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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 Spring and Autumn issues are primarily book-review issues. These issues also include interviews, topical pieces and review essays. The third issue each year is a **Special Issue**, with a focus on articles in an area of Feminist Philosophy chosen by a team of Guest Editors.

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WOMEN'S PHILOSOPHY REVIEW

WPR - Issue number 18 Spring 1998

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EDITORIAL

Welcome to *Women's Philosophy Review*, issue no 18, which offers a variety of treats and useful resources for feminists interested in philosophy and philosophers who engage with feminism. The two key features of this issue are the fascinating interview with **Judith Butler** by **Alessandra Tanesini**, and **Diemut Bubeck's** invaluable critical review of the extensive literature on the **Ethic of Care** and **Feminist Ethics** that has emerged during the last fifteen years.

Here we have two faces of contemporary feminist philosophies that look in different directions. Thus, Judith Butler's approach to issues of ethics and justice is at odds with the emphasis on a 'feminine' approach to ethics that has been at the heart of the 'care' debates. The Editor does, however, regard this diversity of opinion within the field of feminist philosophy as a strength, and not as a weakness.

Women's Philosophy Review aims to be inclusive, rather than exclusive, both in respect to the types of philosophies and also in terms of the varieties of feminisms that it considers. Indeed, the pluralism of approaches is also emphasised by the three contributions this issue to **The Philosopher's Bookshelf**: Alex Klaushofer on **Emmanuel Levinas**; Gill Jagger on **Jacques Derrida** and Miranda Fricker on **John McDowell**. In each case, our contributor engages with those features of a philosopher's work that have provided stimulus for her own philosophical development. What unites the three pieces is that the woman philosopher has chosen to comment on a work by a contemporary male philosopher. Thus, the earliest of the chosen texts—Levinas's *Totality and Infinity*—was first published in 1961.

Although it looks back to earlier centuries as well, the cover of this issue of *Women's Philosophy Review* also features three sides or faces—one might say, perhaps, three moods—of feminist philosophy. On the front face of the cube there is feminism in its most familiar form: **Mary Wollstonecraft** (1759–97) who was a 'feminist' long before the term was invented. Although Wollstonecraft recognised differences between male and female 'souls' and 'natures', she argued for women to be treated as the equals of men. For many non-feminists, feminism is rather simplistically identified with such an 'equal rights' approach.

Perhaps this is why the figure on the right-hand side of the cube is so unfamiliar. Puzzlingly omitted from many of the recent books that over-view the history of women in philosophy, **Frances Power Cobbe** (Irish, 1822–1904) was one of the most prolific and well-known authors in Victorian England who addressed the question of 'woman'. Although a supporter of the suffrage movement, Cobbe's work was primarily distinguished by its philosophical approach to such questions as the 'duties' of women and the need to protect women against the violence of men. As Barbara Caine puts it in her chapter on Cobbe (in *Victorian Feminists*, OUP 1992), 'Cobbe's interest in philosophical and religious questions, and her quite substantial reputation in these fields, made her see herself as the philosopher of the women's movement'.

In modern-day terms, Frances Cobbe could be regarded as the 'mother' of that form of feminism that focuses on an 'ethic of care'. From her *Theory of Intuitive Morals* (1858) through such works as *Darwinism in Morals and Other Essays* (1872), *The Duties of Women* (1881) and her autobiography (2 vols, 1894), Cobbe adopted what might now be called 'difference feminism'. Specifically, she focused on the 'universal' characteristic that all women share—that of being a daughter—and argued for a morality (and religion) that was based on daughterly intuition, and that respected such 'feminine' virtues as tenderness and compassion. On the other hand, Cobbe argued vehemently against female self-abnegation, and rejected various contemporary theories of 'woman as Adjective', preferring instead to stress female autonomy—and 'woman as Noun'.

Interestingly, Cobbe's own life combines conservatism (her background as Anglo-Irish gentry made her a lifelong Tory) with what we would now call a 'woman-centred' approach to sexuality and marriage. Thus, after fulfilling her daughterly duties to her father (in Ireland), Cobbe found herself a female partner with whom she lived (in England) in a thirty-four year relationship of 'mutual affection'. Cobbe's coupling of conservatism with a campaigning zeal—that linked the 'feminine' to the need to oppose such 'vices' as vivisection and wife-beating—might also be thought to have striking resonances with the contemporary 'ethic of care'. As Bubeck shows, the latter is frequently linked with a 'peace' politics or with 'lesbian' values. However, Cobbe's work also has links with those feminists who reject the 'care' perspective and who represent

man's relationship to woman as inherently violent. One feels that Cobbe would have felt comfortable marching against pornography or seeking to 'reclaim the night'.

The strengths and problems of a 'care' approach are the focus of **Diemut Bubeck's** critical essay on the 'ethic of care' in this issue. Reading this review article against Barbara Caine's fine chapter on Frances Cobbe in *Victorian Feminists* certainly provides an intriguing extra dimension to current debates. Although Cobbe's morality places more stress on the virtues of 'daughters' as opposed to the twentieth-century emphasis on the characteristics of 'mothers', the same conceptual and political problems that Bubeck identifies in the ethic of care are also there in Cobbe's system. But does Cobbe's work have the appeal of present-day care theorists that Bubeck also identifies? Or does the framework of Victorian values that bounds Cobbe's writings tell us something about how twentieth-century 'care' theorists might themselves be regarded a century from now?

Cobbe re-visions autonomy as a positive value and as compatible with dependence. Thus, on a political level Cobbe struggles for the recognition of woman as a non-relative entity ('woman as Noun'). However, the problems of the relationship between 'feminine' duty and political justice are evident in Cobbe's failure to extend the duties of 'nurturance' to sons, as well as to daughters. The tensions in Cobbe's position are even more evident in the way this Victorian reformist—who campaigned for education for women—nevertheless opposed women entering those Universities and other educational institutions that required (or even allowed) the non-feminine activity of vivisection as a part of the scientific curriculum.

The third face on the cover of *WPR* this issue—the one on the top of the cube—is that of **Judith Butler**. It is probably not necessary to say that the writings of this present-day feminist philosopher don't fit with a 'lesbian' continuum that is 'woman-centred' in the manner of Cobbe. Instead, this icon of so many feminist 'postmodernists' is associated with 'queer' politics. Indeed, Butler's uses 'woman' not as the site of a new ethics or a new model of a 'female' self, but as an opening for 'queering' the very structures of identity and as a privileged site for destabilising the structures of power.

To understand Butler's moves, it is probably necessary to think of Simone de Beauvoir as the face concealed on the (hidden) fourth side of the picture-cube on the cover of *WPR*. Through the notion that one is not 'born' a woman, but becomes a 'woman' by taking on the status of man's 'other', Beauvoir picked out the paradoxicality of growing into womanhood. But the difficulties that women faced were seen also as a kind of privilege. She positioned women as potential rebels, with a capacity for freedom which was linked with the power of consciousness to negate 'the given' and hence also to transcend that which is 'merely' due to female biology.

Like Beauvoir, Butler uses the problematic category of 'woman' as a source for negation and as a way of overturning certainties about what it is to 'be' a woman. However, for Butler (unlike Beauvoir) what is also put in question is the notion of a universal predicament that is linked to female embodiment and that requires negation. Instead, Butler uses the slipperiness of the category 'woman' to trouble the structures of identity (including sexual identity) as determined by language.

With her emphasis on mime and parodic speech acts as a productive political strategy, Butler has sometimes been read as over-emphasising a person's freedom to 'choose' an identity. Furthermore, as Butler herself also indicates in the interview in this issue, she has also sometimes been accused of being a determinist. Here, the analogy with Beauvoir is again striking. Both writers have been accused of having an overly voluntarist position, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, of allowing culture (Beauvoir) or language (Butler) too great a role in marking out what it is 'to be a woman'.

Given the complex (but different) accounts of freedom that Beauvoir and Butler develop, this double accusation is not as surprising as it might seem. Both feminist philosophers need to be read against a Hegelian tradition of charting human history and identity. In this respect, the interview with Alessandra Tanesini is once again interesting, since here Judith Butler acknowledges this double objection to her early position, and talks about how her thought has developed since *Gender Trouble* days.

Thus, in this conversation Butler also tells us about her own training as a philosopher; about significant philosophical influences; about her links with a Hegelian and German Idealist tradition; and about her

uneasy relationship with contemporary analytic philosophy. The discussion concludes with some comments on Judith Butler's two most recent books, *Excitable Speech* (1997) and *The Psychic Life of Power* (1997), both of which are reviewed in the **Book Review** section of this issue. Interestingly, *Excitable Speech* shows issues relating to justice figuring more strongly in Butler's recent work.

I think it will be fruitful for the readers of this journal to read the Butler interview and the Bubeck essay on the 'ethic of care' side by side. In the field of feminist philosophy, the orthodox divisions between 'continental' and 'analytical' traditions of philosophy need to be broached, as Butler shows by her practice and Bubeck also suggests at the end of her review article. What the Editor of this journal has sought to add in these opening comments is some insights into the way contemporary debates relate to those of the past. And this also is a theme of several of the books reviewed in this issue. Indeed, the question of history itself is taken up in Sigrid Weigel's *Body- and Image-Space* (reviewed by Nicola Foster). But to write about the way that Weigel's—and Walter Benjamin's—threefold 'angel of history' relates to the three faces on the picture-cube on the front of this issue of *Women's Philosophy Review* would be a task for another time ...

Christine Battersby
University of Warwick

WANTED

Sub-Editor for *Women's Philosophy Review* to work with General Editor of *WPR* on 2 issues a year. Must have a good eye for detail; be skilled at 'Word' (for the PC or Mac); have access to a computer & be happy to use email. Internet skills desirable, but not essential.

Until sales of *WPR* increase, the fee cannot be generous, but there is potential for developing the journal further. We can also talk about perks (such as home email).

Ideal for graduates or recent PhDs wanting Editorial Experience for their CVs, and for those wanting to retain links with Philosophy or Feminist Theory during a career break.

Contact Christine Battersby (address on inside cover of this issue).

Women/Philosophy—In Conversation
no 2 in a series of *WPR* Conversations

TROUBLING PHILOSOPHY: Interview with Judith Butler

By Alessandra Tanesini

Influences

- AT Can you tell me something about the main intellectual influences on your work?
- JB I was a graduate student in the early 1980's and the late 1970's, and mainly studied Hegel, Marx and the German Idealist tradition, and phenomenology. I went to Heidelberg in 1979–80 as a Fullbright Scholar, and studied with Gadamer and also took courses on Kant and Hegel with Dieter Heinrich. My dissertation was on the French reception of Hegel and, in particular, on the *Phenomenology of Spirit*. I worked with Maurice Natanson who was very open to my feminism and very encouraging as a dissertation adviser. I also worked briefly as a graduate student with Seyla Benhabib, who is now my interlocutor. She was an enormous influence on my thinking.
- AT You have had many debates with her on postmodernism, on the notion of the ground, and on whether feminist politics needs an account of the subject. How would you characterise your disagreements with her on these issues?
- JB I think what's important to understand is that Seyla and I both were very interested in Hegel, in German Idealism, and in Marxism. We worked together, I think, mainly on the topic of the Frankfurt School of Critical Theory. So we started with a very common ground. While I became more interested in French philosophy, she became more interested in the Habermasian project.

We could both emerge out of Hegel, and find ourselves at very different ends of the spectrum. She became very worried about postmodernism, as a form of nihilism, which undermines the capacity for critical thinking and social transformation; and I never was able to understand what she meant by 'postmodernism'.

AT You didn't mention Foucault in your list of influences.

JB Foucault came later, he wasn't a formative influence. I think that I started thinking very seriously about Foucault only after I finished my dissertation; that would have been in the mid 1980's. I read the *History of Sexuality*, Vol. I, I think in 1981 or 1982, but it didn't come to form my thinking until 1985.

Philosophy

AT You have been trained as a philosopher. Do you think of your work as philosophy?

JB I don't know.

AT Do you think it matters?

JB Not to me. I think it is philosophical. Let's put it that way. I use 'philosophical' as an adjective. It is philosophically informed. I don't think anyone could have written it who wasn't trained in philosophy; so I think that philosophy is essential to it. I don't think it stays within academically respectable bounds to some degree, although recently I am finding a disconcerting tolerance on the part of philosophers towards my work. I feel I'm not able to occupy the rebel stance in quite as clear a way as I used to be.

AT Is there something politically at stake in claiming yourself to be philosopher or in claiming yourself not to be a philosopher?

JB I think I don't do either. I've been introduced as a philosopher. People ask whether they may introduce me as a philosopher, and

I say 'sure'. I mean it's not as if I refuse the name. I publish in philosophical contexts very often, but I suppose that my popularity is in literary studies and in cultural theory. I think that one way to tell the story of my trajectory is to say that I was in feminist philosophy and then I moved to something akin to cultural and critical theory which is interdisciplinary. I continue to think of myself as a feminist philosopher, probably also a queer theorist, probably also a critical or cultural theorist. Because I don't think that identity categories capture you in any final way, I don't mind being described in that way. I also know that it's not a final or exhaustive description.

AT We'll go back to the question of identities later. I noticed that sometimes you have referred to analytic philosophers in your books. I would like to know if you can tell me something about your relation to that tradition, since you studied at Yale where the relations between analytical and continental philosophers were particularly difficult.

JB That's true, and in fact when I was there I had a distinct sense that one had to choose one side or the other. And I had a sense that there was a war between the two. It was only after I left that I met people who were working on Austin and Arendt. For instance, Bonnie Honig's work on Arendt using Austin's speech act theory was really a shock to me. I asked her how she could read Austin, she replied: 'I love reading Austin'. I have always loved reading Wittgenstein; I took courses on him, but I would take them in the Divinity School. I wouldn't take them in the Philosophy Department. I then realised that there were in fact all kinds of ways to relate philosophy of language to the concerns I had in gender theory.

When I developed the idea in *Gender Trouble* about gender as performative, I was taking the word 'performative' from Derrida's work. But I thought that, since he was taking it from Austin, I'd better go back and look. I ended up really enjoying reading Austin, and finding it—in fact—both enormously amusing and illuminating. Of course this was happening at the precise

moment in which, at least in the United States, philosophers of mind were repudiating most of the insights of the philosophy of language. So I am now, of course, very interested in figures who have become, in many ways, anachronistic within the philosophy of language and within the analytic tradition.

Performatives

AT It is impossible to interview you without asking a question about performativity. The notion of a performative plays a central role in your work. I wonder whether you think that your understanding of that notion has undergone changes since you used it in *Gender Trouble*. Certainly, in your recent work it has a broader range of application. Do you think that you have also changed your understanding of that notion or the way you deploy it?

JB Yes, I think that I'm always revising my understanding of that notion and in fact it's important. I think for many people it is frustrating. They believe they will understand Butler's position, if they read *Gender Trouble*. They think *Bodies that Matter* then will clarify it, and now *Excitable Speech* will clarify the previous one; but actually I do revise my position as I go. I think it's important for me as a living intellectual to be able to revise, and I think revision is proper to the work of performativity itself. It's part of what I'm interested in, and it's also part of what I do. In some sense I have always reiterated the performative, you might say.

I think that in *Gender Trouble* I had two problems. First, the notion of the performative was construed as a voluntarist act that a subject performed taking on a gender, taking off a gender. The other problem is that people said: 'Oh, look! Genders are discursively constituted. If that's true, as Butler says, then there is no agency.' So, on one hand, I was accused of having a voluntarist position, and, on the other, I was accused of having a determinist position. I then realised that this question of performativity raises the problem of voluntarism and determinism. I thought as well that this is a false opposition. The real question is how subjects who act, and who are conditioned by power and discourse, are—

to some degree—constrained by the norms that enable that action, and also—to some degree—unconstrained. How do we grasp that process whereby a subject reiterates a norm—where that reiteration is neither mechanical nor radically unconditioned? So, what I've been trying to do is grasp that ambivalent structure of agency. What it means always in some sense to be conditioned by social norms and also not to be fully constrained by them.

AT Which, I suppose, is to say that norms both constrain and enable by virtue of their constraining.

JB Well, that I take to be a way of extending Foucault's understanding of the relationship between juridical and productive power. I believe his insight, which has been central to my own work, is that power which appears to constrain also enables in ways that are not always anticipated.

AT Don't you think that one of the sources of the problems that you have just outlined with *Gender Trouble*, is that your account of gender in that book was illocutionary?

JB Was illocutionary?

AT Rather than perlocutionary.

JB Yes, I think that's a good point.

AT That has changed now, hasn't it? In *Excitable Speech* you have talked about the construction of homosexuals, say, in terms of speech acts and their perlocutionary effects. It seems to me that you would now use the same model for gender. But, I think, we should not slot all these identities within the same formal structure. I am worried by those horrible lists—gender, race, sexual orientation—which treat all identities as if they were all the same, and could be understood along the same lines. How would you understand the differences between these kinds of identity,

granted that they are performative in a way? How do these differences come about?

JB I agree with you. I think it's a big mistake to think that all of those identities are subject to the exact same logic or structure. All we would need to do is come up with a kind of abstract logic or structure of the subject, impose it on these various particular contexts, and we'd be fine. I think that's a mistake. On the other hand, I think it is also a mistake to believe that we can just give a set of particularist analyses without asking about the ways in which contemporary power is constituting the field of intelligibility within which new social identities are formulating themselves. For instance, I think that there are general schematic things one can say, knowing that that is not the whole story. I worry a little bit about the kind of resistance to abstraction that can emerge from the perspective of particular social movements *vis-à-vis* one another. It makes it impossible to have a dialogue or a translated movement among these movements. So, I am trying to lay out a kind of schematic which will be filled in, and taken up, and done differently in a variety of different contexts.

For instance, in *Excitable Speech*, I talk of racialisation which, I think, happens in many different ways. It seems really clear to me, however, that in much of the sociological literature which is written on racialisation, when people talk about the racial constitution of a subject they do not stop and say what they mean by 'constitution'. I think there are many notions of constitution. There's a theoretical and philosophical presupposition in those very specific analyses that seem to have seeped back in and that emerge in those same debates in race studies. By 'constituting' do I mean that I'm determined by this cultural signifier? Do I mean that it's a construction? How do I distinguish between forms of construction? Where's agency? Can there be agency within construction? It seems to me that these debates are reappearing in all those particular analyses in a certain way. My effort is not to legislate a single theory of the subject for all of those, but maybe to offer a critical analysis of some of the organising and theoretical claims that are very often embedded in those analyses.

AT Right. I want to come back to the issue of constitution in a second, but first I want to ask you a different question that is linked to this issue of the performative.

JB I like your idea that it was illocutionary in *Gender Trouble*. I'm afraid that that might be true.

AT That is the impression that I had.

JB I think that that's a good point. No one has said that to me before.

The Body

AT You know that people who read *Gender Trouble* got really worried about the body. That book generated a debate about the space left for the materiality of the body. If I get you right, for you the body is conceived as a limit; it is a site of inscription. Of course there are biological constraints, but the significance of those biological constraints is something that is constructed within language. I want to know whether you think that your introduction in *Excitable Speech* of the notion of the *habitus* gives to the notion of the body a different role from the one it had in your earlier work.

JB I think that *Gender Trouble* did produce a number of questions about the body at that time. I made a joke about it at the beginning of *Bodies that Matter*, I said 'what about the body Judy?' I think that I didn't actually give an account of the body in *Gender Trouble*. What I did was try to expose the misnomer of a natural sex. I didn't even try to expose the misnomer of a natural body. I don't think I dealt with the body as such. I think there were bodily acts, but I would say the body is not so much a site of inscription in *Gender Trouble* as a kind of principle of activity. It is in some sense, what is constantly performing; there was a body that was resolved into the notion of the act. Hence the questions: well, what about the passive body? what about the yielding of the vulnerable body? what about the biological body? what about death? what about

dying? I realised that I had an inconclusive conception of the body in *Gender Trouble*. I really didn't make it clear, but it was also an idealised one. I think it was a conception of the body centred on the notion of potency, of the potent act of a certain kind, which—I'm sure—is an idealisation and a fantasy.

In *Bodies that Matter* I think what I sought to do was suggest at least two things. The first is that the norms, set to be imposed on a body, come to form it; they are also materialised in and through it. I wanted to separate a linguistic constructivism that sees the body as the site on which a cultural construct is imposed or built, from a different notion of materialisation, which is not the same as materialism or even the notion of material. Materialisation concerns how a norm comes to form and be part of the formative structure of the body. It's not as if there are these sexed bodies that are given. Rather, one assumes a sex, a sex is taken on, appropriated, lived, incorporated, and what we called the materiality of sex, is in fact the plausible incorporation of a set of norms. So I tried to, in some sense, overcome the problem of linguistic constructivism in *Bodies that Matter*. I did it also by making a second point which is perhaps less noticed than the first. The second point is that discourse does not fully constitute the body, that it cannot fully or exhaustively constitute the body. There is an excess, there is something that eludes the apparatus of construction. We can't quite refer to the body, because it's not there as a referent, and yet it undermines any capacity for a full linguistic capture of the body. I believe I said this in the chapter entitled 'The Lesbian Phallus'.

AT It is an issue of contingency, isn't it? Reinscriptions might always fail.

JB Yes, that's right. There's something that the body might be said to mark a certain excess, that eludes linguistic capture. That was my way of talking about the limits of constructivism, and acknowledging something about the unrepresentability and ineffability of the body, and also its excessive function in the process of inscription.

I think that in *Excitable Speech*, there are a couple of other points that I'm trying to make about the body. I don't know if this conflicts exactly with *Bodies that Matter*, but I tend to think of it more as a specification of those points. In the first instance, what does it mean for a bodily sense of survival to depend upon modes of recognition? If one needs to be called a name in order to survive in a bodily form, a bodily sense of well being and survivability depends on a certain kind of linguistic guarantee of existence. Also we are, in some profound way, shatterable.

I think that a body, which is being shattered by language, is not simply a biological given body. It's a body that gains a certain appearance and integrity by virtue of the way in which it is addressed, and unaddressed bodies can't survive. Thinking through this involves a certain notion, maybe implicitly, of the bodily schema in Merleau-Ponty or of the body image that Liz Grosz has talked about in relation to Schilder's work. It's a slightly different notion of the body.

The notion of the *habitus*, for me, is a way of trying to specify what it means that bodies incorporate and materialise norms. Norms are taken in and incorporated over time, and they come to a similar form of the given, the stylisation of the body. That seemed to me to be consistent with the work I was doing on Simone de Beauvoir very early on, where I talked about gender as a style of the flesh. So there's at least a temporary resonance with Bourdieu and with Merleau-Ponty on that question, but the place where I would depart from them is that they actually make the body too fully formed by this *habitus*. There is still something of the body which is excessive, that cannot be captured by its discursive and cultural constitution. That's where I re-import a certain psychoanalytic notion of the body as an unconscious field to show that the reiterated construction of the body is also subject to failure.

AT For them it's too masterful.

JB Yes, the culture is too masterful.

Language

AT In your recent talk at the Institute of Contemporary Arts, London [13 May 1997], and also in *Excitable Speech*, you have complained about the recent linguistification of the political field. Couldn't somebody argue that your insistence on the notion of the performative in fact is part of this phenomenon? Or even that *Gender Trouble* initiated this trend? The performative, after all, could be seen as a notion that invests language with the sort of powers that once people attributed to institutions and to other non-linguistic entities.

JB Yes absolutely, I'm guilty. I think that what I'm referring to is not so much a set of theoretical efforts to recast political questions as linguistic questions, but more a set of political controversies, which have emerged, mostly in the US but elsewhere as well, on questions of representation. In the US there are these hate speech controversies. Can speech be approved that not only offends people but which appears to constitute discriminatory conduct against them? How do we decide that? Very often the question of racism, which I think twenty years ago was addressed as a profound institutional question, and indeed a problem that the government was in some ways both condemning and institutionalising, now becomes a question of who said which word, and should that individual be punished. My question is: why is it that we are focusing on the words that emblematised the institutional problems that are, in fact, much more pervasive than the words themselves? More than that, how is it that we understand the individual's utterance to be in some way a recitation of institutional life?

I think we can't go back to the Marxist idea that an individual utterance is simply an epiphenomenal reflection of a social structure. I think that social structures are in fact reiterated through utterances, and that we need to recast the notion of the verbal act as an institutional act. We need to understand how institutions, in their temporal reproduction, require individual speakers to do the work of reconsolidating those institutional powers through speech. In many ways all I'm really saying is that

we need to understand the cause of, say, racism, homophobia or misogyny not as this individual who spoke those words. We need to understand, instead, how individuals who speak are also in this reiterative practice, and try to relocate the speech act, as it were, in terms of its historicity and institutional power.

Agency

AT In *Excitable Speech* you provide a discussion of agency, and of the way in which it emerges through norms that enable agencies whilst constraining them. In that book, you point out that it is possible to speak with authority without being authorised by previous conventions, which—I suppose—is one way of exercising agency. Normally, one can trace the source of authority to previous conventions, which are what enables the success of performative speech acts. But, what you talk about in your book is a performative that succeeds in virtue of breaking previous conventions. I'd like to know a bit more about how and why this is possible.

JB When you say that it's possible to trace the authority that authorises an act to previous conventions, that's I think different from being directly authorised by those previous conventions. For instance, one makes a claim for the human rights of lesbians, and there is a convention governing the claiming of human rights. Many people claimed them under all different kinds of circumstances, but most people have not thought that lesbians had to be included. In fact, some, like the Vatican, would even say that lesbian human rights are a contradiction in terms, that the lesbian is anti-human, that what it is to be human is not to be lesbian. But that's a kind of an exclusionary condition of the human. So, if one claims human rights for lesbians, suddenly a discourse has been invoked where it was never intended to be invoked, and where it was not previously authorised, but it's a certain appropriation. I think Paul Gilroy writes in *The Black Atlantic* about how revolutionary forces in Haiti, for instance, deployed Enlightenment rhetoric as a way of overcoming tyrannical government authority;

at the same time they were in no way reinstating themselves into a kind of European history. At those moments there is an appropriation of a convention which is very clearly not intended to be used in that context, and sometimes explicitly prohibited from being used in a given context, but it's used anyway. The effect of that use is to extend its authority in ways that could not have been predicted.

This interests me because it's actually similar to some arguments in *Gender Trouble*. Bourdieu would say that an act—a speech act—which is not already authorised in a direct, legible and explicit way is going to be foolish, it's going to be fictional, it's going to be a comedy, it's going to be impotent. I would say that sometimes those wild, unanticipated and uncompromised acts have the performative effect of producing the very authorisation that they lack. They retroactively produce an authorisation for themselves as a consequence of the act, and in that sense they don't rely on that as a precondition. That's where I would argue that the functionalism of Bourdieu's analysis of the speech act works in the service of the status quo, and can't actually give us an account of the temporal ruptures by which modes of authorisation get re-established and disestablished. I told him this, and he appeared to agree with me; so it's not a pressing disagreement.

Writing and Authorship

- AT We usually conceive of theory as belonging to the language of the constative. Instead, you are a theorist who speaks the language of the performative. What reconception of theory does this involve?
- JB A great question! I have no idea. It's what I do, but I'm not sure I know what I do.
- AT Could you put it in terms of trying to bring about change? But I presume you would then have to acknowledge that you are not fully in control of your books, which I suppose is something you would be happy with.

- JB I truly acknowledge that. That's the one thing I know about my books—that I do not own them, and that in some profound way, I do not even author them. I think that what I'm interested in doing is producing many possibilities of moving the boundaries of the thinkable and the imaginable. What my books do is try to open up a different field for the thinking of gender, a different field for the thinking of the body, a different field for the thinking of language. I try performatively to produce a possibility that might work against certain naturalised conceptions of these fundamental categories.

Many people ask me about drag in *Gender Trouble*; they can't believe that drag has any profoundly subversive effect on society. They believe that it's just entertainment, something people do on the side, and that certainly drag queens aren't our ideal political activists. For me the question was always not what drag can do, but rather what we think is real. Why is it that we say that a drag queen is not real, but is trying to approximate a reality that a drag queen doesn't own or have? It seems to me that if we accept the idea that reality is instituted through myriad kinds of approximations, then approximation and performativity—this reiterative and re-enactive process—are the very means by which our notion of reality is constituted and altered. What I'm really interested in is not remaining restricted to given notions of reality, but trying to encourage and incite those limits in which our other sense of reality is constituted.

Queer Theory and Feminism

- AT As you mentioned in your talk at the Institute of Contemporary Arts, feminist politics and queer politics are very fast moving apart from each other. I think that's true also for feminist theory and queer theory to some extent. I agree with you that this is a trend that must be resisted, but don't you think that in the current situation it is inevitable?
- JB I think tension is good—I'm in favour of tension. What I worry about is a polarisation that takes these theoretical movements,

these political movements so far apart from one another that the tension is not really thought about. I think that there are some of us who will always remain interstitial; that is to say, I will never be able to align myself with one camp or another. There have to be people who are trying to think of a relationship. It doesn't have to be a relationship of identity or unity, but it has to be a productive mode of conflict maybe, or a productive contestation that keeps those bodies of literature in contact with one another. I think that it's lamentable when feminists develop anxiety toward queer theory as that which is taking over, or is more exciting, or threatening their territory. I think it is equally lamentable when queer theory thinks that its own integrity and future depends on a break with feminism. I don't believe that for a moment. I think it would be tragic, in a non-productive sense, for these parties to fall out of dialogue.

AT I wonder whether you think that Wittig's work might be of use here. I am thinking in particular about what she says about sex.

JB In general, I think that the more we rethink Wittig the better. I think she's really splendid and that her view hasn't been taken up radically enough. I do think that a major problem for queer studies is the extent to which it has thought that the domain of sexuality might be treated as an autonomous domain distinct from the problem of gender, the problem of kinship, and the problem of the naturalisation of sex. At the same time, obviously there was a collapse of sexuality into gender in some of the Lévi-Straussian models and in some of the MacKinnon models that dominated in feminist theory, which was a real problem. The real question is how to pry apart gender and sexuality from one another without sending them off in radically different directions.

Wittig is crucial because she thinks that the constitution of the category of sex is in the service of a kind of compulsory heterosexuality, but she also is not so politically unwise that she thinks you can operate without it altogether. Even Foucault understood that the notion of sex compounded the idea of biological sex and sexual practice. We would be really mistaken if we failed to

understand that, at least in terms of dominant forms of social power, those terms are constituted together, they are linked together. We might say that conceptually they should be separated, and I would agree, but for us to pretend that they are always already separated is to miss the opportunity to make the political intervention.

Projects

AT I know that you have a new collection of essays forthcoming called *The Psychic Life of Power*. Can you tell me a bit about that, and the future direction of your work?

JB Well, *The Psychic Life of Power* is an effort to think about the Foucauldian notion of subject constitution—which insists that power constitutes the subject in some way—using a variety of theoretical points of departure, including psychoanalysis, to think about the psychic constitution of the subject. It's always worried me that Foucault was so allergic to psychoanalysis, and that so many psychoanalysts are so allergic to Foucault. It seems to me that one can't actually understand how power constitutes the subject without understanding how certain modes of reflexivity, conscience, melancholia, are actually related to the social regulation of the subject. So I'm interested in looking at those kind of psychic states, not as independent realities, but as the dissimulation of social power. In some ways it's a philosophical effort in social psychology.

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ETHIC OF CARE AND FEMINIST ETHICS

A Review Essay by Diemut Bubeck

Since Carol Gilligan's publication of her seminal *In a Different Voice* in 1982, what might be called care theory has developed into a major intellectual project. In its conceptualisation of a particular domain or discipline, care theory refers to the attitude, practice or work of care and derives central theoretical insights from this focus. As such, it has branched out into various disciplines, but it has also dominated, at least in Anglo-American analytical philosophy, the discussion of a feminist approach to ethics and the development of feminist thought in moral and political philosophy.

Whilst not all feminist ethics is identified with what has come to be called the ethic of care, the latter has inserted itself as a point of reference for most feminist moral philosophers in the analytical tradition, whether positive, critical or both. This indicates just how central care theory has become. In this essay, I shall review the 'career' of care theory over the last fifteen years and discuss some of the important and interesting issues and problems it has thrown up.

1) Publications Over The Last Fifteen Years

The publications over this period reflect the various strands of the discussion in both care theory and feminist ethics, the various positions that have been taken within it, as well as the development of the discussion over time.

Apart from Gilligan's *Different Voice*, the 1980s saw the publication of two very influential book-length versions of the ethic of care, Nel Noddings' *Caring* in 1984—to be followed by the much less noticed *Women and Evil* in 1989—and Sara Ruddick's *Maternal Thinking* in 1989. Whilst the two authors develop markedly different positions, both have been taken in later discussion as representing the ethic of care project and thus have gained the status of 'classics' in this field.

The main differences between Noddings and Ruddick are the following. Noddings develops an ethic of care which she describes as 'characteristically and essentially feminine', arising from women's

experience 'as women' (Noddings 1984, p. 8). Her notion of care is quite broad, ranging from mothering and friendship to teaching, and her approach is critical of the 'principled' type of ethics that has dominated Anglo-American analytical philosophy. Her ethic is influenced by Gilligan's work and can be seen as a philosophical elaboration of the ethic that Gilligan attributed to those speaking with a 'different voice'.

Ruddick's work, by contrast, is more focused and specific. She starts with the description of the practice of 'mothering' (which can be engaged in by both men and women, but has historically been the domain of women), and discusses the values and virtues inherent in that practice. She then uses this perspective to develop an alternative approach to peace politics. Thus Ruddick's aim is the development of a feminist approach or 'standpoint' in moral and political philosophy and an intervention in contemporary politics from this standpoint.

By contrast, Noddings' aim in *Caring* is the development of a care-based approach within contemporary moral philosophy. The relational ontology which forms an important part of this approach is further elaborated in her *Women and Evil* where she develops a secular conception of evil as a failure to care (Noddings 1989).

Apart from Gilligan's, Noddings' and Ruddick's work, three important and influential collections of papers were published in the 1980s which provided the first round of 'material' from the emerging discussion of care. Joyce Trebilcock's *Mothering* (1983) is more specific than both Eva Kittay and Diana Meyer's *Women and Moral Theory* (1987) and Marsha Hanen and Kai Nielsen's *Science, Morality and Feminist Theory* (1987), but all three contained papers which were referred to widely and which influenced further discussion considerably.

The two later anthologies focus mostly on the question of the relation between the ethic of care and the ethic of justice, and often consist of critical discussions of justice combined with some form of endorsement of the ethic of care, although early critical voices are included as well (e.g. Houston 1987, Harding 1987 and Sher 1987). Main participants in the care/justice discussion such as Annette Baier, Marilyn Friedman and Virginia Held, as well as Sara Ruddick, all contributed to these collections.

Further anthologies appeared in the 1990s, with more varying purposes, contributors and themes. Claudia Card's *Feminist Ethics* (1991)

distances itself from the ethic of care project. Alongside several critical papers, we find other papers on feminist ethics and method and on moral character, the latter indicative of the attempt to resist the domination of care theory in feminist ethics by widening the scope of the discussion.

In *Explorations in Feminist Ethics* (1992), Eve Cole and Susan McQuin do give their due to care theory with a number of papers on it, but similarly cast their net more widely by introducing new areas and theories as part of feminist ethics (although there are a large number of papers which may be seen to be part of the project of theorising care more broadly and in new areas). Elizabeth Frazer, Jennifer Hornsby and Sabina Lovibond's anthology, *Ethics: A Feminist Reader* (1992), runs counter to the trend of domination by contemporary care theory by structuring the papers around substantive feminist themes (women's condition, gender difference, feminist ethics), as well as by bringing together historical and contemporary feminist authors.

As the care discussion reached the curriculum, it produced collections of 'classical' papers in the debate and an introductory book. Rosemary Tong's *Feminine and Feminist Ethics* (1993) is written for undergraduate teaching purposes: it provides a general and very basic introduction to moral theory and feminist thought, as well as to Gilligan, Noddings, maternal ethics, and feminist and lesbian approaches to ethics.

Mary Larrabee's collection *An Ethic of Care* (1993) contains classic papers from the broader care discussion, covering a number of disciplines and diverse developments of care theory. It usefully includes critical discussions of the empirical and methodological validity of Gilligan's original claims about gender differences in moral voice. The philosophical papers in this collection are key contributions to the care/justice debate.

Virginia Held's *Justice and Care* (1995) is a collection of philosophical contributions. The papers consist of classic endorsements, developments and critiques of aspects of the ethic of care project. For teaching and introductory purposes in philosophy, Held's collection will be more useful than Larrabee's, providing the reader who is new to the field with a broad range of positions and possible approaches and themes, although some of the papers in the Larrabee anthology offer a useful corrective to those inclined to take Gilligan's data as final.

Sarah Hoagland's *Lesbian Ethics* (1988) marks the first monograph in a 'second wave' of discussion about the ethic of care and feminist ethics. Already a response to the first 'wave' of enthusiastic argument for the ethic of care as a new approach in feminist ethics, she rejects the 'feminine' virtues of self-sacrifice and vulnerability, whilst endorsing 'attending' as the basis for a lesbian ethics and discussing questions of women's and lesbians' moral agency under conditions of oppression.

Grace Clement's *Care, Autonomy, and Justice* (1996) responds similarly to the problem of self-sacrifice in the ethic of care. However, unlike Hoagland, Clement does not reject either pole of a gendered morality (justice vs. care), but argues for the integration of the two perspectives. By contrast, in her *Women and Moral Identity* (1991), Elisabeth Porter defends the need for a more dynamic 'synthesis' of gendered categories and perspectives more generally, rather than their integration or convergence. Focusing on conceptions of the moral self, she endorses a 'self-in-relation' over an additive 'self-and-relation' or a too predominantly 'relational-self' (p. 169).

Of the 'second wave' of monographs on the ethic of care, Virginia Held's *Feminist Morality* (1993), Joan Tronto's *Moral Boundaries* (1993), and Peta Bowden's *Caring* (1997) are the most sanguine in developing versions of the ethic of care as valid feminist approaches. Held discusses caring, but most creatively and distinctively the mothering paradigm as it pertains to moral and social philosophy, while Tronto extends her discussion of a very broadly defined notion of care to an elaboration and defence of a care perspective in political theory. Peta Bowden uses a Wittgensteinian family resemblance argument against any general definition and discussion of care as such, discussing instead four instances of caring in detail: mothering, friendship, nursing and citizenship.

Lastly, Susan Hekman's *Moral Voices, Moral Selves* (1995) shares with Bowden an inspiration by Wittgenstein, interpreting different moral voices as different language games which are intimately related to moral self-definitions and strategies of subject formation, thus merging a Wittgensteinian, pluralized reading of Gilligan's different voices with a Foucauldian stress on discursive practices and subjectivization.

In addition to these book-length publications, articles continue appearing in various philosophical and feminist journals, notably *Hypatia*,

which has published a number of important contributions over the last ten years, and has carried symposia on Noddings' *Caring* (*Hypatia* 1990, vol. 5 no. 1), Hoagland's *Lesbian Ethics* (*Hypatia* 1990, vol. 5 no. 3), and the state of the care/justice debate (*Hypatia* 1995, vol. 10 no. 2). Lastly, useful collections of their work over the years on the ethic of care and related questions have been published by two of the main participants in the discussion, Annette Baier (*Moral Prejudices*, 1994) and Marilyn Friedman (*What Are Friends For?* 1993).

II) Social Context and Theoretical Avenues

The discussion over the last fifteen years has highlighted the complex nexus and intricate relations between the social context of care, ethics and feminist theory within which feminists can take up a whole host of different positions and lines of argument. As Alison Jaggar has noted, the discussion is much too variegated for a feminist 'party line' to be discernible—instead certain minimum conditions that any feminist ethics must meet may be the only specifiable characteristics to be had (Jaggar 1991). This is not surprising if we consider the above mentioned nexus, particularly the social context.

As feminist writers on care have invariably pointed out, care has so far taken place under oppressive conditions. Care is probably the most significant and important category of work that is accorded to women via the sexual division of labour, and a lot of it continues to be done unpaid or badly paid—if the latter then often by women from less privileged class and ethnic backgrounds. Care is thus inextricably intertwined with oppressive gender divisions: care is done by women, it is associated with women, and it expresses and symbolises femininity (for a critical assessment of this association see Harding 1987).

In parallel to earlier feminist responses to femininity or traits associated with femininity, feminists can respond in two basic ways: they can reject what is feminine as too tainted and oppressive, or they can reclaim it and celebrate it as 'women's own'. Both responses are understandable and inevitable. In fact, any oppressed social group which has become associated with certain qualities faces this choice as it attempts to struggle out of its oppressive conditions. Thus black people reclaimed their blackness, ethnic groups their ethnicity, lesbians their 'dykehood'

and later, with gays, their 'queerness', as each group struggled to feel proud of being what and who they were. However, these groups also had aspirations to modes of being, status and qualities that were associated with their oppressors. Hence in the course of pursuing those aspirations, some members of these groups rejected particular values and qualities because they were seen as produced by oppressive conditions and therefore not worth hanging on to.

The choice between these two responses, celebration or rejection, is deeply dilemmatic, however. The celebration of difference risks reinforcing oppression (which works at least in part through an assertion and continued reproduction of this difference), whilst the rejection of difference risks alienating group members from their own experience, background and solidarity with other members of their group. This 'dilemma of difference' is faced by feminists with regard to care and the prospect of the ethic of care.

To begin with the first horn of the dilemma, that of rejection: those feminists who are critical of care as a practice usually do not spend much time discussing it, concentrating instead on other types of approaches or other concerns. Since this essay focuses on the ethic of care literature, their work will not be reviewed here. A small number of critical papers in the anthologies do, however, voice concerns with the ethic of care project as such (e.g. Spelman 1991 and Card 1991), notably about its tendency to reinforce conservative gender divisions or a 'conservative gynocentrism' (Card 1991, p. 17, cf. Moody-Adams 1991, Gatens 1995) and about its complacency and silence regarding women's failure to care for other women (Spelman 1991).

The first horn of the dilemma is thus not well represented in this review. However, some of the possible arguments against endorsing care can be found in the ethic of care literature in the form of arguments against Noddings (1984), whose initial failure to take the oppressive social context of care into account renders her an obvious target for feminist criticism, especially by those who want to develop a version of the ethic of care that meets feminist concerns.

Choosing the first horn of the dilemma has its drawbacks—namely the loss of a possible source of theoretical reflection and criticism that is available to feminists in virtue of their own gendered positioning:

However disenchanted I became with Reason, it did not occur to me that there was an intellectual life that had anything to do with mothering. I 'thought' only when I had time to myself, put my children out of my mind, and did philosophy... For years I had engaged in spirited reflection about children's lives with other mothers... Could this 'chattering,' so unlike the philosophy in which I was trained, be 'thinking'? Did I, did we, through endless telephone calls and late night coffees, create themes of a 'discourse'? Could what we thought and the way we thought be put to use? (Ruddick 1989, p. 11)

Whilst Ruddick's questions are far from new or original, what they remind us of is the kind of questions feminists will lose both as explicit questions and as critical and creative resources if they reject the theorisation and discussion of care altogether. This loss, it seems to me, is significant, especially if it is considered just how productive many feminists have found the care perspective to be.

The second horn of the dilemma, the theoretical endorsement or even celebration of care, has attracted many protagonists, as the enormous explosion of care literature illustrates. It also has its problems, however, deriving from the fact that care, as we know it, is engaged in under oppressive social conditions. I shall discuss the three main problems, and a related problem, arising from this social context in the theorisation of care.

The first problem has been touched on above: given these oppressive circumstances, the celebration of care as a woman's moral voice can reinforce the oppressive identification of women with care. Noddings, for example, has no compunction about referring to the ethic of care as a women's morality and as 'characteristically and essentially feminine' (Noddings 1984, p. 8 and *passim*; Noddings 1989). Other theorists have similarly used the idea of women's moral voice or experience, or of women's interests in morality, thus at least implicitly asserting a connection between women and care (e.g. Baier 1991, (see also Baier 1994) Fox 1992, Calhoun 1992).

This first problem strikes me as relatively minor, however, since it can easily be met by stressing that the identification of women with care is not necessary. Many feminists have pointed this out, and some have

added that caring femininity is also predominantly a middle-class norm which is often used to criticise less privileged women. Pointing out the historicity, social construction or oppressiveness of the association of women with care, however, cannot by itself provide a valid argument against theorising care. Care is an important human practice and as such worth theorising, regardless of who cares.

The second problem might be called the problem of exploitation: under conditions of gender oppression, the ethic of care—interwoven as it is with the practice of care—will serve as an oppressive ideology that leads to women's exploitation as carers. Thus if only women endorse a care perspective, they will care (emotionally, morally, as well as in their actions), whilst men, insisting on their liberty and rights, will not care, or will care much less and thus be free to pursue other, often materially more profitable, courses of action.

Apart from the material inequality that such a gendered ethic of care helps generate, its function as a reinforcing element in the sexual division of labour must make it, at the very least, highly suspicious to feminists. Hence those feminists who want to defend it must be able to give a plausible response to this problem. Noddings again falls crucially foul of a convincing answer and has been taken to task for this by many commentators (e.g. Card 1990, Hoagland 1990, Houston 1990, Bubeck 1995).

The problem of exploitation, located as it is primarily at the social level, thus points the feminist discussion of the ethic of care beyond the boundaries of moral philosophy towards social and political demands for non-exploitative gender and care arrangements. It also raises theoretical and conceptual questions, however. Since the exploitation of women *qua* carers clearly is an issue of distributive justice, can an ethic of care which is defined *in contradistinction* to an ethic of justice do justice to the problem? If it cannot—and Noddings' version clearly fails this test (Noddings 1984, Bubeck 1995)—how is justice to be discussed within the ethic of care?

Different authors give different answers. Held sees justice as a skeletal moral minimum that has to be fleshed out by the values of care (Held 1993). Tronto, Friedman and Clement call for justice as a necessary corrective to care (Tronto 1993, Friedman 1987 and 1993, Clement 1996). More specifically, Clement argues for autonomy as the value that

will counteract women's uncritical acceptance of their caring roles and enable feminists to reject exploitative versions of the ethic of care (Clement 1996). By contrast, I have argued that only some considerations of justice can be integrated into the ethic of care, whilst others, notably the concern with exploitation, jar with the basic commitments of a care perspective (Bubeck 1995).

The problem of exploitation is, thus, an important 'litmus test' for those feminists who want to defend the ethic of care whilst rejecting unacceptable versions of it (such as Noddings'). 'Acceptable' versions may, more weakly, steer clear of the exploitation problem (for example Clement 1996), or, more strongly, deal with it explicitly and constructively and as part of a wider normative theory covering both moral and political questions (e.g. Tronto 1993, Bubeck 1995).

The third problem deriving from the oppressive condition under which care takes place might be called the problem of distortion. Both Card and Hoagland have argued that care under oppressive conditions must be corrupted by them in that the practice, values and virtues of care will reflect the constraints imposed by such conditions. Hence any theorisation of care which does not explicitly take this context into account will paint a distorted picture of care and the ethic of care as well.

Three examples of actual or at least possible distortion may illustrate the point. The first and most obvious example is the stereotype of women as selfless, self-sacrificing carers: self-denial is clearly a disposition that serves others and keeps women in their subordinate place. Since it is so obviously distorted and oppressive, none of the contemporary care theorists have endorsed the 'virtue' of self-denial as part of their theories.

A second example is Noddings' overemphasis on the value of maintaining relationships in the theorisation of care: according to her, the leaving of any relationship, even if abusive, is evidence of an 'ethically diminished ideal' (Noddings 1984, pp. 113ff.). As Card points out, however, given their material dependence on men, women's evaluation of their relationships with and care for men will be distorted such that they find it hard to leave abusive relationships (Card 1995, cf. Hoagland 1991).

A third example may be Ruddick's endorsement of the virtues of cheerfulness and humility as part of maternal practice (Ruddick 1989):

Bowden has argued that this endorsement is a reflection not so much of the practice of mothering *per se*, but of the isolated conditions under which women have to mother (Bowden 1997, ch. 1).

Given this problem of a practice distorted by oppression, the rejection of its theorisation can be based on two different arguments. First, one might argue that the theorisation of a distorted practice is simply not desirable. This argument, however, has no further comeback to the response that what ought to be theorised is the practice itself, without its distortions. The second, more sophisticated argument, then, is based on the doubt that the distortions can be distinguished from the 'real' or ideal, undistorted practice. Hence feminists wanting to defend the possibility of an ethic of care have to address this second argument by defending the possibility of the distinction between distorted and undistorted care. As part of their defence, they may seek to answer two questions: first, what are the distortions that oppressive conditions introduce and, second, are there examples of care under non-oppressive conditions that can be used as models for theorising?

Both enquiries are problematic. Suppose, regarding the first enquiry, that we discount those virtues or values that can clearly be seen to derive from oppressive conditions, such as the humility and cheerfulness of Ruddick's 'mothering persons' (Ruddick 1989). However, are humility and cheerfulness in the face of uncontrollable circumstances not examples of more general virtues which will remain important even under non-oppressive circumstances, since there will always be circumstances beyond our control?

Against Bowden's critique of these virtues, it might be argued that oppressive circumstances merely exacerbate their importance, but do not give them the status of virtues which they would not have had under non-oppressive circumstances. Similarly, most feminists would want to assert the value of developing and maintaining caring relationships, but probably not to the extreme degree that Noddings does. Hence the attempt to point to distortions is itself open to dispute.

The second enquiry does not fare much better, since there is at least a question whether there are any instances of care that escape distortion. It might be thought that friendships, or lesbian relationships, cannot be distorted, since they are both obvious candidates for egalitarian relationships and are, moreover, entered into voluntarily. However,

as becomes clear in Hoagland's *Lesbian Ethics* (1988), even lesbian relationships may be distorted, since they are invariably entered into by women whose moral character is shaped by their social circumstance. In fact, a fair amount of Hoagland's argument is devoted to identifying such distorted characteristics so that genuine moral agency can develop between lesbians. Lesbian moral agency, according to Hoagland, cannot be taken for granted, but has to be achieved (Hoagland 1988), and a parallel argument might be made about friendship. Even in these relationships, then, there can be no insulation from the distorted baggage women bring with them, hence they cannot be used by the care theorist as examples of undistorted care.

The problem of distortion, in other words, implies that there are no pockets of non-distorted caring to be found, and hence that the theorisation of undistorted care can only ever be guesswork. However, apart from Card and Hoagland, and to some extent Bowden, care theorists have not been very aware of this problem, preferring instead to get on with theorising care in various ways in the first place. This is not surprising, since the problem of distortion will be difficult to notice for somebody whose project is to recover care and to develop a new care-based approach in moral theory. Of course, the care theorist will admit that not all care is as good as it should be—and this admission is relatively easy to make—but she will not necessarily have thought about the ways in which the very care that she wants to celebrate may be systematically distorted by gender distinctions and oppression: the enthusiasm of theorising care works very much against such reflection.

A problem related to the above three problems, but deriving from the fact that other forms of oppression characterise the social context of care, is the problem of the potential multiplicity of caring practices amongst different groups of women, as well as the problems created for caring by structures of oppression between groups of women. The recognition of various 'differences'—based on race/ethnicity, class, sexuality—and the resulting challenge to any general theorisation of care is something about which care theorists have not been very forthcoming. Apart from the occasional acknowledgement of such differences, care theorists have not taken the matter much further, since their interest usually lies in a general theory of care. Indeed, the focus away from a distorting social context towards ideal forms of care (as discussed above),

suggests that such differences and failures to care are part of the distortions of care which need to be discounted in the search for 'care as such', in abstraction from accidental variations and distortions.

Not surprisingly, only Hekman seems to have the theoretical instruments for dealing with the challenge of difference by devising a much more fragmented theory that owes more to postmodern thought than to care theory (Hekman 1995, but see Tronto 1993 for a care-based attempt to endorse difference). However, the price of such an approach, it seems, is the complete lack of substantive theorisation of care. In postulating multiple moral voices and selves constituted by multiple moral discourses, Hekman does not focus on care at all, but instead on the relation between moral voice and the self, and thus ultimately, in Foucauldian terminology, on the construction of the subject rather than ethics. The questions raised by the last two problems of distortion and difference, therefore, revolve ultimately around the same issue, that is, whether the care theorist should take actual or ideal care as the paradigm for her theory. Whilst the problem of distortion points towards a theorisation of ideal care, the problem of difference, much as the problems of exploitation and oppressive association, highlights the importance of taking actual care into account as well.

In sum, of the three problems deriving from the gendered social context of care, the first two are relatively easy to deal with. It is the explicit questioning of the link between women's gendered identity and care that allows feminists to argue against the naturalised and oppressive identification of women with care, whilst the problem of exploitation can be met by acknowledging the need for some considerations of justice in a feminist ethic of care and by calling for social justice for women in the social distribution and organisation of care.

The problem of the distortion of care is much more difficult to take account of, and has mostly been neglected by care theorists. It is here that, it seems to me, a lot more critical and reconstructive work will have to be done by care theorists in order to meet the challenge that their theories are corrupted by the oppressive conditions under which care takes place.

It is only the most obvious kinds of distortion of care that have been discussed, such as self-sacrificing or self-denying forms of care, and the subservience and misplaced gratitude of caring women towards

cared-for men, but the strongest and most astute critics have either chosen to reject care theory as an approach (Card), or have developed a moral theory that applies explicitly only to a small group of women who appear to be best placed to escape gendered distortions, i.e. lesbians (Hoagland). Bowden's criticism of Ruddick remains non-consequential because she fails to discuss this criticism as a more general problem for care theory. Lastly, the related problem of differences between women poses a further challenge reversely related to the problem of distortion. There is, therefore, a crucial issue in, and considerable further work to be done on, the question of what kind of care to theorise in the first place.

Despite these difficulties, the appeal of choosing the second horn of the dilemma is considerable. As the vast care literature indicates, care has turned out to have an enormous theoretical potential as well as resonance with many women, whether care theorists or not. Thus Ruddick's question about whether there was thought in mothering—and by extension, in care—was answered positively by the numerous theorists who embarked upon the exploration and formulation of specific conceptions of care and versions of the ethic of care, as well as by those who could see their own practice captured in those conceptions.

Of course, the enthusiasm generated by care theory can be discounted by those critical of it as a form of 'false consciousness'. It seems to me, however, that this would be too easy and superficial a response to what has been a theoretical development hitherto unprecedented in second-wave feminism, and one that is rivalled only by the advent of postmodernist theory. That very fact must surely mean something about the validity of the project of theorising care, even if it has its problems. In the next section, I turn to the 'care-versus-justice' debate that has been central to care theory.

III) Care Versus Justice

Gilligan's introduction of the 'different voice' of care marked the development of the subsequent discussion by setting up a categorical distinction between the ethic of care and the ethic of justice and rights (Gilligan 1982). Gilligan interpreted this distinction as pertaining both to formal and substantive characteristics: formally, the ethic of care was

contextualised, partial, and particular where the ethic of justice was principled, impartial and universal; with respect to their content, the ethic of care focused on care, responsibility and relationships, where the ethic of justice was about justice, rights and autonomy.

Most of the initial philosophical discussion focused on the formal characteristics, interpreting the two ethics as two moral approaches, perspectives or frameworks with mutually exclusive characteristics. Some contributors to this discussion played down its novelty by reducing it to problems that had been discussed before in moral philosophy (e.g. Sher 1987), whilst others were keener on exploring the differences, points of contention, and the question of the possible compatibility between the two perspectives (see Kittay and Meyers 1987, Hanen and Nielsen 1987, Larrabee 1993, Held 1995).

Aristotle, Hume or the Scottish Enlightenment were referred to, although not uncritically, as possible theoretical models for the new alternative care perspective (Tronto 1993 and Bubeck 1995, Baier 1987b and 1994, and Tronto 1993, respectively). In its focus on formal contrasts, the care/justice discussion converged with the critique of the impartial and universalist neo-Kantian and utilitarian approaches that had held sway in contemporary moral and political philosophy.

Care theorists took on some of the above criticisms (Friedman 1993, Tronto 1993, Baier 1994), and contributed to the revival of virtue theory and a focus on moral character as an alternative approach (Card 1991 and 1995, Tronto 1993). They also explored new avenues, however, such as new moral epistemologies that relied less on abstract reason, incorporated moral emotions and provided a way of making sense of women's different moral experiences (e.g. Ruddick 1989, Held 1993, Walker 1995).

An important part of feminist argument consisted in the development of points of critique of the ethic of justice. What was under critique was its focus on principles; its insistence on universalizability as the criterion of the moral; its preoccupation with impartiality and its related inability to make sense of the morality of personal, close relationships; its failure to give an account of obligations and responsibilities which are not chosen but are nevertheless a source of moral value and motivation; and last, but not least, its silence about care and the moral experience of women (e.g. Baier 1987a, Held 1987, Blum 1993). Most

critics, however, were careful not to conclude that care as an alternative framework could, as it were, cover the whole of morality: they usually stressed that justice in some form is also needed (e.g. Friedman 1987, also Friedman 1993).

There is, in this early discussion, some confusion over the level at which care and justice are discussed. The opposition between care and justice is usually represented as formal, i.e. as relating to the way moral issues are thought about and moral value is derived. However, the insistence on the need for justice within an ethic of care calls for justice not as a perspective, but as a moral value that retains importance. Thus, calls for the integration of some element of justice move to the content level: justice is now discussed not as an approach, but as a valid moral value which has to be retained in a care perspective.

As mentioned above, this confusion goes back to Gilligan, who herself discusses the ethic of care in terms of both formal and substantial contrasts with the ethic of justice (Gilligan 1982). Gilligan's later introduction of the concept of a '*Gestalt*' from the psychology of perception to characterise care and justice as two different perspectives or frameworks continues this conflation, although it clearly stresses differences in substantive interpretation of justice and care from the two different perspectives (Gilligan 1987).

Thus there are two very different types of argument. At the formal level, the two perspectives, frameworks or approaches to morality are pitted against each other and are often argued to be incompatible, fundamentally opposed and mutually exclusive. At the substantive or content level, however, it is much less clear why care and justice as two different values or moral considerations would be thus incompatible, rather than just being two aspects that people take into consideration when evaluating moral questions.

The feminist critique of 'justice', then, is two-fold: first, at the formal level, it is a critique mainly of Kantian and utilitarian impartialism and, secondly, at the content level, it is a critique of the relegation of personalised relationships and their morality, and thus of the relegation of care as a moral value and of women's moral experience, to the margins of moral theory.

The typical impartialist response to these criticisms is to argue that care (as a substantive value or moral motivation) can easily be

integrated into the justice framework, whilst criticising care as a framework for being parochial and not universalist enough (e.g. Barry 1995, for a critique of Barry see Bubeck 1998a). Thus, as Jaggar has pointed out, impartialist attempts at integration treat care in the same way that domestic work was treated in political economy: 'despite its indispensability, its contribution to the larger economy is disregarded or marginalized' (Jaggar 1995, p. 87).

If the question of 'care versus justice' is thus 'disaggregated', the discussion at the formal level has arguably run its course and also displayed certain weaknesses. Thus there are undeniably differences between care and justice as moral perspectives, but the differences have tended to be overemphasised through oppositional contrasts and implausible stereotypes of the perspective that is criticised. Such tendencies can be found in both the care and the justice camps. The effect of such oppositional discussion in feminist care theorists is that justice continues to be thought of in oppositional terms not only at the formal level, from which it derives, but also at the substantive level. Unfortunately, this makes for an implausible theorisation of care.

At the formal level, principles are often rejected, although it is not clear whether principles are rejected as such, or only insofar as they are used inflexibly and without regard to context in moral decision making. Only strong particularists would reject the possibility of generalisation and thus the possibility of principles altogether. All other theorists may still endorse principles as part of an ethic of care, as Aristotelian-type generalisations, for example, or as rules of thumb. The relevant question in this latter position, however, is not *whether* an ethic should be principled, but *what role* principles should play in an ethic.

Similarly, at the substantive level, many care theorists have given justice an antagonistic role in relation to care whilst calling for its integration into the care perspective. Thus, for example, both Held and Tronto call for justice as a necessary corrective to what they think are dangers of parochiality and capriciousness in care (Tronto 1993, pp. 170f; Held 1993, pp. 75ff respectively). However, justice might be seen as much more organically integrated into a care perspective, in so far as considerations of justice form part of the kind of thinking that arises from the practice of care. For example, the idea that those in need are entitled to the care they need, or that equal needs should be responded

to equally, would seem to belong quite obviously and non-antagonistically in a care ethic, even though these are clearly considerations of justice (cf. Bubeck 1995, ch. 5; see also Held's much less oppositional discussion of the 'moral law' as a 'moral minimum': Held 1993, p. 38). Again, what is at issue is not so much *whether* justice can be integrated into a care perspective, but *how* it is to be integrated.

In answers to this latter question, the 'oppositional model' has unfortunately had too strong a hold on theorists' minds. This is not to say, of course, that justice and care may not conflict—as other values may conflict under certain circumstances. I am suggesting, however, that it should not be assumed that these values necessarily do conflict, and that we need to investigate in more detail where and how they may be in conflict. The most fruitful avenues for discussing care in relation to justice, therefore, seem to me to lie at the substantive level, especially once the assumption of an antagonistic relation between care and justice is forsaken.

More generally, the project of the ethic of care, especially if it is thought of as a new moral perspective and competitor amongst other perspectives in the field of morality, forces its theorists to think not just about the relation between care and justice, but about the place of care in relation to other values such as autonomy, liberty, equality, privacy and the like. Similarly, at the more formal level, care theorists need to discuss the ethic of care in relation to other non-principled types of moral framework, such as virtue ethics or moral particularism, as well as with respect to meta-ethical approaches such as naturalism.

Future work in these areas would contribute significantly to further progress in the specification of the various theoretical possibilities and moves within the ethic of care discussion. Such work would free us from the both narrow and confused focus on care *versus* justice.

IV) Moral Dangers

The problems associated with care as an ethic can be divided into those deriving from the social context in which care takes place—specifically the sexual division of labour—and inherent ones, that is problems which derive from the characteristics of care as an activity or practice. I have addressed the former kind of problems in section II. In this section, I

want to focus on the latter type of problems, which I shall call the moral dangers in care (cf. Tronto 1993, p. 170). The two types of problems are not necessarily unrelated, nor even easily divided into these two categories, as the following example will make clear.

It might be thought that it is the oppressive ideal of selflessness and self-denial that underlies women's exploitation as carers, and there is no doubt that this ideal contributes to their exploitation. Care, however, is an inherently 'other'-directed activity and a response to perceived need in others. Hence there is a danger of carers exhausting themselves, even 'losing' themselves, by responding too much to others. This danger becomes a certainty under oppressive, exploitative circumstances, but arguably exists at least as a danger even without them.

The danger of self-loss, in other words, is inherent in the practice of care. Now it might be objected that this danger only arises in persons whose self is somehow damaged already, since they would otherwise not let themselves get to the point of complete exhaustion, burn-out, or self-loss. After all, carers are able, at least in principle, to choose freely when to stop caring for others and to take care of their own needs instead. However, there is reason to think that self-loss is an existential danger for any person living with and relating to others, witness Kierkegaard:

The biggest danger, that of losing oneself, can pass off in the world as quietly as if it were nothing; every other loss, an arm, a leg, five dollars, a wife (*sic*), etc. is bound to be noticed (quoted in Hampton 1993, p. 135).

Because care is essentially other-directed and responsive to others, care exposes people to just this danger of losing themselves in relation to others and of not even noticing. (Love does, too: some things we do just are risky in certain ways.) By contrast, self-interested actions or practices expose people to the converse danger, that is, to the loss of the other and of meaningful relations to others. An ethic of care, therefore, has to address the danger built into the practice it is based on. One way it can do so is by integrating considerations or values which will allow carers to strike the right balance between caring for others and for themselves.

It is not immediately obvious what the value counteracting the danger of self-loss might be. Is it a healthy selfishness, as Nietzsche thought? Is it equality, which implies the equal validity of one's own needs, as Gilligan suggests in her conception of the mature stage of the ethic of

care (Gilligan 1982)? Is it autonomy, as Clement argues (Clement 1995)? Or self-authorship (Hampton 1993)? Or is it even the ideal of caring itself, which implies the need to maintain our own spirits as carers (Noddings 1984)? The last suggestion, although entirely possible in an ethic of care, is relatively unattractive because it reduces the moral realm to care and care alone (which is what Noddings tends to do in her version of the ethic of care). More importantly, the suggestion is implausible because it suggests that the self is only worth looking after in so far as it serves the ideal of care.

I also take it that most ethic of care theorists would not want to side with Nietzschean selfishness, but it is not clear which of the other suggestions is most attractive. Equality—a value usually assumed to be part of the 'justice' rather than the 'care' family of values—might be an interesting choice in so far as it forces care theorists to think about how equality could be integrated into the ethic of care. Autonomy and self-authorship (which, in Hampton's discussion, is a kind of autonomy), do, however, seem equally plausible candidates, though they may not be quite as theoretically challenging as equality.

What all of these suggestions, except Noddings', have in common, is that they force care theorists to look beyond the theorisation of care itself, and to reach back into a much wider moral realm populated by values extraneous to, or at any rate not directly deriving from, care itself. Other moral dangers in care point in a similar direction. They also raise a question about whether and to what extent a danger deriving from care can be responded to theoretically by a particular conception of care, and how much the response takes one outside care itself.

Take the much more often discussed question of parochialism, that is the question of whether care is too restricted in its scope because it is mostly given on the basis of already existing relationships. Whether this is a moral danger of care, rather than a deformation of the practice of care, depends on one's conception of the link between particular relationships and care.

If the particularity of care is stressed through a definition of care which links it to particular relationships, there clearly is a danger that carers will not feel called to respond to those to whom they do not have some kind of relationship (see Noddings 1984). By contrast, if care is defined as the meeting of needs, care is not necessarily confined to

existing relationships and can, at least in principle, be extended to anybody (see Bubeck 1995). In this case, parochiality is not a danger inherent in care, but a failure of moral sensitivity which causes a failure to care where one should care. However, if care were defined as particular—hence if parochialism were indeed a danger inherent in care, thus conceived—care theorists would need to integrate notions of equality, impartiality or democracy into their version of the ethic of care (e.g. Tronto 1993, pp. 170-72).

Other moral dangers have been discussed relatively little, but deserve a lot more attention. There are problems with the boundaries between carer and cared-for, in that the very nature of care as a response to need in others harbours the danger that carers rush in and take over for the other, attempting to solve the cared-for's problems for them where it might be more appropriate to let the cared-for find solutions in their own time and at their own cost. Again it is not clear whether this is a question of good care itself, or whether it is a question of respect for the cared-for, of privacy or of liberty. A similar danger is the carer's possible inattention to the cared-for's own conception of her needs if this conception conflicts with that of the carer. Is this a danger inherent in care, and how is such 'maternalism' best avoided?

Some care theorists would claim that attentiveness as a virtue implies attention not only to the needs of those cared for, but also to their views about these needs, hence would argue that this danger can be 'taken care of' with the resources of care theory itself. Other theorists are more suspicious and want to insist on the 'democratisation' of care (Tronto 1993, p. 171), or on the rights of those cared-for, be it a right to their own voice or simply a liberty-right to be respected in their beliefs, choices and decisions. (Democratic and rights conceptions, however, run into problems if those taken care of fail to be fully able to express their wishes and act on their choices, as is the case, for example, with frail or confused elderly people or children. These problems of unexpressed needs and wishes are ones that care theory can deal with much more easily because it focuses on the response to perceived need, whether this is expressed or not.)

The list of moral dangers inherent in the practice of care could, no doubt, be extended—the abuse of power by the carer is an obvious further example—and clearly much more discussion is needed of any of

these dangers as well as of the best theoretical response to them. I have, however, suggested the following three points in this section. First, there are dangers inherent in the practice of care, and these need to be taken seriously by care theorists. Second, care theorists might disagree over whether these dangers derive from care itself, and such disagreement is based on different conceptions of care. Third, care theorists will consequently disagree over whether the dangers can be appropriately responded to with the resources of care theory itself, or whether other values have to be integrated into the ethic of care to do so. In addressing these dangers, however, most care theorists will be led to a much richer discussion of care in relation to other moral values.

V) The Ethic of Care, Politics and The Public Sphere

One of the interesting questions thrown up by the ethic of care discussion is the possibility of using the care perspective to rethink politics and the values that should govern the public sphere, institutions and politics. Ruddick's work on maternal thinking was groundbreaking in this respect: she uses her conception of mothering and maternal thinking to imagine how women would participate in, and think differently about, politics and political issues (Ruddick 1989, Part III). Specifically, her interest lies in peace politics and the development of an approach to conflict solution that is different to both the legitimization of defensive wars in just war theory, on one hand, and the 'realist' acceptance of any form of conflict, including war, on the other (cf. also Noddings 1989, ch. 7 and Held 1993, ch. 7).

Coming from a civic republican tradition, Dietz has questioned the validity of Ruddick's theoretical move from mothering and maternal thinking to politics and political theory on the grounds that mothers do very different things than citizens, and operate according to correspondingly different values and standards (Dietz 1985). What motivates her argument ultimately is a categorical distinction between the public and private sphere—a distinction which civic republican thinkers have defended in the past (see Arendt 1958), and which, if valid, would render any translation between the two spheres inconceivable. Feminists have, of course, criticised just that distinction (see Okin 1991), but, in this

instance, it seems to me, the *onus probandi* does lie on those who want to make the translation to show that it is possible and fruitful to make it.

There are at least four ways in which such a translation from the private practice of care into the public sphere of politics can be made. First, and least controversially, private concerns can be translated into public and/or political ones. Thus, concerns about the meeting of needs, which any carer typically has, can be transformed into more general concerns with the social distribution of care and the meeting of needs by the welfare state which may be voiced in public and political discussion (Friedman 1987, Bubeck 1995).

Second, privately held values can become public ones, such as a commitment to peace (Ruddick 1989), or a stress on the importance of meeting needs (Tronto 1993, p. 168; Clement 1996, ch. 5). Third, the private virtues of carers may be argued to be important also in citizens' interactions with each other. Thus, for example, Tronto has pointed out that attentiveness to others, especially to their difference or diversity, has an important role in political discussion and decision-making, and a similar argument might be made for the ability to negotiate conflicting needs or the ability to respond creatively to seemingly irresolvable problems.

Fourth, private perspectives, derived from private practices, may be translated into public and political ones—a claim most prominently (and now rather unpopularly) made by feminist standpoint theorists (e.g. Ruddick 1989, pp. 127ff). Hence whether and what kind of translation from private care to public action is valid surely must be argued case by case rather than categorically. Ruddick's and Tronto's very divergent work provides a good illustration of, and also a good case for making, such creative moves, even if the details of their translations are arguable.

The more specific discussion of citizenship provides an interesting point of convergence for a variety of developments in moral and political theory (cf. Kymlicka and Norman 1994; Bowden 1997, ch. 4; and Bubeck 1998b). Thus the recent interest in notions of citizenship in political theory has allowed concerns with citizens' virtues to enter the fray. Where political theory after Rawls' *Theory of Justice* (1972) was preoccupied with the justice of the state in its institutions and (re)distributive role, attention has now shifted onto citizens as political subjects and agents. This new focus has generated new questions about

citizens, such as what virtues citizens should have in interaction with each other as well as in their role as participants in public deliberation and action.

The answer to this question has mostly been discussed in the civic republican tradition, but liberal political theorists have made their entry into this debate (Galston 1991, Macedo 1992), and there is, in principle, no reason why care theorists should not contribute translations of the virtues required in care, provided these virtues can be given a meaningful interpretation in a sphere for which they were not originally developed. As I pointed out above, 'attentiveness' may be an important virtue that care theorists can contribute. Alternatively formulated and extended, the ability to listen and engage in constructive discussion with others may be an important virtue that can initially be learnt in caring relationships with others, but can then be extended to the more impersonal relationships of the public sphere. The recent revival of interest in virtue ethics in moral philosophy more generally is similarly pertinent in the discussion of citizenship. It can provide a more systematic and general account of virtue and a virtue-based approach and thus inform the discussion of citizens' virtues.

A last meeting point around citizenship, more tentative and unlikely perhaps, but possibly the most interesting, might be seen to emerge between these recent developments in the analytical Anglo-American political and moral philosophy, on the one hand, and the discussion of agonistic forms of democracy by postmodern political theorists, inspired by both Nietzsche and the late Foucault, on the other (e.g. Connolly 1991 and Owen 1995). What these otherwise very divergent and seemingly incompatible strands of philosophy share in common in this instance is their interest in the citizen as primarily an ethical subject and agent and, more generally, the use of an ethical, virtue-based approach to think about politics. Thus, both strands are interested in the interactions between citizens, including their role in keeping democratic political institutions alive. Agonistic conceptions of democracy, however, usually stress the need in citizens to compete with and contest each other in their assertion of themselves, their identities and their conceptions of the good (Owen 1995, ch. 6; Connolly 1991, ch. 6). They also base their discussion on a conception of ethics as the care of the self, suggested by the late Foucault who was, in his turn, influenced by the

Nietzschean idea of self-creation and self-overcoming as the basic concern of ethics (e.g. Foucault 1996).

The ethics which is to inform citizens' actions and interactions is, therefore, conceived very differently by the two different strands of theory, and the contrast is particularly acute between ethic of care theorists' stress on caring for others in need and agonistic theorists' stress on strife and competition in citizens' efforts to interact primarily as self-creators. Hence despite their shared ethical interest, it is hard to see what meeting ground, or even common language, there may be between agonistic and care theorists. Both, however, lay claim to the same terrain, particularly the theorisation of politics as informed by differences between citizens (esp. Connolly 1991 and Tronto 1993).

It is tempting to call for a synthesis of these two approaches to difference, and for a politics informed by both the 'pathos of distance' (Connolly 1991) and the sympathetic 'engrossment' into the lives of others (Noddings 1984). I shall, however, resist the temptation, and instead simply suggest that such a theoretical encounter might produce fascinating results.

The extension of care theory into political theory and philosophy thus promises to be both interesting and creative. Whilst I can only indicate possible areas of discussion here, it seems to me that this is one of the areas where further engagement could be truly innovative.

VI) Conclusion

Throughout my review of the ethic of care, its discussion and issues arising from it, I have emphasised new perspectives and questions and suggested new avenues for further work and discussion. It is a mark of maturity in a discussion if the initial seemingly straightforward arguments and positions come to appear obviously simplistic. The ethic of care discussion has clearly reached this point of maturity. Whilst some moral theorists might feel inclined to move on to new areas, it is to be hoped that others will stay on a bit longer and tackle some of the more difficult and challenging questions I have tried to ask in this review.

Last, but not least, it might be appropriate to revisit the question whether the ethic of care project is a feminist one. The answer, it seems to me, is clearly that it is, as long as the social context of care is

sufficiently taken into account. Care theory is feminist in so far as it reclaims and revalues a practice that has been, and continues to be, women's practice. It should also be obvious from my discussion of the difference dilemma in Section II, however, that many feminists will disagree about its desirability, and that some will be critical enough to search for a feminist approach to ethics in other directions and areas. Even so, the sheer volume of the ethic of care discussion and the enthusiasm it generated among philosophers and feminist theorists—and women in general—should give pause to any feminist thus inclined. It is certainly worth reflecting further on the possible merits of such an ethic.

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BOOK REVIEWS

Excitable Speech: A Politics of the Performative

Judith Butler, Routledge 1997

h/b £40.00 0 415 91587 2, p/b £12.99 0 415 91588 0

Words can be dangerous; they can be used as a sword that wounds. The current political climate in the US exhibits an increased sensitivity to the power of words and other forms of expression—witness the recent attempts to curb funds for homoerotic art, feminist campaigns against pornography, and the 'don't ask, don't tell' policy of the US military.

American battles over words, including the (in)famous PC wars, are in part motivated by the particularities of the US legal system and Bill of Rights. The first amendment of the American Constitution protects free speech, which includes words that may cause offence. The Supreme Court has been turned into a panel of judges who 'legislate' by engaging in hermeneutical exercises. It is not surprising that the interpretation of words is a sensitive topic in the US.

In her recent book, *Excitable Speech*, Judith Butler provides a lucid analysis of the current linguistic wars. She discusses several ways in which language is said to wound. These include hate speech, pornography, and the recent changes of policy towards homosexuals in the military. Butler argues that legislation against injurious speech acts cannot help those minorities that are vilified by these acts. This conclusion, as Butler acknowledges, is not original. Her reasons for reaching it, however, depend on a powerful and innovative account of language and agency. Although the topics she specifically addresses might seem mainly relevant to the American situation, her account of language is not limited to these parochial boundaries.

Butler holds that we are, in a fundamental sense, vulnerable to words. Our very existence depends on being the kind of being that can be addressed in language. Linguistic violence, therefore, can thwart survival. Butler argues, however, that the current turn to language betrays deep-seated misunderstandings of how linguistic violence works.

Ironically for Butler, the turn to language she warns us against is sustained by performative accounts of language. For instance, as Butler herself points out, Catharine MacKinnon's campaign against pornography relies on taking pornographic material as a performative speech act.

In this instance the performative is taken as a 'doing'; it is treated as an example of discriminatory conduct. Pornography would not merely encourage the vilification of women, it would enact it. Similar arguments have been provided for the claim that racial slurs and other instances of 'hate speech' are themselves injurious conduct rather than simply an incitement to commit injurious acts.

These accounts, as Butler points out, seem to assume that speech acts of this sort are incapable of failure. The utterance itself is the realisation of the intended effect. These speech acts cannot be null and void. They must be banned. In this manner, performative accounts such as those described above tend to lose sight of the institutional contexts that enable hateful speech. First, such explanations invest speakers with complete responsibility for their speech acts. Since nothing besides the utterance would be needed for discrimination to occur, the responsibility for the injustice lies entirely with the speaker. What remains hidden from sight is that hate speech is efficacious only in given contexts. It thus becomes impossible to investigate the responsibility of the State in keeping hate speech alive. By the same token, it thus becomes possible to consider the State as a neutral adjudicator between individuals who hurt, and who are hurt, with words. Second, Butler argues, these performative accounts encourage a reduction of all injuries to injuries produced in language. Once our attention has been diverted from those institutional structures that sustain discriminatory practices, it is easy to fall prey to the view that the cause of discrimination lies squarely with discriminatory speech and those who utter it.

Those performative accounts that Butler rejects invest language with magical powers to bring about what it names. Paradoxically, they achieve this aim by conceiving language as action, by denying its linguistic nature. In their place, Butler proposes a different account of how performative language works. She uses Austin's distinction between illocutionary and perlocutionary aspects of performatives to illustrate her position. For Butler, the magical view of language relies on an illocutionary reading of performatives. According to this reading, words perform the very act they enunciate. 'I promise' would be an example of such a speech act. Instead, Butler suggests we provide a perlocutionary account of hate speech. Speech acts bring about effects; they do not necessarily enact them.

Unfortunately, on this point the use of Austinian terminology is not helpful. It is nearly impossible within that framework to reject the view that meaning is a matter of the speaker's intentions. Furthermore, Butler's reading of the perlocutionary dimension of speech acts suggests a causal view of language as a tool that brings about further effects. In other words, the framework she adopts from Austin forces Butler to oscillate between a voluntaristic and a determinist account of how language functions as an intervention. This is the same oscillation which was in evidence in her account of gender in her book, *Gender Trouble*, in which, I believe, Butler adopted what she would now call an 'illocutionary' reading of performatives.

However, in *Excitable Speech*, Butler gives a powerful account of the links between language, agency, and freedom. In my opinion, the fulcrum of her views is the Hegelian view that freedom requires constraint by norms. Freedom is incompatible with total lack of constraint; hence, voluntaristic views are mistaken. However, the sort of constraint that makes freedom possible is not causal; it is normative. Thus, determinism is avoided. Of course, Butler does not use the words 'freedom' or 'positive liberty'. Nevertheless, when one substitutes these words with the term 'agency', what one gets is roughly Butler's account. For her, agency is enabled by norms that make some options possible in virtue of eliminating others. Language is the embodiment of this normative dimension of our lives. Finally, performatives are the way in which norms are re-enforced and changed or subverted through and in language. This is indeed a powerful picture of the centrality of language to human life and politics.

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The Psychic Life of Power: Theories in Subjection

Judith Butler, Stanford University Press, Stanford, California, 1997,
h/b £27.95 0 8047 2811 9, p/b £9.95 0 8047 2812 7

The Psychic Life of Power is Judith Butler's fifth and most recent book. It contains a series of essays, some previously published, others new, that engage with debates in philosophy and psychoanalysis over the status of the subject. In this respect, although not focusing explicitly on questions of gender, *The Psychic Life of Power* continues to amplify some of the key

themes of both *Gender Trouble* (1990) and *Bodies That Matter* (1993). In contrast to these earlier works, however, this recent book focuses more explicitly on the possible intersections between, on the one hand, psychoanalysis (of a mainly Freudian kind) and, on the other, power and politics. It sets itself the task of both exploring the creative possibilities of this encounter for our understanding of subjectivity while attending to its tensions.

One of the main concerns of the book is the so-called 'paradox of power' bequeathed by the likes of Foucauldian theory. (See ch. 3.) As Butler puts it in her opening pages:

To be dominated by a power external to oneself is a familiar and agonizing form power takes. To find, however, that what 'one' is, one's very formation as a subject, is in some sense dependent upon that very power is quite another (1-2).

How, Butler wants to know, can we make sense of this process of subjection? And, if subjection requires our subordination or submission, then, what does this say about our psychic state? How is it that we form 'passionate attachments' to our continued and repeated subjection to power? In responding to these questions, Butler investigates the 'tropological' status of subjection. Tropological is used in two senses: first, to highlight the kind of 'turn' necessary to subject-formation; second, to refer to the use of tropes in discussions of the subject.

Examining various aspects of the work of Hegel, Foucault, Nietzsche, Freud and Althusser, Butler discerns a common thread—a sort of circularity in their individual accounts of subject formation—that requires elucidation. Each account relies, according to Butler's interpretation, upon the figure of 'the turn' as a device for exposing the ways in which subjects become wedded to particular self-identities. There is no subject who actually makes the turn, since 'the turn' is itself in some sense constitutive of that very subject. Indeed 'the turn' is metaphorical. It stands, however, as the crucial moment in the generation of the subject. A good example of this is given in Butler's discussion of Althusser in chapter 4.

Althusser's account of interpellation relies upon a figural 'turn': the moment at which the individual, responding to the call of the police, turns to face the voice of the law. At that instant, the individual is sub-

jected: she or he becomes a subject. The 'turn', in Butler's sense, is, however, more than this moment of recognition. It refers both to the way in which power produces the subject (here through the process of interpellation), and to the way in which the subject absorbs the power by which it is inaugurated. '[T]he subject', she asserts, 'is the effect of power in recoil' (6). What does this mean? Butler's response is to argue that interpellation requires a prior theory of conscience. Something else is needed to explain why any particular individual should recognise herself or himself as the addressee of the voice of the law. An account must be given of the subject's assumption of 'guilt'.

Through a discussion of the role of unhappy consciousness in Hegel (ch. 1), conscience in Nietzsche and Freud (ch. 2), guilt in Althusser (ch. 4) and melancholia in Freud (chs 5 and 6), Butler develops an account of the formation of the 'passionate attachments' that subjects develop to their subjection. Although having different qualities and forms, in each instance a drive or a desire is turned back upon itself. This has the effect of producing a psychic habit of self-criticism or beratement that comes to be reinforced as conscience (or guilt etcetera). In the case of Nietzsche, it is this process that generates the capacity for reflexivity in the subject. Reflexivity, in turn, becomes the mode in which desire is brought to the attention of the conscience. What Butler calls the 'doubling back' of desire produces, in itself, an attachment to subjection through the production of that very desire for reflexivity that subordinates the subject.

One of the difficulties with such a circular account of subjection is that it is difficult, if not impossible, to narrate. Grammar assumes already the very thing (the subject) whose origins it is there to explain. As such, subjection operates on a second level as a tropology: as a figure of speech.

Importantly, one of Butler's achievements is to undermine any necessary separation between the psychic and the social. The 'turn', fundamental to subjection, is itself regarded as producing the difference between the internal sphere (the psyche) and the external world of the social. There is no ontological distinction between them. The social is implicated in the formation of psychic space, just as the psychic reinforces the social. This is exemplified very neatly in Butler's final chapter. Here Butler considers the psychic states of 'melancholy', 'ambivalence'

and 'rage', and contests Freud's claim that melancholy is a purely psychogenic phenomenon. Butler argues, instead, that the social itself demarcates the kinds of losses that can be grieved. It is thus instrumental in determining the parameters of melancholia in which certain expressions of grief are foreclosed.

It is in the more explicit discussions of the connections between the psychic and the social that we get a glimpse of the political implications of Butler's analysis. While she drops the occasional hint about post-liberation politics and post-liberation subjectivity, little is offered in the way of a sketch of what either of these might look like. Indeed, with the exception of chapter 5, where she flags the issue of how to grieve publicly for those who die from AIDS—particularly when many of those who die are precisely those for whom a particular kind of love is both socially, even psychologically, 'impossible'—contemporary political questions rarely figure. This is a pity. It would have been interesting to see the ways in which actual passionate attachments help to configure, not only the political itself, but also the kinds of political activity engaged in by those passionately attached to specific identities.

This is an insightful and important book. It is well worth the effort of reading.

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Body- and Image-Space: Re-reading Walter Benjamin

Sigrid Weigel, (trans.) Georgina Paul with Rachel McNicholl & Jeremy Gaines, Routledge 1996

h/b £40.00 0 415 10955 8, p/b £12.99 0 415 10956 6

Series: Warwick Studies in European Philosophy, (ed.) Andrew Benjamin

Relatively little is known—in the English speaking world—of the work of feminist writers in Germany and the German speaking world. The above publication is certainly a step towards making such work accessible to readers of English. Sigrid Weigel is 'one of Germany's leading feminist theorists and a renowned commentator on the work of Benjamin' (blurb on the back). The publication however, is not a translation of an already published book in German, but a compilation of

essays published separately and on different occasions over a period of time. The essays appear here in a book format for the first time.

Weigel's focus in *Body- and Image-Space* is on Benjamin's concept of *Aktualität*, which as the translators point out, is not easily translatable into English. '*Aktualität*' means more than 'actuality', more than 'real' and 'existing at the present moment'. It generally also implies topicality and contemporary relevance, even fashionable status. Weigel seeks to interpret Benjamin through his concept of *Aktualität*, as she seeks to demonstrate an affinity between Benjamin's thought and contemporary thought, especially French post-structuralist and feminist theory. Thus, the book includes short sections on Foucault and Kristeva, and shorter comments on Lacan, Irigaray and others. The book's mediated form of publication—in English translation—adds another dimension to *Aktualität*: the dimension of the Anglo-American mediator of 'the Franco-German relationship in philosophical discourse'. Weigel may well see this as part of *Aktualität*.

Partly because *Body- and Image-Space* was originally conceived as separate focused essays, it is not an introductory text. It does not function to introduce the work of Walter Benjamin, feminist philosophical issues, nor the work of German feminist writers. Weigel assumes her readers to be familiar not only with Benjamin's work and the work of the Frankfurt school, but also with a considerable range of French post-structuralist and feminist theory. The book is no doubt—as Andreas Huyssen points out—'a major contribution to historical scholarship and contemporary critical debates', and a 'must-read for anyone interested in Benjamin's *Aktualität* today'. However, it is a densely written book which would probably prove too difficult for most undergraduates. And yet, precisely because it is an edited collection of essays, individual chapters could be used to support undergraduate teaching.

Moreover, Weigel opens up a potentially interesting avenue for feminism's interest in Benjamin through her interpretation of 'body- and image-space'. In contrast to Christine Buci-Glucksmann's feminist interpretation of Benjamin in *Baroque Reason: The Aesthetics of Modernity* (trans Sage, 1994), Weigel does not suggest that Benjamin proposed a theory of femaleness. Neither does she interpret as utopian his dialectical images and those critical of progress. Her interest is not in Benjamin's images of the feminine, but in his textual practice. She explores the way in which

he transforms these and other images into what she calls 'dialectical' or 'thought-images'.

For Benjamin, Weigel points out, the 'thought-image' or 'dialectical-image' is 'dialectic at a standstill', since according to Benjamin: 'an image is that in which the has-been comes together in a flash with the Now to form a constellation'. The 'dialectical image' is 'a snapshot wrested from the continuum of time which, as the "Now of cognizability" bears its previous and subsequent history within itself'.

To illustrate the above with an example of how Weigel uses it towards a feminist interpretation: she interprets Benjamin's famous image of the 'angel of history' in his "Theses on the Philosophy of History" as presenting us with 'not one, but three angels who are very different indeed' (56). The first image of an angel of history is the lyrical voice in a poem by Gershom Scholem called '*Gruss von Angelus*' ('Angel's Greeting'):

My wing is ready for flight
I would like to turn back.
If I stayed timeless time,
I would have little luck.

Weigel's comments on this poem in 'Towards a Female Dialectic of Enlightenment: Julia Kristeva and Walter Benjamin' suggest that it can be used to offer 'a timeless perspective in which a morally superior "I" turns its back on the world of today—which can be read as the "male" or "patriarchal" world' (78). For a feminist to identify with this angel would involve 'stepping out of history' and adopting, for example, the myth of a matriarchal prehistory.

Benjamin's second angel of history is taken from a painting by Klee, the *Angelus Novus*. This angel 'has Medusa-like features: an open mouth, staring eyes, a frozen gaze' (56). Weigel claims that in the frozen horror of Klee's image, the viewer becomes 'caught under the spell of the myth, entranced into fascinated identification with the position of victim' (78). For a feminist to identify with this angel would be to see women as victims, as survivors of oppression.

Benjamin's third angel of history has a face that 'is turned toward the past. Where *we* perceive a chain of events, *he* sees one single catastrophe which keeps piling wreckage upon wreckage and hurling it in front of his feet' (57). From behind the angel a storm is blowing. The

storm comes from 'Paradise' and 'drives him irresistibly into the future. What *we* call progress, this is the storm.'

Still comparing Kristeva and Benjamin, Weigel notes that the perspective of this third angel is explicitly distinguished from that of the 'we' or the 'us'. By presenting us with an image of history that cannot be reconciled with 'outs', Benjamin's structure allows us to recognise two alternative temporalities, and points to a third. Weigel is arguing that women are also survivors, women also participate in the concept of progress *qua* emancipation. She uses Benjamin's third angel to break open 'the imaginary structure based on the moment of identification which fails to recognize what is heterogeneous' (78).

Weigel's argument is developed more fully in '*Der schielende Blick*' [literally: a squinting or a cross-eyed look], a translated, shortened version of which appears in Gisela Ecker (ed.) *Feminist Aesthetics* (trans. Women's Press, 1986), under the title 'Double Focus: On the History of Women's Writing'. Women can see beyond, or as Weigel presents this image in '*Der schielende Blick*', women can see 'cross-eyed'. At least, they can see glimpses, albeit with one eye: an eye which strays, and a look which is essentially defective. But, as she says in the essay on Kristeva and Benjamin, women 'are not to be compared with the angel of history; for in that they are survivors, participants in this history and this culture, they are forced to turn their eyes away from those of the angel' (79).

Though the book is essentially a collection of essays, these have been edited and, on the whole, fit together remarkably well. There is a sense of continuity and of development of arguments, though the feel of a collection of essays remains present. Moreover, the translation is very readable and clear, not an easy task considering the density of Weigel's writing and the complex sentence structure of the German original. On a critical note, I feel that the book would have greatly benefited from a short introduction to Weigel's work as a whole, and some explanation of the editing work which took place. It is unclear when and where the essays were written and first published, nor is it clear what role Weigel took in the editing which turned the essays into a book. The existing introduction and extensive bibliography are very helpful, but do not fully answer the above.

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Feminist Interpretations of G. W. F. Hegel

Patricia Jagentowicz Mills (ed.), Pennsylvania State University Press 1996, h/b £39.50 0 271 01490 3, p/b £16.50 0 271 01491 1

Series: Re-Reading the Canon, (ed.) Nancy Tuana

This collection, edited by Patricia Jagentowicz Mills, aims to provide a representative sample of feminist critical analyses of Hegel's philosophy. Mills makes a concerted effort to amass a diverse collection of papers: including authors from a range of theoretical backgrounds, and papers on various aspects of Hegel's philosophy. She includes a chapter from Irigaray's *Speculum of the Other Woman* (1974), 'The Eternal Irony of the Community', Carla Lonzi's famous early paper, 'Let's Spit on Hegel', and papers by Mary O'Brien, Carole Pateman, Seyla Benhabib, Naomi Schor, and David Farrell Krell (amongst others). This makes for an interesting collection, which gives a good idea of the state of current feminist reflection on Hegel.

In her introduction, Mills helpfully contextualises this literature in relation to Simone de Beauvoir's original appropriation of Hegel's master/slave relationship in *The Second Sex*: whereas Beauvoir constructed a theory of sexual oppression using Hegelian categories, recent work has engaged with Hegel in a more comprehensive and analytical manner. Mills divides the book into three sections: critical papers on Hegel's conceptions of women and the family (in his *Philosophy of Right* and *Phenomenology of Spirit*); papers on Hegel's aesthetics; and relatively constructive accounts of Hegel's views on state, family and communication. As this reveals, then, most feminist work on Hegel focuses on his philosophy of spirit. There is no sustained discussion here of Hegel's *Logic*, *Philosophy of Nature*, or philosophy of religion.

The crucial debate that emerges here is over the extent to which Hegelian categories can be retrieved by feminists. Heidi Ravven, for example, argues that Hegel's conception of political subjectivity can apply to women as much as men, and is not intrinsically connected with his project of confining women to domesticity. This approach contrasts with a more critical perspective which connects Hegel's misogyny to his 'logic of identity' (Benhabib, Irigaray, Mills, and Krell).

Writers of the latter persuasion are concerned to subvert the Hegelian process of achieving reconciliation between subject and object, universal and particular. For Hegel, this process involves the discovery,

by the subject or universal, that the object or particular, which it had experienced as a contradictory and alien force, is a necessary condition of its *own* existence, and so does not contradict it at all. The subject is thereby 'reconciled' with the object. For many authors, this reconciliation happens only because the particular has already been defined in relation to the universal's own requirements. Reconciliation thus depends upon the prior loss of independence or alterity by the particular. Benhabib, for instance, writes: 'The subject posits its opposite and loses itself in its other, but is always restored to selfhood via the argument that the "other" is but an extension or an externalisation of oneself ... The vision of Hegelian reconciliation has long ceased to convince: the otherness of the other is that moment of irony, reversal, and inversion with which we must live' (41). In defence of the independent other, Benhabib argues that Hegel's (domestic) definition of woman depends upon the suppression of a genuinely independent and particular woman (the independent woman of Hegel's Germany), while Mills unearths a similar suppression of aspects of Antigone, the champion of the particular against the State.

The difficulty in making such critiques of Hegel, however, is that Hegel could reply that he does think that the particular other is independent of the subject: it is indeed posited by the subject, but as an *independent* reality. The moment of reconciliation is, then, the subject's *acceptance* that this reality is irreducibly independent, and is required by the subject precisely *to be* divergent and irreducible. To sustain the critique of Hegel, an analysis of Hegel's metaphysics and his philosophical system *as a whole* is required. While the themes of Hegel's connections of women with particularity and materiality, and of men with universality and conceptuality, are repeatedly broached in this collection (by Schor, Eric O. Clarke, Mills, and Benhabib), no such holistic analysis is provided. In giving such a balanced and interesting overview of feminist thought on Hegel, then, Mills' collection also indicates some directions that feminist reflection here could fruitfully take.

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Feminism and Ancient Philosophy

Julie K. Ward (ed.), Routledge 1996

h/b £40.00 0 415 91601 1, p/b £12.99 0 415 91602 X

If the basic impulse of liberal feminism is to extend an already constituted framework of rights to include women as well as men, many essays in this collection may be thought of as liberal feminist philosophy, aiming to extend an already constituted philosophical framework to include women as well as men. In so far as this is true, the reader is presented with an interesting slice of philosophical life: women working on ancient philosophy in US philosophy departments.

Unfortunately, the result is often less local or perspectival than parochial. The presentation of putative feminist positions is sometimes simplistic or even naive. Both Deborah Achtenberg and Marcia Homiak, for example, argue against a version of feminist ethics in which Chodorow and Gilligan are taken to advocate either a complete lack of separation in personal relationships, or an ethic of care that completely eschews reason. When, then, Aristotle is shown to argue for both separateness and connection as conditions for human flourishing (Achtenberg, 115), the superiority of his ethical theory over feminist ethics is supposedly demonstrated. However, it is doubtful whether anyone working in feminist ethics would actually deny these conditions.

As outlined in Julie K. Ward's introduction (xiv), the aim of many of these papers is to use careful analysis and elucidation of primary texts to defend a particular classical thinker or school against unfair, or even muddleheaded, feminist criticism. On this point the scholarship of these authors—ancient Greek readers to a woman—is not in question, even if in one case (Elizabeth Asmis on the Stoics) the concern to rebut the charge of sexism smacks of sophistry.

Behind every complete or partial defence, however, lies the pervasive assumption that the hard core of a philosophical theory can be extracted from the unimportant detritus of the cultural assumptions which are bound to be found along with it. This is most evident in a footnote to Ward's essay on friendship in Aristotle: 'in the same way that [Aristotle's] political theory may be considered in abstraction from his claims about slavery, so too, his theory of virtue and friendship may be separated from his claims about gender equality' (249). Ward thus begs

the question with which a whole body of feminist philosophy began, and in so doing maybe even catapults the debate back several decades.

As the preceding example perhaps shows, many of this reviewer's quarrels with the collection could also be cast as quarrels between different traditions of philosophy, since much that is taken for granted is elsewhere precisely that which is the focus of the most intense and rigorous critical scrutiny. Homiak, for example, argues that 'the fact that the rational ideal [in Aristotle] has been, or can be used to exclude particular groups from that ideal does not show that the rational ideal is defective' (120). And one would have to agree. But to then assume that the rational ideal is therefore *unproblematic* is quite another thing.

Similar objections could be raised against another author, Susan B. Levin, when she defends Plato's *Republic* against charges of sexism. Her defence works by making a distinction between 'talk of women as they are presently and talk of them as they might be if assessed and educated based on the calibre of their souls' (26). The justification for this depends explicitly on the assumption that the nature of 'the soul' in Plato is essentially sexless (27). Here, again, what is taken for granted is precisely that which is questioned or contested in much feminist philosophy: the sexlessness of souls or selves.

According to another author in this volume, Daryl McGowan Tress, it is only the inappropriate application of modern feminist demands to classical metaphysics that gives rise to the 'perception' of gender bias. She writes: 'Because feminism is centrally concerned with power and politics, it tends to have little use for metaphysics and little patience with it' (32). The implication that feminism and metaphysics are incompatible is one from which not a few feminist metaphysicians would, no doubt, beg to differ. Furthermore, the further aspersion that feminist readings of ancient metaphysics are bound in some way to be philosophically inadequate is, as Kathleen C. Cook says in a critical response to Tress, 'antifeminist rhetoric' (232). In fact, Cook's contribution to the volume—a scholarly, sophisticated *feminist* reading of Aristotle on generation—is, simply by virtue of its existence, an eloquent refutation of Tress.

These critical remarks do not preclude a recognition of the formidable philosophical accomplishments of the authors collected here. There are interesting and informative expositions in all of the above-

mentioned essays. This is also true of other essays: the reprint of a well-known essay by Julia Annas on 'Plato's *Republic* and Feminism'; Patricia Curd's attempt to relate Aristotelian ethics to Virginia Woolf; Anne-Marie Bowery's analysis of the narrative structure of Plato's *Symposium*.

The final essay, by Martha Nussbaum, is a joy. Concentrating mostly on Epicurus, Nussbaum reflects, via Foucault, on the social origins of desire. Without sounding at all preachy, she makes her philosophical and socio-political point. It is difficult not to conclude that it is the more ecumenical sweep of Nussbaum's terms of reference that gives her essay the depth and richness that some of the others lack. As a final note, a comparison of my comments with Amber Jacobs' review of Nancy Tuana (ed.), *Feminist Interpretations of Plato* (in *WPR* 15) would reveal many similarities. Obviously the reviewers' own philosophical biases must be admitted. However, in both cases it is—contra Tress—the absence of any serious engagement with contemporary ('continental?') feminisms that makes some of these essays philosophically unsatisfying.

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Tu che mi guardi, tu che mi racconti: Filosofia della narrazione

Adriana Cavarero, Milan: Feltrinelli Editore 1997

p/b Lire 22,000 88 07 47011 X

In this book Adriana Cavarero provides a new feminist approach to the debates about identity and the self. She rejects both modern accounts of the subject and postmodern endorsements of a fragmented self. Instead, she views the self as constituted by tales narrated by others. These are tales which tell the story of our own lives. They constitute the self and its identity because they construct a pattern out of the succession of events that make up a life. These life stories show the uniqueness of each individual. They show how each one of us differs from any other.

At the same time these tales, because they present each life as unique, confer unity on it. What brings the events constituting a life together, what gives unity to them, is the sense of uniqueness conveyed by life narratives. Thus, this unity, which is necessary for identity, possesses no substantive reality. It is brought about by tales. Hence, our desire to hear the story of our own life, which makes us ask: 'who am I?', is a

desire for an identity that can only be conferred by others. The reality of the self, therefore, is essentially dependent on relations to other individuals; it is dependent on how we appear to them.

Cavarero develops her account of the self through an investigation of storytelling from Homer to Scheherazade in *The Thousand and One Nights* and Karen Blixen (Isak Dinesen). Her detailed commentaries of stories of storytelling build upon her earlier work. For example, Cavarero argued in *In Spite of Plato* that the philosopher's obsession with death amounts to a symbolic matricide: to an attempt to forget birth as constitutive of our existence. In her latest book Cavarero returns to this theme. She holds that we can understand the self only if we think about it in terms of its beginning. At birth we are exposed to others who will tell us our story. At this moment, it is most apparent that our identity (*who we are*) is not a matter of the qualities we possess. It does not depend on *what we are*.

This latter point distinguishes Cavarero's position about the self as narrative from views endorsed by Anglo-American postmodernist philosophers. The life stories which Cavarero discusses need not be conceived as texts. More strongly, they cannot be captured entirely by words. They stand outside the discursive order. Instead, Cavarero argues, they are best expressed in the intimacy of love and friendship.

This book presents a challenge to Anglo-American debates about the question of identity. It shows how it is possible to think differently on these issues. And whilst Cavarero discusses the positions held by feminist thinkers in the English speaking world, one hopes that this world will give her challenge the attention it deserves.

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Feminist Genealogies, Colonial Legacies, Democratic Futures

M. Jacqui Alexander & Chandra Talpade Mohanty (eds), Routledge 1997, h/b £40.00 0 415 91211 3, p/b £12.99 0 415 91212 1
Alexander and Mohanty's collection brings together fourteen new articles by feminists from Asia, Africa, the Caribbean, and African American, Native American, Chicana/o and diasporic communities in the US. In their introduction, Alexander and Mohanty argue for greater

recognition within feminist scholarship of the theoretical importance of work by women of colour. They suggest that while the work of women of colour may be included in US Women's Studies curricula, sufficient consideration has not been given to the ways in which this work calls for a reconceptualization of a still largely white, middle-class gendered knowledge base. The theories elaborated by women of colour may be acknowledged as carrying explanatory weight in relation to their specific experiences, but they are still seen as having 'no use value for the rest of the world' (xvii).

What is needed, according to the editors, is not a Third World feminism that 'fills the gaps' for white Western feminist projects, but rather a 'comparative relational feminist praxis that is transnational in its response to and engagement with global processes of colonisation' (xx). Feminist theory's most basic analytic tools and categories need to be interrogated and complicated by recognising that we all operate in spaces where the dynamics of gendered, raced, national and international relations of power intersect and inform each other.

The best of the articles explore specific instances of these complex, multi-layered spaces and suggest some of the ways in which feminist theory needs to be productively complicated in order to negotiate these spaces. María Anna Jaimes Guerrero looks at Native American women's positioning in conflicts between the US state and indigenous communities' demands for self-determination. Conflicts over who gets to be defined as a member of those communities are often played out on, and through, the bodies of Native American women. Conventionally, these are conceptualised as conflicts between the civil rights of individual citizens and the sovereignty rights of native communities. But by tracking the ways in which citizenship has been defined as a category that excludes the identities and rights of specific communities, and in which native community identities are being increasingly defined along masculinist lines, Jaimes Guerrero goes a step further. Her work suggests that a feminism that looks simultaneously at issues of sexism and indigenous peoples' rights to self-determination will need to rethink both notions of sovereignty and of citizenship.

Ella Shohat looks at how white Western feminist film theory is complicated by what she calls 'post-third Worldist' feminist film. By working through the complexities of spaces in which gender, race and

nation intersect, Shohat argues that Third World and diasporic feminist film and video productions can challenge the masculinist contours of narratives of national and racial identities, and also the Eurocentric legacies of colonialism that still mark white Western feminist theory.

Anannya Bhattacharjee's work on violence against women in South Asian immigrant communities in the US suggests ways in which one of feminist theory's most basic conceptual tools—the public/private binary—needs to be rethought if racial, ethnic, national and class differences between women are taken into account. Thus, 'home'—that most 'private' of categories—'takes on multiple meanings that are not easily contained within the public/private divide, when viewed from the perspective of the non-white non-citizen, the immigrant or the domestic worker. Analogously, 'citizenship'—that most 'public' of statuses—becomes a private domain within the context of immigration policy, a 'bounded space into which only some of the people can walk some of the time' (317).

Honor Ford Smith provides a fascinating analysis of the complexities of power relations between women in her examination of the history of the Jamaican feminist collective *Sistren*, of which she was a founding member. Ford-Smith raises a number of crucial theoretical issues that emerge from her experiences of feminist resistance in a postcolonial setting: the class and race dynamics at play within feminist organisations; the impact of international donors on organisational self-definition and activity; and the need to move beyond a simple feminist faith in 'collective decision-making' and liberatory goals to produce new forms of organisational culture that can address the power inequalities within groups. Against the still-common assumption that feminist theory is only relevant for an educated elite, or gets in the way of feminist politics, Ford-Smith explores how, in *Sistren*, there was a failure to theorise experience and to systematise the insights and skills developed through different activities. These failures ultimately privileged middle-class women and kept power imbalances in place.

In other respects, however, the collection is less successful in providing more complex alternatives to prevailing models of power, agency and identity in feminist theory. In both the editors' introduction and a number of articles, a vaguely defined 'postmodernism' is evoked as being hostile to any form of materialism or situatedness, incapable of

according any value to experience in the name of its struggle against 'essentialism'. A reductive opposition seems to be set up between a white Western feminist theory plagued by this dis-located post-modernism, and a decolonizing feminism of women of colour, committed to realism, locatedness and collective agency. This decolonizing feminism is linked to an assertion of the need for 'socialist principles' (xxix). There is, however, no serious discussion of the problems socialist theoretical models or historical experience might pose for feminism. Nor is there, indeed, any detailed explanation of what the authors mean by socialism.

In Alexandet and Mohanty's introduction there is a tendency, as also in a number of their contributors' articles, to reduce women's complex social and discursive positioning to a framework of either/or oppositions. We find oppositions between agency (which is always good and resisting of oppression) and victimhood; between collective, feminist consciousness, and the 'liberal pluralist individual self' (xxviii); between oppressive constructions of women and their manipulation by capitalist, patriarchal, colonialist or nationalist forces, on the one hand, and women's independent assertion of their identities and interests, on the other hand. In contrast, the most challenging material presented in the collection points to the need for feminist theory to move beyond these too-simple oppositions, especially if it is to sustain a simultaneous focus on gender, race, nation and other differences.

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The Rejected Body: Feminist Philosophical Reflections on Disability

Susan Wendell, Routledge 1997

h/b £40.00 0 415 91046 3, p/b £12.99 0 415 91047 1

Feminist Approaches to Bioethics: Theoretical Reflections and Practical Applications

Rosemarie Tong, Westview 1997

h/b £48.50 0 8133 1954 4, p/b £14.00 0 8133 1955 2

As feminists become increasingly aware of the power of biomedical discourse, there is a growing market for books which both critique the

construction of the biomedical body and strive to challenge the adequacy of existing systems of bioethics.

These two books, both from established American authors, take as their task the need to set out new paradigms of understanding that utilise the insights of feminism. Neither is concerned with women as such, but rather with the project of both taking gender into account, and of outlining a specifically feminist perspective that will enlighten the field of study as a whole. As the titles suggest, the aim is not to establish the successor epistemological and ethical models, but to reflect on the problematic. That said, they are very different in style and approach, and to some extent the text of the first may be implicitly critical of the second.

Susan Wendell's book, *The Rejected Body*, makes no claims for detached scholarship, but makes plain from the beginning that the author is writing out of her own long-term experience of Chronic Fatigue Syndrome, or ME as it is better known in the UK. She is, then, passionately involved with her text and has a determined mission to clarify, both for herself and others, just what underlies the unequal status of disabled people, and how that might be changed. She is particularly scathing about the feminist movement in its reluctance or inability to address the multiple issues surrounding disability, because, as she puts it, 'feminist theory of the body [is] both incomplete and skewed towards healthy, non-disabled experience' (5). Moreover, feminist ethics, which we might expect to see making a central contribution, has to date very little interface with disability studies.

Writing in the American context, Wendell seems unaware of some of the feminist disability works coming out of the UK in the last decade: Jenny Morris, Nasa Begum and Janet Price immediately come to mind. However, I would agree that, for the most part, the involvement of these authors arises from their own varying disabilities rather than from feminism *per se*. In response to what she sees as a general idealisation of the body, practised by feminists as much as by anyone else, Wendell is unequivocal: 'Until feminists criticise our own body ideals and confront the weak, suffering and uncontrollable body in our theorising and practice, women with disabilities and illnesses are likely to feel that we are embarrassments to feminism' (93).

Among the explanations that Wendell offers for the disregard of disability matters is the notion that western society is caught up in the

myth—largely fostered by the scientific project of the Enlightenment, and strongly evident in today's biomedical discourse—that the body can be controlled. And whenever that control falters or collapses, as indeed it must, it is the body that is rejected rather than the myth.

One of Wendell's strategies, then, for revaluing the out-of-control body, is to appeal to the notion that none of us have more than temporarily-abled bodies. If nothing else, the fact that we all age and lose physical function means that at some point each of us will become a member of a group that is characteristically cast as the 'other'. The strength of this appeal to overturn the boundaries of sameness and difference is, however, somewhat weakened by Wendell's own allegiance to a form of identity politics.

In her first allusion to what is effectively a disabled standpoint, Wendell acknowledges that *any* category can only be temporary, but contends, nonetheless, that it can make a difference. As she puts it, being female and disabled creates 'the possibility of different perspectives which have epistemic advantages with respect to certain issues' (73). Such caution however is forgotten when, later in the book, Wendell discusses the ethical issues arising from euthanasia. By now, standpoint is assumed in her assertion that: 'There is considerable agreement among disability activists that people who do not have the same disabilities as the new-borns are in no moral position to judge whether their lives will be worth living' (157).

The Rejected Body is not, as Wendell makes clear, intended for professional philosophers, and I would see it as having a stronger place perhaps in both sociology and cultural studies. The directly philosophical content comes largely in the final three chapters on the cognitive authority of medicine, on feminist ethics, and on Wendell's notion of transcendence. There is sadly no real discussion of a phenomenology of disability, although, unlike many current activists, Wendell does not discount discussion of the body by making a firm distinction between a fixed biological impairment—to be endured without comment—and a socially constructed disability—to be challenged and changed. But when she briefly considers the Foucauldian notion of disciplinary practices as constitutive of physical normality, the move is not extended to disabled embodiment. Perhaps after all she sees it as given.

For all that I am cautious about the limits of Wendell's analysis, however, the points she makes about feminism are telling ones which deserve wider exposure. It is interesting, then, in turning to *Feminist Approaches to Bioethics*, to find that disability figures not at all in the index. To be scrupulously fair, Rosemarie Tong does make mention of the discriminatory nature of ableism in her chapter on genetic screening and pre-natal diagnosis, but even there it is swiftly passed over. In any case, Tong might reasonably argue that she is merely reporting on the analyses of others, but that only throws the silencing back one stage.

I suppose that what is really at issue here is that the body itself is very little problematised in Tong's account, as though there were in effect a universalised model. It's not that Tong, or those she reports on, are unaware of corporeal differences like sex, race, or disability status, but that these are not allowed to make much difference to what is taken to be a properly feminist ethical analysis. As with so many bioethical accounts, the body tends to get somewhat obscured.

Perhaps at heart what I am saying is that Tong offers a very conventional philosophical account of her material. Her purpose is not to present a thesis of her own, but to explicate in some detail the, by now complex, range of bioethical theories on offer, and to contrast non-feminist and feminist modes. Although the tone is strictly non-judgmental throughout, we understand that Tong prefers the latter and finds them more adequate to deal with the practical issues that she raises in the second part of her book.

All these issues are focused around procreation—from contraception and abortion, through the new reproductive technologies, to the concerns of genetic engineering. Given that all such matters are at present of greater concern to women, it seems a shame that Tong has chosen not to test the various theories she outlines on problems where the effect of gender cannot be taken for granted. It is surely the mark of a successful feminist bioethics that its range of applicability is no less than its traditional forebears. Nonetheless, Tong is a model of clarity in her explication of how the application of widely divergent models yields different ethical considerations. She is particularly good in her account of surrogacy and genetic screening, although clearly the UK reader has work to do in glossing the North American social and legal context. Terms such as 'equal protection clause', 'due process' and 'right to

privacy' are not immediately transparent, and some explanation might have helped.

Unlike Wendell, Tong is very deliberately writing for a philosophical audience. At one point, she appeals directly to non-feminist readers to 'throw caution to the winds and join with feminist bioethicists in a collaborative effort to create a moral environment in which truly good medicine can be practised' (74). And what she understands by feminist bioethics is not a model united by common politics, ontology, or epistemology, but a diversity of ethical analyses which nonetheless share a methodology.

For Tong, that methodology must entail commitment to the gender question, raising consciousness about women's subordinate status, and closing the gaps between theory and practice. She sees the two main branches of feminist ethics being those of care—as exemplified by Noddings, Baier, Ruddick, for example—and what she calls power-focused ethics, which she associates with Jaggar and Hoagland. What matters to all, however, whether they be concerned primarily with choice, consent or connection, is that they should be consensus seeking. As a postmodern ethicist myself, I felt left out of all of this, and I'm always deeply suspicious of what gets silenced by appeals to a kind of Habermasian ideal dialogue. Tong does promise to include postmodernism in her run-through of models, but having made that mark, she forgets all about it.

Feminist Approaches to Bioethics is not an exciting book, but I will undoubtedly find it extremely useful. It painstakingly sorts out the distinctions that sometimes need to be made, and I can imagine it will be widely used in teaching.

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Caring

Peta Bowden, Routledge 1997

h/b £40.00 0 415 13383 1, p/b £12.99 0 415 13384 X

Caring is a useful addition to the literature in this field. Bowden integrates the concept of care in practical life, with 'care' as understood in the post-Gilligan academic discussion.

Bowden's work is clearly planned and purposefully executed. She states in her Introduction: 'my motivating claim is that current analyses of the ethical imports of caring frequently forget the epistemological insights of the practices of care from which they emerge' (2). In the subsequent chapters she carefully constructs reminders from the practices of 'Mothering', 'Friendship', 'Nursing' and 'Citizenship'. This makes her approach Wittgensteinian; she also seeks the 'perspicuity produced by discerning juxtaposition' of different examples (122). Bowden highlights the gender-sensitivity, or lack of such, in the writers she discusses.

In the section on 'Mothering' Bowden notes at the outset that the relationship between mothers and children is 'sadly missing' from ethical debate. She both introduces epistemological insights relating to mothering and selfhood, and considers the distinctive values that emerge with mothering. Her account and critique of Ruddick's work is contrasted with that of Rossiter, who is commended for her attention to the material arrangements of mothers' lives. Bowden insists here, and indeed this becomes a theme of her book, that we should keep in mind the social and cultural determinants of practice.

Bowden's chapter on 'Friendship' is, to my mind, the best in the book. She provides a thoughtful and comprehensive explanation of Aristotle's views. These are contrasted with Blum who emphasises the 'partiality' of friendship, and with Rubin who stresses reflected self-knowledge gained through intimacy. Bowden's account of Friedman's work reintroduces a more political tone, noting the 'systematic deformation of social possibilities' for women, and requiring a 'restructuring of social institutions' to encourage friendship. Bowden also registers the anti-women implication of Miller's 'Men and Friendship', and counters it with Raymond's suggestions on the empowerment of gyn-affection. The empowering theme brings the chapter back to Aristotle and his recognition of the contribution of private friendship to active public citizenship. In each case, Bowden presents her chosen author with lucidity. The chapter is, as it were, a kaleidoscopic pattern of thinking on friendship.

The 'Nursing' chapter is less striking, maybe because Bowden's sources are less rich. She examines the role of the nurse 'in-between' the public institution and the private relationship, but the chapter veers away from the ethical debate towards the sociological and the historical.

The final chapter on 'Citizenship' has the most overt programme. In it, Bowden is concerned to explore the ethical possibilities of citizenship and care, in ways that challenge 'the boundaries of the public sphere' and 'acknowledge the public implications of its imperative relationship with the personal and informal practices of care' (154). She advocates a reconceptualisation of citizenship which avoids its opposition to intimacy and particularity. Her epistemological argument uses Baier and Gilligan in attacking the idea of people as autonomous, rather than as formed by social relationships. Her ethical position complements this, developing, courtesy of Minow, a 'social relations' approach as an improvement on the individualistic language of rights.

Bowden's book will be useful on a wide range of ethics courses. The consistent emphasis on practice is welcome. She presents a variety of writers in a comprehensible way, and brings them together to provide persuasive arguments and fresh insights.

In this stimulating book, Bowden has avoided the construction of women as necessarily caring, whilst making clear the significance of caring relationships.

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Reconstructing Political Theory: Feminist Perspectives

Mary Lyndon Shanley & Uma Narayan (eds.), Polity Press 1997,
h/b £45 0 7456 1796 4, p/b £13.95 0 7456 1797 2

This disciplined collection of essays bears witness to the live and dynamic state of feminist political theory. It is a companion volume to the earlier *Feminist Interpretations and Political Theory* which subjected political theorists of the canon to feminist re-readings. In this new collection, eleven essays offer, variously, feminist analysis of central political concepts; fresh perspectives on some of feminist theory's more intractable problems; and some much-needed attention to neglected issues, such as compassion and dependency.

What marks this volume out in particular, however, is the way in which several of the contributions tread between established theoretical positions, delicately constructing new, more nuanced conceptions of what a good society for women would involve. Thus, in 'Alchemy or Fool's Gold? Assessing Feminist Doubts about Rights', Kiss presents a

qualified defence of rights, arguing that they protect the vulnerable and enshrine familial and social obligations, and so play a very real role in empowering women. At the same time, rights need to be conceived so as to acknowledge their situation in a relational rather than individualistic context.

Mindful of the difficulties of immigrant women, Narayan argues that, if it is not to be exclusionary, a feminist conception of citizenship should be founded on a sense of the individual's dignity and vulnerability, and expressed in the holding of negative rights and positive entitlements to the goods necessary for full participation in the political community. In 'Revisioning the Family', Minow and Lyndon Shanley claim that neither a contractarian nor a communitarian model fill the space left by the demise of the liberal understanding of the family as a natural and private entity. They propose instead a 'theory of relational rights and responsibilities' (95), an enriched rights-based position that recognises both the interdependence of individuals as family members and the formative influence of the wider political order.

As the arguments of the above essays suggest, a common theme is discernible in the particular attention given to the relation between the public and the private. The authors do not jettison the distinction, but argue that the boundaries between the public and the private are more fluid than traditionally acknowledged. They also recommend—and this is the normative move—a focus on elements that can act to further women's needs and interests. This kind of reconceptualisation does some real work in addressing changing and complex realities, attempting to come up with flexible responses that accommodate the concrete problems which confront women now.

A similar point could be made about Ackelsberg's essay on anarchism and Crenshaw's piece on the 'intersectionality' of race and gender. Both authors treat the long-standing difficulty of making common cause out of a diverse half of the world's population. An excellent essay by Spelman, based on a comparative analysis of Arendt and the slave girl narrative of Linda Brent, signals what is at stake in generating political capital out of compassion. As such, it is one of several forcible reminders in the volume of how far ideas commonly understood as neutral are gendered, and how they are politically charged and deployed.

Yet part of me feels that this volume might have been more accurately subtitled 'Feminist Perspectives from the United States'. No doubt this is partly due to the eagerness of many of the authors to retain a rights-based position; the good feminist society that seems to be envisioned speaks of a highly individualistic society. In addition, while the philosophical positions drawn are both intelligible and relevant to British readers, many of the subjects of analysis and illustrative examples are of American provenance. For a non-American reader, these just don't have the same resonance, although calls for rethinking popular concepts such as dependency do chime with recent political debate in the UK. Nonetheless, this is a useful and stimulating anthology, to be recommended not least for the dextrous argument and taut analysis of many of its contributions.

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Feminism as Radical Humanism

Pauline Johnson, Westview Press, Allen & Unwin 1994

p/b £12.95 1 86373 655 7

Forty years ago, in his collection *Mythologies*, Barthes pointed to the dilemma of the critical theorist. After delineating some of the mythologies of our times—those snapshots of the post war (*petit*) bourgeois imaginary which Barthes presented so persuasively in *Mythologies*—he plaintively regretted his alienation from his fellows. But the demythologist can no longer participate in the unreflective community of shared belief. He finds himself marginal to his own society. In *Feminism as Radical Humanism*, this kind of disquiet resurfaces as Pauline Johnson analyses the potential for self-alienation in feminism. She fears that if the postmodern route is embraced too enthusiastically, the feminist too will find herself marginal, unable to engage any longer with the society out of which feminism emerged.

The most interesting part of Johnson's book is its defence of the universal. Johnson makes it clear that we have to have a radically *historical* account of the universal, but that we still need a universalistic account of our values in order to engage in constructive critique of our society with other members of it. She defines her defence of the universal as 'an interpretation of modern humanism' (ix).

Humanism itself is seen as the product of a long historical process—not an essence, but an ideal which is still open to discussion. As an example, she cites the anti-nuclear movement which raise issues of global survival: 'a voice raised on behalf of the future of life itself' (128). The values of life, and of freedom (by which she means the respect for each person's uniqueness and individuality) are by no means superannuated. If feminism sees its future in a kind of movement of purification, shedding phallogocentric logic in its totality, she argues, it may shed along with it any residual commitments to the rest of society and condemn itself to sterility. This 'posture of radical alienation' (xii) is not in any case an option for the majority.

Johnson concludes with a defence of feminism as social critique, and argues that to defend the justice of our claims we have to appeal to criteria which are more than merely local (131). This means that feminism needs to 'reflect upon the character of its own universalising ideals' (p.109). This does not mean a search for an ultimate ground, but indicates that we should be able to engage in discussion about the rationality and legitimacy of social practices and arrangements. If we relinquish all normative claims, feminism divests itself of the task of social critique. Johnson emphatically rejects the Foucauldian 'aesthetics of existence' and Lyotard's 'incommensurable social language games', pointing out that we cannot simply ignore the relations of large historical narratives to our present (131). Admitting this is not equivalent to reinstating an ultimate foundation.

Having a critical point of view on our society does not imply that we have no links at all with that society. Most of us are in fact embedded in communities and work situations, and engaged in activities with others; we are not rootless, floating, uncommitted selves. Yet, Johnson suggests (ch. 3), there has been a strange attraction to a Romantic conception of feminism which is a persistently negative stance, an antagonistic conception of the (feminist) self and society. In the refusal of totalising constructions of the feminine, there is a refusal of *all* available images. Feminism's adoption of the attitude of infinite refusal leads to its demise as a social movement.

It is a pity that this book is not available in the UK since its arguments would certainly resonate with some current thinking that is critical of the hyperbolization of the postmodernist position. I am

thinking, for example, of Gillian Rose's critique of the demonizing of reason in *Mourning Becomes the Law* (Cambridge UP 1996). Johnson mobilises a similar argument along the following lines: the fact that history shows the flaws in the ideal seems to lead to a kind of impotence. Thus, the pessimism engendered by the perception that our inevitable failures in the past imply our inevitable failures in the future renders us incapable of acting in the present. The desire to be completely innocent leads to disengagement with the historical present.

I felt that Johnson's position was sometimes overstated. There is always the danger that a warning about theoretical trends will turn into a counter-purification in which attempts are made to rescue one's preferred version of feminism from contamination by other versions, and where the desire for innocence, identified here as a problem in other feminisms, returns in a disguised form ('my version of feminism has nothing to do with yours'). However, Johnson's defence of the need to engage with one's society and situation, and the consequent need for appeal to norms, is persuasively argued. I am in agreement with her concern about the potential for radical isolation in the critical position, since the latter seems to me a moment only, needing to be held in tension with a more constructive stance.

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Only Paradoxes to Offer: French Feminists and the Rights of Man

Joan Wallach Scott, Harvard University Press 1996

h/b £18.50 0 674 63930 8, p/b £10.95 0 674 63931 6

Only Paradoxes to Offer examines the writings and careers of four French feminists: Olympe de Gouges, Jeanne Deroin, Hubertine Auclert and Madeleine Pelletier in the light of contemporary historical and feminist theory. Scott focuses on the fundamental paradox, noted by many noted feminists and historians, namely the French Republic's initial commitment (from 1789) to universal rights whilst restricting those rights to men alone.

In a useful discussion of varieties of theories of individualism, Scott distinguishes between two opposed Enlightenment concepts of the

individual. On the one hand, there is the idea of the abstract individual (the political persona) who for the purposes of rights is identical to all others. On the other hand, there is the unique individual as conceived, for example, by Rousseau, and understood as valorised by virtue of *difference*. Scott argues that where individuality was constructed as masculine and yet universal, feminists who called for inclusion in the polity were speaking for women whilst paradoxically attempting to inscribe women in the masculine sphere.

Scott unravels the differences in meaning of 'woman' and 'feminist' at different historical moments. Arguing against the idea that agency is the expression 'of autonomous individual will', she adopts Foucault's strategy of examining the formation of subjects through historically defined processes (16). In the excellent and scholarly discussions of individual feminists, Scott de-emphasises biographical narrative. However, the female figures emerge as somewhat passive receptacles for the *Zeitgeist*—even if what the women reflect is the *Zeitgeist* of the contradictions of the *Zeitgeist* of a given moment. This is reflected in the writing which has considerable recourse to the passive voice.

The analyses of the four feminists in question also offer valuable contextual material. In relation to Olympe de Gouges, there is an illuminating discussion of Enlightenment theories of imagination. Jeanne Deroin is figured in the context of Saint-Simonian theories of sexual difference, as part of a socialist critique of individualism and as articulating the demand for political rights in relation to the right to work (the social question). This figuration of the social as part of the political emerges in Hubertine Auclert's struggles in the Third Republic for women's suffrage. Madeleine Pelletier is read principally in the context of individualism contrasted with the concept of the mob or the crowd, in relation to Bergsonian ideas of the will and to Lacanian and post-Lacanian theories of sexuality.

Reacting against what Scott describes as a tendency to write teleological evolutionary history, *Only Paradoxes to Offer* studies de Gouges, Deroin, Auclert and Pelletier as 'sites of contradiction', both as contradictory in their demands and as illuminating the contradictions of their cultures. Nevertheless, one feels that the so called 'failures' of French feminism (largely understood as the inability to gain women's suffrage before 1944 and the sense that the feminist battle had already

been lost in the course of the French Revolution) imposes a teleology of its own.

Thus, as Gary Kates has shown in his *Monsieur d'Eon is a Woman* (Basic Books, 1995, chs 30 and 36), the perception from the mid to late eighteenth century was that the *querelle des femmes* was there to be won. Any feminist from Olympe de Gouges to Madeleine Pelletier would have presumed the possibility of effective action. It is only in retrospect that the full weight of institutional and social conventions stacked against them can be fully understood and make feminist defeats seem predetermined. However, what Scott does demonstrate is the extent to which such women were disruptive of the dominant discourse.

Scott engages convincingly with the ideological split between egalitarians (those who advocate abstract individualism) and the apostles of difference: from eighteenth-century complementarians to present-day Lacanian feminists. Contrasting Beauvoir and Irigaray, she comments that these disputes do not constitute a defect in feminism, but reflect the difficulty that sexual difference poses in constituting the concept of individuality (173). There is no need, Scott suggests, to insist on the reconciliation of opposites. The existence of paradox or contradiction, as Marx demonstrated in the dialectic, is what makes a critique of present reality possible.

Only Paradoxes to Offer is a valuable and stimulating book which synthesises a number of theoretical issues and applies them in original ways to specific historical contexts. It will be of great value to scholars engaged in feminist critical theory, women's studies and French history.

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Rousseau and the Politics of Ambiguity: Self, Culture and Society

Mira Morgenstern, Penn State Press 1996

h/b £35.95 0 271 01572 1, p/b £15.95 0 271 01573 X

Jean-Jacques Rousseau's writings on the relationship of man to society were tremendously influential and provoked furious debate when they first came out. Some found his speculations on the origins of mankind—in monkeys—frankly absurd, and even Voltaire indulged in cheap jokes at Rousseau's expense.

Rousseau was both loved and reviled for the ingenuous persona he cultivated both in his life and his writing, and was responsible for an eighteenth-century back-to-nature surge. His portrayal of the individual as someone alienated from, and misunderstood by, society crystallised feeling about the irreconcilability of private and public interests, and influenced thinkers across the board, from the Marquis de Sade, to Robespierre, to the Romantics. His attempts to elaborate the blueprint for a society which would be able to satisfy its citizens' needs and desires resulted in his *Social Contract*. The importance of this work for the movers and shakers of the French Revolution has made it into a canonical text for all those who study revolutionary France.

Rousseau's work is not, however, often brought into an analysis of the tensions of late twentieth-century life, which is what Mira Morgenstern's *Rousseau and the Politics of Ambiguity* promises to do. But by leaving this promising aspect until the last few pages, she unfortunately restricts its capacity to engage with the thought of Rousseau on any but the most superficial level. After 230 pages spent uncritically paraphrasing all of Rousseau's major works, including *The Origins of Inequality* (*The Second Discourse*), *The Social Contract*, and his epistolary novel *The New Héloïse*, her leap into discussing the pitfalls of modern life for women, childcare included, comes almost as a *non sequitur*.

The flaws in this book are not merely structural. One wonders why Rousseau's theories float so freely above their historical context. One suspects that this is because of inadequate research. Not only is this book divorced from the eighteenth century, it is also largely divorced from its own source text. Morgenstern quotes very little, preferring formulations of the genre: 'Rousseau attempts to', 'Rousseau describes', 'Rousseau notes'. The quotations she does give are mostly translated by herself, with the French given below. A comparison reveals them to be generally wooden and occasionally wrong. Furthermore, interpretations of *The New Héloïse* aimed at showing how false and manipulative Julie's father and husband are, turn out to be contestable, at the very least.

But these are just niggles. The question is to discover what the title *Rousseau and the Politics of Ambiguity* actually refers to. After reading the chapter specifically entitled 'The Politics of Ambiguity', where the word 'ambiguity' and variations of it appear only twice, I am still mystified. What Morgenstern does do is restructure Rousseau's thought

around the twin poles of 'authenticity' and its opposite, 'inauthenticity'. But she does not theorise her own version of these two concepts sufficiently. I take them to refer to the 'inauthentic' and the 'authentic' life: the former lived in uncritical ignorance of the moral and social frameworks that mould us, while the second seeks to understand them, thereby coming to a new and critical position. Morgenstern writes in justification of the term 'authenticity' that she believes 'it comes closest to Rousseau's moral imperative to actualise individual and communal humanity to the greatest extent possible' (xiii), while acknowledging that it never appears in his text. What she is really aiming at, both in her reading of Rousseau and in her attempt to apply his thinking to modern-day dilemmas, is to find a route to the sincere 'transparent' person, whose self will not be divided by the diverse claims of work, family and so on. That she fails to show either that Rousseau supplies the key, or that his views shed light on our own situation, does not diminish her book's own transparent sincerity. It's just that it is not very good.

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Ecopolitics: The Environment in Poststructuralist Thought

Verena Andermatt Conley, Routledge 1997

h/b £40.00 0 415 10284 7, p/b £12.99 0 415 10306 1

In her conclusion, Conley tells us that her inspiration in writing this book was 'to put ecofeminism to the test of struggling, resisting, becoming, and mapping out future lines of flight' (152), a vision in respect of which the text is ultimately somewhat disappointing. A less ambitious, but more feasible—and largely realised—aim develops in relation to, and derives much of its force from, Conley's critical readings of discourses on the environment that unwittingly play out the age-old game of 'man's mastery of nature'. Conley argues that right-wing, liberal and postmodern writing of this ilk is not only retrograde on its own count, but tends to obscure or condemn (as 'politically correct') the crucial theoretical work for ecopolitics (and ultimately ecofeminism) that was carried out by francophile intellectuals of May 1968 notoriety.

The real objective of Conley's writing is thus to show how post-structuralist theory and '*la pensée 68*' open 'a space vital for the continued recognition and development of ecological consciousness and even the broad lines of ecofeminisms' (148, my emphasis). However, despite the fact that the feminist component of this work seems to take second place to the task of recovering structuralist and poststructuralist (non-feminist oriented) theory, the effect of the text is one of opening up rich and interesting possibilities for feminisms unaware of, or underestimating the importance of, their shared poststructuralist theoretical resources.

Conley's book falls into three fairly distinct parts, opening with a critique of two very different contemporary disparagements of environmentalism. In the first chapter, Luc Ferry's political rant against post-structuralism and ecology, *Le Nouvel Ordre écologique: l'arbre, l'animal, l'homme*, is shown to rely upon a retrograde view of subjectivity (Sartrean humanist existentialism). Here nature is classically defined in opposition to human freedom and culture, as that from which man dislocates and distances himself as measure of his transcendental and sovereign humanity.

Then, in the next and final chapter of this first part (ch. 2), Baudrillard is convincingly shown to be guilty of creating his own brand of first-world eco-blind ideology. No longer recalling the Western metaphysics of old, Baudrillard nevertheless exaggerates the collapse of the subject-object (culture-nature) opposition to the extent of dissolving the real (and any valuation of nature therewith), onto the stage of techno-consumerist simulacra.

In the second part of the book (chs 3-7), Conley looks at a number of '68' thinkers whose work she sees as interconnected, and as developments out of Lévi-Strauss's opposition to the supremacist treatment of nature in Cartesianism. This ethos is traced in its various manifestations: through Bateson, Serres, and Prigogine and Stengers. The cumulative force of these ideas is drawn together in a neo-Heideggerian approach to technology, informed by Virilio's dystopian vista of our time. There are potential dangers in Conley's project. However, the risks are obviated by the use of Guattari's (anti-humanist) theories of deterritorialization and reterritorialization where, for the

human, ecology is defined in terms of the art of dwelling (in and by means of World rather than Being).

The third part of the book involves a politicisation of the ecological stakes, as Conley moves on to consider de Certeau's account of the economic reality of diverse rural and nomadic communities in their attempts to preserve their ways of dwelling. The importance of writing and language that does not play into the hands of mainstream (masculinist) political ideology and sham democracy is crucial here, and thus is introduced the long-awaited link with feminism. Conley uses the work of Hélène Cixous and Luce Irigaray to exemplify the reactive and creative power of *écriture féminine*. This is seen as offering the possibility not merely of resistance, but of a new economy of language and thought for the entwined agendas of ecology and feminism.

In conclusion, Conley's book presents the reader with a diverse and interesting overview of what she calls structural and poststructural writings 'with specific attention to the ecological consciousness ... [in order] to reassess them and open them out to some pragmatic issues combining feminism and ecology today' (147).

On the whole, the book is not a difficult read, although much of the philosophical and scientific vocabulary is left unexplained (a fact left unremedied in the over-long and frequently irrelevant footnotes). Indeed, details of the poststructuralist and ecofeminist connections are often left to the reader to figure out. My main difficulty with the book, however, concerns Conley's reluctance to deal with the seeming contradiction between her open embrace of the eco-sound products of post-humanist (post subject-object) theory (in chs 4-6) and her hostility towards a poststructuralist abandonment of fully constituted subjectivity necessary to attain these ends. 'Yet as a feminist I am not yet ready to let the political force of an ecological and feminist subjectivity be denied' (55).

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Disseminating Lacan

David Pettigrew & François Raffoul (eds), State University of New York 1996, h/b £46.50 0 7914 2785 4, p/b £15.50 0 7914 2786 2

This is a disparate collection of essays on Lacan, but perhaps this is its objective. Pettigrew and Raffoul aptly claim that Lacan speaks in 'several

voices' (3) and the multiplicity of themes and subject matter in the volume are certainly testimony to the fluidity of Lacanian discourse. The sections of the book cover philosophy; science; aesthetics and literature; sexuality and gender; psychoanalytic theory and practice. The diversity of the collection is its central merit.

In the first section of the book, James Phillips traces the encounters and dialogues between Lacanian psychoanalysis and Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology, as he draws out some of the tensions between the two thinkers. Such a comparison is welcome, since Merleau-Ponty often juxtaposed his position with that of Lacan, and since it is Lacan's position *vis-à-vis* Hegel and Heidegger that is more often used as an entry into the relationship between phenomenology and psychoanalysis.

The points of confrontation developed by Phillips concern the role of embodiment and the perceptual unconscious in Merleau-Ponty, against the centrality of linguistics and autonomous modes of signification in Lacan. This juxtaposition is interesting, not least because the category of the imaginary and the role of perception were central to the positions both of Lacan and (the later) Merleau-Ponty. Phillips draws out their different understandings of perception: for Lacan, the gaze is shot through with the subject's anxiety and desire; for Merleau-Ponty, the scopic field is split into visible and invisible. Ultimately, Phillips sees no point of reconciliation between the two. Thus, Lacan, for the most part, confines his analysis to language and the materiality of the subject's speech in symptoms, whilst Merleau-Ponty's focus on embodiment is transformed, in his later works, into an ontology of the flesh with a more worldly embodiment in nature.

Babette Babich's essay links Lacan's elusive concept of the 'real' with, and against, the Nietzschean themes of the body and a primordial, organic chaos. Babich's speculations claim a place for Nietzschean reverberations in Lacan's 'real'. Of particular interest is her discussion of the two thinkers' critiques of classical causality. However, this drawing of parallels between the two is endless. Lacan's 'real' is equated not only with a critique of science (in ways that some readers of Lacan might question), but also linked to Dionysian tragedy, the artist and to the eternal return. Nietzsche's understanding of consciousness is also best explained, for Babich, with reference to the registers of Symbolic and Imaginary (60). This essay certainly illuminates Nietzsche via Lacan and

vice versa. However, although the concept of the real is explored in many theoretical guises, I am left wondering whether the explanatory role that the 'real' had in Lacan's later work has been lost.

In the section entitled 'Lacan and Science', analyst Joël Dor contests the epistemological status of Lacan's mathematical paradigms. He argues that the structures of Moebius Strip, Torus and Borromean Knot are not scientific concepts, but metaphorical illustrations and elucidations which do not allow us to reach scientific conclusions. The other two essays in this section are sociological rather than scientific and their connection to the section heading is, at best, ambiguous. In one, Stephen Michelman argues that the symbolic inscribes signification always within a discourse of social exchange and collective sociological relations. In the other, Judith Feher Gurewich claims that Lacan's theory of desire can contribute to an understanding of the *social* roots of human subjectivity.

Deborah Bergoffen's essay 'Queering the Phallus' (in the section on gender and sexuality) also questions the implications of reading Lacan's symbolic as a universal structure. Drawing largely on Irigaray's critique of Lacanian psychoanalysis, Bergoffen maintains that Lacan's comments on the historical specificity and contingency of the ego's evolution are not extended to the role of Oedipus. The cultural critique of the Oedipus Complex is thus closed off by Lacan. Bergoffen points to the ethical and political failings of the symbolic order from a feminine point of view and concludes that 'so long as we speak of castration, both men and women will be lured to evade their subjectivity' (p.285).

This volume includes eight other essays by well-known Lacanians. I would certainly recommend the volume for its insightful and stimulating individual contributions. I am less convinced by the introduction to the volume. This does nothing to hint at the theoretical direction(s) within Lacanian studies, nor does it attempt to cross-reference or synthesise at a general level these many interdisciplinary concerns.

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Returns of the French Freud: Freud, Lacan and Beyond

Todd Dufresne (ed.), Routledge 1997

h/b £40 0 415 91525 2, p/b £12.99 0 415 91526 0

In some ways, I think we have been spoilt over the last twenty-five years. Over and over again, we have been able to read works of remarkable passion and originality, which have changed our lives, transformed our view of the world, and inspired us in our own enterprises. These works have sometimes been feminist, sometimes philosophical, sometimes psychoanalytic or literary—the boundaries have often been fluid. But they have given us charged and extraordinary reading experiences. It is hard for the next generation to live up to this. Now we are seeing a lot of rather ordinary—clever, yes, but dull—work following in the wake of an exceptional period. To the realm of the ordinary clever-but-dull belongs this uninspiring collection of essays roughly (*very* roughly) concerned with the reception of Lacan and psychoanalysis in North America, and edited by a graduate student who will probably flourish in the groves of ordinary academe.

Although the line-up of contributors includes some impressive names and well-known scholars (Jacques Derrida, John Forrester, Rodolphe Gasché), and Derrida is brilliant as always, the end result is unconvincing. It is not enough to include an essay by Derrida to ensure the success of a collection, and in fact it only serves to throw into relief the inadequacy of some of the other contributors. The uneven quality of the contributions is only one of the drawbacks.

The guiding idea of the collection is probably the editor's remark that 'the spirit of both Freud and Lacan lives on precisely to the extent that their work resists any final systematisation or institutionalisation' (2), which is unexceptional. But I thought it was a pity that the reassessment of Freud or Lacan should be left in the banal and slightly rambling hands of Paul Roazen or the idiosyncratic ones of Mikkel Borch-Jacobsen. The latter (in conversation with Chris Oakley) has the tone of a triumphant schoolboy who thinks he has caught his master in an error: there is a typical petulant second-generation feel about it.

For specialists who might want to consult individual papers, the line-up is as follows: Paul Roazen on Nietzsche and Freud and the sanitization of Freud by North American humanist psychology; François Roustang on sublimation, attacking the concept as untenable and

defending (all too briefly) an alternative theory of imagination; Kelly Oliver on Freud's fear of birth; Tina Chanter on the relationship between the penis/phallus distinction and the sex/gender distinction; John Forrester on the case of the Ratman; Daniel Bounoux on the problems with Lacan's linguistic paradigm; Gary Genosko on the reception of Marshall McLuhan in France; Todd Dufresne on the radical self-deconstructive Freud; Derrida on Freud in Foucault's *Madness and Civilisation*; Rodolphe Gasché on metapsychology (the translation of a paper written in the seventies); Mikkel Borch-Jacobsen defending shamanism against psychoanalytic theory (roughly). What a curious and disparate collection. I wish I could be more positive about it.

In his paper, Derrida comments that 'all pathbreaking opens the way only at a certain price, that is, by bolting shut other passages, by ligaturing, stitching up, or compressing—indeed repressing—at least provisionally, other veins' (135). If one sees Freud and Lacan as the pathbreakers, one might reasonably hope, then, that a critical collection such as this—with its appeal to the spirit of those great metapsychologists—might start to think about these other veins or pathways. If only ...

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The following information was omitted from the
Books Reviews section in *Women's Philosophy Review* no 17:

Toril Moi & Janice Radway (eds), *Materialist Feminism* is published by Duke University Press, and is distributed in the UK by the Associated Universities Publishing Group
1, Gower St., London WC1E 6HA.

Associated Universities Publishing Group also distributes
Feminism and Postmodernism
(eds Margaret Ferguson & Jennifer Wicke,
also Duke University Press)
which was also reviewed in *WPR* 17.

BOOKS RECEIVED

Please contact Margaret Whitford, Books Review Editor, promptly at the address given on the inside cover if you are interested in reviewing one of the following books.

- Adam, Alison, *Artificial Knowing: Gender and the Thinking Machine*, Routledge 1998, 0 415 12962 1; 0 415 12963 X.
- DeCew, Judith Wagner, *In Pursuit of Privacy: Law, Ethics and the Rise of Technology*, Cornell University Press 1997, 0 8014 3380 0; 0 8014 8411 1.
- Gergen, Mary M. and Sara N. Davis (eds), *Toward a New Psychology of Gender. A Reader*, Routledge 1997, 0 415 91308 X; 0 415 91307 1.
- Günter, Andrea, *Literatur und Kultur als Geschlechterpolitik: Feministisch-literaturwissenschaftliche Begriffsweiten und ihre Denk(t)räume*, Ulrike Helmer Verlag 1997, 3 927 164 96 8.
- Hope, Landrine & Elizabeth A. Klonoff, *Discrimination Against Women: Prevalence, Consequences, Remedies*, Sage 1997, 0 7619 0954 0; 0 7619 0955 9.
- Kourany, Janet A. (ed.), *Philosophy in A Feminist Voice: Critiques and Reconstructions*, Princeton University Press 1998, 0 691 03313 7; 0 691 01936 3.
- Meyers, Diana Tietjens, *Feminist Social Thought: A Reader*, Routledge 1997, 0 415 91536 8; 0 415 91537 6.
- Walker, Margaret, *Moral Understandings: A Feminist Study in Ethics*, Routledge 1998, 0 415 91420 5; 0 415 91421 3.

THE PHILOSOPHER'S BOOKSHELF

LEVINAS

Emmanuel Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, trans. A. Lingis, Duquesne University Press, 1987

by Alex Klaushofer

Totality and Infinity is a strange book, very much a philosophical work yet one which amply demonstrates the limits of philosophy. Although written in late middle age (it was first published in 1961), it represents the first of the two major works which comprise Levinas's now well-known ethics. In one sense it could be said to play the most traditional of roles: a treatise in moral philosophy that categorically rejects the claims of egoism and relativism. Yet this project takes off from a thoroughgoing critique of the philosophical tradition out of which emerges a single big idea: the paramount importance of the ethical issuing in an unconditional responsibility for the Other.

Levinas makes this claim by giving an alternative account of consciousness as constituted heteronomously rather than autonomously. The book takes the form of a quasi-phenomenological story of the subject, who starts out as a pre-reflective being that has a relationship of unproblematic dependence on the elements. The significant moment in the development of the self comes only with the encounter with the Other, which disrupts its at-homeness in the world and marks the beginnings of its full constitution as a being determined by exteriority.

From this point on, existence becomes undeniably moral in character but also ambiguous: the face of the other both bestowing meaning and issuing an oppressive demand. But despite its narrative form, and its indebtedness to the phenomenological methods of Husserl and Heidegger, *Totality and Infinity* cracks and creaks all over the place. Most of the action is over two thirds of the way through; the book is often repetitive in style and unruly in structure.

Philosophically, it may well fail to convince; its claims for ethical obligation and transcendence are arguably asserted rather than demonstrated, so much so that it seems they turn on something akin to blind faith, a kind of blithe naiveté about the existence and durability of goodness. In part this impression is due to the evocation of aspects of

everyday existence which are taken to be fundamental and a cause of joy, 'the happiness of living—of breathing, of seeing, of feeling' (149), but these are counter-balanced by oblique references to the evil of the holocaust, to racism, history and survivors. Both kinds of allusion seem to power the text with a force that is enriching and, in a traditional sense, non-philosophical.

These apparent failings are precisely what for me make up the appeal and success of *Totality and Infinity*. I like the way in which its claims work performatively through the experience of reading, and the way in which, *contra* the mannered reflexivity of Derrida, it shows its workings on the outside. Like a good friend known for a long time (I don't know another like it), I appreciate its quirks of character and find there are still things about it withheld from my understanding.

Regent's College, London

DERRIDA

Jacques Derrida, *Spurs: Nietzsche's Styles/ Éperons: Les Styles de Nietzsche*, trans. Barbara Harlow, University of Chicago Press 1979

by Gill Jagger

The 'feminine', and sexual difference, are among philosophy's 'others'. Their exclusion provides the conditions of possibility for philosophy itself and, at the same time, this exclusion of sexual difference from philosophical significance serves to deny cultural significance to the feminine and women in their own right. But what could this 'own right' be? How can we develop a view of sexual difference in non-essential, non-oppositional terms, avoiding what Derrida terms 'the logic of castration'? What attracted me to *Spurs* was Derrida's—albeit controversial—way of dealing with these issues.

Here, as indeed elsewhere, Derrida re-sexualizes the apparently neutral language of philosophy by both speaking 'like a woman', and by employing metaphors representing the female body. In *Spurs* he adopts a purportedly 'feminine' style, using parody and also self-parody. Taking issue with Jacques Lacan for whom the 'feminine' is the symbol of castration, Derrida replaces the so-called 'logic of castration' with the 'logic of the hymen'. Derrida suggests that the feminine and woman

mark the limits of a logic that works in oppositional terms. Thus, Derrida says, for example, 'With a knowledge that would out-measure the most self-respecting dogmatic or credulous philosopher, woman knows that castration *does not take place*' (*Spurs*, 61, original emphasis).

Although *Spurs* is basically a discussion of Nietzsche's texts and Heidegger's interpretation of them, Derrida announces in the opening lines that his subject is woman. What he means, of course, is that his subject is undecidability, since 'woman' is posed as the figure for undecidability. Derrida wants to show that there is no such 'thing' as woman and focuses on the multitude of meanings of 'woman' in Nietzsche's writings to do so. He adds to this a discussion of the undecidability of the meaning of these texts themselves, indeed of any texts, to show that not only is the meaning of 'woman' undecidable, indeterminate, non-essential, so too is the meaning of 'man' and of 'sexual difference' itself. But, as Derrida puts it: 'all of ontology nonetheless, with its inspection, appropriation, identification and verification of identity, has resulted in concealing, even as it presupposes it, this undecidability' (*Spurs*, 103-4).

One of the main themes in *Spurs* is that of this relation between ontology and appropriation. Indeed this is one of the main themes in Derrida's work, generally. Here, as indeed elsewhere, the question of what is 'proper' to an entity is tied to the question of sexual difference, and the relation of sexual difference to ontological difference. Thus, Derrida takes issue with Heidegger's notion of Being—*Dasein*—as neutral and prior to sexual difference, as well as taking issue with the latter's distinction between ontological difference and sexual difference. Derrida argues that Heidegger's view of sexual difference is based on a process of appropriation, because the very possibility of sexual difference, and indeed ontological difference, involves the question of 'the proper'. The question of 'the proper' is, therefore, prior to both. Furthermore, in each case it is undecidable.

So although one theme of *Spurs* might seem to be Nietzsche's famous positioning of woman as 'the untruth of truth', Derrida's stylistic ruminations are not so much about revealing the truth of woman—and revealing what woman 'is'—as examining the undecidability of the category and the impropriety of any such question. Furthermore, in his examination of the ways in which 'woman' and the 'feminine' are represented and repressed, they become a disruptive force in what he here

characterises as 'affirmative deconstruction'. It is affirmative in that the deconstruction of the man/woman opposition in Nietzsche's texts opens it up to the undecidability of what is 'proper' to either, and the possibilities this brings for understanding sexual difference in non-oppositional terms.

Derrida provides an allegorical reading of the 'feminine', then, to open the possibility of moving beyond a binary understanding of sexual difference, which, he argues, structures western thought and practice. This involves gesturing towards the possibility of thinking sexual difference otherwise. For Derrida it has to be a matter of 'gesturing', an 'opening onto' new possibilities, because the aim is not simply to replace one concept with another. Nor is his aim to reverse existing hierarchies within the existing conceptual structure, characterised here as 'logocentrism' and elsewhere as 'phallogocentrism'. Instead he wants to actually disrupt the conceptual structure itself. For Derrida, it is not possible to simply step outside logocentrism and adopt a neutral, asexual, 'gender-free' position, since such a position always bears the masculine hallmark even while it effaces it. Thus, Derrida's aim is to mime the feminine strategically, in order to reveal the limits of logocentrism and phallogocentric categories, and in so doing, provide the space for future possibilities, as yet unknown and unknowable.

Leeds Metropolitan University

McDOWELL

John McDowell, *Mind and World*, Harvard University Press 1994

by Miranda Fricker

In the summer of 1991, just before embarking on my doctorate, I went to one of the John Locke lectures given that year in Oxford by John McDowell. I'd missed the first two, but it didn't matter, as the vision of the lectures as a whole was present in each one. This one-off lecture made a deep impression on me, and that summer I worked (with no little difficulty) through the transcript of all six. They were to be published three years later, with appendices added, as *Mind and World*.

McDowell's overall view is, I think, like this. If sensory experience is a source of knowledge, then the content of experience must be capable of standing in rational relations. Only something conceptual could

do that. Therefore the content of experience cannot be a brute Given, and the idea of the Given as a source of perceptual knowledge is a myth. So Kant was right. Experience must be conceptual through and through: 'intuitions without concepts are blind'. The relation between mind and world that is enacted in sensory experience should be understood as a receptivity to the 'thinkable facts' that constitute the world, and this receptivity is made possible by the operation of concepts. Concepts, of course, are the tools of *active* thought—their exercise is the exercise of our faculty of spontaneity. In critical thought, in discussion, in debate, we use them actively, deliberately, even manipulatively. So an awareness of the active role of concepts, combined with the commitment to experience as being conceptual through and through, can seem to threaten the independence of the world, can seem to entail idealism.

Here we are confronted by a traditional impasse. But McDowell finds a way out with the help of a brilliant guiding insight: in sensory experience concepts are *operative passively*. Without any active deliberation on our part, concepts open our minds to the intelligible world. Before reading McDowell, I had thought that the most promising way forward for feminist epistemology was to work through the social implications of the underdetermination thesis and the theory-dependence of data. Somewhere along the line, empiricism had evidently installed itself in my philosophical consciousness. But now it had been made stunningly evident to me that empiricism couldn't possibly be right. For somewhere on Quine's periphery—no matter how superficial the irritation—there was a mythical beast called the Given.

Empiricism's epistemology was as ill-grounded as its metaphysics was wrong-headed. Furthermore, the Quinean empiricism which had once seemed so promising to me as a means of placing feminist values in the world now appeared brutishly scientific. By contrast it was suddenly crystal clear that McDowell's neo-Kantianism presented the right basis from which to ask epistemological questions, including those which arise from feminist consciousness. I'm still convinced that this is so.

Birkbeck College, London

CONFERENCE REPORTS

Report on *Society for Women in Philosophy Conference*

Luton, May 1997

The SWIP Conference held in the University of Luton on 24th May 1997 was, in the first instance, somewhat overshadowed by separate problems within the University. The day before the conference was held, fifty University staff were given compulsory redundancy, and in the aftermath of this blow it was difficult for the conference organisers to arrange publicity and finalise the arrangements in time. As a result the conference was a somewhat smaller affair than usual and suffered a few initial technical hitches, but otherwise should be considered a success, both as a forum for the exchange of ideas and as an opportunity to meet for informal discussion after the conference.

The speakers offered three excellent papers on feminist perspectives on metaphysics in both critical and constructive versions. The quality of papers and the discussion which followed can be taken as clear proof, if proof was needed, that feminist research in philosophy continues to thrive and develop.

Christine Battersby opened proceedings with a paper which set up a series of contrasting dialogues between Irigaray and Judith Butler, Hegel and Lacan and Kierkegaard, on the basis of the different 'Antigones' who appear in each thinker's work. This was a defence of an enquiry into the possibility of using the 'female position' in philosophy, where 'female' is understood as both embodied and as socially/historically constructed. As such, it argued against the more disruptive, volatile and parodic stance which Butler tends to take.

The paper examined the appearance of Antigone in Hegel and in Lacan. It was then suggested that Irigaray counters both Hegel's and Lacan's Antigones by dramatising both their 'others', and offering another possibility for philosophy that involves 'body to body' contact and birth, rather than 'formal combat or verbal wrestling'. By re-thinking difference, Christine Battersby argued that new potentials for feminist philosophy can emerge, some of which may be developed via Kierkegaard's equivocal 'either/or' stance.

Stella Sandford's paper returned to 'first questions' by reflecting on what we actually mean by metaphysics. Thinking about the way philosophy legitimates certain questions and modes of asking such questions, it emphasised the political dimension of the enquiry into 'what is'. The paper considered descriptive and speculative metaphysics as different frameworks for characterising not only enquiries into 'what is', but also as accounts of what philosophy itself can and ought to do. Thus, Stella Sandford defended Irigaray's meta-descriptive approach to metaphysics as the possibility of raising historical (and also ethical and political) issues in the context of philosophy.

In a close reading of Hegel's *Philosophy of Nature*, Alison Stone opened up this Hegelian text for possible feminist approaches to difference. She linked Hegel's discussion of nature as sensual and conceptual, universal and particular, and matter and form, to questions of sexual difference, reproduction and the specificity of sexual identity, and suggested ways in which this might be useful for feminist enquiry into corporeal space, genre and self-other relations.

I found all of the papers stimulating and scholarly (I just hope I haven't misrepresented any of them here), and the day a very enjoyable occasion as well as offering plenty of scope for further reflection.

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Review of *Society for Women in Philosophy Special Meeting*

London, October 1997

A special open meeting of SWIP was arranged for 25th October at which members could discuss the problems facing women philosophers in the current context of a higher education system dominated by the requirements of the *Research Assessment Exercise* (RAE).

At the start of the meeting the audience was reminded that two years ago SWIP conducted a survey of the position of its members in the profession of academic philosophy. What was found was that women continued to feel themselves to be disadvantaged within the profession. One of the key reasons identified for this was the greater likelihood of women philosophers working in areas of philosophical enquiry which are not regarded as 'mainstream' by the majority of philosophy departments in UK universities. Such areas include ethical and political philosophy, as well as continental philosophy and feminist philosophy. The experience of the 1996 RAE appears to have reinforced these concerns.

The discussion in the afternoon covered three broad areas:

- 1) The actual experience of the RAE exercise by women philosophers within and outside University Philosophy Departments.
- 2) Ways in which the accountability, transparency and expertise of the of RAE Panels could be improved.
- 3) Positive ways in which SWIP members could work within the current RAE system.

In relation to (1) several points emerged from different people's experience. Perhaps the most significant point was that it wasn't clear at what stage of the process the exclusion or devaluing of certain kinds of philosophical work occurred. Women philosophers working outside Philosophy Departments (for instance in Politics or Cultural Studies) reported that they had not experienced prejudice against, for instance, work in feminist philosophy at the departmental level. Instead, most had found their status and employment prospects enhanced by their philosophical publications. But women within Philosophy Departments often told a different story.

Did the devaluation of certain kinds of philosophical work occur at the stage of departmental selection processes that decided what work was to be submitted to the RAE Panel? Or was the problem the RAE

Panel's actual consideration of work submitted? It was noted that some Heads of Department in Philosophy and some Universities seem to have operated a conservative strategy, because of assumptions about RAE Panel preferences. If this was the case, it clearly has strong implications for the likelihood of certain kinds of philosophers being employed in current circumstances.

The situation was felt to have been exacerbated by reports that the RAE Panel operated with a hierarchy of forms of publication, as opposed to substance: preferring articles in refereed journals and single-authored books to other forms of publication, even ones which had been specially commissioned for special-issue journals or edited collections. There are, however, many more philosophy journals that reflect the concerns of the mainstream analytic tradition than for other aspects of philosophy. This has led to a greater presence of published work in continental and feminist philosophy in the form of edited collections. If refereed journals articles are given a higher status than chapters in edited books by RAE Panels then this is necessarily discriminatory against work in philosophy which does not have a wide range of journal outlets.

Another factor which also served to heighten the concerns of women working in Philosophy Departments was the lack of any representation of feminist philosophy among the expertise of RAE Panel members and the lack of an assessor for interdisciplinary work.

Overall the feeling of the meeting was that the effects of the RAE on women philosophers had been more negative than positive. Positive effects tended to be located in non-Philosophy Departments. Within Philosophy, in some cases individuals had come under great pressure from their own institution after negative RAE outcomes, and some Philosophy Departments had also suffered significant drops in resources. For those women still searching for employment within the academy it was felt that having specialised in what are perceived as non-mainstream areas of philosophy could be a significant disadvantage in the philosophy job-market and, moreover, that the pressure to acquire both teaching experience and publications before gaining a full-time job was becoming intolerable.

In relation to (2) the discussion centred around the issue of how women philosophers could ensure that neither intended nor non-intended discrimination against any area of philosophy crept into the

RAE procedure. It was agreed that the best way to ensure this was by making sure both that those submitting work for the RAE were as well informed as possible about the procedures and criteria being used in the assessment, and that the RAE Panel was as well informed as possible about the range of academic philosophical work and the specific requirements for understanding and judging it. It was suggested that the RAE Panel be approached on an informal basis, to be asked how their procedures could be improved so as to prevent Departmental Chairs and University Appointments Panels acting as a force for conservatism, in the belief that this would reap RAE rewards.

In pursuing these goals it was agreed that SWIP would be working jointly with all those who felt that their branch of philosophy had been inadequately recognised by the last round of the *Research Assessment Exercise*.

In relation to (3) the most positive way forward was felt to be the development of refereed journals in which non-mainstream philosophical work could be published: one example of this was clearly the *Women's Philosophy Review*. In addition, it was suggested that members should take up any opportunities which occurred to be involved in editorial processes as it was only by participating in existing academic networks that dismissive attitudes to certain kinds of work could be changed. The Society needed to be as supportive as possible in making information about grants and bursaries or publishing opportunities available to members.

Kimberly Hutchings
University of Edinburgh

CALLS FOR PAPERS

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.

The final deadline for receipt of papers is 31/10/98. Please first submit an abstract of around 200 words by 01/07/98.

All submissions will be anonymized & assessed by readers, as well as by the Editors. Please request stylesheet from Guest Editors to conform to house style.

If you have an idea for a paper that you would like to discuss, then please contact either Alison Stone or Stella Sandford.

Please send papers and abstracts to either Alison Stone Flat 7, 4 Cambridge Road, Hove East Sussex, tel (0)1273 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 & Nicola Foster

The editors invite papers on such topics as Aesthetics & Difference; Aesthetic Categories; Aesthetics & History; Modernism; Art & Craft; European Debates about Art; Art Practice.

Also welcome are papers relating to particular Arts, including Literature, Film, Dance, Theatre, Architecture & the Visual Arts.

Abstracts (@ 600 words) or complete articles (@ 4000 words) by Jan. 1999. Shorter or longer articles will be considered.

Contact Guest Editors for preliminary discussion or advice and stylesheet. All submissions will be anonymized and assessed by readers, as well as by the Guest Editors.

Contact either Penny Florence Falmouth College of Art Woodlane, Falmouth Cornwall, TR11 4RA Penny@Falmouth.ac.uk or Nicola Foster Dept of Philosophy, University of Essex, Wivenhoe Park, Colchester, CO4 3SQ.

13–15 July, 1998
Macquarie University, Sydney.
Australian
Women in Philosophy
Conference
Programme Organiser
Robyn Ferrell
rferrell@laurel.ocs.mq.edu.au
<http://www.mq.edu.au/~phildept/>

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.
M.vanderSteen@fsw.ruu.nl

The Philosophers' Magazine

This new online & paper quarterly is interested in the work of SWIP & solicits offers of papers by women philosophers. It aims at both academic & non-specialist readers.

For the Debate Section of the magazine, the editor has suggested the questions 'Is philosophy gender neutral?' & 'Does philosophy involve essentially feminine qualities which a philosophy done only by men would lack?' He is looking for 2 SWIP members to take opposing sides.

Sample the magazine at:
<http://www.philosopher.demon.co.uk>

Contact Dr Julian Baggini, the Editor, direct if interested.

Call for Abstracts DISCIPLINE AND DEVIANCE: GENDERS, TECHNOLOGIES, MACHINES

October 2-4, 1998
A Conference at
Duke University
300 word abstracts by 30/5/98
Conference website
<http://www.duke.edu/~athain/discipline.html>

PRELIMINARY CONFERENCE ANNOUNCEMENT— CALL FOR PAPERS TO FOLLOW

end Jan, 1999
Paris, The Board of
Cinquanteaire du *Deuxième*
sexe

International Conference: 50th anniversary of the publication of 'The Second Sex'

Precise venue in Paris & date yet to be fixed. The focus of the conference will be the book itself; its reception & effects; Beauvoir & '2nd wave' feminism; the commentaries; political & theoretical heritage & developments. The organisers are also requesting overseas organisations and Centres as partners in disseminating the call for papers, etc. No financial commitment is entailed.

Contact: Christine Delphy
ChDelphy@aol.com

CONFERENCE ANNOUNCEMENTS

15–16 May, 1998

Dundee, co-organised by
Philosophy Dept, Univ of
Dundee & Jordanstone College
of Art

**Theoros Conference:
Aesthetics, History & Practice**
Speakers include Paul Davies,
Christine Battersby, Carolyn
Wilde, plus Panels on Art &
Gender

Tel (0)1382 344538
Fax (0)1382 224140
c.a.hippisley@dundee.ac.uk

23 May 1998 (10am–6pm)
ICA, 12 Carlton House Terrace,
The Mall, London:

**Post-Conventional Religion:
Feminism, Ethics &
Spirituality**

With Philippa Berry, Daphne
Hampson, Luce Irigaray,
Danah Zohar
Tickets @ £20/£15
Tel: (0)171 930 3647

28 May 1998, 6–7.30
with drinks afterwards
University of London
The Beveridge Hall, Senate
House, Cassal Lecture
title tba, Luce Irigaray,
in French, with translator
Admission Free

5–6 June 1998
Liverpool John Moore's
University: **Surveillance**
Contact: Mary Corcoran
School of Media, Critical &
Creative Arts, Liverpool John
Moore's Univ., L1 7BY
Tel (0)151 231 5054
M.Corcoran@livjm.ac.uk

19–21 June 1998

Keele University
**Gender, Sexuality & Law
Conference**
Contact: GSL98, Keele Univ.,
ST5 5BG
Tel (0)1782 583218
GSL98@keele.ac.uk
[http://www.keele.ac.uk.depts/
la/GSL98.htm](http://www.keele.ac.uk.depts/la/GSL98.htm)

20–26 June 1999

Tromsø, Norway
WW1999
**The 7th Interdisciplinary
Congress on Women**
Tel +47 77 64 58 99
Fax +47 77 64 64 20
Womens.worlds.99@skk.uit.no
[http://www.skk.uit.no/
windex.html](http://www.skk.uit.no/windex.html)

22 - 25 June 1998

University of Manchester
**After The Body: Conference on
Religion, Culture & Gender**
Contact: Dept of Religions &
Theology, University of
Manchester, M13 9PL
Tel (0)161 275 3615
crog@man.ac.uk

14–16 July 1998

Univ. of Hull/Women's Studies
Network Conference,
**Gendered Space: Women's
Choices & Constraints**
Contact: Rachel Alsop
Gender Studies, University of
Hull, HU6 7RX
Tel: (0)1482 465728
R.Alsop@cas.hull.ac.uk

31 July 1998

South Bank University, London
**Disrupting the Discourses:
Women Writers 1500–1700**
Tel (0)171-815 8062
kidniem@sbu.ac.uk

August 6-10, 1998,
Boston/International
Association of Women
Philosophers (IAPh)
**Lessons From The
Gynaecium—Women
Philosophizing: Past,
Present, Future**

Details & registration form
on the World Congress of
Philosophy website
[http://web.bu.edu/WCP/
IAPH/iaphengl.html](http://web.bu.edu/WCP/IAPH/iaphengl.html)
Registration free to members of
IAPh. Membership
\$35.00/\$20.00

**Please let WPR know if you
are a SWIP (UK) member
and intend going.**
We need more SWIP
representatives.

9–15 August 1998

Society for Philosophy in the
Contemporary World
YMCA of the Rockies
**Intersubjectivity:
Self, Other & Lifeworld**
Contact: James B. Sauer
St Mary's Univ., Antonio
Texas, 78228-836
philjim@stmarytx.edu

10–23 August, 1998

Åbo, Finland
Noise Summer School
**Epistemology,
Citizenship & Arts**
Advanced Introductory Course
for u/g & p/g students.
Tel +358 2 2154869
Fax +359 2 2154668
monica.nyland@abo.fi

22 August–26 August 1998
International Information &
Archives Centre for the Women's
Movement, Amsterdam
**Know How—Conference on
the World of Women's
Information**
Tel +31 20 66 50 820
Fax + 31 20 66 55 812
knowhow@iiaiv.nl

11–13 September 1998
University of Dundee
**Gendering the Millennium:
International Conference**
gsiann@dundee.ac.uk

16–18 September 1998
University of Lancaster,
**The Society for European
Philosophy**

1st Annual Conference,
including Adriana Cavarero,
Eckhart Förster, Alexander
Düttman, Christine Battersby,
Simon Critchley
Tel (0)1524-592497
fax (0)1524-594273
ICR@lancaster.ac.uk
[http://www.lancs.ac.uk/
users/cultres](http://www.lancs.ac.uk/users/cultres)

24–26 September 1998
Chicago
**Social Justice: Past
Experiences & Future
Prospects**

Latin American Studies
International Conference
with a special 'track' on 'Gender
& Sexuality'
lasa98@gunet.georgetown.edu

RECENT JOURNAL PUBLICATIONS

Monist 80: 3 (July 1997) 'Gender and Postmodern Communication', Fiona Steinkamp.

Philosophy and Phenomenological Research 57: 3 (September 1997) Review of *Moral Prejudices*, Annette Baier.

Radical Philosophy 85 (Sept/Oct 1997) Reviews of *Passion in Theory*, Robyn Ferrell; *Real Knowing*, Linda Alcoff.

Radical Philosophy 86 (Nov/Dec 1997) 'Birth, Love, Politics', Adriana Cavarero; review of *Sex and Existence: Simone de Beauvoir's 'The Second Sex'*, Eva Lundgren-Gothlin.

Bulletin of the Hegel Society of Great Britain 36 (Autumn/Winter 1997) Review of *Feminist Interpretations of G.W.F. Hegel*, (ed.) Patricia J Mills.

Journal of Applied Philosophy 14: 1 (April 1997) 'The Situated but Directionless Self: The Postmetaphysical World of Benhabib's Discourse Ethics', Elizabeth Hepburn; reviews of *Ecological Feminism*, (ed.) Karen Warren; *The Liberation Debate*, (eds) Michael Leahy and Dan Cohn-Sherbok.

Journal of Political Philosophy 4: 4 (Dec 1996) 'Survey Article: Operative Difference in Recent Feminist, Queer and Post-Colonial Theory', Penelope Deutscher.

NEW JOURNAL

African Philosophy (Carfax, Oxford), (eds) V.Y. Mudimbe, Emmanuel C. Eze & John Pittman. Contact Bruce Janz, Dept of Philosophy, Augustana Univ. College, 4901-46 Avenue, Camrose, Alberta, Canada, T4V 2R3

NEW WEB SITE

A useful new website on feminist theory has been set up by Kristin Switala, at: <http://www.utc.edu/~kswitala/Feminism/>

data compiled by Alison Stone, University of Sussex

Annual Subscription Rates for *Women's Philosophy Review* (3 issues)

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| Europe | £24 or US\$45 (individuals) £48 or US\$90 (institutions) |
| Rest of World | £24 or US\$45 (surface, individuals) £36 or US\$70 (air, individuals) £48 or US\$90 (institutions, surface) £60 or US\$115 (institutions, air) |

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If paying in overseas currency, please calculate at US\$ rate. Cheques should be made payable to the Society for 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, UK.

Membership of the Society for 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 and unwaged. Cheques should be made payable to the 'Society for 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 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.

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