



WOMEN'S PHILOSOPHY REVIEW

Issue No 15 June 1996

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Editorial

We hope that by now you have all received your copy of the special issue: *Women Review Philosophy*. If your copy hasn't reached you please contact Morwenna. Putting out the special issue has delayed the normal issue of the *Women's Philosophy Review* which is coming out a little later than usual. We need to sell more. See page 7 please

We would like to thank all those of you who returned the questionnaire. We have not had time to analyse the replies in any depth, but we have included a brief summary and discussion in the *Review*. We hope to produce a more detailed analysis, but we're both very pressed for time these days.

It's clear that the activities of women in philosophy could be expanded in quite a lot of ways. For example, we could expand the Reviews section of the *Review* to take in a range of books from subjects that our readers are interested in: literature, theology, art theory and so on. This would depend on the availability of reviewers, so if there is a book you think is particularly interesting or important, please write in to Margaret with details (or better still, if you already have a copy, send in an unsolicited review).

We welcome contributions, whatever your philosophical views. There is no editorial view about the kind of philosophy you should be writing. We publish what people send us, and as they don't send us things very often, we publish what we are able to persuade women to write. If it seems to exclude you, that is because you haven't made your views known. The only criterion is that it should be of interest to women in philosophy.

But the possibilities of expansion depend on you. We have been talking for quite a while now of setting up a SWIP Executive, but no one has yet convened it. An Executive would help in the planning of meetings and conferences, and enable SWIP to have more impact and reach more women with an interest in philosophy. Is there anyone who would be willing to take the role of convenor?

The problem for the editors of the *Review*, as no doubt for everyone else, is that we are seriously overworked. We are continuing to produce the *Review* this year, but we're not sure how much longer we can carry on. 1995-96, for example, was the year of the Teaching Quality Assessment, and the Research Assessment Exercise (for which we rushed to get the special issue out). In addition, we

should probably mention that Morwenna has been in dispute with her institution which failed to promote her from Lecturer to Senior Lecturer. She now has a Chair elsewhere, but preparing her Appeal (which is partly on Equal Opportunities grounds and required the presentation of a lot of statistics) has taken up a large chunk of her time. We keep having ideas about the *Review* or what SWIP could do, but we barely have time for our own work, let alone expanding.

If SWIP is to keep going, there will have to be more input from a larger number of people. Please volunteer or send in your ideas for what to do and where to go next. We'll publish suggestions in the next *Review*.

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
From 1 October 1996: Faculty of Education
Nottingham Trent University
Clifton Lane, Nottingham, NG11 8NS
Phone 0115 9418418; Fax 0115 9486626

Margaret Whitford
Dept of French
Queen Mary and Westfield College
Mile End Road, London E1 4NS
Phone 0171 775 3370/72; Fax 0171 975 5500

The deadline for receipt is 30 September 1996

CHANGE OF ADDRESS?

If you change your address please inform Kimberly Hutchings, the SWIP Treasurer, at the following address

Department of Politics
University of Edinburgh
31 Buccleuch Place, Edinburgh EH8 9JT

Phone 0131 650 4239;
E-Mail KHUTCH@afb1.ssc.ed.ac.uk

Call for Papers

NEWS, GENDER AND POWER

12-13 September 1996
Centre for Journalism Studies, University of
Wales at Cardiff

Co-supported by the Tom Hopkinson Centre for Media Research, University of Wales at Cardiff and the School of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Glamorgan.

This event will explore contemporary and historical debates around questions of gender and the news. Potential participants are encouraged to interpret 'the news' from a variety of different perspectives - papers are welcomed on newspapers, radio and televisual news, current affairs programming, infotainment, women's and men's magazines, radio talk shows, the Internet, and so forth.

The organisers are planning an edited collection based on the proceedings with a major publisher and all papers will be considered for inclusion.

Please send a 150-200 word abstract for consideration by 31 May 1996 to:

Cynthia Carter,
Centre for Journalism Studies,
University of Wales at Cardiff, Cardiff,
Wales, CF1 3NB UK
Fax (01222) 238832;
E-Mail: CARTERCL@CARDIFF.AC.UK

Organising Committee: Cynthia Carter and Gill Branston, Centre for Journalism Studies, University of Wales at Cardiff, Stuart Allan, Media and Cultural Studies, University of Glamorgan.

TRANSFORMATIONS

We invite proposals of 500 words on the following issues and themes to be submitted by 30 September 1996.

Framework:

This conference is dedicated to a consideration of the transformative power of feminism: its ability to engender alternative ways of thinking, to shift boundaries, undo certainties, and move beyond limits.

Transformation highlights the importance of feminist re-thinking, of the questioning of 'woman' and 'women' as foundational categories, and the Black and post-colonial critiques of ethnocentrism in white feminist discourse. This conference will open up new critical spaces in which to discuss the question of the gendered, racialised and classed nature of identifications, subjectivities, agency and power.

It will provide a forum for considering challenges to feminism (the need for constant re-evaluation of the categories we employ as theorists, researchers and activists), and will discuss the transformative power of feminism to create positions from which women can act(ivate).

Confirmed plenary speakers: Avtar Brah; Judith Butler, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak; Gail Ching-Liagn Low; Moira Gatens; Jean Grimshaw; Snejha Gunew; Donna Haraway; Joanna Hodge; Anne McLintock; Maureen McNeil; Elspeth Probyn; Valerie Walkerdine.

Themes

- 1 Subjectivity; identifications; recognition; individuality; rights and personhood
- 2 post-colonialism; nation; travel; migrations; racial identifications;
- 3 knowledge; epistemology; ethics; evidence; experience; foundations; methodology
- 4 technology; applications; fabrications; monsters; flows
- 5 language; narrative; vision; texts; aesthetics; objects
- 6 trauma; violence; traces; crisis; conflicts
- 7 distinctions; difference; diversity

Date 17-19 July 1997

Venue Lancaster University

Please send to and further information from:
Sara Ahmed, Celia Lury and Beverley Skeggs,
Centre for Women's Studies, Lancaster University
Lancaster LA1 4YL

E-Mail: S.Ahmed@Lancaster.ac.uk

NATIONALISM AND RACISM IN THE LIBERAL ORDER

The University of Brighton and J E Purkyne University are hosting the third in a series of conferences on the theory and practice of liberalism since the collapse of 'communism'.

Following on from our first Conference and given the dramatic resurgence of European nationalism and racism since 1989, we must now ask whether liberalism represents a bulwark against these deformations, as its proponents have traditionally supposed, or whether liberalism is in fact their harbinger. Among the themes of the conference will be:

- the position of the Romani, especially in central and eastern Europe;
- feminist theory and practice in relation to racism and nationalism;
- the nature and scope of multiculturalism;
- the tensions between academic freedom and responsibility in relation to racism; and
- the philosophical relation of 'the individual' to national and other 'identities'.

The conference will thus be of particular interest to social and political scientists, philosophers and educationalists, as well as to anyone more generally concerned with contemporary issues of nationalism and racism.

Venue: J E Purkyne University, Usti nad Labem, Czech Republic
Date: 1-6 July 1997
Language: English
Format: Seminars based on pre-circulated summary papers and plenaries
Cost: Approximately £320/\$480, including accommodation, meals, papers and excursions. A number of subsidised places may be available.

The deadline for proposals (one side of A4) is 31 October 1996; for papers (maximum 6 sides, for 20-30 minute presentation) 1 March 1997 - these (pre-circulated) will form the basis of seminars of one to one and a half hours. We intend to publish a volume of selected papers (following on from *Liberalism and the New Europe*, Avebury 1993, and *The University in a Liberal State*, Avebury 1996): invited contributors will be asked to submit final drafts of some 6000 words by 30 September 1997.

If you wish to attend the Conference or offer a paper please contact Dr Bob Brecher, School of Historical and Critical Studies, University of Brighton, 10-11 Pavilion Parade, Brighton BN2 1RA, Sussex, UK (Phone UK + (0)1273 643309; fax UK + (0) 1273 681935.

AUSTRALIAN VISITS AND EXCHANGES

Are you visiting Australia in the near future?
Do you want to give a paper while you are there?

If so, Macquarie University, Sydney NSW 2109 would be interested in hearing from you. Contact Dr. Robyn Ferrell, School of History, Philosophy and Politics, tel. 00 61 2 850 9935/8837, fax 00 61 2 850 8892.

Robyn Ferrell would also be interested to hear from you if you would like to give a paper at one of the forthcoming Women in Philosophy conferences: July 1997 in Auckland, New Zealand, or July 1988 at Macquarie.

Contact her also if you would be interested in job-swapping for a short period.

FORUM FOR EUROPEAN PHILOSOPHY

We have received the following proposal (from : Catherine Adard, Simon Critchley, Marian Hobson, Alan Montefiore and Jonathan Rée) and would welcome feedback on whether and how you think SWIP might benefit from the setting up of a forum to promote philosophical dialogue with the rest of Europe. Could you respond to Margaret Whitford? If you feel you could use such a forum to run a series of seminars or workshops on issues in feminist philosophy, please contact Marian Hobson Jeanneret, French Department, Queen Mary and Westfield College (same address as Margaret Whitford).

Aims

- To promote philosophical dialogue between Britain and Europe, by the holding of seminars, lectures and workshops
- to promote exchanges with France through collaboration with the *Collège international de philosophie*.
- to promote exchanges with Italy, possibly through collaboration with the Institute of Philosophy at Naples.
- to promote exchanges with Germany and Spain with suitable partner institutions.
- The philosophical dialogue would be as wide and as non partisan as the members of the Forum desired: no form of philosophy, and no area in which reflection of a philosophical nature was occurring would be excluded.

2. Organisation

The Forum would be constituted by its members, from among whom about 8 would hold seminars, arrange for lectures and workshops.

- we would need a system of rotation for the 8
- we would need to decide whether they formed a steering committee
- we would need mechanisms for the input of members not of the 8 (could they use the title, and apply for small subventions for e.g. visiting lectures? This would help to create a UK network)
- we would hope that administration might go out from a parent organisation (*The Royal Institute of Philosophy*, if it were interested, and if funding arrangements for the administration could be made).

3. Suggestions for the 1996-7 programme (nb this list is neither final nor closed)

- seminar on identity: organised by Alan Montefiore (organisation already underway)
- Workshops on Multiculturalism in France and GB, organised by Catherine Audard

(organisation already underway)

- Day conference on Bernard Williams book *Shame and Necessity*, on Martha Nussbaum.
- Conference on Beckett proposed by Simon Critchley (Essex) to compare readings of Beckett in France and England.

other possibilities would be

- to work with the British Society for Phenomenology on their conference "Phenomenology Renewed", 11-13 April 1997.
- to work with the Society for Women in Philosophy on a programme of seminars/lecture/workshops
- to work with the *Collège international de philosophie* in its presentation of a subject of study, *The Universal*, to the Foundation for European Research at Strasbourg (organisation already underway on the Collège's side under the aegis of one of its vice-presidents, Monique David-Menard; Francis Affergan directs a programme of seminars at the Collège on anthropology, in which one of the themes is the problem of the universal)

Description of organisation of the *Collège international de philosophie*

The College is not a university institution. It was founded to enable interdisciplinary work, and to allow anyone interested in philosophy to attend seminars in which active researchers would present over several years the research in which they were engaged. These researchers do not have to be professional philosophers: some indeed are academics, but most are not in a philosophy department. Others are school teachers, and a few are not active in the education system at all. The seminars take place mostly in Paris, but also in the provinces, and abroad. They last at present for a period of 6 years, and are usually held weekly; there are 39 in France and 11 abroad. Half the directors of these seminars change after three years, so that the whole body of directors of seminars changes entirely after six years. They also organise conferences and workshops. The Collège is developing a system of contacts abroad beyond the activity of the foreign directors of seminars.

The directors of seminars run the Collège through a 'collegial assembly, meeting three times yearly, which has a president (at present a sinologist, Francois Hüllien) and a steering committee for day to day decisions. It has a small administrative office. It is financed by three ministries (Education, Higher Education and Research, Foreign Affairs, and Culture), and now with a subvention organised by François Jullien from the Institute of Management of Electricité de France. The largest sum is given by the Ministry of Education

THE IRISH JOURNAL OF FEMINIST STUDIES

Guest Editors : Dolores Dooley and Liz Steiner-Scott

Building on the important work of several international journals, the *Irish Journal of Feminist Studies* aims to extend and encourage feminist debate and scholarship across a range of disciplines and current issues. It hopes to contribute to the future of women's studies in Ireland by establishing a forum for academics who have completed and wish to publish aspects of their research, as well as for non-academic work which contributes to Irish feminist and international feminist debates. The journal will publish articles that examine various subject areas and concerns from a feminist perspective, whether interdisciplinary or multidisciplinary in scope, and hopes to achieve a broader recognition of the specificity of the Irish context internationally.

As well as original research papers, and documents each issue carries book reviews, notices of academic courses; a list of completed theses in women's studies, and a short essay on a selected work by an Irish woman artist. *IJFS* provides an exceptional forum for interdisciplinary debate and will be required reading for anyone associated with women's studies and feminist debate in Ireland.

Volume 1 £15.00 (two issues); Spring/Autumn 1996
Inspection copies available

For further details please write to Cork University Press, University College, Cork, Ireland.

WOMEN IN PHILOSOPHY ON THE WORLD WIDE WEB

Are you a woman philosopher?
And have you publications?

There is a collaborative database on Women in Philosophy on the World Wide Web. It is called The NOEMA Collaborative Bibliography of Women in Philosophy and can be found by going into the web and typing <http://billyboy.ius.indiana.edu/WomeninPhilosophy/WomeninPhilo.html>.

The database is an excellent resource, with 7300 records so far, listing the work of 3000 women. However, to date it is thin on material that does not originate from North America. There is a current request for more information. Material received by 1/8/96 will be published in book-form. Can I suggest you check your own entry and other entries also (if you can find the time), and corrections and also brand new entries with details of publications to Noel Parish Hutchings on nhutchin@ius.indiana.edu. This can also be sent from within the database. You should also give your name for attributions if you are contributing material on somebody else. Contributions will be credited.

For those who need clues about exploring Philosophy on the Web, the Warwick University Philosophy Department home page provides a variety of resources. (Access Warwick University; then choose Faculties=Social Studies; then choose Department=Philosophy; then locate tools for searching for Philosophy outside Warwick.)

If there are Philosophy Sites or Feminist Theory Sites that you know that are not generated by these methods, why not notify me so that I can put together a page of useful addresses for future issues of The Women's Philosophy Review.

Christine Battersby (C.Battersby@warwick.ac.uk)

REPORT ON SWIP CONFERENCE,
NOVEMBER 1995

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN FEMINIST
ETHICAL AND POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY

About 35 women gathered for the SWIP conference on feminist ethical and political thought held at Edinburgh University last November. As usual at SWIP events, participants came from a wide set of academic backgrounds and included established academics, postgraduate and undergraduate students as well as women from outside of academia with an interest in the issues. It was an intensive day, with five papers being presented in succession.

The paper givers were Patricia Scaltsas, Susanne Gibson, Rosalyn Diprose, Moya Lloyd and Lily Forrester. Scaltsas and Gibson both focused on feminist moral theory. Scaltsas was concerned with the meta-ethical problem of how an ethic of care could be consistent with universalism in moral theory; Gibson focused on the contribution to bioethics which could be made by a feminist ethic of care. Diprose's paper involved a critical engagement with phenomenological accounts of love and desire and the problem of how to challenge the assumption that relations with others are based on some kind of objectification. Lloyd's paper was centrally concerned with Judith Butler's work and the possibilities and difficulties involved in the idea of a politics of performativity for feminism. Forrester put forward an argument for a feminist politics of paganism, drawing on Lyotard's conception of justice and the differend.

All of the papers were of high quality, and one of the advantages of the programme was the extent to which it ranged over different kinds of philosophical ground, from classical problems in analytic philosophy to phenomenology and postmodernism. The day was much enjoyed by all participants and there was stimulating discussion of all the papers, both formally within the conference and informally at lunch-time and in the evening. Feedback on the conference has been overwhelmingly positive, although one or two participants said that they found the papers rather too dense in places.

One of the purposes of the Conference had been to help make contact between women working in philosophy in Scotland. During the lunch break, there was a meeting to discuss how women philosophers could establish networks and how feminist philosophy could be publicized in Scotland. A beginning was made by Kimberly Hutchings agreeing to circulate names and

addresses of all Scotland based participants to each other. It's hoped that there will be other SWIP events in Scotland in the future.

Conference Organizer: Kimberly Hutchings,
Politics Dept, University of Edinburgh, Edinburgh
EH8 9JT.

We need to sell the extra copies of *New Writing by Women in Philosophy* if we are to break even.

It is really easy to distribute leaflets: just put one in every pigeon hole in your department.

(I was surprised by who wanted them in my Department!) There are a couple of leaflets enclosed in this mailing. If you want more just ask Morwenna Griffiths, School of Education, University of Nottingham, NG7 2RD; Morwenna.Griffiths@nottingham.ac.uk

JOBS FOR WOMEN IN PHILOSOPHY WPR QUESTIONNAIRE

Thanks to everyone who completed the questionnaire. Just over half of them have been returned (a total of 75 altogether) and the results confirm some of our intuitions. We haven't had time yet to do a serious analysis, but we thought you'd like to have a glimpse of the evidence so far.

Out of 75 women who replied,
in philosophy

- 10 had posts in philosophy (8 permanent, 2 temporary)
- 8 were graduate students (of whom 4 had temporary or part-time teaching)
- 1 was an undergraduate
- 2 had short-term contracts

not in philosophy

- 35 had posts in other departments (26 permanent, 9 temporary)
- 1 was on a short-term contract
- 7 were not in universities (2 had tried but failed to get a post)
- 8 were graduate students

There were also 3 replies from overseas
In addition we received some useful comments from an anonymous male philosopher which we have included in part below (non-attributed); they tended to underline the points made by our respondents (indented quotes below).

What women in philosophy say

If you want a job in philosophy, your bet is to be a man. Failing that, resemble a man as much as possible. Summarising the picture that women in philosophy departments present, the result seems to offer potential women candidates for philosophy posts a series of negatives :

Don't mention feminism on your cv:

Interest in feminist topics of research may be regarded by interviewers as divisive, unbalanced or unfortunate.

Get your PhD and publish on logic and philosophy of science:

Formal logic apart, women tend to have a different approach from men to philosophy - more interest in big questions and practical applications, less enthusiastic about technical refinements.

This is echoed by a non-philosopher:

I think philosophy departments don't have women because philosophy is too much at a distance from social life and doesn't concern itself with the kinds of problems that women think are important.

Don't expect much of a career :

we can offer our students little in the way of incentives to carry on.

Don't expect to have any life outside your work :
Women philosophers must be far more ready to make sacrifices . . . to maintain a career in philosophy.

Don't expect promotion :

Almost impossible for a woman to be appointed to a chair, and difficult for a woman to be appointed to a permanent post if there are no women on the appointing committee.

Don't expect to enjoy your position as the only woman in the department :

It is very easy for women to feel alienated and uncomfortable in all-male groups and sadly, philosophy groups tend still to be male-dominated.

The women in post were not all completely negative. Several women admitted they had been lucky; more than one said she had no idea how she had managed to get appointed. It was stressed that having women on the appointments committee makes a difference.

What women in departments other than philosophy say

With a few exceptions, the consensus seemed to be that it is easier to have a career and pursue your research interests in philosophy outside a philosophy department :

Retrospectively I can see that it was a good career move [to stay out of philosophy]

Women in other departments sounded less under pressure, on the whole.

For example :

I am now very happy with my appointment . . .
. I am actively encouraged to pursue feminist philosophy

though their career paths had often not been straightforward - it often seemed that they had got to where there were more or less by accident.

Some said that they felt they were really philosophers, although they were not working in a philosophy department :

now that I am [here], I feel I am more of a philosopher after all while others were quite clear that, while they were interested in philosophy, they did not see themselves as philosophers and were quite satisfied where they were.

Greater flexibility was one of the points that emerged :

My interests shifted and broadened and I think being in a traditional/male-dominated philosophy department would have probably helped to render me dead from the neck up.

A few women felt positively dissatisfied :

I would have preferred to stay in philosophy

I am not very happy in [this] department

And some felt that their department or subject was not more supportive of women than philosophy :

{My subject} is even worse than philosophy in its record for women in academia.

What graduate students in philosophy say

Here the sampler is even smaller, and the remarks indicated that things are not much easier now than they were for the women in post. For example, there was the complaint that there are very few women in philosophy :

should I change career direction now??!!

They sense that they may be rather isolated if they pursue a career in philosophy :

The general atmosphere is male orientated and intimidating to women

Where women are on the staff, they are not necessarily experienced a supportive towards women students :

There is only one female member of staff who is very anti-feminist.

Students who want to pursue feminist research interests feel marginalised :

they are told that what they are doing is not 'real' philosophy, as one graduate commented.

One respondent was lucky enough to have a feminist supervisor and had had quite a different experience.

Discussion

Although it's difficult to draw any firm conclusions here, given that there are many more replies from women not working in philosophy departments), there seemed to be more job-satisfaction among non-philosophers (whether they felt they belonged in philosophy departments or not).

Women who have the opportunity to be more flexible (or in less positive terms, whose career pathway has not been straightforward) may in the end be the more fortunate ones. A more indirect pathway is after all more likely to correspond to one's intellectual development. It's harder to move in this way within the institution of philosophy, and so women in philosophy might end up feeling more trapped. They often have less seniority, less power to take decisions, less influence over appointments, and as a result less ability to affect the development of the subject, than their male counterparts. Universities which have a course-unit or module system which allows for inter- or cross-disciplinary teaching may offer more opportunities for intellectual development. Some respondents indicated the narrowness of the intellectual parameters in philosophy departments.

One gets the impression of a discipline with its back against the wall.

Similarly we had the sense, from what some respondents wrote, that to have a real effect on a philosophy department would involve a lot of personal hardship. In the case of conflict between your personal intellectual life and development, and a more abstract commitment to changing philosophy as a discipline, the first option was likely to be a richer and in the end less stressful one. In order to want to commit yourself to changing the discipline of philosophy from the inside, there would need to be rewards to compensate for the struggle, and it was not clear from our respondents that any of the usual rewards (promotion, power, influence, recognition, job-satisfaction, congenial or inspirational colleagues) could be expected. Thought it might be possible to carve out a niche for yourself, you were just as likely to feel alienated and in constant friction with your colleagues.

The lack of women colleagues was seen as a serious obstacle and one of the factors that made for a more stressful environment. On the other hand, mixed feelings were expressed about women colleagues in philosophy. Women in philosophy expect rather a lot of their female colleagues because it is often hoped that they will compensate for all the other drawbacks. The women often do not live up to the weight of expectations heaped upon them - after all how could they? - and thus may become in turn a source of frustration rather than support. The problem does not lie in the individuals so much as in the discipline, and its failure to rise to the challenge presented by intellectual and social developments.

We haven't had time to look at all the answers to question 4 (re interview procedures etc.) but one thing did become clear - that if women are to a) get into and b) flourish in philosophy departments (as opposed to merely surviving), there need to be more women. And yet it is also clear that at the moment, it is very tough for women : what incentives are there for them to apply in any numbers? Until there are more women lecturers, it will be difficult to encourage women to go on to graduate work and a career in philosophy; there is still a long way to go yet. The few graduates who are determined enough to become lecturers in philosophy within the next few years will have to expect a hard ride.

Philosophy does not seem interested in bridge building. One might see the philosophical reflection taking place in other disciplines as a kind of philosophical diaspora. It can only impoverish philosophy to lose touch with this diaspora in the name of disciplinary purity.

Books Received

If you would like to review any of the following books, please contact Margaret Whitford promptly French Department, Queen Mary and Westfield College, Mile End Rd., London E1 4NS.

Dana E. Bushnell (ed.), *"Nagging" Questions : Feminist Ethics in Everyday Life*, Rowman and Littlefield 1995

In this anthology of new and classic articles, eleven noted feminist philosophers explore contemporary ethical issues that uniquely affect the lives of women. These issues in applied ethics include autonomy, responsibility, sexual harassment, women in the military, new technologies for reproduction, surrogate motherhood, pornography, abortion, coerced birth control, cosmetic surgery, anorexia nervosa, in-vitro fertilization, feminist masochism and non-feminist women. Whether generated by old social standards or intensified by recent technology, these dilemmas all pose persistent "nagging" questions that cry out for answers. Unlike other anthologies in feminist ethics, *"Nagging" Questions* encourages critical thinking about concrete, contemporary, social and moral issues. Each engaging, clearly written article is followed by discussion questions, making the text useful for students in introductory as well as upper-level women's studies, philosophy, sociology and political science courses. [Publishers' blurb] NB The article are all reprints - might be a useful collection if you are teaching a course of applied ethics - MW.

C. J. Misak, *Verificationism : Its History and Prospects*, Routledge 1995

This is the first comprehensive history of a concept which dominated philosophy and scientific methodology for almost a third of the twentieth century. C.J. Misak surveys the precursors, the main proponents and the rehabilitators of the verificationist principle - the concept that a belief with no connection to experience is spurious. Unlike traditional studies, Misak's book follows the verificationist theory beyond the demise of positivism to examine its reappearance in the work of modern philosophers. *Verificationism* provides a general introduction to the concept as well as bringing readers up-to-date with its current reformulations. Written for upper-level undergraduates and researchers in the philosophy of science and epistemology, *Verificationism* is an

excellent assessment of a major, and influential, system of thought. [Blurb on back cover. NB Misak is a woman philosopher; she has a previous book on C. S. .Pierce]

Carolyn Merchant, *Earthcare : Women and the Environment*, Routledge 1996

Written by one of the leading thinkers in environmentalism, *Earthcare* is an inspiring collection of work on feminism and the environment. In her latest innovative contribution to this lively field, Carolyn Merchant looks at age-old historical associations of women with nature, beginning with Eve and continuing through to environmental activists of today. She also discusses women's commitment to environmental conservation, and the problematic assumptions of women as caregivers and men as the dominators of nature. *Earthcare* challenges humanity to revise the ways the Western world has produced, reproduced, and conceptualized its past relations with nature, and suggests a new partnership ethic of environmentalism which men and women alike can embrace. This book will appeal to all those who wish to move towards a cooperative approach to creating a habitable, sustainable world. [Blurb on back cover]

Virginia Held (ed.), *Justice and Care : Essential Readings in Feminist Ethics*, Westview Press 1995

This compact anthology traces the exploration of the relationship between the ideals of justice and care - a discussion at the core of contemporary feminist ethics. In addition to compiling the most influential previously published work, *Justice and Care* offers two important new chapters by Alison Jaggar and Sara Ruddick. [Blurb on back cover] [List of contributors: Nel Noddings, Carol Gilligan, Annette Baier, Marilyn Friedman, Claudia Card, Joan Tronto, Patricia Hill Collins, Margaret Urban Walker, Virginia Held, Alison Jaggar and Sara Ruddick. Introduction by Virginia Held. Might be useful for someone teaching a course on this topic. - MW]

Patricia S. Mann, *Micro-Politics : Agency in a Postfeminist Era*, University of Minnesota Press 1994

Patricia S. Mann explains our current period as a time of social transformation resulting from an "unmooring" of women, men and children from the nuclear family, gender relations having replaced economic relations as the primary site of social tension and change in our lives. The feminist movement has evolved, according to Mann, into a popularly based postfeminist struggle to reconstruct relationships between women and men within everyday contexts of work, family, education, and politics. Mann formulates a "postmodern" theory of political agency, utilizing it to explain political events such as the Hill-Thomas Senate hearings and their social aftermath. Whereas liberal and progressive theories have explained political agency in terms of individual or group forms of identity, Mann suggests another alternative. Individuals such as Anita Hill are drawn into socially meaningful struggles in the context of their daily lives - as we all are potentially participating in micro-political forms of activism in a variety of institutional contexts. These dynamic micro-political situations involve intersecting dimensions of race, class, and sexuality, as well as gender. Within specific conflicts, individuals rearticulate their notions of desire and responsibility, and their expectations for recognition and reward; according to Mann, political agency resides in these choices. Addressing some of the most important controversies in political philosophy, Mann weaves together strands of the 'participatory politics' of the 1960s and the multicultural politics of the 1990s. In doing so, she offers a new basis for understanding social change. [Blurb on back cover]

Terrell Carver, *Gender is not a Synonym for Women*, Lynne Rienner 1996

This wide-ranging collection of essays undermines two commonly held preconceptions that "gender" means "women", and that feminist politics are of no concern to men. Women's studies, feminist theory, and gender studies tend to present boundaries that inhibit communication: insiders speak to each other, and outsiders find it easy not to listen. Carver cuts across these traditional boundaries in his conceptualization of theoretical problems and political issues. He considers "malestream" theory and theorists, for example, from the perspective of a well-established feminist critique. Linking political theory to the intellectual biographies that inevitably accompany it, Carver explores how exactly "the personal is political". He also examines the complex intertwining of gender with class and "race"/ethnicity and theorizes gender in relation to sex and sexuality.

His book reveals familiar texts and authors in a new light, demonstrating the power and scope of the gendered perspective in political theory. [Blurb on back cover]

Allison Weir, *Sacrificial Logics: Feminist Theory and the Critique of Identity*, Routledge 1996

At the centre of contemporary feminist theory is the debate about the meaning and significance of identity. In *Sacrificial Logics*, Allison Weir proposes a positive relationship between identity and difference, one that does not equate identity with repression and domination. Through readings of Nancy Chodorow, Judith Butler, Jessica Benjamin, Luce Irigaray, Jacqueline Rose and Julia Kristeva, Allison Weir analyses the relation of theories of individual identity to theories of women's identity, social identity, the identity of meaning in language, and feminist solidarity. [Blurb on back cover]

Susan Sellers, *Hélène Cixous: Authorship, Autobiography and Love*, Polity Press 1996

This book is a clear and accessible introduction to the writings of Hélène Cixous, novelist, dramatist and critic, whose work has had a major impact on feminist theory and practice. Susan Sellers, a major scholar on Cixous, provides a lucid account of Cixous's theoretical position, and in particular her distinctive theory of an 'écriture féminine'. She discusses the development of Cixous' literary *oeuvre* in the context of this theory, and analyses a selection of the works in detail to illustrate the different stages in Cixous' writing career. Focusing on the key novels and plays, Sellers explores a range of issues and themes central to Cixous' work; the correlation between the death of the author's own father and the coming-into-being as a writer; the psychological process of separation and individuation and the creation of a female authorial self; discovery of the other and the dramatization of love; the delineation of an alternative form of relationship between self and other which would have significance in a wider sphere than that of the merely personal. [Blurb on back cover]

Mary Jo Weaver, *New Catholic Women: A Contemporary Challenge to Traditional Religious Authority*, Indiana University Press.

Weaver addresses the historical context, theological response, and contemporary experience of nuns, laywomen, theologians and women in the pew who struggle in an ecclesiastical community that

energetically opposes feminism. She examines the new feminist consciousness of some Catholic women; women's roles in the parish; the relationship of women's religious orders to the women's movement; women's ordination; Roman Catholic feminist theologians; and feminist spirituality, Weaver has added a new introduction addressing the current realities of a conservative Papacy and church. [Blurb on back cover] [The first edition was published in 1986 - does anyone think it is worth a new review? If not, a graduate student in this field might like to write in for it, with no obligation to review. MW]

Simon Blackburn, *The Oxford Dictionary of Philosophy*, Oxford University Press 1996

From Aristotle to Zen, this is the most comprehensive, authoritative, and up-to-date dictionary of philosophy available. Ideal for students or a general readership, it provides lively and accessible coverage of not only the Western philosophical tradition, but also important themes from Chinese, Indian, Islamic and Jewish philosophy. • 2,500 entries including the most recent terms and concepts; • biographical entries for nearly 500 philosophers; • terms relevant to philosophy from neighbouring disciplines; • chronology of philosophical events. [Blurb on back cover]

Teresa L. Ebert, *Ludic Feminism and After : Postmodernism, Desire and Labor in Late Capitalism*, Michigan University Press 1996.

One of the questions I ask in this book is why the dominant feminist theory in the postmodern moment - ludic feminism - has largely abandoned the problems of labor and exploitation and ignored their relation to gender, sexuality, difference, desire and subjectivity. It has done so at a time when 'two-thirds of all labor in the world is done by women ... In the Free Production Zones in South East Asia, Africa and Latin America, more than 70 percent of the labor force is female ... the majority ... young women.' The other side of this question is what ludic feminism has substituted in place of the economic. How does it explain social relations and the emerging world reality? Following Lacan, Foucault, Derrida and other poststructuralist theorists, ludic feminism, including much recent socialist feminism, has articulated the social as discourse/textuality and posited desire/pleasure as the dynamics of the social. In so doing, it has displaced, economics, labor, and class struggle. The cost of this displacement has been enormous

for feminist politics, especially for socialist feminism. [Opening paragraphs of book]

Susan E. Babbitt, *Impossible Dreams : Rationality, Integrity and Moral Imagination*, Westview Press 1996

Both contemporary philosophy and commonsense morality presuppose a personal autonomy and integrity that an unjust social system may make impossible for some people. Babbitt examines the implications of this insight, drawing on feminist and anti-racist political theory, contemporary analytic ethics and philosophy of mind, and non-philosophical literature. She argues for the role of moral imagination in discovering and defending a more humane vision. [Blurb on back cover]

Two books from the new Oxford series : Oxford Readings in Feminism (Series editors : Teresa Brennan and Susan James)

Evelyn Fox Keller and Helen E. Longino (eds), *Feminism and Science*, Oxford University Press 1996

Over the past fifteen years, a new dimension to the analysis of science has emerged. Feminist theory, combined with the insights of recent developments in the history, philosophy, and sociology of science, has raised a number of new and important questions about the content, practice and traditional goals of science. Feminists have pointed to a bias in the choice and definition of problems with which scientists have concerned themselves, and in the actual design and interpretation of experiments, and have argued that modern science evolved out of a conceptual structuring of the world that incorporated particular and historically specific ideologies of gender. The seventeen articles in this outstanding volume reflect the diversity and strengths of feminist contributions to current thinking about science. [Blurb on back cover] [Reprints, but still a very useful collection for courses or for the library - MW]

Joan Wallach Scott (ed.), *Feminism and History*, Oxford University Press 1996

The question of difference - between women and men and among women - is at the heart of feminist theory and the history of feminism. Feminists have long debated the meanings of sexual difference : is it an underlying truth of nature or the result of changing social belief? Are women the same as or

different from men? Feminism and History argues that sexual difference, indeed that all forms of social differentiation, cannot be understood apart from history. It brings together the best critical articles available to analyse the ways in which differences among women (along the lines of class, ethnicity, race and sexuality) and between women and men have been produced. The articles range across many countries and time periods (from the Middle Ages to the present) and they include analyses of western and non-western experiences. There are discussions of race in the United States and in colonial contexts. A variety of theoretical approaches to the question of difference is included; but in all cases, difference is the focus of the historian's analysis. The analytic focus on difference distinguishes this book from other collections of women's history. [Blurb on back cover] [Like the previous collection, these are all reprints - useful for courses or for the library - MW]

Jeffner Allen, *Sinuosities: Lesbian Poetic Politics*, Indiana University Press 1996

The surprising, resilient, and transformative windings of lesbian writing and lesbian lives are Jeffner Allen's themes in Sinuosities: Lesbian Poetic Politics. The ten essays, which span fifteen years, shape a poetic politics that transforms textual and everyday realities. A poetics of sinuous movement - the turning of women to women - informs these reflections on existentialism, lesbian and feminist theory, motherhood, education, hunger, the use and abuse of female bodies in patriarchal economies, female friendship, anger, revolt, endurance, resistance, and survival. For inspiration and meaning, Allen turns away from the fictional poses of much postmodernism, preferring an intimacy of the body as lived. To answer questions about how and whether to remember, to trust, and to befriend, Allen suggests a practice of ecological reading and an attentive listening to the shifting and unpredictable currents that cross women's lives. [Blurb on back cover] [NB All the essays are reprints except the opening and closing pieces. - MW]

Joan C. Callahan, *Reproduction, Ethics and the Law*, Indiana University Press. 1995

Reproduction, Ethics and the Law addresses moral and legal quandaries revolving around human reproduction, adding feminist dimensions to public discussions of these issues. Essays examine how technology can both limit and assist child-bearing; how courts assign legal parenthood to genetic

"parents" of children carried to term by women genetically unrelated to them - and how courts have also passed over genetic progenitors to assign parenthood to individuals socially related to children. Other issues examined include scientists' use of tissue from aborted fetuses to treat persons afflicted with debilitating disease, and the use of eggs harvested from aborted female fetuses. The contributors are : Barbara J. Berg, Joan E. Bertin, Joan C. Callahan, Julie Gressen, Janet Gallagher, Helen Bequaert Holmes, Joan Mahoney, Mary B. Mahowald, Uma Narayan, Christine Overall, Laura M. Purdy, Janice G. Raymond, Mary L. Shanley, Patricia Smith and Rosemarie Tong. [Blurb on back cover]

Carolyn Allen, *Following Djuna*, Indiana University Press 1996

Following Djuna reads contemporary novelists in the tradition of Djuna Barnes, arguing for the importance of women's fiction in understanding women's erotics - emotional and sexual exchanges between women. Barnes's Nightwood, with its experimental form and passionate language, has made its mark on contemporary writers, and Carolyn Allen argues that [Bertha] Harris, [Jeannette] Winterson, and [Rebecca] Brown continue Barnes's exploration of obsession, loss, excess and power between women lovers. Allen stresses the importance of difference in lovers who are "like", and the influence of memory in the making of desire. At the same time, she illuminates the ongoing trade-offs between passion and comfort, and between loss and discovery, as crucial to the intensity of women's erotics. [Blurb on back cover]

Reviews

TWO REVIEWS OF AN IMPORTANT NEW BOOK BY A WELL-KNOWN FEMINIST EPISTEMOLOGIST.

Lorraine Code, *Rhetorical Spaces: Essays on gendered locations*, Routledge 1995, p/b £11.99 h/b £37.50

In this collection of essays, Lorraine Code continues the epistemological themes for which she has become well-known. In particular, she continues her project of remapping the epistemic domain from feminist perspectives. From these perspectives hierarchies of power are a salient feature of the landscape. From these perspectives the epistemic domain includes rhetorical or discursive spaces whose structure is crucial to knowledge producing practices.

In several of the essays, she is centrally concerned with the rhetorical spaces of the various forms of anglophone analytical philosophy in the twentieth century. These have in common a refusal to recognise that they are influenced by the social characteristics of their practitioners or political power in any form. They have refused to acknowledge the rhetorical spaces which they create and which influence them. Her critique begins with a consideration of a paradigm of knowledge which is common to them all. On this paradigm, knowledge is knowledge of a proposition and it is justified through an argument whose premises are true beliefs and whose conclusion is the known proposition. This paradigm is monologic-no interactions with other people are essential to it. Its paradigmatic knower is an observer whose social characteristics are irrelevant and who is observing in "normal" conditions like furniture, apples and straight sticks in water. Her contention is that knowing people does not fit this paradigm and that knowing people ought to be paradigmatic because it is essential for epistemological, political and ethical projects. Knowledge of people does not fit this paradigm because it is intersubjective, negotiable, disorderly and empathetic. It is intersubjective because it requires an interpretive community to exist at all, and it is disorderly and negotiable because the knowledge-producing practices of this community will not proceed according to the standards of scientific method.

The insight that knowledge-producing practices are always politically invested has two important consequences. Firstly, the question of who is

knowing is always relevant to assessments of knowledge claims: 'the impact of feminism on epistemology is to move the question, "Whose knowledge are we talking about?" to a position of primary analytic importance' (105). Secondly, knowledge-producing practices should be accountable to the community as well as to the evidence and thus cannot divorce themselves from ethical concerns. It was this latter consequence which I found the most interesting because in exploring it, Code connected epistemology and morality in ways which are both new and exciting. Code claims that there are cognitive imperatives which must be followed before an adequate morality can result. 'Such responsible cognitive endeavour is, I think, essential to a moral life that is seriously committed, wherever it is possible and reasonable, to engaging with other people as the people that they are.' (93) The question 'Who cares?' within morality is similar to 'Who knows?' except that the issues which it raises require that the epistemological issues have already been answered.

Consideration of the cognitive requirements of an adequate morality leads to a discussion of the 'double-edged phenomenon' (126) of empathy. Code considers that there are good reasons for being wary about empathy, but it might still be able to realise its promise to offer something concrete to a feminist successor morality. Code thinks that empathy can be an ethical tool of great power if its ambiguity is preserved - if she who empathises 'comes to terms simultaneously with the other's likeness to oneself, and her/his irreducible strangeness, otherness' (141). The epistemology which enables this is one in which people are not known as but as 'second persons' which entails that their differences from the empathiser are as salient as their similarities.

In these essays Lorraine Code has made a significant contribution to the creation of new rhetorical spaces within which feminism can move. In addition she has managed to tie these very abstract concerns to the practices of 'everyday life'. This is done through the skilful use of narratives in which issues about testimony, care-giving, and gossip or women's ways of knowing are illustrated. I think that this book would be useful for advanced classes in philosophy and women's studies and essential for anyone who is interested in contemporary epistemology. It goes without saying that it should be a part of every feminist library.

Ismay Barwell,
Victoria University of Wellington

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Lorraine Code has now been taking on mainstream western epistemology for many years, yet *Rhetorical Spaces* feels like a wrapping up of critique and an opening out toward different engagements. The book consists of an edited collection of essays written mainly between 1992 and 1994, in which Code lays out the limits of value-free philosophical discourse and attempts to build alternative vocabularies that would allow us appropriately to bring together value and knowledge.

Each essay focuses on a specific blindness within philosophy, usually positivist empiricism: the tacit subjectivity in 'objectivity', the situated knowledge in the *ad hominem* 'fallacy', the empathy needed for otherwise disengaged 'goodwill', the resolutely social world of the modernist 'self-reliant' individual. These hidden and obscured grounds of day-to-day lives are, as Code discusses in 'Must a feminist be a relativist after all?', grammatical problems in Wittgenstein's sense of 'grammar tells what kinds of object anything is'. There, she mentions the difficulty that war-time doctors had with patients defined as in 'shock', until the changed vocabulary to 'trauma' and 'injury' shifted the grounds of what could be heard or recognised. What the essays do, painstakingly, is begin to articulate the unheard and obscured.

At times, especially when she is exposing the unheard *a priori* of the traditional, these articulations are (necessarily? ironically?) heavy-handed. More often, she finds convincing ways of talking about the suppressed rather than the tacit unheard: about a 'principle of charity, belief, and trust' needed to bridge rhetorical exchange over a 'power/privilege differential' about an 'educated imagination as a way for moral agents to move empathetically toward realising a respect-for-persons principle', about storied epistemology that 'makes normative decisions qualitatively dependent upon descriptive evidence, and locates that evidence in practices and subjectivities where its effects and implications can be assessed'; and about well-constructed stories that situate 'factual and artifactual coherence and plausibility ... in the process of establishing nodal points that make action possible'. Quoted out of context, as here, these statements acquire persuasiveness partly by way of the rather mischievous use of dominant philosophical vocabulary for other purposes which can sometimes tell against the writing, and partly by the courage of the syntax to use emotively-laden words in

propositionally and authoritatively structured sentences. In context, the statements elaborate on the silences, suppressions, and tensions that result from socially constituted gender and its tacit support for certain kinds of value and knowledge. The wider effect is to give both writer and reader the confidence to think about knowing, carefully and attentively, within intimate and personal locations.

The central text for me, possibly because I work on rhetoric, is 'Voice and Voicelessness: a Modest Proposal?', whose title contains the satiric/ironic possibility that to displace the authority of neutral and objective epistemology for a 'storied' or narrative epistemology, may be thought of like Swift's monstrous proposal that famine could be resolved by eating babies. What is curious about this potential prolepsis, is that anyone who is listening to what Code offers in the essay would not take storied epistemology as monstrous at all. This slightly ambivalent voice surfaces occasionally in other places, but in this essay voice moves clearly and deftly through layers of post-Renaissance idealism, rationalism and empiricism, focusing its critique on logical positivism and the early twentieth century, before moving on to evaluate the potential for storied epistemology in various developments out of standpoint theory in science and post-Quinean feminist studies. Bringing the weight of all the other essays and their analysis of different kinds of authority to bear, Code without rancour tells stories about the 'makers of knowledge' and exposes the limitations of early traditions and the possibilities in the contemporary. But then she goes on to elaborate quite specifically the way that once one acknowledges the limitations of knowers and the partiality of perspective, epistemic responsibility comes into play (see pp 182-4). The move ties this gendered book explicitly back into her early work, which she analyses in 'Responsibility and Rhetoric', the first essay of the collection.

However, the writing's gift is its constant attention to strategy and its acute understanding of the ambiguity of strategy. No strategy is in itself good or bad, but all are more or less appropriate to societies and history. In a discussion of the importance of 'testimony' which yields 'knowledge of matters unavailable to direct observation', Code balances the problems of authenticity by a study of stereotyping. 'Stereotyping', which corrupts 'the person who does the stereotyping, is offset elsewhere against empathic listeners, themselves on the border of both caring for and manipulating people. Woven into several essays is a defence of relativism defined as a 'politically emancipatory

promise . . . well articulated, explicitly positioned, and locally sensitive'. Again Code does not shy away from the forms of 'politically disarming' and 'privileged' relativism, but offers a Pyrrhonian (ie not nihilistic) scepticism, and a precise strategy of case-by-case analogical reasoning that builds a contextualised, realist relativism, cognisant of location.

The one area of imbalance is in the account of narrative. Although strengthened by examples of gossip as dialogic and cooperative, and interpretation as dialogic and engaged, narrative is cast as the strategy for restoring context to knowledge, elaborating the continuities between theory and practice in socio-historical situations, and focused on making: process, coherence and nodal arrest. These are indeed recognised elements of socially engaged narrative, but it is often difficult to distinguish the strategies of such a narrative stance from the strategies of isolated voice, linear and controlled structure, and emphasis on verisimilitude and repetition, which are the elements at the heart of traditional post-Renaissance philosophical thought. When is Mills and Boon engaged social realism and when is it social stereotyping? Is Margaret Atwood's *The Robber Bride* monologic or dialogic? Not all narrative is socially engaged. Frequently it is structured in an attempt to control the natural and social worlds of its readers. The storytelling strategies of both writers and readers are replete with techniques for obscuring and hiding the elements to which they wish to remain blind, deaf and untasting. Although I am sure that Lorraine Code knows this full well, an account of such otherwise helpful clarity would have benefited from the balancing technique used elsewhere.

All this said, the essays make claims to epistemic responsibility, to an 'ecological sensitivity to the interconnections of which the world is made', a global accountability. Most of all, they open many doors on to engagement, with gendered examples that extend the vocabulary of situated knowledges and standpoint theory, and are intellectually and practically empowering.

Lynette Hunter
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TWO NEW BOOKS ON LAW

Matthew H Kramer, *Critical Legal Theory and the Challenge of Feminism: A Philosophical Re-conception*, Maryland/London, Rowman and Littlefield 1995 p/b \$22.95, h/b \$62.50.

Ruth Colker, *Pregnant Men: Practice, Theory and the Law*, Bloomington, Indiana UP, 1994, p/b £10.99, h/b £27.50

In this issue of WPR I am reviewing two law books, one British and one American, and in the next issue I shall review another American. Books on law probably lose more than most in the transatlantic crossing, since American law is so shaped by its relation to the Constitution. This should provide important practical experience of the implications for women in Britain were we ever to have such a formalisation of citizens' rights, although supporters of Charter 88, the British constitutional reform pressure group, do not necessarily advocate an American model. Wherever you stand in regard to the controversial views of Catherine MacKinnon, it is clear she would have to adopt a different approach here.

The present theoretical moment is no less interesting for women in the philosophy and practice of the law than it is in that of art. The boundaries of the discipline have become permeable to ideas and methodologies previously thought external. The feminist challenge to the unity claimed in legal discourse under the term 'law', which Carol Smart described (See *Feminism and the Power of the Law*, Routledge 1989) as a source of its power to disqualify competing accounts of social reality, is producing results. The activists in 'Justice for Women' have had notable successes, like the freeing of convicted killers of their violent husbands, Sara Thornton and Kiranjit Ahluwalia, described by Helena Kennedy QC as marking a watershed (see Jennifer Nadel, *Sara Thornton: The Story of a Woman Who Killed*, Gollancz 1989). The theorists begin to build up a formidable body of work that takes on the issues at the levels of both concept and application.

Matthew H Kramer, however, thinks they are in need of a more rigorous framework, and proposes one based on five themes: contradiction, contingency, patterning, perspective and ideology. He has an astounding idiolect, pitching colloquialisms ('shove'), neologisms ('glimpsingly') and archaic syntax ('We come upon no similar all-inclusiveness when we turn our gaze to the category of gender') into a tone of magisterial assurance to bizarre effect. I laughed out loud; whether in amusement or dislike probably depends on how much of a sense of self-irony the man has. He 'forsakes anthropomorphic humbug' (viii), but I confess I simply do not know if he forsakes all others and keeps himself only to his one true object: sorting out the muddles we feminists have got ourselves into in our basically worthy if inadequate philosophical efforts to develop an alertness to

paradox. For example, is it worth delaying long enough to sort out what this means: 'Although a slighting of individual nuances is here inevitable, its basic worrisomeness is rather limited' (266)? If you have wisely girded your loins with strict analytic philosophy and have a stomach strong enough for this authorial impenetrability, there may well be important insights here. I often found bathos. I would welcome a translation, though, since he means to be an ally. Anyhow, he and Stanley Fish seem to like each other.

Ruth Colker's patient and conscientious exposition could hardly be a greater contrast. She writes within the now established tradition of feminist anecdotalism, which is not often to my taste and which worries me in its inevitable promotion of the particular over the general case. But it has advantages as an approach to grounding theory in practice, especially in jurisprudence, because of the particular role of precedence in interpretation. The method can also serve as a good introduction to the need for theory for anti-theory undergraduates, because they soon find they cannot discuss the examples without constructing a theoretical basis.

Colker seeks to base her legal practice in a combination of what she calls equality and anti-essentialist theory. For example, the equality aspect of her argument may be illustrated in relation to IVF, since in the USA, male sperm donors are known as 'pregnant persons' and accorded greater rights than either gestational or genetic mothers (see e.g. 137-144). This calls for equalisation of their treatment, she claims. Her 'anti-essentialism' may be exemplified by her approach to situations where legal disadvantage is recognised to be gender-based, regardless of its relevance to all women - as in legal poverty traps created by discriminatory welfare legislation which affect poor women and do not affect richer women (eg p.200). Discussions of how these two classes of idea impact on conceptualising women in theory and in the practice of the law is the strongest aspect of this book, though I suspect them too slight to go far without a shift towards thinking in terms of difference.

Colker is a practising lawyer as well as a teacher at the University of Pittsburgh, hence her insistence on the importance of a continuing dialogue between practice and theory. Practice comes first in the book's three sections. She outlines three, those of Lawyering, Teaching and Writing, moves on to three case studies and concludes on theory with a single chapter of a scant 30 pages out of her 200. I thought this a pity, since it was by far the most interesting section in a very uneven book. I should like to read a sustained exploration of her ideas in

the manner of Richard Collier's examination of how the homosocial institutions of the law (see *Masculinity, Law and the Family* Routledge 1995), and lawyers who operate as 'technicians', have 'modernised' a heterosexual masculinity and embodied it in the legal construction of the family man versus dangerous and deviant masculinities.

Penny Florence
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Diemut Elizabet Bubeck, *Care, Gender and Justice*, Oxford University Press 1995, h/b £30.00

Despite the Welfare State care is still considered primarily a private responsibility. It is necessary labour, dictated by needs which will always be with us and, for most people, occurs as a demand into which we are trapped. At the same time, we find our most rewarding moments in caring for others. It is poorly remunerated, if at all. Those who stay at home to do it find it progressively difficult to get the rewards and recognition which this society values, and those who combine it with work carry at times almost intolerable burdens. Most commonly these are women. Yet few social philosophers regard care as work, most political philosophers are blind to gender inequality, and those who have tried to account for women's position, such as Marxists, have treated women's work as a species of production, rather than as care. Bubeck weaves these perceptions into an account of why and how women are exploited, arguing that it is because the benefits and burdens of caring are distributed unevenly and because caring is women's work. In so doing, she presents an analysis of the need for the ethic of care to be complemented by considerations of social justice, and for theories of social justice to be complemented by theories of care and women's exploitation.

Part I consists of a critique of Marxist accounts of women's exploitation, including that of Delphy and Leonard. I found these chapters the least interesting, perhaps because I have always read Marx as a useful resource rather than a cipher, and those uninterested in the Marxist tradition could well skip it. However, the arguments are sharp, and useful in showing how orthodoxies simply deny feminist insights because they do not fit into their conceptual schemes, and how sticking with those schemes leads feminists into trying to solve the wrong problems. It also enables Bubeck to develop her own materialistic notion of exploitation as an uneven distribution of work where those who carry the heaviest burdens get the fewest benefits.

Part II consists of a consideration of what care is

and the way that women get trapped into a circle of caring through the economic pressures of wage differentials, psychological dispositions, emotional rewards, moral and social pressures. This challenges the ethic of care, at least as represented by Nodding, as an oppressive ethic, and the final part of the book, engages with questions of justice and care. There are two sets of arguments here: one showing that the ethics of care requires principles of justice to deal with conflicts in demands for care, and to minimise harm and to prevent it turning into an oppressive ideology. The other set of arguments, more dauntingly, claims that there will always be a conflict between care and justice, primarily because carers will necessarily lack the moral resources to resist exploitation, since to be exploited is 'merely' to lack the benefits one merits, while to withdraw care is always to harm (think of neglected children). Carers, as carers, are responsive to the needs of others, and so unable to deny their dependants. Bubeck's solution to this is two-fold; not to reject the ethic of care, but to indicate how it needs further exploration and, in particular, to focus our attention on the social distribution of care, and different scenarios of public and private provision. Whatever one thinks of the intrinsic rewards of caring, it builds into an irresistible case for rethinking the way these burdens are distributed, particularly across the public/private divide.

This is a fascinating, if demanding read, and this brief review cannot possibly do justice to the complexity, rigour and subtlety of the arguments. Bubeck shows what can be achieved using Socratic interrogation from a feminist standpoint, and although undergraduates, might find it hard going at times, at others they will be swept along by the force of the arguments. It is required reading for any graduate looking at the ethic of care, or Marxist theories of women's oppression.

Anne Seller
University of Kent

Adriana Cavarero, *In Spite of Plato: A Feminist Rewriting of Ancient Philosophy*, Translated by Serena Anderlini-D'Onofrio and Áine O'Healy, Polity Press 1995, p/b £11.95 h/b £39.50.

This short, but rich and unsettling book eventually made a far more powerful impression on me than I had expected. Superficially it could be regarded as one more contribution to the critique of the western intellectual tradition, with particular reference to the masculine usurpation of 'humanity' in the abstract; in this respect, and as a commentary on the values implicit in Platonic dualism (life as a

rehearsal for death, etc.), it occupies more or less familiar ground. What lifts Cavarero's discussion out of the ordinary is her attention to a series of female figures who appear in the texts of Plato, always in a marginal role, but one that gives rise to some marvellously imaginative reflections on the (unconscious) psychosexual organisation of Greek thought.

We hear a lot from philosophers under the influence of Luce Irigaray about the need for an as yet non-existent 'female symbolic order'. It is much less common to encounter writing that attempts, as here, to meet this need in a concrete way. Cavarero's chosen female archetypes - Penelope in the *Odyssey*, the Thracian maidservant who makes fun of philosophy in Plato's *Theaetetus* (174a), the goddess Demeter, and the priestess Diotima in the *Symposium* - are intended to be of service to feminism not only in clarifying the thesis that we live in a 'patriarchal' culture, but also in awakening us to a sense of alternative possibilities.

The book's leading idea is that western rationalism rests on a symbolic 'matricide', a rejection of birth in favour of death as its 'fundamental paradigm' (p. 58) or 'way of measuring the sense of human existence' (p.79). Conversely, the task of feminist thought (and obviously it is a 'feminism of difference' that is in question here) is to articulate a philosophy of *birth* and to give voice to women's 'silenced and misrepresented maternal power' (p.80).

Here again a first glance may do the book less than justice - this time because it may suggest the kind of feminist maternalism that seems to leave non-mothers in an ethical or existential limbo. However, Cavarero's position is more subtle. Dissociating herself from 'the reductive identification of the feminine with the maternal, which patriarchal codes inscribe as a role' (p. 64), she invites us instead (especially in connection with the myth of Demeter, whose periodic mourning for her abducted daughter 'explains' the alternation of the seasons) to picture an 'order of the female gaze where every woman, a daughter first, and only later, and not necessarily, a mother, finds her rootedness' (ibid.) This different order is one in which the daughter recognises in her own mother, and by extension in every woman (p.30), a (sexed) being like herself who is a living reminder of the 'feminine root of every human being' (p.60). The vision of a 'maternal continuum' reaching back to 'our boundless pre-human origins' (p.114) (and potentially forward - for the species if not always for the individual - into a boundless future) serves as an antidote to the dominant (patriarchal) view of the human

predicament. The masculine imagination is transfixed by the fact of death, which it pictures as a 'going into nothingness'; and in perversely literal opposition to this idea, it sees birth as a 'coming from nothingness' (not as a coming from the mother, as 'feminine realism' (p.54) would have it). The unbearable pathos of human transience, severed in this way from any emotionally engaging vision of the physical renewal of life, is what the idealism of Parmenides and Plato tries to address with its postulate of an unchanging reality, attainable by 'men' (or rather by *men*) not as embodied creatures but as pure intelligences. By contrast, an undoing of the symbolic matricide on which this philosophy is founded would make it possible to re-enter 'the reality where to live is most of all to be born and then, only at the end, also to die' (p.30).

I have tried to give a rough idea of Cavarero's argument - though without presenting in any detail her four 'thefts' from the Greek symbolic repertoire - and also to provide a sample of her style, which resists fast reading but rises in places to an unforced intensity and beauty well conveyed by the translation.

Some questions remain in my mind. In particular, is the specifically feminist character of the 'philosophy of birth' anything more than an effect of the existing dialectical situation as described by Cavarero? That is, if we did not have (or no longer had) the patriarchal symbolic order to contend with, would it still be appropriate to think of our connection with 'original animality' as passing through the female *rather than* the male line (p.111)? (Does the fact of giving birth make female animals more fully animal than male ones?) It might be argued that the position developed in this book, though undeniably feminist in its actual inspiration, was in principle simply materialist, atheist, or pantheist.

Also, Cavarero passes rather lightly over the question of personal death and its place within a feminist (birth-centred) world-view. Could such a world-view really lead to a 'painless conciliation between individuality and infinite life' (p.119, emphasis added)? The book does not assert that it could take us all the way there - indeed, it says that for human being, equipped as we are with *logos*, 'the problem is eventually unresolvable' (ibid) - but its closing pages do seem to hint at the idea of a superior mode of being in which our resistance to the thought of our own extinction would be left behind. This idea crystallises in some final quasi-religious remarks about a female deity that 'splendidly knows nothing about self or other, and lives simply because it has been born' (p.120). As

deities go, I find this one appealing, but I hope there will be room for non-believers in the feminist future too.

Be that as it may, this is a book of unusual depth and originality. I believe it will remain with me both as a 'philosopher' and as a feminist.

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Kathy Davis, *Reshaping the Female Body: The Dilemma of Cosmetic Surgery*, Routledge 1995 h/b £35, p/b £11.99

This was a difficult book for me to read. Firstly, because reading accounts of women altering their bodies in order to conform to feminine stereotypes (and the pain and misery that entails) exhausts and disempowers me. Secondly, because Kathy Davis undermines my feminist response to cosmetic surgery and the beauty industry generally. I began the book thinking how it was sadly lacking the anger of other feminist responses to cosmetic surgery, and longed for the passion of such people as Naomi Wolf. By the end of the book I had learned that anger itself can be cosy and complacent. And may not always be the best feminist solution.

Davis sets out to produce a feminist analysis of cosmetic surgery, with the intention of presenting the motivation of those seeking surgery as the central theme. She criticises both feminists and non-feminists for representing those who request cosmetic surgery as victims who are incapable of making choices for themselves. Her research was done in Holland where until recently most cosmetic surgery was paid for by the State. Health cut-backs have created a situation where patients have to prove that they are 'abnormal' - looking. This doesn't entail serious deformity, but rather that 'the patient's appearance does not meet certain aesthetic standards as determined by the medical inspector'. Davis describes the women she interviewed as ordinary women who did not want to be beautiful, but wished to alter the one part of them they felt unhappy with. She decided to focus on breast augmentation, because the operation is common, because it entails painful and often permanently damaging surgery, and presumably because breasts are fetishised in our culture. She wants to know why individual women choose an extreme solution to their problems, and decided to ask the women themselves, rather than relying on generalisations and presumptions.

Although Davis keeps returning to the central themes of oppression, inadequacy, stereotyping

and conformity, she is clearly respecting the voices of the women patients. Whilst harshly judging a culture which demands that women channel their energy into re-shaping themselves in order to comply with its demands, she offers no criticism of the women themselves. Rather she suggests that entering the process of surgery enables women to become embodied subjects rather than objectified bodies. David acknowledges this is a problematic stance, that trying to make sense of something which is both desired and harmful is painful, especially when some of those requesting surgery are feminists. She is critical of the process of surgery, and in particular the lack of truly informed consent, a problem which she believes could be addressed. Whilst informing her reader of the dangers and problems of breast argumentation. Davis offers quotes from those she interviewed before surgery about the problems they have faced afterwards. One year later many of the women face serious difficulties and many of the operations have failed; but almost all present themselves as satisfied with the outcome. One woman, who had a horrific series of problems with her breasts and now has one large and one small one, is quoted as saying positively 'one good breast is better than nothing'. Then the horror stories start and it is difficult to respect the recipients of cosmetic surgery, although it is impossible to be unsympathetic. The story which stands out most clearly for me is that of Ellen, who had surgery to improve her breasts although everyone else thought they were wonderful. After the operation she feels 'ten feet tall' when a drunken stranger in a restaurant says he cannot stop looking at her because she has such beautiful breasts.

Clearly Davis has a loyalty to the women she interviewed over a long period of time and who shared intimate details with her. But as the book progressed I was beginning to feel uncomfortable with what she wanted me to hear: that these women were making positive choices, that they are fighting for control, that they consider the pain worthy of the outcome. So I distanced myself from those women to protect myself: I wouldn't do that, nor would any stable self-respecting woman etc. etc. And of course by doing this, I fell into the old trap of blaming women for their situation, hating them because they hate themselves. The final chapter of *Reshaping the Female Body* is called 'Facing the Dilemma' and in it Davis calls for feminists to take a more realistic, less idealistic view of the needs of those who choose surgery. Not once does she accept that cosmetic surgery is good for women; rather she accepts that for those individuals 'cosmetic surgery is about exercising power under conditions which are not of one's making'.

Davis' position on cosmetic surgery will not make her popular. She has taken the image of women as passive victims and shown it to be in itself a stereotype, one which allows feminists to take a firm but possibly inadequate view of the politics of feminine beauty. She suggests that by taking such a position she may be putting her feminist credentials in danger. She criticises other feminists' analysis of cosmetic surgery, especially that of Kathryn Morgan, who she suggests simplifies the importance of cosmetic surgery to women by viewing it as merely morally reprehensible and politically incorrect.

Feminist anger may be a natural reaction to the mutilation of breasts in the name of female conformity, but as Davis bravely suggests, it's not a solution. The Dutch women she got to know were not looking for glamour but a way to achieve agency. They chose surgery, often against great opposition, because they felt that there was no better alternative. I suggest you read the book and see what you think.

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Diotima, Oltre l'uguaglianza. Le radici femminili dell'autorità (Napoli: Liguori editore, 1995), 144pp, Lit 18,000 (Paperback ISBN 88-207-2469-3).

Diotima has been described by two of its members - Luisa Muraro and Chiara Zamboni - as a philosophical community concerned with politics, and with teaching¹. It is a community of women, founded in 1983, which has its roots both in the feminist movement of the 80s and in the academic institution of the University of Verona. Diotima's work reflects this dual reality: it combines love for philosophy and for sustained thinking with attention to the social issues faced by women in everyday life, producing books that are the result of joint seminars and lectures delivered at Verona University.

In their fourth book *Oltre l'uguaglianza. Le radici femminili dell'autorità* (Beyond Equality: The feminine roots of authority) the participants of this community develop their on-going concerns in a new direction. Diotima has always given prominence to discussions about the symbolic order in which reality is invested with meaning, and, following Irigaray, has argued for the importance of an independent female (l' femminile) symbolic². In this volume they explore a notion of the symbolic which is grounded not on power (as it was thought

to be by French thinkers in the 70's) but on authority. Authority, which must not be confused either with the mere exercise of power or with the radical autonomy pertaining to a Kantian self, is, as Chiara Zamboni points out, conceived as mediation on the symbolic level (43). This is a notion of authority which does not promote authoritarianism, since it is authority based on an acknowledgement of both reciprocity and disparity. It is not, however, based on an ideal or, as the cynic might say, illusory notion of consensus. Instead, as Wanda Tommasi illustrates using Hegel's master-slave dialectic, it is the result of a process of empowerment which involves the development of an independent symbolic by the slave through her radical questioning of the master (83). Authority is therefore seen as a source of freedom conceived as an achievement rather than a right.

Tommasi argues that taking authority as the basis of an independent female symbolic shows the way to a subjectivity which rejects the radically autonomous modern subject without endorsing the deconstruction of the 'self' invoked by the Italian philosophers of 'weak thought' such as Vattimo and Cacciari. In particular it develops thought about the individuation of the self beyond the apparent dichotomy familiar to Anglo-American feminism in which the relation between self and other is conceived exclusively in terms of power relations: either the constitution of the self is seen romantically as involving continuity with the other, or its individuation requires domination. Relations of authority, on the other hand, are intended to involve difference and even inequality ('disparità') between self and other without being oppressive. Chiara Zamboni encourages us to acknowledge also the positive value of relations of authority between women: not only are women different from, they are also not equal to, one another (43). Such a model is particularly useful to explore student teacher relations.

Furthermore, the focus on authority allows us to re- think the relation to the mother. This is at the core of Diana Sartori's critique of the Kantian model of the self which requires agency in the form of radical autonomy. It thus becomes impossible to recognise other individuals as authoritative (13). Hence, the rejection of our first relation with the authority for the mother would, on this model, be a pre-condition for freedom (20). For Sartori this confusion between freedom and autonomy characterises also the feminism of equality. As a consequence it unwittingly undermines maternal authority which is not at the root of feminine authority (27).

This opposition to liberal feminism is also carefully delineated by Luisa Muraro. She focuses on what makes sexual difference different from any other form of difference: namely that it involves 'two' which can only have identities in the context of this difference (135). Thus, there is no third term in relation to which the two can be defined as two; and, as a consequence of this, difference inevitably becomes inequality (138). That is, woman is given a human identity only as equal (identical) to man (134). For Muraro the mistake of liberal feminism is a failure to acknowledge this problem. A feminism of difference, on the other hand, must avoid an endorsement of inequality while embracing difference. This is achieved with the development of an independent symbolic which permits the identification of being woman with being human. Humanity thus becomes that third mediating term which makes it possible to conceive sexual difference in terms other than inequality (139). In this way Muraro develops a notion of subjectivity which requires neither an autonomous self, nor a subject that is grounded wholly on power relations.

This book contains arguments and reflections which break new ground for feminist thought on sexual difference. It is also a testimony to the level of theoretical sophistication reached by Italian feminist thought. It is unfortunate that Diotima's work has never been extensively translated into English and has therefore not found the broad readership it deserves.

1 Luisa Muraro and Chiara Zamboni (1990) "Diotima comunità, Diotima politica, Diotima maestra" in Diotima, *Mettere al mondo il mondo. Oggetto e oggettività alla luce della differenza sessuale* (Milano: La Tartaruga edizioni).

2 See especially *Il pensiero della differenza sessuale* (Milano: La Tartaruga edizioni, 1987); but also Diotima's other books *Mettere al mondo il mondo. Oggetto e oggettività alla luce della differenza sessuale* (Milano: La Tartaruga edizioni, 1990); *Il cielo stellato dentro di noi. L'ordine simbolico della madre*. (Milano: La Tartaruga edizioni, 1992).

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Gemma Corradi Fiumara, *The Other Side of Language, A Philosophy of Listening*, Routledge, 1990, reissued in paperback 1995 p/b £12.99 and *The Metaphoric Process, Connections between Language and Life*, Routledge 1995, p/b £12.99, h/b £37.50.

Gemma Corradi Fiumara has a mission, related to our animal heritage, in search of an in-between area where both social and animal selves can meet. The animal within us she calls the 'vestiges of the reptilian brain' whilst the in-between areas are where we as individuals and institutions can meet in fruitful exchange and discussion. Violence is on the agenda but as something to be avoided, utterly inimical to the humanisation process in which we are engaged. We *became* humans and we are still becoming them, with varying levels of success. Our territorial instincts are unfortunately all too prevalent and we guard our patch, whether it be as a person demanding rights in a relationship, an academic refusing to share ideas, or a government doing everything for short-term economic success and nothing for the long-term future of the globe. We live in a world where self shouts so loudly that we no longer really hear anyone or anything else. Knowledge, resources, lives and happiness are consequently left by the wayside. We need to harness them properly, *not* in an effort to go at ever greater speed, but so as to link them all up, with intelligence and humanity. Corradi Fiumara draws a picture of two characters, one the voracious youth, striving to conquer every place he goes, and the other the adult looking to adopt, integrate and understand. This becomes an analogy for the human race. It is now time, says Corradi Fiumara, that we turn into the adult, and in *The Other Side of Language, A Philosophy of Listening* (1990) and *The Metaphoric Process, Connections between Language and Life* (1995) she proposes how we can do so.

The two works are very much a continuous project, the first investigating proper listening, the second how to set up links between epistemologies via metaphor. They are linked to the extent of sharing flagwords and metaphors. At one end of the spectrum we find 'maturation', 'hominization' and 'reciprocity', whilst the other end is inhabited by such terms as 'benumbment' and 'logocentricity'. The Sumerians, inventors of phonetic writing, constitute the paradigm for creative listening and metaphorization:

Possibly, the all too human Mesopotamians heeded the surrounding concern of nature and listened carefully to different sounds: the devoted, coexistential attention of a farming and pastoral community to the

singularity of individual sounds. [*The Other Side of Language*, p188 and *The Metaphoric Process* p115]

They heard specificity and understood that language was both metabolic and metaphoric: expressing the body's sensations, the very multiplicity of those sensations could be differentiated by giving each sound a specific tag. The metaphoric process continues and the sound sign that represented a meaning came itself to be represented - by its transcription. Knowledge advanced. But the risks of failing to listen and leap are dramatised in the opposing paradigm:

The major theatres of western rationality are periodically shaken by horribly destructive festivals which unfold with total indifference toward the 'powerful' thinking that finds itself incapable of resisting the archaic mechanisms of human nature. This powerful thought nevertheless resumes its unusual logomachies as soon as the period of terror has come to an end. [*The Metaphoric Process*, p20 and almost verbatim on p97].

That both scenarios appear more than once within the texts points to their value in the Corradi Fiumara system. As recapitulative moments in their thesis, they show her argument advancing in reiterative, every-increasing circles. As metaphors they explain the rational proposition by translating them into narrative, and as highlighted narrative, they become paradigms. They show metaphors to be an integral part of the communication process, densely packed yet lucid, the bit that makes the best sense. And that is the whole point: containing perception, rational process and affect, the metaphor is the most *holistic* instrument available to us in language. It breaks down barriers between epistemologies and sets up an immense enterprise of imaginative communication. Along with maieutic listening, the listening that brings to birth, language should find its communicative purpose once again. Each person could be heard and would hear. Reciprocity might prevail. The current logocentric paradigm with its attendant frustrations would no longer obtain, and

the very myth of truth as power may begin to vacillate: somehow its foundation, the idea of a centre of geometric locus in which its postulates and genetic mechanisms are decreed, is withdrawn [OSL p114].

To sum up the implications of Corradi Fiumara in my own words: Foucault's nightmare evocation of

power mechanisms need no longer be a feature of our world view and Derrida would no longer need to deconstruct texts, laying open their fault-lines. It would be more a question of, in Corradi Fiumara's words, the 'de-situation of . . . encompassing logic'.

As a visionary project, it is undoubtedly exciting, written with gentle conviction and clear persuasiveness. Both *The Other Side of Language* and *The Metaphoric Process* are delicious to read, not only for their argument and style but also for the asides to the reader, like reading is fun but remembering is something else entirely; you may think you've understood and absorbed, but you can't readily remember very much and all that really remains is your adoration for the author's achievement. To that, and on behalf of all industrious readers, I simply say: 'note-taking'. And she is not such a bad reader herself: she may reject exclusive logocentricity but she does not reject tradition. From Heraclitean fragments, through Socrates (the first maieutic philosopher), and Plato, to Vico, Wittgenstein, Heidegger and Derrida, not to mention the tacit presences of the listening Freud, Foucault and Bataille, *The Other Side of Language* is a journey through the history of philosophy. *The Metaphoric Process* calls on more recent names (although Aristotle starts the ball rolling): Lakoff and Johnson's *The Metaphors We Live By* (Chicago, 1980) is at the very basis of Corradi Fiumara's understanding of the metabolic metaphorisation at work creating language. Marvellous as introductions to the subjects of listening and metaphor, they are above all sincere and gripping examples of philosophy at work in a relevant and urgent time-frame: now.

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**Elizabeth Grosz, *Space, Time and Perversion*
London: Routledge, 1995, p/b £11.99 h/b £40**

With several newish books - single authored and edited collections - already on the shelves, Liz Grosz is difficult to avoid at the moment. Like her other offerings, *Space, Time and Perversion* has the feel of something right up to date, though to my slight disappointment it turns out to be a collection of Grosz's own work over a period of 10 years. Nonetheless, alongside many of her previously published and best known essays are several others that have had a fairly limited circulation, or are awaiting publication. It's not entirely clear that such an extensive selection of papers - 13 in all - can maintain intellectual coherence, but Grosz is always highly readable and often provocative, offering, as she puts it, a series of illuminations that open up

existing positions rather than developing something new. That seems to me an overly modest claim, and at very least, her reflections often kickstart further speculations.

The book is organised into 3 sections, each ordered chronologically - though the claim is not one of progression - with the corporeal as its linking theme, and, as one would expect with Grosz, a constant rethinking of subjectivity. At this point, we may be approaching the oh-no-not-another-book-on-the-body stage, but alongside her new found celebration of the body as an object of productivity and pleasure. Grosz is concerned with the effect on those discourses which have erased the corporeal from their own processes of production. The first section, and least stimulating, deals with bodies and knowledges in ways that will be already familiar to most postconventional philosophers, and rehearses issues such as sexual difference and essentialism. The final grouping - equally characteristic, but far more fruitful, I felt - plunges headlong into the hot debate around the themes of feminine/lesbian desire and queer theory in which Grosz is a leader rather than a mere discussant. But it was the middle section on space and the corporeal which provided not the elegance of a cleverly articulated position, but the sense of possibilities awaiting development.

Grosz herself is open about the somewhat uneven quality of the collection, and it is none the worse for its demonstration of her ability to rethink not only the new orthodoxies of postconventional feminist theory, but her own past positions. The difficulty for the reader who may want only to dip in and out, rather than working through the developments and ruptures, is that they may be left unaware of her current position. This is nowhere more evident than in her approaches to psychoanalysis and particularly its efficacy with regard to the question of lesbian desire. In her essay from 1991 'Lesbian Fetishism?', for example, Grosz is concerned to interrogate the limitations of psychoanalytic models while still reiterating that they 'provide among the more useful terms in clarifying our psycho-social interrelations' (154). As she puts it: 'I want to have it both ways'. Four years in, in 'Labours of Love', however, Grosz seems ready to cut the dependence on psychoanalytic discourse, and it is Teresa de Lauretis who apparently displays the 'wish to both have one's cake and eat it, both "castrate" and preserve psychoanalysis' (168).

For a book deliberately situated in the spaces between feminism, philosophy, cultural studies and critical theory, *Space, Time and Perversion* strikes just the right notes of gravity and play. Moreover,

its deliciously perverse cover - again by Linda Dement - is worth an essay all of its own. Do take a look.

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Elizabeth Grosz & Elspeth Probyn (eds), *Sexy Bodies: the Strange Carnalities of Feminism*, London & New York, Routledge, 1995 p/b £12.99, h/b £37.50

Many readers will no doubt have come across this book already, not least because of its strikingly sumptuous cover image of erotic lesbian bodies (but why is it always Della Grace? Don't academic publishers know *any* other sexual-dissident image-makers?). The voluptuousness of this image is not just a marketing tactic (although it is clearly that as well) but is germane to the project of the collection itself which, as the introduction makes clear, is intended to be quite unlike most other feminist discussions of 'the body': . . . the project that unites the disparate subjects of these essays is the *production* of sexualities, not their description; the wager is to constitute activities as sexual - the sexualization of activities - rather than merely to reflect upon a pre-established and already valorized notion of sexuality and its attendant support, the body . . . [T]o write of pleasures pleasurably, to write not just of sex but *as* sex. In writing, to become, to bump (and sometimes grind) against surfaces, to realise the sensations of elements finding (un)common elements. These emerged as unexpected possibilities from the essays [in the collection]' (pp ix-x).

Topics covered range across what is now the familiar terrain of a fusion between cultural studies and feminist theory, including film studies, literary criticism, post-colonial studies, psychoanalysis and popular culture. The extent to which individual contributions realise the 'unexpected possibilities' of writing-as-sex varies. Many of the essays evoke sexy bodies as well as analysing and discussing them. Others, while engaging and challenging, don't necessarily live up to the introduction's promise. Nor is it always clear quite *why* these sexy bodies are being evoked other than for the pleasure of it: to lay claim to, or even to produce, sexiness is not a self-evidently political project; pleasure is not simply a political end in itself.

Many of the contributors though do have a lively

sense of political as well as erotic purpose - to sever the connection between sex and death (Elizabeth Grosz), to dislodge hegemonic images of the body (Catherine Waldby), to create an *ars erotica* of autonomous female pleasure (Dianne Chisholm), among others - and the result is a richly sexy and richly feminist book. Waldby's essay ends with the suggestion that "[m]aybe what theoretical feminism needs now is a strap-on" (p.275). Re-imagining feminism's body of work as a *sexy* body may not always be successful, but this collection suggests that, more often than not, it is worth taking the chance.

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Susan J Hekman, *Moral Voices, Moral Selves, Carol Gilligan and Feminist Moral Theory*, Polity Press, 1995, p/b £11.95.

This book affirms the radical nature of Gilligan's work in establishing a new moral paradigm featuring: narrative; a connectedness between researcher and subject; hermeneutics; commitment to political change. In displacing the separate self in favour of an embedded situated subject, the paradigm is a radical restructuring of epistemology and ontology orientated to exploring multiple moral voices. This book outlines paradigm shifts by drawing on an impressive array of theorists. Those with background familiarity will find it readable, other may struggle with the density of ideas.

Hekman clarifies that she is advocating not so much an alternative, as a displacement of the dominant moral tradition. She maintains that writers in the "alternative tradition" perpetuate the absolutist/relativist dichotomy, ignore power and hegemonic domination, and ignore the role of subjectivity in the construction of morality. She is critical of those who deal with the situatedness of moral agents by negotiating dichotomy. Her view is that even the liberal/communitarian dialectical intertwining of individuality and communality does not displace a polarity between the individual and social self. Almost half way through the book I became impatient. Her repeated view that we need to displace dichotomies needed substantial argumentation regarding the restructuring of epistemology, power, and subjectivity.

Her argument builds on Gilligan's notion that moral voices and moral selves are inseparable. Hekman's main thesis is that by connecting morality and subjectivity, we deconstruct the foundation of modernist moral theory - the autonomous subject. She offers a broad sweep of contemporary theories

of the subject to give evidence of a paradigm shift. She examines the relational self, particularly object-relation psychology. Next is the postmodern subject, grasping Foucault's idea that subjectivity is a potential to be grasped. Her examination of feminist theories of the subject focuses in on serious thinking about differences. She argues against theorists who argue for a dialectical subject, saying that their logic relies on a modernist dichotomy-constituting versus constituted subject. Given that I personally would slot into this camp, I maintain that her constant references to the need to displace polarities understates the messy complexities of moral life. In my view, creative synthesis accepts tensions of the often unarticulated middle ground between individuality and sociality, between situatedness and agency.

Hekman defines agency as a product of discourses, where different discourses define different kinds of agency. To me that is like saying that we are constituted by discourse and we are constituting. Without this latter dimension, how can we be political? Hekman's goal is 'to articulate a subject that is appropriate to the task of a feminist reconceptualisation of moral theory' (p.109). She advocates a 'discursive subject' who redefines identity, agency, resistance. In connecting moral voice and moral selves she claims that 'what makes a voice *moral* is its connection to who are are' (p.113). I maintain this implies a dialectical interplay between the constituted discourses and the constituting discursive self.

She draws parallels between Wittgenstein's attempts to bring philosophy back to the rough ground of ordinary language and Gilligan's attempt to listen to the moral voices of women to account for the messiness of life. Hekman's work would have benefited from giving practical examples of everyday ordinary life. She talks constantly about multiplicity of voices but apart from brief references to class, race, and ethnicity there are few examples. She builds up to her climax - a discursive morality, 'a new epistemological space for ethics and politics' (p155), but acknowledges that she has outlined but not detailed a discursively constituted approach to morality. This outline is impressive in its inclusion of a wide-range of theorists, but while acute on critique, I finished the book, frustrated, wanting more detail on what a radical reconceptualisation of morality might involve. I also felt curiously uneasy about the centrality given to Gilligan in title and framework, when Hekman's selective use of postmodernism seems to go beyond Gilligan's moral self.

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Joanna Hodge, *Heidegger and Ethics* Routledge, 1995, p/b £12.99, h/b £37.50

As Joanna Hodge herself suggests, to embark on a study of Heidegger's philosophy from the perspective of ethics may seem odd given the trouble Heidegger takes to distance his work from that theme. He begins this distancing in *Being and Time* (1927) through the distinction between ontological inquiry, which Heidegger claims characterises his work, and ontic modes of inquiry such as ethics. By raising the question of the meaning of Being against a metaphysical tradition which takes the Being of beings for granted, Heidegger's ontological inquiry sets out to demonstrate that *Dasein's* understanding of Being, which is constitutive of its own (human) existence, keeps open the difference between Being and beings in such a way that it is only ever on the way to Being, open to possibilities and incomplete. Ethics, on the other hand, (along with other human and natural sciences) is an ontic mode of inquiry which, by studying actual human beings and their relations, takes the Being of beings as given. Ethics, so understood, participates in the metaphysics of presence which Heidegger's analytic of *Dasein* sets out to challenge.

While Heidegger continues to insist that his interest in Being is not an ethics, most strongly in his 'Letter on Humanism' (1947), Hodge does not take him at his word. She argues that in so far as Heidegger is concerned with opening up the Being of beings to future and fertile possibilities, then his critique of metaphysics is ethics. This argument rests, in part, on taking ethics in its 'original' sense. Rather than understanding ethics in terms of morality, or the derivation of rules for human conduct, Hodge bases her understanding of ethics on the concept of *ethos* as a mode of existence, a form of dwelling. Ethics, then, is about the conditions of possibility for an *ethos*. This, says Hodge, is not unlike Heidegger's understanding of metaphysics as posing the question about the mode of living in which philosophical questions about truth and existence can be asked and within which metaphysical systems can be constructed. Metaphysics, particularly that characteristic of technological thinking, tends towards closing down possibilities for existence (a closure which Heidegger argues is impossible) by not questioning its own conditions of possibility and by containing existence in the present thereby assuming its completion. Ethical thinking, on the other hand, while also about conditions of possibility for modes

of dwelling, welcomes the impossibility of closure. Or, as Hodge puts it at one point: 'Metaphysical political thinking focuses on conceptions of sameness, of predictability, and of fixity. Ethical political thinking makes difference, the unexpected and alterability central' (p.9). By linking metaphysics with ethics in this way, Hodge provides a unique and thought provoking path through Heidegger's philosophy, one which maps Heidegger's 'thematics of listening for and responding to the call of being, which turns into the moment of self-constitution' (p.23), on to an ethics concerned with the open formation of human beings in relation with others who are similar but different.

Heidegger and Ethics is not an introductory text. To follow Hodge's argument requires some familiarity with Heidegger's philosophy. But the complexity of the book is a virtue, not a fault. The argument is complex because it is creative, working, as it often does, against Heidegger's own understanding of what his philosophy entails. It is also complex because it is comprehensive. Hodge's recovery of the question of ethics in Heidegger's philosophy involves re-reading his own readings of others, including Leibniz, Kant, Nietzsche and Hölderlin, as well as numerous themes which span his work, including technology, humanism, freedom and homelessness. And the argument is complex because it works on several levels. Not only does Hodge recover the ethical dimension in Heidegger's work, but she also relates his blindness to his own insights to the ethical question of his involvement with Nazism. Further, her reading of Heidegger's philosophy as ethics is itself an ethical reading in the sense that it opens his work to other possibilities and therefore 'makes difference, the unexpected and alterability central'. And to the extent that Hodge's own philosophy opens Heidegger's philosophy to ethics so understood, she positions philosophy itself as an 'ethical commitment to an open-ended project of thinking, defying determination' (p.149). This runs against Heidegger's claim, in his later work, that philosophy is coextensive with metaphysics and the closure that implies. While the analysis is complex, Hodge undertakes it in refreshingly clear prose in contrast to the 'Heideggerian-speak' which plagues some other Heidegger 'commentaries'.

Those familiar with Hodge's rigorous feminist readings of philosophy may be disappointed to find no analysis of the ethics of sexual difference in this book. In one sense this is not surprising given that Heidegger rarely mentions sexual difference. On the other hand, when he does (for example, in *The Metaphysical Foundations of Logic*, S.10) it is to exclude the question of sexual difference, along

with ethics, from the ontological dispersed structure of *Dasein* and hence from the interrogation of the conditions for the possibility of being in general. Hodge's challenge to the neutrality of *Dasein*, and the question of Being, with regard to ethics provides the opportunity to challenge the neutrality of *Dasein* with regard to sexual difference. While Hodge does not take this opportunity herself, she does, by opening the ethical dimension of Heidegger's philosophy, provide the necessary groundwork for others to raise the question, in connection with his work, of the ethics (the conditions of possibility) of (a more open) sexual difference.

The importance of *Heidegger and Ethics* lies beyond an exercise in retrieving the 'unthought' in Heidegger's philosophy although it does make an invaluable contribution to Heidegger scholarship on those grounds. It also makes a significant contribution to the question as to whether a 'postmodern' ethics is possible. Just as Heidegger has been accused of moral relativism, and indeed of making moral choice impossible, so have contemporary proponents of the dispersed structure of human existence who owe a debt to his work. By showing, on the contrary, that ethics is only possible if human existence has the open structure which Heidegger describes, Hodge not only saves Heidegger from moral bankruptcy but keeps open consideration of the ethics of his contemporary disciples and of the social relations with which they are concerned.

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Grace Jantzen, *Power, Gender and Christian Mysticism*, Cambridge University Press, 1995, p.b £13.95 h/b £40

There is little doubt that in a field which is already noted for excellence, Grace Jantzen's *Power, Gender and Christian Mysticism* makes a significant contribution. The great mystics of the Christian tradition have long been of interest to feminist historians, theologians and religionists. This has yielded a vast amount of literature, ranging from special studies of individual female mystics, (to which Jantzen herself has contributed an impressive study of Julian of Norwich (SPCK, 1987), to more general or thematic explorations of the theological and socio-political contexts in which these women redefined the boundaries of the spirituality appropriate for women. This study of the role of power and gender in the social construction of mysticism, most particularly in the Middle Ages, is provocative, engaging and thoroughly convincing.

Although it is difficult to capture the diversity of themes and arguments contained in this study, the central thesis is that the dominant ideology of gender relations in the Christian tradition, and its expression in the social realm, had a significant impact on the definition of mysticism, who counted as a mystic, and how the problematic of the female body was dealt with. Using the genealogical method of Foucault as her main hermeneutical device, Jantzen examines the careful delimiting of mysticism (which she convincingly argues was crucial to maintaining male hierarchical control in church and society) in which issues of gender played a significant but disguised role.

Each chapter is carefully structured around a particular dimension of mystical theology and practice. Among the themes she examines are, the significance of the mystical interpretation of scripture and the virtual exclusion of women from this because of lack of education, the uneasy manner in which women mystics were accepted and the growing desire and tendency to control them by enclosure of some form or another, and the often times explicitly sexualised ways in which some women mystics engaged with the Christ of their visions. It is difficult to point to any one discussion which stands out, but for me Jantzen's consideration of the role of gender in the increasing desire to distinguish true mysticism from false, from the fourteenth century onwards, eventually culminating in the burning of heretics and witches, is inspiring. Without endorsing any facile conspiracy theory, Jantzen's examination of this phenomenon is uncompromising.

One of the most impressive dimensions of this study is the way in which the author moves with great authority and fluency between the classics of mysticism, philosophy of religion and contemporary theory. Her ability to bring the critique of postmodern, feminist discourse to bear on this most traditional of disciplines in a manner which illuminates so many facets of the academic debate thus far stands out. She guides the reader through often unfamiliar territory always explaining difficult concepts and (to the modern mind) strange practices with great alacrity. I thoroughly recommend this work to both specialists and non-specialists alike, as one which makes a unique and valuable contribution in a field already very well served.

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Laura Stempel Mumford, *Love and Ideology in the Afternoon: Soap Opera, Women, and the Television Genre*, Indiana University Press 1995, p/b £9.99, h/b £21.95

Most analyses of soap opera have been conducted under the general umbrella of popular culture analysis. Television soaps are 'popular' in the sense that they are enjoyed by many people, but also 'popular' in the pejorative implication that the genre has been seen as an impoverished form of high culture. Television critics have, broadly speaking, expressed two kinds of anxiety - one social and one cultural. The first kind tends to be expressed by metaphors of 'the habit' and 'the fix', as though television were a kind of drug which seduces the citizen away from his/her appropriate social functioning. The second kind has tacitly assumed that literature is the ideal form and television programmes should be judged by comparison with that ideal. Historically, many reviewers have hardly treated television as a different medium from literature at all, and, as a consequence, many of television's forms were either unexamined or condemned out of hand.

This may be partly a generational thing. For people who have grown up with television, there is perhaps less tendency to try to validate a televisual production by reference to a literary one. Laura Stempel Mumford's book offers an overview of more recent televisual theory, informed by both feminist theories and cultural studies, in which the soap opera, rather than being television's Cinderella, is in fact its Queen. For example, she quotes Charlotte Brunsden's view that the soap opera is 'in some ways the paradigmatic television genre (domestic, continuous, contemporary, episodic, repetitive, fragmented, and aural)'. Whereas earlier critics had condemned what they called the 'false naturalism' of *Coronation Street*, Laura Stempel Mumford draws our attention to the work of Dorothy Hobson, who, in 1982, writing about *Crossroads* argued that 'the moment of narrative closure in soap operas is more like a pause for breath. Closure in a soap always threatens to come unstuck, as indeed it sometimes does'. In other words there is something about the serial form of soap operas that opens up a space for repeated problem solving, dialogue and intimate conversations which reverberates with the intimate knowledge of family dynamics which is part of most women's experience. These more recent critics have also identified other characteristics of the genre which make them particularly, although not exclusively, attractive to women; for example, many of the male characters are portrayed as sensitive, whereas female characters are often professional

or otherwise powerful in the world outside the home.

One of the 'social' anxieties about television has been the destruction-of-the-citizen argument. As 'soaps' were initially scheduled for transmission in the afternoons, inevitably many of the expected viewer-citizens were housewives, so possibly there was a particular concern that wives and mothers would fail to prepare the evening meal or darn the socks, but instead would be indulging in 'another world'. This anxiety about what the advent of television would mean to society was expressed as early as 1946 (*Radio Times*, 17 May) and has been repeated in varying forms ever since. Research by Jane Root (amongst others) has shown, however, that women (unlike viewing men) tend to undertake activities simultaneously with watching, so that therefore anxiety about women neglecting domestic work in order to watch television is a misplaced anxiety. What might be more pertinent is an uneasiness expressed by many critics about the peculiar intimacy established by 'soaps'. This sense of intimacy is created by several things. The first of these productive items is available to any camera-based medium and that is the exploitation of the close-up, which, according to Dennis Porter's well known formulation, reveals a 'face [which] before the age of film only a lover or a mother ever saw'. The viewer becomes, in effect, both a voyeur and an eavesdropper on intimate moments. Peculiar to the television soap is the use of time which parallels actual time and implies that the action continues to take place whether we watch it or not. This 'dailiness' results in long-standing characters in soaps becoming guests invited into the privacy of the home on the same level of frequency as family or close friends. The viewers and the players for a kind of community. When, for example, Noele Gordon, the star of *Crossroads*, was sacked, viewers wrote thousands of letters of complaint, many stating specifically, and with no sense of irony, that they had 'lost a friend'.

It has been generally accepted that soaps particularly appealed to women because they brought the private sphere of intimate relationships into public view. Laura Stempel Mumford's book joins the debate by pushing this argument one step further. She claims that 'soap operas *redefine* both the public and private spheres... In the soap opera world everything is *everyone's* business'. Laura Stempel Mumford is of the generation of feminists, graduating in the seventies, who felt a special interest and attachment to the 'soap', which seemed to provide a space for the woman viewer. She 'came out' as a lover of soaps at precisely the time when feminists were emphasising that the personal

was the political, and that the strong barrier erected between 'private' and 'public' life served a patriarchal system only too well. At this historical moment, privacy and its violation, which is central to soap opera narrative, must have resonated in a sympathetic way with the writer's growing political awareness. Lest my review has inadvertently made the theorisation sound over-heavy, may I end on Laura Stempel Mumford's clear statement that she looks to soaps for 'fun', 'pleasure' and 'the communal pleasure of talking about the programmes'. Despite old anxieties about the advent of television breaking down communities, it may well be that it creates new ones, by mechanisms specific to television itself, that will not respond to analyses which obsessively attempt to judge by literary yardsticks. Laura Stempel Mumford's contribution to the body of theory tailored to the medium of television and specific genres within the medium is both sophisticated and entertaining.

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Naomi Schor and Elizabeth Weed, (eds) *The Essential Difference*, Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1994 p/b £11.99, h/b £27.50.

The papers in the collection bring together some of the key theorists who have contributed to recent developments in the debates around essentialism and anti-essentialism and the implications of either (or both) for feminisms in general and identity politics in particular. It includes chapters by Teresa de Lauretis, Naomi Schor, Luce Irigaray, Diana Fuss, Robert Scholes, Leslie Wahl Rabine, and an interview with Gayatri Spivak. Although perhaps a bit dated now - with the exception of the editors' introduction and the chapter by Elizabeth Grosz, all the papers formed a special issue of *differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies* (Vol 1, No 2, 1988) - it remains a very useful and highly sought-after collection (as any inter-library loan office will vouchsafe) so it's about time it was reproduced in the more enduring and accessible form of a book!

In their introduction Naomi Schor and Elizabeth Weed capture the 'essence' of the book which, as the title suggests, turns on the problematic ambiguities for feminists wrangling with the thorny difficulties of sexual difference, that stem from the apparently inherent problem of essentialism. Since I can hardly do justice to each individual chapter in such a short review I will rather highlight some of the questions that Schor and Weed raise and that are addressed in the collection: How to avoid the

fixity of trying women to some sort of essential nature, while retaining, and indeed reframing, the salience of the body to subjectivity. How to 'speak as a woman' and also what it means to say one is speaking as a woman. How to establish and affirm a subject-position for female subjectivities. And, in particular, how, for feminists eager to avoid phallogocentric notions of essentialism, is this to be achieved?

Recent turns to the question of essentialism in feminist thought, and in particular the necessity (or not) of some form of strategic essentialism, rest on this sort of reconstructive problematic. What is implied is that not only is there a need to deconstruct phallogocentric notions of essentialism and anti-essentialism, bodies and psyches but that it is also necessary to redefine these categories. Although providing no definitive answers the papers in this collection have nevertheless helped to reframe the questions and the general problematic in which they are formed and I recommend it to anyone who is interested in questions of the body, subjectivity and sexual difference.

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Nancy Tuana (ed), *Feminist Interpretations of Plato*, Penn State University Press 1994, p/b £12.95, h/b £31.50

The selection of essays in this collection are all reprints written between 1976 and 1993, the majority having been written in the eighties. The contributors are all American other than the French philosopher, Luce Irigaray. Essays reprinted are by: Gregory Vlastos, Janet Farrell Smith, Monique Canto, Arlene W Saxonhouse, Elizabeth V Spelman, Natalie Harris Bluestone, Page duBois, Wendy Brown, Andrea Nye and Cynthia Hampton.

Part of a series entitled "Re-reading the Canon" this book is apparently involved in a project which seeks to transform the canon and to question the basis of its creation. However the essays offered seem to bear no relation to such an aim and remain in a so-called feminist discourse, which in my opinion has become or should become obsolete. It is worth noting that this book exemplifies American feminisms and says more about what is going on there than saying anything interesting about Plato.

The first part of the book is set under the question 'Was Plato a feminist?' Perhaps I am being pedantic about the chosen wording, but it is difficult to take such a question seriously. Surely that is not the point. The opening essay confirmed my suspicions. Mr Vlastos begins his essay by asking, what is

feminism? He then does something which insults the feminist reader's intelligence. He gives us the OED definition and then quotes the Amendment to the United States Constitution which talks about equal rights in the face of the law. Mr Vlastos says he is happy with this definition of feminism and adds 'I shall waste no time defending it, for my interest is Plato, not feminism.' Does it not seem rather strange that the editor of a book entitled *Feminist Interpretations of Plato* chooses an opening essay written by a man who clearly states that he has no interest in feminism and demonstrates his total ignorance of it? Unfortunately Mr Vlastos sets the agenda for the remaining essays in the first section. Feminism is defined in terms of equality and Plato's feminism is judged in terms of whether or not women were given equal social and political rights in the ideal city. Everyone seems to agree that some women were given equal rights and that the ethic of equality is in line with a policy that feminism would condone. I advise any reader to skip the first section because it offers no new insights on Platonic thought and clearly is totally uninformed about contemporary feminist issues. It is stuck in a liberal humanist tradition which sees social equality as the aim of feminism. Additionally, the tone can sometimes be offensive (as in the case of Mr Vlastos).

The second part consists of essays under the title 'Plato and the Feminine' and the Platonic texts discussed are the *Dialogues* and *The Symposium* rather than *The Republic* and *The Laws*. Thankfully, the question 'was Plato a feminist?' is dispensed with, and we get a more sophisticated approach, that being the appropriation of the feminine in the Platonic metaphysics. Themes discussed in these essays are the Platonic appropriation of reproduction and thus the attempt to reinscribe a paternal origin, and the discussion of the intermediary in the Platonic dialectic. The essay to read if one is really interested in feminist interpretations of Plato is by Luce Irigaray: 'A Reading of Plato's Symposium, Diotima's speech'. Irigaray argues that Diotima's speech reveals a philosophy which disrupts the masculine dialectic by introducing a third intermediary term which is never subsumed in resolution, but remains present as an element of becoming, of constant transformation and movement, an element which is engaged with the between, the connections, rather than closure. Irigaray's essay can be found in *An Ethics of Sexual Difference*. It is far more worthwhile to read this essay in the context of her own work, rather than in the context of a book of uninspiring essays which seem disengaged with contemporary feminisms and therefore fail in their attempt to offer 'feminist interpretations'. These re-readings of Plato do little to transform the canon.

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REVIEW ARTICLES

Morwenna Griffiths (1995) *Feminisms and the Self: The Web of Identity*, London and New York: Routledge. p/b £12.99 h/b £35.

Every so often a book is published which does more than simply promise to cross discipline and thinking boundaries and to draw together what has been separate, a book which also seriously endeavours to put this into practice. Morwenna Griffiths's *Feminisms and the Self: The Web of Identity* is such a book, an accessible and engaging account of working at the points of linkage between philosophy and social science, between feminist theory and 'mainstream' theory, between feminist philosophy and 'mainstream' philosophy, between the abstract and the concrete. 'The book aims to question unhelpful disciplinary boundaries, as a contribution to the project of re-defining and re-aligning them' (p.3). One of its concerns is with notions of subjectivity and identity, more precisely with 'how selves are constructed . . . emotions and rationality, self-esteem and self-creation and . . . the idea of 'real self' and authenticity' (p.2). Its closely related second concern is with working in ways which depart from 'the abstractions assumed by most Western philosophers' (p.5):

by returning to experience through a critical use of autobiographical material. Some of the material is drawn from my own life, but a sustained effort is also made to discover and understand the perspectives of others from excluded minorities, especially women but also including a number of men. I have argued before that the use of personal experience is crucial to the development of a feminist perspective . . . (p.6).

Part 1 of the book, 'Learning from experience', is composed of three chapters dealing with autobiographical accounts, how, methodologically and theoretically, to 'handle', these, and relatedly, with the place of 'subjectivity' in epistemology. The four chapters in Part II, 'Constructing ourselves', begin with a consideration of 'questions for women' and 'questions for philosophers' concerned with self and self-identity, then move on to how a feminist philosophy concerned with self/identity can position emotions, self-esteem, rationality and autonomy. Part III, 'Changing' deals with language, communication and personal and collective change within this nexus of conceptual concerns. From Chapter 4 on, chapters

start with a footnote stating that 'In this chapter I draw on the following . . .', a reference to a set of what are termed 'life stories' (pp 45-54), i.e. Griffiths's summary readings of sometimes single pieces of work, sometimes entire oeuvres, which constitute the 'idiosyncratic set of sources on which I have drawn . . . I cannot assume my readers are familiar with them all. Rather than rely on lengthy footnotes, I say something about them here . . . to make the allusions to them in the rest of the book comprehensible' (p.45).

Morwenna Griffiths's project, then, we can conclude, is as much methodological as it is substantively focused around analytically engaging with questions of self-identity, of 'the self that I am (p.1), and both are conceived politically. As she says,

I try to explain the intricate entanglement which is our own self-identity . . . This is the weft of the book. The warp on which the weft is woven is made up of: the threads of an epistemology based on autobiographical experience; an argument on the constraints and opportunities of language; and, most importantly, since the analysis is a feminist one, an attention to politics (pp 2-3).

Clearly, the grounds on which readers should evaluate the book are its successes and failures in 'delivering' these symbiotically linked concerns that constitute its wider project, outlined in its introductory chapter as 'contributing to . . . discovering and inventing feminist philosophy' (p.3).

Methodologically, and indeed reflexively, the book is concerned with precisely 'learning from others', including what kind of a 'self/identity' ours is and how this might change, how 'I' might change 'it' through a kind of 'we-ness'. Thus the importance of Chapter 3 to the argument and method of the book as a whole. 'Other Lives: learning from their experiences'. This chapter is concerned with learning, more specifically with 'Who is it possible for me to listen to?' (p.44) in the sense of whom we are 'open to', whom we can *hear*. Griffiths points out how uncomfortable it is to deal with such a question, for 'the more marginal someone is, if they are on a different part of the margin from oneself, the harder it is to listen to them, and to engage with them' (p.44). In response she outlines some 'principles of procedure', which include choosing in an explicit way who it is that one 'listens' to in her sense, and thus the 'life stories' which follow and which are referred to above.

The principles and the attempt at practice here are entirely laudable, but they are not (in either meaning of the word) exemplary, for reasons which are equally methodological and procedural. This can be seen by asking the apparently simple question of 'whose stories?'. They are in fact Morwenna Griffiths's stories - her brief summaries or readings made for her particular purposes, although they are implicitly presented to readers as those of the authors concerned. One simple example, equally 'autobiographical' / personal and public / political, here. The account of my own 'life story' (p.54) provides a reading of something I wrote on feminist epistemology in terms of its specific contents as though this content is 'what it is about'; but it isn't, not at least as I wrote it or as many other people have read it. This is not, of course, to say that mine is the only reading possible, but it is to point up that these matters are complex and that there is no straightforward referentiality between 'a reading' and 'the text' it is supposedly a making of. To put it succinctly, there is a (feminist as well as 'mainstream') politics of reading and writing which is curiously elided here in favour of 'this is what they say'; Morwenna Griffiths draws a line around an unnecessarily narrow notion of 'politics'. In many projects of course this would not be so significant as it is for Griffiths's, which turns an autobiography and politics and their interrelation with methodological and procedural matters which have epistemological consequentiality; that it is significant here is a measure of the importance and indeed daringness of what she has set out to do.

The 'other' political plank of this book is its concern with 'inventing feminist philosophy' in a way which avoids the determined abstractions of a masculinist mainstream and which contributes to re-defining and re-aligning unhelpful discipline boundaries. As a feminist sociologist working on the borders with (my versions of) anthropology, literature, history and philosophy, the redefinition of boundaries is of particular interest to me. So what kind of a 'feminist philosophy', indeed 'feminist philosopher', is inscribed in Morwenna Griffiths's book? In her project different from the 'philosopher queen' project I associate with the imperialist strain within American feminist philosophy shudderingly glimpsed in Kathleen Pyne Addelson's statement that 'We are makers of knowledge, we exercise cognitive authority. The social position of feminist philosophers is a dominant one, not only over the positions of most other women but also over the positions of men of other classes, races, ages ... and even nations' (in *Feminist Epistemologies*, eds Linda Alcoff and Lizabeth Potter, 1993, p.268).

Feminisms and the Self works at the borders, it eschews abstractions, and it is concerned with concepts and ideas and language in use, and again here it departs from much of the philosophy mainstream. It does not situate the feminist philosopher at an epistemological apex, as does the 'philosopher queen' strain of feminist philosophy which sees itself as providing the grounding of knowledge for everyone everywhere. It is instead concerned with a more modest and engaging job of work, analytically dealing with 'situated knowledges', its own as much as everyone else's, and it takes the politics of location as epistemologically serious and as central to understanding and analytically evaluating its own knowledge claims. This is a most welcome exposition of a feminist philosophy which is questioning and as engaged with other feminisms as with philosophy. But as already suggested, it is in fact - and ironically - here that it does not entirely succeed in what it sets out to do, for its move out of 'abstractions' into 'experience' immediately hits, but does not grapple with, in fact elides, issues of referentiality which by definition surround all 'research'. This is not to say that it should have solved such problematics, for they are 'by definition' there, but it is to say that it should have recognised the seriousness and consequentiality of these for the central arguments and methodological procedures of this book as a whole, and looked more closely at the work of other feminists who have grappled with them. As for why it has not done so: The 'unhelpful boundaries' between the disciplines that Morwenna Griffiths's book starts with are harder to traverse than it supposes and will need a more considerable 'learning from each other', but it is nonetheless an interesting and insightful attempt to do so which will be deservedly read and used by a very wide audience.

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Syncopating India: Catherine Clément's *Syncope: The Philosophy of Rapture* University of Minnesota Press 1994, p/b.

In her recent book¹, Catherine Clément argues for the emancipatory possibilities of what she calls syncope - the temporary loss of self through the suspension of time, and with it the ties of the individuated self to a social body that defines and constrains it (1994, 251). Clément explores those syncopated moments of music, dance, mystical ecstasy, *jouissance* and philosophy when time stops and selves, 'by temporarily losing the secured

identity that constitutes them as a single member of the social body, ... escape its confines: they are free, with an unreal and extraordinary sense of emancipation' (240). Since one of feminist theory's prime concerns is the ways in which the social body defines and constrains women, Clément's attempt to find an exit point is not without its attractions. Of particular interest at a time when the Eurocentrism of much First World feminist theory is being challenged, is that Clément proposes to find those points of exit through a conversation between Western and Indian philosophies.

For Clément, syncope represents an opposition both to the 'classic Western concept of the Subject' based on reason, autonomy and free will (156), and to the type of social contract this concept of the subject underpins:

It is as if there were two ways of thinking. Either one arms thought in order to conquer the whole field of consciousness, developing the 'I' to the point of making it absolute ... Or one strips one's thought of its weapons and makes it as 'weak' as possible, taking advantage of its moments of fragility: anguish, shivering, the void, orgasm - syncope ... The first thought is on the side of fullness and rigidity; the second on the side of the void and suppleness. The first thought constructs a protected system; the second is on the side of the fragment, of hesitation, of risk. The first thought justifies the world, the second argues with it violently.' (164-5)

Clément tracks Western philosophy's uneasy moves to repress, contain, and sometimes embrace the possibilities of syncope from Plato, through Hegel and Hölderlin, to Kierkegaard, Bergson and Lacan. But one of the places where Clément finds a more comfortable home for syncope is in India, and it is the construction of India as this privileged site of syncope that I want to examine briefly here. My focus, therefore, is not so much on exploring the problems and possibilities of Clément's concept of syncope as such, but rather in the lessons a First World feminist engaging with non-Western thought can learn from Clément's example. Unfortunately, because she engages neither with the insights of post-colonial theory, nor with Indian feminist thought, the lessons to be learned from Clément are largely negative. On several levels, Clément's India remains within the terms of an Orientalist project, that constructs an East in order to define the West. In Irigarayan terms, Clément engages with an India that remains an 'other of the same'. I see this move at work on three levels. First,

Clément perpetuates an 'us and them' discourse in which a pure East stands in opposition to an equally univocal West. Second, she closes down the complexity of Indian society and culture to a univocal Hindu-India underpinned by an unproblematized view of the past and tradition. Third, the specific nature of Indian patriarchy is covered over and accommodated in Clément's approach, and the ways in which it constructs its own versions of a feminine 'other of the same' are not contested.

a) East-West

Clément recognises that Western philosophers have repeatedly constructed for themselves an 'Asia' as an outside, an abyss that marks the borders of their own philosophical projects (see, for example, her discussions of Hölderlin and Hegel, 70-2). She recognises too, to some extent that, whether this outside was embraced or rejected, it remained a Western construction (129). Yet she does not seem overly concerned about the dangers of such a move for her own project. She can speak quite confidently of "[t]he Asia of reality, at least the one I know..." (71) in contrast to the Asia of the Western philosophers she examines. Her text is full of those capitalised reifications, 'The Westerner', 'The Asian', 'The West', 'The East', with very little sense that there is a need to problematize these terms as she uses them to speak of things 'that the East knows by heart and the West has lost' (8).

Clément's us-and-them language of pure oppositions seems almost crudely old-fashioned in the light of post-colonial scholarship. She sets up two hermetically sealed worlds, one of which is driven by the need to defend a strong, autonomous subject, and another in which the individual self needs to be weakened in order to privilege its links with both the collective and nature.

Because to cross over there, into the abyss called Asia, is to accept the understanding of the absolute, radical and monstrous dispossession of the subject, its degradation, neglect, and finally its destruction in the name of a higher good: order, fusion, the life cycle... Above all, there is the *nonsubject*, before, during and after. A deliberate strategy of syncope will be used to abolish the rejected subjectivity of the individual (144)

In the West the Subject prevails, 'master and possessor of Nature' ... it is prohibited to syncope philosophically: make way for the absolute sovereignty of the Subject... In India, this consensus about the human race is reversed. We must place a

restraining order on the individual Subject, which must burn its emotions and desires to a cinder in order to meet up again with Nature... (257)

The West, with its strong individuated self, sets itself against Nature (another capitalised, unproblematized absolute) while in India 'conversion to practising ecology is made effortlessly; it flows from the source'. Only those who have been 'contaminated by the West divorce themselves from this consensus' (258).

But one of the most important insights of post-colonial scholarship is the need to contest such absolute models of purity and contamination². Westerners, too, need to ask whether it is in any way desirable to hold onto fictions of purity like East and West, or whether it is more appropriate, in a post-colonial mode, to interrogate the genealogy of such fictions and the political agendas that sustain them. Where do these pure oppositions now exist, if they ever did, and what is at stake in holding on to them?

b) Univocal India

Just as it is important to resist looking for a pure East to oppose to a West, we should expect any particular culture to have its own complexities. This is such a self-evident statement that it seems banal, and yet the temptation to reduce a society's unruly and dissonant voices to one, especially when 'West' or 'North' looks at 'East' or 'South', remains strong. Clément basically hears one voice in India, and she reproduces it as *the* voice of India, while covering over both other voices that contest it, and much of the political context within which those contestations take place. Clément relies heavily on two Indian sources, Sudhir Kakar and Ashis Nandy. Kakar, who is frequently cited in Clément's text is, in her own description, a 'strict Freudian' whose project involves uncovering 'the prehistoric fantasies that are characteristic of the Indian imagination' (135). Nandy, whose influence on Clément is acknowledged directly only in a footnote (281, fn4), is a key player in current debates among Indian intellectuals, including many Indian feminists, concerning questions of secularism and communalism, tradition and authenticity. Both Kakar and Nandy are engaged in theoretical debates within India that turn around competing constructions of the concept of 'India' and its constituent elements: the relationship between Hindu culture and the many non-Hindu minorities, and the tendency to conflate 'Hindu-ness' with 'Indian-ness'; the construction of authorised and de-authorised versions of Hindu-ness itself; the 'authentic' or 'constructed' nature of tradition and modernity and their relationship to 'Indian-ness'

and 'Western-ness'; and the place of women and the feminine in relation to all these questions. All these theoretical issues have very practical repercussions in the current Indian political context with the rise of the Hindu right and competing communalist projects. But none of this complexity and contestation is reflected in Clément's discussions of India, with the result that both the richness of intellectual debate and the political stakes involved - both the promises and dangers - are flattened out to tell a single story.

The resulting story is one in which 'India' is repeatedly conflated with 'Hindu', which is in turn represented as embodying a monolithic Indian imagination, which remains pure but covered over by 'the leaden layers of successive colonial empires' (135). The 'spiritual body of Hinduism' that oversees the Indian unconscious stands in polar opposition to notions of democracy and the autonomous subject borrowed from the West (142-3).³ Drawing on this opposition, 'syncope-people' like Gandhi could engage in politics while remaining outside the desire for power (242); his tactics of refusal and non-cooperation in India's independence struggle are read as representing the possibility of an 'un-governing of the world' (247). I am not saying that this story cannot be heard in India, but I am saying that it is not the only one to be heard. And I want to suggest that its attractions for a Westerner are suspect, because it holds India up as offering everything we cannot find 'at home' - access to a pure and authentic past, an alternative model of subjectivity, a way to act politically while remaining outside power relations. A more productive approach, I would argue, would be to expect to find in India as much 'impurity', as much complexity and contamination as we find 'at home', and to argue that a conversation is possible precisely because there are no pure spaces in either 'East' or 'West'.

c) Women and the Feminine

In closing down her narrative of India to the demands of an 'other of the same' framework, Clément also covers over the rich contentions within Indian feminisms. Her insistence on defining India in polar opposition to the West is combined with a commitment to a Lacanian psychoanalytic approach which links woman and the feminine necessarily to a discourse of lack and excess. Together these two moves lead Clément to a too-simple reading of India as a site where the feminine is valorised and where the transgressive blurring of boundaries between masculine and feminine is more possible than in the West. In support of this reading, Clément points, for example, to the valorisation of the mother-figure in Hindu thought

(143) and in Gandhi's nationalist discourse (243), and to the blurring of masculine-feminine boundaries in Tantrism (138). But she never engages with Indian feminist scholarship, which is full of debates that might problematize such a straightforward reading⁴. By not questioning the terms within which the 'feminine' or the 'maternal' are being valorised, Clément closes down consideration of how these might be appropriated or accommodated within a particular form of patriarchal power relations or male-centred discourse. In so doing she closes down a space in which an important feminist conversation needs to take place.

Clément's treatment of the question of *sati*, or widow burning, is a good example of this. In picking up on the Hindu imagery of burning in relation to her concept of syncope ('fire consumes the self's resistance' (153) 'knowing how to breathe is knowing how to burn the Subject within' (154)), it was inevitable that Clément would have to consider the question of *sati*. Again, it is what she doesn't say about it that is important here. The colonial debate around *sati*, which involved British colonial authorities, Indian opponents and supporters of the practice in complex contestations and reconstructions of what constituted 'Indian traditional values' and the place of women in them, is reduced to a single sentence: 'This voluntary sacrifice was forbidden by the English at the request of a Bengali humanist, around 1830' (155). The contemporary debate around *sati*, which crystallised around the case of the young widow Roop Kanwar in 1987, is again collapsed and oversimplified: 'the whole of India thought it was dreaming and understood that fundamentalism was making a comeback' (ibid). It is worth noting here that Clément refers her readers to one forthcoming book by a westerner and a film of the British novel *The Far Pavilions*. There is not a word about the numerous Indian sources, including the rich contentions within Indian feminisms, and between Indian feminists and other intellectuals on this question. Her take on *sati* remains strictly within the terms of an 'ascetic myth':

Following the example of the female yoginis of classical India, the *satis* decide to burn up, in a gesture beneficial to the village community from which they come, their useless bodies, their abandoned flesh. They are burning their half - which is not even a half - of a conjugal subject, the other half of which, male and essential, is already on the pyre, and whose death they are vaguely guilty of (156).

Clément's position is not a completely straightforward valorizing of the practice of *sati*, because she recognizes that there is often compulsion involved. There is also some suggestion, as in the passage quoted above, that the context is one that privileges the male. But it is hard not to conclude that this is less important for her than the way in which the act of *sati* fits into a model of self that can be abstracted from the complex, messy intersection of power relations in which it operates. Also there is an accommodation with the view of woman-as-excess and lack that Clément takes from her appropriation of the Lacanian psychoanalytic model:

Woman is always excessive. But their excess fits into a straight line that connects the individual to the cosmos that she faithfully replicates, in which she finds a place, at the moment of fusion, that parallels the place she had as a living being. This is achieved by resolutely abolishing what stood in the way of union: autonomy, individuation, and that limiter, consciousness. (156)

In contrast, Indian feminists have taken the debate around *sati* in quite different directions. These include, perhaps most obviously, challenging the nature of a national, cultural or religious 'tradition' which requires the burnt bodies of women as a symbol of its purity. But they also include reflections on the strategic and symbolic location of women/Woman in constructing not only gendered, but also 'raced' and national identities. The debate on *sati* has also led to attempts to rethink models of agency and subject-status that do not take the male position as norm⁵. A conversation with these Indian voices might not fit so easily into Clément's search for a 'fire [that] consumes the self's resistance', but it would speak to issues that are of prime concern to First World feminists as well - rethinking the body, identity, self and agency.

Instead, in her desire to construct India as her syncopated 'other of the same', Clément uses a reified 'Indian woman' as part of the raw material for her theoretical project. In basing her alternative model of the self on an underlying discourse of purity and authenticity, what gets covered over is the 'messiness' of complex power relations. A model of the self that is based on this kind of objectifying, reifying of an other is not really an alternative; it just shifts the terrain on which the 'other of the same' gets constructed, a bit further away, to a place we know less about and so can more easily construct in terms of absolutes. In the process, it turns our attention away from actual

voices of Indian feminists, who may be less easily accommodated within prevailing First World feminist theoretical models, and with whom it is therefore more unsettlingly promising to converse.

1 Clément, Catherine, *Syncope: The philosophy of Rapture*, translated by Sally O'Driscoll and Deirdre Mahoney, Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 1994.

2 See, for example, Homi Bhabha, *Nation and Narration*, Routledge (1990); Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic*, Verso (1993); Edward Said, *Orientalism*, Penguin (1978) and *Culture and Imperialism* Chatto (1993); and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, *In Other Worlds*, Methuen (1987) and *The Postcolonial Critic*, Routledge (1990).

3 There is a disturbing anti-Muslim subtext in Clément, perhaps borrowed along with the Kakar-Nandy line that tends to conflate Hindu and Indian. We see it in the approval of Levi-Strauss' comment that Islam served to interrupt a possible slow osmosis of Christianity with Buddhism (142), and again, in the suggestion that Islam is the stumbling block preventing the West from clearly understanding India as 'democratic, pluralistic, secular, and Asian' (144) This dangerously covers over the way in which discourse of 'secularism' is being used in contemporary India by the Hindu right to attack the rights of the Muslim minority (see, for example, T. Sarkar and U. Butalia, eds., *Women and the Hindu right*, Kali (1995)).

4 See, for example, Uma Chakravarti, "What Happened to the Vedic Dasi", in K. Sangari and S. Vaid, eds., *Recasting Women*, Kali (1989); Amrita Chhachhi, "Forced Identities" in D. Kandiyoti, ed., *Women, Islam and the State*, MacMillan (1991); Tanika Sarkar, "Nationalist Iconography", *Economic and Political Weekly*, 21 November, 1987; and Rakeswari Sunder Rajan, *Real and Imagined Women*, Routledge (1993).

5 See, for example, Ania Loomba, "Dead Women Tell No Tales", *History Workshop Journal*, 36, Autumn 1993; Lata Mani, "Contentious Traditions" in K. Sangari and S. Vaid, Eds., *Cultural Studies*, Routledge (1992); and Rajeswari Sunder Rajan, (1993), as above.

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Why 'Female Intuition'?

'...what has come down to us as our unmistakable inheritance from seventeenth century rationalism is the ideal of method, construed as expressing the true nature of the mind. Although much has happened since in the development of reason, this rationalist model still underlies our "rational" thought styles. Conversely, "intuition" has come to mean the negation of all this - a thought style that is not sharpened and systematized in the manner of which Cartesian method is the paradigm. Intuition, inevitably, has come to be associated with specifically *female* thought styles' (Lloyd 1989 p.124).

1. Victims of a Dualism

One of the key topics to exercise feminist philosophers has been the relation between conceptions of reason and masculinity. Challenges have been made to what is seen as an excessively dualist philosophical approach, which characterizes reason through a sharp opposition to other capacities such as emotion - capacities which tend, in philosophy as in culture more generally, to be associated with women. This gender-association may sometimes be explicit in a philosophical work; more usually it is implicit, generated indirectly through a wider pattern of associations which may only become visible when one stands back to take in a broader view of the history of ideas.² While a certain amount of attention has been paid to problematizing dichotomous conceptions of reason and emotion,³ to my knowledge very little has been said about another mode of thought equally contrasted with reason and just as strongly associated with women: intuition. It appears to have largely escaped attention, despite the longevity of the popular notion 'female intuition', which continues a tradition both theoretical and, as it were, 'folk epistemological' in which the inferiority of women's rational powers is implied.⁴

I shall argue for the view that, far from standing in a relation of opposition to reason, intuition plays an essential role within human reasoning broadly construed. This view has three implications: firstly, that *intuition* is not well understood if it is sharply contrasted with reason; secondly, that a conception

of *reason* which is sharply contrasted with intuition is an unduly technical or 'thin' conception; and, thirdly, that the exclusive association of intuition with *women* is mistaken - more than this, it is a piece of cultural mystification in urgent need of feminist philosophical analysis. If these points are sound, we ought to jettison the idea that reason and intuition are wholly discrete 'ways of knowing', and recognize instead their essential co-operation. This recognition, it will be argued, makes way for a fuller understanding of the character of human reasoning, achieving what we might call a 'rich' conception of reason. Such a rich conception will demystify intuition, undermining the excessively dualist, and also the oppressively gendered ways in which reason and intuition have tended to be constructed.

I will draw on Thomas Kuhn's conception of scientific intuition as he presents it in *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Kuhn 1970). Kuhn's conception of intuition features it right at the heart of rational inquiry, as he argues that intuition is the catalyst for theoretical changes in science. It seems to me that Kuhn's account of the role of intuition in scientific progress is not only an important (if contentious) move in the philosophy of science, but also the most richly suggestive feature of his position for feminism. Perhaps it has received less attention from feminists than it deserves because it is over-shadowed by the *prima facie* more radical and still more controversial claims about the 'incommensurability' of different scientific theories and the supposed corollary that scientists who adopt them 'live in different worlds'. These sensational claims may well be important precursors to postmodernist and otherwise relativistic accounts of scientific knowledge, but they are in fact made by Kuhn only in very qualified, almost apologetic tones,⁵ and should be read in the light of the 1969 Postscript in which he strongly maintains he is no relativist.

2. The Catalyst for Scientific Revolutions

First let me clarify my understanding of where Kuhn's notion of intuition fits into his conception of scientific progress. Kuhn famously employs the term 'paradigm' to express the thought that science cannot take place in a theoretical vacuum. Science

requires a framework for research which comprises a basic body of scientific assumptions - physical, metaphysical, methodological and aesthetic. This framework of assumptions provides the foundation on which new research is premised. He then claims a distinction between 'normal science' and 'revolutionary science', where the first has the task of 'articulating' or fleshing out the initially skeletal framework which constitutes the presiding paradigm; and where the second has the task of drawing that paradigm into crisis, eventually precipitating a revolution, and thus allowing a new paradigm to oust the old.

According to Kuhn's characterization, then, normal science is inherently conservative in its immediate aim. It endeavours not to test or challenge so much as to confirm or 'articulate'. It seeks no counter-instances, but tries to fill in the detail of a paradigm by finding evidence for it. Fortunately, however, normal science also has an inherent rebellious streak whereby, after a certain period, it inevitably diverges from its pre-set path, bringing about a state of crisis for the incumbent paradigm. This, according to Kuhn, happens for two reasons. Firstly, because it is only in the context of a well-established paradigm that scientists can do the kind of esoteric and detailed research which gives rise to the recognition of (ever-present) anomalies, and therefore to dissatisfaction with the incumbent paradigm and eventually to revolution. And secondly, because 'The more precise and far-reaching... [the] paradigm is, the more sensitive an indicator it provides of anomaly and hence of an occasion for paradigm change' (1970 p.65). These circumstances are conducive to paradigm change, but the change itself must be catalysed by an intuition. In Kuhn's view, then, it is intuition, and not what he calls *rational* deliberation (i.e., on his view, the application of pre-established criteria or rules - rationality in our 'thin' sense) which permits the scientist to envision an alternative paradigm. Kuhn also claims that such revolutionary intuitions are usually triggered in the mind of the scientist by some personal quirk or chance event, but this arbitrariness does not necessarily infect the characterization of intuition itself. That the *genesis* of intuitions is subject to chance does not entail that matters of *justification* are also subject to chance. Thus, although Kuhn rightly emphasizes that the intuitive mode is misunderstood and distorted if it is transposed into (thin) rational form, we can say that the actual hypotheses arrived at by way of intuition are subject to standard procedures of justification within the existing paradigm, and integration into the existing body of scientific knowledge - knowledge which, unlike intuition, is of course structured in terms of laws and rules. In other words,

intuitions do not possess any extra justificatory weight merely in virtue of being intuitions; and if the relevant intuitive hypothesis is found to be justified, then it will no longer take intuitive form, but rather the usual law-like form of scientific theory.

I am using, then, a primarily methodological reading of Kuhn's remarks about intuition, which moreover would seem to reflect his intentions, as he affirms in the Postscript that it is a mistake to interpret him as 'trying to make science rest on unanalyzable individual intuitions rather than on logic and law' (1970 p.191). The conception of intuition gradually emerging presents it as a *mode of hypothesis formation*; we speak derivatively of the hypotheses themselves as 'intuitions'. This mode involves the ability to see a new problem as being *like* an old one, the ability to 'follow one's nose', to 'act on a hunch', to 'smell a rat', to 'play it by ear', to 'feel it in one's bones'... Language is rich in expressions for this cognitive mode, and yet it is too easily neglected in our conceptions of reason. The definitive feature of intuition in Kuhn's account, however - and this is essential to our purpose - is that it depends crucially upon *experience*. Scientists are able to have intuitions about how to solve new scientific puzzles in virtue of a stockpile of lessons learned from past experience. These lessons do not take the form of consciously held beliefs, but rather they amount to a *capacity* for increasingly educated hunches (regarding a particular subject matter) so internalized that the process by which we arrive at them is usually subconscious, so that the subject will not know quite by what train of thought she arrived at the intuited proposition.⁶ This is of course not to say that intuitive processes are irretrievably subconscious, since there is no reason to think it impossible retrospectively to retrace subjective associations or triggers for ideas.

We must be clear that in describing the workings of intuition as typically subconscious it is not being suggested that the intuitive mode of thought is just thinly rational thought *executed subconsciously*. That view would be no more compelling (or, rather we should say, no more obligatory, for some people do hold the view in question) than saying that when a tennis player hits the ball she must be subconsciously *making calculations* about where to move and when to hit the ball, using split-second estimates of its velocity, weight, shape etc. This is surely unconvincing. But the advocate of such a view may insist that analysing intuition as subconscious inference in this way nonetheless represents an attractive option. First, it is obviously conducive to the present aim of showing intuition to be a rational cognitive process; and, second, it succeeds

in explaining our capacity to draw subconsciously upon past experience (or so the advocate claims) without needing to posit any new kind of cognitive process.

In response to this we can clarify that it is in any case a feature of the present account that intuitions are 'drawn' from experience, in that the relation between a set of past experiences and any resultant intuition is an *evidential*, and hence rational, relation. But this by no means shows that inference of any kind is involved. The notion of subconscious inference - which would itself demand some explanation - could not do the job of intuition, because the notion of intuition is posited primarily (though not exclusively) to explain intellectual moves in circumstances where there simply is no inferential path available. When explaining how a subject arrived at a given hypothesis, any ascription of inference to that subject carries the necessary condition that the evidence available to her (consciously or subconsciously) was sufficient to license some series of inferences entailing the hypothesis. Yet in the sorts of intellectual moves I am suggesting we attribute to intuition, there is very often no such licence.

That there should have existed such an inferential path, then, is clearly a necessary condition for subconscious inference; but it is not a sufficient condition. Even in cases where there *was* an inferential path available to the subject, it does not follow that she in fact used it to reach her conclusion (consciously or subconsciously) - she may have intuited the conclusion regardless. In specific cases of this kind the competition between subconscious inference and intuition as rival accounts may be undecidable in practice, though in any given case there will presumably be a psychological fact of the matter as to which process actually occurred.

Intuitions, then, cannot be explained away simply by pointing to subconscious inference, for the simple reason that they tend to be underdetermined by the evidence. But in order to avoid ambiguity we should distinguish 'common' from 'philosophical' under-determination. I am not here invoking philosophical under-determination: *the* under-determination thesis, which states that theory is under-determined by data. That thesis is supposed to be universally applicable, so that even in cases where a theory seems 'to us' to be wholly determined by the evidence so that no other possible theory would do, this is so merely from the perspective of the practitioner - a perspective which is to be contrasted with that of the philosopher. Rather, my purpose is to invoke common under-determina-

tion: to remain within the perspective of the practitioner, and to appeal to the perfectly ordinary contrast between cases in which a given hypothesis is (by our lights) fully determined by the evidence, and cases where (by our lights) it is not. The notion of intuition is posited to explain a particular kind of intellectual step taken in cases of common under-determination, regardless of whether philosophical under-determination holds or not. In such cases the subject takes not so much a step as a leap from what we would commonly consider an inadequate evidence base to some more or less extravagant conclusion, as in Kuhn's examples of scientists who envision a possible new theory as yet unsubstantiated by normal science.

The proposed conception of intuition grows out of Kuhn's in both senses. I have taken certain elements of his account for granted, and they form the core conception (i.e. the contrast between intuition and 'rational' processes defined as adherence to pre-set criteria; and the idea that intuitive capacities issue from experience). But the emerging account is distinctive, and its application is far wider than that which Kuhn envisaged. Intuition has emerged as a non-inferential, typically subconscious mode of hypothesis formation. It constitutes a sub-personal level of cognitive operation that is crucial to rational inquiry, since it is primarily the intuitive mode which enables us to solve new problems in the light of old - a skill which is necessary in most, if not all, kinds of inquiry. As Kuhn points out, it is intuition which enables us to recognize a new question as being *like* one we have encountered in the past, and this is so even though we cannot pinpoint the respect in which they are alike, or say why or how we recognize the likeness. But given this characterization we might wonder why Kuhn saves intuition for the grand task of precipitating scientific revolutions. If our conception is right, then intuition must be constantly involved in normal science too, in problem solving activities of the most mundane and practical kinds. Consequently, the exclusively revolutionary office which Kuhn assigns it seems both too grand and too restrictive.

By contrast, Michael Polanyi - cited by Kuhn as the source for his model of intuition - takes the view that intuition is involved in *all* knowledge (Polanyi 1966). But if that means there is nothing which could not be known intuitively, then it seems excessive in the opposite direction. There are surely some facts which could not be known intuitively just for the reason that there is no possible human experience which could have any evidential bearing on the matter. For example, the proposition that a certain substance has a melting point of

10.3°C. There is no set of experiences which could nurture specifically the intuition that the melting point is 10.3° rather than, say, 10.2° or 10.4°, and so we may conclude that this sort of fact cannot be known *directly* by way of intuition. This, however, does not mean that there is some class of propositions whose very nature - and, in particular, whose relation to experience - makes it thoroughly immune to the intuitive mode, for it might be knowable *indirectly* via intuition. For example, one might have a correct intuition that a certain theory were right or a certain state of affairs obtained, where that theory or state of affairs entailed that the melting point of the substance in question was precisely 10.3°C. Intuition, then, can work indirectly as well as directly, and there would always be some story we could tell about any given fact to explain how it could be known indirectly by way of intuition. In this highly qualified sense we might concede that intuition is, or can be, involved in all kinds of knowledge, though let us emphasize that the indirect route does not produce genuine intuitions, for the hypotheses it produces are in fact arrived at by way of inference from something which just happens to be known intuitively. We could never actually have an intuition with the content 'the melting point of the substance is 10.3°C', even if that proposition were entailed by something we came to intuitively.

Bearing this sort of exception in mind, I nonetheless hope that the general point is sufficiently made that rational inquiry, both theoretical and practical, relies heavily upon the intuitive mode. Viewed in this light our standard conception of reason, in its negligence of intuition, looks excessively thin, excessively rationalistic.

3. What is Female about 'Female Intuition'?

If we extend a (thin) conception of reason to include the intuitive mode, then we achieve what I have called a rich conception of reason. A rich conception is non-dualistic in the sense that intuition, though a distinctive mode of cognition, has been identified as *internal* to reason, rather than contrasted with it. Intuition is properly described as rational in virtue of the fact that the relation between a set of past experiences and any resultant intuition is fundamentally an evidential relation, albeit under-determined and subconscious. There continue of course to be legitimate uses for a thin or technical conception of reason, to characterize routine logical operations, for example; the point is simply that it is a mistake to take such a technical conception as a general model of reason *per se*. The model of intuition so far elaborated is itself suffi-

cient to show that intuition of *this* kind is neither the enemy of reason, nor the exclusive province of women. But the question now facing us is whether this general model is a suitable one for the kind of intuition which is popularly supposed to be peculiar to women. I will argue that it is. In so far as there exists a phenomenon of female intuition - roughly, women exhibiting a particular range of intuitive capacities which men apparently lack - it will be shown to fit the model here presented, on the grounds that it exemplifies a cognitive mode which draws subconsciously on the fruits of experience as a source of hypotheses of one kind or another.

The notion 'female intuition' is vague, however, and perhaps a certain awkwardness is inevitable when philosophy addresses a varied and rather ill-defined (though no less ubiquitous) cultural idea or attitude. It would be inappropriate to impose a precise formulation, but perhaps, for the purposes of this discussion, we may accept that a paradigm case in which the cliché concept of female intuition tends to be applied is the case of a mother's intuitive capacity concerning the well-being of her children - an enhanced perceptiveness and foresight concerning the individuals in the family and their inter-personal relations. Clichés aside, it is surely not wrong to see this as a case of intuition. It is not remotely surprising that the social group which has by and large been assigned primary responsibility for childcare and managing family life has come to be associated with the relevant range of intuitive capacities. Many of the members of that social group are, after all, very likely to develop just these capacities in the course of their lives, for the simple reason that social conditioning makes it very likely that they undergo the relevant experiences: most notably, the actual experience of becoming a mother and all that that may entail in the specific cultural circumstance. The relevant intuitive capacities here will be those which aid the interpretation of children's behaviour, for example, or which permit a particularly finely tuned awareness of the psychological and emotional under-currents in family relations - although mere exposure to the relevant range of experiences is of course no guarantee of acquiring any particular intuitive capacity.

As one might expect, not all cases of intuition share the same qualitative character, since different activities will require the exercise of different sensibilities. Mothering, for example, may rely particularly heavily on emotional sensibilities, whereas scientific research may not. However, as regards its *structure* as a way of knowing, there is nothing remotely unusual about the mother's intuition re-

garding her children's psychological or emotional states. It fits our general model of intuition, for it involves a capacity for generating hypotheses regarding a particular subject matter, where these hypotheses are subconsciously informed by a relevant range of past experiences. 'Female intuition' is therefore no more mysterious or other-worldly than a scientist's hunch about a particular theory, or, for instance, a car mechanic's suspicion that, without knowing why, the peculiar starting problems with a given car might not be connected to the electrics, after all, but maybe to the carburettor. Intuitive insights concerning a specific range of problems are the product of a personal stock-pile of relevant experiences, and so they can seem surprising, baffling, or even mystical to an observer who has not shared the relevant range of experience.

The point, then, is that historically women have tended to fulfil a specific social role which encourages and develops intuition in a particular range of activities relating primarily to childcare and family management, and perhaps by extension to personal relationships more generally. But my aim is not to prove that mothers exhibit this kind of intuition (although I think they generally do); nor that mothers and non-mothers alike tend to exhibit this kind of intuition in virtue of a 'sex-gender system' where elements of maternal thinking contribute to gender-norms of femininity (although I think they do).⁸ Rather, my aim is to argue that in so far as women may exhibit this kind of intuitive capacity, the phenomenon is best understood as an instance of the same mode of hypothesis formation as in the cases of the scientist or the car mechanic, male or female.

This is not how female intuition is generally understood, however, for it tends to be subject to an unfortunate mystification, due to the fact that its manifestation can sometimes appear to the uninitiated as mysterious - as some kind of primal, quasi-telepathic Maternal Instinct.⁹ More than this, the romantic mystification has acted as a consolation prize for associating reason with masculinity. Instead of being put down to experience, as is the car mechanic's intuition, for instance, the woman's intuitions regarding her children are apparently held up as the product of her *sex*. Under this description, no wonder they appear mysterious. In the busy mundanity of everyday life, we catch the occasional glimpse of these alleged primordial *female* powers - when 'mother knows' what's making baby cry, or she foresees an impending accident and averts it in the nick of time. These glimpses can either be caught in the lens of an enduring romantic conception of The Maternal; or they can be viewed in the social context within which parental respon-

sibilities are assigned and sensibilities learned. The latter is surely the more convincing. What affords a mother such powers of perceptiveness, if she has them, is a wealth of experience of a thousand-and-one near misses, minor accidents, upsets and recoveries which are the stock-in-trade of parenting.¹⁰ Yet the mystified notion of female intuition would have us attribute the resultant intuitions to the mother's sex. But is she supposed to think with her womb? Rather they are more properly seen as a product of her gender, for it is culture more than nature which has gendered the division of labour in such a way as to assign women, historically speaking, the primary role in childcare and family management - a role which typically carries a certain range of experiences and therefore a likelihood of developing a certain range of intuitional skills. In this sense, the popular notion of female intuition conforms to a familiar pattern of the undermining of women's skills by false 'naturalization', whereby actual capabilities are construed as natural 'givens' of being female, rather than as skills which have to be learned.¹¹ This undermining treatment, however, is only part and parcel of the romantic mystification we have already observed, for it is surely one of the oldest lessons of feminism that excessive romanticization is closer to contempt than to respect.

4. The Rich Conception: reforming a dualism

A basic model of cognition strikingly analogous to Kuhn's account of the role of intuition in scientific progress is found in Daniel Dennett's 'Why the Law of Effect Will Not Go Away' (Dennett 1979). The details of his argument are not relevant here, but what is highly relevant is that it centres on a certain strategy in AI programming, 'generate-and-test':

The problem solver (or inventor) is broken down at some point or points into a generator and a tester. The generator throws up candidates for solutions or elements of solutions to the problems, and the tester accepts or rejects them on the basis of stored criteria (1979 p.81).

In the interpretation of Kuhn's remarks about intuition I employed a (non-sharp) distinction between the *genesis* and the *justification* of hypotheses. This enabled us to see intuition as a necessary part of scientific method, without this having any direct effect on how we should think about processes of justification. Dennett's generate-and-test schema is thus of interest here, for it neatly maps on to what we might call the 'intuit-and-justify' schema

which I extracted from Kuhn's account of scientific progress. In virtue of this mapping, the generate-and-test model supports our case, for it illustrates in the broader context of the philosophy of mind, rather than in scientific reasoning only, the necessary partnership of two distinct elements, one generative (intuition) and one selective (thin reason), within a unified process of cognition. In section two, the urge to think that intuition could be explained away by reduction to subconscious inference was resisted - an urge which seems compelling if one is in the grip of the excessively rationalistic conception of reason presently under attack. Generate-and-test suggests a picture of the mind which does not encourage that rationalistic conception; it encourages instead the proposed 'rich' conception of reason.

4.1. Problems with this Model

The above model so described, however, is oversimplified for our purposes. It is flawed as an account of the relation between intuition and thin reason because it fails to represent two distinct ways in which intuition plays a role of 'tester', and it fails to honour the 'generative' power of thin reason. As a result, the model effectively reasserts an overly dualistic and somewhat caricatured account. Although it depicts intuition as *internal* to reason - a substantial improvement on the dualist characterization - the essence of the dualist account is in effect reintroduced by featuring intuition as doing *all* the generating and thin rationality as doing *all* the testing. This, I would suggest, leads to misapprehensions about the nature of intuition and its role in thought.

The first problem, then, is that it caricatures intuition as a *random* intellectual sparking mechanism with no internal selective capacity of its own. All selective procedures are thought to be imposed by the 'test' component, of which the analogue here is thin reason. But this cannot be right. If intuition, as the 'generate' component, merely threw up new hypotheses randomly over an unrestricted field, then it could not possibly be of any use. Rather, our generative component must be random within a certain selected range of relevant possibilities, i.e. it must have some internal selective capacity of its own.

The second way in which the generate-and-test model, as it stands, fails to take account of the corrective role that intuition sometimes plays is familiar from ordinary philosophical method. While it is certainly a commonplace to change one's intuitions in the light of thinly rational efforts to make them consistent and systematic, for in-

stance, it is perhaps still more common that intuition should function as a normative standard with reference to which we may moderate the eccentricities of thinly rational deliberation. In philosophy, thin rational argument (the application of preset criteria of some kind, to continue with Kuhn's characterization) may lead to conclusions which we find intuitively unacceptable, and when this happens it is frequently taken as a sign that there is something wrong with the theory. Crude Utilitarian principle, for example, unchecked by moral intuition, can lead to notoriously wayward conclusions. Hence the need for intuition to function as a 'test' or corrective on such occasions, and perhaps to bring about refinements in the relevant principles. Here I permit myself to draw specifically upon moral intuition in order to make points about intuition in general, because, although moral intuition may have a distinctive character of its own, it nonetheless fits our general model if, in an Aristotelian frame of mind, we come to see it as the internalization of lessons learned from the past experiences that are brought by an appropriate moral 'upbringing'.

The third problem relates to the characterization of thin rationality as a 'tester' and nothing but a tester. This may be its primary role, but I would suggest that thin rationality can also function as a 'generator' of sorts, not only in the negative sense just mentioned that it is commonly susceptible to correction by intuition, but also in the positive sense that it can lead one to unexpected and illuminating insights. Thin rationality may never quite take the form of a flash of inspiration, but it can certainly transport one, step by step, to unforeseen destinations. Novel conclusions may be reached merely by following through the logical implications of a given philosophical principle, for example. Or, as A.J. Ayer has pointed out, the working out of a priori truths - mere tautologies, on his view - can genuinely illuminate our thinking, if only for the reason that we are not logically omniscient (Ayer 1938 pp.116-8).

In response to these three caveats concerning the corrective power of intuition and the innovative potential of thin reason, we should think of the two not as playing fixed and wholly discrete roles of 'generator' and 'tester', but rather as playing interchangeable roles. Furthermore, there is no algorithm to decide for us when we should give intuition priority over thin rationality or vice versa. We just have to find a 'reflective equilibrium' between the two (Rawls 1972). We might picture intuition and thin rationality as weighing down either side of a pair of scales where each acts as a responsive counter-balance to the other. There is no guaran-

tee, of course, that human subjects will always succeed in maintaining such an equilibrium of judgement, but in so far as they do we might see this, also in an Aristotelian vein, as a kind of *epistemic* maturity, itself an intuitive capacity produced by the range of experiences that is afforded by an appropriate epistemic training or 'upbringing'.

But now we must ask whether my interpretations of Kuhn and Dennett can be adequately refined to take account of the above three caveats. It seems that they can in part, for my interpretation has so far been deliberately simplified. Less so in the case of Kuhn than Dennett, however, for Kuhn is perhaps himself responsible for a certain simplification. While he obviously does not intend to present scientific intuition as completely arbitrary, he does remain dangerously silent about what might normatively constrain the formation of a given intuition in order to ensure that it is not a completely arbitrary process. This silence is somewhat provocative given his emphasis on the causal role of what are indisputably arbitrary influences, such as personal quirks, in the conceiving of new paradigms. Dennett, however, specifically discusses the non-arbitrariness required of the 'generate' component of generate-and-test when he notes that the generative mechanism in a computer, if it is to be more likely to throw up good ideas than bad, cannot be simply arbitrary. Rather, the desired novelty of newly generated hypotheses not only relies on there being a 'fortuitous' (in the sense of non-pre-programmed) element but also an element of 'appropriateness' (hence his use of the word 'fortuitous' rather than 'random'). Dennett's comments here may partially reassure us, since they do illustrate how the generate-and-test model can reflect the fact that intuition, in virtue of its evidential relation to experience, is a non-arbitrary source of innovative hypotheses. This satisfies the first of our three concerns (that intuition is falsely depicted as random), and thereby explains the second (that intuition sometimes serves as a 'tester') by reminding us that its rootedness in experience ensures that intuition merits such a part-time corrective role. However, these points still fail to honour the thought that intuition and thin reason sometimes swap roles altogether, revealing their inter-regulative relation.

It would seem, then, that generate-and-test remains an imperfect model for the relation between intuition and thin reason. But perhaps the discussion has nonetheless furthered our understanding of how profoundly the two are inter-related. Their apparently exclusive and fixed roles in reasoning turn out to be inter-changeable, since each can in different ways function as a corrective to the other,

just as each can in different ways function as an inspiration to the other. However, despite this close inter-relation we may still take the view that the primary or most usual roles of intuition and thin reason are as a generator and a tester respectively, where this generalization is now qualified by the acknowledgements: firstly, that such innovation consists not in the generator sparking at random, but rather sparking 'fortuitously'; secondly, that thin reason is not our only means of testing new ideas; and, thirdly, that intuition does not have a monopoly on innovation. Once we understand the co-operative inter-relation between intuition and thin reason, we can appreciate how generate-and-test still provides the rule of thumb for the internal structure of reason in our 'rich' sense.

5. The Holistic Structure of Philosophical Revolutions?

To recap: my line of attack on the original dualism between reason and intuition was to reject the dualism utterly by arguing, with reference to Kuhn, that intuition is internal to reason. This raised the question of the relation, *within* reason, between intuitive and thinly rational cognitive modes, and I attacked an overly dualistic view of that internal relation by setting out the functional inter-changeability between the two sides of the supposed dualism. These arguments, if successful, undermine any overly dualistic interpretation of the relation (within reason) between intuition and thin rationality, but they do not attack the idea that there is an important distinction to be drawn between the two as different modes of cognition. In fact my characterization of intuition has precisely involved an elaboration of the distinction. Thus I have taken an essentially revisionist stance which might seem to some tastes not to go far enough in dismantling an oppressively dualist philosophical framework. A brief account, then, of how the proposed view of intuition relates to the general theme of anti-dualism in feminist thought is, perhaps, called for.

Is it a shortcoming not to reject *the very distinction* between intuition and thin rationality? Some theorists write as if any distinction amounts to a dualism, where any dualism must automatically be a masculinist construction. If I read her correctly, Susan Hekman, for instance, thinks that all dualisms are necessarily ranked or hierarchical, and that this ranking is inevitably gendered in a way which disadvantages women. She asserts, for example, that 'The hierarchy implicit in the rational/irrational dichotomy is not external to it; it cannot

simply be reversed, leaving the dichotomy itself intact' (Hekman 1990 p.41) and as a result she sees it as a fatal flaw in the socialist/radical critique of liberal feminism that it 'does not repudiate the dichotomy that lies at the heart of liberal feminism: rational/irrational' (1990 p.48). On such an approach, there is no room for *revising* conceptions of reason in any way, for the very distinction between rational and irrational is seen as a dualism *necessarily* gendered and ranked so as to privilege the masculine. I do not wish to over-simplify Hekman's position, and the comments quoted come within the context of a discussion of Enlightenment thought in which ranked and gendered dualisms are perhaps justifiably seen as fundamental. However, my aim is to give some philosophical backing to the simple point (though no less true for that) that it is not the existence of distinctions between, say, reason and emotion or reason and intuition that is the problem, but rather the falsely hierarchical and gendered conception of such distinctions which we may have had the misfortune to inherit.

Feminist philosophers have produced many convincing arguments to the effect that the western intellectual tradition is characterised by a system of dualisms - public/private, mind/body, culture/nature, reason/emotion, and (I would add) reason/intuition - where these map onto a further dualism, male/female, of which the male-dominance sets the gendered ranking for the other pairs of terms. Thus the influence which these gendered dualisms have on western thought is subtle but pervasive, making itself felt via a complex system of associations. Dispiriting though this thought may be, it still falls short of an argument for saying that dualisms are necessarily and irredeemably ranked and/or gendered. If the task of neutralizing a given dualism should prove impossible, then this is not because the very nature of dualisms makes it *in principle* impossible to re-characterize them. Rather, the problem is that to suggest a way of neutralizing just one of many dualisms with respect to gender is bound to have negligible effect, since a single localized effort cannot possibly transform an entire system of ideas at one go. The problem, then, has a holistic character, and Moira Gatens provides one example of this inter-relatedness when she says: 'One cannot...rethink women's social role and status without also rethinking our conceptions of nature, passion and the body' (Gatens 1991 p.123). The most powerful ideas make their presence felt holistically; and thus so called revisionist and radical feminist arguments alike will not be able to make their influence properly felt until the implications of feminist philosophical critique permeate the system of ideas as a whole. However, while it is right to acknowledge

the extremely restrictive context in which efforts at intellectual reform must take place; equally one must not under-estimate the radical potential of an accumulation of localized efforts. A few extra grains of sand can precipitate the subsidence of an entire dune, after all, and it is in this spirit that I offer these comments about the both falsely gendered and falsely ranked conception of the relation between intuition and thin rationality. Come the subsidence, it *will* be possible to assert important distinctions, such as that between rational and irrational, without this way of talking automatically invoking an entire system of ranked associations which implicitly denigrate women. It is the gender-hierarchical organization of the categories in these dualisms that must be undermined, and how else could this be achieved but by a gradual process of reconceptualization informed by a more subtle understanding of their inter-relations? ¹⁵

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Notes:

1. Certain sections of this paper are reproduced here by kind permission of *The Philosophical Quarterly* ('Intuition and Reason' Vol.45 No.179, April 1995). The paper as a whole is also published in *Women: A Cultural Review* ('Why Female Intuition?' Autumn 1995 Vol.6 No.2) and I am grateful to the editors and to Oxford University Press for permission to reprint.
2. See, for example, Genevieve Lloyd (1984), Jean Grimshaw ch.2 (1986), and Moira Gatens (1991).
3. See, for example, the articles by Alison Jaggar, Elizabeth Spelman and Lorraine Code in Garry & Pearsall (eds.) (1989); and Fricker (1991).
4. An issue which includes the question of intuition was brought to widespread attention by Carol Gilligan in her critique of the theory of cognitive moral development associated with Jean Piaget and Lawrence Kohlberg (Gilligan 1982). Gilligan's work can certainly be read as involving a vindication of an intuitive style of ethical thought. However, the main argument does not involve intuition *per se*, for the key contrast is between a style of thought characterized by the application of abstract moral principles, as opposed to a more particularist engagement with the concrete individuals and their relationships with each other.
5. For example: 'Notice now that two groups, the members of which have systematically different sensations on receipt of the same stimuli, do *in some sense* live in different worlds' (Kuhn 1979 p.193; original italics).
6. For a distinctive approach to this feature (among

others) of intuitive thought, see Michael Polanyi's *The Tacit Dimension* (Polanyi 1966).

7. I make no claim about quite how ubiquitous either the idea or the phenomenon of female intuition may be in different cultures or through different historical eras. Nor, therefore, do I attempt to specify the scope of my comments. I make my points in a fairly general way precisely in order to leave the question *open*, and, needless to say, not because I presume any of my remarks, if true at all, are either timeless or universally so.

8. By the 'sex-gender system' I mean whatever psycho-social system it is that establishes gender-norms, and thereby transforms, as it were both actually and symbolically, 'female' to 'woman'. See Sandra Harding's use of this term (Harding 1983); or Seyla Benhabib's equivalent use of 'gender-sex system' (Benhabib 1992).

9. There is a good deal of overlap in popular parlance between the notion of 'female intuition' and the notion of 'maternal instinct', and as far as the two coincide the same deflationary comments apply to each. But in as far as these comments do apply to maternal instinct, my intention is not to deny that there exist *any* biologically determined instincts relating to maternity, for such a denial would surely be false and certainly unnecessary for the current project of demystifying and vindicating intuition.

10. See Sara Ruddick's 'Maternal Thinking' (Ruddick 1980).

11. See Cynthia Cockburn's discussion of the sexual division of labour in industry, and how, for example, even the most complicated sewing machinist jobs have been deemed low-skilled because 'sewing' has been thought of as some kind of natural capacity of women (Cockburn 1986).

12. A remark made by Robert Nozick indicates a notable example of a philosopher's theory actually changing his intuitions. In the preface to *Anarchy, State, and Utopia* he writes, almost apologetically, '*With reluctance, I found myself becoming convinced of (as they are now often called) libertarian views, due to various considerations and arguments*' (p.ix; italics added).

13. See McDowell (1978), or Burnyeat (1980).

14. See the citations in Note 2.

15. I am grateful to Jennifer Hornsby, Sabina Lovibond, and Bernard Williams for their comments on earlier drafts.