophical readings can be seen as 'passionate involvement', more a question of love or wonder, than just about being correct or incorrect. This perspective offers assessments of Irigaray on the basis of the new challenges she inspires and the unique insights she offers. (A number of quite unlikely philosophers have commented to me recently about the strange, compelling originality of Irigaray's book *Marine Lover of Friedrich Nietzsche*).

The individual essays look comprehensively at very different aspects of Irigaray's work. Carolyn Burke's excellent reflections on the issue of translation, covering the shifts in Irigaray's experimental language and syntax through to her more recent texts on legal representation and civil rights, also offer an opportunity to think about the history of the translations and the way the time-span of translation has shaped interpretation. Dianne Chisholm and Elizabeth Hirsh look at issues of hysteria and therapy as praxis, while essays by Margaret Whitford, Elizabeth Grosz and Luisa Muraro move on from the specifics of psychoanalytic issues to consider the wider consequences for social and political orders - respectively, utopian futures, the politics of sexualities, collective action and the possibility of a new or different social contract.

All the topics which strike me as relevant and urgent, both in interpreting Irigaray's work and more generally in feminist philosophy, are represented here; it is an exemplary set of essays and I recommend it highly.

Alison Ainley
Anglia Polytechnic University

Rosalyn Diprose, *The Bodies of Women: Ethics, Embodiment and Sexual Difference*, Routledge 1994, p/b £11.95.

Rosalyn Diprose, one of a group of exciting Australian feminist philosophers who have long been snapping at the heels of modernism, has at last produced her own excellent book which decisively delivers the promise of her earlier articles. In common with many other feminist theorists hoping to develop new insights from recent continental philosophy in particular, she is concerned with the question of ethics and sexual difference. What is original about her work is the focus she turns on the body, and most specifically as it imbricates with issues in biomedicine. Her first and last chapters address head on the controversial

question of surrogacy, in which she rejects both conventional ethical debate and feminist revisionism as equally implicated in a view of the body as property. For Diprose, what is at issue is not who has rights of disposal over particular bodies, but the sense in which contractarian ethics misses the point of the lived experience of an integrated body/self. In adopting a broadly phenomenological approach, she shows how the experience of surrogacy cannot be subsumed under moral rules decided in advance.

That stress on the inadequacy of any rule-bound morality informs the book throughout. What Diprose wants is a redefinition of ethics, such that what is to count is the way in which one conducts one's ethos. As she puts it, ethics concerns 'the problematic of the constitution of one's embodied place in the world' (p.19). With this in mind, her central chapters are devoted to an examination of Hegelian ethics and Nietzschean ontology - both of which she finds suggestive but finally dangerous - and to Derridean deconstruction and the concept of a sexual difference beyond the binary. The difficulty there, for Diprose, lies in the neglect of embodiment, and it is a little surprising that she does not follow through on her earlier references to Irigaray. Her reading of the latter is limited to a consideration of Irigaray's critique of identity and difference, and of her notion of the residue within conventional sexual difference that allows for the possibility of change. The same concerns emerge from the reading of Derrida, with the significant addition of the idea of the gift as that which marks the irreducibility of the other to the same, the gift that cannot be 'repaid' because it is not a commodity exchanged between self-present individuals, but precisely that which constitutes the substantial identity of both parties.

These central sections of the book are complex and sometimes difficult reading. Nonetheless, for those of us working on (bio)ethics, Diprose's analysis provides grounds for the further move into a postconventional and fully embodied ethics of sexual difference; and for everyone her insights into the mutability of the inseparable body/self help explain - through specific instances like the Baby M case - why traditional medical ethics cannot adequately resolve moral conflict. In contrast, Diprose's reconceived ethics has no part in problem solving, but redirects attention to the relations of our sexed, embodied being in the world.

Margrit Shildrick
Lancaster University

Diane Elam, *Feminism and Deconstruction: Ms en Abyme*, Routledge, 1994 p/b £9.99

Diane Elam's central concern in examining what she sees as the displaced and displacing relationship that feminism and deconstruction share is the politico-ethical implications of the *mise en abyme* turned *Ms. en Abyme*. She wants to rethink women and rethink the political: to understand woman as indeterminate, a category without identity as such, and yet retain the possibility of collective political action and social justice - though note not in the form of some ultimate, achievable, fixed end point.

Hence she focuses her discussion of feminism and deconstruction on the question of, 'What are women and what can they do? Can gender be distinct from sex? Where does the emphasis on representation leave the materiality of women's experiences?' (p.2-3) (ch. 2). Then she goes on to rethink the political after identity politics (ch. 3) and finally, linking feminist political concerns with the problem of solidarity to the deconstruction of the Cartesian subject, to argue (in ch. 4) that setting feminism and deconstruction beside each other gives rise 'to an ethics best understood as groundless solidarity and ethical activism' (p.3).

Thus Elam argues against those who view deconstruction's emphasis on undecidability as inimical to political action. It is rather that deconstruction helps to open up the possibility of doing politics differently. Examining the limitations of a politics of identity and a politics of rights she argues against both in favour of a politics of undecidability which is not centred on an autonomous privileged subject. Politics becomes 'a realm of continual negotiation in which action is phrased in ethical terms as a duty' (p.106) Unlike others she does not turn to Levinas in her attempt to draw out deconstruction's ethical obligations. For Elam it is enough to say, 'It is this sense of the indeterminate that enforces an ethical judgement'. (p.24) Perhaps not surprisingly therefore she distances the ethics that arises from feminism and deconstruction from ethics as a traditional branch of philosophy and insists it is not a moralism but an 'ethical activism'. Her point is that feminism and deconstruction "give rise to a solidarity that rethinks the political as a foundationless activity of judgement" (p.106).

Therefore a politics of undecidability in engaging with ethics which involves obligations and responsibilities does not, she insists, involve some form of relativism or nihilism. Nor does a politics of undecidability involve refusing to make decisions; rather it refuses to ground decisions in universal laws. The point is that a politics of undecidability means we have to make decisions in each case as there is no pre-existing universal law. In this way she argues feminism and deconstruction oblige us to both judge and act.

Thus although Elam says she is not presenting an apologia for deconstruction in many ways it seems to me she is. She certainly attempts to address some of the most strident feminist criticisms of deconstruction, from both critics and defenders, at least around the question of 'woman', women, and deconstruction's alleged political inactivism. Moreover, in taking a rather generalist approach to both feminism and deconstruction and thus avoiding the problems of definition, some of the complexity of each is lost, although her approach does allow her to cover a lot of ground and makes the book a reasonably accessible introduction to debates in this area.

Gill Jagger
Department of Philosophy
University of Hull

Kathleen Lennon and Margaret Whitford (eds), *Knowing the Difference: Feminist Perspectives in Epistemology*: Routledge 1994, p/b £12.99

A neophyte in the field of feminist epistemology might well be forgiven for believing that it consisted almost entirely of disputes between a few, hopelessly old-fashioned, defenders of the Enlightenment project and a larger number of, often esoteric, denigrators. Picking one's way through the literature can be confusing and dispiriting; if one takes on board postmodernist objections to the possibility of universal knowledge, all hope of political action is lost and post-feminism rules. Conversely, criticism of such objections instantly brands one as oppressive, denying difference and in thrall to the standards of dead white males.

For this reason alone, this collection of papers would be welcome. That they are also generally of a high standard and accessible is a bonus.

The relationship between knowledge and power has long been the subject of feminist analysis, and it is, of course, what makes epistemology so important to feminist theory. Sadly, and unnecessarily, the solution is too often taken to be to throw out the possibility of there being knowledge in any meaningful sense, in the belief, apparently, that removing the epistemological cornerstone will bring about the destruction of the power edifice. Yet to valorise difference *qua* difference and to allow anyone claiming a difference their own, subjective, knowledge is to create an insurmountable barrier to the sort of political programme which feminism requires, if it is to be more than self-indulgence. The editors recognise this, and have selected a set of papers which point to the possibility of another way; a dialectic through which the useful insights of postmodernist thinking can engage with feminism's need to make knowledge claims with which to inform a political project. There is a difference, after all, between something's being true, but only in particular circumstances and something's being 'true for me'. This collection makes that distinction clear; the possibility of knowledge is retained, but as negotiated rather than normative.

It would be invidious in such a short review to select any particular paper for praise or criticism: to do so would, in any case, probably only reflect the reader's particular interests. However, those of us suffering from fin-de-siècle PMT (postmodernist tension) and seeking ways to reconcile the legitimate need to acknowledge and accommodate differences with the recognition that feminism must be a political project will take heart from the papers collected in this volume.

Pat FitzGerald
University of Kent

Toril Moi, *Simone de Beauvoir: The making of an intellectual woman*, Blackwell 1994.

I was pleasantly surprised by this splendidly refreshing approach to a well worn field of inquiry. As Moi says, the title of the text gives the impression that this is a critical biography. Indeed, she does fuse the biographical with the theoretical but this book does something a little more interesting. She examines de Beauvoir in all her facets as a figure worthy of admiration both for what she represents and for what she achieves. This work asserts not

only her historical importance but also her continuing relevance both in terms of the woman as role model and in terms of the potentialities of her theoretical position. In a post-modern, post-structuralist self-referential web where concepts of liberation and change are rendered impossibly naive, it is this grande dame of feminism who can still point to a way through if not out.

Moi organises her book by examining a range of 'texts' all of which she sees as valid sites of analysis. Her premise is that there is no hierarchical distinction to be made between what we can discover from de Beauvoir's life and from her work: "... that there can be no methodological distinction between life and 'text' (p 3/4). Whilst ultimately distancing herself from the passivity of post-modern theory, Moi uses its tools, and I believe to good effect. Thus in this book there is a tension between, amongst other things, a Foucauldian genealogical approach and the politics of liberation she asserts through analysis of de Beauvoir's work. (This would probably have Foucault turning in his grave.) This tension is reminiscent of the contradictory position in which de Beauvoir is shown to have lived her life: she was a real sense part of the elite and for a long time adherent to the master discourse which excludes women. Also, as a woman in an intellectual world she was continually placed at odds with this position and rendered an outsider.

Moi's book is divided into three sections. In the first she compares de Beauvoir's education with that of Sartre to reveal the extent to which her struggle was so much harder than his and how, when you compare like with like, Sartre's transcendence was clearly socially determined. Moi also looks at the critics' attitude to de Beauvoir's work and shows how far the very dismissive reactions to her writing, particularly in her native France, were often motivated by the fact that she was female.

In part two Moi evaluates de Beauvoir's work. Particularly interesting is her evaluation of *The Second Sex*; Moi's approach reveals how much this work still has to offer, not only symbolically but also theoretically. She evaluates de Beauvoir's theories and presents them as an enactment of the contradictory, conflictual position in which an intellectual woman is placed in a phallogocentric order. Moi affirms that today it is anachronistic to look for a useful account of female sexuality in *the*

Second Sex. Nevertheless she takes theories seriously and deals with them on that level. As I have outlined, she shows how far liberation is still possible using de Beauvoir's insights.

Part three concentrates on de Beauvoir's autobiographical output. She evaluates the relationship between de Beauvoir and Sartre giving great insights into how the famous pacts made by the pair really affected her. She gives us insights into the motivations behind the way de Beauvoir organised her personal life and she uses this to help her discover why de Beauvoir needed to write and the role the different forms of writing played in her life.

The intended audience of *Moi's* book seems very much to be intellectual women. In a real sense *Moi's* project is to rehabilitate de Beauvoir as a relevant theorist and to shed light on the way she represents intellectual women in mid 20th century France.

Claire Kenney
Hertford Regional College

Claire Goldberg Moses and Leslie Wahl Rabine *Feminism, Socialism, and French Romanticism*, Indiana University Press, 1993.

This is a book which has puzzled me, in the sense that I could not quite work out its intended readership. My guess is that its starting point was the need to have translations of primary material easily available for women's studies courses, framed in some way by scholarly essays. The inter-disciplinary approach of women's studies is represented by two essays, one by historian, Claire Moses, the other by literary critic, Leslie Rabine. So far so good, but I think there are certain problems with how the material in this book has been presented. Firstly, although the separate essays are fascinating in themselves, I was not convinced that they really *spoke* to each other, in the way that sometimes, at a good conference, each new paper seems to illuminate the last. Secondly, the essays took up almost half of the book, and the first half at that, which had the effect of rather drowning out the exciting and differing voices of the Saint-Simoniennes women (different from each other, *as well as* from their twentieth century critics). Personally, I would have much preferred a book which gave more space to the individual Saint-Simonienne women and what they individually had to say. Perhaps the central interest of their stories is

that they are those of women who had to struggle to have their voices heard in their own time. They struggled to articulate their own points of view, recognising that they were not identical with the views of the men in the same movement. Perhaps we, as feminist scholars, need to pay particular attention that we do not accidentally drown out the historical specificity of women's voices by overlaying them with our (also historically specific) theories.

Perhaps this is really the vexed question of exactly how feminist scholars use (and abuse?) theory in the 1990s. During the 1970s the women's liberation practice of 'consciousness-raising' was based on a recognition that each woman's experience needed to be made collective in order to be understood. In other words, there was a recognition that experience needed to be theorised, but that theory was derived out of experience, it was not free-floating. The Saint-Simoniennes, we learn from this book, were doing their particular version of separatist consciousness-raising in the 1830s. They had joined a movement which had held out the promise of new peaceful relationships between men and women, between the classes, even between nations. Curiously, Saint-Simon, although advocating meritocracies of talent to replace inherited social status, in articulating his philosophy of the rehabilitation of the material world necessary for the synthesis of matter and spirit, nevertheless theorised this social change in terms of a new religion. The male leaders, Prosper Enfantin and Saint-Amand Bazard, although they spoke of the emancipation of women, and awaited the coming of *la femme messie* [the female Messiah] set up a quasi-religious hierarchy. After a schism with Bazard, Enfantin set himself up as Father, a kind of Pope figure, seating himself on a throne at official functions, with an empty throne next to him, representing the ideal Woman who was to be his female Other. She was, conveniently, never located - the empty space of her throne signalling only too clearly the desirability of a Mother both worshipped and forever absent. Meanwhile, Enfantin had set himself up as a father-confessor, the privileged interpreter of the women's narratives, an experience which Suzanne Volquin describes as so negating of her subjectivity and her pain that she 'vowed never again to speak of my thoughts [unless] I met a woman great and loving enough to appreciate with her heart all the acts of life, to explain to her the motives

that would have made me act'. She had told how she had been raped by Stanislas before her marriage, at which point Enfantin comforted Suzanne's husband. Despite Saint-Simonian rhetoric of mutual respect between the sexes, the husband was comforted because he had unwittingly married damaged goods. Where love was 'free', oddly enough, the woman seemed to pay the price.

Suzanne Volquin's disappointment, followed by her desire to speak to someone who would understand her, an imagined readership, an imagined community of women, is what made her act - to write and edit the journal, *Tribune des Femmes*. The painful materiality of these women's lives, their work, the difficulties of living experimentally; the fact, for instance, that Suzanne's acceptance of 'free love' meant that she allowed her husband to leave her for a new love, despite the fact that in his excitement he left her without any money, these *experiences* are the material I should have liked to have seen analysed, reflected on, *theorised* if you will. I appreciate that here I seem to be not so much writing a review of a book as making out a case for another one; however, if I return to my original question of readership, I think this is fair enough. The scholarly essays, whilst excellent in themselves, seem to me to be free-standing, and could therefore have been read by their peers in professional journals. If, however, the aim was to present important primary materials, detailed analysis of the texts that they provided would have been more productive. Both writers have made 'difference' a key term in their theorisation but, although they use the term differently from one another, and each within the subtle nuances of her own discipline, I continued to experience an anxiety that neither of the two analyses actually highlighted how the Saint-Simoniennes of the 1830s understood the concept of differing roles for the sexes. If so, then I think the Saint-Simoniennes have been unintentionally short-changed; they remain objects of a text when they so passionately wanted to be subjects.

Pam Hirsch
Cambridge Women's Studies Forum

Susan Sellers (ed.) *The Hélène Cixous Reader*, With a preface by Cixous and a foreword by Jacques Derrida, Routledge, 1994. p/b £11.99

'Écriture Féminine' among the boys.

What kind of strategy is it to introduce this representative selection of one of the best-known exponents of 'écriture féminine' with a foreword by Derrida, then a preface praising him by Cixous and lastly an introduction by the editor, Susan Sellers, which does something to situate Cixous' work as that of a woman? Of course, Cixous has always avoided being contained by any single position or political allegiance. That is not what is at issue here. Rather it is the historical framing of the debates within which her work has been situated.

Why is the prefatory material in this order? It looks uncomfortably like a deference to the father-man of the kind Toril Moi has so fascinatingly written about in relation to de Beauvoir and Sartre. This interpretation is reinforced by Cixous herself, for Derrida is not the only father elevated in this no-woman's land that appears to guard, and so define, the Lady in her tower of feminine writing. Not one of the writers Cixous cites, about ten of them is a woman, and what men! - Cixous in the company of Shakespeare, Montaigne, Milton, Goethe. Shakespeare, 'always the most modern of authors' (xvii). Really. Just like that. Not even Clarice Lispector gets a mention. Sellers later quotes Cixous, speaking in 1987: 'It was always men. Each time I came up against a wall ... where were the women?' (p. xxvii) Where indeed! Where is at least the interest in the current philosophical issues around an unstable and problematised sexed and embodied self, which you won't find in Shakespeare's 'exemplars of a powerful subjectivity' (ibid)? The question is especially pressing in the light of Cixous' own summary of the directions of her work: 'in my fictional texts I work in poetic form and in philosophical contents on the mysteries of subjectivity' (p. xvi) (The eccentric English may come from Cixous herself, since she revised Sellers' translation).

These worries persist into the otherwise generally very good editorial material in the body of the text. For example, Sellers' remarks about Cixous' image of the mouth in her introduction to 'Dedans' [Inside] run the risk of obliterating the female and the mother at a

stroke, repeating the classic phallogocentrism of unreconstructed psychoanalysis. It is not that Sellers is wrong; it is the absence of critical distance that is troublesome. 'Dedans' relates to the death of Cixous' father when she was 11. This event was a formative influence on her writing/self. Sellers points out that in 'Dedans' the mouth is disembodied, resembles the female sex, is the birthplace of a transition to individuation, is also the father's, and disappears as 'the words animate the self in a masculine symbolic order. I should have thought this pro/re-gression worthy of some contextualisation, either within Cixous' oeuvre or some other post-Irigarayan cultural location. This is important for readers and generations coming to Cixous for the first time.

Strategy apart, the selection is in many ways very good. It is broad, covering Cixous' drama, fiction and non-fiction, thus contributing to countering the distortions consequent on her fragmented availability in the anglophone world, work begun by scholars such as Morag Shiach. The work is mostly well-translated, insofar as I am any judge (barring oddities like 'plurilingualism'), though the varying approaches adopted by the different translators arguably do not help the reader evolve her sense of textual quality in the inevitably compromised business of reading translations. I found this a pity, since Cixous' suggestive, alliterative and inventive language appears further removed by the variety of interpreters. The extract from 'Neutre', however, is presented as a parallel text with the original in French. The translation is by the editor herself, and she has prefaced the piece with a commentary concerning her view of the particular difficulties of translating Cixous, and giving examples of her solutions. This is useful. The occasional parenthesis or footnote should supplement the translator's commentary, not substitute for it. In an ideal world, the thoroughly annotated parallel text is the format I should have liked for the whole book. Cixous' address is never going to be to a mass audience, and her reader in English is likely to want the access to fine points of language manipulation and innovatory semantics that a parallel text facilitates, however awkwardly.

It has been fascinating for me to return to Cixous after many years. She has been grittily important to my intellectual development, as must be so for many of my contemporaries. This *Reader* confirms and clarifies for me my

state of engaged disagreement. I should like to end with an example. When Cixous says 'I have never conceived of poetic writing as separate from philosophy' (p.xxi), my response is to say, go on! To rethink old categories by merging is not to depart from the logic of the same. In a formulation I learnt first from you, what kind of separation would not oppose them? I do not want to retain the same old divisions any more than you, but rather to explore the manifestations of difference without fixity or denial. If there is no separation at all between philosophy and poetry, what, Hélène, of what has been called the lyrical?

Penny Florence
Falmouth College of Arts

Penny A Weiss *Gendered Community: Rousseau, Sex, and Politics*. New York University Press, 1993, h/b \$40.00

In *Gendered Community: Rousseau, Sex and Politics*, Penny Weiss places the issue of gender at the heart of her interpretation of Rousseau's political theory. Taking as her point of departure Rousseau's discussion of very different educational programmes for males and females in *Emile*, Weiss attempts to resolve what she has labeled inconsistent but not contradictory educational models by placing this particular discussion "in the context of themes and principles, . . . that provide the framework of his political philosophy" (p. 4). In fact, Weiss insists that for Rousseau these gender differences are not *natural* differences but are sexual differences to be created through education based upon their potential social value in the establishment of political community.

Weiss goes to extraordinary lengths to demonstrate that Rousseau's own rhetoric about natural sexual differences is a discursive strategy employed to persuade the different sexes to adopt different modes of life (p.51). Her contention that Rousseau's deployment of natural sexual difference is a rhetorical strategy is convincing. However, her argument that this strategy is based upon utility alone is not quite as persuasive. This theoretical link - between the necessity of the creation of sexual difference for the maintenance of political community and the relationship this has to active citizenship - is the basis for the conclusion Weiss draws at the end of this text that any feminist alliance with communitarian thought is dangerous. In her estimation, any

discussion of community is antifeminist in nature since it requires the maintenance of sexual difference rather than the pursuit of political equality. I will examine these two issues in turn - firstly, Weiss's discussion of what constitutes sexual difference and secondly, the claim that this discussion of difference is deeply antifeminist.

The lack of theoretical depth surrounding Weiss's discussion of sexual difference is most evident in her discussion of the maternal figure in *Emile*. While Rousseau values biological mothers, as they are the source of all goodness and light, he effectively rails against what he refers to as the mercenary practice of using wet nurses. Rousseau's discussion here is fraught with ambiguity and rather than noting this, Weiss completely effaces the dichotomy Rousseau sets up between a bad versus a good maternal figure. Weiss refers to wet nurses as simply one of the set of servants responsible for child-rearing in noble and bourgeois families during the ancien regime: 'The role of servants in the lives of their children began at birth, when the infant was immediately sent to a wet nurse [*nourrice*]' (p.61). In interpreting this as an example of Rousseau's concern that the ties of the 'natural' family must be strengthened in order to teach the child to become a more socially responsible being, Weiss ignores the extent to which Rousseau not merely creates gender differences in *Emile* but reinforces his discussion of the emergence of the patriarchal family in the *Discourse on Inequality*. This latter text receives remarkably little attention from Weiss and she fails to note the striking similarity between the patriarchal family that just happens to emerge in the state of nature and Rousseau's subsequent discussions of political community.

The dichotomy between feminists and antifeminists which structures Weiss's analysis is the most disturbing aspect of this work. There seems to be no awareness on the part of this author of the more general conversation within feminist theory regarding 'equality and difference', an oversight which tends to erase the complexity of many of the arguments surrounding this debate. The text is clearly aimed at a more general audience than feminist scholars and while it does have the merit of taking seriously the issue of gender in Rousseau's political theory, it misrepresents the insights of feminist theory to the wider audience at which it is directed. Her conclusion, that Rousseau's work 'inadvertently supports

the feminist contention that equality requires abolishing the political categories of woman and man' (p.91), is merely one such example of this type of misrepresentation. I suspect that closer attention to other works by feminist scholars working on either Rousseau or the equality and difference debate would have had the effect of strengthening Weiss's conclusion that equality is the most desirable political goal for women. As it stands, I would recommend this text only to those scholars concerned with interpretations of Rousseau in traditional political theory and to those interested in more general issues concerning the divide between communitarianism and liberalism.

Monique M Rhodes-Monoc
Newcomb College Centre for Research on
Women
Tulane University, USA

Reinventing Nature

"Man is something that must be overcome" (Nietzsche)

by Jill Marsden

When Donna Haraway's book *Simians, Cyborgs and Women*¹ impacted with terrestrial temporality in 1991 the response from the mainstream academic establishment was one of bemused but benign disinterest. Perhaps the narcissistic guardians of the Academy simply failed to see themselves reflected in a work that drew together topics as disparate as primate behaviour studies, information technology and the politics of gender, 'race' and class, whilst consigning the Universal Subject of history, 'man', to the occasional footnote. And yet despite wide acclaim from most feminist communities Haraway's book might just as well have been an alien cybertography invading from the future. Relatively little of *Simians, Cyborgs and Women*, - ten essays written between 1978 and 1989 - is devoted to historical critique or revision of patriarchal paradigms and scant investment is exhibited in salvaging a female genealogy from the male philosophical canon. Moreover, whilst Haraway's work, like that of many contemporary feminists, may be classed as 'anti-humanist' it is an anti-humanism subtly inflected by an interest in primatology and cybernetics. Animated by a twin fascination for monkeys and machines, Haraway's research has successfully bypassed that blip on the horizon of the earth, homo sapiens thus is 'untimely' in every sense of the term.

Perhaps principally for this reason, the work of this extraordinary and exciting thinker has proved impossible to classify within the academic taxonomies which police the boundaries between the "natural" and "human" sciences and which simultaneously demarcate both from the domain of silicon intelligence. However, as I hope to demonstrate in this brief paper it is precisely the utility of these analytical boundaries which Haraway's unique brand of 'cyborg-feminism' seeks to interrogate. A genius of inventive connection, Haraway sets out to show how in the age of information technology the key categories and dualisms that have organized feminist theory hitherto may be decisively reprogrammed and even nature 'itself' may be 'created' anew. Given the importance of politicizing issues of female embodiment from a feminist perspective the claim that nature can be effectively 'reinvented' is as intoxicating as it is contentious and it will be my aim to ask precisely what is at stake in this project. Are we to look forward to a future in which hyperorgasmic cyberwomen in pulsating data-suits utterly redesign the biological domain or does the cyborg

presage a new world order in which women's bodies are ever more insidiously invaded and engineered? In precisely which ways might cyborg-feminism 'look forward'?

Much energy in contemporary feminist theory is devoted to an exploration of the social construction of gender identity and the concomitant dilemma of embracing a coherent gender politics in the post-modern epoch of fractured social subjects. In *Simians, Cyborgs and Women* Haraway writes that 'A Cyborg Manifesto' - easily the best known and most oft-quoted essay from the volume - 'was written to find political direction in the 1980's in the face of the hybrids "we" seemed to have become worldwide'². A cyborg is a fusion of organism and machine, a special kind of creature appropriate to the era of information technology. Haraway suggests that when viewed ergonomically as labouring, desiring, and reproducing systems, organic creatures function as self-designing communications systems which - via their mutual integration in information circuits - generate the cybernetic creatures which haunt the margins of late twentieth century reality. Indeed, she contends that in the post-industrial system of production the connections between power and subjectivity have to be radically rethought:

'By the late twentieth century, our time, a mythic time, we are all chimeras, theorized and fabricated hybrids of machine and organism; in short, we are cyborgs. The cyborg is our ontology; it gives us our politics. The cyborg is a condensed image of both imagination and material reality, the two joined centres structuring any possibility of historical transformation'³.

In this definition of the cyborg, Haraway deliberately conflates the figurative and the literal, forestalling attempts to commute the cyborg to either symbol or object. This gesture is itself political inasmuch as it may be read as a refusal of hierarchical codings between mind and body, organic and inorganic, human and animal and human and machine. In simultaneously aligning the cyborg with fact and fiction, Haraway articulates the complex political necessity of holding incompatible things together. In this respect, her strategies mirror those of many 'postmodern feminists' who seek to unite political and philosophical commitments which are often manifestly in conflict.⁴ For example, Rosi Braidotti

argues that Haraway's 'cyborg myth' is particularly fruitful for expressing specificity (or 'situated knowledge') whilst avoiding the pitfalls of relativism:

The cyborg is Haraway's representation of a generic feminist humanity; it is her answer to the question of how feminists reconcile the radical historical specificity of women with the insistence on constructing new values that can benefit humanity as a whole.⁵

'Cyborg-feminism' might thus be regarded as an attempt to forge a politics that sacrifices faith in global sisterhood (and essentialist definitions of 'Woman') in order to embrace temporary and tactical coalitions based on 'affinity'. In the name of the post-biological, 'artifactual' cyborg subject Haraway intends that "the certainty of what counts as nature - a source of insight and promise of innocence - is undermined, probably fatally".⁶

Theorising the 'natural' has been of particular importance to feminists. In attempting to account for the near universal cultural devaluation of women, social scientists of all persuasions have been monotonously consistent in their recourse to some form of biological determinism, arguing that dominance is genetically inherent in the male whilst the female has basic physiological instincts to nurture. Whilst feminists have been vociferous in their critique of these patriarchal narratives, the humanistic prejudice that culture defines itself in its transcendence of nature has led many feminists into a conceptual impasse. Thus, despite astute deconstruction of the discourses which naturalize and thus legitimate social inequities, the 'facts' of female embodiment have seemed impossible to theorise away. To quote Sherry B. Ortner: 'Because of woman's greater bodily involvement with the natural functions surrounding reproduction, she is seen as more a part of nature than man is'.⁷ Strip away the layers of social injustice and one finds that nature was the guilty culprit all along. What option for women other than to reject it, villify it, deny it? Faced with the grim truth that woman is held in 'the iron grasp of the species' and biologically 'destined' for the repetition of life, Simone de Beauvoir concludes that pregnancy is incompatible with existential autonomy.⁸ Writing in a similar vein, Shulamith Firestone argues that a sexual revolution can only be consequent upon a biological revolution and hence that only through reproduction ex utero will women gain genuine sexual equality.⁹ What these views have in common is the conviction that there is a basic truth about female embodiment, that nature is a truth text upon which social significations are variously

inscribed. After all what could be more incontrovertible than the fact that women give birth, are more involved with 'natural processes'? Whatever feminists may have to say about the way in which the female body is socially coded and inscribed, there are basic facts which make a female, well, female. Surely there are material limits to what can be reinvented?

Notoriously Firestone looked to innovations in ectogenic reproductive technology to liberate women from the pregnancies she deemed 'barbaric'. In the shadow of the spectre of eugenics feminists have been justifiably critical of such unrestrained appeals to technology in the context of women's liberation.¹⁰ Feminists such as Judy Wajcman have highlighted the ways in which new reproductive technologies such as in vitro fertilization are motivated by commercial and professional objectives, how amniocentesis is used to preselect female fetuses for abortion in India and how sterilization and hazardous contraceptive experiments have been particularly targeted at women of colour.¹¹ Moreover, as Wajcman points out, gender relations have profoundly influenced the form that technological advances have taken (for example, it is routinely women's bodies that are subject to scrutiny and manipulation when fertility problems arise). In short, the tacit codification of culture as 'male' and nature as 'female' has had profound repercussions on the way in which any appeal to technology is interpreted. As the texts of writers such as Ortner make clear nature is 'acted upon', treated as a resource for cultural endeavour and it is man (in the non-generic sense of the term) who is alone free to assert himself 'artificially' through science, technology and art. Indeed the subsumption of matter to form via the ongoing march of reason is a story that philosophers have fondly repeated to themselves as the essence of history itself. It is scarcely fortuitous that in his account of the generation of things Plato should gender the imposition of form upon elemental matter in terms of male procreation and female receptivity.¹² Indeed, one could chart a history of narratives from Aristotle to Marx which locate the morphic articulation of the hyleic within the formal causality of agency which, whether, paternal, despotic or divine, systematically keeps nature down.

It is thus not surprising to encounter critics of Haraway who insist that her invocation of the cyborg remains pre-eminently a male fantasy. Mark Dery comments:

One thing that bothers me about the notion of the cyborg as a useful myth is the fact that the flesh cedes territory to invasive

technologies- myoelectric armatures, cyberoptic implants, brain sockets. If machines continue to signify an impregnable masculinity, and if the flesh continues to be coded as feminine - as is so often the case in Hollywood SF - then the myth of the cyborg is one more story told about the feminine subjugated.¹³

And as Tricia Rose comments,

The cyborg is a masculine construct in which the technology houses all of the hard, strong, Terminator capacity, and the softer stuff is understood as the weak portion, the part that bleeds, menstruates.¹⁴

Indeed, how else could the steel-clad heroes of films such as *Robocop* and *Terminator* be viewed other than as the triumph of the phallic? Nature is sheathed in exo-skeletal armour, harnessed, constrained. Isn't Haraway's cyborg just like this, a high tech flight from feminine flesh after the fashion of Firestone?

It is true that her unusual enthusiasm for the technological marks Haraway apart from feminists sceptical about the fate of female autonomy within the age of the automaton. However, whilst she observes that 'the analytic resources developed by progressives have insisted on the necessary domination of technics and recalled us to an imagined organic body to integrate our resistance'¹⁵ there is a refusal in her work to follow the path of either demonising technology or championing the purity of the 'presocial'. Conceding the point that a cyborg world might appear to be 'the final imposition of a grid of control upon the planet' she insists that it may equally be regarded as a creative development in communications across previous divides, generating relations based on 'affinity' rather than essence.

It is thus imperative to grasp the axial insight that across the vast expanses of the cybercosm there is no dialectic between the technical and the social. Indeed, integral to Haraway's analysis is the claim that 'we are living through a movement from an organic, industrial society to a polymorphous, information system'¹⁶ and hence that feminist politics must orientate itself within its rapidly mutating frontiers. Whilst under industrial capitalism the human subject could still cherish the fantasy of ultimate control over the machine, in the information age cybernetics consummates the destiny of capitalism as an inexorable process of dehumanisation beyond recuperable agency. Viewed philosophically, one might theorise the kinds of changes Haraway has in mind in terms

of a transition from the transcendental philosophy of representation to the informatics of immanent flow - the liquidation of all transcendence in a vocabulary of auto-catalytic production. In this move from epistemic description to cybernetic programming the prejudice that exteriority must pass by way of interiority is short-circuited and notions of 'organic wholeness', 'unity', 'integrity' become functional assemblages of flows, not indices of meaning or truth. As Haraway comments, in the information age 'ideologies of sexual reproduction can no longer reasonably call on notions of "sex" and "sex role" as organic aspects in natural objects like organisms and families'¹⁷ Rather, the kinds of control strategies appropriate to cybernetic systems concern boundary conditions and interfaces, hence 'reinventing the natural' devolves on the functioning of flows across thresholds rather than relations between static objects.

It would appear then that what is at stake in Haraway's notion of cyborg embodiment is the way in which boundaries or interfaces are established. Haraway contends that in the electronic era: 'the dichotomies between mind and body, animal and human, organism and machine, public and private, nature and culture, men and women, primitive and civilized are all in question ideologically'¹⁸ Rather than appealing to these familiar dyads to structure her account Haraway chooses to foreground the 'actual' situation of women in terms of their integration/exploitation into a world system of production/reproduction which she terms the 'informatics of domination'.¹⁹ Her point is that beyond the rhetoric of gender dichotomies, domains such as the 'home', the 'workplace', even the 'body' can all be 'dispersed and interfaced in nearly infinite, polymorphous ways' making political movements organised around any one very difficult to code. As examples she cites the growth of the 'homework economy' outside 'the home', the increase in women-headed households, multi-national capitalism, the power of communications technologies to integrate and control labour despite extensive dispersion and decentralization, the weakening of familiar groupings, the demise of the family wage, and the breakdown of the welfare state. Rejecting the distinction between the public and the private as 'a totally misleading ideology' she proposes the alternative image of 'networking' in the integrated circuit.

I prefer a network ideological image, suggesting the profusion of spaces and identities and the permeability of boundaries in the personal body and in the body politic.²⁰

The hope is that new alliances and transversal connections will be made now that gender, 'race', sexuality and class are no longer segmented in strictly oppositional terms. Finding ways of forging connections through strategies of self-help, support and alliance have been one of the most enduring and empowering aspects of feminist practice. The feminist project might now be viewed as one of reading webs of power and social life beyond the organising parameters of class consciousness or racial identity. Or as Haraway puts it: 'The issue is dispersion. The task is to survive in the diaspora'²¹

Translated into the language of the philosophy of immanence one could identify this task in terms of the virtualisation of boundaries beyond organicist delimitation. Such a project constitutes a retreat from the premise that limits are constitutive. Rather, boundaries are rethought as immanent thresholds, zones that are invented and reinvented in the passages that define them. In other words, theoretical unities such as 'home', 'family', the 'workplace' are not determinate entities. It is in actualization that boundaries are specified and hence within their *engendered contexts* that power relations are to be evaluated. Moreover, every virtual boundary is potentially present everywhere, no one boundary necessarily in place at any one time. It is only through discursive, ideological processes of naturalization that infinite potential is channelled into specific (normalizing) patterns, some so familiar that they appear lawlike.²²

Understood in this sense it perhaps becomes easier to appreciate how and why the organic unity of the body is also a contested political site. The radicality of Haraway's project lies in her insistence that just like the other domains she lists the body does not pre-exist 'as such' but comes into being as an entity of a certain type within a specific cultural context. Moreover, she refuses to think of the body in terms of an inert, passive object of knowledge. As she comments in *Simians, Cyborgs and Women*, 'the world is not raw material for humanization' rather, 'the world encountered in knowledge projects is an active entity'.²³ Furthermore she argues that:

Bodies as objects of knowledge are material-semiotic generative nodes. Their boundaries materialize in social interaction. Boundaries are drawn by mapping practices; 'objects' do not pre-exist as such [...]²⁴

Cyborg-feminism thus ceases to commensurate with humanist agendas predicated on the

sovereignty of organic integrity. By regarding bodies as biotic communications systems - maps of power and identity - one is able to articulate a body-politics based on the shifting but material limits of dissipative structures. Summarising these ideas Haraway writes:

The machine is not an it to be animated, worshipped, and dominated. The machine is us, our processes, an aspect of our embodiment. We can be responsible for machines; they do not dominate or threaten us. We are responsible for boundaries; we are they. Up till now (once upon a time), female embodiment seemed to be given, organic, necessary; and female embodiment seemed to mean skill in mothering and its metaphoric extensions. [...] Cyborgs might consider more seriously the partial, fluid, sometimes aspect of sex and sexual embodiment. Gender might not be global identity after all, even if it has profound historical breadth and depth.²⁵

Against those who would argue for the irreducible materiality of female essence, Haraway identifies the "natural" as ongoing corporeal construction. This is not to take flight from feminine flesh but rather to resist its fetishization as a biological artefact. For need it be said, there are many biological bodies just as there are many ways in which virtual genders may be actualised as Judith Butler has so convincingly shown.²⁶ Why should reproduction be the salient feature in sexing female bodies? Might it not say more about the ideological currency of heterosexuality and productionist paradigms than the supposed reality of sex? To embrace the 'partial, fluid, sometimes aspect of sex and sexual embodiment' is to acknowledge that the so-called 'facts' of female nature gain their truths via the realities they create and not the other way around. Biological dogmas become naturalized through a process of repeated actualization, machining the body politic.

Regarded in this sense Nature is not a given but a possibility created in the process of its own interpretative tendencies, its intimate modalities. Haraway's cyborg is thus badly conceived as an imposition of the mechanical upon the organic instead of their mutual and mutating integration; invisible flows of information and excitation map out a body through paraspatial connections and disjunctions, a body engineering its own assembly. 'Nature' thus conceived as immanently self-regenerating cannot be harnessed within the philosophy of representation even though it must inhabit its camouflage within the hylomorphic epistemology it renders

obsolescent. Mother nature refuses to be penetrated, mined for her secrets, refuses to be kept down.

By considering the body thus - in terms of its becomings as opposed to an assumed organic being - Haraway is an adventurous cybnaut exploring possibilities of affinity, mutation and integration across the wastelands of a senescing humanism. Beyond the theotechnics of the philosophy of transcendence, it is no longer clear 'who makes and who is made in the relation between human and machine' nor is it certain what is body and what is mind in machines that resolve into coding practices.²⁷ Just as one might regard cyborg-becomings in terms of a technological invasion into human genetic structures one might equally regard the computer as a space to enter, the ecstasy of virtual travel. Jacking into cyberspace one is liberated from the confines of the organ-ised body and is able to explore the matrix, experiment with all kinds of illegitimate couplings. In this way machines can be prosthetic extensions, intimate bodily components. The computer becomes an elaborate extension of the human nervous system promoting tactile integration across the electric capillaries of the Internet. As Haraway writes: "Why should our bodies end at the skin, or include at best other beings encapsulated by skin? [...] We don't need organic holism to give impermeable wholeness."²⁸

Lest this be taken to imply that there are no constraints in 'reinventing nature' the lived reality of existing inventions' must be acknowledged. As marginal beings it falls to cyborg-feminists to identify where boundaries are drawn and if necessary to reinvent them. For example, Haraway draws attention to the way in which women's bodies have boundaries newly permeable to both 'visualisation' and 'intervention' via high-tech sonograms and ultrasound.²⁹ One only has to think about the way in which visual representations of fetal autonomy have been mobilised in New Right politics to erase female bodies, or reduce them to living laboratories. Once again, the importance of moving beyond the parameters of specularly to networks of inclusive difference is manifest. As Carol Stabile has remarked, the project is to situate the woman and the embryo *in vivo* as well as *in vitro*.³⁰ Whilst more urgent restrictions to Haraway's technofeminism might seem to issue from vast populations in the Southern hemisphere whose existence is seemingly uncounted by electronic technology, she is insistent that the importance of networking and contesting borders is equally applicable. For, it is not technological escalation per se which

structures reality but its location in the matrix of meanings. The issue is not about whether wombs can be implanted in men or whether gestation can be simulated in the laboratory but about the way in which what is constructed as natural, what counts as natural, marks out the political and ideological space.

This said, sympathetic commentators of Haraway's work who are gladly embrace her 'reinvention of nature' continue to regard the status of her appeal to technology as problematic. As Stacy Alaimo argues:

In this culture the predominant ideology connected to the blurring of machines and humans is one of masculinist force and domination, an erotics of power particularly terrifying in a nuclear age. This seems like an insurmountable difficulty for the feminist cyborg. Feminism could benefit from an alliance with technology's cultural power, but could such a feminism be separated from phallogotechnology in order to open up the possibility of a feminist cyborg?³¹

It strikes me that both the danger and the challenge of Haraway's work is that an unequivocal opposition to the military industrial complex is untenable. As she wryly notes, the cyborg is the bastard offspring of militarism and patriarchal capitalism and whilst it is hoped that this illegitimate progeny will prove exceedingly unfaithful to its origins, no guarantees are possible. One might add that much of the technology that has fuelled the revolution in computing and communications has also grown out of military defence research. No permanent battlelines may be drawn and there are no politically pure safe havens.

Contrary to its Hollywood incarnations then, Haraway's cyborg is less a restricting or reterritorializing of the flesh than an anarchic haemorrhaging of energies through the vast arterial networks of post-human space. Beyond the theatre of the philosophy of representation, beyond the mighty constructions of industrial capitalism and the space age, electronic technologies function invisibly, expansively, cross hatching continents, silently invading. Like a computer virus feminist politics may newly inhabit and reprogramme patriarchal software, using the replicating mechanism of the host organism to produce and disperse its codes (a practice which in another context Irigaray has termed 'mimeticism').³²

What then of the future for cyborg feminism? In *Simians, Cyborgs and Women* Donna Haraway

permits us to theorise our cravings for illegitimate connections across the matrix of possible becomings. Because the cyborg has no creation story to tell, its future is not theorised in terms of its past. It is thus liberated from the need to ground politics within a hierarchy of oppressions, identifications, moral superiority, purity or the maternal. Ironically, then perhaps the most damning criticism of cyborg-feminism would be that it is *insufficiently feminist*. Given Haraway's refusal to predetermine the content and identity of political practices it must follow that the very coding of cyborg-politics as feminist is itself partial, temporary and strategic. However, I think that Haraway is far less reluctant to affirm this point than both her admirers and detractors alike. Refreshingly void of humanistic relics, cyborg-feminism *has no givens*, is orphan, aberrant, adventurous, recklessly scrambling the polarities which institute transcendence. Existing only in its actualisations cyborg-politics has no fixed vectors to negotiate, no trajectory or agenda in linear time. Instead, it loops back on itself, migrates, extends, synthesizes, unwinds. It is anastrophic, anarchic, redesigning the future from which it departs. The private molar body is traumatized, melts into the electrodes in ecstatic, cybernetic fusion. Patriarchy expires in the matrix - the only 'mother' cyborgs ever avow - confounded into extinction by frenzied networks proliferating beyond its control. Welcome to the future - the future as feminist. Nature as insurrection.

References

- 1 Donna J. Haraway, *Simians, Cyborgs and Women: The Reinvention of Nature*, London: Free Association Books, 1991.
- 2 Haraway, op. cit., p.3
- 3 Ibid., p.150
- 4 Two very useful anthologies exploring these concerns are *Feminism/Postmodernism* edited by Linda J. Nicholson, New York & London: Routledge, 1990 and *Knowing the Difference: Feminist Perspectives in Epistemology* edited by Kathleen Lennon and Margaret Whitford, London & New York: Routledge, 1994.
- 5 Rosi Braidotti, *Nomadic Subjects: Embodiment and Sexual Difference in Contemporary Feminist Theory*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1994, p.105. It must be acknowledged that this resolutely "humanist" interpretation of the cyborg may be symptomatic of a desire to defend Haraway from her critics who remain troubled by the imbrication of cybernetics within the military industrial complex. See Stacy Alaimo's critique, page seventeen below.
- 6 Haraway, op. cit., p.153
- 7 Sherry B. Ortner, "Is Female to Male as Nature is to Culture?" in *Women, Culture and Society*, ed. Michelle Zimbalist Rosaldo and Louise Lamphere, California: Stanford University Press, 1974, p.76.
- 8 Simone de Beauvoir, *Le deuxieme sexe*, Paris: Editions Gallimard, 1949 p.69, trans. *The Second Sex*, London: Penguin, 1972, p.63.
- 9 Shulamith Firestone, *The Dialectic of Sex*, London: The Women's Press, 1979.
- 10 See for example: Gena Corea, *The Mother Machine*, New York: Harper and Row, 1985; Susan Griffin, *Woman and Nature: The Roaring Inside Her*, New York: Colophon 1978; Mary Daly, *Gyn/Ecology: The Metaethics of Radical Feminism*, Boston: Beacon Press 1978.
- 11 Judy Wajcman, *Feminism Confronts Technology*, Oxford: Polity Press, 1991, p.61.
- 12 Plato *Timaeus* 50b-51a ff.
- 13 Mark Dery, (ed) *The South Atlantic Quarterly (Special Issue - Flame Wars: The Discourse of Cyberculture)*, vol.92, no.4, 1993, pp.772-773.
- 14 Ibid p.773
- 15 Haraway, op. cit., p.154
- 16 Ibid., p.161
- 17 Haraway, op. cit., p.162
- 18 Haraway, op. cit., p.163
- 19 Ibid., p.163
- 20 Ibid.
- 21 Haraway, op. cit., p.163
- 22 Perhaps this reading of the *materialization of boundaries* would rescue Haraway from the criticism that she regards the partiality of perspective as 'desirable in itself' (see Miranda Fricker's challenging essay, 'Knowledge As Construct: Theorizing the Role of Gender in Knowledge' in Lennon & Whitford, op. cit., p.102).
- 23 Haraway, op. cit., p.198
- 24 Ibid., p.208
- 25 Haraway, op. cit., p.180
- 26 Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, London: Routledge, 1990; *Bodies that Matter: On the Discursive Limits of Sex*, London: Routledge, 1993.
- 27 Haraway, op. cit., p.177
- 28 Haraway, op. cit., p.178
- 29 Ibid., p.169
- 30 Carol A. Stabile, "Shooting the Mother: Fetal Photography and the Politics of Disappearance" in *camera obscura: A Journal of Feminism and Film Theory*, vol.28, January 1992, p.198
- 31 Stacy Alaimo, "Cyborg and Ecofeminist Interventions: Challenges for an Environmental Feminism", *Feminist Studies*, vol.20, no.1, Spring 1994, p.148
- 32 Luce Irigaray, *Ce Sexe Qui N'en Est Pas Un*, Paris: Les Editions de Minuit, 1977, p.74;