



WOMEN'S PHILOSOPHY REVIEW

Issue No 16 December 1996

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editorial

The *Women's Philosophy Review* is on the move. Every so often in the (short) history of the Society there has been a surge of energy and expansion: beginning to call conferences, starting a Newsletter, forming a Society, organising bigger and longer conferences, and producing a book (the Special Issue, last year). It is good to look back and remember it was only about twelve or thirteen years ago that the first tentative moves were made to bring women philosophers together into the same room to discuss things.

Now here we go again. This is the last editorial that Morwenna and Margaret will be writing together. The *Women's Philosophy Review* is getting a new editorial team (which will include Margaret but not Morwenna), and will be supported by an executive. There are plans for expanding in all directions (see reports on the SWIP general meeting below). We have enjoyed being part of this story through editing the *Review* in its present form and look forward to the next chapter.

*Morwenna Griffiths
Margaret Whitford*

thank you

A big 'Thank you' to
Jacqui Clay
at the
*University of
Nottingham*
who has been typing
and formatting the
Review with
extraordinary speed
and efficiency for
many years. We
could not have
managed without her.

material for the next Women's Philosophy Review

Reviews should be sent as usual to
Margaret Whitford
French Department
Queen Mary and Westfield College
Mile End Rd, London E1 4NS

*Details of forthcoming workshops and
conferences* should be sent to the
News Co-ordinator

Alison Stone
Postgraduate Pigeonholes
ENGAM
Arts B, University of Sussex
Falmer, East Sussex, BN1 9QN
(email alison.l.stone@btinternet.com)

*Please notify any change of address and
email addresses to*

Kimberly Hutchings
Politics Dept, University of Edinburgh
31 Buccleuch Place, Edinburgh, EH8 9JT
(email Khutch@afb1.ssc.ed.ac.uk)

All other Review material
feedback, conference reports, offers of
help, details for networking, small ads,
ideas for publicity and anything else
should be sent to
Christine Battersby,
Department of Philosophy,
University of Warwick,
Coventry CV4 7AL
email C.Battersby@warwick.ac.uk (work)
(home) 100707.3333@compuserve.com

Deadlines and formats

Please send all material in *hard copy*, as
well as on a *Mac or PC disc*.

Save document as normal, but also
provide an extra copy in RFT format.

**Material for the next issue of WPR
should reach the editors by
30 April 1997**

*Please send your email address to the SWIP treasurer, Kimberly Hutchings, if you have not
already done so.*

announcements

Joint Session

July 11th to 14th 1997

University of Warwick

A seminar, at a time yet to be fixed—

- *Helen Longino* 'What can social epistemology offer feminism?'
- *Kathleen Lennon* respondent
- *Christine Battersby* chair

For the first time Feminist Philosophy will be included in the annual *Joint Session of the Aristotelian Society and the Mind Association*, which thinks of itself as the most important annual gathering of philosophers in Britain.

Papers—published in advance, in the May Supplementary Volume—discussed on the day, not read. The support of feminist philosophers will be particularly welcome on this significant occasion.

The full cost of the conference will be in the region of £120 (including en suite accommodation and food), with scope for reduced fees for those attending part only, for non-residents and also reduced student rates.

For further details about bookings and cost contact

Dr Michael Luntley, Dept of Philosophy,
University of Warwick, Coventry, CV4 7AL.
pyrbv@snow.csv.warwick.ac.uk

Student subsidies are allocated by lot. Details in the current edition of the *Proceedings*.

Graduate students are invited to send in short papers, the best of which will be presented at the Joint Session, with the possibility of publication for the very best. Programme co-ordinator

Dr Jo Wolff
University College, London,
Email j.wolff@ucl.ac.uk

Professor Drucilla Cornell

Author of *The Imaginary Domain : Abortion, Pornography and Sexual Harassment* (reviewed this issue) and many other books will be resident in the UK, and offering an MA course relating to her work in Feminist Theory and Jurisprudence from April 16-28 May 1997.

For further details contact

Mrs Debbi Deely,
The Graduate Secretary,
Philosophy Department, University of
Warwick, Coventry, CV4 7AL.
email D.S.Deely@warwick.ac.uk

* ethics at the beginning and end of life *

As part of the continuing lecture series, *The Wellesley Club of England* is presenting

Dr. Ifeanyi A. Menkiti
Professor of Philosophy at Wellesley College. Dr. Menkiti is the 1996 winner of the Pinanski Award for teaching excellence. He will be joined by Dr. Brad Hooker from the University of Reading for a lecture and discussion on the above topic

Thursday 9 January at 8pm

Doors will open at 7pm for refreshments.

Issues to be included in the discussion will be court-ordered medical and surgical treatment, ethics of infertility treatment, euthanasia, and an individual's right to make morally private choices.

This very thought-provocative evening will be held at the University Women's Club, 2 Audley Square, South Audley St, London

Tickets are £5 in advance or £6 at the door. Register by sending a cheque to Elizabeth Paulson at 26 Ossington St, London. For enquiries please telephone Pat Barki on 01734 835823.

*** a call for papers ***

Body Matters II

The Body Matters conference continues to offer an open forum for the exchange and consideration of conceptions, experiences and uses of the body as seen in a diversity of practices and disciplines.

Papers are sought on all aspects of the body from all areas, be they theoretical, practical, artistic or political.

deadline for abstract submission

January 31 1997

conference dates

4-5 July 1997

Enquiries, Abstracts and Papers to : Body Matters II, Philosophy Department, University of Hull UK, HU6 7RX.
Phone 01482 465 995,
e-mail : S.A.Burwood@phil.hull.ac.uk.
Fax : 01482 466 122.

Contacts : Stephen Burwood, Lawrence Nixon at Hull.

*** announced in
WPR 15 ***

1-6 July 1997

Conference on Nationalism and Racism in the Liberal Order in the Czech Republic

U.K. Contact : Dr Bob Brecher, University of Brighton, 01273-643309

17-19 July 1997

Transformations.

Conference at the University of Lancaster including Avtar Brah, Judith Butler, G. C. Spivak, Gail Ching-Liagn Low, Moira Gatens, Jean Grimshaw, Sneja Gunew, Donna Haraway, Joanna Hodge, Anne McLintock, Maureen McNeil, Elspeth Probyn, Valerie Walkerdine

Contact: Sara Ahmad at Lanacaster
email S.Ahmad@Lancaster.ac.uk

*** Women's Studies Group
1500-1825***

Sun. 5/1/97 at St John's College, Oxford

Annual joint meeting with the *British Society for Eighteenth Century Studies* includes

3 p.m. Jacqueline Labbe on Elizabeth Carter's Radical Conservatism
also

2 p.m. Marilyn Butler on The Woman's Novel and the New Anthropology

Other BSECS meetings that day are open to paid-up members of the WSG.

small ad

Patricia A. Barki

Philosopher of Feminist Jurisprudence is seeking teaching availabilities in all areas of Women's Studies and Feminist Philosophy, with an emphasis on law. Also available for seminars, lectures, part-time/adult and Open Studies courses. Willing to travel.

Patricia Barki has 20 years active experience in the rights of women field, and a double BA in Philosophy and Women's Studies from Wellesley College (US). Particular research are interests in women and jurisprudence and reproductive jurisprudence.

CV available on request to
47 Horseshoe Crescent,
Burghfield Common,
Reading, Berkshire, RG7 3XW.
Or telephone (0)1734-835823

call for details

Have you had an article on feminist philosophy published?

Or an article on gender issues that might interest philosophers?

Or an article which might be of use to those working on gender issues?

Future issues of this journal will begin to build up a listing of articles published by SWIP members

Information about books also welcome

Please send details to Christine Battersby
(address p. 2) On hard copy and disc.

report on special general meeting of SWIP 21/10/96

If members have any comments to make on the proposals and policies put forward in this report, please send them in writing to Kimberly Hutchings. If any members would like to participate in the SWIP executive committee, please contact the convenor, Stella Sandford.

Present : K Lennon; M Dhanda; S Ali; M Fricker; A Assiter; M Whitford; S Sandford; C Battersby; A Klaushofer; J Hornsby; A Stone; G Jagger; K Hutchings.

1. Written contributions.

- Jan Feore (Edinburgh University Press) expressed interest in proposal to publish SWIP journal professionally.
- Pat Fitzgerald sent information about publishing journal for ASLP and about Standing Order method of subscription payment (KH agreed to implement advice about the SO subscription method).
- Anne Louise Gilligan congratulated Morwenna Griffiths and Margaret Whitford for their work on the *Review* and expressed interest in organising SWIP branch in Ireland.
- Andrea Rehberg asked for SWIP meetings to be held at weekends (it was noted that a weekday meeting had been specifically requested for the Special General Meeting). She also asked for a vote on the question of excluding men from SWIP meetings/conferences (it was noted that previous policy had been to leave this up to the discretion of conference convenors).
- Nicola Foster regretted absence and argued that an Editorial Board was desirable for the *Review* on grounds of stability, workload and broadness of philosophical perspective (*Radical Philosophy* model suggested), and she expressed her willingness to serve on the Editorial Board. She supported idea of *Review* being available to non-members, libraries etc. and suggested that SWIP subscription rates should distinguish between part-time and full-time waged.

- Nancy Cartwright sent apologies and encouragement.

2. Future editorship and editorial policy of *Review*

i. Future

- CB suggested future format of *Review* as a reviews based journal (similar to *Philosophical Books*) with a Special Issue each year for articles.
- There was considerable discussion of whether Special Issue should utilise papers from SWIP conferences. In the end it was agreed that all submitted articles would be refereed, but that contributors to SWIP conferences would be encouraged to submit their papers for the Special Issue.
- Editorship of the Special Issue would rotate annually and Special Issues might be theme based or general. It is proposed that the *Review* should have a semi-detached relationship to SWIP.
- SWIP would continue to focus on the needs of women working with and in philosophy. The *Review* would focus on work on feminist philosophy, and on work in feminist and gender theory likely to be of interest to philosophers. It was stressed that both 'philosophy' and 'feminism' would be interpreted in a broad sense, so as to continue to reflect the diverse philosophical interests of SWIP members.

ii. Editorship :

- CB agreed to take over as Editor of the *Review* and to convene an editorial board representative of the range of work in feminist philosophy in the UK. This board would include professionally established philosophers, together with some younger scholars, so as to try and ensure a transfer of skills.
- MW's offer to carry on as Book Reviews editor was warmly received. The Editorial Board would form the pool of people from whom editors of the annual Special Issue could be drawn. KL praised the *Radical Philosophy* model and argued for a large editorial board, since at any given time only

certain members would be able to do the work.

- In addition to members present and Nicola Foster, CB agreed to approach the following as participants in the editorial board: Anne Seller; Morwenna Griffiths; Alessandra Tanesini; Susan Mendus; Jean Grimshaw; Mary Midgley; Nancy Cartwright; Sabina Lovibond; Joanna Hodge; Anne-Louise Gilligan.

iii. **Policy**

- It was noted that the long term aim should be to get the *Review* recognised as a respected Philosophy journal, with anonymous reviewers for articles and libraries and colleagues consulting it for reviews of recent books on feminist philosophy. The medium term aim would be to get the *Review* professionally produced and published and available to a public beyond SWIP membership. However, MW pointed out that it would take time to attain these goals, and that it was important to develop in a gradual fashion.

3. **SWIP executive, aims of SWIP, relation between SWIP and *Review***

- i. **It was agreed** that a consequence of changes envisaged for the *Review* would be that the journal would become semi-detached from the Society (although it would continue to be free to SWIP members) and that eventually the Newsletter function of the *Review* might become a separate and more frequent publication of the Society.

- For the present the *Review* would continue to include all Newsletter material (networking, information about conferences, professional support items). Alison Stone agreed to act as co-ordinator of news items for the immediate future.

- ii. **It was agreed** that the SWIP executive committee should now comprise :

- **Convenor**
- **Treasurer/ Membership Secretary**
- **News Co-ordinator**
- **Regional Representatives**
- **Editor of *Review*** (or other liaison person representing *Review* editorial board).

- The Executive committee should meet once a year (travel expenses paid) and be responsible for sustaining and expanding membership numbers, representing the views of members, ensuring annual SWIP meetings/conferences take place, networking and disseminating information of interest to women in philosophy, providing professional support and lobbying on behalf of women in philosophy.

- iii. **Current Membership** of Executive Committee (addresses listed at the end of the Report) :

- Stella Sandford (Convenor and London Rep)
- Kimberly Hutchings (Treasurer/ Membership Secretary and Scotland Rep)
- Christine Battersby (*Review* Editor and Midlands Rep)
- Meena Dhanda (Midlands Rep)
- Alessandra Tanesini (Wales Rep)
- Alison Stone (News Co-ordinator and South East Rep)
- Kathleen Lennon (North East Rep)
- Gill Jagger (North East Rep)
- Carol Haynes-Curtis (South West Rep)
- Jean Grimshaw (South West Rep)
- Anne Louise Gilligan (Ireland Rep)

- More Reps are needed for the North West in particular. Volunteers should contact the Convenor, Stella Sandford.

- **iv. Next meeting**

- Stella Sandford agreed to convene a meeting of the Executive in Spring 1997.

4. **Subscription**

- i. **It was agreed** that members should be able to pay by Standing Order.

- ii. **It was agreed** that from 1997, subscriptions would be £20 waged, £10 p/t waged, £5 unwaged. This will be kept under review, in the light of the needs of the journal (which will no longer be subsidised by the University of Nottingham), and the need to develop a broad base of SWIP members in schools, in further education and amongst students.

- iii. **KH reported** that SWIP funds were currently low because we hadn't yet recouped the costs of the 1996 Special Issue.

- The Radical Philosophy Conference on Feminist Philosophy was to be used to promote SWIP, sell Special Issues and recruit members. KL asked that the Executive make it a matter of priority to promote and advertise SWIP, since it was still too little known. Any member willing to sell the Special Issue at conferences or to friends or colleagues should contact KH who will make copies available. From now on new members will not be entitled to a free copy of the Special Issue, but can buy it for the reduced price of £5. Membership forms can also be obtained from KH.

5. Conference 1997

Alison Assiter reported that Luton would be willing to host a SWIP conference in 1997. [Alison can be contacted on e-mail on aassiter@luton.ac.uk]

6. AOB

MD offered to set up a WWW page for SWIP and all present agreed this would be an excellent idea.

7. PS

i) After the meeting a letter was received from Jacquie Swift, which made the following points :

- a) a plea that any changes to the *Review* should not over-academicise the content and that the editorial policy should remain very open;
- b) a note about the work involved in both extending professional support networks and the market for the *Review* but that both developments would be welcome;
- c) a note about the usefulness of Direct Debit schemes and a willingness to pay £7.50 subscription as an unwaged member.

ii) After the meeting

Anne Seller volunteered to be a second regional rep. for the South-East.

Addresses of Executive Members

- Stella Sandford Flat B,
38 Dunsmore Rd,
London N16 5PW

- Kimberly Hutchings
Politics Dept,
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Ground Floor Flat,
52 Pennsylvania Rd.,
Exeter, Devon EX4
- Jean Grimshaw
North View, Dundry Lane,
Dundry, Bristol BS18 8JG
 - Anne Louise Gilligan
The Shanty,
Glanvarneen, Brittas,
Co. Dublin, Ireland
- Ann Seller
Philosophy Department,
University of Kent,
Canterbury.

**MARTHA NUSSBAUM, RATIONALIST
AND HUMANIST :
DISCUSSION AND REPORT**

Martha Nussbaum is a resolute defender of Aristotelian rationalism and universalism, suitably reconceived. In fact, she is an old-style humanist, if ever I've met one (and I use this term here not pejoratively, but descriptively, even admiringly). In the current climate, this means she is a predictable target for criticism from both postmodernists and (some) feminists. And she has criticised (some) feminists in her turn for their 'unreasonable' critique of reason. Does this mean that her arguments are 'regressive' or that she displays a 'reactionary attitude towards feminist philosophy', as Joanna Kerr has recently contested in the 1996 Special Issue of *Women's Philosophy Review*, *Women Review Philosophy*, (pp. 92, 99)? I do not think so. In fact she is a feminist philosopher herself by at least one characterisation of us; as Grimshaw describes our activities in her *Feminist Philosophers*, '[f]eminist thinking is . . . both anchored in and, in various ways, critical of certain major philosophical traditions' (Grimshaw 1986, p. 4). Feminists do not think in a vacuum, and just how much of philosophical traditions, theories and concepts we reject, how much we refashion and reinterpret, and how much we endorse and maybe use in new ways is surely a matter of degree and open to disagreement. In fact, this is where feminist philosophers start arguing with each other—most usefully, as far as I am concerned, if polemics are avoided. Accusing each other of being 'reactionary' or not really feminist, or of being 'bad' feminists, however, is pure polemics. Let's not police what feminist philosophers get up to, and stew in safe uniformity; let many philosophies bloom!

As far as Kerr's substantive argument is concerned, it would obviously take more space to engage with at length, but I would like to draw attention to one point which seems to me to be mistaken. Kerr argues that feminists have to 'reject reason' be-

cause reason is invariably defined in a male-biased way which associates the 'other' of reason with women, and because, consequently, such a 'rejection of reason is a strategy designed to draw attention to the terms involved when we are talking about reason and the rational' (ibid. p. 92). What reason does Kerr reject, however? Is it reason as such, or reason as traditionally (with male-bias) defined? Is it Platonic, Cartesian or Kantian reason? Is it Aristotelian, Humean, Rousseauesque or Wollstonecraftian reason? Kerr's rejection of reason, in other words, is ambiguous between two possibilities: 1) the rejection of reason as such, which would make a feminist reconstruction and reconceptualisation of reason impossible; or 2) the rejection of male-biased conceptions and evaluations of reason, which leaves the question of reconceptualisation and revaluation open. Given her spirited argument against Nussbaum, I doubt that Kerr really means to opt for (1), short of undercutting her own power of reasoned exchange with others, feminist philosophers included. Furthermore, like Nussbaum, I believe that one of the powers of the oppressed lies in reasoning with their oppressors, if the oppressed are to improve their lot, even if sometimes at the expense of having to adopt the oppressors' way of reasoning for strategic purposes. It is exactly the definition of the oppressors as in possession of reason that makes oppressors vulnerable to that strategy, i. e. vulnerable to appeals to their reason. These appeals may take some time to be heeded, but we did eventually win the vote, enter the professions, even become professors of philosophy. Agreeing to any of these claims, which I hope Kerr would do, does not commit feminists to male-biased conceptions of reason, however, beyond the position that it may be strategically useful to conform to them; we can engage in hitherto acceptable forms of reasoning while working towards new and less biased conceptions of what reasoning consists in.

I take it that it is such a reconstructive project that Kerr embraces herself when she refers, somewhat programmatically, to 'reconstructive feminist philosophy' (p. 93, cf. p. 95). Endorsing that, however, does not commit her to rejecting reason as such

(option 1), but only to rejecting male-biased conceptions of reason (option 2), and, as I have argued above, it would be a grave philosophical and strategic mistake to opt for (1). Kerr, therefore, will find herself endorsing the same position as Nussbaum, namely (2), whilst probably being somewhat more radical in her reconstruction of reason than Nussbaum. There is no doubt, however, and Kerr acknowledges this herself, that Nussbaum is involved in an extended reconstructive project herself. Whilst using Aristotle's philosophy as a framework for her own work, Nussbaum will not hesitate to leave Aristotle behind in advocating women's equal rights and denouncing the injustice of women's lesser capabilities (Nussbaum 1995). Nussbaum also uses Aristotle's account of virtue and an Aristotelian understanding of the role of literature in order to criticise overly rationalist approaches in ethics (Nussbaum 1987). Moreover, some of Nussbaum's most interesting work in the last few years has been on a theory of the emotions, presented in the Gifford lectures in 1993, which are to be published in 1997. Nussbaum, then, while undoubtedly a believer in reason, does not share the narrow focus and conceptions of reason philosophy has been lumbered with.

Nussbaum discussed two fine pieces of work at an afternoon event at the London School of Economics, organised by the Gender Institute in conjunction with the Centre for the Philosophy of Natural and Social Sciences on 2 May 1996. In the first, workshop session, she responded to questions and comments on her paper 'Human Capabilities, Female Human Beings', which contains an extended argument for using Amartya Sen's (universalist) human capabilities approach in the context of discussing women's position, needs and interests in developing countries (Nussbaum 1995). In the second session, she gave a paper on 'Compassion in Public Life', developing an argument for compassion as a vital social emotion needed in the various walks of social life, such as moral education, economic thought and social policy, legal rationality and public institutions. (cf. Nussbaum forthcoming). (Nussbaum's defence of compassion against an insistence on reason, narrowly conceived, is a good and typical example of the kind of reconstruction Nussbaum engages in.) The audiences in both events were quite mixed—certainly not exclusively philosophers—and the response from the audience was very lively

and equally mixed. Clearly, Nussbaum's Aristotelian approach gets people going, one way or another. In criticising her from a feminist perspective, it is easy to take her to task for not being a radical enough feminist, both in her work and in her politics—especially after her recent defence of liberal feminism in her Oxford Amnesty lecture (see *précis* in Nussbaum 1996). But the substance of her work is both courageous in its defence of universalism and rationalism, and creative in her usage and interpretation of Aristotelian and other canonical philosophy. I hope that even those who disagree with her would want to give her credit for that.

REFERENCES

- Grimshaw, Jean (1986), *Feminist Philosophers: Women's Perspectives on Philosophical Traditions*, Brighton: Wheatsheaf.
- Kerr, Joanna (1996), 'Martha Nussbaum and Unreasonable Philosophy' in Morwenna Griffiths and Margaret Whitford (eds), *Women Review Philosophy: New Writing by Women in Philosophy*, University of Nottingham.
- Nussbaum, Martha (1987), *Love's Knowledge: Essays on Philosophy and Literature*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Nussbaum, Martha (1995), 'Human Capabilities, Female Human Beings' in Martha Nussbaum and Jonathan Glover (eds), *Women, Culture and Development: A Study of Human Capabilities*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Nussbaum, Martha (1996), 'The Sleep of Reason...'; *Times Higher Education Supplement*, February 1996.
- Nussbaum, Martha (forthcoming), 'Compassion: The Basic Social Emotion', *Social Philosophy and Policy*.

Diernut Bubeck,
London School of Economics

THE LANGUAGE OF LEARNING ; NARRATIVE AND ASSESSMENT IN THE UNIVERSITIES

As every academic knows, universities are currently undergoing a dual form of assessment exercise : research is to be assessed by the Research Assessment Exercise and teaching through Teaching Quality Assessment. Both exercises are, of course, about maintaining and manipulating mass higher education with limited resources and as such they have both secured the endless diversion of staff time.

Much of that time, at least as far as the Teaching Quality Assessment exercise is concerned, must be directed at attempting to make sense, at a level of basic understanding, of the Assessor's Handbook. Laurie Taylor has already pointed out that the differences between 'aims' and objectives (page 11 of Handbook) are not just confusing, but may actually not exist except in the over-heated imagination of academic bureaucrats. Nevertheless, academics are defenceless in the face of the demand that a statement of up to 500 words be produced to set out their goals and purposes or even, as they used to say, reasons. But aims and objectives have a more directional, a more map-reading tone to them, which suits the quasi-military exercise tone of the Handbook. A 'reason', after all, implies the possibility of thought, discussion and debate, which are clearly inappropriate on what is defined as an educational 'mission'.

The idea of the TQA as a 'mission' thus raises the possibility that the Handbook was written by a group rather similar to the one which composed the Gideon's Bible. In both cases, the raw data of the exercise, in one case the Bible and in the other the complex material of higher education, is rich, varied, often contradictory and always open to diverse readings and interpretations. It is not material which, until recently, was ever assumed to be a neat package, or one that could be presented as such. Anybody reading the Bible—or in higher education—was expected to be, if not confused, then at least aware of diversity and the absence of conclusions. But not any longer : the 'institutional mission' of higher education in which 'subject providers' develop 'generic or transferable skills' is one in which every class should end with a sum-

mary of 'key points and conclusions'. Students can now expect to leave the classroom (if they were close enough to the front to hear the teacher, a point helpfully made in the prompts for assessors) with a neat set of references and summaries.

In exactly the same way, the 'one hundred internationally recognised Bible scholars' who managed to render the King James version of the Bible into the sub-literate prose of the 'New International Version' have recognised that many contemporary citizens may be in too much of a hurry to read the Bible, or even parts of it, as a complete text, and therefore need help with comprehension. For those tempted, advice is to be found in pages 508 *et al.* If it is already too late, then consciousness of sin is covered on page 535. Advice on a career is given through reference to Psalms chapter 3, verse 5, where the text, rather mystifyingly for anyone who associates training with a career, speaks of trusting in the Lord and not in your own understanding.

But the Gideon Bible is, as travellers know, specifically designed for people who are away from home and feeling lonely, afraid and sleepless. Even if the match between state of mind and text seems sometimes less than perfect, at least the traveller has something to puzzle over. Equally, the assessors travelling the breadth and width of the country have, in their handbook, a guide to make sense of their travels and reassuring time-tables about the order of their days. They can leave home secure in the knowledge that their 'base-room' will provide tea and coffee and plugs for their computers. *Aide-mémoires* are generously provided should they momentarily forget what they are doing. (On the other hand, if they are still confused or need guidance, then pp. 523, 526, 662, 1006 of the Gideon Bible should be able to help.)

In the fifty-three pages of the Handbook there are numerous lists about what assessors should assess, and what course managers might provide. Indeed, a close reading of the text reveals certain tensions between the over-managed bureaucracy of the whole exercise and lingering perceptions and perhaps memories of other versions of higher education. Thus reading the text is very like entering the world of Orwell's 1984 : the language and the place have been taken over by hostile forces (and frequently incomprehensible ones) but ev-

ery now and then small indications surface that there might be ways of conducting (and even assessing) the process of higher education other than its reduction to the packaged form set out in the Handbook. These tiny instances (like the real chocolate bar in 1984) are few and far between, but occasionally words such as 'dialogue' creep into the text.

Unfortunately, these references are limited, and what comes across as a whole are both a language and a set of expectations which are irretrievably bureaucratic and schematic. Just as the Gideons managed to reduce one of the core texts of the West to a set of proscriptive injunctions, so the complex narrative of teaching in higher education is rendered as a set of uniform building blocks, with an externally-imposed form and purpose. For example, the form of the class in higher education (set out on p. 27) suggests a model of learning which is absolutely appropriate to the acquisition of certain skills, but may be entirely inappropriate to education. Thus it is assumed that a class will move from (a) definition of objectives through to (k) summary of key points and conclusions and that during this progress, 'key points' should be emphasised. Again, we all know that if you want to learn to change a plug it is essential to learn which wires are live and which are not. But in discussing *Anna Karenina*, the nature of 'anomie' or virtually any subject in the humanities and social sciences, it is virtually impossible to decide what the 'key points' might be. Indeed, there is a school of thought which would argue that the absence of agreement about 'key points' is exactly what higher education is about.

Nevertheless, instruction in 'key points' would seem to be the uncontested purpose of contemporary higher education. Since we live in a consumer-aware age (and since students have become consumers in many university handbooks) there is also a concern in the set of expectations about consumer satisfaction. Assessors are asked to comment on the level of student understanding and stimulation. The possibility that students *need not* enjoy the class and/or understand all of the discussion is not raised: like customers in other situations students are invited to comment on whether or not they enjoyed their lecture and/or class. As the Handbook says: 'A judgement of the quality of a teaching session can sometimes be facilitated by

careful observation of the responses of students.'

The programmatic setting out of the desirable order of teaching in higher education has, as most academics are aware, the function of making knowledge, and its transmission, appear manageable. If this conjuring trick can be achieved, and the course text substituted for the course texts, and conclusions for absence of conclusions, then mass higher education on the cheap becomes a more realisable goal. What does not have to be allowed for (and here budgeted for might be substituted) are the crucial resources of academic staff and libraries. To teach in a way suggested by the Handbook requires little more than a list of the relevant material and summaries of its strengths and weaknesses. Just as Isaiah chapter 43 is jolly useful if anxious or worried, so Durkheim (Book 3, chapter 1) might be the crucial document on suicide. These sound-bites of knowledge, which the highly structured reading list or course guide suggest, obscure the whole text and with it its inherent internal inconsistencies and contradictions.

In all, the Assessor's Handbook and the Gideon Bible share a common refusal of all the expectations of post-enlightenment narrative, not least the assumption that literary and intellectual complexity are to be valued, and constitute central themes of higher education. But the question of what higher education is for seems to have been decided once and for all by the Assessor's Handbook: numerous references to employers/links with business/influence of 'supervised work experience' suggest that the agenda of higher education is now set firmly by the marketplace. Indeed, in the section on the curriculum the second point to be considered is 'the relevance to prospective career'. (The first point is, again, that hope for 'match' between content and expectations.) As we await the arrival of the Assessors, we can only hope that at some point a recognition will develop of the absence of education in managed learning and the existence of a text which defies organisation and definition.

Mary Evans
University of Kent

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.

Margaret Ferguson and Jennifer Wicke (eds), *Feminism and Postmodernism*, Duke University Press 1994

This collection of essays explores the significant agreements and tensions between contemporary feminist and postmodern theories and practices. Having brought enormous changes to conceptions of the body, identity, and the media, postmodernity compels the rethinking of many feminist categories, including female experience, the self, and the notion that 'the personal is political'. Feminist analysis has been equally important, though not always equally acknowledged, as a force within postmodernism. Feminist writings on subjectivity, master narratives, and the socio-economic underpinnings of the master narrative of theory itself have been particularly influential. This volume traces the crossings and mutual interrogations of these two traditions into the arenas of cultural production, legal discourse and philosophical thought. [Blurb on back cover]

Essays by Jennifer Wicke, Mary Poovey, David Simpson, Linda Nicholson, Toril Moi, Anne McClintock, Kathryn Bond Stockton, Salwa Bakr, Carla Freccero, Claire Detels, Andrew Ross, Marjorie Garber, Laura Lyons.

Judith Weisenfeld and Richard Newman (eds), *This Far by Faith : Readings in African-American Women's Religious Biography*, Routledge 1996

This Far by Faith brings together a collection of essays on the religious

identities and experiences of African-American women. Covering the period of slavery to the present, the essays profile American figures such as Sojourner Truth, Harriet Tubman, Willie Mae Ford Smith, and Ella Baker, exploring the role that religious institutions and impulses played in their lives. Methodologically grounded in a historical perspective, the contributors make use of varied sources—music, visual arts, approaches to health care, and political activism—to enhance our understanding of African-American women's contribution to religious, social and political life in America. [Blurb on back cover]

Linda Lopez McAlister, *Hypatia's Daughters : Fifteen Hundred Years of Women Philosophers*, Indiana University Press 1996

Hypatia's Daughters offers a study of women philosophers from the Middle Ages to the twentieth century. Covering a wide spectrum of ideas—from religion to evolution to political theory—this unique volume brings creative women thinkers into mainstream discussion of the history of philosophy. Contributors examine the work of Hildegard of Bingen, Christine de Pisan, Elisabeth—Princess Palatine, Anne Viscountess Conway, Sor Juana, Damaris Cudworth Masham, Catharine Trotter, Belle van Zuylen, Mary Wollstonecraft, Anna Doyle Wheeler, Harriet Taylor Mill, Charlotte Perkins, Edith Stein, Hannah Arendt, Angela Davis, and Hypatia herself. Some essays focus on the philosophical arguments of individual women, while others contextualise the philosophical positions within a philosopher's life and times; some are biographical studies. These life-studies discuss women philosophers from each period of Western philosophy, some examining the relationship between the work of women philosophers and their male counterparts. Some of the essays—on Christine de Pisan, Sor Juana, Angela Davis—are virtually the first scholarly treatment of them as philosophers. [Blurb on back cover]

Martha Vicinus, *Lesbian Subjects : A Feminist Studies Reader*, Indiana University Press 1996

The growth in cultural studies has brought homosexuality to the centre of work on gender and sexuality. The lesbian is now an accepted subject for scrutiny—she exists, but how do we define her history, when did it begin, and whom do we include? *Lesbian Subjects* gathers essays—primarily from *Feminist Studies* between 1980 and 1993—and traces lesbian studies from its beginnings, examining the difficulties of defining a lesbian perspective and a lesbian past—a culture, social milieu, and states of mind. Essays range from studies of such well-known figures as the Harlem Renaissance poet Alice Dunbar-Nelson, to studies of specific historical moments such as the regulation of sexuality in the women's army corps during World War II. Other essays treat well-known authors such as Virginia Woolf and Gertrude Stein, lesser-known writers from the early nineteenth-century to the present, postmodern definitions of the lesbian, 'queer theory' and lesbian invisibility. [Blurb on back cover]

June Campbell, *Traveller in Space : In Search of Female Identity in Tibetan Buddhism*, Athlone 1996

Traveller in Space is a cross-cultural study of the significance of the female in the philosophy and symbolism of Tibetan Buddhism. It approaches female identity through an account of the historical context of archaic images of the female, and takes a psychoanalytical perspective on the philosophy surrounding the key figure of female embodiment in Tibetan Buddhism, the *dakini*. Through an examination of the unusual patriarchal system which developed in Tibet, important questions are raised concerning the meaning and relevance of the secret sexual practices of Tibetan Tantra, and the issues of power and authority as they relate to the potential subjectivity of women today. [Blurb on inside flap]

Mary Midgley, *Utopias, Dolphins and Computers : Problems of Philosophical Plumbing*, Routledge 1996

Why do the big philosophical questions so often strike us as far-fetched and little to do with everyday life? Mary Midgley shows us that it need not be that way; she shows that there is a need for philosophy in the real world. In *Utopias, Dolphins and Computers*, she makes her case for philosophy as a difficult but necessary tool for solving some of the most pressing issues facing contemporary society. How should we treat animals? Why are we so confused about the value of education? What is at stake in feminism? Why should we sustain our environment? Why do we think intelligent computers will save us? Mary Midgley argues that philosophy not only can but should be used in thinking about these questions. [Blurb on back cover]

Julie Abraham, *Are Girls Necessary? Lesbian Writing and Modern Histories*, Routledge 1996

What do we read as 'lesbian' and why? Have we been looking for love in too few places? In this first full-length study of modern lesbian writing, Julie Abraham challenges conventional assumptions about the dangers and pleasures of the coming together of lesbianism and literature. Who would lesbians be without the novel? What would modernism be without lesbian writers? Abraham reads the fevered female romances written by straight men as often as gay women. She also reads the work of high modernist and popular lesbian writers, from Gertrude Stein and Virginia Woolf to Mary Renault who instead claimed history—the ancient world, the New World, and war-torn twentieth-century Europe—as their arena. Abraham offers new accounts of major British and American writers, from the trials of Oscar Wilde to Stonewall, from the avant-garde to pulp fiction, from high cultural canons to best-seller lists. [Blurb on back cover.]

NB I have two copies of this; please indicate if you would like a review copy or a non-review copy.]

Tess Cosslett, Alison Easton and Penny Summerfield (eds), *Women, Power and Resistance: An Introduction to Women's Studies*, Open University Press 1996

Women, Power and Resistance is an accessible introductory book on Women's Studies. It is divided into interdisciplinary sections covering key aspects and major debates, centring on four main areas: the social organisation of gender relations; the cultural representation of women; gender and social identity; women and political change. These sections are linked by the concepts of women, power and resistance: each section investigates how women have been defined by dominant social structures, and how they have resisted such definitions, both within and outside those structures. In the process, a range of different feminist perspectives and methodologies are explored. Theory is introduced through the in-depth study of specific topics and themes. Each chapter is written in a clear and accessible style, and is followed by questions to promote further discussion and an explanatory further reading section, making the book ideal as a course textbook, or as an introduction to anyone who wishes to know more about Women's Studies and feminism. [Blurb on back cover]

[NB It would be particularly helpful to have this book reviewed by someone who teaches in a Women's Studies Department - MW]

***Writings on Dance: The French Issue* no. 15, Winter 1996**

[I have received this issue of an Australian journal on dance which includes references to Merleau-Ponty, Levinas and Irigaray. If anyone with joint interests in dance/philosophy would like to have it, please let me know. No obligation to review unless you feel particularly strongly that a review is called for. - MW]

- (i) **Andrea Günter, *Feministische Theologie und postmodernes Denken Zur theologischen Relevanz der Geschlechterdifferenz* (1996)**
- (ii) **Günter, *Weibliche Autorität: Freiheit und Geschlechterdifferenz: Bausteine einer feministischen politischen Theorie* (1996)**
- (iii) ***Papierne Mädchen, Dichtende Mütter: Lesen in der Weiblichen Genealogie (mit dem Gelben Katalog der Libreria delle donne di Milano)* (ed.) Andrea Günter and Veronika Mariaux, (1994).**

[I have received these three books from the German feminist philosopher /theologian Andrea Günter.

Andrea Günter describes herself as being halfway between Irigaray and Italian feminism. If anyone who can read German and is interested would like to review one or more of these, let me know. MW]

book reviews

Johanna Alberti, *Eleanor Rathbone*, Sage 1996, h/b £30 p/b £9.95

This title is one of a series called 'Women of Ideas', dedicated to 'introduce readers to the life, times and work of key women of ideas', foregrounding 'the political and intellectual circumstances in which their work has been formulated and presented.' Eleanor Rathbone (1872-1946) is a worthy candidate for one of the first titles of this series. Her central *aperçu* that children are the responsibility of the *whole* of society led her to become the architect of family allowance. She was also the outstanding backbench MP of this country from her entry into Parliament in 1928 to her death in 1946. The 'success' of women in politics cannot always be judged by such obvious yardsticks as whether they held a Cabinet Office, and part of feminist scholarship needs to be the development of criteria for the evaluation of women's achievements. Johanna Alberti's book is an excellent contribution to this enterprise.

Alberti's preface usefully points out that in feminist research there has been a recognition that ideas have an 'historical moment' when they assume their greatest significance, so that 'great ideas' of one time can seem commonplace or ridiculous in others. Eleanor Rathbone's political apprenticeship was in local government and many of her ideas were first formed there. She was one of a group of formidable and well-educated women, who served on borough and county councils in England and Wales, and who went on to become the first cohort of women MPs. Eleanor defined her role as councillor as keeping 'a watching brief' on women's questions—municipal lodging houses for women, cheap workmen's fares for women, public relief workshops for women during the pre-war unemployment—all as far as possible on the same terms as men. Conflict occurred for the Liberal women when senior male Parliamentary Liberals refused to commit the party to women's suffrage. Some of the women, including Eleanor Rathbone, prioritised the women's constituency rather than party loyalty and stood as Independents. Jane Brownlow, writing in *Women's Work in Local Government* (1911) advised women to

stand as independent candidates if possible: 'The work she is going to do is not to advance any political party, but to benefit the community, with special regard to the needs of women, children, and those who are helpless.' This formulation was the bedrock of Eleanor Rathbone's politics, in local, national and international arenas.

In her political career, because she disdained partisan politics, and instead championed humanitarian legislation, Eleanor Rathbone did not achieve high office. Her successes were the laws she secured rather than the portfolios she might have had. Whatever we regard now as the limitation of her political strategies—one critic said she was merely a 'liberal tinkerer'—nevertheless, her continual worrying at the conundrum of 'what are women in politics for and how should they behave?' indicates a question which we have by no means solved today. Alberti's closing sentence is worth quoting: 'As we move into the future, her tireless determination and her faith in the contribution which women can make to society are a welcome antidote to the discourses of cynicism and despair.' I can't argue with that. Brava to Eleanor Rathbone and to the accomplished interpreter of her ideas, Johanna Alberti!

Pam Hirsch
Homerton College, Cambridge

Alison Assiter, *Enlightened Women: Modernist Feminism in a Postmodern Age*, Routledge 1996, h/b £35, p/b £11.99

Assiter's voice is a significant one in the emergence of British feminist philosophy, which is distinguished in part by the absence of hostile camps, by eclecticism and by clarity. Trained in the techniques of linguistic analysis, informed and at times nurtured by Hegelianism and Marxism, and with imaginations stimulated, if not entirely captured, by continental post-modern and psychoanalytic theories, a group has developed which has maintained dialogue between apparently antithetical traditions, often within the same person, and this book is exemplary of that.

The book falls into two halves: the first critical of post-modern feminism, as exemplified by Judith Butler, Luce Irigaray, Nancy Fraser and Linda Nicholson; the second constructive of Assiter's own views, characterised by her as post-postmodern feminism. It is worth reading just to see the way she employs her analytic skills in this critique, often with clarity and elegance, but both halves of the book are integrally linked, and need to be read together. The book is both relentlessly philosophical *and* relentlessly political, making clear the implications of metaphysical assumptions for the political project of feminism. Thus her critique of postmodernism has two major targets. Firstly, she argues, the theory of language which postmodernism relies upon makes the mistake of rejecting a realist theory because it fails to recognise that words can refer without that reference exhausting their meaning. But, Assiter argues, the feminist challenge is to show how some men (e. g. Freud) have been using language *about women* wrongly. We need to retain the term 'woman' to refer to real women, and to alter its meaning. Secondly, Assiter argues that postmodernists (together with many contemporary analytical philosophers) have mistakenly confined the meaning of humanism, and with that the notion of reason, identity, and subject, to Cartesianism and liberal humanism. The bulk of Assiter's constructive thesis consists of working out an alternative tradition derived from Hegel, Marx and Sartre, whereby the subject is understood as in-the-world, so that subject and object are both inter-related and real.

These metaphysical moves lay the bases for Assiter's constructive theories, which are based upon a conception of enlightenment humanism which allows humans to be autonomous, and to develop themselves and their morality into selves which they desire to be, primarily through their engagement in epistemological communities which enable the development of emancipatory knowledge. This in turn requires a reworking of such concepts as reason, emotion, and autonomy, and Assiter's handling of this shows the way that feminism can move philosophical debates forward. Much of it will be familiar, contained if not developed in this way in the past decade of discussion. But Assiter uses it to move to an argument for revised forms of both essentialism and universalism within feminism, in order to establish

an 'imagined community' of women. This will doubtless become the most contentious part of her book.

I have done no more than gesture towards the central argument of the book here. Space does not allow more, and indeed a major criticism of the book is that her ideas deserve more time and space than she could give them. I hope some one, some day, gives this woman the sabbatical she deserves. Meanwhile I for one will be urging my students to read her book and may use it to organise a course around. It is exciting, contentious, and is moving the debate forward. I wish I'd written it.

Anne Seller
University of Kent

Dana E. Bushnell (ed.), "Nagging" Questions : Feminist Ethics in Everyday Life, Rowman and Littlefield 1995, h/b \$53. 50, p/b \$21. 95

Joan C. Callahan (ed.), Reproduction, Ethics and the Law : Feminist Perspectives, Indiana University Press 1996, h/b £31. 50, p/b £19. 50

"Nagging" Questions is touted as a reader in applied feminist ethics, aimed at the undergraduate. Insofar as it brings together a total of fifteen contributions covering a range of areas ('Autonomy and Responsibility'; 'Women at Work'; 'Reproductive Technology and Liberty'; and 'Body and Sexual Images') it fulfils this role. However, although the contributions are interesting and varied, including essays such as Sandra Lee Bartky's 'Feminist Masochism and the Politics of Personal Transformation' and Anita M. Superson's 'Right-Wing Women: Causes, Choices and Blaming the Victim', the collection as a whole left me feeling irritated and dissatisfied. To begin with, although Bushnell claims in her Introduction that: 'The problems addressed in this book apply to women around the world', the contributors are all based in North America, a fact that is reflected in the focus of their essays. Thus the problems addressed tend to be those of North American women who are subject to the social, cultural and legal pressures of North American society. What is often missing is an account of the different ways in which the problems apply to women in different parts of the world. This is not a criticism of the authors themselves—most of the contributions are reprints anyway—but of the selection as a

whole. Second, the Introduction itself misrepresents the state of feminist philosophy and feminist ethics. Bushnell claims that: 'At root, the feminist believes, and even insists, that women deserve the same social, political and economic rights as men' (p. 1). Even if all, or most feminists agree that there is a place for such an appeal to rights, to suggest that this is at the root of all feminist thought is mistaken; and although it is acknowledged on the following page that there are differences of opinion among feminists, these differences are reduced to the controversy over reverse discrimination. Clearly aimed at those who are new to the discipline, Bushnell gives a confused, confusing and extremely partial account of what feminist ethics is all about.

In contrast, *Reproduction, Ethics and the Law* is an example of how a collection of essays should be put together. Callahan provides a clear and comprehensive introduction to the volume, as well as introducing each of the four sections, giving an overview and analysis of the essays that are included, as well as pointing to further reading in each area. Again the authors are drawn from North American academia, and again this is reflected in the content of their work, although Uma Narayan's analysis of the implications of industrial health-hazard policies for Third World women is a notable exception. Rosemarie Tong's claim that the United Kingdom's Surrogacy Arrangements Act was *authored* by the Warnock Committee is perhaps indicative of the lack of attention to what is going on in the rest of the world. Nevertheless, the edition as a whole acts as a useful summary of the debate so far, as well as providing some valuable advances. Of particular note is the attention that is paid to the question of the importance of the genetic tie between parent and child. A recurrent theme in feminist reproductive ethics has been the criticism levelled against those who emphasise the genetic over the gestational and social relationships between mother/parent and child. This has been particularly apparent in commentaries on custody disputes between 'surrogate' mothers and the commissioning, genetic fathers. Joan Mahoney continues in this tradition, arguing for a nurturing model of parenthood to replace the genetic, property-based model. Tong, however, suggests that it is a mistake to dismiss the genetic tie as entirely irrelevant. One of the primary motivations for having a child is as a way of experiencing

oneself as 'living on' in that child, something which, it is suggested, is good for the child as well as the parents, providing as it does a link between past and future. Both papers provide challenging and carefully-argued material and the differences between them should perhaps not be over-emphasised. Mahoney and Tong both see connection as an important part of the moral relationship; where they disagree is over the relevant factors for determining that connection.

Other contributions are weaker. Barbara J. Berg rightly berates feminists for 'speaking for' infertile women, often with a view to denying them access to treatment services. However, Berg's essay itself is glaringly short of concrete references to the voices of infertile women, and Berg has no qualms about 'speaking for' potential surrogate mothers. Nevertheless, her paper provides a timely warning: alarm bells immediately began to ring as I read Christine Overall's claim that 'while concern for and attention to [infertile] women's experience is of course essential to any feminist analysis of embryo crytopreservation and IVF, their perceptions must also be assessed critically in terms of both the pronatalist environment, preserved and generated by infertility treatments and the promotion of embryos as child-substitutes' (p. 189). Saying is not the same as doing!

Although the collection demonstrates the variety of and continuing disagreement between feminist analyses of reproduction, there are also some emerging themes. In line with other developments in feminist ethics, many of the authors emphasise nurturance and relationship over individual rights. The knots that Overall ties herself in, in attempting to argue for the rights of women over their genetic material while denying the same rights to men suggests that this may be a good thing. However, it might be that there just are these conflicts—as *ethical* feminists we cannot ignore the interests of men—and it is telling that many authors fall back on the language of rights when putting forward suggestions for public policy. There is still plenty of work to be done in finding a coherent approach to issues in reproductive ethics as a whole. What is clear, however, is that the feminist contribution(s) to the debate is alive and kicking.

Susanne Gibson
University College of St. Martin

David Crownfield (ed.), *Body/Text in Julia Kristeva : Religion, Women and Psychoanalysis*, SUNY Press 1992

John Fletcher and Andrew Benjamin (eds), *Melancholia and Love : The Work of Julia Kristeva*, Routledge 1990

Kelly Oliver (ed.), *Ethics, Politics and Difference in Julia Kristeva's Writing*, Routledge 1993

Kristeva can seem so inaccessible, especially to undergraduates, that a considerable amount of processing has to be done in advance for teaching purposes. There is not only the problem of Kristeva's allusive and dense writing, but also the question of her evolution over an couple of decades and the theoretical contradictions or affiliations of her major work. Kristeva has also been interpreted in a variety of contradictory ways (seen as feminist or not, as anti-essentialist or not, as heterosexist or not, as politically conservative or not), so one also has to thread one's way through the multiplicity of interpretations. But with the passage of time, and thanks partly to collections like these, the so-called French feminists have come to seem somewhat less esoteric and somewhat more accessible than they appeared back in the early eighties. However, on the evidence of these collections, a basic acquaintance with psychoanalytic concepts appears a *sine qua non* for any real understanding of Kristeva's theoretical enterprise.

Although none of the three collections is recent, I have just been teaching a course on French feminism, including Kristeva, to BA and MA students, so it seemed a good moment to assess them from a pedagogic point of view. To what extent would the essays help students to get to grips with the complexities of Kristeva's still daunting theories? Whom are these collections for? The earliest of the three collections, edited by Benjamin and Fletcher, is still the most accessible one, perhaps because the papers were originally written for a conference and designed in the first instance for listeners rather than readers. It has a slight bias towards the aesthetic and literary aspects of Kristeva's work (including a paper by Kristeva herself on 'The Adolescent Novel') but also includes some work on feminism, the ethics of psychoanalysis and philosophy. For

undergraduates, this would probably be the collection one would want to recommend first. Quite a few essays include explanations of basic terms (semiotic, symbolic, abjection etc.) and offer a way in to the Kristevan oeuvre through preoccupations that are already familiar from elsewhere (discussions about the literary avant-garde, or the body, or the history of feminist demands).

Second in order of accessibility, in my view, is the Crownfield collection. We are familiar with discussions of psychoanalysis and women; an extra dimension is added here by the third term of the subtitle: Religion (five out of seven contributors work in religion or theology). The result is a rather interesting set of essays, with discussions on issues that the other collections do not much address (e.g. the gendering of death and absence, the sacrificial basis of the social contract, the role of religion as Other). The editor emphasises in addition the theme of the division of the self. He is a conscientious and committed editor who identifies themes, issues and links in brief editorial essays *between* each paper as well as supplying an introduction and a conclusion. This collection would be useful for a course which was attempting to widen discussion beyond the literary and philosophical to include broader social and anthropological issues.

The most difficult of the three collections is undoubtedly the Kelly Oliver one. The editor identifies a set of Kristevan preoccupations which I summarise as follows : 1) a resistance to structuralism's eviction of the subject; 2) the forces that either maintain or destabilise identity (whether individual, social or national); 3) the importance of ethics; 4) the importance of the universal. The essays are highly sophisticated and some of them are reasonably clear, but others offer the same level of difficulty as Kristeva herself, and are too demanding for most undergraduate reading lists. The collection enables one to place Kristeva in a wider philosophical context which includes Heidegger, Sartre, surrealism, Bataille, Husserl and phenomenology, as well as the more common reference points of Hegel, Saussure, Barthes, Derrida and Lacan. For specialists, it will be indispensable, but it's not the best collection for the neophyte to start with.

The other question which the Oliver collection allows us to address is that of the relation between Kristeva and feminism. The question 'Is Kristeva a feminist?' is often raised; Kristeva is measured against political criteria. The problem though is that Kristeva starts from the other side, seeing feminism itself as a matter for assessment. Her position here—that feminism is not the ultimate criterion—is not always expressed diplomatically and has aroused some indignation in the past. But it may be that we are now secure enough to see the legitimacy of the questions she puts to feminist theory and practice. But again, to join in this discussion, it helps to have taken part in, lived through or otherwise encountered the past twenty-five years of feminist theory, which makes the Oliver collection in this way too one that will be of more benefit to the specialist than to the beginner.

Margaret Whitford
QMW, University of London

**Mary Evans, *Simone de Beauvoir*,
Women of Ideas series, Sage 1996, p/b
£9. 95, h/b £30**

**Stevi Jackson, *Christine Delphy*,
Women of Ideas series, Sage 1996, p/b
£9. 95, h/b £30**

Both these books belong to a new series, 'Women of Ideas', which aims to provide a set of introductions to significant women thinkers. Jackson's introduction to Delphy is especially welcome, since it is, to my knowledge, the first book-length English-language study of Delphy's work. Evans' book by contrast has to position itself within the flourishing industry of Beauvoir studies (which includes Evans' own earlier, rather less nuanced, contribution, *Simone de Beauvoir: A Feminist Mandarin* (1985)). Perhaps for this reason, Evans' study is more interpretative than Jackson's which remains predominantly introductory.

Jackson outlines Delphy's central concepts and theories with outstanding clarity and helpfully makes continual efforts to situate Delphy politically, amidst other brands of 'French feminism'. Jackson lucidly sets out the differences between the materialist, radical feminist current with which Delphy is associated and the socialist and *Psychanalyse et Politique* currents.

Furthermore, Jackson refreshingly objects to the (still rather entrenched) Anglo-American habit of attending exclusively to a small number of French feminists and marginalising others, such as Delphy, reminding us that these marginalised others have often been the more influential and central figures within French feminist theory and activism.

Jackson portrays Delphy's theorising as developing out of the initial radical feminist idea that men and women occupy a relationship of oppression through which their gender identities are constructed. This idea has evolved in Delphy's work into her theory of men as an exploiting class vis-à-vis women (and of the contentious 'domestic mode of production' within which, Delphy claims, men appropriate women's domestic labour), and her conception of gender as a social relation and sex as the ahistorical perception of bodies from within gender relations. In this sympathetic exposition of Delphy's work, there are places where Jackson could well have asked *critical* questions of Delphy. For instance, she supports Delphy's conception of gender relations as social against Judith Butler, who supposedly treats gender relations as purely 'discursive' (which Jackson regards as virtually synonymous with 'linguistic'), and against 'sexual difference feminists', who are identified as biologicistic. There are two problems with Jackson's account here: firstly, her misrepresentation of psychoanalysis and sexual difference feminism as biologicistic and apolitical; and secondly, her failure to interrogate the notion of the *social*. She does not ask whether (for example) social relations necessarily involve people's identifying and recognising one another in specific ways, so that social relations would be ineradicably cultural and intersubjective. (In contrast, she understands social relations as *producing* ideas about identity, so that 'ideas' for her are definitely secondary to relations.) However, these problems paradoxically *contribute* to the overwhelming lucidity of the book, by making even more apparent the nature of the divergence between Delphy and others, such as Butler or Irigaray, who are engaged, implicitly or explicitly, in questioning the idea of the 'social' itself.

I found Evans' book considerably less exciting. This is perhaps inevitable given its

well-trodden subject-matter, but nevertheless Evans does stick rather closely to the familiar format of half-biographical, half-philosophical engagement with Beauvoir. This is not to say that Evans has nothing new to add. She interestingly focuses on Beauvoir's relation to her mother (and to her mother's politics) and on sadistic elements in Beauvoir's attitude to Sartre, such as her organising of Sartre's other sexual relations, her definition of herself as the uniquely intellectual woman in Sartre's life, and her use of Sartre as the vehicle of her own vicarious public participation. Evans relates these sadistic, intellectualising and maternal tensions to themes in Beauvoir's work (especially *The Second Sex*): her repudiation of motherhood and valorisation of 'masculine' qualities, her feeling of difference from other women, and her adherence to humanism and rejection of psychoanalysis and post-structuralism. Evans is thus committed to keeping under discussion those tensions underlying Beauvoir's work that Beauvoir herself struggled to suppress and define as 'private'. In this Evans situates herself especially against Moi's 1994 study, *Simone de Beauvoir: The Making of an Intellectual Woman*. Here Moi sought to define Beauvoir as the quintessential twentieth-century 'intellectual woman' and to treat her relationship with Sartre as heavily motivated by Beauvoir's genuine desire for an intellectual partnership. Evans suggests that Moi plays in with Beauvoir's own elevation of 'intellectual' over 'other' women, and risks idealising Beauvoir as free to choose her own mode of life (thus re-suppressing the very same tensions that Beauvoir herself endeavoured to suppress).

More negatively, Evans sometimes, unfortunately, assumes that all readers are familiar with the theoretical content of Beauvoir's oeuvre. Evans could have spent more time elaborating and exploring this content. Similarly, she often presumes a certain consensus among feminists. For example, she takes it without discussion that feminists oppose the claims of philosophical systems to universality. She therefore supposes a pre-established harmony between feminism and other currents of opposition to philosophical universalism, such as 'post-modernism'. But to simply regret Beauvoir's failure to be anti-universalist, as Evans intermittently does, is to ignore the possibility that there is a *question* that Beauvoir's work poses, of whether or to

what extent feminists can be feminists without opposing universalism. Ultimately it is this presumption upon the identity of feminism that I find unappealing in Evans. In contrast, the most invigorating aspect of Jackson's study is precisely its insistence that feminists such as Delphy can have perfectly illuminating things to say *without* necessarily having to be poststructuralists of any kind.

Alison Stone
University of Sussex

Moira Gatens, *Imaginary Bodies: Ethics, Power and Corporeality*, Routledge 1996, h/b £35, p/b £11. 99

Moira Gatens uses the concept of the Imaginary within the project of theorising embodiment without essentialising difference. 'The term Imaginary will be used . . . to refer to those images, symbols, metaphors and representations which help construct various forms of subjectivity. . . those ready-made images and symbols through which we make sense of social bodies and which determine, in part, their value, their status and what will be deemed their appropriate treatment.' (p. viii).

The essays which are collected here span the period from 1983 to 1994. In the earlier pieces her concept is informed most strongly by psychoanalytic sources, but later the predominant influence is Spinoza. In both cases the Imaginary is the domain of affect and reflects the 'affecting and affected' interactions of human bodies, interactions which are historically and socially variable. In the case of individual subjectivities, the Imaginary will reflect both social Imaginaries and the affective interactions with other particular bodies. The affective dimension of such Imaginaries is part of what explains their resistance to change by simple exposure to orderly patterns of argument. This resilience is reinforced by their often unconscious dimension. They inform 'embodied habits' which have become 'second nature.'

The collection opens with Gatens' well-known and prescient attack on the sex/gender distinction, with sex as nature and gender as culture. Here she insists on attention to the body as lived, a focus which informs the rest of the book. She uses the concept of 'body image' here to insist that the body as lived is the

Imaginary body whose 'body image' is our way of living/experiencing our biology. This sets limits to certain kinds of degendering proposals, as the femininity lived by a female body will be qualitatively different from that which could be lived by a male body. The diverse sexual Imaginaries through which we live our bodies are subject to interrogation in later chapters. But Gatens is also interested in the social Imaginaries which inform political and legal texts and make possible certain forms of political structures or legal judgements. 'The problem . . . is that dominant masculine sexual imaginaries are politically, legally, economically and socially legitimated through existing networks of power, whereas women's imaginaries are not.' (p. 147).

The emphasis in the early essays is on sexual difference, though Gatens refuses to privilege this as ontologically fundamental. She views both equality and difference feminism as problematic, in so far as they view the body as biologically given. Instead the salience of bodily difference to our subjectivities is a consequence of sexual Imaginaries which have a history and whose genealogy is one of her objects of investigation. In later essays the focus on sexual difference becomes part of a more general concern with differences, conceived of as different modes of embodiment. This shift goes hand in hand with increasing use of the philosophy of Spinoza.

Several aspects of Spinoza's thought become important. His monist account of the relationship between mind and body yields a picture in which reason, imagination and knowledge become active and embodied. Knowledge is not a possession of the mind. It is something we are or become. Attaining new knowledge is to 'exist differently'. One consequence of this is that mind/body dualisms and the parallel dualisms of reason/passion, culture/nature and thereby sex/gender become undermined. Moreover, given the diversity of people's embodied encounters, reason and imagination are historically and culturally variable, as well as dynamic and open to revision.

The later papers in this volume explore the ethical, political and epistemological consequences of such a position. Gatens sees Spinoza's thought as allowing a grounded ethics anchored in specific communities and sets of relationships,

without the possibility of universal rules. These later essays address the forms of socialisation which are possible given the differences which exist. Here the ethical, epistemological and political issues become intertwined. Gatens resists assumptions that we can simply enter into the modes of being of others: 'The limits to empathising with, and gaining an understanding of the specific and total contexts of the lives of those with whom the law deals must be acknowledged. To fail to acknowledge the necessarily limited understanding that a given person can glean about the lives of those who are very differently situated is to do such persons a serious violence' (p. 140). The response there should be not to simply train judges about the lives of those they judge, e. g. women, but to ensure women are represented at all levels of legal, social and political life.

This is a rich and rewarding book. It needs to be placed in conversation with writings from within Queer Theory, which is a project outside the scope of a short review. Highly recommended.

Kathleen Lennon
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Virginia Held (ed.), *Justice and Care*, Westview Press 1996, h/b £33. 50 p/b £11. 50

Whilst new monographs on the ethic of care continue entering a seemingly unlimited market, the publication of a good collection of articles in this area still has a useful function: it can introduce the reader who is new to the field to a range of arguments and approaches and thus provide a good overview. *Justice and Care* does so admirably. It does justice to the outstanding contributors to the 'ethic of care paradigm', covers the topic and arguments extensively, and to boot, takes the discussion into new areas and levels of sophistication with two new papers written for this collection. *Justice and Care* stands out amongst the various collections published already in this area, and I can highly recommend it, both for teaching purposes and for anybody wanting a good and useful introduction.

After a concise introduction by Held, we find extracts from Nel Noddings' influential if controversial *Caring*, Carol Gilligan's classic paper on care and justice as two moral perspectives, and Annette Baier's

argument for 'The need for more than justice'. These three papers are classic expositions of the ethic of care (Noddings and Gilligan) and the critique of the 'ethic of rights and justice' launched from a care perspective (Baier), and fully deserve inclusion. More critical assessments are added with Marilyn Friedman's (again classic) call for the 'De-moralisation of gender' and Claudia Card's discussion of oppressive gender relations as a form of 'moral luck' that can distort not only women's relations with others but also their moral outlook.

Part 3, 'Extensions and Affirmations', contains a paper by Joan Tronto and extracts from Patricia Hill Collins' *Black Feminist Thought* on 'Black women and mothering'. The choice of Tronto's paper is somewhat unhappy because of overlap with other papers in the book and because her most distinctive contribution has been her use of the care perspective in political theory which is unfortunately not covered (see review of her *Moral Boundaries* in **WPR 12**). The arguably distinctive, more contextualised and particularised, moral epistemology of a care perspective is discussed in a paper by Margaret Walker and in extracts from Virginia Held's *Feminist Morality*.

To close, Alison Jaggar's excellent and sophisticated analysis of the 'care vs. justice' debate debunks some of the facile contrasts the debate has been riddled (and held back) with, and Sara Ruddick's account of assault and domination in the family as types of injustice combines rare insight with critically engaged writing that touches deeply.

If I have one complaint, it is that the possible substantive content of an ethic of care has not really been covered enough, most space being given to the discussion of its more formal features. But this lack is a reflection of the focus of much of the debate in this area and constitutes a minor complaint which should not detract from the unparalleled strengths of *Justice and Care*.

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Kimberly Hutchings, *Kant, Critique and Politics*, Routledge 1995, p/b £12. 99

In this book, Hutchings examines the dynamics of Kantian critique as they

resurface in the work of Habermas, Arendt, Foucault and Lyotard, as well as in key debates in international relations and feminist theory. She begins with an admirably clear account of the politics of critique as they emerge in Kant's writings. These chapters show how the presupposition of reason's limitation frustrates attempts to legitimise cognitive, moral and aesthetic claims and thus conflicts with reason's desire to legislate for itself and the world. Critique is thus characterised as neither straightforwardly liberal nor authoritarian but as inherently 'volatile and paradoxical', caught between 'the political options of rigid order or absolute anarchy' (p. 12). However, this inherent tension is read as critique's defining strength rather than its failure; it is these paradoxical dynamics which maintain critique as such and prevent it from collapsing back into precritical alternatives. Hutchings shows how these dynamics are manifested in Kant's critique of politics, focusing on the problematic relation of legality to morality in his theory of right and of the ideal to the real in his philosophy of history. Particular attention is played to the role of judgment in the philosopher's reading of history, understood as the capacity to occupy an 'inexplicable no-man's land' between practical reason and empirical history whose own legitimation remains 'mysterious' (p. 56).

In her examination of subsequent thinkers, Hutchings is not concerned with identifying failed or successful critique but with the continual re-emergence of critique's paradoxical structure. Nonetheless, the specificity of each theorist's work is always maintained through detailed and rigorous accounts of the development of their thought in its relation to Kant. Thus Hutchings explores how Habermas' and Arendt's attempts to avoid transcendentalism return each differently to the tension between legislation and legitimation. She argues convincingly that in representing the unrepresentable, Lyotard's critical night-watchman plays a role analogous to reflective judgment for Kant, leading to a critical practice which 'veers between the acknowledgement of its own lack of authority and a claim to occupy the absence which is the ground of absolute obligation' (p. 145). However, it is the critical attitude of Foucault's specific intellectual which comes closest to the paradoxical activity of Kantian critique.

continually undermining critique's authority whilst maintaining as exemplary the resistant self-legislating work of the critic. Yet Hutchings' characterisation of Foucault's aesthetic of existence as a practice of self-legislation is problematic; hence it is (paradoxically) at this point that her conclusions are less convincing.

The book concludes with a compelling account of the tendency within both international relations theory and feminism to define and respond to debate in terms of the paradoxes of critique. The tension between the need for authoritative grounds for judgment and the impossibility of such grounding is played out between critical theorists/modernists and postmodernists (Linklater/Ashley and Walker; Benhabib/Hekman). Feminist international relations theorists attempt to chart a passage between 'universalist dogma and particularist scepticism' (p. 185) yet tend to define the possible choices in these terms.

In response, Hutchings offers not an argument 'for' critical political theory but the possibilities of critique as charted throughout the book as 'a consistent refusal either to fail or succeed' (p. 166). Given her persuasive portrayal of feminist debate as tending to 'fall back' into pre-critical alternatives, I would have liked more exploration of the 'possibilities' (p. 186) offered by her dynamic version of critique. She makes it clear that it is not a matter of regarding any of the theorists examined as either 'authoritative or useless' (p. 189). However, it remains unclear how one is to decide which manifestations of the 'perpetual striving' (p. 191) of critique are of most use to the feminist theorist. Nonetheless, this is a thought-provoking, challenging and enjoyable book, demanding the same rigorous attention from readers as Hutchings has brought to bear on her subject.

Rachel Jones
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Evelyn Fox Keller and Helen E. Longino (eds), *Feminism and Science*, Oxford University Press 1996, h/b £35.00, p/b £11.99

As an area of study, feminism and science is perhaps the one most likely to occupy the poor relation position in Women's Studies degrees. In my own experience, too many students and not a few teachers

fail to see the relevance of science studies to their own lives or to feminist theory in general. The current collection, then, edited by two influential scholars in the field, is very welcome for its straightforward agenda of providing some of the seminal articles of the last two decades in order to reflect the diversity of approaches and their interconnections with other more familiar feminist concerns. The links into even the most conventional understanding of philosophy are always evident, with questions of language and epistemology at the forefront.

The starting point for any feminist critique of science is that historically specific ideologies of gender—and we might add race, class, sexuality (though these are largely unexplored)—have been incorporated, unacknowledged, into the authoritative discourse of science. The collection opens, then with three early statements of the problem from the perspective of a sociologist (Dorothy Smith), a scientist (Keller herself) and a philosopher (Genevieve Lloyd), and proceeds with an enquiry into the effect of cultural gender stereotypes on scientific representations of sex and gender. The essays in this section (including early Haraway and Emily Martin) are particularly lucid and will provide an easy way in for the hesitant.

The remit of the next sections 'Language, Gender and Science' and 'Gender and Knowledge' is rather more complex in that it seeks to extend the feminist critique to non-gendered subject-matter. Starting with various analyses of how culturally embedded metaphors pervade scientific language to reproduce paradigms of masculine activity and feminine passivity for example, the question turns eventually to theories of knowledge. With articles by Haraway, Harding and Scheman among others in this section, there is much to engage the philosopher, but more to the point, all the essays are concerned with the status of (scientific) epistemology. The familiar challenges to the dichotomies of subject/object, mind/body, universal/particular and others are rehearsed, with a particular emphasis on what alternative a feminist approach to such questions might generate.

Overall, the collection is organised to successfully trace what the editors call 'a significant trajectory of argument'. The 17 essays inevitably raise further unanswered

questions, and thoughts of 'missing' writers, but no dynamic subject-area could do otherwise. I cannot say, from a position of prior acquaintance, that I found the choices especially exciting, but I can imagine that those new to the field might be both reassured as to its comprehensibility, and better still, intrigued. The book will certainly enhance undergraduate reading lists.

Margrit Shildrick

Patricia S. Mann, *Micro-Politics: Agency in a Postfeminist Era*, University of Minnesota Press 1994, p/b \$17.95

The subtitle of Mann's book announces its content more appropriately than the title: I found a mixture of 'postmodern' social meta-theory (hers is 'a work of postmodern philosophy/social theory', p.1), substantive social theory (propped up by the assertion of 'a socially bounded truth potential for philosophy', p. 23), and some political theory and argument.

The substantive social theory is to be found in her postulation of a second phase in the 'genealogy' of individualism which comes about as a result of the 'unmooring' of individuals from the patriarchal family, a development which, according to her, also brings about the end of modernism (p. 22). As material needs were highlighted with the emancipation of the (male) individual from feudal relations, so 'interpersonal' needs come to the fore with the 'social emancipation' of women from their subordinated position within the family, necessitating new forms of family and interpersonal agency in both men and women (ch. 4). Linked to this analysis are chapters on changes in women's and men's agency with regard to the sphere of sexuality/pornography (ch. 2, considering 'sociosexual interaction in terms of a ritualised male-female dialogue of asymmetrical forms of recognition', p. 69) and on procreation/abortion (ch. 3, advocating a 'cyborgian theory of procreative agency', p. 109). These chapters contain interesting points and arguments, but sometimes also awkward combinations, as when Mann asserts the postmodern fluidity of lives and identities, whilst at the same time insisting on a discourse of responsibility and obligations towards children (p. 116 ff.).

Her political theory in the last chapter (but not her analysis of three recent political

issues in the US) follows more closely her meta-theoretical aspirations: political agency is fractured, without overall aim, 'unitary political subject' or 'unitary political opponent' (p. 159), being more like the struggle of an athlete to win than the struggle of a victim to end her oppression, and where winning is not as important as participating. (p. 162). Mann professedly means 'postfeminist' to refer to an era in which 'feminist concerns have entered the mainstream' (p. 226, n. 19), but is too much emancipatory potential given up in this kind of conceptualisation?

Mann's postmodern vein is expressed in her argument for a move away from identity theories focusing on the self towards a theory of agency: 'As multiply-engaged individuals, we create our daily lives out of a bricolage of competing and conflicting forms of agency' (p. 31). The focus on agency is itself an interesting and creative new theoretical perspective, as Mann's discussions of sexuality, motherhood and abortion, and the family illustrate. If Mann's book is ultimately not so convincing, it is, I think, because it is itself too much of a 'bricolage', trying to fit rather traditional types of social theorising and the discussion of authors as diverse as Lacan and Donald Davidson into a postmodern theoretical framework. It is very engaging at points, but it is more of a pioneering than a fully mature work.

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Lucy Sargisson, *Contemporary Feminist Utopianism*, Routledge 1996, h/b £40, p/b £12.99

Joel Whitebook, *Perversion and Utopia: A Study in Psychoanalysis and Critical Theory*, MIT Press 1995, h/b £19.95

These two defences of utopianism, although in many ways they couldn't be more different, do tend towards convergence in their conclusions. Whitebook stresses the importance of the imaginary domain (using imaginary in Castoriadis' sense) as a source of visions of a better society (p. 89), while Sargisson sees utopianism's strength in its open-endedness, its ability to bring about shifts in consciousness and lead to different perspectives of the possible: 'The future must be dreamt and imagined according to desire' (p. 225). Although she does not explicitly use the concept of the imaginary,

she does foreground Irigaray for whom the imaginary is central. (And see the review of Moira Gatens' *Imaginary Bodies* above for another treatment of the imaginary.)

Whitebook is a psychoanalyst and works in Critical Theory. His starting point is Horkheimer and Adorno's statement, in *The Dialectic of Enlightenment*, of the danger of the utopian impulse interpreted as the impulse towards domination. The power of their analysis, along with the events of the Second World War, made utopian thinking politically disreputable for quite a long time. Via discussions of the shortcomings of Adorno, Lacan and Habermas (specifically what he sees as their tendentious readings of psychoanalysis), Whitebook returns to Freud and to another psychoanalyst (Castoriadis) to mount a defence of the possibilities that psychoanalytic theory still offers to political thought.

He is particularly concerned to point out the difference between an 'autonomous' and a 'heteronomous' relation to existing laws and regimes, i. e. the ability to take up a critical stance *vis-à-vis* the society one lives in, as opposed to simply accepting its laws because they are the law. The possibility of autonomy depends upon not confusing politics with fantasy. Against the common psychoanalytic critique of feminism that feminists are attempting to circumvent the paternal law and reunite directly with the archaic mother (basically Kristeva's argument in 'Women's Time'), one needs to take a step further to explain how the individual, once having internalised lawfulness, can adopt a critical stance toward any given law. Criticism is not automatically an expression of a regressive phantasy, and some laws are simply bad. The point of his argument in favour of the imaginary is that the formal principles of justice do not dictate the contents of society, and it is here that the role of the psychic imaginary can come into play: 'One essential source for visions of a better society—visions that could be debated in a just public system—is the psychic imaginary and its refashioning of the contents of cultural tradition. Without the input of the imaginary, any such debate, while possibly just, is in danger of being empty' (p. 89).

Perversion and Utopia is a wonderful piece of sustained argumentation, which I highly recommend.

It is not Whitebook's project to consider the question of feminist utopianism, but I couldn't help wishing that someone would now go on to address the question of the feminist contribution to political thought in the light of Whitebook's work. This is not what Sargisson is attempting. Against the more conventional understanding of utopia as static perfection, Sargisson defends a definition of utopianism as transformative, oppositional, creative and critical. Her aim is to examine the feminist utopias and utopian strands exemplified in contemporary fiction and theory. 'The new approach suggested by this book enables us to identify what I call a new utopianism emerging from contemporary feminist theory and fiction' (p. 5). This new utopianism is defined by 'progress, movement and the perpetuation of struggle' (p. 20). Sargisson sees feminist utopianism as engaging in political debate—closer to Whitebook's autonomous relation to the law than to Kristeva's regressive fantasy (though there can sometimes be elements of that too). Its function is to visualise possibilities that do not yet exist, not to produce plans of campaign for action. It should be considered rather 'in terms of what it does to the present rather than by direct reference to the future' (p. 54). Sargisson suggests also that feminist utopianism could be linked to deconstruction's unending process. Although she thinks postmodernism/poststructuralism can result in an immobilising nihilism, she argues that its openness can also lead to possibility: it can create a (utopian) space in which reconceptualisation can occur.

Her book is well-organised and thoughtful. It would be an excellent book for a student reading list; it is clear, accessible and well-informed. However, it doesn't have Whitebook's philosophical breadth or depth, and provides more of a phenomenology of contemporary feminist utopianism than a philosophical argument for its value and function. I felt also that there was some inconsistency between form and content in Sargisson's book. On the one hand, she wants to discard the maps: desire is 'protean' (p. 221) so it cannot be confined to any specific genre and elements of utopianism can be found in all kinds of writing, theory as well as fiction. (This seems to be right—it corresponds to the evidence presented.) Why, then, did she need to spend so much time discussing genre and whether her texts belonged to the utopian genre or not (whether and when science fiction is

utopian fiction, for example)? The internal logic of her argument seems to work against the rather constricting bounds in which the argument is set out, and this made me wonder whether the book had started out as a thesis and had been affected by the constraints of *that* somewhat rigid genre.

I had a second more theoretical reservation. Throughout the book, Sargisson seems to equate essentialism with universalism, but I think this equation is debatable. Irigaray—to take one of her central figures—is a universalist but not an essentialist. Pace Naomi Schor (see her recent collection of essays, *Bad Objects*, from Duke University Press), one of the reasons Anglo-American feminists have had trouble understanding the ‘French feminists’ is because we have too easily conflated these two rather distinct concepts.

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Allison Weir, *Sacrificial Logics: Feminist Theory and the Critique of Identity*, Routledge 1996, h/b £37. 50, p/b £11. 99

The task for feminist theory, as Allison Weir discerns it, is to rewrite the significance and meaning of identity in such a way that it might evade the damaging equation of identity with domination and the denial of difference(s). In her concluding chapters, Weir discusses at some length what she sees as Julia Kristeva's positive contribution of a non-repressive theory of the subject—where identity entails the capacity for recognition and acceptance of non-identity—and gives her own version of self-identity as the ability to *resolve* conflicts ‘through an openness to difference [that] is essential to the practice of change and to the generation of new meaning’ (p. 188). For the most part, however, as her title implies, Weir is concerned to outline those existing critiques of identity which fail to circumvent what she calls (following Kristeva) sacrificial logics, the logic of domination. Her claim is that either such critiques—and she cites variously de Beauvoir, Derrida, Chodorow, Benjamin, Irigaray, Rose and Butler—collapse back into a conflict model, or they are constrained to give up on self-identity altogether

In following a post-conventional critique of the modernist subject, feminist theory, as Weir rightly perceives, is forced to rethink how women, individually and collectively, might resist and subvert the relations of domination in which we actually find ourselves. Whether theory and practice have reached the ‘paralysing impasse’ that she refers to is perhaps not so clear. The work of clearing the ground, undertaken by theorists such as Rose, Irigaray or Butler, seems to me a necessary precondition for any political or ethical agenda, and need not imply that a recuperation of ‘freedom of thought, choice and action in everyday struggles’ has been abandoned. Nonetheless, in her project to understand identity as that which may affirm agency and solidarity without affirming domination and exclusion, Weir rejects such analyses as inadequate. Her argument is that autonomy must be rethought, and that instead of indicating the exclusion or domination of the other, separation is a necessary step in the relinquishing of egocentricity and the recognition and the acceptance of the other (p. 64).

That much is unobjectionable; what I find difficult is Weir's partial readings and her unwillingness to see anything positive in the willing suspension of logical closure. Time and again she criticises her chosen theorists for their affirmation of paradox, which she calls ‘fuzzy thinking’, while at the same time admitting that some paradoxes are irresolvable. And when Weir finally commends a Kristevan position as the way forward, she seems to forget her own earlier assessment that ‘Kristeva's work is . . . rooted in a fundamental ambivalence between a sacrificial model of identity and a theory of identity as something that can include difference and heterogeneity’ (p. 145). My feeling is that although Weir has sometimes given an unfair spin to existing theory (does Irigaray really deny the need for a symbolic?), her critique if not entirely sound is always thought-provoking.

Margrit Shildrick

review articles

***Women Reviewing Philosophy: New Writing by Women in Philosophy*, edited by Morwenna Griffiths and Margaret Whitford, University of Nottingham, 1996**

***Women Philosophers*, edited by Mary Warnock, Everyman, 1996**

A glance at the titles of these two collections of papers naively led me to suppose that they would be complementary, not least since, as the editors point out, most of the papers in *Women Reviewing Philosophy* engage with philosophical work by women. In fact, the editorial introductions to the collections illustrate the chasm which still exists between feminist and mainstream/ malestream philosophy. While one epitomises feminist theorists' exploration of the links between disciplines, the other epitomises the way in which the male values of the academy try to oppose and undermine any breaking down of barriers which might ensue from such exploration.

One of the possibilities which the wide-ranging and often complex papers which make up *Women Reviewing Philosophy* demonstrates is that we can continue to look for, and find, a rich seam of material for feminist analysis in some unlikely and ostensibly unpromising places, as well as in continuing analysis of ground-breaking feminist writers such as Simone de Beauvoir and Dale Spender. As Joanna Hodge shows, we can look for it, for instance, in Kant, whose apparent commitment to the production of objective, universally valid ideas in morality is typical of the sort of thinking many feminist philosophers challenge. Or, as Anne Seller and Joanna Kerr explain, in Hannah Arendt and Martha Nussbaum, neither of whom would appreciate being tagged with the epithet 'feminist'. Many of the papers in this collection represent a 'second stage' of feminist philosophy. Rather than providing intellectual Pollyfilla for male-generated theories—filling in the

holes their initiators and disciples left in Marxism or Freudianism, for instance, to compensate for their gender blindness—they move the debate on to the next level, taking on and grappling with issues identified by the 'first stage' of thinkers, such as Luce Irigaray, Julia Kristeva or Carol Gilligan. Still other papers find novel ways of exposing the masculine perspective inherent in the theories of Stephen Munzer and Hegel, showing up, for instance, the shortcomings of Munzer's theories of property or demonstrating that Hegel's form of illogic is alive and well in contemporary mainstream philosophy. Inevitably, some papers make their argument more successfully than others; but the judgements on which are or are not successful will, at least to some extent, depend on the reader's familiarity with the subject matter. In such an eclectic volume, there ought to be something for everyone, whatever their speciality, and the benefit of assembling such a broad range of perspectives in one volume is that, whatever our particular interest, we will most likely be drawn into sampling papers which fall outside our own area of expertise and challenged to explore what the editors describe as the 'boundary hedges' between disciplines (p. ii). My own research interests drew me immediately to the last four papers in the collection, which gave me reassurance that my interests in the 'universal feminisms' and in gendered language, are still continuing to inspire lively debate and analysis: it can often appear, especially when lurking in newsgroups on the Internet or reading about and listening to successful liberal women in the news media, that such concerns are outmoded—after all, we're all post-feminists now.

Sampling the other papers in this collection, it becomes obvious that the image of working in the boundary hedge is an apt one. I discovered that all the papers—even those about whose subject matter I am woefully ignorant—had something to contribute to my own thinking and sparked my interest, even when—or perhaps particularly when—they also sparked my disagreement. As the editors point out, feminist philosophers often have little option but to work in

comparative isolation. A collection such as this contains enough variety to ensure that most of us will find something not just of interest, but which will keep us aware that we are indeed part of a community. It is also encouraging to note that writers such as Julia Kristeva, Carol Pateman and Susan J. Hekman, as well as those already mentioned, continue to engender debate on issues which are still relevant to feminists: this surely testifies to their importance and relevance as philosophers.

Not that Mary Warnock would consider them important, at least as philosophers, and there are unlikely to be any extracts of their work which she would have considered for inclusion in *Women Philosophers*. Indeed, of the women philosophers whose work is examined in *Women Reviewing Philosophy* only Arendt and de Beauvoir meet her criteria of what counts as a philosopher—and de Beauvoir only grudgingly. Warnock's paradigm of a philosopher is David Hume: the project of the true philosopher, she maintains, is to arrive at an objective account of 'all human knowledge, including scientific knowledge, and all morality, including political morality' (p. xxx).

It comes as little surprise, then to discover her criteria for inclusion in *Women Philosophers*, which are that the theories propounded should exhibit 'generality and the hoped-for explanation of phenomena' (p. xxxiii). Most 'feminist literature' is explicitly excluded: the work of feminist philosophers such as Sandra Harding, Alison Jaggar and Susan Bordo, Hekman and Lorraine Code, contains 'too much unexamined dogma ... too much ill-concealed proselytizing, too little objective analysis, to allow them to qualify for inclusion among philosophical writing proper' (ibid.). And ultimately, they fail her test of generality, on grounds that the 'truths which philosophers seek must aim to be not merely generally, but objectively, universally, true. Essentially they must be gender-indifferent' (p. xxiv). This clearly disqualifies most feminist epistemologists from her consideration. But to deny the necessity for generality, she asserts, is to engage not in philosophy but in anthropology. Reading her definition of philosophy and criteria for inclusion as a woman philosopher brought to mind Douglas Adams' two male, philosophers who, on behalf of the *Association of Sages*,

Luminaries and Associated Thinkers, demanded rigidly defined areas of doubt and uncertainty.

Most second wave and contemporary women feminist philosophers, then, are automatically excluded from this anthology. And many of those who would not fail at the first hurdle fail at the second: Warnock's wish to show that women can write philosophically on a range of subjects, not just on women's issues. Who is left? Why—women philosophers who write like men philosophers.

Two feminists do creep in under the wire. Mary Wollstonecraft is included not because she meets the criteria, but because Warnock admires her. And de Beauvoir is allowed in, but grudgingly, and with the qualification that the editor is not convinced that she actually originated any ideas but includes her because she is characteristic of existentialism. Which says something, of course, about the implicit criteria for inclusion: that Warnock agrees with the theory, or that she considers the theory to fall under the rubric of what she believes to be a true philosophical 'ism'. De Beauvoir only makes the grade because Sartre is disqualified. For the rest, there is no disputing that there are extracts from the work of some outstanding women thinkers here. Some of the 17th–19th century writers were unfamiliar to me: Anne Conway, the Hon. Victoria Lady Welby and Mary Whiton Calkin were not names I had remembered encountering before. Others would merit inclusion in any anthology of mainstream philosophy; for example Arendt, Iris Murdoch, Mary Midgley, G.E.M. Anscombe, Philippa Foot and Onora O'Neill. But I was left wondering what the purpose of this collection was and who would be its audience.

The most well known writers do not need to have extracts of their work included in such a volume: their work is both widely disseminated and widely read. The resurrection of work by earlier women writers is certainly laudable, but as neglected women philosophers they surely deserve a volume to themselves. Unless, of course, the purpose is to show that women have always been as good as men, judged on men's criteria—in which case the editor ought to have looked further back than the 17th century. The target audience for a

book such as this would, I imagine, be undergraduate and they should certainly be introduced to thinkers of the calibre of those included in this volume. On the other hand, I should hate to think of their being exposed to Warnock's establishment perception of feminist philosophy at such a delicate stage in the development of their feminist sensibilities.

Now, I'm not disputing that the women included here are fine philosophers. What troubles me is their being corralled into a nice little volume (ironically—or perhaps not—published by Everyman). It is dispiriting, even though it is not surprising, coming from a pillar of the liberal establishment, to be reminded that so many people still believe that equality simply consists in women's showing they can do things not just as well as men, but in exactly the same way. It sometimes seems that for every *Women Reviewing Philosophy* which tries to dismantle the barriers, there is a Baroness Warnock calmly, and with the weight of the entire establishment behind her, re-erecting them. We can only hope that weight of numbers will eventually break the barriers completely.

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**Drucilla Cornell, *The Imaginary Domain: Abortion, Pornography and Sexual Harassment*, Routledge 1995.
h/b £37. 50, p/b £11. 99**

Cornell has produced another excellent and significant book. I shall use it in graduate cultural theory classes because of the clarity and focus of Cornell's reasoning in the service of a fundamental and far-reaching project concerning the constitution of the 'sexuate' self. The explicit aim of the book is both abstract and instrumental: 'to synchronise the values of equality and freedom' (p. 231) through a programme of legal reform which goes beyond the 'difference/equality' divide which Cornell rightly sees as having hindered feminist jurisprudence—and indeed, much else besides.

Cornell is an important philosopher. If Irigaray is right in suggesting that sexual difference is the question of our age, then the interface between psychoanalytic and socio-political discourses is perhaps its primary locus. This is no less than a redefinition of the collective in the light of recent—and continuing—redefinitions of the individual. Cornell works exactly here, since in her understanding, the law is unequivocally a socio-political discourse, and equally unequivocally required, in its primary operation, to protect 'the imaginary domain'. This is one reason why her work in general should be widely read. It makes legible philosophical positionings across disciplines which open on to practicalities; it recognises no fixed barriers between the sexed individual's most singular and conflicted self-definitions and her/his definition through the symbolic forms which the law bodies forth. More: it is the work of the law to protect the minimum conditions for individuation without which not only are no freedoms possible, the very possibility of freedom itself is obliterated. Underpinning this book, then, is the notion of justice as a 'limit principle' and an orientation towards production rather than epistemology, based on practical, rather than theoretical reason (pp. 116-7). As with her book *The Philosophy of the Limit* (Routledge 1992), a fundamental issue is not whether analysis is needed, but 'what kind of philosophical judgment we give for making that analysis. This is the relationship between philosophy and feminism as it helps us think through the limits of theoretical reason. . . ' (p. 245 n. 47).

The mainstay of Cornell's argument runs as follows. The legal system is a symbolic Other operating in a future anterior time-frame. Without its guarantee of bodily integrity, the self cannot, as she puts it, project its own continuity (see e. g. p. 42). Rights are no longer argued in terms of the negative freedom of the absence of State intervention in and/or control of the 'already free', but rather are based in the conditions created by an active State-as-Other which enable individuation. Thus it is not enough for the State to permit abortion; it must guarantee the infrastructure which provides it, on the grounds that women cannot project their future selves as integrated without it. The pornography and sexual harassment debates are similarly examined, placing

the legal system clearly within the 'imaginary domain' (since the three necessary conditions for individuation which the law has to create and to safeguard pertain to that domain: bodily integrity, access to symbolic forms and protection of the imaginary domain itself). Passionate discussion of fiction, art, and occasionally, brief autobiographical reference is interpolated into passages of close legal argumentation. Cornell's use of psychoanalysis is clear and critical; for example in her chapter on pornography, she demonstrates how the psychoanalytic account of porn is both heterosexual and addressed to the male viewer. MacKinnon and Dworkin are both disagreed with in an exemplary manner; Cornell acknowledges the importance of their contribution while demonstrating the equal importance of its limitations. An important aspect of her argument overall is the way it addresses institutionalised homophobia in exactly the same terms as sexuate rights, using Shue's notion of the 'degradation prohibition': basically the outlawing of morally unacceptable inequalities which degrade the person (e. g. pp. 213-4).

It is tempting to expand further on specifics of the argumentation, but instead I will thoroughly recommend this book as a whole while going on to voice a disquiet. It is that Cornell situates her position in relation to Kant and to Lacan, and aligns her work with theorists such as George Fletcher, Henry Shue and John Rawls. While she acknowledges feminist theorists, including Judith Butler, Luce Irigaray and Teresa Brennan, she is by no means as careful to argue through them. For example, chapters 1 and 2 foreground Kant and Lacan, while Irigaray was for me a clear presence in her critique. Yet nowhere, I think, is the word 'sexuate' referred back to Irigaray in the way the concept of the 'degradation prohibition' is referred back to Shue. The attack on the ego is again formulated in terms of Kant, and while Teresa Brennan is referred to briefly, I thought Brennan's analysis of 'the ego's era' in *History after Lacan* was more important, at the very least as a reference point, than was stated. Cornell's definition of the self is performative in a Butlerian sense. Here again, although Judith Butler is present as an adjunct to the main lines and contexts, my feeling is that she has been more influential both in feminist thinking and in re-thinking the self more generally—and thus worthy of citation in

this way—as well as in the specific development of Cornell's own work.

I raise this as a general issue of strategy, as I have before, since it is one of considerable delicacy in these backlash times. I am not suggesting a simplistic promotion of women's thought over men's. I am all too aware of having to write ourselves out of pre-set agendas, of institutional pressures, and how they can determine legibility itself. But what are the imaginary, historical and political implications of framing the development of the female imaginary domain, both in theory and in social institutions, in such a way as to seem to accord more structural weight than is justified—or perhaps even the wrong kind of weight—to the dominant? What exactly is producing it? (Are we being good daughters?) There has already been the 'why are there no great women postmodernists?' debate, admirably challenged by Meaghan Morris and others, partly by arguing the structural role of feminism in shaping contemporary understandings of postmodernism, and partly by simply making a bibliography.

Irigaray found one kind of solution in her own dialogism, most dramatically with the textual Nietzsche. What is the equivalent in academic debate and scholarly referencing?

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[The following paper is a more or less verbatim transcript of Margaret Whitford's Inaugural Lecture as Professor of Modern French Thought at QMW, University of London, delivered on 7 March 1996. Obviously it was written for that particular occasion, and some of the references will not interest members of SWIP. However, we thought that it was worth making it available to readers of the *Women's Philosophy Review* since it focuses so centrally on feminist research.]

Doing Feminist Research— Making Links

The privilege of being involved in the opening up of a new field of thought is one which is not accorded to everyone. I think I have been very fortunate, even if at the time it didn't always feel like a privilege. Today I want to speak about the experience of doing feminist research in the academy, and to suggest some of the implications and potential of the model of feminist research.

As some of the audience will be unfamiliar with the field of feminist theory, I would like to explain at the outset that to say that one is a feminist researcher does not commit one to *any* specific thesis or fundamental item of belief; it does not imply a doctrinal position of *any kind*. This sometimes comes as a surprise to non-specialists unfamiliar with the proliferation of hypotheses and theories in the sphere of feminist research, and accustomed to thinking of feminism as a more or less monolithic entity, as far as the theory goes. But it would probably be impossible to find a single thesis of any substance to which every researcher who thinks of herself as a feminist would subscribe. Feminist research isn't like that; it is as contested a field, internally, as any other area of intellectual inquiry. Feminist intellectuals, *as a group*, do not make *any* global claims, though these might be made by individuals. The fact is that feminist theories are both multiple and hotly disputed; they involve lively and intense disagreement among feminists themselves. Partly for this reason, I am not today going to enlarge on the particular kind of theory which I am associated with, but will instead spend some time thinking about the model of feminist research in general.

I will begin with a brief detour, making a connection between working in a French Department and working in feminist research. When I came to London in 1977 and joined the French Department at Queen Mary College, there were two types of degree available to students in French: the University of London federal degree and the newly introduced course unit degree. Far from being the norm, as they are now, course unit degrees were an innovation in the French Department at that time, and didn't mesh easily with the University of London federal control over the syllabus and examining of degrees in French. Although the study of language formed the core of both, the two types of degree differed quite sharply in their conception. The federal degree was basically diachronic in its organisation, dominated by the rather biblical notion of a canon—a number of authors from the Middle Ages to the twentieth century which students graduating in French could be expected to have read. Because of the size of the canon and the problem posed by the large number of contemporary writers compared to previous centuries, students sometimes never quite reached the present day—there was no room for it on the syllabus. The course unit degree, in contrast, was synchronic, in practice if not in conception. This doesn't mean that nothing previous to the twentieth century is studied, but that the pathways are organised conceptually or methodologically rather than chronologically. Its dominant structure is interdisciplinary rather than canonical, and it is probably for economic and political reasons as much as intellectual ones that the canonical programme has disappeared, leaving the interdisciplinary system in possession of the field.

There is no doubt that the focus and concentration offered by single-subject disciplines is a source of real scholarship that, as an outsider, I cannot but be impressed by. But it is not an option that is open to the feminist researcher. A feminist researcher is obliged to be interdisciplinary, with all the problems that this entails. I use the term 'feminist researcher' here for short, to refer to all those engaged in the different types of research which involve the generation, exploration or application of feminist theory. In the area

where I would situate myself, for example, that of feminist philosophy, once one takes 'gender' as an analytical category—whether this is seen as an empirical or as a conceptual category—one is more or less obliged to see what has happened to the concept in adjacent disciplines. And once one posits a structure as systemic, the supporting evidence cannot be confined to one discipline only, but gains in weight and plausibility from making links with evidence or arguments in other disciplines. Although without aspiring to the comprehensiveness of Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex*, most feminist researchers in philosophy also read work in other fields—political theory, sociology, intellectual history, anthropology, literary theory, film theory, psychology, psychoanalytic theory—to name only the most obvious. One of the more substantial of recent studies inspired by feminism—Donna Haraway's *Primate Visions*—is about primatology, which is certainly not something I expected to find myself reading about when I started working in a French Department. As an absolute minimum, we have to know about our own subject, *plus* feminist theory.

This doesn't mean that we are multiply-skilled experts. On the contrary, most of us suffer from the feeling that whatever we are doing, we are not sufficiently well-informed, well-versed or well-trained. In philosophy, for instance, we feel that we haven't the grasp that our more specialised colleagues have; that we don't have their breadth of reading in the subject; that we can't always follow the specialised debates; that our questions are not their questions so we are often at cross-purposes; and for some of us, that we spend much of our working lives teaching outside our field. We don't seem to *fit* anywhere.

Yet when we join together with other feminist researchers, we come across another set of concerns and arguments, to which we can feel equally marginal, and where we are assailed by the same kind of doubts. The field of feminist theory is so large, that it is impossible to keep up here either, although the pressure to read everything is just as great, all the more so because of a moral imperative that we recognise and acknowledge the work of our fellow women scholars. And every academic knows the feeling of unsureness that arises as soon as we step out of the area of our special expertise, the area we

have written our lectures, or our articles on.

However, this is not, I think, necessarily a matter for complaint. This feeling is inherent in the inter-disciplinary conception and is part of the cost of opening up lines of communication. Once you step outside of the closed field represented by the concept of 'canon' or 'discipline' and question the lines along which closure has been effected, then we all become inter-disciplinary to some extent and it becomes difficult to know where to draw the boundaries of one's intellectual life. The peril of interdisciplinarity is that you may end up with no disciplines to be 'inter', so boundaries may get drawn in a rather ad hoc way, by custom, by exhaustion, or by the limited time available. And here the experience of the feminist researcher and the experience of working in a French Department that has gone over to the course unit system converge. In this lecture, I am going to speak as a feminist researcher, working in continental philosophy, rather than as a lecturer in French, but some of the intellectual issues are comparable. For the course unit degree, the core language is not a unifying factor; you can read anything in French, as in English, and without the notion of a canon, there is no single fully-agreed on alternative conception that would close the open horizon of studies in French.

Feminists also sometimes revert to the canonical model which is partly imposed on us from outside by the media, and partly imposed by feminists themselves in their desire to recognise their predecessors. But if we canonise too fast, feminism too may become a corpus and we become over-preoccupied with our own internal debates, especially debates about the purity of a particular theory's feminist credentials, classic arguments of the canonical type, instead of maintaining our vital links with other areas of thought. For there is probably very little that is not relevant for the feminist researcher; the problem is only where to draw breath.

We have often conceptualised our multi-faceted existence as feminist researchers in various more or less nostalgic or negative ways redolent of marginality, alienation, exclusion, superficiality, lack of scholarship, lack of focus and so on. The stress has often been on exile, estrangement, alienation, not belonging. What I want to suggest here is that the focus on

belonging—the identity problem—may not be the only way to think of our intellectual situation. Belonging implies an inside and outside, which seems more characteristic of the canonical version of disciplines. It may be too either/or for our purposes. I want instead to start thinking in terms of linking rather than belonging. The idea of linking is itself interdisciplinary, and comes from numerous sources, including psychoanalysis, feminist theory, postmodernist philosophy and Caribbean literary scholarship, so it exemplifies the notion that it posits. Linking is not intended to be an exclusive term, replacing all the other accounts; it represents rather a shift in focus, an intention to consider our situation from a slightly different perspective.

In the next part of this lecture, I will turn to images of connection and blocked connection. I am making one main point which is about the importance of making links, and in order to make it, I will be presenting a variety of images or concepts taken from different theorists. In case the main point gets lost in the detail, I should make it clear that *linking* is the idea which links the images in an associative way.

My first example comes from the models of the mind offered by post-Freudians, in the work of Melanie Klein and Wilfred Bion. These inventive and original thinkers proposed the idea, now current in contemporary psychoanalysis, that one of the most central and important activities of the mind is making links. It's a reworking of Freud's more physicalist model in psychic and symbolic terms. In psychoanalytic theory, the attack on links, if it becomes a habitual and systematic mental gesture, is seen as a pathology. Melanie Klein hypothesised that one of the most primitive and perhaps also most ubiquitous of mental operations consists in splitting. Splitting is a basic mode of organising psychic operations, by dividing input—whether from internal or external stimuli—into two categories, good or bad, and by attempting to expel the bad. The division between good and bad is presented as, in some ways, more fundamental than the division between internal and external world. At all events, splitting is thought to be a less arduous activity, psychically, than ambivalence, that is, the realisation that the qualities one most loves and the qualities one most hates belong to the same source. It is easier to locate them in different places, to idealise the one and demonise the other,

than to link the two together and endure their coexistence.

Bion, who trained with Klein, was able to elaborate on this theory as a result of working with schizophrenic patients who, as their diagnostic label suggests, suffer from excessive splitting. Bion felt he had been able to observe more or less directly in his patients the process of cutting links, and he concluded that :

if [the] link could be severed, or better still never forged, then at least consciousness of reality would be destroyed, even though reality itself could not be (Bion 1957).

Cutting links is a way of *not* knowing, or *not* seeing, and thus being unable to think about what *is*. Melanie Klein's stress is on the paranoia which this leads to. What I would emphasise here, rather, is Bion's point that cutting links makes it impossible to be mentally or psychically creative :

All of the [objects or ideas] are attacked until finally two objects cannot be brought together in a way which leaves each object with its intrinsic qualities intact, and yet able, by their conjunction, to produce a new mental object. (Bion 1957)

In psychoanalysis, the attack on links is conceptualised as a psychic defence. This means that when one attempts to make or restore links, the process is not necessarily felt as benign or creative, it may be felt instead as extremely dangerous and threatening. The attack on links was made for a purpose, and removal of any kind of defence is likely to be experienced as inherently unsafe. Bion gives a succinct version of this in one of his anecdotes about his schizophrenic patients. Bion manages to make a link which the patient recognises. The patient responds : 'Brilliant interpretation', following this almost immediately with the words 'I hate you.'

The psychoanalytic concept of links is central to my next example, the work of the Italian philosopher and psychoanalyst Gemma Corradi Fiumara, which takes us from schizophrenia, or schizoid thinking, to the idea of what she calls 'diabolic thought'. Corradi Fiumara works in Rome, dividing her time between her private practice as an analyst and her teaching at the university. She studied in the States as well as in Italy, and has published four books in English which develop her g35

characteristic and quite personal synthesis between the insights of psychoanalysis, the philosophy of language and the branch of continental philosophy called hermeneutics. In short, she is a link-maker par excellence. I am interested in particular in her work on symbolic thought and the distinction she makes between real symbolic thought and a kind of pseudo-thought which presents itself as symbolic thought but which in fact impedes thinking. Central to her work is the importance of differentiating between thought which allows for evolution, growth and transformation, and thought which, while giving all the appearance of intellectual activity, actually functions as a defence system against the processes of creation, of forming new thoughts. She describes the first kind, the creative kind, as metabolic; the second kind, or pseudo-thought she describes as diabolic. In her 1992 book, *The Symbolic Function: Psychoanalysis and the Philosophy of Language*, she writes :

pseudo-symbols . . . cannot be used for the purpose of progressively creating objects, as they have nothing in common with the high affective cost involved in producing inner transformations of the symbol-generating type (Corradi Fiumara 1992 : 81).

Her point is that real thought is not a superficial phenomenon, a kind of detached intellectual activity of manipulating symbols, but is linked in the most fundamental way with the rest of the personality. Thought which cuts itself off from the psychic processes that Bion describes as making links may be clever, but it is repetitive, stifling and closed to the possibility of being affected by contact with the thoughts of others. It is more likely to respond in a predatory or cannibalistic way, absorbing or eating the thoughts of others, rather than allowing these thoughts to have any effect on itself. Corradi Fiumara writes :

A pseudo-symbolic process which has the appearance of symbolism but is not conducive to dialogic interactions is 'diabolic' in the etymological sense of the word . . . a 'diabol' could be something that flings things across, and as a consequence jumbles them up. To be closer to the vital complexities of language we could suggest that communication is symbolic when we have activities that lead to richer interactions, and that,

insofar as this is achieved, the activity is also a truly metabolic one, a vital one (ibid. 82).

Diabolic thought uses sophisticated symbolic structures to defend *against* change and development, to keep everything the same, to prevent new thoughts from occurring or interfering. It is characterised in practice by inertia and repetition, often despite an apparent proliferation which turns out to be a false liveliness. Corradi Fiumara's work describes how the symbolic function can be used to destroy, to block or to deaden, as well as to assist the birth of new thoughts or new forms of life. Diabolic thought may be a means of survival. As Klein and Bion suggest, cutting links is a way to defend against the intolerable, the thought that cannot be taken in. The fear is of disintegration, loss of meaning. But, as Corradi Fiumara says, 'If it were only a question of surviving, any pathological style might well do.' (ibid. 91). Survival does not mean life.

I will come back to Corradi Fiumara later in the lecture. My third image is the idea of 'world-travelling' which I take from the Hispanic American writer Maria Lugones, who will probably be well-known to feminists but perhaps not to anyone else. The kind of travelling she has in mind is quite distinct from the tourism we have come to associate with the idea of travelling (see Lugones 1989). As Lugones explains it, many people nowadays live in more than one world. By world she means both an actual society or group, whether dominant or marginal, or an imaginary one. For example, the academy is a world, the department is a world, though a smaller one. One's family may be a world too. For the exile or the immigrant, one of their worlds may be an imaginary one, since the world of their childhood or formative years has disappeared, probably forever. A world may be a non-actual but still real world which links those who belong to it; or it may be a traditional construction of life, as she puts it; or it may be an incomplete world still in the process of coming into being. One may or may not be conscious of belonging to a world in this sense. In some cases, it is outsiders who construct the world to which we are then allocated; the insider is not necessarily aware of the construction, or if aware does not necessarily agree with its terms. Lugones describes in her work the experience of being a Hispanic in a predominantly Anglo-American world, and focuses

on the curiously ambiguous and discordant experience of having qualities in one world which she does not possess in the other. In one world she can afford to be playful; in the other world, she feels it is too dangerous, and as a result people see her as intensely serious. In one world she has abilities which she does not seem to have in the other. In the world in which she can be playful, she can be inventive and resourceful; in the world in which she is serious, she feels too defensive to have the kind of psychic mobility that she has in the other world. Nonetheless, both worlds are *her* worlds, *both* the Hispanic world of family and upbringing *and* the mainstream Anglo-American world of work. So we might be speaking here of a linguistic world, or a cultural world, an emotional world, or a professional world. She stresses that the having or not having of particular abilities has something to do with the capacity of the world she is in to recognise them. I do not need to mention here the late nineteenth-century arguments about the intelligence of women and the kind of education that befitted those with smaller brains. But the division of worlds, and its consequences, will be immediately recognisable to women in philosophy who have often described the same phenomenon: in traditional philosophy departments and seminars they are silent, or they fail to say what they mean, or they have the fragment of an idea but do not dare to air it in case the idea is murdered at birth, while in groups where they talk to other women in philosophy, they suddenly become animated, voluble, stimulated and stimulating, in short doing philosophy in a way they could hardly imagine themselves capable of in their professional situation. But then they discover that the groups in which they are doing philosophy in such a lively manner do not, apparently, count in the professional context; *real* philosophy, it is said, only takes place in the groups in which they are silent, and they suddenly find themselves de-skilled.

Sociology has described the way in which life in the modern city becomes fragmented into a variety of roles, and postmodernist theory has described the self as performative, particularly in relation to gender identities. Neither of these—the role-fragmented or the performative self—is the aspect that I want to pick out here. The point that I want to take from the idea of world-travelling is that translation across worlds is needed,

because our worlds are not transparent to each other. Although it has been customary to foreground our marginality, our not belonging to any of the places we inhabit, I want, with Maria Lugones, to see world-travelling as a potential strength. Living in more than one world is like speaking more than one language. Those of you who came to Marian Hobson's 'Inaugural Lecture' two years ago will remember the increased capacity or baggage that she described as coming with speaking more than one language. This ability to live in more than one world is a condition for the knowledge that comes from making connections, reconceptualising and reconstructing across boundaries. One does not travel as a nineteenth-century explorer with a desire to conquer, nor as a monoglot twentieth-century tourist flying in and out of some exotic country. One travels by inhabiting a different self, the self that one is when one is in that world. It is not necessarily an easy or a comfortable experience. One may be happier in some worlds than in others. And some worlds, as Maria Lugones points out, are entered at our own risk, though we may feel we don't have a lot of choice. But the person who like Lugones can mediate across worlds because she inhabits more than one is a figure of our times. She is an essential interpreter between worlds, the one who makes it possible for different worlds to communicate with each other rather than remaining self-enclosed.

Let me illustrate what I mean by the attitude of self-enclosure with an example taken from British philosophy. Philosophy has been more than a little inhospitable towards feminist thought. The mind has no sex, it is said, and reason is universal. On the one hand, there is a world which sees itself as neutral, sex-blind; on the other a world which posits gender, or sex, as its fundamental category of analysis. It is not immediately obvious that any translation is possible. Some people on both sides still argue that it isn't. The problem as I see it is perhaps not so much that each side starts with different fundamental assumptions, different methodologies, or different objects of thought. Difference in itself may be an opportunity as well as an obstacle, and there is no neat split between 'good' feminist thought and 'bad' patriarchal thought. The problem is rather that the boundaries are drawn too exclusively, so that linking is more likely to be experienced as contamination. In my

example, it is not the threat of feminism that is being warded off, but the threat of continental philosophy.

'Is it philosophy?' is a question that philosophers tend to find important. It's a field in which boundary disputes seem to arise rather acutely. Take the novelist and philosopher Iris Murdoch who recently in 1992 published her first philosophical essay for many years, *Metaphysics as a Guide to Morals*. In this extended essay, Iris Murdoch is arguing for the importance of moral philosophy. However, she sets up her argument rather as she might set up the plot of a novel, presenting the issue as a kind of heroic, almost mythic contest for the soul or consciousness of the ordinary individual. The struggle is personified by two major figures. On the celestial side: Plato. On the infernal side: Derrida. Derrida's *flaw* is that he is not a philosopher. Murdoch's desire to exclude Derrida from the ranks of *philosophers* runs through the book like a leitmotiv. I quote: 'Derrida is not strictly a philosopher' (151); 'Wittgenstein is plainly a philosopher whereas Derrida is not' (209). Excommunications such as this punctuate the argument at regular intervals. Yet, she says, Derrida is: 'a remarkable thinker, a great scholar, a brilliant maverick polymath, a *pharmakeus*' (290). Having admitted this much, what is it about philosophy that drives her to exclude this remarkable and brilliant author as, as it were, a contemporary Lucifer? Murdoch's own answer can be found in her book, but for my purposes, this significant exclusion illustrates well the kind of fierce territorial defence and patrolling of boundaries that I have in mind, not only conceptual but also institutional. For after all, whatever else he is or does, Derrida lectures in philosophy in the French higher educational system.

The problem is that the kind of thought which operates by splitting and exclusion is translated into institutional practices which have an effect on the employment of new staff, the development of new options or subject-areas, or the encouragement of new research. At a time of cuts, it is hard to retain the necessary flexibility to provide for a not entirely predictable future, and the boundaries of disciplines may shrink against the cold. This might be more of a problem for philosophy than it is for modern languages, where the boundaries are no longer drawn so exclusively by the canon. In philosophy, however, the

picture will remain bleak so long as the defensive logic of exclusion makes it impossible to allow metabolic thought through contact with something other than itself. In this respect we owe a lot to certain publishers in this country (the editors are in some cases former graduates in philosophy) who have displayed a somewhat more open-minded approach to the potential of new ideas than senior academics in philosophy departments.

If one adopts the model of linking, rather than the inside-outside logic of disciplinary purity, then many of the boundary disputes become irrelevant. The point is then the *link* that is made and the *new object of thought*, rather than the purity of the domain and the desire to expel intruders. The feminist researcher, like other inter-disciplinary researchers, can then expand into her potentiality as a world-traveller, although her ability to function effectively in this role depends partly on the willingness or ability of those who occupy the different worlds to hear her.

This point returns me to continental philosophy and two further notions, taken respectively from Luce Irigaray, the French philosopher and psychoanalyst, and Gemma Corradi Fiumara again. The first notion is that of the subject of enunciation, a psycho-linguistic concept that I came across in Irigaray's work. The idea is that the speaking subject, that is, not the grammatical subject of the sentence but the person speaking, is also a psychic subject, a subject of desire (as they say). The psychic structure, whether this is specific to the individual, or shaped by a particular culture and shared by many others, is replicated in different speech acts. The desire underlying the speech acts may not necessarily be to communicate; it may also be a desire to persuade, seduce, overwhelm or conquer, for example. Ideally, there would be two poles of enunciation, the speaking self or I (the subject pole) and the interlocutor who becomes in turn the speaking subject. Unless the communication goes in both directions, it becomes an exercise in domination, rather than dialogue. Important in Irigaray's work is the question: who in western thought is the subject of enunciation? Who is speaking and to whom? In the perspective which she develops, there is always a subject of enunciation, even if one is only speaking to oneself, and even

the most formal and impersonal academic prose is a communication informed by a speaking subject. Even if one tries to eliminate subjectivity entirely from one's account, in order to present the most objective possible report, there remains a speaking subject who may perhaps be identical with, or identified with, the first-person of the discipline: we-philosophers, or we-scientists speaking to each other, but not necessarily speaking to anyone else, or prepared to recognise another discipline as a subject-pole of equivalent dialogic status. When the desire is to exclude, to keep out potential interlocutors, one needs to think about what sort of defensive operation is being mounted. There are of course many good reasons why one might feel the need to defend oneself, but when this desire is reproduced at a disciplinary level, it inevitably raises questions about the kind of model of communication that is operative, and whether it *allows for* more than one subject-position.

The danger of solipsism is raised by Gemma Corradi Fiumara as well. Although she has written a whole book on the philosophy of listening, and the necessity for a receptive listener in order to bring to birth new thoughts, I'm going to pick out here a different theme, the notion of linguistic or symbolic ecology, taken from her 1995 book *The Metaphoric Process: Connections between Language and Life*. As its title suggests, the book is about metaphor, metaphor as boundary-crossing and the translation from one language or discourse to another. The fundamental picture she gives is an ecological one. Just as we live in an environmental habitat which is affected by pollution and other degradations and assaults, she suggests that we also live in a linguistic and symbolic habitat which is an equally important environment. And you can wipe out a symbolic or discursive universe just as easily as wiping out a species. Much philosophy, she argues, cognitively operates in a social-solipsistic style in which there is no dialogue with interlocutors who are also subject-poles of enunciation in their own right. The effect of being a disciplinary monoglot of this kind is the impoverishment of the linguistic and symbolic environment, underwritten by an unstated myth of transparent communication as an ideal. The danger is always that of falling into the often-unexpressed but nevertheless operative assumption that one's own linguistic or discursive universe is the only

one, or the only one that counts, or the only one that makes sense. Operating on that implicit assumption, one fails to engage in the kind of struggle involved in trying to find out what kind of sense another discursive universe makes. If one starts from a position of power, one might feel that one doesn't need to make the effort. So again it is likely to be the less powerful inter-disciplinary researcher who will be bilingual or trilingual.

This is also a good reason for travelling from one metaphoric world to another. For example, if you think in terms of world-travelling, you emphasise that there is more than one world, say, more than one linguistic or discursive universe, and that going from one to the other can be both an exciting but also a dislocating experience. World-travelling emphasises that there is a need for translation, and that there is a difference between world-travelling and tourism, and a limit to each individual's capacities. In terms of interdisciplinarity, you can't make links with everyone. If you think in terms of ecology, on the other hand, you emphasise that your habitat contains you, you do not have sole ownership, and that what you do in one place has effects in another which may not involve direct contact but rather a whole series of links which are difficult if not impossible for any single individual to trace, so that knowledge-production will be thought of in terms of an inexhaustible web or network. The consequences of cutting in one place—wiping out a whole subject-area for example—will have incalculable effects elsewhere.

The picture I've presented then is one of making links versus a kind of schizoid fission; metabolic versus diabolic symbolising; world-travelling versus linguistic or symbolic solipsism or imperialism. The problem for the feminist researcher, as for any other innovator, is how to avoid the dangers of the second, while ensuring the conditions in which the first are possible. She has, in other words, to ensure her own survival as a thinker, often in the interstices of the existing disciplines, without recourse to too many defensive strategies of the kind outlined. To consider this final point, I will take one more image or picture, taken from psychology and the literature on child development. (In a French Department, almost anything one reads turns out to be relevant.)

In attachment theory, we find an account of an experiment with children and parents called the Strange Situation, set up to examine patterns of attachment behaviour between parent and child at an early age. Children in the experiment are typically fifteen months old, and the whole event lasts for a few minutes at most. The experiment monitors the child's behaviour in a situation where they find themselves in an unfamiliar room, with toys, both with and without their mother, and what they do when a stranger comes in. It could in theory be either parent, but in the accounts I've read, it was always the mother. The observer looks at whether the children play with the toys in the presence, and in the absence, of the mother, and how they react to the stranger in the presence, and in the absence of the mother. On the basis of the observations, the behaviour is classified. In child development theory, the observations and classifications form the basis for predictions about later child development, which don't concern me here, nor will I comment on the classification, since I just want to use the account rhetorically.

The classification schema defines four types of behaviour and four types of parenting. The first type is defined as secure/autonomous. The child is able to play with the toys and interact with the stranger in the presence of the mother, who is emotionally and physically available. When the mother is not there, the child's first concern is to find her again. The second type indicates an avoidant child, and a mother who is said to be dismissing of attachment. The child focuses on the toys rather than on the mother, and appears relatively indifferent to whether the mother is there or not. This is said to correlate with a parent who avoids experiences of distress. The third type indicates ambivalence in the parent with a child who is unable to focus on the toys, because it is too preoccupied with a mother who is herself too preoccupied with concerns that exclude the child. The fourth type, described as disorganised or disorientated, describes a child without a strategy, whether the strategy is to focus on the toys, or to focus on the mother. Where the parent is too unpredictable, the child will typically engage in behaviour such as freezing, backing against the wall, or falling into a heap on the floor, unable either to play with the toys, or to approach the mother for help, or indeed to adopt any purposeful approach at all.

If the academy is our mother figure, our alma mater, what sort of mother was the academy when feminist research was still a toddler? I think it's not unfair to say that she was not a mother who provided security. We could not play happily with our theories, knowing that she was available and concerned about us. At the other end of the scale, she was not a pathological mother either. We did grow up and acquire confidence. We didn't stand frozen, unable to move, become disorientated, hide behind the furniture. Provisionally I suggest she was more like an avoidant or preoccupied mother. For some, it was difficult to get on with their research because of a ceaseless preoccupation with her. Am I approved of? Will she still support me if I want to be independent? For others, she was an avoidant mother; she didn't want close contact. She was happy for us to go on playing with our theories, provided we didn't expect too much in the way of encouragement. We couldn't turn to her when in distress.

Obviously one can't take the analogy too far, but I do want to extract and stress three points.

The first is to acknowledge my debt to the *Society for Women in Philosophy*, and its predecessors, the various women's philosophy seminars which took place in the eighties, and whose existence was the precondition of having any sustained thoughts at all. Without that protective and nurturant foster mother, that we created because we needed her, many of us in philosophy would not have flourished. One way of seeing feminist theory is to see it as a process of making links between previously unconnected phenomena. When Kate Millett published her groundbreaking work *Sexual Politics* in 1970, she connected vast swathes of knowledge and experience in the single term *patriarchy*. Patriarchy is now seen as too global a term to be genuinely descriptive, but at that moment it had the function of establishing links. This process was experienced as unsafe both by the women who were involved in it and also by the academy. The academy was able to defend itself quite successfully because of the structures that already existed. However, for the women who were trying to think new thoughts, it was easy to lose confidence, self-esteem and direction. A new thought needs nurturing. For this reason, an intellectual community

is essential, and if the academy cannot provide it, then it might have to happen outside the academy.

It is sometimes necessary to remind the second generation of feminist researchers how recent all this is. When I first came to Queen Mary College, I was the only feminist here as far as I knew. Although this wasn't, I hope, literally true, it certainly felt as though it were. This was not an unusual experience at that time. When in the early eighties I published a short piece in the College bulletin about the first meeting of women philosophers (which later became the Society for Women in Philosophy) there was a deafening silence. I was lucky; I had a Head of Department who believed in me; not everyone had as much. I was thus spared the kind of negative and hostile reactions that other feminist researchers describe, since for quite a long time nobody here, except the other rare feminists, spoke to me about feminist research except as a joke. Things have changed so much in the Arts Faculty here, that many people will not recognise what I am describing. This kind of intellectual isolation underscores my second point which is the need for an intellectual community. Anyone who violates what Corradi Fiumara calls 'unutterable cognitive vetoes' (Corradi Fiumara 1982 : 108), that is, vetoes on knowing or thinking certain things, especially when the veto itself is never explicit, or never allowed to be made explicit, is in a situation of danger in face of a threat of non-existence.

The third point then, is to argue that it is a mistake to think that all intellectual life happens in the academy. Thinking of a metabolic kind goes on in other spaces, and in order to renew one's thinking, one sometimes has to step outside the academic framework. If we had waited for the academy to recognise us, we wouldn't have gone very far. I feel that this needs to be stressed at the present time, because of the lack of real support by the government for higher education. Metabolic thinking is motivated by the desire to transform the self and the world, not just one's academic field; it is not limited to working hours. What I would say now to younger scholars faced with the demands of the institution, is: there is on the one hand career, and on the other there is thought and its exigencies, and one should not confuse the two. You may need to step outside the academy in order to think. If the institution which is supposed to create a space

for intellectual life ends up, because of the pressures that we know about, making intellectual life impossible, it may be necessary to do your thinking elsewhere. Your intellectual community is not confined to the university. You may want to try and change the academy from within, but it won't change unless there are those whose intellectual demands are forcing it, and they are not all within its walls. As Rosi Braidotti once memorably wrote: Feminism has brought about the education of women as philosophers. It was a broad social movement that enabled women, in philosophy and elsewhere, to start making the links that produce new thoughts.

Feminist theory has grown, with or without institutional support, and it is straining against the disciplines that once contained it. All the evidence suggests that there is a conflict between the internal development of disciplines and theories, and the external demands of institutional structures and development. But the internal logic of feminist research requires a framework in which students and researchers are enabled to make links rather than discouraged from doing so. For all the reasons which I have sketched out in my lecture—the intrinsically interdisciplinary nature of feminist research, its commitment to transformational thinking, its explicit imperative to listen to speakers from other worlds, feminist research at its best could be seen as paradigmatic of what intellectual inquiry might be at the end of our century and into the beginning of the twenty-first century.

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