

WOMEN'S PHILOSOPHY REVIEW

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WPR seeks to review books on Feminist Theory and Gender Theory likely to be of interest to philosophers, as well as books in Philosophy likely to be of interest to those working on Women and Gender. Both Feminist Theory and Philosophy are understood in a broad and non-partisan sense.

WPR is published three times a year. The Summer/Autumn and Winter/Spring issues are primarily book-review issues. These issues will also include interviews, topical pieces and articles that overview current work in a particular area of Feminist Theory and/or Philosophy. The third issue each year is a **Special Issue**, devoted to articles in a designated area, and is edited by a team of Guest Editors.

WPR is the official journal of the Society of Women in Philosophy (UK). (See back cover.) It can also be bought by institutions and individuals who are not SWIP members by writing directly to the General Editor.

Cover Picture and Design: John Opie's portrait of Mary Godwin (**Mary Wollstonecraft**, 1759-97) appears by courtesy of the National Portrait Gallery, London. A picture of **Drucilla Cornell** copyright © Jerry Bauer (Viale Aventino, Rome) and a photo of **Penny Florence** provide the other two faces of the cube (as interviewee and interviewer in this issue). All are gratefully acknowledged. Thanks also to the University of Warwick Print Services for the cover design and printing, and Nikki Sykes for the design and layout of the text.

Material for *WPR*

- **Book Reviews** to Margaret Whitford (Books Review Editor).
- **News** to Alison Stone (News Co-ordinator).
- **Advertisements** contact Stella Sandford who will quote appropriate rates.
- **All other *WPR* material** to Christine Battersby (General Editor)—but send articles for the

Special Issues to the Guest Editors direct. (See 'Calls for Papers'.)

Material for the next issue of *WPR* is due by **10 November 1997**.

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

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EDITORIAL

Women's Philosophy Review is the official journal of the Society of Women in Philosophy (SWIP, UK). In the past it has only been available to members of SWIP. However, the journal is now undergoing a period of transition in which it is being redesigned and made available to a broader readership under a new General Editor (Christine Battersby), with Margaret Whitford now in the position of Books Review Editor. This is the first issue in this gradual process of transformation. We hope you enjoy it! And we welcome feedback from readers (both 'old' and 'new') to the new look and feel of *WPR*.

Women's Philosophy Review is the only journal on the international scene that sets out to review books on Feminist Theory and Gender Theory likely to be of interest to philosophers, as well as books in Philosophy likely to be of interest to those working on Women and Gender. Both Feminist Theory and Philosophy are understood in a broad and non-partisan sense, and the current Editorial Board comprises twenty two women who represent a broad range of philosophical interests and skills from Universities around the UK and Ireland. Names are listed on the inside cover of the *Review*.

Women's Philosophy Review will appear three times a year. Two issues each year will focus on book reviews, but will also include interviews with important women philosophers and feminist theorists, as well as columns and review articles on areas of interest to feminist philosophers. The third issue each year will be devoted to articles in a designated area, and will be edited by a team of Guest Editors. Given the comparative neglect of Feminist Philosophy in the established journals that review Philosophy books—and the consequent omission of much feminist work from the related data bases on current research in Philosophy—the Editorial Board believes that a review-based journal has an important function to play in opening this most conservative of disciplines to the many new perspectives and voices that have recently emerged.

Although the journal is aimed primarily at philosophers, we also recognise that many of our readers will be feminist theorists or researchers who are employed—or who are studying—outside University Philosophy Departments. We remain committed to addressing this diverse audience in ways that recognise a variety of levels and needs. This concern is revealed in the range of books reviewed, and will also be borne in mind by the Guest Editors of the annual Special Issues.

Please see **Calls for Papers** below for the first three Special Issues that are planned. Readers are invited to submit articles for the forthcoming issues on *Feminist Political Philosophy* (1998), *Hegel* (1999) and *Feminist Aesthetics* (2000). After that, we have plans for a Special Issue on *Language* (in the Year 2001). Get your pens (and computers) working *now!* We are particularly anxious to receive submissions for the first of these issues. You do not have to be a member of SWIP—nor is it necessary to be a woman—in order to write for *Women's Philosophy Review*. But we are looking for writers in these areas who are broadly sympathetic to the aims of *WPR* and who have relevant skills in the particular subject areas. Please spread the word ...

To make it more attractive for established and younger scholars to submit articles, please note that we now have an ISSN number and that we also intend to anonymize articles submitted to these Special Issues to members of the Editorial Board for 'blind refereeing'. The intention is that this journal should become one that 'counts' for the purposes of the Research Assessment Exercise (RAE) that is currently reshaping the face of Philosophy in UK Universities. Reviews, columns and interviews for the other two issues are not subject to the same procedures, although the Editors reserve the right to exercise editorial control and to shorten (or reject) submissions where appropriate.

The attempt to increase the academic prestige of the *Review* is not to endorse the current workings of the RAE. Indeed, this topic is discussed in some detail by the Editor in the **Views and Comment** section of this journal, and this topic

will also be discussed at a Panel which proceeds the SWIP party on Saturday 25th October 1998 in London (see page 7 and page 90). It is, however, a policy that is necessary if Feminist Philosophy is to get the recognition that it deserves as a flourishing research and publishing area within the UK.

Don't forget, you can increase the prestige of the journal by submitting articles and also by writing to Books Review Editor to volunteer your services as a reviewer. If you have not reviewed for *WPR* before, see Margaret Whitford's instructions on how to proceed at the head of the Books Received section of this journal. Please contact Christine Battersby direct if you have other ideas for a Column or other material that would enliven *WPR*.

Please note also that we are inviting further submissions for the **Philosopher's Bookshelf** which is a new series in which readers are asked to comment on a book that has significantly influenced their philosophical development. This has proved a popular column with members of the Editorial Board and has generated a wealth of material, with some submissions held over until next time. This issue the Editor has decided to feature those contributions that relate to philosophers writing towards the end of the nineteenth century and in the early years of the twentieth century. But what links all four contributions is not only a matter of chronology, but also the high valuation placed on original thinking.

Here we find praise for a philosophical opponent (Nietzsche); acclaim for a philosopher whose own silent assumptions acted as a goad to thinking the puzzles of sexual difference (Husserl); and two tributes to Wittgenstein who is represented as a thinker whose stylistic unconventionality brings philosophical questioning into everyday life. Although it has sometimes been said that women do not succeed in Philosophy because they tend to position themselves as 'disciples', this is not what characterises these contributions to **The Philosopher's Bookshelf** by Diemut Bubeck, Nicola Foster, Sabina Lovibond and Alessandra Tanesini. The

Editor looks forward to seeing how other women will describe their philosophical influences.

Similar reflections are triggered by a further innovation this issue. The Editor is proud to present Penny Florence's fascinating dialogue with Drucilla Cornell which is the first of a series of interviews with key women philosophers and/or feminist theorists. This conversation provides a full and unique account of one woman's philosophical and political development. And here again we see how misleading it is to position women always as 'disciples' of male philosophers. As Cornell herself puts it,

it is really interesting that a lot of my work, probably unconsciously to myself, proceeds through alliances that are so bizarrely drawn with men that it disrupts the idea of identification. I mean, nobody writes of Lacan, and Derrida, and Rawls in the same book—and says she has alliances with all of them. I have proceeded a great deal through disidentification, and I think that is the only thing we can hope for. Yet it is also a reality—an intellectual historical reality—that I have really come out of German Idealism, and have remained engaged in a long, long struggle with it. That tradition is very inscribed in the masculine.

No, the so-called 'Heloise complex' that some feminist theorists write about—memorialising and misrepresenting the twelfth-century abbess's tragic bond to her teacher, Peter Abelard—is by no means an accurate representation women's relationship to philosophical tradition at the end of the twentieth century.

Photographs of Drucilla Cornell and Penny Florence provide two sides of the 'photo cube' that makes up the re-designed cover of *WPR*. The picture on the third side is Mary Wollstonecraft (1759–97). Although the idea is that the photo cube will change each issue (and will ideally include a changing succession of interviewers and interviewees), it would have been inappropriate if we had not featured the 'mother' of

British Feminist Philosophy on the first of the new covers. This is particularly apt in this bicentennial year of Wollstonecraft's death and Mary Shelley's birth. A exhibition celebrating both mother and daughter is currently on at Dove Cottage, Grasmere (to 16/11/97), transferring to the National Portrait Gallery, London (28/11/97 to 25/1/98).

Future issues of this journal will include a Review Article, overviewing some developments and recent books on some selected area of Feminist Philosophy or Feminist Theory. Next issue we are expecting a piece on Feminist Ethics. In this issue, in lieu of such an article, we have solicited a column by **Rissy Ruddy** which profiles **Feminist Philosophy on the Internet**. Here you will find some instructions for the Internet Beginner, a glossary of key vocabulary, the http addresses for some selected sites and also, as an added bonus, some reviews of selected recent books in the field of 'cyberfeminism'. A really useful resource!

Finally, some information to SWIP members about what is *not* included in this issue—and that is a list of the publications and research interests of the members of SWIP. We offer our apologies to members who have submitted this information, but it has been decided that now that *WPR* is to be made available to a broader readership, it would be more appropriate if a Directory were compiled which was available only to the members of SWIP, listing these and other personal details. Alessandra Tanesini has kindly agreed to take on this task, and will be writing to SWIP members requesting the relevant information. It is also proposed to gradually separate out the Newsletter and the Review functions of this journal, with a separate Newsletter going round on a more regular basis to SWIP members. Watch for further developments ...

When my female students ask me for advice about giving papers in public, I always start by saying 'Never Apologise!', since women are too prone to apologise—and apologies by women tend to be heard differently than those that come from men. So it would be odd to end the first Editorial that I have written since taking over as General Editor of *Women's*

Philosophy Review with an apology. Nevertheless, a word of explanation is called for about the delay in the appearance of issue no 17. Not only have there been the usual chores associated with finishing a book and seeing the manuscript into production, but the task of editing this journal has turned out to be more work than I could have guessed.

I can thus only express my admiration for the efficiency with which Morwenna Griffiths and Margaret Whitford have produced the *Women's Philosophy Review*—and its predecessor, the *Women in Philosophy Newsletter*—over the years. I am delighted that Margaret Whitford felt able to continue her work for *WPR*. Morwenna Griffiths remains associated with SWIP—and hopes to represent SWIP at the International Association of Women Philosophers (IAPH) on August 6–10, 1998 in Boston (see *Conference Announcements*)—but she has taken the opportunity of a move to a new job at Nottingham Trent University to take a well-deserved break from the task of editing *WPR*. I would like to thank both of them on behalf of all SWIP members. You both did a sterling job!

*Christine Battersby,
Department of Philosophy,
University of Warwick*

**Next Meeting of SWIP (UK)
Saturday 25th October 1997**

Room 3D, University of London Students' Union,
Malet Street, WC1E (opposite large Dillons)

**2–5pm, panel discussion and open floor
debate of issues relating to the RAE.
5pm onwards, drinks and chat in the ULU bar.**

Women/Philosophy—In Conversation
no 1 in a series of *WPR* Conversations

**TOWARD THE DOMAIN OF FREEDOM:
Interview with Drucilla Cornell**

Penny Florence

The following is a transcript of a conversation with Drucilla Cornell, edited jointly by her and by Penny Florence. Thanks to Christine Battersby for her assistance.

PF I would like to start with some questions to help situate this interview for readers of the *Review*. How would you place yourself in terms of philosophy?

DC I would place myself primarily as a feminist with many alliances. All my work I see as inspired by feminist progress and as a Leftist. It has never been more necessary to call yourself both a feminist and a Leftist than it is now.

PF What is your academic background and do you think of yourself as a philosopher?

DC I am not a trained philosopher. My academic background is probably very typical of women of my generation. I really started out my life thinking I would be a poet and a playwright, a novelist—a writer—and I published some poems when I was younger. Even when I was in college I thought I would make a living by translating revolutionary Polish women's poetry. That was me being practical at the age of nineteen! Now, many years later, I have somebody in my extended family from Poland, so it worked out in that sense, even if it did not work out as an effective way of making money. But I studied Polish with such intensity and I am still a great admirer of the Revolutionary Polish

Women poets. They are phenomenal. I was thrilled recently when a Polish woman poet won the Nobel prize. So it continues to be a passion of mine.

Like many women, I did not take myself seriously at all as someone who would ever realise their ideas, let alone pursue an academic career. I went to college at a number of different schools and left Stanford right before I graduated to become a Union organiser. I saw myself by that time as a committed revolutionary. My life's work would be in Union organising. I had some very brutal experiences as a Union organiser, faced a lot of physical danger and death threats, but what was really affected was my hope that the world could be truly transformed in that way. It was quite an extended battle we were in with the Teamsters Union, which was developing sweetheart contracts in shops where I was trying to organise. Of course you can challenge sweetheart contracts, but how are you going to do it when many of the workers are illegal immigrants and the last thing they are going to want you to do is to bring a law suit against the bosses and the Teamsters. It made me see personally just how brutal Capital can be. But it was the failure of justice. After I really hung in there,—I had already been burnt out.

Later I succeeded in getting into a major University in mathematical logic, a great programme, and got funding which still existed then in the US. My grandmother and I went and looked the place over and I just lost my nerve. I was quite shattered by it. There were no women in the department; it was the University of California at Berkeley, probably one of the best programmes in mathematical logic, and I just did not believe I could do it. Having gotten into the programme, working very hard to do so, I backed out and went to Law School in a moment of total defeat. It is only maybe in the last three years, if asked the question, I would say, 'Yes, I am a philosopher.' It just shows you how long it takes women to be able to answer some very simple questions.

Because I never went to graduate school, I did not understand anything about this whole academic apparatus, you know. I skipped a whole programme and became a professor out of nowhere.

PF What you are working on at the moment?

DC I am writing a new book, *At The Heart of Freedom*, in which I am trying to continue to work with the idea of the 'imaginary domain'. It strongly defends gay and lesbian rights. Not just gay and lesbian rights but much more sweepingly: is there a concept of right that would give us a new way of thinking about freedom of sexuality that feminism could promote, and that would not lead to some of the quandaries that have been created by current theories of feminist legal reform that have focused on gender equality? In the United States this focus has a specific history because there was a moment when the feminist agenda tackled the interpretation of sex as gender for purposes of Title VII, our anti-discrimination statute. I am trying to return feminism to some of the earliest aspirations of what we now think of as the 'second wave' of feminism, and away from a very limited concept of gender equality.

The imaginary domain is a philosophical concept in the sense that it tries to articulate the conditions that any theory of justice or any ethics as social arrangements has to have as a starting place: the equivalent evaluation of each of us as a sexuate being. I use 'sexuate' as opposed to 'sex' or 'gender' because they have both been given such loaded meaning. I use the imaginary domain to replace the actual working legal principle of privacy in the United States as it has been used—and horribly misused—in protecting the rights of gays and lesbians. So my new book is in a sense a feminist book about sexual freedom which argues that we cannot think anything like freedom for women without thinking freedom for all of

us as sexuate beings. The imaginary domain is meant to be that new idea that can help get feminism out of some of its conservative implications in the United States.

PF For the sake of anyone who is unfamiliar with your book *The Imaginary Domain*, perhaps you could elaborate on the concept a little more, and then go on to explain how the idea of the imaginary domain is currently evolving from that initial articulation.

DC In *The Imaginary Domain*, I primarily looked at minimum conditions of individuation as the basis of an egalitarian theory that would protect a de-ontological core of the person. However, as I started thinking about what this would mean in an international context I realised that such an idea still turns us back to concepts that we now think of as 'western' even if minimum conditions of individuation, and the idea of the person, are psychoanalytically and politically based, rather than metaphysically justified. I realised that I needed to distinguish between two levels. So, for example, when I started to look into questions of erotic autonomy for women in the Third World, it became clear that the idea of the imaginary domain might work, but it would not work in the same way. The equivalent meaning of our sexuate being has to be substantively filled in, in different ways, by every culture. So it raises the question of universalisability. This can be opposed to the positive universalism which has been an endless danger when feminists from the United States, or for that matter, Great Britain, or what used to be called Western Germany, get involved in the human rights dispute.

I take it very seriously when as Western feminists we are imposing our own ideas on the majority of the world. I was also very informed by the so-called collapse of Socialism. I say 'so-called' because it is unclear what actually collapsed. These countries may have been

governed by utilitarianism in the Capitalist sense and therefore they were much more like State Capitalist societies. Even when they granted social equality to women, they did so through appeal to a utilitarian justification.

The imaginary domain is defended on the other hand through an interpretation of Kant. But it starts with the Kantian idea of our inviolability as persons. Still we want to be very very humble before taking words like 'autonomy' and even 'individuation' outside of their own context. I have in no way given up on the idea of minimum conditions of individuation as a working idea for a legal theory of equality in the US. But there may be whole cultures for whom bodily integrity is just not the way a people would express whatever they want to say when they say there should be an equivalent evaluation of sexuate being. Questions of clitoridectomy and polygamy will have to be asked, and there would be a test for rightfulness. The test for rightfulness would be: is this legislation or institutional structure consistent with the equivalent evaluation of feminine sexual difference? Universalisability remains a question; it would still not be relativism, just look at the context and the culture.

Unfortunately most cultures end up with the same position, relegating women to the status of the degraded other. We see world-wide patterns. Lesbians get exiled and women have no rights, and these horrific conditions must be condemned as unjust. They can be condemned as making impossible any equivalent evaluation of sexual difference. Still, we must be careful that we do not decide in advance, using our own Western terminology, what laws, and institutions, and cultural practices would be inconsistent with the equivalent evaluation of women's sexual difference. *The Imaginary Domain* is also an attempt to provide new answers to the political and legal issues of pornography, abortion and sexual harassment. It is an attempt to take feminism back to some of its rudimentary but very important radical ideas.

PF Britain, of course, has no written Constitution such as exists in the USA. One of the most prominent women barristers in this country, Helena Kennedy, is also chair of Charter 88, which is a group campaigning for a Bill of Rights in this country and a written Constitution. I have two questions here. First, drawing on the American experience, do you think women are right to fight for a constitution? The second question is about the constitutional differences between countries and the 'translation' problems that ensue for international readers and writers interested in the law. Even if a constitution is drafted, there will still be major differences between Britain and the U.S., for example, because of the historical trace of the old system, or because of our relation to European laws and courts. What might be some of the ramifications for the broad feminist project of rethinking Law?

DC You know I think, for me at least, we need to do two things. First, we should not simply conflate social critique of law with normative interpretations of legal principle. Now I think that the question 'Should there be a written Constitution?' is an important one. Overall I would favour written constitutions. They are needed because written constitutions are marking out a symbolic order which to some extent creates boundaries for the colonial world. The creation of new constitutions has been taken up in many of the world's new nations. Since we are confronted with these new constitutions, I think we should certainly advocate a concept of right that would embrace what Jaqui Alexander calls 'erotic autonomy' and we should also fight to make sure that these constitutions do not reconstitute patriarchy once again. Just the written declaration that we are all free and equal persons can be quite significant as a rallying call. I am Lacanian enough to think that the symbolic order will want to spit off that equality.

Can a constitution make you safe? Obviously not! I agree with the old Marxist saying: that rights are only as good as the people who enforce them. People in the popular sense. You should not expect more from these constitutions than you can get. So for most of the world my answer would be the move towards a written constitution is extremely important, and I tend to agree with Willie Appalon that it involves second stage post-colonialism when you claim for your country and your people the kind of subject-position that is absolutely denied to the colonised. And it should be a rights-based constitution rather than a duty-based constitution. Wherever women have been rendered objects of duty you see the replication of utilitarian capitalist ideology.

PF In Britain, especially since the anti-democratic developments under Thatcher and Major, it has become increasingly important both that current rights of citizens be safeguarded and that women's rights be understood as human rights.

DC That is why I disagree whenever people say rights are necessarily part of private property. Rights are part of possessive individualism. I disagree with the Foucauldian analysis that when you claim yourself as having a right before the law you are positioning yourself as a victim. I think that what we are aiming for in the imaginary domain is not to represent ourselves as a victim, but to say we are entitled to represent our own sexuate being. That means whether I am a lesbian or a transvestite or a transsexual, or something else that I have represented myself to be, when I choose to be a parent I can be a parent—unless of course I am engaging in violence against my kid.

I am very concerned that the idea of a concept of right does not get conflated with a specific articulation of rights because I do disagree with the idea that simply having a concept of right, if it is tailored on an abstract

enough level, will turn into political moralism. It is not that I disagree that political moralism has haunted feminism; it has. But that does not mean that we cannot positively and affirmatively intervene in this dispute. Perhaps in the end I am Hegelian enough to think that we are actually constituted in modernity as subjects of right and so, in a sense, we cannot just step outside this sphere of law. I mean Foucault asks, why are we always back to legality? Well, I think Hegel has the answer to that. Since the bourgeois revolutions, who we are, who we have been constituted to be, is subjects of rights. Thus, when a nation proclaims its people as a free and equal nation, in a sense it is also proclaiming an entitlement to a kind of personhood that has been absolutely denied the nation and its people by imperialist domination.

PF Your work has implications for aesthetics if only because of the major role you accord to safeguarding access to symbolic forms. How productive do you think it might be to think this through explicitly in terms of aesthetics?

DC You know I think the aesthetic might be the central category of what I mean by ethics, and even the concept of right embodied in the imaginary domain has at its heart the demand for the space for the aesthetic affirmation and re-engagement of the feminine within sexual difference. If I did not see feminism and feminist politics as requiring an aesthetic dimension, then I would not have carved out the boundary of the person to individuate themselves as a sexuate being in the way that I did. The whole aesthetic dilemma of feminism is how you move within imposed personas to try to 'be freed up enough' to re-dream, re-think, re-live out different patterns of sexuality and sexuate being that do not just re-inscribe accommodation to the masculine and feminine, or to family life as a certain kind of kinship. You can not defend this vision of feminism without the idea of 'dreaming up', and in this

way, the part of Kant that ultimately I am most interested in is the idea of the transcendental imagination.

The role of the imagination and the role of the aesthetic are essential in my entire project, starting with *Beyond Accommodation*. What is it about human beings that can enact and create new objects? And the reason I have always said this is not anti-materialist is that when we think of human being in Heidegger's sense, as radically thrown into a world, there is no way we do not symbolise it. That is what it means to be in language. You can get this from Heidegger; you can get this from Wittgenstein. We are stuck with having to re-symbolise, re-articulate, re-allegorise and re-metaphorise who we are and how we live in a world that is brought to us in language, so that our own sexual being never comes to us as un-symbolised.

Annie Sprinkle does a marvellous enactment of this—Annie Sprinkle is a porn star, as you probably remember from *The Imaginary Domain*. She says she was a failed heterosexual for her first twenty years of life and she had her breasts re-done four or five times. At the opening of her show, she takes off her blouse and stands there with her breasts exposed, and she says, 'I have no idea what these are.' Then she proceeds to get every woman in the room completely and utterly confused because in fact none of us do know what they are. That is what I mean by saying that we encounter our own bodies without being able to know them as ours. Judith Butler says we run into a body that has already been re-evaluated, but, even more profoundly, a body that is so deeply inscribed in a whole scene of sexual dynamics that, by the time you look at your breasts and at what they are, it is certainly not just a material phenomenon that is at issue.

Once breasts are no longer shown as sexual objects, the question 'What are these? Can you help me?' makes women confront their own hearts and the history

inscribed in them. Then Sprinkle goes through a list of her boyfriends as she shows all her scars. This one wanted them this way; and this one wanted them that way; and, finally, when she was in her late 30's she became a lesbian, initially because she did not want to go have plastic surgery any more.

Other women usually join in, and then people make ink prints of their breasts; and she has turned these ink prints into art shows that she displays, and the women sign them and they put the prints up in different ways. It becomes this kind of collective aesthetic performance (laughter) of women trying to take back their breasts, and of course it is an incredibly funny evening; it is totally enjoyable. But a lot of Annie Sprinkle's work is about this struggle to take back the body. 'What is this?' 'How did I get this?' 'Who am I?' When a woman's sex is accompanied by this long discussion about what is there and what is not there, the whole discourse of woman-as-sexual-object is completely disintegrated. In the show there is the voice and the body parts and it is really beautifully performed.

For me, that performance exemplifies where the heart of feminism lies. The women who put their breasts in ink attempt to take something that cannot be held on to,—and hold on to it. This 'holding on differently' is why I have argued that the feminine imaginary has to be symbolised, despite all of the problems of the re-activating of symbols. You know, symbols freeze, symbols keep us from seeing everything that can be put in motion again, but without that moment of holding on, there is no way of moving beyond accommodation to our 'found' bodies. We are just endlessly lost in the dissolution, and the disintegration that Sprinkle is describing. So the aesthetic is the absolutely central category for me.

PF This puts me in mind of feminist thinkers such as Rosi Braidotti who, as she puts it, are trying to think

materialism beyond physicalism, to get beyond the idealism/materialism binary. It seems to me that your work certainly implies this.

- DC Absolutely. Rosi and I have just been involved in an exchange with Rita Felski, sending some material that touches on this back and forth. You are right. I think that the way I would put it is that materiality is never directly accessible to us. So if you think about what a materialist ethics would be that would get beyond the mind/body dualism, it would explore the way meaning is inscribed in the flesh. To touch the subject of the body differently demands that we find words to represent the unreadability of the found body.
- PF I am trying to think of it from the point of view of an embodied and historicised 'aesthetics of difference' which is supple enough to encompass the vexed questions of value and beauty which have been evaded for some time by many feminists and Leftists alike. Of course earlier left thinkers like Adorno ...
- DC I do not think you can ever forget Adorno on this point and, for instance, what Habermas did in boxing the aesthetic from the ethical. Some practices like Sprinkle's, whatever you think of their success, are looking toward an aesthetic of feminine sexual difference as material—but as material that can be re-formed, re-symbolised and played with.
- PF Do you think this basic relation of the aesthetic to play is at least part of what Irigaray meant in her fairly recent expression of regret concerning the pain there is in feminist art or women's art?
- DC I think Irigaray may well be reaching for something like Schiller's sense of play, and it is very much what I mean

by the imaginary domain—you know, the space before you are completely marked by a sexed body. But, of course, we do not get there except by travelling differently, and part of that travelling has to be through play. So play-acting in Schiller's sense is a very profound part of feminism. I was glad to see Irigaray coming back to it, because I felt when she followed Hegel in introducing the concept of sexuate rights she was getting very far away from her own radicalism.

It is one thing to say you need a concept of right; but it is another thing to ontologise sexual difference. I strongly disagree with her concept of sexuate rights because you have inevitably given an ontological basis to Right that freezes sexual difference, and that is an extremely dangerous project, not a playful project.

- PF The Utopian is a space in which it is possible to play, and you make significant use of it in your work. I am not sure I understand all the levels on which you do so, however.
- DC First, what I do not mean. I do not mean Utopianism as a blueprint, a 'how-to' manual. Kantianism, as I interpret it in *The Imaginary Domain*, is a utopian project because it is a demand for inclusion in a moral community of persons that, by definition, cannot exist; and, in that sense, the demand for inclusivity is not in this community or that community, but it is for full recognition of a free and equal personhood that is utopian. It is what has never been realised in any existing society. If you just did that—if you just defended the proposition that women as well as gays and lesbians, transvestites, transsexuals would be given the right to represent their own sexuate being, and be given the right to represent themselves without any interference, and to live out lives in accordance with our visions of intimate association—you would have completely disrupted the order of civilisation.

Chantal Mouffe talks about inclusivity in a horizon of community, or existing community. The community of persons is a 'must be' of practical reason placed on society by the recognition of us as free and equal persons, so I do not even think we want to have a community as a horizon as if there were something out there that we can represent. So it is utopian in both these ways: it appeals to what is not, and it has never been actualised; and if it were to be actualised we would be living in a very different world. We would living in a world in which patriarchy could not be institutionalised any more. The other form of utopian gets back to the feminine within sexual difference. I mean the time of sexual difference that has never yet arrived, that only exists in the future and that Irigaray speaks of.

As a mother of a four-year-old daughter, I am endlessly returned to the practice of freedom in mother-daughter relationships, and so in this sense starting as if we were creating psychic maps for outer space. You know, this is what I have tried to do on a day-to-day basis. What 'mother' is, what 'daughter' is, this all has to be scrapped, and you start with this 'person'. Of course, this 'person' is materialised as female as you are, so you are already engaged with feminine sexual difference—the two of you together. When my daughter, Sarita, started to masturbate, and she wanted to know what her sex was called, we decided to call it 'wonder', and the reason I called it wonder is because it represents the wonderful, the many pleasurable things that if you just said what they were, you could never describe the pleasure they give you. And the playing with wonder has had an effect on how she thinks of her sex, as opposed to masturbating, which is such a dull word.

Sarita knows all her parts; this is a 'vagina', this is a 'clitoris'; but she refers to her clitoris as her 'fun button'. This feminine other self—so much freer than my self—is always demanding, because I am the one with more

language, but she is the one with more freedom. My words try to catch up with her freedom, and of course it is impossible. So I see actually engaging with her as a utopian project, creating a place that has never been. And creating an in-between us that has never been conceivable under the whole unbelievably oppressive rubric of 'being a mother' and 'having a daughter'.

- PF Something no woman can change alone, of course. I guess this is one of the ways your extended family works, including the various, but stable, male figures in Sarita's life, like Uncle Larry.
- DC I am trying to build a completely different kind of family, and the adoption chapter in my current book defends these new families. Some people are going to have more biological ties than others. In my case, my extended family has almost no biological ties, though I do have a biological family with people still living in it. My idea was to create an extended family which would prevent me from having to rely on servants as many women do who continue to work, and to completely problematise the dynamics of the sexual imposition of heterosexual normality. Uncle Larry always wanted to be a parent, and the way the rights to parenting are generally so limited meant that, as a gay man, he was excluded. My daughter has four gay uncles. Uncle Bill and Uncle Larry were single at the time they became part of my extended family. They got into very stable relationships, and their lovers have now joined the Uncle category. The Uncles are different. Uncle Larry is really involved in week-by-week parenting. He picks her up from school one day a week and he also cooks dinner for me, lunch for me. I feel like I have died and gone to heaven, since he has been with me! He is involved in day-to-day caring. In some ways he is a better mother than I am. He is much less fraught with endless

philosophical complexity about each and every one of his actions.

Our family is a very rich sphere of complex engagements and a lot of love. So I am very glad that I keep up this experiment. The scene of adoption is fraught with the unconscious paradigm of heterosexuality. That is why all the adoption literature is so hopelessly boring. You know the birth-mother and the adoptive-mother are put in a position of war against each other because there can only be one 'mother' in the heterosexual imaginary; but, of course, when a lesbian-mother wants to adopt her lover's baby, both of the couple want to be mothers. This should not be a big problem. Under my schema, there is not only room for one more, there is no limit. Why would I be threatened if in fact Sarita's birth-mother at some point or another wants to have contact with her? We have set this up in such a way because of the whole thing of heterosexuality producing the man's sexuality, which produces the children and the trauma of infertility etc. And so it was actually adoption that got me thinking about sexual freedom.

- PF Irigaray has famously suggested that sexual difference is the question of our age. What would you suggest and why? Or is this not an age of large 'Questions' as such, but rather one of re-thinking relations?
- DC That's a really interesting question. I certainly would see sexual difference as one of the main questions of the age; but I think maybe the central question for me is whether it is possible to really transform the world, and truly produce new social arrangements. The re-working of sexual difference would be central to the new ethics of social arrangements. I think that is what has led me to be very careful about the role of political philosophy and insist on the idea of justice. If you do not think that it is possible to truly transform the world and create new

social arrangements that are in dramatic ways more ethical—perhaps more ethical by many different standards or theories that you could set up—then the re-working of sexual difference, what does it come down to? How would we know that it came to anything? What would it produce? What would it constitute that was different?

So I think I would say that is the central question. And with the collapse of a political scenario involving a major part of humanity believing to some degree or not in Marxism, this question has really come to the fore. And then within the resultant situation, the re-thinking of sexual difference and the re-working of sexual difference will be one of the main arenas in which we are going to challenge the idea that there is nothing new under the sun.

- PF Feminism has always faced the awkward problem of inserting itself into ill-fitting systems of meaning. There is attendant on setting up a dialogue with the male dominant a real danger of according it, the dominant, more structural weight than the female in the imaginary domain. What is the effect of situating in the dominant tradition areas of theory where women have made substantial, if sometimes only recent, contributions? How best can it be handled? On one level this is about something as simple as citation; on another, disidentification; and on another, about history. I particularly wanted to ask you this because, as I said, I raised it in a kind of coda to my review of *The Imaginary Domain* in the last issue of the *Women's Philosophy Review*. The matter was re-stimulated for me as much by your notion of the imaginary domain itself and the extent of its potential as by the way you chose to frame it—in other words, it is as much about the genealogy of important ideas as it is about your practice, and thus it is

about the reception of your work on the level of conceptualisation as well as a question of strategy.

DC I actually think that is a really important question because we inherit a tradition—at least if we are raised in England or the United States—that is not only mainly masculine but also white. When we engage with it, we are inevitably both having to identify and disidentify. I try to express that identification/disidentification with alliances—and I need to note my refusal to keep my alliances neat. I ally with many different men who are at war with one another. I would never call myself a Derridean, or an Adornian, or a Hegelian, or a Kantian, or a Lacanian—so disidentification is always implied by the alliance. Yet it is also true that the two women writers I mainly cite who are not primarily known as fiction writers are Irigaray and Cixous. But the woman I cite the most is Toni Morrison—and, in a sense, she is probably the writer who has had the most aesthetic impact on me, in reshaping and rearticulating what I think of as the aesthetic element in my own attempt to reconfigure a feminism in which the aesthetic is at the heart.

I think part of what we are up against is the historical fact of the exclusion of women from philosophy, which has nothing to do in my mind with any natural characteristics of the feminine mind, but simply with imposed, brutally imposed, exclusion. As we get to the point—if we are getting to a point—where women can place themselves in philosophy, then what we would hopefully see is more women engaging enough in disidentification, so that we will no longer have to spend our whole life labelled as a follower of a particular man.

But it is really interesting that a lot of my work, probably unconsciously to myself, proceeds through alliances that are so bizarrely drawn with men that it disrupts the idea of identification. I mean, nobody writes of Lacan, and Derrida, and Rawls in the same book—and

says she has alliances with all of them. I have proceeded a great deal through disidentification, and I think that is the only thing we can hope for. Yet it is also a reality—an intellectual historical reality—that I have really come out of German Idealism, and have remained engaged in a long, long struggle with it. That tradition is very inscribed in the masculine. And Irigaray has, too. We share a tradition with one another, and I think that this part of the reason that even more than Cixous (although I am very deeply sympathetic to so much of her work), Irigaray for me has been a real interlocutor—even as she came up with sexuate rights and I came up with the idea of the imaginary domain.

PF I guess this also about the genealogy of important ideas.

DC I am conscious of the historical problem; what does it mean to root yourself in a masculine tradition? What would it mean to break yourself free of that grounding both as yourself psychically at a particular moment, and to claim your own ideas for yourself and as a feminist claim these ideas are feminist, and at the same time say the feminism demands a complete re-thinking of the central categories of philosophy? I do think it is important to go back to the old texts. I also often teach MacKinnon; but MacKinnon has a kind of materialism that is very deterministic, so that in order to teach MacKinnon you are always forced to go back to the texts that she is engaging with, particularly Marx. I feel that this is a constant, constant problem, and the only solution I think is to endlessly try to re-engage with it.

There is a further question about how to symbolically engage in public with women with whom you would disagree. It is an extremely difficult question. It involves the problem of translation, how does psychic reality translate into our objective world, and how is our objective world translated back into our psychic reality

without some very simple idea of cause and effect? It is clear that the respect for the other writer must be noted. Even with MacKinnon I felt the need to bend over backwards to be very very clear of my ultimate respect for her. I think that part of this is what Irigaray calls for, the great care before the symbolic relationships between women that can so easily be misread as a 'cat fight'. I think it is a very important question—and I think it is part of feminist politics that we answer it—and it certainly is not because I think there are no great feminist 'postmodern' thinkers. I think they are innumerable. It suggests that when you engage, it must be a careful reading.

PF Have you seen Teresa Ebert's book, *Ludic Feminism*, which I am reviewing elsewhere in this issue of *Women's Philosophy Review*?

DC She sent it me, I think. She obviously did not know that I was an old Union organiser, and in and out of Marxist and Leninist Parties, and did armed self-defence for the Black Panther Party. So my response is, 'Well, girlfriend, I've been there!' I've read parts of the book. I understand her impulse. She wants to go back to true-blue Marxism, and go back to class; but if you go back to class, what you're going to find is all sorts of women trying to engage with the aesthetic formulation and re-formation of what it means to be a woman. One of the deepest fantasies of academics is that we are the only ones who read books and have ideas. Once you have actually worked in a factory, you will know that you will have as many discussions on what we are now calling aesthetic practices as you will anywhere else.

My own consciousness-raising group, when I worked in a factory in New Jersey, was all Black and Hispanic, and one of the women was in the Young Lords Party. She was a prostitute; she remained a prostitute; and

we organised prostitute collectives that were very engaged with all sorts of measures to really handle the pimps. Yet part of what this whole discussion was about was re-forming female sexuality and the figure of the prostitute. We played a major role in going to the 1974 feminist meeting to discuss prostitution and defended unionisation for prostitutes. We would read Hegel and Marx.

It is a fantasy of ours, us academics, that we are the ones that are formed by ideas. When I read *Ludic Feminism* and I saw myself portrayed as a high theorist separate from the masses, I thought, 'no!' You see, if you are with 'the masses' you no longer have that kind of elitism; and it is a kind of elitism to think that so-called 'average' women—and I say 'so-called' because, in a sense, certainly, I see myself as having all of the 'average problems' that any mother who tries to work has. We fantasise materialist feminists as being 'real' and about the 'real' issues; but when you actually are doing the work of changing the world, it is all about re-imagining the forms in which it is to be done.

I will give you an example. Our consciousness-raising group not only took on prostitution. We organised an action against a male worker in Harlem Hospital that was completely thought out in terms of keeping the State out of kinship relationships. This man was not paying child support. We would go in; we would pass out leaflets asking women to express as best they could their views on this kind of behaviour. People would put smoke-bombs in this guy's locker, pelt him with food, and put worms in his locker, and use all sorts of creative and expressive means—and the last I heard he was still paying his child support maintenance. On the one hand, it was direct action, and on the other hand, it was always thought through in terms of new forms of self-mobilisation. Our rallying-call was: 'We leave it to you girls to express in your own unique—and what, we are

sure, will be highly original—ways, how you feel about this guy not giving money to his kids and causing so many problems.' And they did. The last I heard, he was still paying his child support maintenance.

I think the irony is that for me I learned about the aesthetic dimension of political practice as a Union organiser. The Unions were very much caught in economic determinist arguments, and it is exactly that which could not mobilise anyone to do anything. Even the idea of a Union Organising Committee coming together and being in solidarity, and being in a union, we always played with it. When I was on Organising Committees, plays would come out of it, paintings would come out of it, it was aesthetic on many different levels in that sense. In short, I am sympathetic to Teresa Ebert. Let us not be up in the clouds; and let us do something. But if she tried to do something she would realise it is very important to at least be able to reach into the dreamy aspects of life and be fearless in what you are challenging, otherwise what are you going to change? We have gone through this over and over again in the Union movement.

- PF I guess that one thing that concerned me about her argument was that in her appeal to return to global questions, she was wanting to return to global theories. There is an important difference. We do have to return to those kinds of 'universal' questions—but not through global theorising.
- DC Yes, and again with that kind of economic determinism. Of course I think we need theories of distributive justice.
- PF One last question. Is there something you think we should have talked about or covered that we have not?
- DC I think I would like to end with a warning to feminism. Feminism really needs to guard against some of its own

conservative tendencies, as we have to fight now for what seem to have been rights that we should have long since won. We should not entrench ourselves in a programme based more on circumstance and exhaustion than on any kind of real hope. And if we do that, and then say, for instance, that some right to abortion is better than no right to abortion, and that some minimal laws against sexual harassment are better than none, then maybe we have purchased these rights at the price of excluding our gays and lesbians from the reach of a concept of right.

We need to be faithful to radicalism. But the good thing about being radical is that you can make a coherent argument, and also make your ideas have an appeal that this is truly different. I am looking for a radicalism that is not just an old re-play of the politics of resentment that just endlessly plays out in the same kind of negotiation-politics, where people trade off others in order to get the little bit that is not worth having.

Drucilla Cornell, Rutgers University (US)
Penny Florence, Falmouth College of Art (UK)
 at the University of Warwick, May 1997

BOOK REVIEWS

Utopias, Dolphins & Computers

Mary Midgley, Routledge 1996, h/b £17.99

'Is philosophy like plumbing?' is the opening question of *Dolphins, Utopias and Computers*. Midgley believes that it is, and by comparing philosophy to something as domestic and mundane as plumbing, she is being deliberately provocative. She argues that as plumbing is essential for the health and well-being of society, so too is philosophy. It is an essential tool for critically examining the underlying conceptual schemata which affect our ordinary lives.

Academia has altered philosophy to the extent that, in Midgley's view, it has lost its way this century. Modern philosophy has become an esoteric discipline, isolated from everyday reality in the ivory tower of academia. A class distinction has arisen between pure and applied philosophers, the former doing philosophy, the latter merely applying it. The requirement of specialisation has forced philosophers to work in obscure corners, ignoring the wider picture. Midgley's criticisms, though, are not to be read as advocating the dissolution of academic philosophy. On the contrary, philosophy demands trained specialists. Rather, at issue is the direction that philosophers have taken, becoming solely lawyers, stifling creativity and imagination. Midgley, though, believes that philosophers must be poets as well as lawyers, to explore the world as a whole. It has been fashionable this century to criticise our historical roots where utopian ideals were commonplace. We condemn them as too fascistic or too idealistic to be of any use. But practical utopias, argues Midgley, are not holiday brochures of an ideal place in which to live but rather necessarily oversimplified conceptual maps which can stir our intellectual imagination.

The book shifts in emphasis from the early chapters which address internal considerations of philosophy to the later chapters addressing highly contemporary issues such as the purpose of learning, the place of women in society, the sustainability of the environment, animal rights and the exalted

meaning we have given to artificial intelligence. By using philosophy to examine all these issues, Midgley believes it brings philosophy back into the real world. Equally, by showing us what is distorting our conceptual thinking, philosophy can help us to see more clearly possible ways forward and solutions to these often problematic and challenging areas affecting us all both now and in the future.

Midgley writes in a clear and lucid style, often with warmth and humour. Her views and ideas are thought-provoking and the book is especially apt for anyone interested in the direction philosophy should take as we approach a new millennium. Unlike Midgley though, I do not agree that we should look backwards to our philosophical ancestors as role models for the future. Rather, I believe we must be forward-looking to have the vision to ensure that philosophy will play an exciting, dynamic and crucial role in the 21st century.

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Earthcare: Women and the Environment

Carolyn Merchant, Routledge 1996, h/b £50, p/b £11.99

Carolyn Merchant has made her reputation with a unique blend of philosophy, environmental history and social history—all written from a well-grounded socialist feminist perspective. The synthesis she achieved in *The Death of Nature* (1980) opened the door to a new perspective on the Scientific Revolution, and played a key role in ushering in a new, more conceptually sophisticated, stage in ecofeminist theory. Thus it was with a good deal of anticipation that I began reading *Earthcare*—a work which includes several of Merchant's articles, as well as edited extracts from all of her major books. In this synthesizing work, Merchant aims to pull a set of general themes—relating to earthcare and a 'partnership ethics'—out of the diverse elements of almost two decades of her research.

In parts of this book, my expectations were more than realised. When she is focusing on the inter-relationship between material history and the history of ideas, Merchant's work is

stunningly good. In chapter two, her deconstruction of the Edenic recovery narrative makes possible a fresh and powerful retelling of the American frontier saga. Chapter five discusses New England's history through a focus on ecological transformations during America's colonial and post-revolutionary period; Merchant has thus been able to shed new light on the common experiences of Native American and Euro-American women during this era. Finally, in chapter four's compelling discussion of the European Scientific Revolution, she demonstrates that an integral relationship existed between the development of new mining technologies, the rise of mercantile capitalism, the ecological devastation of northern Europe, the gendered politics of democracy, and the contestations for 'nature' within both the organic and the mechanical philosophies of the early modern world.

However, Merchant seems to write with at least two, sharply different, styles. In the chapters focusing on contemporary environmental philosophy and politics, she abandons the engaged synthesizing style of her historical studies in favour of a more enumerative approach. In a discussion of contemporary ecofeminism in her first chapter, Merchant resorts to disappointingly simplified typologies of feminism's various theoretical strands, largely eschewing any real analysis of them. Chapters six through nine look at feminist environmentalism in three industrialised countries, but derive much of their analysis from other theorists. Merchant's use of this more empirical style is at its best when she is discussing feminist science studies (chapter three) and the American women's conservation clubs of the progressive era (chapter six); even these chapters, however, lack the flair and originality of the historical syntheses discussed above.

Merchant concludes *Earthcare* by calling for a new 'partnership ethics'. This concept, located within the new theoretical paradigm being created by philosophical ecofeminism, is an important one. However, Merchant has not developed it as fully as Karen Warren, Val Plumwood, Jim Cheney and certain other American and Australian ecofeminist theorists.

Overall, *Earthcare* fails to hold together. Although it has several good chapters—and it has a few gems—Merchant's discussion of 'partnership ethics' is not powerful enough to harmonise the diversity of issues, concerns and styles included within it.

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Pragmatism and Feminism—Reweaving the Social Fabric

Charlene Haddock Seigfried

University of Chicago Press 1996, h/b \$43.95, p/b \$13.50

This exploration of the historical and intellectual relationship between pragmatism and feminism is as engaging as it is substantial. A genuine sense of discovery pervades as we are told stories which have not yet found their place in intellectual history. There are stories which relate how women influenced—and were influenced by—the pragmatist movement. These stories set out the complicated sum of inclusions and exclusions that characterise the liberal aspirations—yet illiberal gender prejudices—of particular pragmatist thinkers.

In places I found the discussion too generalising to be philosophically rewarding. Seigfried asserts, for instance, that 'universalist and necessitarian approaches to morals ignore as irrelevant the particularity of persons and historical groups and the fortuitousness present in day-to-day living' (217). This is presented almost as a truism, yet it is in fact a highly contentious point. Of courses it is thoroughly familiar as a criticism of Kantian ethics, but it is an objection which can be met with persuasive counter-arguments in some Kantian quarters.

Such minor frustrations, however, are immaterial, for the selfsame generality is in a different respect a virtue. Seigfried's book is designed to interrelate two traditions of thought, and this is a task which can only be done in the broad. Attention to themes rather than to specific arguments is precisely what is needed to bring patterns of similarity into view. And there are indeed striking similarities: the social embeddedness of philosophical thinking; the relation of theory to practice; the

culturally constructed nature of experience and subjectivity; the multiplicity of epistemic perspectives; the presence of partiality in ethical thinking. Seigfried sums up:

Pragmatist explanations of the relation between self and world, experience and knowledge, theory and praxis deny the strict separation of emotions and intellect that feminists frequently criticize as a masculinist distortion pervasive in the Western tradition of philosophy. (161)

For those theorists inclined to link the above themes and correlative styles of thought with femininity—perhaps through psychoanalytic considerations about separation, for example—it is already interesting enough that these themes were advanced, albeit not without other influences, by white American academic men. But there is an added twist when we read these men's philosophies from the point of view of women—the point of view of feminism—since what we have perhaps come to think of as a feminist philosophical voice is overheard saying some shockingly sexist things.

Thus, in her conclusion to chapter six, on William James' very feminine, yet not very feminist, philosophy, Seigfried puts the point nicely: 'Only when James' own interpretative horizon of patriarchal values is recognized and rejected are we free to appropriate the subversive feminine that is also part of his text' (141). Seigfried's excellent book will help us to do just that not only for James' work, but more generally for classical American pragmatism.

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Materialist Feminism

Toril Moi and Janice Radway (eds), *Special issue of the South Atlantic Quarterly*, Fall 1994, Volume 93, No 4.

This collection sets out, as its editors put it, to 'build up a provisional, tentative picture of what a 'materialist feminism' might look like in the 1990s' (749). Through so doing, the editors hope to further the understanding, firstly, of the nature

of the 'materialism' being claimed; and, secondly, of the relationship between this kind of feminism and the earlier current of thought called 'socialist' feminism. The essays are extremely diverse, including several pieces of cultural analysis, an examination of 'maternalist ethics' (by Sabina Lovibond), a history of the French women's movement, and a conversation between Moi and Juliet Mitchell; nevertheless, an overall sense of materialist feminism and its characteristic concerns does emerge.

Some of the features of materialism that become apparent will surprise few: materialist approaches accord explanatory primacy to social relations but without privileging any one set of those relations (e.g. class or gender) over others, and stress the ideological or discursive constitution of identities within these relations. Furthermore, for several authors, materialism consists more particularly in attending to the place of bodies within these relations.

Also unremarkably, materialism sets up essentialism as its prime antagonist. Sadly, many contributors (with the exception of Lovibond, whose approach to essentialism is more considered) do not interrogate this term, but appear content to redeploy it to designate the cardinal sin within feminism. For example, Sandrine Garcia appears to see essentialism as simply mythical and intangible, while Jennifer Wicke equates it directly with the naturalisation of gender difference and advises vigilance against it. It is perhaps in respect of this opposing of essentialism and materialism that 'materialist feminism' retains its closest tie to former socialist feminism.

On the other hand, the strength of the collection lies in its sophisticated awareness of the complexities and uncertainties of the social-relational situations feminists face, and its assessments of the possibilities and difficulties of political engagement within those situations. I found particularly insightful Wicke's analysis of what she calls 'celebrity feminism' and her criticisms of academics' blindness to the importance of this domain, and Garcia's study of the decline of the French women's movement and her examination of the widespread female practice of both using and repudiating feminism:

women desire to reap the benefits of feminism, but also to 'profit in relation to women because they pretend to escape from a dominated group by exhibiting their lack of solidarity with it, and in relation to men because they hope to gain recognition from them by putting down feminism' (862).

This collection provides an interesting, if not altogether surprising, picture of materialist feminism. It also, if inadvertently, suggests that this style of feminism needs to augment its strength as a source of political analysis, by rethinking its relationship to 'essentialism' and its adherence to a concept of the social which it seems hardly to have begun to problematise.

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Passion in Theory: Conceptions of Freud and Lacan

Robyn Ferrell, Routledge 1996, h/b £35, p/b £10.99

Freud and the Passions

John O'Neill (ed.)

Penn State University Press 1996, h/b £36, p/b £15.95

La Dynamique qualitative en psychanalyse

Michèle Porte, Presses Universitaires de France 1994

These three books on Freud could not be more different, and will probably attract different audiences. Robyn Ferrell's philosophical essay offers a dense and allusive set of arguments in a mere 100-odd pages. There is an argument about the inextricability of reality and representation; an argument about the continuity between Freud and Lacan; an argument about feminism and psychoanalysis, and so on. Its central argument, however, is that Freud was an empiricist who evolved a theory that challenged the premises of empirical science.

This book should go on the reading list for any course which looks at the philosophical implications of psychoanalysis, for it sets out the case for the psychoanalytical challenge to our contemporary attachment to science, which Ferrell characterises as a religion of objectivity: the cult of the fact. Ferrell does

not claim that empiricism is wrong, rather that the reference to the external world does not guarantee its assumed status as an independent arbiter. The objective is a theoretical fiction. For Ferrell, what psychoanalysis shows is that the reference to the world passes through desire. Without desire, we have no connection to the world at all. It is common to discount psychological reality as being 'merely' subjective, that which has to be set aside in order to assure the validity of science. But what we see in empiricism is the desire that 'the subject not desire' (100). The subjective is still there, informing the theory.

Ferrell does not go on to make the argument (put forward by Irigaray and other feminist critics of the scientific world-view) that we are looking at a desire with a specifically masculine structure. Hers is a much more general point about the unconscious passions inherent in any theoretical commitment (and that includes feminism). She writes beautifully and the argument is both elegantly constructed and sophisticated. I wished she had gone on to elaborate on the implications of her case—it is the kind of book that makes you wish it were twice as long. Highly recommended.

John O'Neill's edited collection, *Freud and the Passions*, will probably have more appeal for a literary audience. It's quite a mixed collection, and some of the essays display an impressive virtuosity. They seem to me to fall mostly into the category of moral essays, in the sense in which 'moralist' is used in France (the tradition of La Rochefoucauld and La Bruyère), commenting on human nature, but with the added scope for reflection provided by the work of Freud.

Because my view of the qualities of the essays depends partly on my own interests, which will not be shared by all readers, I think it would be invidious to single out any individual contributions for praise, so in order of appearance, I simply give an account of what to expect. In chapter 1, William Kerrigan argues that the Renaissance was 'the great age of forepleasure' (13). In chapter 2, Donald Carveth critiques Freud's metapsychological model of the passions, and argues that narcissism is the root of all evil. In chapter 3, Jerome Neu

wonders why we hate the ones we love. In chapter 4, Kathleen Woodward looks at anger in feminist writing and the cognitive dimension attributed to the emotions in feminist philosophy.

In chapter 5, Claire Kahane offers yet another essay on the 'Dora' case. In chapter 6, Mary Jacobus disentangles Freud's 'Case of Homosexuality in a Woman'. In chapter 7, John Forrester links an affective state (envy) to a configuration of the social world via Nietzsche, Freud and Klein, and challenges Rawls' attempt to separate justice from envy. In chapter 8, Ellic Ragland contributes a Lacanian account of ignorance in the transference, starting from the Lacanian perspective that 'the ego by which we negotiate a position in the world is not to be trusted' (152). In chapter 9, Geoff Miles writes about the 'dead mother' phantasy in Freud's *Grävia*. In chapter 10, John O'Neill analyses Freud's 'Leonardo' essay, and in chapter 11 Laurence Rickels reflects on mourning and melancholia in Freud's case histories.

The quality of the essays is high (there is some occasional prolixity which made me long for the concise economy of Ferrell's style, but this is, I suppose a matter of taste), and they could all be put on reading lists where appropriate.

As Michèle Porte's book is in French, its audience will be more specialised, and I am really only reviewing it here to draw the work to general attention. It has often been pointed out that Freud's models of the mind depend upon figures and metaphors drawn from late nineteenth-century science, and writers on psychoanalysis sometimes speculate about what psychoanalytic theory would look like in terms of twentieth-century science. Michèle Porte, who is both a mathematician and an analyst (which must be a fairly unusual combination), has tried to reconceptualise Freud's central models in terms of catastrophe theory, using the work of René Thom. I don't know enough about catastrophe theory myself to be able to assess the value of this attempt, but it did seem to me both worthwhile and potentially very valuable.

Porte argues that Freud has difficulty constructing adequate models of the psychic apparatus, because he needs to

include both the pressure of the drive and also psychic conflict. He needs therefore two levels: structural stability combined with a high degree of event-instability, or in different terms, a model which includes both an explanation of continuity and an explanation of discontinuity. Thus, after he loses his theoretical dualism (of ego versus sexual drives) in the monistic theory of narcissism, he is obliged to postulate a second instance in order to handle both continuity and discontinuity—hence the theoretical necessity for the introduction of the death drive.

Like Ferrell, Porte argues that transference is not just an aspect of clinical work, but is also a key to the theory—catastrophe theory shows that the term 'ego' requires a minimum of two agents in order to be intelligible. She also manages to propose an explanation for the masculine fear and hatred of women in terms of the same theory. Although I couldn't follow all of it, I took her aim to be a vindication of Freud's drive theory, but in terms of some of the most recent developments in mathematics. For those Freud scholars whose work revolves around assessing Freud as a scientist, this book should be essential reading.

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Mourning Becomes the Law: Philosophy and Representation

Gillian Rose, Cambridge University Press 1996, p/b \$9.95

In this collection of essays Rose pursues the themes and arguments of her previous work in *The Broken Middle and Judaism and Modernity*, and continues to interrogate and criticise post-modern theory through her radical, 'aporetic' reading of Hegel. As with all of Rose's work the essays here are both difficult and provocative. They are difficult because of the complexity of Rose's style of argument, which always involves her thinking through, with and against an array of other thinkers and traditions. Even when Rose, as she puts it, 'shoots from a pistol' (72), her scholarship makes few concessions to those less thoroughly read in the traditions of Western philosophy and literature, not to mention Judaism, than she is.

The essays in this book are provocative because in them Rose presents a critique of the resources of contemporary philosophical, social and political thought. She examines both the legacy of Heidegger in the work of Derrida, Levinas and Blanchot, and the much cruder stances of libertarianism and communitarianism, in a way which identifies the connections and mutual implications of what are often seen as diverse or opposing modes of understanding and judgment.

Those sympathetic to Levinas's account of ethics or Derrida's recent work on politics, or more generally to the post-modern turn in philosophy and theory, are likely to be suspicious of Rose's sweeping conflation and condemnations of postmodernism. Those schooled in more mainstream social and political theory may well be outraged by Rose's dismissals of the claims to authority of both individual and community. Nevertheless, even though some of the material here is far too condensed, however bold Rose's claims, they are neither crude nor ill-informed.

Thus, in this final work, put together when she was dying, Rose continues to initiate and perpetuate argument. The last two essays in the book are about philosophy and death and inevitably have poignant connotations for those who know the circumstances in which they were written. At the same time, however, these chapters continue to expound an understanding of philosophical work which will be Rose's proper legacy. This book will be interesting and useful reading for all those working in areas of theory where the claims of postmodernism and the critique of metaphysics and representation have become taken for granted. Over and above this, this book attests to the endless fascinations of philosophical work.

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Hypatia's Daughters—Fifteen Hundred Years of Women Philosophers

Linda Lopez McAllister (ed.)

Indiana University Press 1996, h/b £39.50, p/b £17.50

The origin of this book lies in a special edition of *Hypatia: A Journal of Feminist Philosophy* published in 1989 which focused on women in the history of philosophy. It is republished here together with other journal articles and specially commissioned essays. The women represented are a diverse group; they include Hypatia, 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 Gilman, Edith Stein, Hannah Arendt, and Angela Davis.

Traditionally, philosophy is an institution which has marginalised women, both literally and rhetorically. In recent years, however, there have been some attempts to redress the exclusion of women from the academy; for example, Mary Ellen Waithe's four volume history of women philosophers and several anthologies. The next step in this exciting new field is to begin to read these women critically and analytically. As such, this volume is a mixed contribution to this important project. The book would benefit from a more ordered approach to its selection of women, through a more detailed discussion of the criteria for including a woman in a history of philosophy.

The essays in this collection vary greatly in approach, scope and quality. The best contributions attempt to situate the women within a contemporary philosophical context, reading them as engaging in key philosophical debates and considering the impact of their experiences as women on their work. I particularly liked Andrea Nye's essay on the ethics of Elisabeth, Princess Palatine, which explores the lengthy philosophical correspondence she shared with Descartes and the mutual influence they exerted on each other in their writings on the passions, the good life, the nature of philosophical enquiry, and the relationship between ethics and epistemology. There are

insightful essays on Charlotte Perkins Gilman's social philosophy seen within the wider context of evolutionary theory, and on the role of self-governance in Mary Wollstonecraft's writings.

But I was disappointed with the book overall. A critical feminist history of philosophy should entail a rewriting of the history of philosophy itself and a rethinking of what constitutes the philosophical. We need a more fluid understanding of philosophy as not merely the solution of a set of timeless problems, but as a set of social practices embedded in a web of contemporary cultural narratives. The danger is that a new female canon of women philosophers will merely duplicate a history of male philosophers that happens to be the philosophy of the moment. It is not enough merely to add women to a list of eminent male philosophers. We must ask different questions—interrogate the historical conditions of possibility for the entry of women into philosophy, explore the rise of different philosophical practices, and widen the areas of debate that count as philosophical. What are the barriers facing women philosophers, for example, in the late eighteenth century? What are they today?

The least effective essays offer little more than biography and a short exposition of the subject's ideas. At this early stage of the project perhaps it is inevitable that this should be the case, as we need to know who these women philosophers were and what they wrote before we can comment critically on them. This book falters because it is split between exposition and commentary.

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Women, Knowledge and Reality: Explorations in Feminist Philosophy

Ann Garry and Marilyn Pearsall (eds)

2nd edition Routledge 1996, h/b £50, p/b 14.99

It was a odd decision for Routledge to package this collection of essays in feminist philosophy as a 'second edition' of the earlier well-known (and very useful) collection. So much seems to have changed!

The first edition comprised twenty essays, broken into seven sections: 'Methodology', 'Metaphysics', 'Theory of Knowledge', 'Philosophy of Science', 'Philosophy of Language', 'Philosophy of Mind', 'Philosophy of Religion'. The second edition comprises twenty-five essays, broken into the same seven sections (except that 'Philosophy of Mind' has now become 'Philosophy of Mind/Body'). However, these superficial structural similarities in the two editions disguise substantial differences in content.

Only eight of the original essays remain: Janice Moulton's account of the adversarial method in philosophy; Genevieve Lloyd's classic delineation of 'The Man of Reason'; Alison Jaggar on love and knowledge; Helen Longino on feminist science; Andrea Nye on the language of French feminism; Maria Lugones' extremely influential account of playfulness and 'world-travelling'; Hilde Hein on the spirit/matter dichotomy and Toinette Eugene on black spirituality and sexuality.

In some cases it is simply that more up-to-date essays have been included by the original authors (often on entirely different subjects). This means that there are new essays by Marilyn Frye, 'The Possibility of Feminist Theory' in the 'Methodology' section; by Ann Ferguson, 'Can I Choose Who I Am?' which addresses gender, race, identity and the self in the 'Metaphysics' section; by Lorraine Code, 'Taking Subjectivity into Account' in the 'Theory of Knowledge' section; by Sandra Harding, 'Feminism, Science and Anti-Enlightenment Critiques' for the 'Science' section; and also a replacement essay by Judith Butler, 'Imitation and Gender Insubordination', in the 'Mind/Body' section.

Authors brand new to this collection in the 'Methodology' section are Naomi Scheman on 'The Unavoidability of Gender' and bell hooks, 'Choosing the Margin as a Space of Radical Openness'. In the 'Metaphysics' section we now have Julia Kristeva's much-anthologised 'Women's Time', Sally Halanger's 'Objective Reality, Male Reality, and Social Construction' and Lourdes Torres' 'The Construction of the Self in U.S. Latina Autobiographies'. The new author in the 'Theory of Knowl-

edge' section is Patricia Hill Collins, 'The Social Construction of Black Feminist Thought', whilst in the 'Philosophy of Science' section we now find Vandana Shiva, 'Science, Nature and Gender', and Lynn Hankinson Nelson, 'Who Knows? What Can They Know? And When?'

The two new entrants in the 'Philosophy of Language' section are Carole Boyce Davies, 'Other Tongues: Gender, Language, Sexuality and the Politics of Location' and Alessandra Tanesini, 'Whose Language?' (the only paper of UK origin to make it in). I was pleased to see Susan Bordo as the new girl in the 'Philosophy of Mind/Body' category with her well-known piece on 'Anorexia Nervosa'. The new entrant to the 'Philosophy of Religion' section was Luce Irigaray, 'Divine Women'—although I was sorry to see that the editors had not updated the footnotes since this translated piece first appeared in 1993. Despite information to the contrary, Irigaray's *Elemental Passions* has been available in English translation (from Athlone Press) since 1992.

I am sorry to say that this oversight is not atypical of the volume. In my review edition '2nd edition' appears on the front cover only as a paper stick-on label. Even more disturbingly, the acknowledgements (and hence details of where the essays originally appeared) find a place in the volume only on a loose-leaf insert. Even then, only twenty-two of the essays are listed. Perhaps the others are 'originals'—we are not told.

Judging the value of the new contributions and substitutions is a difficult matter, and it will have to be seen how useful the new edition is in the classroom. Personally, I was particularly sorry to lose from the first edition Caroline Whitbeck's 'A Different Reality: Feminist Ontology'—and I found Ann Ferguson's contribution to the new Metaphysics section a puzzling substitution (primarily because it seemed to read Deleuze and Foucault in a curiously non-ontological way). However, the increased number of articles that engage with 'race' and ethnicity is clearly a great advantage, and it was an interesting decision to slot these pieces into each of the existing sections that lacked such a perspective. I was also particularly

pleased to have the clear, short and accessible essay which I have frequently used to present Judith Butler's position (at the time of *Gender Trouble*). This is taken from the 1991 *Inside/Out* anthology, ed. Diana Fuss.

Other feminist philosophers will no doubt find their own reasons for enthusiasm and regret about the choices that the editors made. However, this volume will be (another) useful resource for those teaching courses in feminist philosophy. This is a book that needs definitely to be ordered for a library! Don't think that you have got this collection of readings there already in an earlier guise ...

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Introducing Contemporary Feminist Thought

Mary Evans, Polity Press 1997, h/b £39.50, p/b £11.95

With this book, Mary Evans has provided a wide-ranging, interdisciplinary snapshot of the history of western feminism over the last twenty years. She draws on a wealth of sources and locates many of the texts that were influential in western feminism in their historical context. As such, the book will be a useful addition to the range of texts available for the beginning student of women's studies.

It is difficult, in one book, to do justice to the whole range of debates on the subjects that Mary Evans chooses to outline. Inevitably her own interests predominate and inform her thinking—she draws on literary sources to illustrate points, and she emphasises the history of 'feminism' from the point of view of a white English academic who participated in the debates and politics that have taken place largely in the USA and in the UK over the last twenty years. If anything this is the primary limitation of the book. It is presented as a book of feminist thought when it is actually a snapshot of feminist thought from one perspective. It probably would not resonate as a history of feminist thought for a Latin American feminist or for a feminist from Eritrea (to take two possible examples). Nor does it contain much feminist theory.

Thus, for example, the chapter on the body makes no mention of the important 'body' of feminist thought that is reconceptualising the position of the body in western thinking. Analogously, the chapter on 'engendering knowledge' mentions standpoint theory, but only in the context of the history of science and not as a broader epistemological approach that challenges the notion that the context of knowledge is irrelevant to questions of justice or truth. Furthermore, the emphasis, throughout the book, on Foucault as an important influence on feminism and on the rethinking of universalising approaches to gender analysis, is highly questionable. Many would attribute this change in the focus of feminism more to the influence of anti-racist perspectives on feminist writing and politics.

Notwithstanding these reservations, the book is a lively read and should be a useful text for those unfamiliar with the debates to which it refers.

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Lesbian Subjects

Martha Vicinus (ed.)

Indiana University Press 1996, h/b £31.50, p/b £13.50

The lesbian subject—or indeed the 'lesbian' 'subject'—is not greatly evident in the pages of *Women's Philosophy Review*, and so it was with pleasant anticipation that I turned to Martha Vicinus's collection of essays. All but one are drawn from the journal *Feminist Studies*, and might be best described as operating within the remit of cultural studies. Nonetheless, given feminist philosophy's commitment to interdisciplinarity, I expected to find a substantial overlap of interests, such that the terms of the title would be at least problematised. Certainly the question of what and who constitutes the lesbian subject is at the forefront in many of the essays, but the answers given remain narrative and positivist, apparently without awareness that the terms themselves may be under suspicion.

The most prevalent references were, then, not to Judith Butler, Teresa de Lauretis or even Elizabeth Grosz, as one might

have expected, but to Lillian Faderman, author of the socio-historical accounts *Surpassing the Love of Men* and *Odd Girls and Twilight Lovers*. In the context of the disinclination of mainstream discourses to recognise the lesbian beyond the confines of the abnormal, the political impulse to fix and name the lesbian subject is understandable, but regrettably, from a philosophical perspective it closes down some of the more interestingly disruptive possibilities.

But does the collection demand attention in its own terms? Vicinus promises that each essay will investigate the question: 'Who is the "I" in this body?', but rather than allow that to lead her into the territories of Queer Theory which she briefly encounters, she prefers instead to channel her enquiry through a historicisation of lesbian roles. In consequence, the first section of the book, 'Explorations', concentrates on the recovery of the lesbian subject in a variety of contexts—twentieth-century literary Harlem, early nineteenth-century England, the Women's Army Corps of World War Two—that have occluded and silenced her. The majority of these painstakingly researched contributions—aside from a positively skittish essay by Elizabeth Meese on the relationship between Virginia Woolf and Vita Sackville-West, which cleverly performs desire even as it analyses it, and one other—are unremittingly descriptive and finally dull. The second exception in this first section, by Anne Herman, does investigate the epistemological and performative models of lesbian subjectivity, but in being closely embedded in specific literary texts, is perhaps not fully accessible.

If Part I is disappointing, Part II, 'Affirmations', which claims to focus on definitions rather than discoveries, is rather more adventurous in that it is more inclined to take a lesbian *milieu* for granted and then analyse what that means. One of Vicinus's initial aims is to challenge the model of lesbian sexuality that apparently limits it historically to either romantic friendship or to the butch-femme pairing, but far from displaying the comparative freedom that contemporary society allows to

lesbian expression, the second section writers appear haunted by a nostalgia for clear-cut difference.

As with any collection that includes essays from as long as seventeen years ago, there is perhaps an inevitable problem of having heard it before. However, even with the more recent pieces, I kept thinking that it's not that simple. Feminist theory, with regard to subjectivity and sexuality, has generated some strikingly novel and productive approaches, but for the most part they are ignored. Only Heather Findlay, in her seriously playful essay on psychoanalysis, the phallus and lesbian dildo fetish, engaged productively with contemporary theory. Sadly for academia, Heather is now editor-in-chief of *Girlfriends* magazine. What a gal!

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Care, Autonomy, and Justice

Grace Clement, Westview Press 1996, p/b £12.50

One of the main problems emerging from the care-versus-justice debate is whether and how carers can avoid caring too much for others and not enough for themselves. Clement addresses this question head on, by introducing 'autonomy' as a value that feminists should endorse: one that is central in distinguishing implausible from plausible versions of the ethic of care. As it turns out, however, Clement's discussion is more wide-ranging, presenting the whole debate in an interesting new way.

Clement defines the two ethics as ideal types by way of three contrasts: abstract/concrete; separate/connected; equality/maintenance of relationships. She argues that neither of the ideal types is plausible and that the two ethics need to be 'integrated in the sense that they can jointly determine deliberation in public as well as personal contexts' (121). Clement thinks of the two ethics as distinct but mutually corrective and counterbalancing. But just how the 'joint determination' in moral deliberation is to work is unfortunately not discussed in any detail, thus leaving the conception of integration crucially underdetermined. Autonomy enters the

picture as a value which enables feminists to reject those versions of the ethic of care which reinforce women's uncritical adoption of their roles as carers and permit self-denying and unhealthy forms and conceptions of care and caring relationships.

A further strand of argument is directed at the public-private dichotomy which has defined care symbolically, as well as practically, as private and as pertaining to women. Clement argues that this has also mistakenly restricted the ethic of care to personal relationships. Clement 'tests' her argument for extending the ethic of care into the public sphere by discussing Ruddick's 'contextual pacifism' and the public provision of 'elder care' as two examples illustrating the possible application of the ethic of care to public issues.

I enjoyed reading Clement's fresh, clear and insightful presentation of a by now well-discussed field. Clement's presentation is one of her strengths, as is her development of a new and interesting path through the terrain by means of the focus on autonomy. Her relatively cavalier treatment of autonomy, however, also reveals one of her weaknesses. Whilst Clement endorses a very wide conception of autonomy, which includes social preconditions (chapter 2), the term is much more indiscriminately deployed and comes to mean anything from self-determination (15), to being 'in control of [one's] life' (22), the ability to think critically (46), the ability to refuse to engage in caring (61), and even economic independence (100). Autonomy is thus used to criticise various aspects in women's lives that may be wrong, but are arguably distinct and only mediately linked to autonomy. Given that the concept is so central to Clement's argument, clarity and consistency in its deployment should have been *de rigueur*.

Clement's intellectual style is to go for synthesising solutions and the broad picture, at the expense of a more detailed discussion of possible objections or problems. Since so much has been written on care and justice, it is difficult to contribute anything genuinely new.³ Real advancement of the discussion, it seems to me, lies in the direction of detailed

argument. Clement has succeeded in contributing interesting new ideas, but if she had pursued the discussion of autonomy and the argument for the expansion of the ethic of care into the public sphere at greater length and with more precision, her contribution would have been more weighty.

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From Sex Objects to Sexual Subjects

Claudia Moscovici, Routledge 1996, h/b £35, p/b £11.99

Series: Thinking Gender, ed. Linda Nicholson

I wish I could be more enthusiastic about this book. The blurb forgot to mention the author's engagement with Habermas (which might have warned me against reviewing the book), and instead suggested a contribution to an under-researched field that interests me a lot: the links between writings on subjects and subjectivity in Diderot, Rousseau and Kant and the feminist and philosophical critiques of Judith Butler, Irigaray, Foucault 'and others'.

The book as a whole is ambitious in its historical scope, but thin in its execution: five short essays and an even shorter introduction, amounting to no more than a hundred pages. In the fourteen pages of chapter 1 Moscovici does address Rousseau, Diderot and Kant (as mediated by Lyotard). She argues that there are clear continuities between the tropes of dissimulation adopted by the two French *philosophes* and Lyotard's paralogy, Derrida's 'supplement' and Foucault's 'Panopticon'.

Then there is then a jump in perspective and frame, as we move into chapter 2 which reads Irigaray against Bhaktin's model of dialogic communication. But this essay is too sudden, and its nine pages are too brief to be effective. Indeed, early and late Irigaray are run together as Moscovici attempts to locate a 'universalism' in Irigaray's position, and to find a 'flexible ethics of intersubjectivity' in her oeuvre.

A further jump takes us to chapter 3 which is the longest (twenty-eight pages) and also the most ambitious in the whole

book. This is primarily a consideration of Habermas who is seen to offer a 'communicative ethics' in which everything that is not implicitly agreed upon can be subject to debate and reformulation. It seems to be this move that leads Moscovici to argue that Habermas's ethics 'provides an indispensable resource for feminist scholarship' (42): one that moves us beyond the unacceptable universalism of Kant and also beyond Rousseau's equally unacceptable appeal to a 'general will'. Comparing Irigaray's 'universalism' (unfavourably) with Habermas in this respect, this chapter then moves on to position Habermas as providing us 'with useful modes of destabilizing binary hierarchies and of constructing—or at least envisioning—a more "egalitarian" social world' (43).

This chapter then goes on to complicate the Habermasian frame by use of Martha Nussbaum, Judith Butler, Jane Flax and Nancy Fraser. However, although the author concludes that Habermas's intersubjective ethics allows us to move 'beyond' deconstructive procedures (60), this essay confirms what was for me evident from the start of the book. All of these theorists are presented through a frame of discourse theory. Thus, for example, Irigaray seems to be presented as retaining a 'universal' (of the masculine) which is based on 'the rules and structures of language' (43). It is this 'universal' that Irigaray is seen to keep in place whilst seeking to rigorously deconstruct 'hierarchical oppositions' (26).

Chapter four turns to aesthetic issues and now Kant—once again the 'baddy'—is pitted against Griselda Pollock's feminist critique and Pierre Bourdieu's Marxian analyses of the so-called purely 'aesthetic' field. Unfortunately, the analysis is not only again too brief (twelve pages), but is profoundly flawed by an insufficient grasp of Kant's theory of aesthetics (and 'genius', in particular) and by the acceptance of an overly simplified account of the history of such concepts. Thus, for example, we are asked to accept that Kant 'adopts and reformulates' one of two (inconsistent) theories of art to be found in Plato: what Moscovici calls (after Derrida) 'the magnet theory of expression, in which the artist-genius becomes possessed' (65).

To be fair to Derrida who knows his Plato well, I do not think we can blame Derrida for this—or for the account of Kant who, seemingly, merely intensified the theory of genius implicit in the Renaissance and that developed with capitalism. Elsewhere I have provided a detailed critique of such old 'chestnuts' about the history of aesthetics (in *Gender and Genius*, 1989/1994). Although there are interesting things in Moscovici's essay—such as her appeal to Bourdieu's notion of a *habitus* or a 'system of dispositions' acquired through education, family upbringing, etc. (73)—these are marred by its failings. Indeed, the notion of a *habitus* is also tied too closely to notions of ideology and (once again) discourses. I would recommend Marcel Mauss's more materialist—and earlier (1934)—comments on *habitus* as a useful alternative.

In other words, by the time Moscovici turns to her final chapter —'Justice, Equality and Proportional Group Representation' (twenty three pages)—she has lost the sympathy of this reader for her conclusion which tries to think how to conceive of community in a democratic fashion. Here figures from the eighteenth and twentieth century jostle together: de Gouges, Wollstonecraft, Rousseau and Cordorcet meet Habermas, Joan Scott and Iris Marion Young. Moscovici ends by advocating a model of citizenship based on Young's definition of affinity 'groups', but moving in and out of different time-frames and voices so quickly made the argument hard to follow.

Sometimes the slimness of a book can be an advantage. But this is by no means one of the short books which obeys the injunction that is posted—fairly ineffectually—on my desk: 'Short books change the world!' Instead, this short book could have done with an editor who asked the author to flesh out the arguments—and, indeed, some of the research. The bibliography (incomplete), the in-text references (often left mysterious) and the footnotes (sometimes hard to tie to the text) also suggest a lack of editorial control. It's a shame because there are also interesting insights and arguments in this densely-written book.

For feminists interested in Habermas and in notions of community, 'communicative ethics', democracy and citizenship, it is worth picking up this volume and persevering—despite the sense of there being here an opportunity that has been missed.

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Ludic Feminism and After: Postmodernism, Desire and Labor in Late Capitalism

Teresa L. Ebert

University of Michigan Press 1995, h/b £27.60, p/b £11.95

I recommend this book and I disagree with it in fundamental ways; the former because it asks a number of provocative questions about the idealism of prevailing feminist thinking in a serious and informed manner, and the latter because it does so in a way that, I suspect, mirrors the intellectual scenario that produces its critique. In this respect the book runs the risk of becoming part of 'the problem' which it is right to examine. Ebert articulates this problem as the social and political consequences of the displacement of historical materialism by the discursive or the semiotic—the 'ludic'—as a central theoretical discourse.

Among the theorists Ebert lists as ludic are: Drucilla Cornell, Jane Gallop, Meaghan Morris, Donna Haraway, Stuart Hall, Homi Bhaba, Judith Butler, Gayatri Spivak (e.g. 16ff.). Ebert's level of argument is sophisticated: this is not an introductory text, though it would be a challenging overview for advanced graduate classes. Ebert does not fundamentally read for what might be learnt, but rather for what supports her argument. But her readings may hide another, older dualism: that between the Puritan (loosely defined) and the Epicurean. In this, Ebert misses the cues which might provide those links from which a bridge might be formed. The question of the relation between the material and the discursive is presented by Ebert as the point of dissension, whereas it requires to be read as the meeting-point, because both 'sides' are addressing aspects of the same question.

Ebert owes a great deal to those she critiques. She also asks some valid questions of them which could take matters forward. Why, then, does she go back into a basically conventional Marxism as if it were an 'Answer'? Part, at least, of the dynamic may be made legible through Gemma Corradi Fiumara's distinction (see Margaret Whitford's paper in *Women's Philosophy Review* no 16) between 'metabolic' and 'diabolic' thought, where metabolic structures are oriented towards the forging of links productive of a 'new object of thought' and the diabolic towards defence and blockage.

Fiumara's distinction does, in turn, reflect Ebert's own call for constructive critique between feminist theorists. But Ebert often places the wrong emphasis for this to succeed. The extremely diverse thinkers that Ebert lists as 'preoccupied with' sidelining issues of labour, economics and class may be read differently: as redefining both the processes and objects of thought in ways that could challenge—or be deployed to make—connections with class and economic production. These issues may not be central, but that is because the notion of centrality is being contested and a more dynamic and energetic model explored. All previous knowledges, including Marxism, require to be rethought. Part of that rethinking is, indeed, the need to be able to analyse global socio-economics, to go beyond the local, or to trace the continuities between them. The reassertion of global theory is not the same thing.

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Impossible Dreams

Susan E. Babbitt

Westview Press 1996, h/b £40.50, p/b £13.50.

This book is an instance of a new style of feminist thinking. It has taken on board the lessons of postmodernism; but it is not prepared to accept either a metaphysics in which social reality is nothing but a text, or to give up on the attempt to identify 'real' or 'objective' needs and interests and 'the real nature of oppression' (22). Working within a tradition of mainly Liberal thought (with a nod towards Marxism), Babbitt accepts that

'traditional' understanding of society is shot through with sexist and racist assumptions. Moreover, she suggests that this tradition does not provide the resources within which to question the social institutions and practices, and that this can make it impossible for some subjects to be able to pursue 'human flourishing'. There are some subjects for whom the only option open to them as moral agents is reaction—often violent—to a situation in which flourishing is an 'impossible dream'.

Babbitt argues that the real interests of individuals can only be assessed by considering ways in which they might develop, and by taking account of experiential and non-propositional knowledge acquired by walking the paths of life. What someone should do is dependent upon what they might become, and often this can only be assessed using knowledge which they do not have when the question of how best to act is being considered. '[T]he objective end for an individual becomes identifiable only after the individual makes what turn out to be objective rational choices' (74). Thus, it would seem that it is an impossible dream for some people to act in their best interests, unless they do so by chance. All is not lost, however. Babbitt thinks that there are ways in which the relevant knowledge can be acquired without actually following the path and undergoing the transformative experiences. This is through the vivid imagining of stories.

The most interesting chapters for me were those in which Babbitt considered the role of narratives in the bringing about of the experiences which transform an inadequate sense of self into one up to the task of pursuing a proper conception of human flourishing. In the last chapter she contrasts the narrative moral vision with that of the archangel. Her argument is that sometimes the right moral vision is one which transcends any community values and the 'evolving story' which is the community's understanding of itself.

I think that Babbitt made her case that sometimes community standards need to be questioned, but I was not sure why she thought she had to have an archangel when she had Toni Morrison. Those who realise that their exclusion is necessary to

the identity of a community can offer critiques which bring about individual and community transformations. And they are not angels. Their position is not transcendent, but that of an outsider or 'outsider within'.

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Gender is not a Synonym for Women

Terrell Carver, Lynne Rienner Publishers 1995, h/b \$29.95

Feminist readers are likely to agree with Carver's protest about the usage of 'gender' in much popular and academic writing, which his title challenges. According to his definition, 'gender' and 'gender studies' are about 'the ways that sex and sexuality become power relations in society', whilst feminist theory is somewhat controversially defined as the 'theorizations of women's oppression' (1). Carver notes that his work is informed by both feminist theory and the sociology of masculinity/masculinities. One of his main complaints about feminist critiques of mainstream political theory is that feminists have concentrated too much on women's oppression and not looked enough at men and masculinity/ies (chapter 1).

Whilst that point might be seen to be won simply in virtue of his respective definitions, it seems to me Carver's argument is valid. Despite the focus of much feminist intervention in political theory and philosophy on the male bias of concepts and theories, feminist theorists on the whole have not explored the conception of masculinity used in their critique of male bias, nor the possibility that masculinity and men's social and political situation are as heterogeneous as femininity and women's situation. If there is as much heterogeneity in 'men' and 'masculinity' as feminists have had to admit there is in 'women' and 'femininity', then not only is the possibility of constructive feminist theory in question, so also is feminist critique. Furthermore, as Carver points out in chapter 1, that critique engenders its own silences: about men's contributions to, or about a possible children's perspective on, child-bearing and rearing, for example.

Unfortunately, Carver does not pursue this critique, nor does he discuss masculinities at any length, except to point out that some men (and their masculinity) are oppressed by other men in virtue of their deviant sexuality or class. This leaves the feminist reader wondering just what conclusions she is to draw from Carver's intervention. For the rest of the book, she is not helped in this reflection because Carver moves on to discuss such issues as Engels' unwarranted assumptions in *The Origins of the Family*; the role and importance of personal life in the writing of biographies of political thinkers (illustrated with the example of Engels' biography); the uptake by biographers of Marx and Engels of the story of Frederick Demuth's alleged paternity (Marx was said to be his father); and the recent Anita Hill trial in the United States. The latter is treated as a story about who could produce more stories about whom, with Clarence Thomas winning the vote in the Senate because he produced more stories about Hill.

As a materialist of sorts, feminist and lover of gossip, I was interested in reading about Engels' work and his rather unreconstructed relations with women. I also enjoyed the Demuth story and I found Carver's version of Hill-Thomas debacle engaging. However, I do not think that these separately written papers hold together as a book. Carver is aware of this problem, but argues that his overall argument about political theory and the process of its production is illuminated by his various chapters as case studies in the production of theory. He also frames his slightly rewritten papers with an introduction and conclusion to guide the reader, and draw out the common strands.

Too much is left to the reader's own imagination and efforts at reconstruction of an argument, however, for this *oeuvre* to be anything but a collection of papers. For example, Carver's valid point about the relation between the personal and the theoretical—the relation between Engels' personal life and his explanation of the 'world-historical defeat of women'—is left for the reader to work out, since Carver does not relate the two, discussing them separately in two separate chapters.

On the whole, the book is interesting, but its title promises more than it holds (at least for philosophers interested in gender). A more detailed exploration of the link between masculinities and political theory by a thinker well-versed in the sociology of masculinity/ies could have complemented and challenged feminist efforts in this field. As it stands, however, the dialogue is at least started.

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Feminism and History

Joan Wallach Scott (ed.), *Oxford Readings in Feminism*
Oxford University Press 1996, h/b £35, p/b 13.99

How properly to historicise theory is a pressing matter and, of course, so is that of how to retheorise history. Most chapters of this excellent book provided me with insights into these broad questions, many of which I shall continue to think about for some time. Even though some of this is doubtless about lacunae in my reading, since on the whole feminist theory as I know it pays more direct attention to time than it does to history, I should still imagine that historians, feminist and cultural theorists and the 'general reader' would all find the book worthwhile. The style is uniformly clear, the range of reference scholarly and wide, and the arrangement useful if unsurprising.

The seven sections are: 'Women', 'Gender', 'Race', 'Class', 'Sexuality', 'Feminisms', 'History', which in its simplicity generates cross-reference. Thus Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham's essay on 'African American Women's History and the Metalanguage of Race' outlines the problematic in such a way as to resonate with the other six sections as (potential) metalanguages, raising issues about the transferability of methodologies across areas of difference. It is perhaps a pity that there is no new material except for the Introduction. (Many of the essays were first published in *Signs* or *Feminist Review*.) The earliest essay is Gayle Rubin's widely known 'The Traffic in Women' (1975). This is

something of a classic, as is Denise Riley's 'Does Sex have a History?' (1988).

The contributors to this volume are currently resident in the USA, Germany, France, New Zealand, Australia and the UK, although China and India are also represented by Tani Barlow and Mrinalini Sinha respectively. In this collection, such a (possibly ideologically loaded) combination makes for the productive intertextuality of comparative material at its best, though it might not have done in the hands of a lesser editor than Scott. Barlow's critique of anglophone histories of Chinese women, for example, goes beyond its immediate Chinese subject-matter to open on to innovative ways of theorising women's relation to the State as multiple, while confirming Judith Butler's idea of gender as a productive apparatus. This is a connection whose reach I might not have seen in another context.

The blurb claims that the use of difference as the analytic focus distinguishes the book from other collections of women's history. It certainly works to concretise and test out some important elements of abstract theoretical analysis at the same time as it exemplifies different philosophies of history. The introduction is a succinct outline of the current state of play, though neither it nor the collection as a whole pretends to offer a comprehensive picture. Rather the aim is 'to make the case for the usefulness to feminism of historicising categories of social differentiation' (10). This leads to a rapprochement with other disciplines, particularly anthropology and sociology, and inevitably draws into the analytic frame the issues of identity and sexuality common to most, if not all, feminist theorising. I do not yet know whether it goes so far as to create the potential for understanding feminisms in a new light, as Scott suggests, but it is a point worth considering. Broadly speaking, what it does do is once again demonstrate the indispensability of feminist philosophy. Recommended.

Penny Florence

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This Far By Faith: Readings in African-American Women's Religious Biography

Judith Weisenfeld and Richard Newman (eds) Routledge 1996, h/b £40, p/b £13.99

African-American studies have come of age. This year, for the first time, Norton has published an anthology of African-American studies, edited by Henry Louis Gates, Jr. For those of us who are critically committed to the politicisation of the texts we study with students, and who have been frequently frustrated by difficulties in obtaining primary texts, this represents a hugely important milestone. To date, of the six thousand or so extant slave narratives (which have come to represent the millions of lives destroyed or deformed by the institution of slavery) we have been able to read only a handful. There has been a tendency to publish the ones which most closely follow what James Olney calls the 'master outline', of which Frederick Douglass's *Narrative* (1845) is 'the best example, the exceptional case and the supreme achievement'. The canonisation of Douglass's work initially produced what Gates has called 'the cultural erasure of a female progenitor'. Although Douglass was 'marketed' by Garrison as the 'black Everyman', not all black women regarded his truth as their truth.

Douglass discriminated between the religious practices of the church and its representatives, claiming that he loved 'the pure, peaceable, impartial Christianity of Christ: I therefore hate the corrupt, slaveholding, woman-whipping, cradle-plundering, partial and hypocritical Christianity of this land.' He studied the Word in order to counter pro-slavery claims that because God cursed Ham, slavery was justified. Douglass's revisionary reading relied on the mastery of written language (mastering the master's language) as the key to freedom.

Many of the women represented in *This Far By Faith*, however, were illiterate. Nell Irvin Painter gives us an account of the itinerant preacher, who called herself 'Sojourner Truth', and who actively resisted print-based culture, relying instead on her shrewd observation of people and on divine inspiration—the Holy Spirit as Word to legitimate her own voice. Sojourner

Truth's suspicion of—and resistance to—writing meant, however, that her dictated narrative (1850) was of necessity mediated by white abolitionists, as were those of many other women. Whether the white amanuenses were merely scribes, or whether they were controlling editors, remains a contentious issue, and in any case will vary from case to case.

Painter's essay explores the various representations of Sojourner Truth, using the conceit of 'shadow' and 'substance' to tackle these critical issues. As she points out, in the post-Black Power era of the late twentieth century a (partially fictive) Sojourner Truth was constructed as an icon of female strength and blackness: one who reputedly snarled 'And ar'n't I a woman?', defiantly baring her breast. Sojourner Truth's self-representation was rather different. She co-opted new photographic technology to have *cartes de visite* produced. The image she chose for her *cartes* was the antithesis of both the piteous female slave—which any presentation of a naked or partially naked black body might evoke—and, indeed, of a female warrior. Instead, she showed herself attired in sober, but smartly tailored, clothing. As a free(d) woman she sold these *cartes* to support herself: they bore the caption, 'I sell the Shadow to support the Substance.'

Truth may well have felt that she had more control over writing with light than writing with words; light may have seemed closer to God's Word than man-made language. As Painter is at pains to point out, when there are not 'generous caches of personal papers in the archives where historians have traditionally done their work, [we scholars] will need to develop means of knowing our subjects, and adapt to our subjects' ways of making themselves known, that look beyond the written word.' *This Far By Faith* has certainly achieved this. It foregrounds such diverse domains of African-American women's religiosity as quilt-making and gospel singing, as it explores 'African-American women's personal spiritual experiences and expressions ... women's communities of faith ... their religiously based impulses to effect social change'.

Other significant essays include those by Jean M. Humez who asks what it means for a black Christian woman to share a religious tradition with white Americans who justify slave-holding, looking at how this translates into resistance and activism for such a writer as Harriet Tubman in the escape narrative, *Harriet, Moses of Her People* (1886). Another essay by Judith Weidenfeld raises interesting questions about the careers and potential influence of African-American teachers employed by the American Missionary Association, such as Sara G. Stanley writing in 1864.

Every essay in this book marks an important step along the way of recovering and investigating expressions of African-American women's spiritual, cultural and political experience. The book as a whole displays an impressive range of new critical methodologies, all of which, in different ways, help sort shadow and substance. It has been my privilege to read and learn from it.

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Psychoanalysis and Gender: An Introductory Reader

Rosalind Minsky, Routledge 1996, h/b £45, p/b £13.99

For students of literary theory, women's studies and psychoanalytic studies, Rosalind Minsky's critical reader, *Psychoanalysis and Gender*, is like a breath of fresh air in its clarity, objectivity and grasp of psychoanalytic and feminist theories. The range of thinkers selected is of necessity limited. Minsky has chosen Freud, Klein, Winnicott, Lacan, Kristeva and Irigaray. She treats all of them with respect. It is also very helpful to have the classic texts and essays at the back of the book, in particular, those by Lacan, Kristeva and Irigaray.

I wondered about the absence of post-Kleinians, such as Bion. Perhaps post-Kleinians who have studied the intricacies of unconscious interaction work on gender less explicitly, and are therefore less suitable for an introductory reader. However, Minsky has a knack for explaining complicated Kleinian concepts in a simple and effective way. 'Looking for someone to

blame for one's own vulnerability' is her lively and controversial definition of 'projection'.

One of Minsky's strengths in this book is the maturity with which she addresses both conscious and unconscious elements in each thinker. She perceives the personal limitations which may distort each thinker's theories, but also paradoxically provide the impetus to struggle with them. She never loses her grasp of the potential significance of the ideas. For example, she talks about Freud's misogyny, which she thinks stems from his fear of the 'feminine' part of himself, but she also respects his inner struggle as well as his revolutionary ideas, and she rescues Freud for feminism in his implicit recognition of the centrality of the mother.

With Lacan, Minsky demonstrates her art in deftly linking and integrating each thinker's theories with others and with her own. She claims that Lacan's work inadvertently suggests that 'the womb is the power which men unconsciously envy and fear', and that what Freud calls 'penis-envy' is for Lacan 'a disguised inversion of womb-envy'. In this 'tour de force', Minsky persistently points out how Freud and Lacan use the little boy or man as the model with which to compare the little girl or woman, and shows how this in itself paralyses their thinking.

This brings us to Klein, who places mother, breast and envy as central in psychoanalytical thinking, which is understood by Minsky as a quantum leap. But I do not think Minsky engages so passionately with Klein as she does with Freud and Lacan, so she does not extract the potential in, for instance, projective identification as a communicative tool between the genders.

Writing about Kristeva and Irigaray, Minsky is less in the position of interpreting their potential, as they so clearly demonstrate that for themselves. She presents their points lucidly and joins with them in a forward movement towards change: through women, a consciousness can emerge which will transform the present all-pervasive manifestations of sado-

masochism in relationships and groups into an appreciation of difference, rather than an exploitation of it.

As a psychoanalytic psychotherapist, I have been testing the ideas in this book with my experience as a clinician, and I do not hesitate to recommend it to other psychotherapists, teachers, supervisors and trainees.

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Feminism and Postmodernism

Margaret Ferguson and Jennifer Wicke (eds)

Duke University Press 1994, p/b £14.95

This book aims 'to map the boundaries between postmodernism and feminism while also envisioning a new terrain for their crossing in a materialist feminist politics.' Feminism is understood as materialist feminism, premised on the material conditions that contribute to the social construction of gender. Postmodernism is understood as a historical shift in theory. Postmodern feminism is thus explained as an attempt to read each discourse through the lens of the other, and to assess conjunctions and collisions between feminism and post-modernism.

With the exception of one woman, all the authors work in North American universities. Their expertise includes literature, cultural studies, critical theory, American studies, political science and music.

The themes the book deals with are fascinating, themes which centre on the urgency of identity politics, viewed broadly as racial, gender, sexual, regional and global politics. Despite these very important issues, I found this book a real effort to read, for three main reasons: its jargon, its organisation and its eclecticism. Admittedly, perhaps these problems say as much about me as the book. I still find much postmodern literature to be arduous—the language, the terminology and the concepts are often obscure. With this edited collection, many times I read the same sentence repeatedly, trying to grasp the author's meaning and subsequently found myself converting phrases into a simpler form of prose. Only a few chapters use sub-

headings and I found the constant low of highly abstract material to be rather laborious. I persisted because the themes and the subject matter are crucial to contemporary feminist theory.

In a positive sense, the book's eclecticism reflects a wealth of intriguing questions, but the borrowing freely from such a range of sources left me wanting more thematic overlaps or some unifying threads. But perhaps my desires reflect my uncertainty with the postmodern project. The volume is a mutual interrogation of the arena of cultural production, legal discourse and philosophical thought, and I believe that the volume could have been somewhat more structured into a thematic organisation without betraying the fluidity of boundaries that a postmodern feminism seeks.

It is hard to summarise fully the rich diversity of the material. Jennifer Wicke writes on the legal subject, looking at identity as a self-chosen expression of a subject-position, and applies her ideas to the Anita Hill trial. Mary Poovey looks at popular movies, date rape and abortion trials to examine the scapegoating defence against fear. David Simpson analyses the effects of a long-duration perspective on feminism by examining changes in the cultural categorisation of 'feminisation'. Linda Nicholson focuses on postmodernism as a different approach to issues such as discourse, knowledge, truth, validity. Toril Moi builds on Simone de Beauvoir's use of ambiguity to describe fundamental contradictions that include paradoxical advantages women occasionally reap from their powerlessness.

Anne McClintock maintains that the problem of social value embodied in the 'whore' stigma is the historical contradiction between women's paid and unpaid work. She explores the parameters of prostitution laws. Kathryn Bond Stockton provides an encounter between Victorian theories of the body and an Irigarayan materialist spirituality. I found Salwa Bakr's story of women inmates in an Egyptian prison to be very powerful; she gives accounts of different backgrounds, relationships inside, and the influences that lead potentially to prostitution. Carla Freccero, a Catholic Italian-American,

pursues her cultural version of womanhood through Madonna's video 'Like a Prayer', highlighting the fragmentation of images, the blurring of generic boundaries, a sense of play and carnival and an attention to fashion.

Claire Detels uses the paradigms of 'soft boundaries and relatedness' to challenge the solidly masculine terrain of music theory. Andrew Ross puts a postmodern spin on the cultural politics of male bonding as a possible bridge to ecofeminism. Marjorie Garber is critical of the cultural fantasy of heroes and greatness and the sale of wisdom as a cultural commodity. Laura Lyons interviews Mairead Keane, an Irish feminist and National Head of Sinn Féin's Women's Department, in order to test the parameters of feminist politics in national and international contexts.

The reader is exposed to a wide display of cultural subjects and objects. As I read the book I kept trying to decide whom I would recommend it to. I think that most undergraduates—bar bright third years—would find it demanding to read in its entirety, especially because, given the nature of its postmodern project, most authors seem loathe to define concepts too precisely or indicate their arguments too exactly. Ambiguity, diffuseness, fluidity and elusiveness can be strengths in presenting postmodern challenges, but can raise conflictual uncertainties that hinder wide accessibility. Those well-versed in the intricacies of cultural studies debates will benefit the most from this book.

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THE PHILOSOPHER'S BOOKSHELF

In a new series members of the Society of Women in Philosophy comment on books that have helped determine their own philosophical development. This issue the emphasis is on four books—and three authors—who have been most influential on the various traditions of twentieth-century philosophy: Friedrich Nietzsche (1844–1900), Edmund Husserl (1859–1938) and Ludwig Wittgenstein (1889–1951).

Readers are invited to submit further contributions for consideration for inclusion in future editions of this column. Please address contributions to Margaret Whitford (Books Review Editor), sending hard copy and PC or Mac disk.

Nietzsche

Report from the battle ground: how Nietzsche awakened me from my dogmatic slumbers

by Diemut Bubeck

Books or authors can be reassuring or demanding companions on the way, but some turn out to be milestones that are also turning points in people's thinking: some turn out to be opponents. When I read Marx, a long time ago, and later feminist writers, I was looking for companions. When I started reading Nietzsche, originally for teaching purposes, I got more and more alarmed. It was not so much his obvious misogyny, though, that alarmed me; I was well prepared for that. But I was not prepared for the full frontal attack that Nietzsche seemed to launch right at me as a feminist who had been thinking and writing about, and to a varying extent endorsing, the idea of the ethic of care as an alternative to rights-based and justice-dominated frameworks in moral and political philosophy. What was alarm turned into a spirit of battle; I could not live with my beliefs any more without having tried to defend them against such fierce attack. I had found an opponent.

What makes certain thinkers' opponents one does battle with? It must be the right mixture of a shared perspective or

approach, or shared beliefs, with arguments opposing other central premises or tenets of one's own thinking. There must be enough that resonates—otherwise what we read would simply be too alien or off-putting—whilst there must also be enough that offends. Otherwise we would not feel called to respond. After having read and thought more, and felt overwhelmed to the point even of giving up, I started finding ground again. What I shared with Nietzsche, I realised, was a virtue-based approach to moral considerations and an interest in the psychology of morality. What I came to appreciate in him most was a finely honed sensitivity for moral self-complacency and self-deception, as well as a fierce, even brutal, honesty. What divided us most strongly was his critique of pity and all other altruistic moral sentiments, including any form of altruism and universalism in moral theory.

Nietzsche's argument can be found throughout his middle and late period, starting with a number of aphorisms in *Daybreak*, where he turns for the first time explicitly against his own revered 'teacher', Schopenhauer. Schopenhauer had singled out pity/compassion (*Mitleid*) as the only motive that could give actions moral worth, hence as the foundation of his moral theory. Nietzsche counters that at the root of all seemingly 'un-egoistic' motivations lie egoistic ones. A utilitarian would not be very disturbed by such argument: what does the motivation matter if the outcome is desirable? A care theorist will be disturbed, however, since she will require (among other things) that people act with the right, caring motives if their actions are to count as care.

In *The Gay Science*, *Beyond Good and Evil*, *On the Genealogy of Morality*, *Anti-Christ* and *Will to Power*, Nietzsche argues further that, in any case, pity/care needs to be revalued as morally undesirable because it derives from weakness, sickness, exhaustion and degeneracy. It is a 'slave morality' and the terrain of women, priests and the mediocre, all of whom are human types frustrated in their will to power and thus having to assert it indirectly through the pretence of altruism and 'care'. Strong stuff, this, and yet I found myself having

to agree with much of Nietzsche's analysis of what goes wrong in caring for others: there is a problem of power exerted through care which care theorists have not addressed adequately. I also agree with him that weakness and powerlessness undeniably have effects on moral agents and their moral outlook on the world.

I part company with Nietzsche in that I do not think there are natural slaves (e.g. women, the mediocre majority) who will necessarily endorse a slave morality. Care has been one of the few avenues open to women through which to exert power. Women are not to blame for this, as Nietzsche suggests, but those forms of society in which women (and others) have to resort to such indirect forms of power. Also, caring virtues can be expressions of strength and creativity, not weakness. And yet, in celebrating women's strengths, the various versions of the ethic of care tend to be morally complacent: too much in love with caring goodness, in opposition often to masculine individualism and competitiveness, to see what I have come to call the 'moral dangers' inherent in care.

These dangers are not just those of power, but also those of intrusions of privacy, of 'rushing in' instead of letting be, or of running away from one's own problems into taking care of others. All these, and others, Nietzsche saw very clearly. I think care theorists can learn a lot from him without necessarily having to give up the project of developing an ethic of care altogether. But I can guarantee that care after Nietzsche will come to have a different place in the moral realm from the one it had before.

So Nietzsche has woken me from my dogmatic slumbers. He has also proved to be an as yet unexhausted source of irritation and inspiration, surely an irresistible mixture for anybody who has gone stale and needs that sort of impulse to set sail on new seas. As little as there is doubt that each person's Nietzsche is different from everybody else's, is there any doubt that Nietzsche is one of the greatest *agents provocateurs* and worthiest opponents in Western philosophy. For this I'd like to give him full credit.

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Husserl

Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations*, trans. Dorian Cairns Kluwer Academic Publishers 1991

by Nicola Foster

My first encounter with Husserl's work was with his problematic and confusing late text *Cartesian Meditations* (1929). Despite its critique of Cartesian dualism and transcendental realism, on one level this book merely repeats Cartesian circularity. Thus, as in the case of Descartes himself, Husserl generates an account of otherness (the Other in Husserl, God in Descartes) through which—to use Ricoeur's famous articulation—'every truth and reality which goes beyond the simple reflection of the subject on itself, is granted.

Most readers agree that Husserl's account of the Other is deeply flawed. Husserl himself says that the Other: 'becomes constituted [as] an ego, not as "I myself", but as mirrored in my own Ego', (94). However, if Husserl's account of the Other is defective—so that the Other is mere intentional modification of my ego—how can the Other (a mere self-mirror) found the meaning the objective world has for me, and by definition, for everyone else as well?

Whilst in general I agree with the above criticism, I was nonetheless fascinated by Husserl's very detailed phenomenological description which offers a series of ego splits through phenomenological reductions. These culminate in the reduction to 'the sphere of ownness', which Husserl explains as the mere 'animate organism' stripped of all linguistic and cultural meanings, a sphere of mere bodily self-awareness. Here, in this pre-linguistic sphere, Husserl wants to show phenomenologically how my experience of 'the experienced Other' founds the meaning the objective world has 'for us all'.

I was interested in two implied claims. First, the claim that there is a level of meaning which is not language-dependent. Hence, philosophy is founded on some level of meaning which is 'pre'-cultural. Second, the claim that this non-linguistic level of meaning is one in which I can differentiate

between encounters with those who have body shape and motor control over their body which is like mine, and those who do not. Husserl says: 'only a similarity connecting, within my primordial sphere, that body over there with my body can serve as the motivational basis for the "analogising" apprehension of that body as another animate organism', (111).

Towards the end of the text Husserl's says: 'phenomenological explication does nothing but explicate the sense this world has for us all, prior to any philosophising, and obviously gets solely from our experience—a sense which philosophy can uncover but never alter... because of an essential necessity, not because of our weakness' (151). Looking at these claims it struck me, that perhaps what *Cartesian Meditations* does describe and explain is who are the 'us all' and who the 'we' is, and how philosophy came to acknowledge only one sex—one set of experiences which are then universalised—with the consequences that philosophy (and 'the sense the objective world has for us all') is founded on the experience of one sex only.

According to the above, Husserl seems to suggest only two possible options for women philosophers—neither of which are satisfactory, and have thus occupied me ever since. Either, accept that philosophy is always going to prioritise one sex over the other. The tradition of philosophy as we know it, prioritises the male sex. Hence, women philosophers face the difficulty of being able to operate only on the level of linguistic and cultural meaning—they must by definition forget the meaning generated by their bodily self-awareness. The alternative would be to seek to articulate a feminine philosophy founded on their 'pre'-linguistic experience, but with the consequences of losing the single objective world.

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Wittgenstein

Ludwig Wittgenstein, *On Certainty*

by Sabina Lovibond

I discovered this book as a graduate student in 1979, a year or so after reading Wittgenstein's *Investigations*. It consists of a compilation of short notes written towards the end of his life, in fact almost up to the day of his death in 1951. For me there is a feeling of freedom about it, partly subjective (because these writings do not carry the same burden of subsequent learned commentary as the 'rule-following considerations' and so forth), but also partly due to a certain stripped-down, nothing-to-lose quality that seems to be present in the thought. Wittgenstein says elsewhere (*Culture and Value*, 26)—about the practice of philosophy?—"The *edifice of your pride* has to be dismantled. And that is terribly hard work." But in *On Certainty* either the hard work has been accomplished, or some kind of artistry conceals it.

In place of the sub-text of anxiety (about the risk of error) that runs through much conventional epistemology, what I find here is *fearlessness* about our actual epistemic predicament as Wittgenstein sees it—I mean about the condition of being *de facto* unable to doubt all sorts of things, while at the same time being exposed (*qua* finite creatures) to the possibility of the unforeseen subversion of our frame of reference. 'I can't be making a mistake,—but some day, rightly or wrongly, I may think I realize that I was not competent to judge' (OC 645). 'Rightly': that is, it might turn out that I really had been incompetent. Something 'really unheard-of' might happen (OC 513)—'houses gradually turning into steam without any obvious cause...'. But this doesn't discredit our ordinary claims to knowledge, those that remain within the bounds of (what other writers have called) the 'lifeworld'. The ordinary claims just are that vulnerable. But they are all we have and, after all, 'a language-game is only possible if one trusts something' (OC 509).

I still look on this text as a wonderful example of what philosophy can do when cut loose from professional imperatives such as winning an argument (or indeed sustaining one in linear form over 6000 words). I would not put it forward as a literary model and I do not know whether it has anything in particular to teach women philosophers as such, but it certainly represents an alternative to the magisterial attitude.

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Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*

by Alessandra Tanesini

When we read philosophy books, we are often presented with a thesis and a set of arguments in its favour. Nevertheless, the texts I find myself coming back to again and again, very rarely have this format. These books, of course, contain arguments, often very good ones, but most of all they embody a way of seeing. Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations* is one such book. It is the portrait in words of a philosophical life. It displays at once the seriousness and the ordinariness of philosophy.

Wittgenstein's philosophy emerges out of a sense of loss of the world. It is an admission that one cannot find one's way any longer. 'A philosophical problem has the form: "I don't know my way about"' (PI, 123). What is being lost is the inconspicuous: 'Does the ordinary always make the *impression* of ordinariness?' (PI, 600). The everyday world stops being something one can simply inhabit. But philosophy is not only the admission of a loss, it is also the struggle to reclaim one's place in the world. 'In philosophy we do not draw conclusions. ... Philosophy only states what everyone admits' (PI, 599). It is the attempt to recover the ordinary. 'The real discovery is the one that makes me capable of stopping doing philosophy when I want to.—The one that gives philosophy peace, so that it is no longer tormented by questions which bring *itself* in question' (PI, 133).

It is easy to read along conservative lines Wittgenstein's conception of philosophy as a form of therapy. Philosophical questioning would be interpreted as a sort of neurosis which can be cured by means of more doses of poison. There is support in the *Investigations* for this interpretation (cf. PI, 124), but it fails to capture the whole story. Philosophy is not simply the reaction of neurotic individuals to a world that is just fine as it is. Rather it is precipitated by the discovery that even 'when we follow the rules, things do not turn out as we had assumed'. In these cases we face a contradiction. The philosophical problem here is: 'the civil status of a contradiction, or its status in civil life' (PI, 125). According to Wittgenstein, philosophy alone does not change the world. Nevertheless, philosophical questioning is the reaction of the individual who experiences the contradictions inherent in the rules which govern our everyday lives.

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[http: feminism/philosophy/internet](http://feminism/philosophy/internet)

RISSY RUDDY EXPLORES THE LINKS

The Internet was developed by the US military and was designed to provide speedy communications that would be immune to nuclear attack. It is premised on data transmissions that do not follow linear A to B patterns. If one system were to fail, the data could flow via an infinite number of different digital routes. What follows is not a defence or attack of the Net. Rather I offer here a basic guide tailed to the needs of on-line feminists and treating the Net, therefore, in its crudest form as both communication tool and information resource. For those interested in how the Net was appropriated by civilians and the cyber-revolution that it became a part of, I also include a selection of recent book reviews at the end of this piece.

Netiquette

Negotiating around the Internet should not be an intimidating affair. If you only use one of the web sites addresses cited here, you will undoubtedly stumble across a wealth of data bases, which you can pare down or crossbreed according to your interests. Obviously, it's a good idea to have a basic knowledge of your computer for when things go wrong. I suggest that you admit your weaknesses and get a friend to actually show you manoeuvres, rather than trying to figure things out on your own or wasting money on incomprehensible books.

When you become more familiar with your equipment you'll naturally be able to sift out what other gadgets or reading materials are best for your needs. When it comes to 'net speak,' it is really not necessary to know exactly what every acronym stands for. Trust me, you will quickly pick up on what you absolutely have to master. For the basics, however, here is a glossary of the most bandied terms, as well as the address of an on-line site that provides additional information.

Glossary

E-MAIL This stands for Electronic Mail and is probably the most used and familiar permutation of the modem/personal computer relationship. E-mail allows you to send, receive and forward messages to anyone with an e-mail set up. It is cheap and effective: the cost of e-mailing is billed at local phone rates or is usually available free via UK Universities. But its lack of confidentiality makes e-mail also controversial. If this matters to you and you e-mail from an institution (and this includes not only universities and corporations, but also e-mail providers such as Compuserve), make sure you know their monitoring policies concerning all your incoming and outgoing messages.

HTTP This stands for HyperText Transfer Protocol. All web site addresses begin with these letters, although your computer should be able to find the site if the rest of the address is correct.

HYPERTEXT This is the abstract notion of a document with many links and it is this which sets Net articles apart from their paper equivalent. These hypertext connections are easy to spot as they come in the form of icons, pictures or highlighted words. As you move your mouse across these the arrow or cursor will change into a hand. Double clicking will automatically transfer you to the other site.

MODEM A modem is the box which hooks your computer up to the Internet through telephone lines. You'll also need a modem to send and receive e-mail unless you are accessing via a University network. The speed of connecting up to different links and the rate at which pictures are downloaded onto your screen depends on the type of modem you own.

URL This stands for Uniform Resource Locator. When someone asks you 'what's the url?' that's your cue to read out the web site address.

WWW Almost without exception this acronym along-side 'http' is found in web addresses. It stands for the World Wide Web and is the name given to the body of sites that make up the data bases that comprise the Internet. One final note, when typing in web site addresses you have to faithfully reproduce all the letters and other characters as they are given to you (although you do not have to include the symbols < and > at the start and finish of each address. These are 'cleaning' devices which highlight the address and prevent confusion when references are quoted in the body of another text). The simple mistyping of a hyphen for an underline for example, will prevent the connection. It is not uncommon, due to sloppy proof reading, for printed articles to get addresses wrong and usually you can figure out where they've gone wrong by common sense deduction. Replacing commas with full stops is an obvious starting point, as is removing the full stop at the end of the address. If the address misspells a word you will have to as well.

For more information

<<http://www.eskimo.com/~feminist/nownetin.html>>

For those thirsty for technical knowledge, this site gives a feminist spin on the sheer opportunities afforded by a modem and computer. In simplistic, but never patronising terms, this site details the subtle and grand differences between mailing lists, bulletin boards, news groups, gophers, the world wide web and e-mail. Each explanation comes complete with hypertext addresses which take you directly to such sites as alt.feminism and soc.women.

Now, with the basics mastered, it is time to move further to explore the links between **Philosophy and Feminism**

Inside the Screen

<<http://lib.uiowa.edu/gw/wstudies/theory.html>> takes you to the Women's Studies branch of the University of Iowa's web site.

Here you will find an extensive menu and of particular note is the 'Feminist Theory' section. Click here and you reach further sub-divisions, including annotated bibliographies and articles on Kristeva and Cixous, plus an interview with Braidotti.

This site also has details on the 'French Feminist Listserv' provider. This is a system set up to provoke dialogue solely on the subject of French feminism. You don't have to get involved and can simply read other people's messages, which are forwarded to you via e-mail. As this is e-mail driven you do not need an Internet account. You can hook up to this server by e-mailing <majordomo@jefferson.village.virginia.edu> and in your message write the phrase, 'subscribe french-feminism.'

<<http://www.uky.edu/ArtsScience/Classics/gender.html>> takes you to 'Diotima: Women And Gender In The Ancient World'.

The title is self-explanatory and this site is a vibrant data base. Included here are bibliographies, selected text excerpts and essays, which are already neatly divided under such headings as 'Ancient Near East' and 'Late Antiquity.' Furthermore, find installed a myth encyclopaedia and a programme which allows you to perform word searches in both Greek and English.

<http://www.press.jhu.edu/books/hopkins_guide_to_literary_theory/g-index.html> takes you to *The John Hopkins Guide To Literary Theory And Criticism*.

Here you will find the 'Feminist Theory And Criticism' category which is split into four parts covering '1963-1972', 'Anglo-American Feminisms', 'Post-Structuralist Feminisms' and 'Materialist Feminisms'. There are a host of other essays, written by such scholars as Bonnie Zimmerman and Kelly Oliver, so I suggest you spend some time skipping around this essay-based site that involves lots of scrolling.

The 'Pertinent Entries' section has articles on Irigaray, Beauvoir, Cixous, Spivak and Kristeva, to name only a few of

the female philosophers under review. Although the wide reaching nature of these essays necessarily dilutes their focus, this is a great site to steer students towards.

<<http://www-personal.monash.edu.au/~day/phil/>> takes you to 'Philosophy In Cyberspace'.

This is a large philosophical data base that stretches over 'Philosophy Topics', 'Text Related Resources', 'Organizations', 'Discussion Formats' and 'Miscellaneous.' By clicking on the 'Philosophy Topics' you'll reach a menu that ranges from aesthetics, logic, ethics and the philosophy of mind. I've given separate details of the 'Feminism and Women's Studies' site (see below) and not too surprisingly the rest of the links are heavily male oriented.

Surfing through the 'Great Thinkers A-K and L-Z' pages, I could only find pages on Simone de Beauvoir, Ayn Rand, Simone Weil and two on Hypatia of Alexandria. There is, however, a fantastic women's division in the 'Medieval Thought and Philosophy' section.

<<http://www-personal.monash.edu.au/~dey/phil/fem.html>> takes you to the 'Feminism and Women's Studies' site run by Monash University in Melbourne, Australia.

This site is split into three broad bases covering 'Research Resources', 'General Resources' and 'Activism and Politics.' Under the first of these sections you'll find links to the *APA Directory of Women Philosophers*, the *US and Canadian SWIP divisions*, the *International Association of Women Philosophers* and the *Collaborative Bibliography of Women in Philosophy*. It's also full of pages that provide connections to such diverse interests as feminist jurisprudence, ecofeminism and queer politics.

<<http://www/wwwomen.com/>> takes you to a combined site for 'Women' on the World Wide Web.

This is a hotchpotch of A-Z of women-related sites. The lack of any underpinning theme is somewhat frustrating but this is alleviated by simply having to scroll down the alphabetised menu. Picking 'Feminism' takes you further in, and provides references that range from the 'Russian Feminism Resources' database, to Andrea Dworkin's home page to the electronic tie-ups of such journals as *Hypatia* and *Differences*.

<<http://www.feminist.com/>> takes you to a combined site relating to 'feminism'.

Starting off with nine overall categories, you can link up to such topics as health, activism and women-owned businesses. If you click on the 'Resources and Links' you'll be faced with another menu and from here I suggest you move to the 'Women's Culture and Education' site. Here you'll find an A to Z of sources, which includes numerous listings of Women's Studies conferences and calls for papers. The information here is heavily US biased, but it's an easy place to move around from.

<<http://www.ashai-net.or.jp/~RFGT-TYFK/haraway.html>> takes you to material related to Donna Haraway

This is an extensive centralised site where you can download a selection of her essays and book excerpts, read her recent interview with *Wired* magazine and check out her bibliography. There's also a slew of articles dealing specifically with her 'A Cyborg Manifesto' essay. This site also provides a bibliography for women in science and there is an eclectic mix of cyberphilosophy references under the 'Reflectors' heading.

<<http://www.geekgirl.com.au/geekgirl/index.html>> takes you to 'Geekgirl' which comes straight from Australia, and was the first electronic cyberfeminist 'zine'. It runs in tandem with a more traditional paper version of the magazine. From the homepage you can flick through the current issue as well as all

the back copies. Each issue comes with book, film and zine reviews and interviews.

Cyber Book Reviews

Technologies Of The Gendered Body: Reading Cyborg Women

Anne Balsamo, Duke University Press 1996

Treating the body as both product and process, Balsamo expertly dips in and out of such fields as the virtual body, cosmetic surgery, body building and pregnancy. Although all of these topics have been innovatively dealt with before by feminist scholars of all persuasions, Balsamo's contribution is in putting the meat back onto the utopian, disembodied frame of the cyborg.

Exposing the metallic 'clink' and sterile hollowness of today's techno-bodies, Balsamo shows how the female form seeps under, over and through the cyborg, as depicted in films, adverts, sci-fi fiction and theory. Through out the book and working up to her conclusion, Balsamo openly admits her debt to Elizabeth Grosz's notion of corporeal feminism. Whilst Balsamo may not have the same philosophical intensity, the ideas that inform and emanate from this book make it the best cyberfeminist monograph to date.

The Cyborg Handbook

ed. Chris Hables Gray, Routledge 1995

This is a truly sumptuous book, not due to any contributor's lyrical turn of phrase but rather for the sheer effort involved in its layout. The deployment of different fonts coupled with a consistently intelligent use of diagrammatic framing is a bibliophile's delight. Whilst the articles are conservatively grouped under such non-headings as 'In Science and Engineering' and 'In Medicine', it is almost without exception the more formal entries that pack the most punch. These include the opening section tracking 'The Genesis Of The Cyborg' through to the three essays which kick start the second

section. Mention must also go to Ron Egalsen's essay on 'African Influences In Cybernetics', which provides the most provocative contrast in the book.

The weak link in this book are the cyberfeminist articles. Haraway's introduction has since been surpassed by the publication of her *Modest Witness*, and Stone's contribution has been revised to provide the opening chapter of her *The War Of Desire And Technology At The Close Of The Mechanical Age*. This is not to detract from the likes of Monica J. Casper, Linda F. Hogle, N. Katherine Hayles and Chela Sandoval (to name but a few of the other female writers), it's just that as a whole none surprise or intellectually intimidate.

Clicking In: Hot Links To A Digital Culture

ed. Lynn Hershman Leeson, Bay Press 1996

Read beside *The Cyborg Handbook*, *Clicking In* fleshes out still further the techno infrastructure of digital philosophy. Split into five sections covering 'Terminal Treatise', 'The Consequences Of Untruth', 'Colonizing Virtual Space', 'The Body' and 'Digital-Specific Art', this is a substantial work through words alone, regardless of the accompanying CD ROM which illustrates the texts. Alongside Sadie Plant's pivotal essays, there are pieces by Sherry Turkle, Diana Gromala and the editor Lynn Hershman Leeson, plus an interview with Sandy Stone. Of special interest is Catherine Richards' deliciously titled 'Fungal Intimacy: The Cyborg In Feminism And Media Art': an acerbic look at Haraway's 'safe feminism'.

The War Of Desire And Technology At The Close Of The Mechanical Age

Allucquere Rosanne Stone, MIT Press 1996

Allucquere Rosanne (aka. Sandy) Stone eschews any underpinning grand narrative, but her way with words makes this book a potent historical record. Stone is now Assistant Professor and Director of the Interactive Multimedia Laboratory [Actlab] at The University of Texas at Austin. But Stone's own (controversial) positioning as a transsexual is part of the history

that leads her to explore, amongst other things, the medical and legal implications of multiple personality disorder; the cultural and corporate dilemmas of multiple persons at work and play, and on-line gender fusing.

For samples of Stone's writing that can be downloaded on screen try `<http://english-www.hss.cmu.edu/gender/>` and add `<the-empire-strikes-back.txt>` for 'The Empire Strikes Back: A Post-Transsexual Manifesto'. Substituting at the end instead `<violation-and-virtuality.txt>` gives an article by Stone on 'physical and psychological boundary transgression'. Whilst substituting `<what-vampires-know.txt>` yields a third article concerning 'Transubjection' and 'Transgender' in cyberspace. Such http codes are useful when one good essay does not justify buying the whole book!

Wired Women

eds. Lynn Cherny and Elizabeth Reba Weise

Seal Press, 1996

In the most personal of all the books under review, this collection of sixteen essays focuses primarily on the issue of gender alienation as perpetuated by America's computer culture. It becomes grating to read articles that bemoan and, therefore, the best essays are those written with a confrontational edge. This book forgoes dense technical jargon and mechanical tribulations and is definitely worth reading, but I suggest you first try and find it in the library.

*Rissy Ruddy
Austin, Texas*

CONFERENCE REPORTS

Review of 1996 Society of Women in Philosophy Conference on 'Women And Philosophy'

Canterbury, December 1996

The 1996 SWIP conference was held at the University of Kent, and was organised in conjunction with the Centre for Women's Studies there. Its atmosphere was, as appears to be usual with SWIP conferences, friendly and enabling. Moreover, the three papers were all extremely interesting—and I say this as someone who generally finds conferences painfully dull.

The first, dense and very suggestive, paper, 'Rethinking Oedipus: Stealing a Patriarchal Text' came from Adriana Cavarero (University of Verona). She used the story of Oedipus to explore two conceptions of selfhood: one in which Oedipus affiliates to the universal, as 'man', and therewith acquires a self-same identity; the other (derived from Hannah Arendt) in which he traces his life-story as a unique, singular person, his story irreplaceable by those of any other persons, and whose story commences, crucially, with his birth.

This was followed by lunch and a SWIP executive meeting. At this, feedback was solicited on the forthcoming expansion of SWIP. Discussion centred on the difficulties of contacting (and maintaining contact with) women who would be interested in SWIP—not only people outside philosophy departments but women within them as well. Further suggestions regarding ways of getting round these difficulties would be welcome. It was also confirmed that a small SWIP conference was to be held in Luton. This was arranged for May 1997 (report in next issue of *WPR*).

Next on the agenda was Miranda Fricker, speaking on 'The Radicalisation of Epistemology' (Birkbeck, London). In this intricate paper, she identified a component of post-modernism that can be useful for feminists, which thinks in terms of a fragmentation of social identity and a proliferation of particular perspectives, and enables an awareness of the power relations among these perspectives. She contrasted this with a relativistic,

'pseudo-radical' component of post-modernism which, she argued, cuts against the possibility of a critique of those power relations as oppressive.

Finally, Jean Grimshaw (University of Western England, Bristol) spoke on 'Philosophy and the Feminist Imagination', examining the importance of metaphorical language in creating feminism's self-image and contributing to its practice. Through a consideration of several approaches to metaphor, she suggested the value of a pragmatic use of metaphor to defamiliarise and re-metaphorise the literal and familiar. Unfortunately, there was (as ever) too little time for much discussion of the possible metaphors for feminist philosophising that could achieve such fruitful results.

Overall, it was a very thought-provoking and enjoyable day; thanks to the organisers, Anne Sellar and Sue Sherwood, for such a worthwhile event. Thanks also to Women's Studies at the University of Kent who helped to finance the event.

Alison Stone
University of Sussex

Review of 'Torn Halves: Theory and Practice in Contemporary Feminism', Radical Philosophy Conference

London, November 1996

The theme of this conference reflected a widespread feeling that while feminist theory has become increasingly accepted and productive, in Britain and elsewhere feminist activism around concrete issues has been declining. Hence the 'torn halves' of the title. The predominant motif was of the need to weave the torn halves back together, rearticulating a dialectical relation between experience and theory, in which 'experience is never taken simply as raw empirical data; nor does theory seek some complete formulation: they are continuously and mutually refined through their interaction. Women are not presupposed as some latent political agency just waiting to be set in motion, but nor do they have to be conjured up

subsequently out of the complexities of theory' (Diana Coole). The model here is taken to be socialist feminism of the 1970's.

Lynne Segal's paper revisited seventies feminist writings, for example those of Sheila Rowbotham, to refute the accusation made by some nineties feminists, of easy universalising of the category women or a lack of attention to subjectivity. These early texts showed a sensitivity to both difference and subjectivity, themes which have emerged as the central theoretical concerns of nineties feminism. What she emphasised, however, is that these themes emerged as women were engaged in concrete struggles around 'reproductive rights, housework, child care, nurseries, welfare provision, immigration, marriage, the family, poverty, the state, employment, trade unions, health care or violence against women'; issues, she argued, that seem to have gone missing from recent feminist collections. When present they required theoretical accounts of structural relations of power and attention to an all pervasive capitalism which are no longer the focus of contemporary feminist theorising. As a legacy of the inhospitable political and economic climate of Thatcherism, she suggested, feminism is no longer a theory and practice of social transformation. She was sceptical about how 'either attention to the discursive specificity of "feminine" difference or the proliferation of categorical heterogeneity and transgressive display, might ever again bring women together in any transformative feminist project'.

Diane Coole was less dismissive of the political potential present in the attention to the discursive, seen as the mark of nineties feminism. She sees such attention as a consequence of the recognition of the politicisation of culture as such:

feminists' own theoretical excavations show powers reproducing sexual inequality and gender hierarchy moving through all domains, suggesting politics must involve an ongoing engagement wherever power is present, via deployment of a whole variety of tactics which cannot be formulated in advance.

This recognition of the all-pervasive character of gender differences and of the insistence on resistance at the local and micro level, including the household, was also a distinctive feature of early feminism. Coole, however, along with Segal, registers the globalisation of capital, and sees the need to return to systematic sociological and economic theory to provide the basis for collective resistance to the structural forces conditioning women's lives. She thereby moves away from the current dominance of philosophy in feminist theory. At the end of the millennium we need an audit of 'where women (as opposed to genders) stand as the century draws to a close'.

The paper by Anne Marie Smith from the USA, highlighted the difficulties of mobilising activism in a context where the official discourse appears to have taken on board feminist claims, generating 'the false image that we already inhabit a post feminist terrain, as feminist demands are appropriated by right wing forces and private corporations, and bent to serve their reactionary interests'. She analysed this process with particular attention to the Clinton campaign, which used the rhetoric of feminism, gaining the support of many prominent feminists, while subsequently enacting cuts in welfare programs which condemned 'over a million additional children to poverty and threatens to throw millions of poor mothers with no child care, no job training and no job prospects off the welfare rolls.'

The three above papers have been published in *Radical Philosophy* 83). Two papers by overseas visitors remain unpublished to date. Toril Moi covered fairly familiar ground as she spoke on Simone de Beauvoir as a woman intellectual, and moved into less familiar territory as she discussed the trajectory of her own development as a feminist theorist. Another paper by Adriana Cavarero introduced the audience to movements of thought in contemporary Italian feminism in which the relationship between theory and practice took on a different form from that envisaged by the socialist feminist contributors. The feminist groups have been evolving such theory work outside the academic framework, and ground their

own concrete relationships and political practices directly in the theory they are developing. Operating in a culture in which sexual difference is evident, they take responsibility for transforming a symbolic order in which the iconography of femininity—including crucially motherhood—is anchored in Catholicism. These Italian feminists are transforming such iconography by developing practices and concepts in which women entrust themselves to symbolic mothers, and in which the figure of the mother is given material and symbolic authority.

Cavarero distanced herself from such practices, based as they were on explicit inequalities of power, but nonetheless recognised their effectiveness as interventions in a social world in which discourses are being appropriated and modified to establish the possibility of authoritative women. Cavarero's own position drew on the work of Hannah Arendt to suggest that the recognition of the uniqueness of an other as a subject who has a perspective onto the world and who has a story to tell. Such uniqueness is ignored if our concern is with the question of *what* kind of thing is speaking, rather than with *who* is speaking. By making the 'what is' secondary to the 'who is', Cavarero seemed to be suggesting that questions of sexual difference should not be addressed via the traditional focus on questions of identity that have come down to us from Aristotle.

The return to socialist feminism evident in most of these papers, and which constituted the dominant theme of the day, was a welcome corrective to the balance of theorising in contemporary feminist writing. We must be wary, however, of an *either/or* approach to both theory and practice which might make us suppose, for example, that we *either* go with queer theory *or* with structural analysis. One of the strengths of nineties feminism, is its recognition of the need for us to hold onto different moments of feminist thought simultaneously, even when they might appear to pull in different directions. We don't have to attend either to transgressive gender practices or to the increasing globalisation of capital—but to *both*. Moreover, the question of where 'gender' is, is not separate

from the question of where *women* are. The discriminatory operation of structural social forms rests on the possibility of maintaining discourses around gender which pull off a naturalising trick, which has been subject to sustained deconstructive critique and also undermined by performative practices.

In addition, as Cavarero's paper illustrated, when we think of the relation between theory and practice we need to have more than one model in mind. One model is that we theorise about the causes of a given phenomenon and this directs our strategies to bring about change. Another model recognises the constitutive relation between our practices and our self-understandings, so that our conceptualisations make certain kind of practices possible and our practices change the content of such conceptualisations.

This recognition is not just the result of an explosion of queer theory. There is a picture on the front of the *Radical Philosophy* issue in which three papers from the conference are reprinted, of 'Feminist Mothers', *Islington 1975*. The experiments in alternatives to nuclear families which were tried then were practices designed to change our concept of the family. They have a parallel in the film *Paris is Burning*. This film is often referred to—due to its documenting of drag queen contests. It is seen as an exemplar of the performativity of gender illustrated by successful cross dressing. Judith Butler, however, in discussing the film points instead to the queering of the notion 'house', and she could have added 'mother', produced by the communal groups providing support as well as professional training in passing as 'female'. (A 'house' in the film had echoes of both home and *couture* house) In undermining the conventional and conservative notions of family, the political import is comparable to those 1970's groups.

It's not a choice between socialist feminism or some effete poststructuralism. We need both!

Kathleen Lennon
University of Hull

VIEWS AND COMMENT

There has been some e-mail discussion of the Research Assessment Exercise (RAE) that is currently reshaping the face of Philosophy in UK Universities. The Editor reprints the gist of a letter that she posted on an e-mail discussion group for philosophers (philos-1@liverpool.ac.uk) that is operated from the University of Liverpool.

Members of SWIP are invited to a Panel Discussion and Open Floor Debate of these issues from 2pm Saturday 25th October 1997, Room 3D, University of London Students' Union, Malet Street, WC1E. All readers are invited to contribute responses to the Editor's Letter for publication in this column in the next issue of this Journal.

In an essentially-contested subject such as Philosophy, it makes little sense for a small Research Assessment Exercise (RAE) Panel to make judgements about such a broad discipline, however well-intentioned that panel might be. As I work 'between' the 'Continental' and 'Analytical' traditions—in the field of Feminist Philosophy which was (and always has been) completely unrepresented on the RAE Panel—I feel this very acutely.

I know, in practice, little Feminist Philosophy work was submitted under RAE to the Philosophy Panel. But that is precisely the problem. I know from discussions in the Society of Women in Philosophy (UK) that many junior (and sometimes also senior) colleagues working in this field were either dissuaded by their Heads of Departments from submitting 'feminist' pieces, or were persuaded to submit 'outside' Philosophy, under the entirely inappropriate heading of Sociology, for example. Such a strategy prevents the development of the discipline of Philosophy—and also somehow fails to register the 180+ women who are part of this network, including those who have responded to recent SWIP

questionnaires in ways that show that many see their academic future in fairly grim terms.

If we have to continue with the absurd process of RAE assessment (as I fear we must), it is absolutely essential that the discipline recognises the need for separate sub-panels for the different traditions of Philosophy. There was, for example, nobody on the panel this time who had skills in recent French Philosophy, and 'Continental Philosophy' is certainly not a homogeneous tradition, even though it is often equated with all that is not 'analytic'. In Europe, after all, a similar RAE exercise would have a variety of 'Continental', and probably only one person who was supposed to have skills in the whole 'Analytic' area.

I would, therefore, suggest that next time round there be at least four sub-panels. It has been suggested by some that there might be Sub-Panels in 'Analytic', 'Continental' and 'Applied' Philosophy. However, I would like to add to this suggestion by requesting that consideration be given to a further Sub-Panel that should be set up to deal with Interdisciplinary work in Philosophy. Furthermore, I would propose that some person or persons on this interdisciplinary sub-panel should have the skills necessary to judge work on sexual difference and race: work that emerges from a variety of philosophical traditions, but that is usually not 'Applied Philosophy'. Thus, 'Applied Philosophy' is an inappropriate category for assessing work in such lively research areas as Feminist Epistemology, Feminist Meta-Ethics or Feminist Political Philosophy. Nor can 'Applied Philosophy' embrace my own two primary areas of research specialism: Feminist Metaphysics and Feminist Aesthetics.

Interestingly, when I recently assembled the self-descriptions of the women serving on the editorial Board of the *Women's Philosophy Review* (UK), what was striking was the inability to tell from their lists of Research Expertise whether the Board member was trained in the Analytic or Continental Traditions. Here, what matters more is the necessity forced on those working within Feminist Philosophy to familiarise

themselves with a broad range of philosophical argument and interdisciplinary debates.

The RAE process is already acting like the Medusa's gaze, freezing the discipline of philosophy into anachronistic modes of self-definition that block innovation. If the only philosophy that is financially rewarded as 'good' philosophy is 'pure' philosophy—and if 'pure' philosophy is judged in a way that marginalises interdisciplinarity—then we might expect further 'cuts' and 'blocks' to the development of radical and 'non-standard' philosophy (including feminist philosophy). And what should be a vigorous discipline, open to a plurality voices and conceptions of philosophy, will be unable to defend itself effectively against those University Managers and Administrators who are looking for easy targets in this time of financial stringency. As we are already seeing, the RAE judgements have already meant that posts are 'axed' or 'frozen', and at least one (quite decent) English Philosophy Department is threatened with dispersal and closure. It is urgent that we discuss questions of future strategy now before too much more damage is done.

Christine Battersby
University of Warwick

BOOKS RECEIVED

We are looking for reviewers for the books described below.

If you have not reviewed for the WPR before, you should send a brief CV, including details of your research/teaching interests and copies of two or three reviews previously published elsewhere. Beginning reviewers are welcome to apply, enclosing sample unpublished reviews. Please contact Margaret Whitford promptly at the address given on the inside cover.

Towards Justice and Virtue : A Constructive Account of Practical Reasoning

Onora O'Neill, Cambridge University Press 1996

Towards Justice and Virtue challenges the rivalry between those who advocate only abstract, universal principles of justice and those who commend only the particularities of virtuous lives. Onora O'Neill traces this impasse to defects in underlying conceptions of reasoning about action. She proposes and vindicates a modest account of ethical reasoning and a reasoned way of answering the question 'who counts?', then uses these to construct linked accounts of principles by which we can move towards just institutions and virtuous lives. [Blurb on back cover]

Feminism and Ancient Philosophy

Julie K. Ward (ed.), Routledge 1996

An important volume connecting classical studies with feminism, *Feminism and Ancient Philosophy* explains which views may be fruitful for feminist theorizing today. It confronts such difficult questions as: Should feminists dispense with ancient Greek theorizing? Are Plato and Aristotle hopelessly misogynistic?

The papers range from classical Greek philosophy, including Plato and Aristotle, through the Hellenistic period,

with attention to such topics as the relation of reason and the emotions and related issues in moral psychology. Because of the seminal role played by Greek thought in the origins of Western philosophy and the importance in feminism of the question of male bias in Greek thought, the volume will be of interest to a wide audience including those working in classics, ancient philosophy, and feminist theory. Contributors: Deborah Achtenberg, Julia Annas, Elizabeth Asmis, Anne-Marie Bowery, Kathleen C. Cook, Patricia Curd, Marcia Homiak, Susan B. Levin, Martha Nussbaum, Daryl McGowan Tress. [Blurb on back cover]

Bringing Peace Home: Feminism, Violence and Nature

Karen J. Warren and Duane L. Cady (eds)

Indiana University Press 1996

Contributors discuss the subtle and complex interrelationships between different notions of feminism and peace, extending the important contributions of Dorothy Day, Susan Griffin, Hannah Arendt, Virginia Woolf and many others. Feminist peace issues are explored throughout a wide spectrum of personal and political issues—from the personal violations of rape, incest and domestic abuse, to the violence of racism, sexism, economic exploitation, war, and genocide.

Topics of individual essays include 'just-war' theory; the technology of genocide; feminist justice; feminist peace politics; the effects of the Green Revolution on women; understanding self-immolation as an act in support of peace; and how abuse of women, children, and pets is connected to the violence of patriarchal culture. Contributors include: Carol J. Adams, Barbara Andrew, Alison Bailey, Bat-Ami Bar On, Duane L. Cady, Jane Caputi, Adrienne E. Christiansen, Deane Curtin, Laura Duham Kaplan, Larry May, William Andrew Myers, Lucinda J. Peach, Cheyney Ryan, James P. Sterba, Robert Strikwerda, and Karen J. Warren. [Blurb on back cover]

Caring: Gender-Sensitive Ethics

Peta Bowden, Routledge 1997

In *Caring*, Peta Bowden extends and challenges recent debates on feminist ethics. She takes issue with accounts of the ethics of care that focus on alleged basic principles of caring rather than analysing caring in practice. *Caring*, Bowden argues, must be understood by 'working through examples'. Following this approach, Bowden explores four main caring practices: mothering, friendship, nursing and citizenship. Her analysis of the differences and similarities in these practices—their varying degrees of intimacy and reciprocity, formality and informality, vulnerability and choice—reveals the practical complexity of the ethics of care. *Caring* recognizes that ethical practices constantly outrun the theories that attempt to explain them, and Bowden's unique approach provides major new insights into the nature of care without resorting to indiscriminate unitary models. It will be essential reading for all those interested in ethics, gender studies, nursing and the caring professions. [Blurb on back cover]

Feminist Approaches to Bioethics: Theoretical and Practical Applications

Rosemarie Tong, Westview Press 1997

No other cluster of medical issues affects the genders as differently as those related to procreation—contraception, sterilization, abortion, artificial insemination, in-vitro fertilization, surrogate motherhood, and genetic screening. Rosemarie Tong's approach to feminist bioethics serves as a catalyst to bring together different feminist voices in hope of actually *doing* something to make gender equity a present reality rather than a mere future possibility. [Blurb on back cover]

The Politics of (M)othering: Womanhood, Identity and Resistance in African Literature

Obioma Nnaemeka (ed.), Routledge 1997

Over the last decade, post-colonial studies have become a defining feature in critical thought, and Africa with its wealth of literatures continues to play a crucial role in shaping post-colonial discourse. The arrival of *The Politics of (M)othering* signals an important widening of the debates in post-coloniality. This collection brings together critics at the forefront of African literatures. It will be a core resource for anyone interested in African, Gender, Literary, Cultural, or Post-Colonial Studies, and Critical Theory. Contributors: Trinh T. Minh-ha, Françoise Lionnet, Obioma Nnaemeka, Huma Ibrahim, Peter Hitchcock, Charles Sugnet, Uzo Esonwanne, Renée Larrier, Celeste Fraser Delgado, Ousseynou B. Traoré, Juliana Makuchi Nfah-Abbenyi, and Cynthia Ward. [Blurb on back cover]

Philosophy as Passion: The Thinking of Simone de Beauvoir

Karen Vintges, Indiana University Press 1996

Philosophy as Passion refutes the commonly-held view of Simone de Beauvoir as no more than an acolyte of Jean-Paul Sartre. Karen Vintges delineates Beauvoir's independent, original ethics and philosophy, drawing on the moral-philosophical treatises of the 1940s and 1950s, along with *The Second Sex*, her novel *The Mandarins*, and autobiographical works. Vintges shows that Beauvoir's unique notions added an ethical dimension to existentialist philosophy. Beauvoir's treatises on ethics and her essay on Sade demonstrate how an existentialist ethics was created and developed by transforming Sartre's theory of emotion, reconciling his ontology with a phenomenological perspective.

According to Beauvoir, only a 'philosophical literature' can express the essence of 'lived experience', which is the level where ethics is situated. The philosophical novel *The Mandarins* articulates her concept of positive ethics as 'art of

living', a concept relevant today, especially in view of postmodernist debates. Beauvoir developed and presented her own 'art of living' in her autobiography, rejecting Freud's and other's perceptions of the creative and intellectual woman as a contradiction in terms. Drawing on Foucault's ethics, Vintges traces how Beauvoir developed an individual ethic as an intellectual woman. *Philosophy as Passion* illustrates how closely Beauvoir's life and work were intertwined—how she lived her philosophy and philosophized her life. [Blurb on back cover]

The Company She Keeps: An Ethnography of Girls' Friendship

Valerie Hey, Open University Press 1997

This lively and revealing study explores a sociologically invisible but important social relationship: girls' friendship. This taken-for-granted 'ordinary' relationship is examined using girls' notes, talk, diaries and interviews, gathered by observing girls' groups within city schools.

An important and previously ignored question is addressed by examining how girls' intimacy is structured through class, gender, sexuality and race, especially its paradoxical role in maintaining and challenging 'compulsory heterosexuality'. In this way, a series of case studies analyses how girls variously come to understand and construct 'difference'.

Valerie Hey returns the reader to the terrain of loss and recollection, of girls' pleasure and pain in their friendship, and asserts the claims of the social through identifying how this is written into the cultural forms of girls' relationships with each other. Students of women's studies, education, sociology and social psychology will find this book to be an invaluable exploration of how everyday obvious experience is played out as forms of subjectivity and power. [Blurb on back cover]

Feminist Amnesia

Jean Curthoys, Routledge 1997

Feminist Amnesia is an important challenge to contemporary academic feminism. Jean Curthoys argues that the intellectual

decline of university arts education and the loss of a deep moral commitment in feminism are related phenomena. The contradiction set up by the radical ideas of the 1960s, and institutionalised life of many of its protagonists in the academy has produced a special kind of intellectual distortion.

This book criticises current trends in feminist theory from the perspective of forgotten and allegedly outdated feminist ideas. Jean Curthoys shows that much contemporary feminist theory, like much of today's radical thought, is muddled. The 'forgotten' theory of Women's Liberation was, she argues, deeply oppositional and moral. The repression of this theory has led to distortions, most notably in the preoccupation with binary oppositions. Jean Curthoys argues that where Women's Liberation was once radical, much of contemporary feminist thought hides behind obscurantism and has become conservative and orthodox. These controversial ideas will be keenly debated by all those involved in women's studies, feminist theory and moral philosophy. [Blurb on back cover]

Finding a New Feminism: Rethinking the Woman Question for Liberal Democracy

Pamela Grande Jensen (ed.), Rowman and Littlefield 1996

This collection of essays by prominent scholars of political theory contends that contemporary ideas of feminism have reached a theoretical impasse because they are unable to reconcile tensions between principles such as equality and difference. *Finding a New Feminism* places modern concepts of feminism within the historical context of political thought and uses feminism as a lens through which to examine the strengths and weaknesses of liberal democracy, both in practice and in theory.

Contributors: Ann Charney Colmo, Jean Bethke Elshtain, Alice W. Harvey, Pamela Grande Jensen, Mary P. Nichols, Arlene W. Saxonhouse, Diana J. Schaub, Lauren Weiner, Catherine Zuckert. [Blurb on back cover]

Rethinking Masculinity: Philosophical Explorations in Light of Feminism

Larry May, Robert Strikwerda and Patrick D. Hopkins (eds)
Rowman and Littlefield 1996

Are men naturally aggressive? What makes a good father? How can men form intimate friendships? In the new edition of this popular anthology, seventeen philosophers [all male except one co-author] explore these and other questions that relate to what it means to be a man, including questions about pornography and homosexuality. New essays look at masculinity and violence, research on difference between men's and women's brains, impotence, sexual ambiguity, and whether black men have a moral duty to marry black women. [Blurb on back cover]

Women and Spirituality (2nd edition)

Carol Ochs, Rowman and Littlefield 1997

'As I focused more narrowly on those people whose lives were centred on religion—the great authors of the Western spiritual tradition—I was appalled to find no text written from the viewpoint of a woman who was both a mother and happily married. I searched further, convinced I had overlooked an obvious classic. I failed to come up with any examples in writings on religion, spirituality, or philosophy. (While some can be found in the form of fiction, diaries, and autobiography, these do not deal explicitly with spirituality.) I began to wonder what would have happened had there been such a book. How much of what I believe about reality—about the value of life and its meaning—is the result of having lived in marriage for nearly twenty-five years and having raised two daughters to adulthood? Had the "saints" raised an infant to adulthood, would they still have come up with the "purgative way"? ... I attempt to show how women *as women* can contribute uniquely to our understanding of spirituality.' [Extract from the author's introduction.]

*'We Two Know the Script; We Have Become Good Friends':
Linguistic and Social Aspects of the Women's Script
Literacy in Southern Hunan, China*

William W. Chiang, University Press of America Inc. 1995

Before the 1960s, a group of women in southern Hunan, China, often gathered to do embroidery while listening to one of their members chant from a booklet or a piece of paper a folktale, an autobiography, or a marriage congratulation text written in an elegantly slanted script. The women reacted to the reading with laughter and tears, adding comments at intervals. The men, usually ignoring and sometimes condemning such gatherings, could not read the script and belittled it. They used instead Hanzi, which they considered to be more prestigious, in writing genealogies, managing village affairs and conducting formal education.

It is in an attempt to understand the script used by the women, called the Women's Script, and the practice of its literacy, that I have undertaken this study. This line of interest, plus my preference for the total social phenomenon approach in socio-cultural anthropology, provided the desire to study a particular case of script in its entire socio-cultural configuration. Fieldwork was carried out in two stretches, from January to July 1988 and from January to June in 1990, adding up to a total of thirteen months. The methods included an intensive study of a village, interviews with women who used the script, documentation of modes of literacy, and documentary research. The picture that emerges in the end is a historical reconstruction based on a combination of local folk culture, information from existing literature which I reinterpret, interview data and field observation. [From the author's preface]

CALLS FOR PAPERS

for 3 Special Issues of Women's Philosophy Review

All submissions will be anonymized and assessed by members of the Editorial Board, as well as by the Guest Editors. Please request style sheet from Guest Editors to conform to house style.

FEMINIST POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY

WPR no 20 (1998)

Guest Editors: Diemut Bubeck and Alex Klaushofer

The Guest Editors invite contributions for articles on any topic within feminist political philosophy for this forthcoming special issue of *WPR*

We welcome original pieces from a variety of different philosophical approaches and traditions.

The maximum length of articles is 5,000 words, but shorter pieces are equally welcome. See remarks on selection of papers above.

Articles should be sent by 15th March 1998, to

Diemut Bubeck, Department of Government, LSE, Houghton Street, London WC2A 2AE, UK.

WPR Special issue on HEGEL

WPR no 23 (1999)

Guest Editors: Stella Sandford and Alison Stone

Papers of 5-6,000 words on any aspect of Hegel's philosophy are welcome. We invite a range of papers covering a wide variety of dimensions of Hegel's work.

The final deadline for receipt of papers is 31/10/98. If you are thinking of submitting a paper, please first submit an abstract of around 200 words by the 30/4/98. See remarks on selection of contributions above.

If you have an idea for a paper that you would like to discuss, or a suggestion for someone whom you think we should ask to submit a paper, then please contact either Alison Stone or Stella Sandford.

Please send papers and abstracts to either Alison Stone, Flat 7, 14 Cambridge Road, Hove, East Sussex
Tel. 01273 329354

Alison.L.Stone@btinternet.com
or Stella Sandford, Middlesex University, White Hart Lane, London N17 8HR
S.Sandford@mdx.ac.uk

**WPR Special Issue on
FEMINIST AESTHETICS
WPR no 26 (2000)**

Guest Editors: Penny Florence
and Nicola Foster.

Papers are now invited for
this special issue. Subject areas
of interest include

Aesthetics and Difference

feminist aesthetics, sex, race,
body, subculture

Categories of the Aesthetic

interest &/or disinterest, nec-
essity &/or utility, the value of
the aesthetic, aesthetics as
value, aesthetic value;

Historicising Aesthetics

recent history of the aesthetic,
the aesthetic as a historical
category, Modernism, aesthet-
ic history of women's art/craft

**Aesthetics and the Specificity
of Medium**

the visual arts, literature,
music, film, dance, theatre,
architecture, etc.

**Art Practice and the Philoso-
phy of Art; Feminist Aesth-
etics**

Including responses to recent
writing in French, German,
Italian, Spanish, etc

Abstracts (about 600 words long)
or complete articles (4000 words
long, although shorter or longer
contributions will be considered),
no later than January 1999 to
either Penny Florence

Falmouth College of Art,
Woodlane, Falmouth, Cornwall,
TR11 4RA

or Nicola Foster
Dept of Philosophy,
University of Essex, Wivenhoe
Park, Colchester, CO4 3SQ.

Submissions are invited for an
anthology of original essays
exploring the experience of male
embodiment

**REVEALING MALE
BODIES**

**Nancy Tuana, William Cowling,
Maurice Hamington, Greg
Johnson and Terrance
MacMullan (eds) for Indiana
University Press.**

Revealing Male Bodies will
consciously respond to the chal-
enge raised by feminist theorists
to provide explorations of male
lived experiences, and encour-
ages works that reflect diverse
approaches, methodologies, and
styles. Given the anthology's
multi-disciplinary character, pap-
ers are invited which balance
rigorous scholarship and general
accessibility.

Subject areas listed of
interest include Intersections of
Race and Maleness; Phenomen-
ologies of Male Embodiment; The
Epistemological Significance of
Male Bodies; The Male Body as a
Site of Resistance

If interested you should
submit a CV and an abstract
(two hard copies) of no more
than 500 words by 5/1/98 to
Nancy Tuana, Department of
Philosophy, University of
Oregon, Eugene,
OR 97403-1295.

Potential contributors will be
notified to submit a completed
paper for consideration. The
deadline for submission of the
final article is 1/7/98.

Further information and queries:
Maurice Hamington
835 Edgewood Drive, Albany,
OR 97321; email
hamingts@ucs.orst.edu

**WHEN — Women in Higher
Education Network,
Saturday 1st November 1997
University of Salford
IS FEMINISM A DIRTY
WORD?**

The conference will explore
feminism inside and outside
academia; questioning the nature
of work, the employment struc-
ture, the feminist presence and
the intellectualisation of the fem-
inist agenda. Issues may include:
ideas and realities; what counted
as success; the feminist platform;
female friendship; feminist disc-
ussions.

Calls are extended to anyone
interested in either presenting a
paper or poster or co-ordinating a
workshop on a relevant topic or
area of interest. A maximum 500
word abstract or workshop plan
should be forwarded to Jacquie
Mella, Head of Department of
Rehabilitation, Faculty of Health
Care and Social Work Studies,
University of Salford,
Blatchford Building,
Frederick Road Campus,
Frederick Road, Salford, M6 6PU.

**Women's Studies Group,
1500-1825
Call for Papers
Dayschool on
THE BODY AND WOMEN
Sat. 18 April 1998**

Send proposals to Linda Bree,
Glandore, Cannons Lane,
Hatfield Broad Oak, Bishop's
Stortford, Herts. CM22 7HX
tel: 01279 718332
fax: 01279 718124

**European Journal for
Women's Studies
Calls for Papers**

on **Simone de Beauvoir**, ms due
30/9/98 for publication 1999
on **Constructing Ethnicity**, ms
due 30/9/99 for publication 2000
Send ideas for possible article
first to EJWS, Zzan Matti, Margit
van der Steen, University of
Utrecht, Heidelberglaan 2, NL-
3584 CS Utrecht, Netherlands
Margit van der Steen's e-mail:
M.vanderSteen@fsw.ruu.nl

**Call for papers
for an Anthology on
Hildegard von Bingen
(1098-1998)**

in conjunction with a festival
4-9 June, 1998 in Göteborg,
Sweden

Full papers of about 8000 words
by 30/11/97 For information and
sub-mission details e-mail
margaret.myers@musik.gu.se

CONFERENCE ANNOUNCEMENTS

Next Meeting of SWIP (UK) Saturday 25th October 1997

Room 3D, University of London
Students' Union, Malet Street,
WC1E (opposite large Dillons)

2-5pm, panel discussion and
open floor debate of issues
relating to the RAE

5pm onwards, drinks and chat
in the ULU bar.

Women's Worlds 1999 7th International Interdisciplinary Congress on Women

20-26 June 1999

Tromsø, Norway

womens.worlds.99@skk.uit.no
http://www.skk.uit.no/WWW99/w
w99.html

Women and Human Rights, Social Justice and Citizenship: International Historical Perspectives

30 June-2 July 1998

Melbourne, Australia

information:
hisdek@lure.latrobe.edu.au

GOING AUSTRALIAN: RECONFIGURING FEMINISM AND PHILOSOPHY

An International Conference at
Warwick University
6-8 February 1998

The 1st forum for many of the
voices of Australian feminist phil-
osophy to be heard together in
Europe.

public lecture
Genevieve Lloyd
with plenary speakers

Moira Gatens Rosalyn Diprose
Robyn Ferrell Linnell Secomb
Claire Colebrook Zoe Sofoulis
Cathryn Vasseleu
Penelope Deutscher

and a variety of extra speakers in
parallel sessions.

Contemporary Australian feminist
philosophers and theorists enter
into dialogue with the traditions of
European philosophical thinking
on such topics as embodiment,
spatiality, relationality, aesthetics,
identity and ethnicity, multicult-
uralism, feminist pedagogy, mem-
ory, feminist epistemology, post-
modernism, paradigms of philoso-
phy.

Further details from Heather
Jones, Secretary, Centre for
Research in Philosophy and
Literature, Department of Philo-
sophy, University of Warwick,
Coventry, CV4 7AL, UK.
H.Jones@warwick.ac.uk

8th Symposium of the
International Association of
Women Philosophers (IAPH)
**Lessons from the Gynaecium:
Women Philosophizing—Past,
Present and Future**
August 6-10, 1998
Boston, MA, USA

to be held just prior to the 20th
World Congress of Philosophy on
PAEDEIA: Philosophy
Educating Humanity.

The IAPH conference aims to
cover all aspects of feminist
philosophy, including historical
pieces, discussions of the vast
array of current issues in feminist
philosophy and theory, and spec-
ulative work about future direc-
tions.

Further information about
the symposium, housing, travel,
etc. will be forthcoming at a later
date. In general: registration fees
will be low, dormitory housing will
be available. Travel assistance
will be available for women from
countries with non-convertible
currencies and possibly others
who would find it impossible to
attend without assistance. For
information fax +1-813-9740336

NOISE Summer Schools (in English) at Åbo Akademi University Finland 1998

provides Certificates and Credits,
Open to advanced u/g and p/g
students.

Includes modules on
Feminist Epistemology;
Citizenship; Arts

Information:
monica.nylund@abo.fi

Illinois Philosophical Association 1997 Conference Illinois State University November 14-15, 1997 *The Philosophy of Martha Nussbaum*

Keynote lecturer:
Professor Martha Nussbaum
Presidential Address:

Professor Marcia Baron

Information:
Professor David B. Fletcher,
Department of Philosophy,
Wheaton College, Wheaton,
IL 60187, Fax: (630) 752-5555.
David.B.Fletcher@wheaton.edu

Women's Studies Group 1500-1825

Philosophically interesting
meetings include

Sat. 22 Nov 1997 Sarah Hutton,
'The Elusiveness of the Female
Self: Anne Conway through her
Letters', 1 p.m. Institute of Rom-
ance Studies, Senate House,
University of London

Mon. 5 Jan 1998 Mark Davies,
'Sulpicia's Daughters: Lady
Mary Wortley Montagu and the
Traditions of Female Satire', 2pm,
St John's College Oxford.

Contact Linda Bree on 01279-
718332 (fax 01279-718124)
about attending the British
Society of 18th Century Studies
meetings also in Oxford that day

Sat. 18 Oct 1997 is a special
introductory meeting, with a
paper also on Women and
Electoral Processes. Time and
Venue as 22/11/97

Society for the Study of
Women Philosophers
Pacific Division of the
American Philosophical
Association,
in Los Angeles

on a date between
25-28 March, 1998

**WHY ARE THERE NO
GREAT WOMEN
PHILOSOPHERS?**

Further info:

Robin Parks, (+1) 360-758-7244
robingraphic@nas.com

Jane Duran (+1) 805-893-8132
jduran@education.ucsb.edu.

For annual membership of
SSWP, send a cheque for \$10
and details of yourself to:

Cecile Tougas SSWP Convenor,
262 Connecticut Avenue, NE,
Atlanta, GA 30307-2212

**Crossroads in Cultural
Studies**

**2nd International Conference
29 June-1 July 1998**

Tampere, Finland
e-mail: iscsmail@uta.fi
http://www.uta.fi/crossroads

**2nd International Workshop of
the Women's Studies Program
at**

**the University of Havana, Cuba
November 18-21, 1997, Havana**

**WOMEN ON THE
THRESHOLD OF THE 21ST
CENTURY**

The workshop will consist of
panels, round tables, commis-
sioned lectures and several pre-
conference courses.

Workshop themes include

Feminist thought: Theory and
Methodology; Gender and
History;

Feminine subjectivity; Gender
and sexuality

Gender studies in Art and
Literature

Woman, race, ethnicity, and
social class

Woman and Human Rights

Pre-workshop courses on 17/11
on women in Cuba

Cost of registration: Courses
US\$20.00; Workshop US\$80.00

For Full Details, Lodging and
Pack-ages contact: Dra. Norma

Vasallo, Catedra de la Mujer,
Universidad de La Habana,

San Rafael No. 1168 Esquina
Mazon, Ciudad Habana, Cuba

Zona 4 Codigo Postal 10400,
FAX (537) 335774 or 335960

RECENT JOURNAL PUBLICATIONS

Radical Philosophy 82 (March/April 1997) Reviews of: *Imaginary Bodies*, Moira Gatens; *Enlightened Women*, Alison Assiter.

Radical Philosophy 3 (May/Jun 1997) 'Generations of Feminism', Lynne Segal; 'Feminism without Nostalgia', Diana Coole; 'Feminist Activism and Presidential Politics: Theorizing the Costs of the "Insider Strategy"', Annie-Marie Smith.

Journal of Political Philosophy 2 (June 1996) 'Is Theory Gendered?', Elizabeth Frazer.

Journal of Applied Philosophy 2 (1996) 'Warren, Plumwood, a rock and a snake: some doubts about critical ecological feminism', John Andrews.

Journal of Applied Philosophy 3 (1996) Reviews of: *The Bodies of Women: Ethics, Embodiment and Sexual Difference*, Rosalyn Diprose; *Essays on Sexuality and Ethics*, J. Martin Stafford.

Man and World 3 (July 1996) 'Nomadism with a difference: Deleuze's legacy in a feminist perspective', Rosi Braidotti.

Man and World 4 (Oct 1996) 'Thinking life as relation: an interview with Luce Irigaray', Stephen Pluhacek and Heidi Bostic.

Journal of the History of Philosophy 2 (April 1996) 'Beyond Misogyny and Metaphor: Women in Nietzsche's Middle Period', Ruth Abbey.

Journal of the History of Philosophy 3 (July 1996) Review of *Women Philosophers of The Early Modern Period*, Margaret Atherton (ed).

Philosophical Quarterly 46 (April 1996) Review of: *Situating the Self*, Seyla Benhabib.

Philosophical Quarterly 47 (Jan 1997) 'Mendus on Philosophy and Pervasiveness', Iddo Landau.

Philosophical Quarterly 46 (Jan 1996) 'How Androcentric is Western Philosophy?', Iddo Landau; 'How Androcentric is Western Philosophy? A Reply', Susan Mendus.

Environmental Ethics 4 (Winter 1996) Reviews of: *Women, Animals and Ecofeminist Critique*, Greta Gaard; *On the Oppression of Women and Animals*, Lori Gruen.

data compiled by Alison Stone, University of Sussex

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If paying in overseas currency, please calculate at US\$ rate. Cheques should be made payable to the Society of Women in Philosophy (UK). If not applying for SWIP membership, please send your payment to **Dr Christine Battersby, WPR General Editor**, Dept of Philosophy, University of Warwick, Coventry, CV4 7AL.

Membership of the Society of Women in Philosophy (UK)

SWIP is open to individual women who work in and with philosophy both inside and outside Philosophy Departments, mainly in the UK, although it is also open to women working with philosophy overseas. It welcomes student members, those using philosophy in allied disciplines, as well as those in schools and those not formally attached to an educational institution. Institutions are not eligible to join.

Current UK membership rates are £20 waged, £10 p/t waged, £5 unwaged. Cheques should be made payable to the 'Society of Women in Philosophy (UK)'. To apply for membership please send details of yourself and any institutional affiliation to **Dr Kimberly Hutchings** (address on inside front cover). Overseas applicants should contact **Dr Kimberly Hutchings** for the appropriate rate. Please note only those paying UK full rate are entitled to the annual **Special Issue** free of charge. Others will be offered the **Special Issue** at a discount rate.

Information for Contributors

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