

Women's Philosophy Review

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Cover Onora O'Neill is on the front face of the cube; Image of Truth from the Frontispiece of the *Encyclopaedia* is on the side; Statue of Isis is on the top.

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EDITORIAL

I have to admit I approached constructing this edition of *Women's Philosophy Review* with a great sense of fear and trepidation. Am I alone among philosophers in having a blind spot when it comes to Kant? When I was a student, tackling Kant nearly brought me out in hives, and as my old housemates will attest, the two months of my PhD study which were spent shut in a room 'learning' the *First Critique* from start to finish were not happy—not for myself, but neither, more especially, for them! However, in editing a volume of the journal which has adopted a decidedly Kantian tone, I have been offered the opportunity to confront my nemesis head on.

And, in retrospect, I am glad to have been afforded this chance. For, as this volume demonstrates, Kant is a key figure who cannot afford to be ignored by feminist philosophers. In different ways, the two main contributors to this edition highlight the value and pitfalls that Kant creates for feminist thought. Furthermore, their contributions ably elucidate a range of Kantian themes, enabling even the most timid reader of Kant to approach his writings, and subsequent feminist engagements with them, with renewed confidence and understanding.

The journal opens with a lively and illuminating interview by Kimberly Hutchings with Professor Onora O'Neill, one of the foremost women philosophers working currently in the UK. O'Neill has published widely on Kant and the Kantian tradition, and also on themes and debates within bio-ethics. The interview covers many of the main topics that have featured in her work, in particular focusing on debates surrounding particularism and universalism within ethical theory, and how concepts of agency and autonomy are to be understood.

As well as a life-time dedicated to her philosophical work, O'Neill is also very active in the public sphere. In addition to being Principal of Newnham College, Cambridge, Onora O'Neill is also a

cross-bench life peer, is currently chair of the Nuffield Foundation, and in 2002 she delivered the BBC Reith lectures. The theme of the lectures was trust and this concept also features prominently in the interview here. As O'Neill explains, her engagement with the public sphere arises directly out of her philosophical views and background. She situates her work as emerging from a Kantian tradition, although as she makes clear, she views her approach as 'standing on the shoulders' of Kant, rather than 'lying at his feet' (12).

This description of a thinker's relationship with their predecessors also neatly applies to many of the feminist philosophers whom Rachel Jones discusses in her review article of feminist responses to Kant.¹ In this comprehensive piece, Jones uses Robin May Schott's edited collection *Feminist Interpretations of Immanuel Kant* as a jumping off point for a critical analysis of the different ways in which feminist scholars have engaged both with Kant's own writings and the key Kantian debates within ethics, political theory, and aesthetics. As she shows, while many feminist thinkers have been—justly—critical of aspects of Kant, his work also contains themes that can be used for feminist ends. By highlighting what she considers to be both the strengths and weaknesses of Schott's collection, Jones draws our attention to a series of interventions by feminist thinkers who, by standing on Kantian shoulders, offer a range of conceptual resources that enhance and develop feminist philosophizing. In particular Jones is keen to show how an aspect of Kant's theory which is often neglected by feminist thinkers—namely the transcendental—can offer a particularly fruitful source of engagement.

Both O'Neill's interview and Jones' review article draw attention to the 'double' methodology often practiced within feminist philosophy: the tradition of philosophy is interrogated to expose its 'blind-spots' regarding the question of sexual difference, while theorists simultaneously use this analysis to build a different and more nuanced account of alternative possibilities arising out of this very same tradition. This approach again comes to the fore in many of the

books which are reviewed in the Journal's final section. Reviewers draw our attention to how Stella Sandford's and Judith Butler's recent work exposes key points of tension within the writings of Levinas and Lacan respectively. However, these tensions are not necessarily viewed as 'flaws' but rather as the sites of productive engagement for feminist thinkers. This method of engagement is also extended into the reviews themselves. Both Joanne Winning and Christine Battersby, in their critical reviews of two very different books, show how the authors' failure to engage with certain aspects of contemporary debates and scholarship, leads to partial accounts being presented. However, both reviewers also give clear indications as to what elements are missing and which other resources the reader would need to draw on in order to re-appraise the material under consideration.

For, as Onora O'Neill stresses in her interview, the role of the philosopher is not simply to observe and contemplate, but should also involve engagement and action. Whether this is in the form of active participation in public life, or in more cerebral interventions into intellectual debates, this is perhaps the choice of the individual feminist thinker. However, as this edition ably demonstrates, amongst the key 'tools' which the feminist philosopher has at her disposal, are the resources which are endowed by the tradition of thought itself. And even when the thinker is as initially daunting as Kant—or perhaps, because of the daunting nature of the material that is presented—this engagement can be immensely rewarding and productive. And this is said by a woman who, until editing this edition, used to break out in a cold sweat at the approach of Kant: no more, I have learnt my lesson!!

Helen Chapman,
Staffordshire University

Note

1. The editors would like to make it clear that while Rachel Jones is currently a general editor of WPR, this review article was commissioned and largely written before she took up this post. In general, we have a policy of not publishing work

by the general editors of the journal. However, exceptional circumstances prevailed with this piece. The editors have ensured that it has gone through the usual reviewing process for all articles to which the journal adheres. This also accounts for the fact that this editorial is written only by Helen Chapman, rather than both editors, as is the normal practice.

'This Girl is Hungry for Philosophy!'

An Interview with Onora O'Neill

conducted by Kimberly Hutchings

KH = Kimberly Hutchings

OO'N = Onora O'Neill

KH I'd like to just start by asking you what got you into philosophy in the first place, what attracted you to it, why did you end up taking that direction?

OO'N I certainly didn't choose it at school. When I was about thirteen I remember reading Lewis Carroll's logic puzzles and enjoying them a lot and spending a lot of time with them, but I went to University to do History and I was really very committed to doing History. Then I suppose I began to think very quickly that writing history essays didn't answer certain sorts of questions, so I told my History tutor that I thought I wanted to do Philosophy. I talked to a lot of people who were doing Philosophy and I was sent to Elizabeth Anscombe who asked me about causality—about which I knew extremely little—and then I'm told she wrote a very fine one-liner: she said "this girl is hungry for philosophy". Then the College let me switch and I did Philosophy and Psychology. At that time my own view would have been that Psychology interested me more but the rather limited diet one got in those days—mainly experimental and learning theory—certainly seemed to me not to give very useful explanations of action.

KH That's interesting, because in some ways one tends to think of becoming a philosopher or getting into philosophy being relatively unusual for women in the generation that we're talking

about, and Anscombe herself is one of the few figures from the generation before who was in play.

OO'N I didn't have any feeling like that. I mean, it was perhaps unusual for women to do graduate work at all. However, as I was taught mainly by Anscombe and Foot, and a little bit by Mary Warnock among others, as an undergraduate, I didn't notice that this was a field in which there weren't many women.

KH Do you have a sense of your trajectory of development as a philosopher, do you think your work has gone through phases?

OO'N Oh yes, a lot of different phases, certainly. One could hardly be a student around 1960 without thinking the later Wittgenstein extremely exciting and when I set out to do a PhD at Harvard, I certainly thought that that would be the direction in which I would go. I had also not really done much thinking about the history of philosophy, as was the habit in those days, and Harvard made me be at least a little bit more systematic about that. The real shift—perhaps one always notices the accidental—was when I took a seminar with Robert Nozick, then a very far from grand assistant professor, on rational choice theory.

We went through lots of formal models of rational choice, and I wrote an essay that Nozick liked and he said "you should really publish that". I had a moment of absolute cold feet and misgivings, and I thought "no, if there's something to be said about reason and action it isn't up this street", so that was the moment when I went back and started reading Kant seriously, and I was fortunate. Rawls of course has written very little on Kant, but he did give excellent lectures on Kant, and I had read the *Grundgesetze* as an undergraduate very carefully, but I also went to Charles Parson's *First Critique* lectures. I've always found that it is very important not, as it were, to try to take Kant's phi-

losophy piecemeal. Another thing that Harvard did for me—and I tell you that this was not by planning, it was inadvertence—when I was a teaching assistant (there's a footnote there I'll return to in a moment), Cavell required the first years to read *Religion Within the Limits of Mere Reason*. Now, they may have been baffled, but so was I and to some good effect because it made me think about a lot of things like interpretation and authority. The footnote is this: when you were a teaching assistant at Harvard in those days you were called a 'section man', regardless of sex—as though you mended fences!

KH [*laughs*] Excellent. So the turn to Kant, the beginning of examining Kant's work carefully, and the move into ethics as a key area of your work, are those coincidental?

OO'N Initially I worked quite a lot on some other things in Kant, too. In my first teaching years I always did a seminar on the *First Critique* and I wrote an article which I called "Space and Objects", so I was quite influenced by Strawson too in a way. That article taught me something: never give your articles too general a title because somebody at a college of gymnastics asked me whether he could have an offprint, so I imagine he thought it was about how to arrange the gym!

KH Oh dear, that's a good one. Following on from that, not perhaps ethics per se, but practical reasoning anyway has been a focus of quite a lot of your work?

OO'N That, I would say, has been the key underlying theme: the connection between reason and action. Of course, that doesn't land one simply in ethics or simply in political philosophy, although I have on the whole said much less about the explanation of action, mainly because I thought other people had said a lot about

it. I am rather coming round to thinking that a lot of what is said about motivation and desire just isn't plausible, so that maybe I will end up going back in a more theoretical direction there.

KH In relation to that, one of the things I like very much about your work is the way that when you are talking about issues like transnational justice or whatever, you have a view to institutional and political agency and its significance within this. I think that there could be some really interesting work to be done precisely about agency in that sense as well as individual human agents.

OO'N I agree very much. I think that although, if we distinguish artificial from natural agents and think of ordinary human beings as natural agents, it's true that you don't get any artificial agents without natural agents. Nonetheless artificial agents are perfectly well structured for making decisions, often in more limited spheres, sometimes in broader spheres than natural agents. What I also note is that natural agents themselves are artificial in many respects because we have socially learnt capacities and incapacities. I'd say that I see considerable continuity there. I think that if one's talking about how to translate principles into action, it's going to be in large part about the construction of enduring structures with capacities to act; and for me, that means institutions and character.

KH Absolutely. The other sense in which the connections between principles and actions seem to come to the fore in your work is that as well as being a philosopher you also have a public role, and make a contribution in terms of work on committees and so on. Perhaps it's too broad a question, but I'm interested in what you see as the difficulties of bringing philosophy to bear on action, as it were, in person, in the sense that your work combines the two?

OO'N I don't think one can do it in a sort of systematic frontal assault way. The ways in which one can contribute to the work of a committee or a group are, I think, just the things we do with our students: by drawing a certain distinction, by exposing ambiguity, by showing how much work a certain assumption does or fails to do. Very often I think exposing ambiguities is one of the more useful things. It's not rocket science, the sort of work one can do in public contexts, but I think it's also not surprising that quite a lot of philosophers do find themselves fairly active in public contexts.

KH Yes. Moving back to the reading of Kant which has obviously been so crucial to your work in general, it's interesting that you're one of a number of philosophers who have, as it were, returned to Kant. I mean, you mentioned Rawls already, and Habermas, and there's a huge range of work bringing Kantianism and cosmopolitanism together, or claiming some kind of return to Kant. You have your own specific constructivist reading; it's probably much too big a question really, not a fair question, but I'm interested in what you see as the virtues of the way in which you read Kant. Say, in distinction from quite a lot of the work that maybe comes through Rawls or comes through Habermas, often looking at problems similar to the ones you're interested in ... ?

OO'N There's a whole range of ways in which one can approach someone as big as Kant. There is a tradition of scholarship (which one certainly finds rather more of in Germany) which I greatly respect but have no desire to join, in which the careful reconstruction of what Kant may have meant and the context of what he was saying is the dominant aim. And then there are people who, to put it crudely, merely appropriate a little snippet of Kant, and I suppose people that I have been talking about in

the Gifford Lectures who wave some conception of individual autonomy around and ascribe it to Kant would be a good example of that sort of thing. I think that maybe this shows the sort of practical intention with which I agree, but what I look for is: how convincing an argument can be found here? That's a bit different from saying that I employ a strong principle of charity in reading, because my objective isn't necessarily to get close to whatever somebody meant or to its reconstruction. My objective, rather, is to see whether I find deep and interesting arguments that I can make plausible, and if perhaps some of them aren't exactly what Kant had in mind, that doesn't bother me one bit because he's led me there and that's fine. So I think it's a 'standing on the shoulders' rather than 'lying at the feet of' exercise.

KH Yes, I find that very interesting because it does seem to me that with philosophers like Kant, it is possible to almost have something like an ongoing dialogue; it isn't something that is finished, and as you say, there are so many ways in which you can ...

OO'N There are so many ways and it's also been really quite unusual until recently for people to try and read across a very large range in Kant. I think that when I was younger, on the whole, people who were interested in the *First Critique* were often not much interested in the ethics, let alone the political philosophy, let alone the philosophy of religion. Of course, people who are interested in Kant, in being Kant specialists, might do so ...

KH Yes.

OO'N ... there was a great deal of selectivity in the way people read.

KH Yes, I think that's right.

OO'N Of course, everyone's selective, there are very, very few people who want to read the collected works, but there are ways of being sort of broader-ranging and more eclectic which I found helpful.

KH One of the things that is a theme that continues in your work on justice and virtue, the bounds of justice and so on, is a critique of ethical particularism and of people who argue in a rather blanket way against abstraction in ethical thought. Just from the point of view for the moment of feminist philosophy, there's obviously quite a strong line within feminist philosophy, particularly feminist ethics which would, I think, perhaps on the surface look like something that would come under that heading—the ethical particularism and so on—especially something like the ethics of care. But you also tend to emphasize human vulnerability and finitude and so on in your work, which in another way would actually seem to fit quite well with some of the themes there. I mean, I have no idea if this is something that you've even got any interest in particularly, but how would you see something like that development within feminist ethics of the idea of the ethics of care?

OO'N I'm all for care, but I think the ethic of care is a very mistaken approach to care. I really rather like Carol Gilligan's work, but it was work in developmental psychology; it did not purport to be work in ethics or political philosophy. Unfortunately there have been at least some people who have taken up these phrases or slogans—the 'voice of justice' and the 'voice of care'—and thought of them as possible alternatives. Now, as far as I'm concerned one of the things that is really important for women is justice, and women who think that they can neglect justice are no sort of feminist, so that I think you have to have both. To argue for an 'ethic of care' by itself is to imagine that there are

some protected spaces where women can pursue the life of care—it's a wonderful double entendre, isn't it? Being protected from the harsh realities of the world, I suppose by men. Well that's exactly in my view what the harem and the traditional convent and so on were about, so that the anti-political interpretation of care seems to be one of a range of mistakes.

The other thing that has puzzled me greatly when reading others' writing on care is how historically limited it is. Care is after all *caritas*, the greatest of Christian virtues. When you go back to Aquinas, *caritas* is the mother of all virtues, including the virtue of justice. The conception of charity is very diminished in current ethical discourse, and so is that of care. So as you see, I'm all for care, but I just believe that you have to fit it into a sufficiently robust framework to take account of some other things, like oppression, or a possibility of oppression.

KH Sure. And for those things you need a universalism ... ?

OO'N Well, these issues seem to be a bit separate from the distinctions between particularism and universalism, although they are connected in some people's writings. Particularism, as I see it at the moment, has two rather different interpretations. One which I share (although I think it's often decontextualized) is that ultimately we have to make judgements about quite particular situations using quite thick categories and all the rest of it, and that makes very good sense. It doesn't of course in any way preclude the thought that in reaching those judgements we have to take account of universal principles. The other version of particularism, for which I have rather less time, is a more radical form of particularism, which takes it that we reach our ethical judgements by somehow eyeballing particular cases, and then some capacity to intuit or attend or appreciate is what takes over and there's no process of practical reasoning. I take that sort of

picture, though it has its charm, to be ultimately deeply anti-political and probably quite aestheticizing in its view of the moral life. It's a sort of moral connoisseurship masquerading as an attention to the particular, and of course, such attention can lead people to the most ghastly sorts of action.

KH I wondered what you'd thought of Martha Nussbaum's most recent book on women, development and justice, *Women and Human Development*??

OO'N Well, I like it in many ways. Nussbaum has been criticized, and I think rightly, for having a too ambitious account of the good and at the same time perhaps too little argument behind it. She says she's found some cross-cultural agreement, and, of course, you always get cross-cultural agreement unless you force hard choices. So my sense of it is that the account of the capabilities that are important is overblown and that, paradoxically, although what she hopes to attend to is the lives of poor women (mainly in India but also in other poor societies) by as it were demanding too much at the start, she hasn't got enough focus at the end. So, if I were developing a capabilities approach I think I would go with something closer to Sen's work, and try to think more about the basic capabilities that people need rather than the capabilities they'd need for a full, vital, flourishing, mega-wattage life.

KH Yes, sure. I wanted to finish by asking more specifically about the focus of the Gifford lectures and the bio-ethics material.¹ Perhaps just in general first: in dealing with issues to do with bio-ethics, has that provoked a particular set of philosophical questions, or do you see it as essentially having a lot in common with other areas of applied ethics that you may have worked with before—are there particular things that strike you?

OO'N Yes, well, bio-ethics is, of course, an area in which one has to think pretty hard about institutions and about human vulnerabilities, including the intersection of those two themes. I think the difficulty for bio-ethics is that there are no disciplinary standards. A lot of what one reads under this heading wouldn't really pass muster as philosophy, or as law, or as sociology. What I tried to do was to link some more systematic philosophical arguments to a few of the topics that I found myself reading on or working on in much more public contexts in the last ten years. The particular focus of the lectures is on autonomy and trust, and it almost fell into my lap as I began to think about the extraordinary combination of events whereby people are clamouring for more autonomy, better respect for patient autonomy, individual autonomy, and all the rest of it, but are also bemoaning the loss of trust. So I started thinking, you know, could there possibly be some internal connection between these two things, and are certain conceptions of autonomy perhaps one of the reasons why it proves difficult to preserve a culture of trust in this area of life? So the topic just came to me.

KH Yes, I can see that. Just looking ahead and at the notions of 'principled autonomy' and 'principled trust', I can begin to see the sort of argument that might emerge. But it's interesting again because it shows how in your work you bring together things which very often people tend philosophically to want to keep apart.

OO'N Yes, topics that they perhaps do not even want to keep apart but which just don't seem to belong to the same particular enterprise. What I'm actually very struck by is how extraordinarily little philosophers seem to have written about trust. It seems to me to have become a topic in which sociologists and anthro-

pologists have done rather better; you'd think that philosophers would have said a lot; but it seems that they haven't.

KH I'll remember that when people are asking about possible PhD topics to pursue!

OO'N Well, yes, we could all do with some really great PhDs turning towards this topic because trust isn't just one more virtue.

KH Could you say a bit more about that?

OO'N I suppose if you were to ask about reasoned trust and having reasons for trusting, you'd have to think about *having* reasons for trusting as against there *being* reasons for trusting: there could be a situation in which people are thoroughly trustworthy, but because the evidence of the trustworthiness is unavailable or only available with great difficulty, they are then mistrusted. The general idea that I shall be pursuing is that the ways in which we have sought to improve trust have been by trying to jack up the amount of evidence available to show that certain institutions or persons are trustworthy, largely by means of what you might call the audit culture. But this isn't necessarily available to the people who need to do the trusting, and it's naive to think that something called 'better communication' is going to make it available just like that. The evidence has often actually been put together in ways that make it rebarbative and unassimilable because of course it's designed for auditors and not for the people who need to decide whether or not to trust. So I think we've got a difficulty connecting the public culture of regulation and audit with trust. It strikes me at present that it's like the person who is busily digging a hole and throwing the earth over his shoulder into another bit of the hole; we dig like mad to improve ac-

countability in order to improve trust, but meanwhile we're destroying trust.

KH Yes, it just gets eaten into; I shall look forward to the trust lecture. One last question really, just to wrap it up. Of contemporary philosophers working across the range of different aspects of philosophy, whose work do you perhaps most admire or feel has been most significant for you?

OO'N Rawls has undoubtedly been significant for me; he was my PhD supervisor.

KH Oh, is that right?

OO'N Amartya Sen is certainly significant for the sort of work I've done on poverty and international justice ... (pause) ... I think I see myself in some ways to be a bit lonely philosophically. I don't identify myself particularly with any school; I haven't, on the whole, found myself comfortably at home among the Rawlsians, for example. I suppose I am one of the first group of his pupils who worked on Kant. If I have any group I'm close to, it's Rawls' pupils who worked on more historical themes, people like Thomas Hill and Christine Korsgaard, Andrew Reath and Barbara Herman; it's very interesting that they were all Rawls' pupils, mostly later than me, and are now all people I know.

KH Interesting.

OO'N I don't know if you've seen a book that they did together, which was called *Reclaiming the History of Ethics*? It was a group of historical essays influenced by Rawls; it was a sort of *Festschrift* for him. It came out with CUP, edited by Herman, Reath and Korsgaard, I think.² The difficulty about it is that in some ways—in

contrast, say, to the Cambridge school of political thought—it really isn't historically very ambitious or very learned, and it has its limitations there. But those are people whom I know well, and among them, although he's not a Rawls pupil for obvious reasons of age, Jerry Schneewind. Their work is perhaps in some ways closest to mine.

I've always tried to keep going in two parallel tracks, one of which involves reflecting on Kant, and looking at some of the details of texts, while the other tries to follow parallel lines of argument independently of the texts. So there are various problems I've taken up, doing what I suppose one can call applied ethics (though it's a phrase I don't much care for because I think it suggests quite a misleading model of what one's doing).

As for Kant and international justice, that in a way is a very natural connection. I understand why many people are doing this, although there is also no doubt a historically contingent reason in that it was the 200th anniversary of Kant's 'Perpetual Peace' essay in 1995. But I think that there's a much more general reason. The theories of justice that we have generally looked at—and this has become very obvious looking at late Rawls—are mainly designed as theories of the just state; many of their protagonists have been up-front about that. So it's extremely interesting that, although Kant is writing his main works in political philosophy in the period just before and during the French Revolution, he thinks that a statist account of justice, or an account of the just state, can't be written independently of thinking about the context of that state among other states.

KH One very, very last question, has just been raised by what you were saying there. Have you ever looked at Arendt's work on Kant?

OO'N Yes, the connection of the Gifford lectures of course ...³

KH --- exactly.

OO'N -- Arendt's lectures on judgement, which are extremely bizarre, as is her work on Kant and politics. But I think I have some sympathy with that work. There is a sort of line that you can read of rather political interpretations of Kant; I would see Karl Jaspers as one person there and Arendt as another, and Ronald Beiner is obviously working very much in that idiom, and what's his name, Hans Saner?⁴

KH Oh yes, that's a nice book I would say.

OO'N Yes, a very nice book isn't it, and the title is very odd— quite different in German than in English.

KH Yes, it goes on for ages, doesn't it?

OO'N I think that if you read Kant thinking about these metaphors of war and peace, as well as the broader metaphors of law and tribunal, one learns a lot from that. I've often been struck by the degree to which he articulates the problems of philosophy using a set of metaphors drawn from geography, and the solutions using a set of metaphors which are much more drawn from war and history. So, yes, I found Arendt particularly stimulating on this topic and in her discussions of the *sensus communis*. I feel she was full of insights, but didn't seem to come together very systematically in her reading of Kant.

KH I think we'll have to finish there, thank you very much.

OO'N It's been an enjoyable session.

Notes

1. This interview took place while Onora O'Neill was delivering a series of Gifford Lectures at the University of Edinburgh in March 2001. The lectures have subsequently been published by Cambridge University Press as *Autonomy and Trust in Bioethics*, 2002.
2. A. Reath, B. Herman & C. Korsgaard (eds) *Reclaiming the History of Ethics: Essays for John Rawls* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1997).
3. Arendt delivered a version of her lectures on Kant's philosophy of judgment as Gifford Lectures, although they were first delivered at the New School for Social Research in 1970. See Hannah Arendt, *Lectures on Kant's Political Philosophy*, R. Beiner ed. (Chicago, University of Chicago Press: 1982).
4. Hans Saner, *Kant's Political Thought: Its Origins and Development* trans. E. B. Ashton (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1973); originally *Kants Weg vom Krieg zum Frieden*, Vol 1: *Widerstreit und Einheit: Wege zu Kants politischem Denken* (Munich: R. Piper Verlag, 1967).

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'You Kantian!' Feminist Interpretations of Kant A Review Essay

by Rachel Jones

In a recent essay, Mieke Bal confesses that 'I turned away from institutional feminism when someone hissed "you Kantian!" instead of "you bitch!" in my ear' (Bal 2001, 324). Perhaps it is unsurprising that this should function as the ultimate feminist insult. Kant is often invoked as the arch-proponent of an autocratic Enlightenment subject who imposes a reductive abstract order on the world, whilst striving to escape sensation, feeling, and the contingencies of life. This Kant becomes the 'natural' enemy of those seeking to make space for a concrete subject, one that is not only embodied, but socially, culturally and historically situated, and whose modes of knowing are inseparable from differences of sex, gender, class and race. Add to this Kant's infamous misogyny—'A woman who has a head full of Greek ... might as well even have a beard' (Kant 1960, 78 [II:229–30])¹—and it is not surprising that it is thought 'politically suspect' for feminists to work on such thinkers, whose philosophy seems to embody the oppressive values of a masculinist, Eurocentric tradition.²

Such suspicions are not groundless, though they have led some to discard the potential of Kant's philosophy for feminist thought rather too swiftly. Just before the comment about learned women disfiguring themselves, Kant remarks that 'it is not enough to keep in mind that we are dealing with human beings; we must also remember that they are not all alike' (77). This injunction to be attentive to (sexual) difference need not be played out in the hierarchical terms Kant himself adopts, as is shown by the recent collection *Feminist Interpretations of Immanuel Kant* (1997; henceforth *FIK*). This substantial volume, edited by Robin May Schott, contains a variety of responses, ranging from thoroughgoing critique to the appropriation of Kantian concepts for feminist ends; what

all have in common is a shared perception of Kant as an important interlocutor for contemporary feminists.

In this essay, I offer a detailed critical review of the volume, referring to related feminist work as appropriate. I also draw attention to some of the volume's limitations, as these seem to reflect broader issues in feminist responses to Kant. The essay does not aim to give an exhaustive overview of recent feminist work on Kant, but offers a particular, and necessarily selective, critical perspective. There will not be room to discuss a number of important—if not explicitly feminist—studies of Kant that have been produced by women philosophers in recent years.³ However, some reference will be made to well-known thinkers (Hannah Arendt, Christine Korsgaard, Onora O'Neill and Barbara Herman) who have had a significant influence on feminist readings of Kant, as the *Feminist Interpretations* volume indicates.

The Missing Transcendental

In her introduction, Schott uses Elisabeth Grosz to position *Feminist Interpretations of Kant* as engaging with the philosopher both critically and constructively (*FIK*, 4). This 'double vision' regarding the history of philosophy could be seen as one of feminist philosophy's defining characteristics.⁴ Here, it allows feminist thinkers to critique the patriarchal values that mark Kant's writings, drawing attention to blindspots and contradictions, whilst simultaneously insisting on the creative potential of Kant's thought for feminism.

The volume's own main blindspot is the general lack of attention to the relevance for feminist thought of the specifically *transcendental* nature of Kant's project. This is reflected partly in the terms in which the introduction frames the volume, and partly in the lack of attention paid to the first *Critique*. With one exception (see below), and despite some recognition of Kant's significance for feminist epistemology,⁵ the knowing subject of the first *Critique* tends to remain a shadowy 'atomistic' figure hovering in the background (Moen *FIK*, 216), whose presence it

seems we would do well to exorcize. One result of this 'blindspot' is the lack of an adequate context in which to appreciate the contributions to the volume of Sarah Kofman and Monique David-Ménard, who need to be read in relation to a more European tradition informed by a concern with the transcendental constitution of the subject.

This 'blindspot' seems especially odd given feminism's own concern with analyzing and transforming the *conditions* of women's experience. It seems to me to reflect a rather reductive characterization of the Kantian project which has had a certain dominance in some feminist accounts. Kant is seen as the champion of 'impartial' reason, where 'impartiality' is taken to denote not just 'disinterest', but a solitary, god-like transcendence of any particular perspective (see Schott *FIK*, 8; 328).⁶ Kantian morality and epistemology are thereby contrasted with approaches foregrounding the locatedness of subjects. But such interpretations obscure the fact that the 'Copernican turn' revolves around a finite subject, whose knowledge and experience is always and necessarily conditioned: a transcendental subject rather than a transcendent rationality.⁷

The tendency to portray the Enlightenment ideal of the knowing subject as one of 'pure'—i.e., transcendent and epistemically self-sufficient—rationality is seen by Louise Antony as a mis-representation characteristic of contemporary feminist epistemology (Antony 1993, 195–6). In feminist accounts of Kant, this tendency can be manifested in two ways (both of which, I would argue, are reflected in Schott's own interpretation, particularly her 1988 study, *Cognition and Error*). First, in readings which strongly oppose the empirical and the transcendental, in ways that suggest that the empirical (aligned with the particular and concrete) exists independently of a formal (universal and abstract) order that both transcends and suppresses the former in its sensuous immediacy (see Schott 1988 & 1993, especially chapters 8 & 9). This in turn reflects a tendency to blur the *transcendental*—understood as constitutive, as the conditions of possibility of experience—with a *transcendent* reason that seeks to distance itself from sensuous life by imposing a rigid framework

of rules and restrictions on the disorderly contingencies of concrete existence.⁸ Yet such readings conflict with the first *Critique*, where Kant's aim is precisely to curb the ambitions of transcendent reason. They also fail to do justice to the way that, for Kant, the transcendental makes experience possible; it is not imposed upon it from outside or above, but instead inhabits and is always immanent to the empirical. Thus conceived, a transcendental project need not turn away from the sensible or situated, but might instead generate a deepened understanding of the structures or processes that inform and sustain—that 'situate'—particular kinds of experience.

An insistence on the immanence of the transcendental helps feminism to avoid the temptation of appealing to a (pre-critical) notion of 'women's experience/s' as that to which we could turn to escape the confines of patriarchy. Such appeals—for example, to a privileged female experience of care—too readily reinscribe a philosophical tradition which has been more than happy to accord Sophie and Antigone a 'special' familial role.⁹ Appeals to 'women's lives' can also allow the universalism about which Schott is rightly concerned to reinsert itself, insofar as some women's experiences are taken as the norm.

From a Kantian perspective, the notion of appealing to experience to escape the restrictions of the transcendental is intrinsically suspect. Just as for Foucault power is not simply confining but productive, so for Kant the transcendental is a set of productive conditions that in delimiting, simultaneously constitute experience. Rather than rejecting the thought of the transcendental, then, it seems to me vital to maintain the critical approach by enquiring as to the (multiple and varying) conditions that make it possible to live *as* a 'woman', that is, as other than the 'Other' of a male subject. This kind of post-Kantianism marks the work of such thinkers as David-Ménard, Luce Irigaray and Christine Battersby.

These theorists argue not only that Kant's views on the sexes have philosophical significance, but also that we need to take seriously the gendered implications of the core concepts of the critical project (including, for example, space, time, substance, the subject-object relation, and

the phenomena/noumena distinction). They question the supposed universality and necessity of what Kant positions as *a priori* conditions of experience. Such an approach involves continuing to think (with Kant) the necessarily constituted nature of the empirical, as well as the immanence of the transcendental to the empirical, but deepening this thought (and turning it against Kant) by asking what conditions the investment in specific concepts as 'universal', and by showing, for instance, how different conceptions of space and time might enable different modes of becoming a subject. Battersby's approach in particular involves historicizing the transcendental in similar ways to Foucault. This kind of critique deepened into genealogy would facilitate the investigation Schott desires into the way 'the thinker is embedded, embodied, and engendered in a particular historical matrix' (*FIK*, 3).¹⁰

A further aspect of Irigaray's and Battersby's readings of Kant that is absent from the introduction to *Feminist Interpretations of Kant* is an emphasis on the interdependence of (transcendental) subject and object. The alignment of the Kantian Enlightenment with a 'unified, rational, self-knowing subject' (Schott *FIK*, 7) or later with a conception of 'a deep self, a unified whole, an isolated ego' (Schott *FIK*, 330), invokes something more like a Cartesian self than Kant's transcendental T. This reflects a broader tendency in some feminist criticism to misrepresent philosophical modernity by blurring the differences between Descartes and Kant.¹¹ Yet, as the first essay in *FIK* stresses, the 'unity' of consciousness that marks Kant's subject is neither available to, nor established by, introspection, but is a necessary *a priori* supposition that can only be posited against a transcendental object as its necessary counterpart (see also Battersby 1998, 83–5). As we will see, for Irigaray and Battersby, it is this recognition of the subject's constitutive dependence on an object/'other' that makes Kant a more promising starting point for feminist thought.

My suggestion that Schott's collection does not pay sufficient attention to the transcendental is echoed by Kurt Mosser, who notes the 'surprisingly small role' that the first *Critique* plays in feminist engage-

ments with Kant (Mosser 1999, 322). Mosser offers a useful synopsis of feminist criticism of Kant in the Anglo-American tradition, where Kant is seen as generating 'a picture of reason that has been used in a variety of ways to exploit and oppress women' (325). He then engages in detail with work by Schott, Genevieve Lloyd, and Pauline Kleingeld.¹² He is right that the general lack of close attention to Kant's account of the subject in the first *Critique* leads some feminist thinkers to misrepresent Kant. However, rather than showing how Kant's misogyny 'infects' the supposed gender-neutrality and universality of his system, as advocated by Kleingeld (343–4), Mosser rejects Kant's views on women as having no 'in-principle connection' with the critical project (351). He defends the transcendental subject as a formal and gender-neutral construct capable of grounding a 'robust liberatory and progressive' feminism based on respect for the 'dignity, autonomy and freedom' of all rational agents (345, 353).

Mosser, along with some feminists, argues that Kant supplies sufficient resources to combat his (Kant's) own—and others'—sexism. Whilst I agree that caricatures of Kant abound (and not only amongst feminists!), Mosser's recuperative liberal approach underestimates the significance of recent analyses of the 'masculinist' bias implicit in the Kantian model of autonomy. Moreover, some feminists have worked to show, contra Mosser, that the 'formal conditions' of experience do indeed establish 'substantial, material conclusions about the content of that experience' (Mosser 1999, 336). This alternative feminist approach does not involve abandoning Kant's project, as Mosser supposes, but is a continuation of critical thinking, giving the Copernican revolution another turn. For Mosser, Kant's saving grace is that he "does not want to give transcendental status to the [sic] sexual difference." (Kleingeld 1992–3, 141; quoted in Mosser 1999, 244) By contrast, thinkers such as Irigaray and Battersby suggest that it is the refusal to give sexual difference a transcendental status which perpetuates woman's positioning as the 'other' of a (male) subject.

The Anomalous Other

The only piece in *Feminist Interpretations of Immanuel Kant* to engage substantially with the first *Critique* is Adrian Piper's opening essay, 'Xenophobia and Kantian Rationalism'. Piper notes that in general, [c]ontemporary Kantian ethics has given a wide berth to Kant's analyses of reason and the self in the *Critique of Pure Reason* (Piper *FIK*, 21), and argues that a more thorough engagement with this text produces a deeper understanding of Kantian ethics (22). Her specific aim is to show that the Kantian concept of personhood provides the basis for an analysis of xenophobia as an understandable but above all corrigible 'defect' in rationality (22-3).

Central to Piper's argument is the way that it is a necessary condition of experience that human beings organize sensory data via a set of internally consistent rules or concepts (26-8). This, she emphasizes, has two corollaries. First, such cognitive organization 'is a necessary condition of being a rationally unified subject'; without it, it would be impossible to posit a 'unity of consciousness' (27-8; *CPR* A112). Second, it is a 'general feature of human intellection' (29) to resist anomalous data that challenge the internal coherence of the conceptual frameworks that allow an individual to make sense of the world, and sustain its identity as 'a unified and rationally integrated self' (23). Xenophobia—understood as a resistance to recognizing as 'persons' those who seem anomalous—is therefore positioned as a specific case of a general tendency towards rational self-preservation.

Privileging the transcendental unity of apperception,¹³ Piper argues that the Kantian concept of personhood—'of a rationally unified, temporally continuous self' (37)¹⁴—is transcendent insofar as it surpasses any particular instance of human behaviour, yet also has a transcendental function. Any subject that organizes experience in ways that simultaneously secure the positing of a unified self, will inevitably form the concept of a spontaneously reasoning being (or 'person') which it will

apply to itself.¹⁵ The key question then becomes which other human beings are recognized as 'persons' along with oneself.

Piper explores a variety of ways in which xenophobes refuse to see others as 'persons' by illegitimately conflating empirical stereotypes with the transcendent idea/I of personhood. Such confluences reinforce an image of the other as an 'inscrutable and malevolent anomaly that threatens that theory of the world which unifies one's experience and structures one's expectations about oneself and other people' (61). However, the gap between empirical concepts and the transcendent/al idea of personhood means that the xenophobic world-view is corrigible. The xenophobe can be confronted with behaviours and individuals that satisfy the criteria of rational agency, even though they fail to correspond to her empirical conception of a person. Whilst such experiences may provoke strategies of self-defence, they can also change one's world-view by forcing the revision of empirical conceptions of personhood, bringing them closer to the more inclusive (because non-determinate) ideal of rational agency.

Piper's conclusion thus foregrounds an alternative response to otherness, a kind of xenophilia grounded in the Kantian system as she sees it. 'Anomalous data' need not only be seen as threatening the integrity of our conceptual frameworks. They also provide 'irresistible cognitive challenges to the scope of our conceptions and ... provocations to reformulate them so as to increase their explanatory reach.' (66) The encounter with an other who demands to be seen as a person, yet who challenges our prejudicial views of what a person is like, can provide 'opportunities for psychological growth rather than mere threats to psychological integrity.' (66)

Piper's article is an impressive attempt to tease out the ways in which the 'merely' formal concepts of the first *Critique* have concrete implications for difference and otherness. Her argument encourages us to turn Kant's account of the rational subject against his own stereotypical views of women and non-Europeans. However, because she positions xenophobia as 'a special case of a perfectly general human intellectual disposition

to literal self-preservation; i.e., preservation of the internal rational coherence and integrity of the self against anomalous data that threaten it' (50; my emphasis), xenophobia becomes an inevitable side-effect of the subject's transcendental structure (despite her claim that xenophobia is not 'hardwired' into human consciousness). If the internal coherence of *any* conceptual scheme is secured by excluding 'anomalous data', *some* kind of 'other' will always be required to construct a unified subject of experience.¹⁶

Concomitantly, the logic of inclusion that Piper seeks seems to risk excluding a positive conception of difference. If limited empirical conceptions result from 'ignorance of others who are *thereby* viewed as different' (55; my emphasis), then expanding our conceptual horizons so as to 'integrate' (64) these 'others' as 'persons' would seem to involve showing their 'differences' to be a kind of illusion. Despite Piper's desire to find resources in Kant for dealing productively with difference, the other to the subject seems to remain caught between two modes of objectification—the threatening anomaly, or an 'opportunity for psychological growth'—tempered only by the possibility of an assimilation which recognizes the other in the terms the subject would use to identify themselves.

Ethics and Care

As Piper indicates, feminist engagements with Kant have been centrally concerned with the charge that his moral philosophy is overly 'abstract' and 'detached' (Piper *FIK*, 22). The section on ethics in Schott's anthology presents a dialogue between four contributors engaged with this theme. Their work belongs to an interpretative debate neatly glossed by Rae Langton as the contestation between a 'severe' and 'sane' Kant (Langton 1992, 485). The abstract strictures of the former seem to involve 'a blind and hideous attachment to principle that flies in the face of ethics'; but it is also possible to recover 'the Kant who thinks well of spontaneous natural sentiments, and thinks we should cultivate them'

(485). This second Kant, Langton argues, is reconstructed by thinkers such as Korsgaard, whose interpretation of Kant's 'Kingdom of Ends' reclaims 'an attractive ideal of human relations' where others are accorded responsibility, dignity, and respect (Langton [quoting Korsgaard], 485; see also Korsgaard 1996).

Two important 'fellow workers' in the project of reclaiming this second, 'sane' Kant are O'Neill and Herman. Both theorists have helped to undo caricatures of the Kantian agent as 'a moral superstar alone on a rock of rational will power' (Kneller *FIK*, 174). O'Neill's work is also significant for feminist thinkers because her anti-foundationalist account of the vindication of reason—as outlined in her 1989 study, *Constructions of Reason*—positions critical philosophy as essentially political (Hutchings, 28). By tracing the political and juridical metaphors that structure the first *Critique*, O'Neill foregrounds the isomorphic nature of questions of discursive and political authority: 'In either case we have a plurality of agents or voices (perhaps potential agents or voices) and no transcendent or pre-established authority. Authority has in either case to be constructed.' (O'Neill, 16)

O'Neill proceeds to argue that the authority of critical reason is not given in advance of the activity of critique, nor is it discovered by solitary introspection. Instead, it emerges through the collaborative work of a 'task force' of critics engaged in open-ended discussion and debate. The only constraint on this shared labour is that it does not foreclose its own possibility; hence, participants must refrain from according authority to any principle of thought or action which it is impossible for others to adopt. The practical principle embodied in the categorical imperative (CI) turns out to be the 'supreme principle' of all reasoning (20–2).

This guiding principle is not imposed by an alien authority, nor does it provide a set of abstract rules that dictate in advance what one can know or do. Rather, it is a negative instruction via which reason disciplines itself, ensuring 'a *strategy* for thinking and acting that does not defeat the possibility of action, interaction and communication.' (24) Under this strategic constraint, 'a plurality of agents who share the world,

but who are short of principles for doing the sharing' can continue the ongoing task of deciding which modes of thinking are authoritative, and constructing principles of discursive and political order (20).

O'Neill's rendering of critical reason is conducive to feminist projects seeking to articulate the social constitution of autonomy as well as the principles of a more inclusive polity, one founded on a plurality of voices. Her rejection of 'value neutral knowledge' (x) shows that the value of autonomy underpins not just Kant's ethics but his account of theoretical reason too, with significant epistemological implications. In turn, her account of critique generates a reading of Kant's practical philosophy as entailing neither empty formalism, nor the crude imposition of inflexible moral algorithms. The conjoined demands of consistency and universalization generate substantive constraints on action, but this does not imply that the CI 'can select a unique code of conduct as morally worthy for all times and places'. On the contrary, there is room in Kantian ethical reasoning for attentiveness to particularity and context: 'the ways in which maxims can be enacted or realized ... must vary with situation, tradition and culture' and 'will always reflect specific ways of living and thinking and particular situations and relationships.' (104-5)

This reading is reinforced by Herman, whose work is especially important to the *Feminist Interpretations* volume.¹⁷ Contributors draw on her argument that although Kant's moral agent must not be *determined* by her emotions, she need not necessarily act in their absence. What matters is which motivating factors are taken up as reasons for acting. Those who act out of duty, because of the 'rightness of the action', need not renounce co-existent non-moral motives—as long as these are not actively affirmed as the grounds for action. Indeed, it is preferable for feelings to reinforce our efforts to fulfil duty's demands.¹⁸ Moreover, Herman argues that on Kant's view, not all human needs are moral ones. It is sometimes appropriate to act out of love or care, providing the motive of duty is effective as a 'limiting condition': a moral person only acts on a non-moral motive where this does not conflict with duty.

Like O'Neill, Herman counters the misrepresentation of the CI as generating an inflexible 'grid' of general moral rules. Rather, as a formal regulative principle for assessing the moral content of maxims, the CI 'provides a procedure for structuring the particular in a moral way' (Herman 1993, 44). Maxims must contain as much particularity and detail as necessary to describe the action as willed by the agent. Herman supplements Kant with a 'middle theory' based on the notion of 'Rules of Moral Salience' (73-93). These function as fluid and transformable schemata¹⁹ that 'translate' the governing conception of the autonomous agent worthy of respect into particular situations, structuring the perception of morally significant elements and shaping the formation of maxims. Ultimately, Herman does not read the CI as applying directly to specific but to generic maxims,²⁰ generating principles that function as regulative norms guiding moral deliberation. Maxims justifying particular actions must include enough special information about individuals and circumstances to show how they fulfil—or, more importantly, justify an exception from—the relevant deliberative principle. In this way, Herman reads the CI not as rigidly abstract and impersonal, but as structuring the context-specific deliberations of situated moral agents.

Herman's key claim regarding the CI (like O'Neill's) is that although formal, it is not empty, but contains the distinctive conception of value that is its ground. The principle of universalization stipulates that we take 'the conditions of rational agency as a constraint on willing' (154). The subsequent formulations of the CI show that this constraint demands much more than logical consistency: it entails respecting rational agents (ourselves included) as ends-in-themselves because of their capacity for self-determination. If the Formula of Universal Law shows *that* a maxim is impermissible, the Formulas of Humanity and Autonomy indicate the aspects of rational agency such a maxim misuses, thereby explaining '*why* it is not good.' (230) The different formulas together elaborate a conception of the value of autonomous agency that provides a rationale for moral constraint and a regulative norm for moral deliberation.²¹ Herman's argument implies that any fundamental critique of

Kant's moral philosophy will have to engage with the normative model of the subject-as-agent in which it is grounded.

Finally, Herman argues that the specific principles grounded in the regulative norm of autonomous rationality are not imposed on individual lives as if from 'outside'. Rather, they operate immanently, shaping the kinds of projects and relationships individuals invest in, as well as the ways they conduct them. As Herman puts it, the fact that one seeks to treat others as ends entails developing *different* motives of connection from someone unconcerned with this, rather than having *no* motives of connection (197). Normative moral principles are integral to an agent's sense of identity and partially constitute a 'deliberative field' that encompasses the social, cultural, and affective. Whilst moral norms have regulative priority, the different elements in the field are mutually transformative: increased understanding of relationships can deepen our grasp of moral dilemmas. Herman thus explicitly counters 'ethics of care' approaches by arguing that a Kantian conception of morality need not devalue affective ties: guiding moral norms and the structure of affective connections are internally related and interdependent.²²

In this way, Herman's work allows Sally Sedgwick to counter two common criticisms of Kant from the 'ethics of care' perspective, namely, that Kantian autonomy demands transcendence of affective capacities,²³ and that the categorical imperative necessitates abstraction from particularity. Sedgwick argues that although personal feelings should be checked by the *a priori* 'feeling' of respect, this ensures self-interest is supplanted by concern for others as members of humanity. Hence, Kant's ethics forms the basis for 'a morality of care in the broadest possible sense' (Sedgwick *FIK*, 81).

What Sedgwick does take from feminist criticisms is an emphasis on the way that Kantian autonomy is founded on a split between reason and nature: 'autonomy in the sense of self-legislation whereby reason and not nature is determining for our will serves as the "ground" of the categorical imperative.' (87) The respect commanded by the moral law is respect for this rational self-legislating capacity. But it is precisely here,

she argues, that Kant is guilty of importing uncritical assumptions that undermine the universality of his theory, namely, the view that 'our affective natures' can have 'no *constitutive* role in the forming of the strictly moral component of personality' (88), and are therefore morally insignificant. Following Benhabib, Sedgwick questions whether we should accept Kant's view that the moral agent is best represented by a 'disembodied' and 'disembodied' self, or that the 'humanity' that commands respect should be wholly identified with our rational capacity.

Sedgwick draws on Gilligan to argue that the problem with Kant's position is not only that—as his aesthetic and anthropological writings show—he does not fully recognize women's potential to be rational moral agents. Rather, the whole model of agency on which his theory depends is inherently biased.²⁴ It inevitably obscures the moral value of the experience of those whose identity is formed in connection with others, those for whom feeling is integral to discriminating judgment, and self-determination is inseparable from sensitivity towards others. She concludes that Kant's model of autonomous agency is not universally valid insofar as it excludes the different basis for moral value that can be found in the experience of women. I find Sedgwick's turn to a notion of female experience problematic, for reasons indicated below, but the strength of her position lies in its emphasis on the need to question the underlying conception of moral agency on which Kantian ethics depends.

Jean Rumsey agrees, arguing that is not enough to 'bracket out' Kant's views on women, because of the way he 'models the moral agent on the male-identified qualities of his patriarchal world: autonomy, rationality, independence, detachment, courage, and strength.' (Rumsey *FIK*, 132) The result, she argues, is an account of agency that overemphasizes independence and, by excluding female experience privileging interdependence and connectedness, undervalues the social dimensions of human being.

Rumsey's argument is more problematic than Sedgwick's, however. First, her claim that Kant neglects sociability in his account of

moral agency misrepresents Kant in a number of ways.²⁵ Rumsey privileges *Religion Within the Limits of Reason Alone* to argue that Kant subsumes community under animality as an impulse connected to the preservation of the species. This does not do justice to the ways in which Kant also takes up the theme of community at a transcendental level, both in the *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, in the idea of a Kingdom of Ends (Kant 1997, 41–2 [IV:433–4]), and in the third *Critique* (henceforth *CJ*), as *sensus communis*. Indeed, in this text, taste as a liking 'in community with others' provides the 'mediating link' between man's natural 'urge to society' and a transcendently grounded and ultimately moral community (Kant, *CJ* 163–4 [V:297]).

Second, Rumsey tends to appeal to the empirical and psychological to challenge concepts and arguments that operate at a transcendental level. Her suggestion that Kant's theory requires reformulating 'based on the full spectrum of human moral experience' (Rumsey *FIK*, 138) is problematic, given that morality cannot be grounded in the empirical for Kant.²⁶ Having mentioned the formal account of agency as autonomy given in the *Groundwork*, Rumsey shifts to a longer discussion of Kant's anthropological and empirical accounts of human being. She argues that Kant neglects the human tendency towards affiliation and cooperation that 'an adequate view of human agency' would address (133). However, such arguments beg the question of why an account of moral agency ought to take account of such tendencies, of which 'tendencies' and which experiences should be attended to as having moral worth. As Rumsey notes, Kant's own empirical emphasis on psychological independence follows from his transcendental account of autonomy as self-legislation.

Rumsey is right to highlight the isomorphism between the Kantian model of agency and the qualities valued in the male subjects of his time, but her claim that Kant *derives* the former from the latter is rather swift. It allows the significance of this isomorphism to be attenuated via the counter-response that it is not the result of Kant's account of moral agency per se (that is, in its properly universal aspect), but only the con-

tingent (if unfortunate) effect of a social and political context which illegitimately identified the capacity for morality with men. Indeed, the two remaining pieces in the *FIK* section on Ethics both deny that Kant derives the ground of morality by abstracting from virtues historically identified as 'male', and seek by contrast to affirm the value of Kant's moral philosophy for feminism.

Herta Nagl-Docekal echoes Sedgwick's comment that Kant can be seen as providing a legitimate basis for an ethics of care in a broad sense. Nagl-Docekal argues that although the ethics of care perspective takes itself to be an alternative to universal ethics, in fact it implicitly depends on universal principles. Moreover, the formal universalism of Kantian morality can ground an ethics of care that demands that we value others as ends-in-themselves, and support them in the pursuit of their chosen ends (providing these do not conflict with morality). Because such support is not based on pathological love, it avoids the dangerously exclusive nature of an ethics based on actual emotional bonds. Nagl-Docekal concludes that basing an ethics of care on Kant's categorical imperative allows sex-discrimination to be seen as an objective moral problem, because it involves both using women simply as means, and failing adequately to support them in their pursuit of happiness—on this model, formal equality could never be enough.

Marcia Baron also suggests that, from the standpoint of a 'feminism of equality', Kant's ethics provide the resources for social and political change: his formal account of the basis of morality is fundamentally egalitarian in ways that implicitly undermine his own misogynistic views and support the recognition of women as equal moral and political agents (Baron *FIK*, 148). Baron offers subtle, non-reductive readings of Kantian autonomy and the role of feeling in moral judgement. Nonetheless, she agrees with Rumsey that Kant tends to identify the generic human with the male subject, excluding qualities associated with women (such as love and care) from his account of the prototypical moral person. Thus, he over-emphasizes emotional detachment, and neglects the importance of the cultivation of sentiment for moral development.

However, contra Rumsey, Baron argues that this bias in Kant's moral philosophy, whilst problematic, does not touch its foundations.

Baron deals sensitively with the power-relations that can complicate acts of friendship, love, or beneficence, and with the way that a respect for distance may be crucially important for women. However, her comment that 'accepting favours may undermine self-respect and one's sense of equality with others' (155) indicates a tendency to take bounded and equal individuals as the norm. This fits with her advocacy of a feminism of equality, and her rejection of accounts of identity that take the boundaries of the self to be 'porous' (157). But it also means that, despite her careful reading of Kant's account of mutual aid, it is hard to see how relations of dependence would not always (on this model) constitute a potential threat to identity and agency. The limits of this kind of feminist re-appropriation of Kant are also indicated when Baron develops Kant via Mill, to argue that respect for autonomy entails that every individual has an equal right to pursue their own projects, as long as they do not infringe on anyone else's right to do the same. This model of mutually delimiting spheres of freedom and action would not help us when faced with fundamentally incommensurable projects, such as may be the case when women seek a female identity incompatible with patriarchal structures.

Baron suggests that the gender bias in Kant's theory can be 'corrected' in ways that leave his moral groundwork intact by adding in more attention to the moral significance of qualities traditionally aligned with women (166). This strategy runs the risk of unintentionally reinforcing conventional (i.e., patriarchal) gender roles and stereotypes. Moreover, as Baron herself notes, Kant bars sentiment from playing a foundational role in morality (170 n.31). Thus, no matter how much corrective weight is given to empathy or love, within a Kantian framework a sentimental education will always be less important than the development of autonomy. A hierarchy will be implicitly preserved whereby those whose identity is socially and culturally bound up with the cultivation of feeling and interconnectedness will remain second-rate moral agents. This

points to a problem that haunts the liberal feminist position that Baron adopts. Given Kant's framework, women can only count as fully developed moral agents at the cost of distancing themselves from the norms and ideals connected with being recognized and valued as women; by taking up a position that is theoretically neutral but, as Baron acknowledges, culturally and historically aligned with men.

What this section of the book interestingly illustrates, then, is that both 'ethics of care' and liberal feminisms of equality tend to perpetuate problematic gender dis-symmetries. As Baron and Nagl-Docekal suggest, ethics of care approaches seek to make space for sexual difference but may inadvertently reproduce patriarchal values and gender roles by too straightforwardly inverting them. This is the risk Sedgwick and Rumsey face in appealing rather uncritically to a notion of 'female experience'.

Yet, as we have seen, the liberal feminism with which Baron aligns herself risks perpetuating the ideal of a universal rational subject whose implicit gendering remains operational but obscured. Though their papers are very different, both Baron and Nagl-Docekal see Kant's denial of full moral agency to women as an (illegitimate) second step in a fundamentally 'egalitarian' morality. Nagl-Docekal goes further, separating an ethics of care insofar as it is concerned with gendered differences in moral reasoning, from what she regards as a more general concern with alternative conceptions of morality. But in so doing, she loses the critical feminist insight into the intrinsic link between conceptions of morality and gendered conceptions of the subject.

Neither Baron nor Nagl-Docekal, I would suggest, take seriously enough Sedgwick's claim that the real force of the feminist critique lies in the identification of a gender-bias in the very model of autonomy underpinning (and reinforced by) Kantian ethics. This implies that the exclusion of women from full moral agency is not a historically contingent 'second step', but bound up with the underlying structures of Kantian agency—namely, the opposition of nature and reason, and the concomitant devaluation of the material and affective—in ways that feed back through the system and undermine the claim to universal validity.

The question is how to draw this out without relying on uncritical appeals to the empirical evidence of women's experience. Such appeals readily support the view that it is the socio-cultural conditions of women's lives which need to change so that they can become moral agents in the Kantian sense, rather than this model of agency which is inherently problematic—with serious social and political consequences—because it is simultaneously gendered and gender-blind.

It would thus be important to show how Kant's account of autonomy is secured by transcendental structures (such as the subject-object opposition) as well as pre-critical assumptions (primarily the claim that human nature is split between animality and reason) that combine to preclude the very possibility of a female subject of moral experience. Insofar as woman's sexed and embodied specificity is recognized, this will align her with the 'instinctive' and objectified realm of material nature that impedes fully-fledged moral agency. A more positive question may follow. Rather than appealing to women's experience as it is and has been (under patriarchy), we might ask: under what conditions can women—without sacrificing their sexed specificity—become the subjects of ethical experience? What conception of human nature, and what account of the subject, make this conceivable? Not because this would for the first time allow women to have ethical experiences, but so that those aspects of women's existence that are not captured by the reductive schemas available, and that risk remaining invisible and undervalued, might come into view as having ethical significance.

Respect and Desire

By highlighting Kant's inability to deal adequately with unequal power relations, Rumsey signals a possible strategy for challenging Kant. Rather than revising his model of agency, we could take unequal power relations as the norm (as a different 'common cognition' from which to begin moral reflection perhaps), and ask what the ground of morality would be for such beings.²⁷ Such lines of enquiry see the gendering of Kantian eth-

ics as inextricably bound to transcendental and ontological questions about the constitution of the subject as agent and the nature of human being.

As noted above, Herman draws attention to the need to engage at just such a level, emphasizing that Kant's moral philosophy is grounded in a 'metaphysical and transcendental concept of pure practical rationality' (Herman 1993, 233). Herman explicitly addresses Sedgwick's charge that identifying moral value with rational autonomy entails an impoverished conception of moral agency (202). In human beings, she argues, autonomy is always embodied in situated agents, and the manner and extent of its realization is shaped by the physical, affective, and social contingencies that characterize their existence (204–5). Herman's interpretation makes it difficult to accept Sedgwick's claim that Kantian autonomy can only be attained 'in isolation from [an agent's] contingent ends, her culture, history, and relations to others' (FIK, 93).

However, despite the sensitivity towards the affective that Herman shows is available to Kantian ethics, Sedgwick's central claim holds good—namely, that where the affective plays no *constitutive* role in the ethical, an impoverished model of agency results. Insofar as a normative conception of rational autonomy structures an agent's deliberative field, affects, desires and emotions will only be perceived as morally significant to the extent that they impinge on an agent's capacity to determine themselves via reason. In Herman's account, the possibility of ethical thought and action remains aligned with a conception of desires and inclinations as 'contingent' in the sense that they are 'not *constitutive of the kind of being we are*—a kind of rational being' (Herman 1993, 217; my emphasis).

Challenging the identification of moral agency with reason involves asking what it would mean to think of human beings as 'a kind of being' necessarily constituted by desires, as well as by reason. This would not entail simply according 'feeling' intrinsic moral worth, but challenging the foundational opposition of (active) reason and (passive) materiality. We would need to ask how the material affectivity of human

beings might be seen as playing an active, constitutive role in the ethical life of an agent.²⁸

David-Ménard takes up such questions in her analysis of the relegation of the sensible in Kant's philosophy, which she positions as the *effect* of a particular organization of desire. As she says in a recent interview, 'I find that the edifice of pure reason, as a work of thought, is much more intelligible when one grasps the respect in which desire is at work in elaborations which are nevertheless abstract.' (David-Ménard 2000, 23)²⁹ Her contribution to the *Feminist Interpretations* volume exemplifies her method of examining philosophical texts for 'points of articulation' between the order of the 'purely conceptual' and that of 'fantasy', where 'the sexuate identity of the male or female thinker ... plays a part.' (2000, 28)

In this essay, she differentiates two aspects of Kant's categorical imperative: the brutal 'surprise' of being confronted with the law's unconditional demand, and the logical test of universalization, where the specificity of different desires is erased as all acts acquire a common measure and all individuals become equivalent before the law. That the second aspect seems logically implied by the first is an illusion, she argues, sustainable only because both are already founded on the relegation of the sensible as the 'pathological' (David-Ménard *FIK*, 350-1). Human beings always fall short of the law's demand because Kant presupposes a conflict between the awareness of being determined by law, and sensible interests and desires (349). This conflict links the first, categorical aspect of the law to the second, where the need to relegate the sensible becomes the 'pretext' for a process of universalization which transforms the material specificity of desires into 'mere matter for the formalism of the law.' (350)

The split between the sensible and the law that underpins Kantian autonomy is shown to depend upon a particular organization of desire (namely, renouncement) that makes its objects interchangeable. David-Ménard argues that a different organization of desire, one that she traces in the dream of a female patient, would engender a different relation to

both the unconditional and the sensible. In the dream, unconditional loss is acknowledged and negotiated, but desire is also continued in ways that register the differences between objects. Thus, instead of responding to the suffering induced by an unconditional demand by renouncing (and thus rendering equivalent) all objects of desire, this alternative logic neither sacrifices all sensible interests, nor renders all objects of desire 'indifferent'. David-Ménard's final suggestion that women ('or those humans who identify with women') perhaps act without reference to the 'Supreme Good' deliberately echoes Kant's claim that women do not act out of respect for the Moral Law (353). However, her analysis allows us to hear within this pronouncement the possibility of a wholly different ('amoral') conception of 'the Good'.

David-Ménard's essay is distinctive in that it takes up the alignments via which Kant excludes women from being fully-fledged moral agents, and makes those alignments (with the sensible realm of beautiful appearances and desirable objects) the basis for a different understanding of notions of obligation, guilt and autonomy.³⁰ She reveals the necessary links between exposing the gendering of Kant's 'universal' moral law, reworking 'moral' concepts by abstracting from a female subject-position, and re-thinking the very conditions of being/becoming a subject. 'May one say that women are not subjects? Let us say rather that they become subjects differently from men; women become subject by way of a specific modality of playfully sublimating that which, in their desires, causes suffering and guilt.' (348)³¹

David-Ménard deploys a Freudian modulation of transcendental critique—'not quite what one calls the work of critique' (2000, 24)—in ways that problematize psychoanalytic accounts of woman, and philosophical accounts of the 'pure' transcendental unmarked by a phantasmatic/empirical residue.³² Her approach resonates with that of Kofman, who also turns Freud against Kant to uncover an empirical residue contaminating the *a priori* transcendental principle of morality.

Kofman begins by asking whether '[t]o respect women' is 'simply to obey the categorical imperative which requires respect with regard to

the other as moral personage?' (Kofman *FIK*, 355) For Kant, she argues, respect for women lies at the heart of a complex economy of relations between the sexes. Respect is demanded by women's modesty, which covers the animalistic, disgusting nature of (her) sex; it protects man, helping to prevent him from indulging his own sensuality; and it educates man, eliciting the civilized decency that set him on the path to true morality. By withdrawing the object of his desire from the senses, woman redirects man towards the idea/L. Respect for women thus functions as a 'preliminary respect', '[t]he condition sine qua non of the existence of the moral law, or at least of apprenticeship for submission to it.' (360-1) When respect is properly transferred to the moral law, a retroactive 'cleavage' is produced. The respect for woman that first curbed man's desires is replaced by disgust for maternal, sensual nature. This must now be sacrificed to the sublime law that inherits the power of 'the original fascinating figure' (364).

Kofman finds the tension between respect for the mother and respect for the moral law repeated in Kant's use of the figure of Isis (to whom I return below).³³ Whilst empirical representation emasculates reason by making man dependent on his senses, the transcendental imagination can represent the moral law aesthetically, providing that its very unrepresentability is simultaneously figured. Isis fulfils this function: the sublime inscription banning the lifting of her veil indicates the impossibility of representing both the moral law and the inexhaustible plenitude of Mother Nature. Yet by choosing Isis, Kant risks contaminating a personification that he insists must come after, and be based upon, the idea of the moral law with the respect for the mother that comes before the law.

By reading the sublime as sublimation, Kofman concludes that, on the one hand, respect for women—and in particular, the mother—constitutes a 'prefiguration of moral respect' that 'stain[s] by its empirical impurity the purity ... of respect for the moral law'. On the other, the fact that a proper respect for the moral law depends on holding Mother Nature at a distance indicates that morality itself serves 'as a cover for an

operation of a completely different order', namely, the mastery of women (357).

The analyses of Kofman and David-Ménard complement one another productively. Their shared concerns with the sacrifice of the sensual realm also resonate strongly with the emphasis on feeling and concrete particularity in the section of the *Feminist Interpretations* volume on 'Ethics'.³⁴ Nonetheless, a profound difference in approach cuts across these shared concerns. The modes of analysis adopted by Kofman and David-Ménard link them more readily to several other post-Kantian feminists, absent from this volume, to whose work I will now turn.

The Abyss of Sexual Difference

Two feminist philosophers who engage with the ontological implications of the Kantian transcendental are Luce Irigaray and Christine Battersby. *Speculum of the Other Woman* situates Kant's work within a phallogocentric genealogy sustained by woman's manifold appearances as 'other'. The critical system repeats the pattern whereby woman is both desirable object, and the infinite excess against which the subject is secured. Woman is aligned with a phenomenal nature formally constituted by the subject, and with matter thought as both inert substance³⁵ and unstable chaos.³⁶ But Kant is also located at a very specific point in this genealogy. Irigaray's account foregrounds the interdependence of subject and object in Kant's system,³⁷ implying that this accords the object/other a power which may not be fully containable. Kant is thus seen as initiating a movement towards the de-centering of the subject, which will pass through Freud and Lacan into postmodernism. However, it is not only 'in the male imaginary' that the Copernican revolution 'has yet to have its final effects' (Irigaray 1985, 133). A further revolution remains to be charted: the earth might turn upon it-/herself, generating a female-female relation in which woman would no longer be defined against a (male) subject.

Kant's voice echoes through the chapter opening the central part of *Speculum* ('Any Theory of the Subject') and is foregrounded in 'Paradox A Priori'. Irigaray shows how woman is aligned with 'the reserve of "sensuality"' that underpins the critical architectonic (141): each of the partitions erected by reason depends on its distancing itself from one of 'the many faces of the sensible world' (212). Even in the 'seismic convulsions' of the sublime (137), '[f]ear and awe of an all-powerful nature forbid man to touch his/the mother and reward his courage in resisting her attractions by granting him the right to judge himself independent' (210).

Kant seeks to usurp the productivity of the mother/nature (140) by re-constituting nature on a transcendental ground that will 'never do justice to the sensible world' (204). The *a priori* forms of intuition and the schematism of the first *Critique* block out the multiplicity of unlabeled sensations that characterize nature 'in her primary empirical naivete', sacrificing 'the immediacy of the relationship to the mother' (204). Irigaray need not be read as appealing to an original but 'lost' female nature here; what is at stake is the specificity of woman's relation to the imagination (133). The transcendental project is deepened in two directions simultaneously. Irigaray shows how the space-time of the critical project is conditioned by the demand that the self-identical subject be secured; and she asks what kind of space-time would make it possible to schematize differently, in ways releasing the manifold potentiality of restless matter from the unifying forms of the object, and allowing woman/matter to become other than the 'other' of the subject.

This dual deepening is reflected in Irigaray's analysis of Kant's discussion of incongruent counterparts, where he considers the (non-conceptualizable) differences between a right hand and its 'left-hand' mirror image (203).³⁸ Kant's representation of inner bodily differences in terms of mirror images indicates that a space-time characterized by opposition, reversal and inversion has been introjected in ways that make the maternal body—where one can be 'placed inside the other'—inconceivable (137; 205). But the fact that inner bodily differences that

resist conceptualization can be 'taught' via the senses also suggests that: 'One kind of difference ... will never be analysed. Is this because that difference could not be mirrored as object? If so, this is precisely how it under-lies the very functioning of the "object"' (210).

The abyss confronted by the imagination in the sublime veils another 'chasm' on which Kant's system rests: the inability to think sexual difference.³⁹ Irigaray's subversive double-syntax articulates the ways in which this difference, whose repression is a condition of the oppositional structures of Kantian metaphysics, slips beneath and beyond those same structures. Thinking sexual difference in its irreducibility would require an imaginary able to schematize a productive female materiality in which 'self' and 'other' are not oppositional counterparts, but sustained by a fluid intermingling.

It is towards such a possibility that Battersby works in *The Phenomenal Woman*, via a critical dialogue with Kant that moves beyond a Kantian account of identity. Where Kant's 'Copernican revolution' placed man at the centre of reality, Battersby seeks to 'displace[s] the apparently gender-neutral Kantian self at the centre of the knowable world' (1998, 2). She agrees with other theorists discussed here that woman's relation to personhood and autonomy is problematized by her alignment with ('beautiful') cultivated propriety rather than ('sublime') moral principle, as well as with the reproductive purposes of nature (64–5). Her more unusual claim is that the transcendental subject, an apparently gender-free logical construct, in fact 'make[s] the female body—and her transcendental T—a transitional structure, somewhere between self and not-self.' (66)

Like Irigaray, Battersby emphasizes that the Kantian subject can only be posited as a correlative of an objective external world. Kantian spatiality is thus crucial to the temporal stability of the transcendental T, which depends on conceptualizing matter as inert, 'dead' substance, and positioning the subject's necessary 'other' as both in space and 'outside' the self. This problematizes the status of the subject's own body, which, as a spatial construct, 'slips between inside and outside ... neither self

nor not-self.' (70) The problem is deepened by Kant's inability to think inner bodily spaces, so that he remains unable to conceptualize the female body that births and that may contain otherness within.⁴⁰ Indeed, as Battersby shows, in both the *Critique of Teleological Judgment* and the *Opus Postumum*, Kant struggles with (and against) the notion of a fluid, self-forming matter, which could not be simply opposed to an active thinking subject (77).

Battersby takes the female subject-position as norm so as to think through the ontological significance of a 'self-forming' matter—of a body that births—in ways that entail 'dispensing with the (Kantian) notion that the 'I' gives form to reality by imposing a grid of spatio-temporal relationships upon otherwise unformed "matter".' (2) She challenges the 'space-time structures and subject-object relationships that Kant viewed as both universal and necessary' to show that 'to think a persisting self it is not necessary to posit a permanent, underlying substrate that persists beneath matter and that remains always the "same"' (5–6). She proceeds to delineate a metaphysics of becoming (rather than substance) that makes it possible to think identity for an embodied (female) subject characterized by a capacity to birth.

The link between the female subject-position and natality rests on an appeal neither to women's 'experience' (6, 37, 59), nor to biological 'fact'. Rather, the 'female' is a socially and historically variable construct linking women to a particular bodily morphology as well as to specific positionings in social networks of power (20–1).⁴¹ Where the 'female' is centrally understood in terms of a body that births, as in western modernity, the philosophical import of taking the sexed specificity of the 'female' subject as norm lies in the way that this necessitates re-working the subject-object relation. Self and other are no longer discrete entities but constitutively entwined, as unique identities emerge through complex patterns of repetition and echo. Battersby uses Kierkegaard to negotiate an alternative, non-Kantian ontology and a non-linear temporality where 'birth (and radical novelty) is the norm' and 'identities are scored into specificity by repeated movements which pattern the complex possibili-

ties into actuality', such that "'self" and "other" take shape together.' (151)

By finding some of the resources for a feminist metaphysics within the history of western philosophy, Battersby departs significantly from Irigaray, for whom 'the history of western philosophy remains the expression of a seamless masculine imaginary' (56). But Battersby does not only appropriate resources from within the tradition, arguing that 'we also need to look in some unfamiliar places: in texts by past women writers who register that they must count as abnormal, peculiar or singular in terms of the dominant models of the self—and then go on to make imaginative or theoretical adjustments.' (56) Thus, in a series of articles (and a forthcoming book, provisionally entitled *Split Infinities: the Sublime, Aesthetics and Political Critique*), she has analyzed the multiple strategies deployed by women artists and writers to appropriate and reconfigure the (Kantian) sublime.

Sublime Variations

In 'Stages on Kant's Way' (1995), Battersby charts the gendering of the sublime from the pre-critical *Observations* to the third *Critique*. What remains constant throughout is the alignment of aesthetic and moral hierarchies such that a capacity for sublime feeling correlates with a capacity for moral autonomy. Hence, though women are theoretically capable of sublime judgment in Kant's later, 'universal' aesthetics, the fact that they *ought* not to be educated into transcending their instinctual fear of nature (because of their role in the propagation of the species) blocks them from both the sublime and development as moral persons. Women's 'duty to remain outside the sublime' places her between man/nature, self/other, and 'disrupts and disturbs the whole of [Kant's] critical system.' (1995, 93) However, for Battersby, Kant's emphasis on the differences between those trained to overcome bodily life and those educated to think of themselves in terms of embodiment provokes a more positive question (97): What kind of sublime, what mode of tran-

scendence, might be open to a self that did not position the material world as its external 'other'? And concomitantly, what alternative ontologies might emerge by thinking from the perspective of a self that did not secure itself by mastering nature?

Possible answers are found in work by a range of women, past and present. The poetry of one of Kant's near contemporaries, Karoline von Günderode, transforms the dynamics of the sublime to recover a mode of relational selfhood, an 'individuality that is in harmony with, and permeated by, the opposing forces that together constitute Nature and the All. ... Identity does not disappear, but is maintained only by flowing excess.' (1994c, 133; 138) A different response is found in the work of contemporary artists Mona Hatoum and Evelyn Williams.⁴² On Battersby's reading, both can be seen as deploying the antinomial nature of the sublime against Kant, to negotiate the (non-Kantian) antinomies that structure women's paradoxical position in western modernity, caught between being 'not-at-all bodily' and 'more bodily' than males (Battersby n.d., 5), between 'masculine ideals of autonomy and feminine ideals of bondedness and collectivity.' (1994a, 30).

These artists neither dissolve antinomies into a loss of self, nor solve them to secure an autonomous subject. In Williams' work, tensions between the bounded (stasis, sameness, the self, the one) and unbounded (flow, becoming, otherness, the many) become productive. They structure both the images and the tenuous identity of vulnerable figures whose singularity often depends on the ways they are folded into complex patterns of repetition. Hatoum's 'Current Disturbance' uses pulsing light and sound to decompose the boundaries between 'self' and 'not-self', and 'makes us experience our selves as constituted through unstable patterns of movement and flows of energies' (Battersby n.d., 23). Matter is no longer 'other' to the self, which Hatoum's work configures as 'bodily, fragile, vulnerable—both part of nature and yet nonetheless an observing "I".' (Battersby n.d., 25)

The sublime, as emblemized by the goddess Isis,⁴³ also plays an important role in *The Phenomenal Woman*. Here Battersby argues that the

excessive nature confronted in the sublime is a contained ('fake') infinity: not only does it allow man's sense of himself as an autonomous agent to be reinforced, but feminized Nature (Isis) is pinioned as an ever-receding horizon against which the subject's speculative gaze is oriented (Battersby 1998, 79). This containment of a feminine 'excess' which allows (the illusion of) identity (or self-presence) to be constructed and maintained is repeated, she argues, by both Derrida and Lacan.⁴⁴

Battersby critiques psychoanalytic interpretations that map the sublime onto oedipal dynamics. Such readings often accord the m/other a key role, yet underwrite her alignment with the enticing/threatening excess that must be overcome to secure the boundaries of the subject. Hence, 'the epitome of sublime power remains the oedipal father.' (1994c 132) By contrast, Patricia Yaeger argues that 'the agon typical of the Romantic sublime' can be reconfigured 'so that the pre-oedipal desire for closeness or nearness with the other that the conventional sublime tries to repress remains visible and viable.' (Yaeger, 204) However, this feminine sublime celebrates a blissful bonding with the mother that remains aligned with a state of pre-individuation in ways that leave the bounded (oedipal) subject in place as the norm. Yaeger's account moves away from the confines of masculine autonomy without moving towards an alternative model of the self.⁴⁵

Given the rich work in this area,⁴⁶ it is perhaps a shame that only one piece in the Schott volume addresses the sublime. Cornelia Klinger questions the extent to which the gendering of eighteenth-century aesthetics reappears in the more recent writings of Lyotard. Klinger uses Schiller to show how the gendering of the beautiful and sublime maps onto the opposition of nature and reason, but this strategy is problematic insofar as it obscures important differences between Kant and Schiller. For Schiller, sublime reason can wrench itself free from the alluring beauty of phenomenal nature (Klinger *FIK*, 200), lifting the veil on the super-sensible (again personified as Isis). For Kant, as Battersby notes, Isis remains necessarily inaccessible; the illusion that one can penetrate the veil only 'emasculates' reason (Battersby 1995, 101–3).

Klinger quotes a long passage from 'The Interest of the Sublime' (Lyotard 1993), suggesting that Lyotard's depiction of 'father' reason raping 'mother' imagination is an ironic caricature designed to unmask the gendering of Kant's account (*FIK*, 202-3). Nonetheless, she argues that Lyotard does not distance himself enough from this gendered dynamic, even surpassing Kant in celebrating the violence done to the imagination (203). In Lyotard's post-metaphysical sublime, the imagination's failure no longer signals a higher (moral) vocation (205): the sublime (masculinist) gesture of breaking away from reality has been emptied of meaning. But this does not do justice to the ethical import of Lyotard's project, where 'transcendence' no longer implies a movement of overcoming, but an immanent opening onto an irreducible otherness beyond the subject's representational powers. Whereas Klinger aligns Lyotard with Schiller (205), I would position him closer to Kant. The painful disarming of the subject in the sublime—like the prohibition on lifting the veil of Isis—allows a different kind of violation to be blocked, namely, the assumption that every 'material event' can be grasped via the forms of representation (Lyotard 1991, 141).⁴⁷

It is the ethical and political potential of Lyotard's approach that Barbara Freeman mobilizes in *The Feminine Sublime*. She links his account of the sublime as attesting to 'the fact that something unrepresentable exists' (Freeman, 125)⁴⁸ to Toni Morrison's *Beloved*, as bearing witness to the unspeakable and largely unspoken history of African-American slavery. The theoretical frame of Freeman's book positions the 'feminine' as 'one name' for a disruptive 'residue' that 'contests binaries', including the oppositional structure male/female (9-10).⁴⁹ The 'feminine sublime' will involve both exposing the traditional gendering of the sublime, where identity is reaffirmed by neutralizing feminine excess, and working to invoke that excess in its irreducibility. 'Unlike the masculinist sublime that seeks to master, appropriate, or colonize the other, I propose that the politics of the feminine sublime involves taking up a position of respect in response to an incalculable otherness ... to that which makes meaning infinitely open and ungovernable.' (11)

Here Freeman risks releasing feminine excess only to contain it again, by holding it at a respectful distance, and by continuing to define it as the 'otherness' sustaining the symbolic. This 'excess of excess' does not yet involve thinking alternative ontologies. Instead, Freeman draws on Judith Butler to suggest that it demands a politics of continual and shifting resistance (10-12). Thus, in the first of two chapters on Kant, Freeman offers detailed readings of both *Frankenstein*, and Jean Rhys' *Good Morning, Midnight*, positioning each in turn as a subversively parodic enactment of the Kantian sublime.

In the final chapter, Freeman moves beyond parody and towards an alternative sublime, prefigured in her reappropriation of Isis. Freeman reclaims the goddess veiled by Kant's and Derrida's distanced respect by turning to the original myths, where Isis recovers and buries the scattered fragments of Osiris' body (116-9, 121). Contra the detachment of Kantian aesthetics, this Isis shows us how to bear witness to unspeakable loss: through a labour of mourning that finds ways of symbolizing events defined by their unrepresentability, thereby affirming connections to the past (110-1, 121, 139). This is the work of mourning Morrison undertakes in *Beloved*.

Morrison is read alongside Lyotard as asking how to testify to a traumatic past that erupts into the present, shattering temporal boundaries, yet that cannot be re-presented because it is not just 'forgotten' but never was present. Trauma obliterates its witnesses; survival can depend on absencing oneself from the experience (127-9). The key figure in this 'poetics of the unspeakable' (131) is *Beloved*, an ambiguous presence caught between life and death, personal and collective trauma, who 'betokens the excessiveness of a history that cannot be presented as such.' (136) *Beloved* brings the other protagonists into relation with their past and their pain; she provokes the need to tell stories about what cannot be recalled, showing that the unspeakable not only exceeds speech, but impels interpretations to refigure an unreadable history (129-2). She opens a passage to the unsymbolizable that allows the fragments of a

ruptured past to be recovered—not to master or exorcize it, but to attest to the relations that bind the present to what is lost, and cannot be told.

Freeman draws attention to four sections towards the end of the novel where the voices of Sethe and her daughters, Denver and Beloved, become increasingly entwined—with each other and with their shared but unrepresentable history—finally merging into a chorus.⁵⁰ Here, Freeman notes, 'consolation depends upon an affirmation of attachment and the fusion of individual identities'. But importantly, this is no simple celebration of the loss of self. In ways that point beyond a logic of oppositional identity, Freeman emphasizes that: '*Only when their voices merge can the characters begin to separate from the past and from each other ... Thus is the work of mourning accomplished.*' (143; my emphasis)

Rethinking the Kantian model of the subject by drawing on resources found in Kant's aesthetics is also the concern of two other essays in the Schott anthology. Jane Kneller and Marcia Moen argue that the emphasis Kant places on the universal communicability of aesthetic feeling reorients his thinking. Moen suggests that re-evaluating the role of feeling draws Kant away from an 'atomistic ontology of the person' and towards 'the value of felt connectedness' (Moen *FIK*, 214), while Kneller argues that this shift permits a reconceptualization of autonomy. Kneller positions both Arendt and O'Neill as pointing in this direction: the former via her political reading of the third *Critique* as recognizing the necessity of thinking in community; the latter due to her social constructivist reading of Kantian autonomy as an open-ended project through which rational agents seek to realize political freedom.

Kneller herself argues that to fully recognize the importance of community for the capacity for self-determination, we need to acknowledge not only the social dimension of autonomy, but the felt and imaginative aspects of human subjectivity explored in the third *Critique*. Attention to feelings can help explain how an individual becomes autonomous—frustration at dependency driving one towards active self-determination, for example. Kneller also sees the expanded power of the productive imagination in the third *Critique* as crucial, as it allows us to

imaginatively project alternative realities, and to produce and affectively connect with images and ideals that exceed our conceptual grasp.

The imagination's role in symbolic expression is central to Moen's argument too. Drawing on Kant's discussion of hypotyposis, she foregrounds the way that the supersensible can be indirectly presented and materially embodied via symbols. These demand interpretation, made possible, in turn, by the supersensible substrate as the ground of the subject's powers to create and respond to aesthetic ideas (*FIK*, 236–9).⁵¹ Moen coins the term 'Transcendental Semiotic Function' for this double-sided process, echoing the 'Transcendental Unity of Apperception' in the first *Critique*. Because symbols are always particular, yet indeterminate, capturing more than could be discursively articulated, they challenge us to interpret them in ways that allow concepts to be reformulated. At the same time, the self-instantiating aspect of symbols, which set the terms of their own interpretations (different symbols allowing for different elaborations of the same concept), means that the objects of material culture partially constitute the interpretative subject (237, 240–1).⁵²

Moen argues that this process of interpretation is open-ended and inherently social, in ways that gesture towards a revised conception of morality based on 'an imperative to communal and cultural participation, an imperative to interpret and be interpreted.' (236) She suggests that the 'Transcendental Semiotic Function' restores narrative complexity to both subject and object (243; 246). Our lives provide rich material for interpretation, and the stories we tell to articulate their particularity make us 'part of the process in which we interpret and are interpreted' (251). Thus, individual narratives become linked in a shared story.

In the first of these two essays, Kneller wittily critiques the 'caricature' of the 'moral-heroic' Kantian subject which feminist criticism has sometimes perpetuated (174–5).⁵³ Nonetheless, the force of her own argument partly depends on representing the third *Critique* as a radical shift in Kant's thinking in ways that tend to push her back towards this more reductive model of moral autonomy by way of contrast. Similarly, Moen emphasizes the difference between the subject of aesthetic judgement

and the 'atomistic ... essentially separate, desperately autonomous' subject of Kant's earlier work (214–5), thereby tending to obscure the way that aesthetic feeling secures both the cognitive subject of the first *Critique* and the moral agent of the second. Thus, it could be argued that both thinkers overestimate the extent of the shift effected by Kant's aesthetics.

This is compounded by a blurring of the empirical and transcendental in both essays' accounts of *sensus communis*.⁵⁴ Kneller interprets this as a kind of impartial empathy (182), Moen as an 'empathic generality' essential to inter-subjective processes of interpretation (221, 228, 231). Both accounts imply a feeling for/with others at odds with Kant's insistence that the universal communicability of aesthetic judgements is independent of how others actually *do* feel. As Kneller indicates, aesthetic judgment 'takes account' only of how others ought to judge by virtue of being transcendently grounded in the faculties (181–2). But this means that rather than generating empathic social and psychological bonds *between* subjects, aesthetic feeling reinforces the underlying sameness of subjects who—at a transcendental level—can stand *for* one another, taking up the same exemplary subject-position. If subjects are related by analogy in the third *Critique*, as Moen suggests (218), then this would take the form not of metonymic contiguity (generating 'horizontal', inter-subjective connections), but of metaphorical substitution, reinforcing sameness and identity.

For these reasons, I remain unconvinced that Kant's account of aesthetic judgment leads to a relational ontology (215, 222), though I agree with Moen that unless the ontology of the Kantian subject is questioned, the feminist critique of his epistemology remains inadequate (251). Moen also shows that the third *Critique* should make us question the claim that Kant simply opposed reason and feeling, whilst the attention she pays to the aesthetic significance of *Lebensgefühl* allows her to re-evaluate the role of the body in Kant's critical project, suggesting a rich line for further enquiry (232–5). Moreover, the ethical and ontological potential of the process of mutual interpretation Moen extrapolates from

Kant is not necessarily dependent on her at times rather psychological reading of *sensus communis*. Despite some reservations, then, Moen and Kneller do succeed in showing why the third *Critique* may be of particular interest to feminist thinkers.

Kim Hall adds to their case, linking Kant's aesthetics (and their gendering) to European attitudes towards race. Hall emphasizes beauty's function as a symbol of morality, arguing that *sensus communis* is 'the moment of judgment that opens the way in which human beings, insofar as we are moral beings, belong together in community.' (*FIK*, 258) At the same time, the third *Critique* reinforces the idea of man's rightful superiority over nature (262) in ways that echo the discourses of colonial expansionism, as exemplified in texts by Columbus and Cortés. Both the latter, and key examples in *CJ* (such as references to the Carib and Iroquois), position indigenous non-European peoples as part of 'primitive' nature that needs to be tamed. Hall thus identifies an ideological violence at the heart of *sensus communis*. The moral community characterized by the civilizing capacity for taste turns out to be composed of subjects that are male and European. It excludes women and indigenous non-European peoples, who are portrayed as uncultured or 'savage' in ways that implicitly legitimize the real violence of colonial and patriarchal domination.

Hall's case is somewhat weakened by the way she blurs the differences between the pre-critical *Observations* and the third *Critique* with respect to gender. Likewise, though I can see why she identifies the warrior with the ideal of beauty (insofar as his acts express morality in the face of danger), this is also rather odd given that he represents the archetypal figure of the sublime, as the passage she quotes indicates (*CJ* 121–2 [V:262–3]). This lapse detracts from Hall's otherwise convincing claim that Kant's noble warrior who is admired even by the savage reinforces 'the myth that colonization is a "civilizing mission" welcomed by those whose world it 'improves' (*FIK*, 266–7).

More attention to women's role in this 'civilizing mission', and to the power-relations between women that can cut across shared (patriar-

chal) oppression, would also have been welcome. Kant can be read as reinforcing the eighteenth-century alignment of (European) women with an active capacity for 'civilizing' taste, which would legitimize their taking up the position of oppressor themselves (whilst still devaluing them in relation to the 'nobler' feeling for the sublime; Battersby 1994b, 118). Nonetheless, Hall's piece is a welcome addition to the recent work undertaken by thinkers such as Genevieve Lloyd. Writing in an Australian context, Lloyd explores Kant's role in the production of a philosophical imaginary that echoes and reinforces the wider social and cultural imaginary that was the condition of European colonial expansion.⁵⁵

From 'I' to 'We': Women, Marriage and Kant's Political Philosophy

Consideration of the political aspects of Kant's thought continues in Schott's own contribution to the *Feminist Interpretations* volume. She begins with an overview of recent philosophical theories informed by Kant, and feminist responses to those theories. As in her book, *Cognition and Eros* (1988 & 1993), Schott focuses on reason's domination of sensuous existence, as well as the universalism and ahistoricity of the Kantian Enlightenment subject. She draws attention to 'the emotional content of detached impartiality', arguing that '[the] desire to detach the self from contingency and embodiment is itself an effect of particular gender relations, itself an expression of the flight of masculinity from the temporal, embodied, uncertain realm of phenomenal existence.' (*FIK*, 329, 321) In her analysis of the form this 'flight' takes for Kant, she argues that Kantian reason is constituted by the exclusion of emotion such that it becomes impossible to distinguish productive and destructive desires (329).

However, this does not do justice to Kant's complex taxonomy of affects, where a range of differences between feelings, emotions, passions, inclinations and enthusiasms are carefully charted.⁵⁶ Conversely, in her book, there is not enough sense of the way that reason's powers are strictly delimited in a critique conducted *of*, as well as by, reason. *Cognition*

and Eros argues that transcendental sensibility is sensibility stripped of the sensual (1988 & 1993, 101–14); yet this insight could be balanced by the recognition that it is because the sensible is accorded transcendental status that the Kantian world is not one in which abstract conceptual structures are imposed on 'raw' sensuous experience. We might instead, with Irigaray, hold onto the active, conditioning power of sensibility (as transcendental) but ask how to extend this to/through the sensible as sensuous materiality.

Both in her *FIK* essay and in her book, which places Kant within a long tradition of philosophical asceticism,⁵⁷ Schott makes a good case for Kant as an 'ascetic priest' in a Nietzschean sense: encouraging 'bad conscience' and prescribing self-discipline in a constant watchfulness for pathological motives. But it is odd to then accuse Kant of 'forgetting' or 'refusing to acknowledge the existence of nonrational motivations' (*FIK*, 329). We might turn to one of Kant's interlocutors for a dramatic reminder that he often suggests that actions acquire moral worth in the struggle with such nonrational motives: as Maria von Herbert puts it in her second, extraordinary letter to Kant, it seems that the demands of morality 'only get their prestige from the attractiveness of sin' (Letter to Kant, January 1793, quoted in Langton 1992, 493).

Schott draws on Herbert's letters to argue convincingly that Kant's account of 'Enlightenment' reinscribes women's lack of self-determination, and fails to acknowledge the socio-historical forces blocking women's transition from tutelage to independence. The way women are caught between the status of objects and persons is astutely drawn out in Langton's analysis of the Kant-Herbert letters (Langton 1992). Herbert first writes to Kant in 1791, asking for advice in her despair over a lost love.⁵⁸ In her second letter, she has descended into a state of desolation and apathy which makes her, Langton suggests, a kind of terrible 'Kantian saint' who poses a 'profound challenge' to Kantian ethics (497, 495): 'Desire is dead. Nothing attracts. ... [M]orality itself has become a torment ... because it is too easy. Without the counterweight of opposing inclination, what course could there be but to obey?' (494) If

concepts without intuitions are 'empty', so too are principles without inclinations (498).

Langton relates the letters to Kant's accounts of deception and friendship. She argues that by passing Herbert's letters to another without her consent, Kant betrays the moral ideal of friendship by treating Herbert as an object and a means to an end. He not only makes of her actions something she did not choose—a 'warning ... against the wanderings of a sublimated fantasy' (Kant, quoted in Langton 1992, 499)—but gives her no option of consenting to the circulation of her letters, thereby refusing to recognize her as a responsible agent capable of setting her own ends. Conversely, Langton defends the deception on Herbert's part that was the initial cause of the crisis in her relationship. Here Langton draws on Korsgaard's reading of the Kingdom of Ends as an ideal to strive towards, rather than one we can live by as if we did not inhabit an imperfect world (501–3). Set against the backdrop of a society which reduces women to objects in a sexual marketplace, Herbert's reluctance to tell her beloved of a former liaison can be seen as the deliberate refusal of a discourse which would reduce her to a 'thing' with a price, and hence as protecting the mutual respect necessary to friendship (503–4). As friendship constitutes the moral relation in perfected form (492), Langton concludes that this deception may even be a duty (504).

Korsgaard and Langton show that the value attached to autonomy and expressed in the ideal of a Kingdom of Ends has substantive implications for how human beings ought to relate to one another: the Kantian moral standpoint is seen as essentially 'interactive' (Langton 1992, 487). Such readings cast doubt on Schott's concern that the Kantian subject cannot pass 'from the *I* to the *we*',⁵⁹ and that privileging autonomy necessarily entails valorizing detachment and neglecting human interrelation (*FIK*, 331–2). In stronger contrast still, O'Neill's constructivist account makes the 'interactive' stance central to the very project of critique. For her, the autonomous 'I' capable of critical thinking and worthy of respect only emerges via an endeavour shared with its

fellow workers—with the 'we'—such that critique itself is an inherently political enterprise. But perhaps we can ask of both O'Neill and Schott how making the 'we' normatively primary—either the 'we' of the fellow workers of critique, or a 'we' constituted by the interdependence of concrete individuals—can avoid generating exclusions on which the identity of that 'we' will depend.⁶⁰

A different approach to the relation of 'I' to 'we' is offered by Annette Baier. In her contribution to *FIK*, Baier argues that Kant has an individualist picture of social co-operation and collective responsibility where the latter is secondary to and dependent on the autonomous moral individual. Given that Kant is often invoked as articulating the ideals that underpin the founding of the United States as a representative democratic republic, questioning his position acquires a contemporary urgency (*FIK*, 303). The temptation for modern US (and, we might add, UK) citizens to distance themselves from political decisions by ascribing them to a quite separate group of official decision-makers echos in a negative way Kant's model of republicanism as characterized by the separation of powers (304–5).

Baier critiques Kant's version of the republican ideal for curtailing the real autonomy of active citizens by denying them any right to resist a ruler perceived to be abusing his powers; and for consigning some citizens, including women, to a passive status whereby they support the public sphere without being fully included in it (309). The limited scope for political resistance offered by Kant's model is found to be partially repeated in Ronald Dworkin's more recent account of collective responsibility. Dworkin privileges a mode of political 'integrity' which entails that members of a community ought to respect the principles on which their shared life is based. But community members who wish to challenge those principles (including women working to change fundamental patriarchal values) are thereby implicitly positioned in the wrong, and left 'with a tremendous amount of apologizing' to do (313).

Nonetheless, Baier like Dworkin wants a cross-generational model of collective responsibility. All those involved in unjust co-operative

schemes—such as a patriarchal division of labour—share responsibility for the way responsibility has been divided. Baier allows that responsibility may be joint without being equal: women's consent to patriarchal social arrangements may not have been freely given. Yet 'even when their agreement to their own role of meek helpmeet was not entirely unforced', this does not change the way that '[w]omen who let men keep the role of initiator and decision-maker, despite their proven abuse of the powers that role allocation gave them, were not merely victims of the oppressive scheme, but co-conspirators', who 'might have been better advised to risk the ire of the master-sex by disputing their right to rule.' (315). Here, Baier's account of power seems unsatisfactory, with regard to both systematic oppression and the abuse of individual women. Her position does help to shift the emphasis from allocating individual blame to identifying oppressive structures, together with the shared project of social reform. But she does not allow for the extent to which the choices and possibilities that individuals regard as open to them may be the effect of the power relations in which they are enmeshed.

Elsewhere in the volume, we are returned to the question of women's 'double status ... as object and yet as person' (FIK, 287). Hannelore Schröder tellingly contrasts Kant's account of marriage in his philosophy of right with von Hippel's radical defense of human and civil rights for women. Von Hippel attacks the 'pseudo-Enlightenment' for advocating a 'universal' equality denied to women. Schröder follows Hippel in arguing that the egalitarianism implicit in Kant's philosophy is doubly undermined: the arguments used to defend women's subordination to men could also be appropriated by the nobility to justify illegitimate privileges.

Like Susan Mendus (1987) and Carole Pateman (1988), who it is useful to read alongside this article, Schröder not only notes the uncritical prejudices that mark Kant's writings on women, but is especially concerned with the odd status of the 'marriage contract'. By referring to it as a contract at all (*Ehevertrag*), Kant implies that, like all contracts, it must hold between free and equal citizens, yet Schröder argues that in

fact Kant uses the ideology of contract to defend patriarchal marriage laws in which men acquire wives as property.⁶¹ This duplicity generates a 'chaos of self-contradictions': marriage is and is not a contract; it is an equal partnership where women are rightfully subordinate; it unites persons in 'mutual ownership' and yet, for the good of the household, women forfeit civil personality to become things owned (FIK, 293–4). Moreover, as both Schröder and Pateman note, 'women's bodies may be used as property by men as husbands, but women must not sell this commodity in the market and be paid for sexual use.' (Pateman, 204; see Schröder FIK, 292)

Sometimes Schröder resolves these contradictions too swiftly, asserting for example that for Kant, women are 'not human beings' but 'things', 'animals' and 'nonpersons' (FIK, 296 & 287–9). But as her own account suggests, the problem is more that women are caught *between* personhood and objectification, humanity and animality, equality and subordination. Pateman sees this 'simultaneous denial and affirmation' that women are persons (Pateman, 168) as a particular version of a more general strategy for managing the constitution of modern civil society: while the ideal of 'universal' freedom demands that women are seen as part of society (and able to enter into contracts), they must be incorporated in a way that preserves patriarchal political authority (180–1).

Schröder and Pateman emphasize that for Kant, any contract by which an individual renounces their freedom is necessarily 'null and void': such an undertaking revokes the very status of personhood necessary to making a contract. This is one reason why the marriage 'contract' requires a special separate account, in terms of the strange right to use a person as a thing. Schröder presents women's reduction to property as deriving primarily from this right. However, here the (admittedly tortuous) logic of Kant's position is rather easier to reconstruct from Pateman and Mendus.⁶² They emphasize that this right is reciprocal, so that both husband and wife are 'simultaneously owner and owned'. Hence, 'each give themselves up and win themselves back', becoming persons once again (and allowing Kant to sidestep the unethical reduction of human

beings to mere things) (Pateman, 171). Thus the question is how this reciprocity is undercut, such that women are reduced to the status of objects by the marital relation as men are not.

The answer lies partly in Kant's claim that despite woman's natural equality as a human being, the unified will formed by the married couple must be represented by the husband, whose naturally superior faculties give him the right to command (172). In fact, Kant equivocates between seeing women as voluntarily surrendering equality, or as naturally lacking the capacity for self-mastery and civil reason. Either way, fundamental human capacities appear to be sexually differentiated and unevenly distributed (see Mendus 32-6; 39; Pateman 168-9). Woman's contradictory positioning 'sabotages' the supposed universality of Kant's account of human being (Schröder *FIK*, 289; Mendus 21; Pateman 168).

Mendus helpfully situates these tensions in relation to active and passive citizenship (Mendus 24-30), and as reflecting a broader conflict between the revolutionary and reactionary aspects of Kant's thought (22-3, 38-9). In ways at odds with the critical project, Kant often seems to read woman's social condition as 'a true reflection of her inherent nature' (12), thereby failing adequately to separate the historically specific from the necessary and universal. Thus, he wavers between implying that women's lack of civil personality is only contingent, and ruling out as a matter of principle their having the (supposedly universal) right to work their way up to active citizenship in the public sphere (26-8). It is the latter view that is consolidated by his account of woman's proper subordination to her husband in marriage (32). This renunciation of civil independence feeds back through the system, destabilizing his accounts of the equality and freedom due to all as subjects and human beings (34, 36; see also Schröder *FIK*, 288).

In the end, Mendus traces the tensions that emerge in Kant's account of the marriage contract back to his individualist theory (see also Pateman 168, 184-5). 'All individualist theories', Mendus argues, 'share this difficulty: in construing persons as essentially independent, free and equal, they support an atomistic model which cannot readily accommo-

date those social units, such as the family, which transcend mere atomism.' (40) Rather than abandoning individualism, Kant (like others) treats the family as a single unit represented by the male head of the household. The problem is, as Mendus says, a 'deep one' (39), returning us to the issue of the underlying model of the subject, and highlighting its connection to the (re-)envisioning of social and political bodies.

Choosing One's Company

The final paper in *FIK* completes the investigation of the three major critiques by examining Kant's account of teleological judgement in relation to ecofeminism. Via the work of Karen Warren, Val Plumwood, and Vandana Shiva, ecofeminism is defined as a transformative project that makes the woman-nature relation central to a critique of patriarchy, and that strives to overcome normative and oppressive dualistic thinking. Holly Wilson proceeds to re-evaluate Kant by showing that he conceptualizes nature not only as the totality of objects ordered by a human subject, but also as an interconnected system of purposes to which humans belong, and which extends beyond man's control. Humans can succumb to natural disasters or function as a means to survival for other species; they are always part of nature for Kant and cannot be judged as *naturally* superior to any other species (Wilson *FIK*, 387). Hence Wilson argues that Kant's teleological account of nature does not support simple normative dualisms opposing man either to nature or animals. To this extent, Kant and ecofeminism are compatible.

Nonetheless, as Wilson notes, human beings have a special role in nature conceived as a system of purposes, whose final end must be located in human beings as the only beings able to conceive of purposes. Freedom and a moral vocation, then, are what ultimately differentiate man from nature. This does not bring an 'unproblematic' superiority but a responsibility towards other animals and the environment (394). Wilson does not consider the non-reciprocal nature of this responsibility (animals do not have moral duties towards man, and so do not warrant

the respect accorded to moral agents). More seriously, I think she underestimates the extent to which morality re-introduces a fundamental split between man and nature, one located within human being itself, which must ceaselessly struggle against 'nature within' as well as without (see *CJ* §28 [V:260-4]). Kant's philosophy of nature may not be straightforwardly dualistic, but his conception of man's moral destiny still inscribes a normative hierarchy separating humans from the rest of material existence.

This hierarchy has implications for another strand of Wilson's argument. Here she aligns Kant's account of woman's role in both reproduction and the cultivation of civilized society with an ethics of care perspective (*FIK*, 380-5). Wilson (like Kant) finds value in woman's link to nature, and the 'non-dominating' strategies via which she educates man out of a reliance on force. But it is unclear how this could contribute to the transformative feminism Wilson desires, given that the ultimate purpose of woman's labours (for Kant) is still the production of a morally autonomous (male) subject capable of transcending nature.

Wilson's interest in the way nature provides for man's education is echoed in Hannah Arendt's emphasis on the 'secret ruse of nature' that allows the human species to progress, in her *Lectures on Kant's Political Philosophy* (Arendt, 8). The idea of progress is crucial to Arendt's reconstruction of Kant's 'unwritten political philosophy' (19): it operates as a standard by which to judge events according to their capacity for 'opening up new horizons for the future' (56). Arendt's reading of Kant is not explicitly feminist, but her focus on judgement as linking particularity and sociability has made her work important to a number of feminist theorists. The feminist reader of Kant might also be encouraged by Arendt's insight that, unlike Plato, for whom the true philosopher welcomes death and 'does not accept the conditions under which life has been given to man' (22), for Kant, 'the philosopher clarifies the experiences we all have; he does not claim that the philosopher can leave the Platonic Cave ... [he] remains ... living among his fellow men' (28).

Arendt is especially concerned with Kant's account of aesthetic judgement, due to its focus on 'men in the plural', the 'actual inhabitants of the earth', rather than man as a cognitive subject or self-legislating moral agent (26). These earthly beings depend on one another not just for physical survival, but for the functioning of their mental faculties. Arendt emphasizes that, for Kant, the ability to think for oneself depends on the freedom to make public use of one's reason. Critical thinking can be developed only by exposing one's thought to that of others: it depends on sociability (39-40). Hence the significance of aesthetic judgement as a *sensus communis* where one judges as a member of human community, and where the ability to take others' perspectives into account in one's own thinking is most fully realized.

For Arendt, the imagination is the key to this 'enlarged thought' (43) where egoism is overcome in favour of inter-subjectivity (67). Aesthetic judgement does not involve empathizing with others' actual views, but disregarding self-interest and using the imagination's power to make present what is absent so as to move between the possible standpoints of others: 'To think with an enlarged mentality means that one trains one's imagination to go visiting.' (43) This interpretation has two consequences relevant to contemporary feminist theorizing.⁶³ First, the generality required for political judgement is not achieved by subsuming particulars under a universal. Rather, the extent of one's ability to move from one particular standpoint to another (one's 'reach') will generate a degree of generality that remains 'closely connected ... with the particular conditions of the standpoints one has to go through in order to arrive at one's own "general standpoint".' (44) Second, 'impartiality' is thereby reinterpreted as the perspective obtained by being able to take others into account in this way, rather than 'some higher standpoint ... altogether above the *melée*.' (42)

Arendt can therefore be read as providing the starting point at least for a politics of inclusivity generated not by abstracting from particulars to reach the universal, but by expanding one's ability to take account of others in their particularity. This is the direction in which Lisa

Jane Disch takes Arendt's thinking in her book-length study, *Hannah Arendt and the Limits of Philosophy* (1994). Disch reads Arendt's 'creative appropriation of Kant' as seeking 'a possible justification for principled thinking—a means by which to take a stand without attempting to resolve or disguise the ambiguity and contingency of any response that one makes to a situation that unfolds within the web of human plurality.' (Disch 146, 141) Arendt's originality, it is argued, lies in an appropriation of Kant which is at odds with neo-humanist critiques of modernity, but which also allows her to evade the postmodern collapse of judgement into mere arbitrariness. For Arendt, differences are irreducible rather than incommensurable (164).

Disch offers a subtle, critical elaboration of 'the visiting imagination' by exposing its connection to Arendt's notion of 'storytelling'. She shows how representative thinking is transformed from the (Kantian) demand to take up the transcendent perspective of 'any man', to the use of 'imaginative powers to inhabit a plurality of embedded standpoints.' (161) But she also uses Maria Lugones to extend the solitary travels of Arendt's imagination into interactive engagement which may be uncomfortable as well as unfamiliar. Hence, she in turn creatively appropriates Arendt, developing a non-foundationalist model of 'situated impartiality' relevant to contemporary critical and feminist theory. Situated impartiality generates a conception of public decision-making which starts from the assumption 'that parties to most decisions are *not* equal with respect to social power, that they may *not* share a common cultural or normative framework, that no *single* decision can reconcile their differences.' (220) Practicing something like Arendt's 'visiting' would allow dissenting perspectives to be heard and understood, not so as to resolve them, but as part of a decision made in a specific context of dispute (210–2).

A different assessment of Arendt's post-Kantian political philosophy is offered in Kimberley Hutchings' *Kant, Critique and Politics* (1996). Hutchings' reading of Kant, partly informed by a concern with contemporary feminist debates, presents a startling alternative to the image of the autonomous Kantian subject for whom reason secures cognitive

truths and moral certainties. On the contrary, Hutchings sees critique as 'a highly politicized philosophical practice which is both volatile and paradoxical' (12). Because it is premised 'on both the limitation of reason and the assumption of the capacity of reason to transcend that limitation' (1), critique is an inherently unstable process. It frustrates reason's attempts to legitimize cognitive, moral and aesthetic claims and to legislate for itself and the world, veering instead 'between the political options of rigid order or absolute anarchy' (12).⁶⁴

Hutchings shows how the paradoxical movement of critique destabilizes Kant's explicitly political writings, and re-surfaces in the work of subsequent critical thinkers. Her work is important for current feminist interpretations of Kant in at least three ways. First, her critical approach sensitizes us to a tension structuring Arendt's appropriation of *sensus communis*. By blurring the empirical and transcendental ground of aesthetic judgement, Arendt does not so much provide an alternative basis for the political as restage the problematization of the authority of judgement (96). As the critical spectator interpreting events, the political philosopher remains caught between an openness to contingency, and a power to judge according to an eternal ideal of human community (99). Arendt's theory hovers ambiguously between 'the poles of transcendent universalism and contextualized pluralism.' (169)

This tension is repeated in key strands of subsequent feminist critical theory. Via a nuanced assessment of the work of Benhabib and Hekman respectively, Hutchings shows that those who align feminist critique with the 'modernist' quest for universal criteria of judgement also seek to avoid dogma by making room for the concrete and contextual; whilst those sympathetic to the 'postmodern' denial that knowledge claims are legitimized by universal conditions also strive to retain the possibility of meaningful judgement between oppression and resistance. Hence, secondly, Hutchings' approach offers a mode of critically analysing the terrain of recent feminist thought.⁶⁵

Finally, Hutchings' characterization of critique as neither straightforwardly liberal nor authoritarian refuses the tendency to reduce Kant

to either the (unwitting) forefather of a liberal feminist project, or the progenitor of an oppressively abstract rationalism. Instead, she shifts the emphasis onto critique as a process whose paradoxical dynamic is its defining strength. The inherent tensions which maintain critical (feminist) thinking as such also prevent it from collapsing back into the precritical alternatives of 'universalist dogma and particularist scepticism' (185).

As Disch and Hutchings note, Arendt reads Kant in the light of a concern with judgement and responsibility arising from her own present. At the same time, though, she engages with and 'interrogates the present with concepts formulated by Kant.' (Lloyd 2000a, 253) It is this doubled approach that allows Genevieve Lloyd to position Arendt as exemplary of a certain feminist approach to the history of philosophy, even though Arendt does not present her *Lessons* as explicitly feminist. By thinking with Kant, Arendt is able to draw out the implicit but not fully realized potential of his texts so as to contribute to the rethinking of the political that marks her own time.

Lloyd notes Arendt's emphasis on the imagination's role in finding examples to guide judgement. Her work thus points towards a feminist critique of the 'past operations of the philosophical imagination' which have normalized masculinity against 'feminine "examples" of the non-rational' (256). But Arendt's thinking is also 'an exercise in collaborative thinking' (253) that exemplifies a mode of continuing to think with past philosophers constructively. Such a strategy has value for contemporary female thinkers 'uneasy in the structures of male-dominated professional philosophy', who may turn to the past to find ways of opening up alternative conversations in philosophy's present (248).

Arendt herself observes that by communicating one's feelings with the exemplary validity of aesthetic judgement, 'one tells one's *choices* and one chooses one's company' (Arendt, 74). Her own work, and that of the other thinkers discussed in this essay, indicates that choosing the philosophical company of Kant ought not to be grounds for exclusion from feminist conversations. Rather, the collaborative project of reading Kant both critically and constructively is another way of 'opening up

present philosophy to a wider agenda,' (Lloyd 2000a, 249) an agenda that includes multiple perspectives on feminism as well as on the history and possible futures of philosophical thought.

Notes

My thanks to Andrea Rehberg for her valuable comments on an earlier version of this article.

1. References for quotations from Kant's texts, apart from the first *Critique*, give the date and page number of the translation used, followed in square brackets by the volume (in Roman numerals) and page number (in Arabic numerals) of the *Akademieausgabe* (Kant 1902-). References to the first *Critique* (CPR) are to the standard pagination of the A [1781] and B [1787] editions; I use the Kemp Smith translation. Texts by Kant are listed in the bibliography according to the date of the translation used.

It was not possible to correlate the translations I use with those referred to in *Feminist Interpretations of Immanuel Kant* (Schott 1997), which I go on to review in detail, because different contributors to that volume often use different translations of the same text (sometimes providing their own renderings). It is obviously important to allow individual authors to draw on their preferred translations, although in some cases in the *Feminist Interpretations* volume, it remains unclear which translations are being used. It would also have been helpful if a consistent system for referring to Kant's texts had been employed across the volume as a whole (for example, some authors reference the *Akademieausgabe* whilst others only indicate the translations used), with an introductory note from the editor concerning issues of referencing and translation. However, these oversights can doubtless be attributed to the pressurized conditions in contemporary academia under which such edited collections are often produced.

2. Marcia Homiak describes participating in a panel at a SWIP (USA) conference with two other feminists, noting that: 'there was something politically suspect about feminists working on established male figures—and something particularly suspect in this case, where the three philosophers in question (Aristotle, Hobbes, and Kant) were well-known for their benighted views on women. How could we reconcile our commitment to feminism with a scholarly life devoted to the study of philosophers who explicitly describe women as inferior to men, as unfit for the best life available to human beings, as incapable of being full moral agents?' (Homiak 1993, 1) See also Kurt Mosser: 'The juxtaposition of Kant's name with "feminism" seems almost designed to invite scorn and indignation.' (Mosser 1999, 322)

3. See for example: Rae Langton, *Kantian Humility: Our Ignorance of Things in Themselves* (1998); Beatrice Longuenesse, *Kant and the Capacity to Judge* (1998); Diane Morgan, *Kant Trouble: The Obscurities of the Enlightened* (2000); and, more obviously resonant with feminist concerns, Susan Shell's *The Embodiment of Reason* (1996).
4. While feminist theorists have long engaged in such 'double readings', the theme of feminism and the history of philosophy seems only recently to have become the object of a more self-conscious theorization; see Lloyd 2000a & 2002.
5. See Schott *FIK*, 12, and Marica Moen's comment that 'Kant promoted the insight that knowledge is constructed. This is not yet the idea of social construction of reality, ... although in C3 [the third *Critique*] where culture is finally examined, his thought opens in the direction of social construction.' (Moen *FIK*, 215).
6. Schott here draws on Iris Marion Young; see Young 1990, 96.
7. Louise Anthony insists that one of the essential insights of modern philosophy—one she aligns with both Descartes and Kant—is that 'perfect objectivity is not only impossible but undesirable, that certain kinds of "bias" or "partiality" are necessary to make our epistemic tasks tractable' (Anthony 1993, 200).
8. This elision of the transcendental and transcendental also leads to the misleading view that for rationalist thinkers of the Enlightenment, 'all knowledge came from reason' (Antony 1993, 196). According to this view, which Antony contests, '[k]nowledge is then achieved ... not by active engagement with one's world and with the people in it, but by a pristine transcendence of the messy contingencies of the human condition.' (195) Whilst I do not agree with every aspect of Antony's argument, I think she is right to insist that it is not part of Kant's project to make any such claim. Kant's *critique* of pure reason involves both putting strict limits on the legitimate use of reason, and insisting that the rational faculties only produce objective reality *formally*. Rather than implying that knowledge is attained via transcendence and abstraction, Kant emphasizes that objective truth is only possible within a space-time frame, and stresses the dependence of the faculties on material received via the senses. Put crudely, synthesis needs something to synthesize, and that something does not 'come from reason'. For a related discussion, see also Mosser's criticisms of Schott (Mosser 1999, 334–43).
9. As Jane Flax notes: 'In our attempts to correct arbitrary (and gendered) distinctions, feminists often end up reproducing them.' (Flax 1990, 52) See also Schott's discussion of a care perspective (*FIK* 330).
10. Schott later aligns the transcendental with the transhistorical (321) in ways that foreclose the possibility of historicizing the transcendental. She also contrasts Kant with Nietzsche, Freud, Lacan, and Marx, in ways that are problematic given that their genealogical, psychoanalytic and dialectical investigations into the conditions of the human subject are partly made possible by Kant's transcendental turn, and continue the project of critique, albeit in radicalized and historicized forms. See Rehberg & Jones 2000, xiii.

11. For a counterview, see Moen *FIK*, 253 n.22. The tendency of poststructuralist feminisms to take the Cartesian ideal of (self-)certainty grounded in the *argito* as the epitome of 'modernity' or the Enlightenment is discussed in Battersby 1998, 81–6.
12. Schott *Cognition and Error* (1988 & 1993); Lloyd *The Man of Reason* (1984 & 1993); Kleingeld 'The Problematic Status of Gender-Neutral Language in the History of Philosophy: the Case of Kant' (1992–3).
13. Piper, following Strawson, has a 'thin' conception of the transcendental constitution of experience, where only the subject–predicate relation and the category of substance–property that corresponds to it are to be considered as having properly transcendental status. In her account of the transcendental unity of apperception, she argues that the subject–predicate relation which is the necessary condition of experience is instantiated in the 'I think' that must be able to accompany 'all our other concepts' in a way that 'engenders the transcendent idea of a rationally unified, temporally continuous self as the content of the concept of personhood.' (Piper *FIK*, 37)
14. Piper indicates that she is drawing primarily on the conception of personhood elaborated in the first *Critique* but notes that this is linked to the richer notion of the person as moral agent developed in texts such as the *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* (*FIK*, 37; see also Kant 1997, 37 [IV:428]). It would have been helpful to have a more extensive account of how she would map the one onto the other, especially given the ethical implications of her own argument.
15. Piper is careful to stress with Kant that the ascription of personhood to oneself cannot be made on the basis of any direct experience of oneself as an active, spontaneous intellect—in other words, we have no access to the noumenal self (*FIK*, 40–3). Instead, she argues that rational subjects can represent themselves as spontaneously thinking subjects on the basis of the uncompelled and autonomous character of their thoughts: we may not have direct access to the purely rational aspect of our being, but we do experience reason's effects in consciousness.
16. See Piper's comment that although we are 'innately cognitively disposed to respond to any conceptual and experiential anomaly' as a threat, our empirical experience need not be 'so limited and provincial as to invite it'; hence, someone's experience could be so wide-ranging that 'only an "alien" would rattle her.' (*FIK*, 50) On this reading of Kant, however, some kind of 'alien' will always be necessary.
17. In particular, Sally Sedgwick's paper in *FIK* continues an ongoing dialogue with Herman. Sedgwick engages with the articles that became key chapters of Herman's *The Practice of Moral Judgment* (1993). This dialogue is continued in the closing chapter of Herman's book, where she in turn refers to the original 1990 publication of the Sedgwick essay reprinted in *FIK*. Sedgwick, and other contributors to *FIK*, refer particularly to Chapter One of *The Practice of Moral Judgment*,

- 'On the Value of Acting From the Motive of Duty', first published in 1981 in *Philosophical Review* 90, 363–6; Chapter Two, 'Integrity and Impartiality', first published in 1983 in *Morast* 66, no. 2, 233–50; and Chapter 4, 'The Practice of Moral Judgment', first published in 1985 in the *Journal of Philosophy* 82, no. 8, 414–36.
18. '[W]hile the Kantian holds that it is better to act out of principle with no other motive present than it is to act out of feeling or emotion with no attention to principle, it does not follow that acting in the absence of emotions is desirable.' (Herman 1993, 32)
 19. Herman draws on Kant's *Metaphysics of Morals* (1996) as well as on another article by Sedgwick (1988) to suggest that a method for applying the CI would in effect 'schematize' the pure principles of duty (Herman 1993, 233 n.38).
 20. Generic maxims contain an 'action-justification pair' linking a specific type of action to a type of justificatory reason (Herman 1993, 147).
 21. As Herman also points out, her reading involves taking seriously Kant's opening concern in the *Groundwork* with the 'good will'. It is this concern that generates the need to determine the *a priori* principle of practical reason, because to fully understand the latter is to understand what it is that constitutes the unconditional goodness of the good will. Thus Herman concludes—contra deontological readings—not only that Kant's ethics has 'a notion of value as its fundamental theoretical concept' (Herman 1993, 208), but also that: 'We cannot understand what practical reason is without understanding it as a conception of value. The sense in which I think we must leave deontology behind does not require that we argue for an independent conception of value as the foundation for practical reason. Rather, insofar as practical reason is the principle of obligation, it is and must be a conception of value.' (239)
 22. Given recent feminist attention to the relation between narrative and selfhood (also reflected in Marcia Moen's article in *FIK*), chapter 8 of Herman's book is also of interest. Noting that different moral conceptions imply different narrative models, Herman argues that a Kantian conception of obligation positions moral concerns as integral to the narrative shaping an agent's life: moral issues are regarded as emerging within a deliberative field where they are taken up as part of a commitment to an ongoing process of deliberation (Herman 1993, 180–3). This is contrasted with a performative conception of moral obligation as a set of impositions interrupting agents' progress, which Herman aligns with the narrative of 'liberal theory's successful individual: triumphant in the face of obstacles (including morality) in the pursuit of private goals.' (181)
 23. As Marcia Baron indicates, Sedgwick herself still exaggerates the need for detachment at times (Baron *FIK*, 149): see for example Sedgwick's comment that Kantian autonomy involves 'severing' affective ties (*FIK*, 93).
 24. Given this claim (and providing it is sustainable), Sedgwick is right to be suspicious of Herman's argument that the Kantian conception of rational autonomy itself provides the terms with which to criticize and correct the prejudices com-

- promising the impartiality of moral judgement in practice. See Herman 1993, chapter 4, especially 86–9.
25. See also Rumsey's account of the duty of mutual aid. Here she offers valuable insights into the tensions generated in Kant's account by his emphasis on independence. However, her conclusion (human beings cannot successfully promote the happiness of others because they are unable to do so on the basis of their own idea of happiness) seems flawed (*FIK*, 132–3). As Baron notes later in this section (with explicit reference to Rumsey), Kant's point is rather that we should help others but without imposing our own conception of happiness on them, so as to show respect for them as self-determining agents (Baron *FIK*, 156–7). On this point, see also Herman (1993), who argues that: 'One might view the idea of taking another's ends as my own not in the sense that I should be prepared to act in his [sic] place ... but, rather, in the sense that I support his status as a pursuer of ends, so that I am prepared to do what is necessary to help him maintain that status. This interpretation acknowledges the other as a rational autonomous agent ... So we should not meddle and we should be wary of impulses to paternalism, ... because they go against the grain of the respectful help we are morally required to give.' (70 & 72)
 26. See Kant 1997, 19–24 [IV:406–12].
 27. It is just such a strategy which is pursued by Battersby in *The Phenomenal Woman*, where taking unequal power relations as the norm is one of five features characterizing a female subject-position (1998, 8). This means that, as Battersby notes, her argument has ethical implications still to be fully elaborated (208–9).
 28. Nietzsche's thought would be a crucial touchstone here. In terms of recent feminist philosophy, one could turn to Moira Gatens' and Genevieve Lloyd's work on the contemporary significance of Spinoza, in which they explore the ethical and political implications of his non-dualistic metaphysics where '[t]he body, imagination and affect do not, in themselves, represent limits to reason and knowledge.' (Gatens and Lloyd 1999, 4) Battersby's project may also provide some of the resources for re-thinking the role of materiality in agency, particularly insofar as she seeks to replace the 'dead matter' of (Kantian) 'substance' with a self-forming matter that would make it possible to 'theorize agency in terms of patterns of potentiality and flow' (Battersby 1998, 57).
 29. Penelope Deutscher's interview with David-Ménard discusses her book-length study of Kant, *La Fée dans la raison pure* (1990), in which she argues that central to the construction of the first *Critique* is 'a profound ambiguity in the nature of thought; without the proximity of madness, it could never constitute itself as reason'. Hence 'the most theoretical questions of his [Kant's] philosophy have to be achieved through differentiating themselves from the risk of mad thought.' (David-Ménard 2000, 26) She also discusses her methodology, which involves recognizing that although conceptual thought 'moves in the direction of autonomy from the phantasmatic', nonetheless, what differentiates one philosophical

- system from another, is its differing relation to its constitutive (and sexuate) fantasies (30). She shows how key conceptual claims made in the *Critique of Practical Reason* can also be read as 'melancholic fantasy', in ways that relate back to the accounts of male and female identity in the *Observations* (28–9).
30. In the previous essays in *FIK*, Kant's gendered distinctions in texts such as the *Observations* are seen entirely negatively. David-Ménard's approach is closer to that of Battersby, who takes the alignment of woman with the sensible (which excludes her from the sublime) as a starting point for re-thinking transcendence.
 31. As this passage makes clear, David-Ménard's argument concerns the constitution of women as subjects, and does not appeal to a natural or 'given' female subjectivity. Although she does refer to the real dream of a female patient, she does so to show that the dream implicitly contains a different ('uncommon') conceptualization of guilt, desire, and perhaps even 'the Good', in ways that knowingly echo Kant's method in the *Groundwork* (where he shows how the transcendental ground of morality is implicitly contained within 'common rational cognition'). See her comment that the point is to show that 'other vicissitudes of guilt, besides [Kantian] ethics, are real and therefore possible, that is, conceivable.' (*FIK*, 348; my emphasis)
 32. 'The criterion of the universalisability of the maxim of our actions, the foundation of Kantian morality, thus demands a critique and doubtless corresponds to a particularity, to an empirical residue in the transcendental edifice, and perhaps to a fantasy, but a fantasy that doubtless does not belong to Kant alone...' (David-Ménard 1990, 222; my translation).
 33. Isis appears in a footnote to §49 of the *Critique of Judgment*: 'Perhaps nothing more sublime has ever been said, or a thought ever been expressed more sublimely, than in that inscription above the temple of Isis (Mother Nature): "I am all that is, that was, and that will be, and no mortal has lifted my veil."' (*CJ*, 185 n51 [V: 316]) In 'On a Newly Arisen Superior Tone in Philosophy', published six years after *CJ*, Isis appears again, this time as the veiled goddess who personifies the moral law (see Kant 1993).
 34. Kofman's piece also echoes Jane Kneller's concern with how individuals become autonomous moral agents (*FIK*, 182–4).
 35. See especially the First Analogy in *CPR*, on substance thought as that which necessarily persists through and beneath change, where such 'permanence is thus a necessary condition under which alone appearances are determinable ... in a possible experience.' (*CPR* A189 B232).
 36. The wild and ruleless nature of the sublime (*CJ* 99–100 [V: 246]); and the threatening *Urmatter* in the *Critique of Teleological Judgment* (*CJ* 304–5 [V:418–20]).
 37. '[T]he "I" had to relate to "things" before it could be conscious of itself.' Irigaray 1985, 204.

38. See Kant 1985, 30 [IV: 286]. It is helpful to read Battersby's discussion of related passages alongside Irigaray here, to draw out Irigaray's more implicit argument (Battersby 1998, 70–1).
39. See Kant's 1795 letter to Schiller, quoted in Battersby 1998, 71: 'The realm of nature has always struck me as amazing and as a sort of chasm of thought; I mean, the idea that fertilization in both organic realms [of nature], always needs two sexes for the species to be propagated.'
40. Kant 'clings to a model in which the unitary self is only established by reference to embodiment [the spatialized world of objects], but the self closes over the inner bodily spaces in ways that mean that any possibility of inner, sexually differentiated organs must fall out of account.' (Battersby 1998, 73)
41. On this point, *The Phenomenal Woman* echoes the 'anti-essentialism' of *Gender and Genius*, where Battersby writes: 'Being female involves not some collection of innate (or acquired) psychological or biological qualities. It is rather a matter of being consigned—on the basis of the way one's body is perceived—to a (non-privileged) position in a social nexus of power.' (1994b, 210) Battersby's emphasis on female embodiment, rather than the qualities aligned with the 'feminine', also derives from the ways in which the 'feminine' can operate to privilege a male subject-position, as her analysis of Romantic genius shows (1994b, 227–31). Moreover, it is not the feminine but the sexed specificity of the 'female' subject that cannot be adequately conceptualized within a Kantian space-time frame, and that makes woman's position within Kant's theory a paradoxical one, caught between ideals of rationality and autonomy, and a normative alignment with the objective realm of nature and the body. In *The Phenomenal Woman*, Battersby works to reclaim a (non-Aristotelian) model of essence that would allow for differences between women, whilst recognizing the culturally specific norms and regulative practices that mean that in western modernity, being 'female' involves being aligned with a body that can birth (1998, 32 & ff.).
42. My thanks to Christine Battersby for allowing me to refer to her as yet unpublished paper on Hatoum, which also discusses the twentieth-century painter Dorothea Tanning. 'Neither Kant nor Schopenhauer: Dorothea Tanning, Mona Hatoum and the Female Sublime' positions the two women artists as twisting free of both Kant's and Schopenhauer's models of the sublime.
43. See Kant *CJ* 185 n 51 [V:316]
44. Lacan explicitly draws on Kant to position woman as both (beautiful) object of desire and (sublime) excess, threatening the boundaries of the ego even as she operates as the M/Other against which identity is secured; this pattern is repeated in his account of Antigone (Battersby 1998, 96–9; 111–2). Derrida, on the other hand, is seen by Battersby as remaining closer to Kant than he can acknowledge. He celebrates but also contains excess by privileging the 'feminine' play of *différance* which both destabilizes and sustains an (unsustainable) metaphysics of presence (89–96).

45. See also Freeman, who suggests that Yaeger domesticates the sublime into 'a kinder, gentler sublime that isn't sublime at all, for it has become yet another version of the beautiful.' (Freeman 1995, n.3)
46. See especially Joanna Zylińska's *On Spiders, Cyborgs and Being Scared* (2001), which works towards an ethics of the feminine sublime by weaving together key theoretical texts and reflections on contemporary culture. Space and time constraints meant that unfortunately it was not possible to include a more detailed review of this interesting recent study here.
47. Whilst I am to some extent sympathetic to Klinger's concern with the masculinism of the 'heroic avant-garde artist' in Lyotard's account, I think she is much too swift in identifying this figure as just another version of the 'autonomous, sovereign ... modern subject' (Klinger *FIK*, 207); the disarming of the subject in Lyotard's sublime is perhaps more readily suggestive of the *feminine* male of Romantic genius.
48. See also Lyotard 1984, 81–2.
49. For Freeman, 'the feminine' provides a way of contesting any notion of essence, in contrast to Battersby's project of rethinking the concept of 'essence' for a female subject; see above n.41.
50. Freeman's emphasis on the way these speeches become increasingly rhythmic and tonal, and less grammatical, recalls Kristeva's notion of the semiotic. Kristeva is an intriguing absence in *The Feminine Sublime* (her longest appearance is in a footnote), as Freeman's analysis often brings to mind Kristeva's work on abjection and mourning.
51. See Kant, *CJ*, 'Dialectic of Aesthetic Judgment', esp. §57 Comment I and §59 [V: 342–4; 351–4].
52. Moen uses one of Kant's examples to explain: using the image of a hand mill rather than that of an organism to symbolize the state would lead us to articulate the concept of statehood very differently. 'The particular intuition [here synonymous with image/symbol] determines how we reflect on the state, what we attend to, and then articulate as a concept of statehood.' (*FIK*, 237) Moen's analysis could be interestingly read alongside Michèle Le Doeuff's account of the role of images in *The Philosophical Imaginary* (Le Doeuff 1989).
53. In spite of the emancipatory rhetoric of the "Enlightenment" essay, the "Kantian" view of autonomy has come to be associated with a questionable sort of figure: a moral superstar alone on a rock of rational will power, removed from the individuals whose humanity this will requires him ... to respect, relying only on himself, with no "taint" of love or emotion spoiling his moral glory.' (Klinger *FIK*, 174–5)
54. This problem also surfaces in the way Moen draws no clear distinction between 'person', 'self', and 'subject', making it ambiguous whether it is the transcendental subject or the empirical, psychological self that is at issue.

55. Lloyd argues that Kant's temporalization of reason and Locke's analysis of property combine to help legitimize colonization as a historically inevitable aspect of mankind's 'progress' towards enlightenment (Lloyd 2000b, 32–4).
56. See Baron's essay in *FIK*, in which she notes that for Kant, not all feelings are on a level from a moral point of view: only some kinds of feeling (those taking root as passions) are positioned primarily as moral hazards; others, though never the basis of moral agency, are far from being morally indifferent. See also Battersby 1995, 98.
57. There is no room here to do justice to the detailed nature of Schott's argument in *Cognition and Eras*; for one critic's response, see Mosser 1999.
58. Herbert's first letter is dated August 1791; Kant responds in Spring 1792. Herbert's second letter is sent in January 1793; Kant never replies, though he does exchange letters with others about Herbert. Herbert committed suicide in 1803. For a detailed account of the correspondence, see Langton 1992; for the original correspondence, see Volume XI of the *Academieausgabe*.
59. Schott is here quoting Lucien Goldmann; see *FIK*, 331.
60. Although Schott raises this problem, noting that the Kantian system is itself sustained by unacknowledged exclusions (*FIK*, 332), it is not in the end clear how her own position escapes a similar criticism.
61. See also Pateman, 171. Both Schröder and Pateman refer to Kant's striking example of the difference between saying "This is my father" and "This is my wife": the former, he says, signifies only that 'I have a father', whereas the latter indicates the legal possession of an object/thing. See *FIK*, 294–5; Pateman, 172–3.
62. Pateman's account is occasionally misleading in a different way, insofar as she does not explicitly distinguish between Kant's pre-critical and critical texts.
63. See also the Appendix in Anderson 2000-1, which links Arendt's reading of *senatus communis* to a model of feminist objectivity developed in the context of Anderson's work on feminist philosophy of religion. Anderson also reflects on what it might mean to engage in philosophy as a woman via an interesting discussion of Kant's famous image of the island of truth in *CPR* [A236, B295], as well as related images deployed by Neurath and Quine. Her work here builds on analyses of images used by Kant and Bacon already undertaken by Le Doeuff (1989).
64. Hutchings therefore offers a critical response to O'Neill's reading of Kant as unambiguously anti-authoritarian (Hutchings 28–33).
65. Hutchings also deploys her account of critique to offer an analysis of the interpolation of feminism in the field of international relations (Hutchings 178–85).

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BOOK REVIEWS

Genders

David Glover and Cora Kaplan, Routledge, 2000

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In one of the most innovative literary explorations of gender of recent years, Cate Sullivan and Kate Bornstein's 'infobahn erotic adventure' *Neatly Roadkill* (London, Serpents Tail, 1996), the radical gender activists 'Scratch' and 'Winc' endeavour to deconstruct the rigid binary of gender in the disembodied landscapes of cyberspace, acting out gender identities and scenarios of sex and desire which contravene traditional boundaries and which inspire others to follow their liberatory example. The radical shape-shifting potentialities of cyberspace threaten the social fabric to such a degree that the State intervenes, regulating the online world through a process of compulsory registration.

'Scratch' and 'Winc's' refusal to complete the 'gender' entry on their registration forms provokes the rule of law and turns them into 'gender-outlaws' who must go on the run to survive. Such is the social imperative of living within the prescribed and proscribed parameters of either masculinity or femininity. 'Toobe', *Neatly Roadkill's* no-nonsense teenage narrator, downplays their radical deconstructions of gender, asking: 'What kind of fool would ask you what gender is? It's the only thing we know, goddammit.' Yet, as the transsexual activist and theorist Kate Bornstein notes in her book *Gender Outlaw* 'The trouble is, we're living in a world that insists we be one or the other—a world that doesn't bother to tell us exactly what one or the other is' (Routledge, 1994; 8).

The slippery complexities of gender, together with its compulsory nature, are explored with admirable breadth in this recent addition to the *New Critical Idiom* series by David Glover and Cora Kaplan. Mapping the transformations and valences of the term is a considerable undertaking as Glover and Kaplan note: "Gender" is now one of the busiest, most

restless terms in the English language, a word that crops up everywhere, yet whose uses seem to be forever changing, always on the move, producing new and often surprising inflections of meaning' (ix). In a book with this remit it is impossible, as the authors argue, to cover the ground fully. Their avowed aim is to lay out the central cultural debates around gender identity as these have been played out in theoretical and cultural discourses and, more ideologically perhaps, to 'pluralize' our notions of gender. Their scope is by turns both historical and contemporary, locating material principally in the eighteenth, nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and reading it at various points through contemporary theoretical frames. Their book focuses on the discursive debates that have taken place around femininity, masculinity and other genders and makes extensive use of primary source material such as literary texts as well as key critical and theoretical interventions and synopses from the twentieth century.

Glover and Kaplan's first move in their attempt to define the term 'gender' is to extract it from its sticky relationship with its 'Other'—'sex'. Such a division is, in historical terms, a relatively new one. Glover and Kaplan begin with Foucault's analysis of the tragic fate of the nineteenth-century hermaphrodite Herculine Barbin, which serves to demonstrate 'the extent to which the foundations of sexual knowledge were being thoroughly overhauled in the nineteenth century.' (xv) Analysis of gender was greatly advanced by the twin disciplines of sexology and psychoanalysis, both of which implicitly (if not explicitly) inaugurate it as a category in their investigations of desire, sexuality and human identity. One of the most important moves Glover and Kaplan make in this chapter is to look to the much neglected figure of the psychoanalytic psychotherapist Robert J. Stoller. The case studies and theorizations arising out of Stoller's work at the Gender Identity Research Clinic in Los Angeles in the 1960s constitute the first real attempts (after Freud) to prise apart biological and corporeal identity from the processes of acculturation and identity formation that make up 'gender' as a distinct category.

Stoller's case-work with adolescents and adults who presented at his Clinic with gender dysphoria was—despite its shortcomings and oversights—ground-breaking. It laid the necessary theoretical foundations upon which early Second Wave feminists such as Kate Millet and Gayle Rubin (amongst others) could construct feminist explanations of sex and gender. Feminist understandings of this division have become increasingly sophisticated, not least turning to language as the system of signification through which ideologies of gender and 'gendered inequalities' are constructed. To exemplify this, the authors turn to the work of Monique Wittig whose literary experiments of the 1960s (whose real resonance is felt in their original French) sought to crack open language in order to demonstrate the ways in which it simultaneously naturalizes and occludes the division between 'sex' and 'gender', and privileges the male as universal human subject.

In producing a survey of the cultural debates about gender, Glover and Kaplan demonstrate that the most complex and subtle work on gender has been most commonly situated at its abjected margins and across cultural fault-lines. In this sense, the fullest and richest chapters in the book focus on femininity and lesbian/gay/queer formulations of gender identity. Their analysis of femininity has a very useful breadth. Opening with Freud's evocation of the 'riddle of femininity' in his 1933 essay 'Femininity', they examine some of the solutions (and more of the questions) presented by female theorists and writers from Mary Wollstonecraft onwards. Using literary texts from two 'historically specific moments in the history of femininity'—1790–1850 and the years between the two World Wars—they situate femininity as a 'busy category' that does 'a great deal of "ideological work" in Western culture.' (14) As masculinity's debased 'Other', femininity is shown to be a contested site of identity and yet a site from which women have claimed autonomous identity and launched social and political action. Importantly, by looking at the work of two African-American authors—Zora Neale Hurston and Nella Larsen—Glover and Kaplan offer the important proviso that we cannot (and must not) extricate gender from the hegemonic structures in

which it functions. For Hurston and Larsen, staking out a claim for a new femininity means refuting racialized versions of black femininity as hypersexual and amoral. Their work shows how other indexes of identity (and oppression), such as race and class, inflect and transform the gender identities we are assigned and the new ones we must write into existence.

Looking to lesbian and gay sexualities is, rightly, to muddy the divisions between desire, sexual identity and gender identity. Here the book moves away from a close focus on gender and offers a brief account of gay male history that demonstrates the ways in which 'gender' is 'trouble' (in Butlerian terms) for those whose desire runs in the 'opposite' direction to normative modes. Glover and Kaplan focus particularly on Camp, utilizing Susan Sontag's definitive analysis to argue that: 'In Camp gender differences increasingly approximate to the condition of display or masquerade. Instead of looking for the inner truth behind appearances, "Camp sees everything in quotation marks ... not a woman, but a 'woman'".' (102) In offering a synoptic view of gay identity, Glover and Kaplan show Camp to be an important precursor to the late twentieth-century development of queer identity which, citing Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, 'can refer to: the open mesh of possibilities, gaps, overlaps, dissonances and resonances' (107) of gender identity when it is cut loose from normative definitions and understandings that figure it as innate.

Perhaps one of the most compelling strengths of queer is that it becomes a positionality that can be employed critically—'queer reading'. As evidence of this Glover and Kaplan focus on Joseph Allen Boone's productive and subtle queer reading of the female modernist Djuna Barnes. In its resistance to closure and its presentation of the polymorphous perversity of human desire and identity, Barnes's text somehow provisions queer understandings of identity (and perhaps even textuality) so that to come (back) to this challenging text with a queer reading is to access its deepest themes.

By comparison the chapter 'Masculinities' seems thin. What is striking about this chapter is the paucity of theoretical material on which Glover and Kaplan can draw (though they problematically do not make

use of the extensive theorizations offered by women and gay men). This suggests the extent to which the predominant positioning of normative heterosexual masculinity at the cultural centre has obviated its need to theorize itself. This is not to suggest, however, that such an identity is 'secure'. As Glover and Kaplan demonstrate in their literary examples, 'the manly ideal' is a 'highly charged bundle of ideas' that has been heavily policed and fortified. This 'idealized version of masculinity' is a pervasive construction that has long held a great deal of cultural valency: 'masculinity undergoes many local revisions and permutations but nevertheless many of the same features seem to occur again and again, as if the image were a necessary fiction in constant need of refurbishment or updating' (61). Utilizing the most extensive examination of masculinity, George Mosse's *The Image of Man* (1996), Glover and Kaplan show that the recurring 'problem' for masculinity is what to do with the body, which in its 'perfect state', might symbolize the manly ideal, but which is also prone to vulnerabilities and unruly desires that threaten to undermine it.

In her essay 'Variations on Sex and Gender: Beauvoir, Wittig and Foucault', Judith Butler has argued that masculinity resolves this crisis by a process of 'disembodiment', constructing the Other as completely and indelibly 'embodied': 'By defining women as "Other", men are able through the shortcut of definition to dispose of their bodies, to make themselves other than their bodies—a symbol potentially of human decay and transience, of limitation generally.' (*Feminism as Critique: On the Politics of Gender*, eds S. Benhabib & D. Cornell, University of Minnesota Press 1987, 133) Nowhere is the vulnerability of the male body more apparent than in the experience of warfare and its 'deadly technologies.' For this reason, Glover and Kaplan read the German writer Ernst Jünger's First World War novel *The Storm of Steel* (1929) which valorizes 'the manly and purposeful activities of war' (*Genders*, 56) against Erich Maria Remarque's pacifist novel *All Quiet on the Western Front* (1929), which quite simply does not. In both texts, there is a kind of abjection of the body but the form this abjection takes is profoundly different.

Jünger's projects the abject on to women, particularly the nurses who treat him and the 'simple girls' with whom the soldiers fraternize. For Remarque, however, it is the male body itself which becomes the abject, reduced to 'stark bestial reality' by war which turns men into 'human animals' (63-4). What is made clear in Glover and Kaplan's discussion of masculinity is the way in which it can only conceive of itself in relational terms, evidencing Butler's notion of 'embodiment' with a startling clarity.

Glover and Kaplan conclude with the work of Judith Halberstam, whose *Female Masculinity* (1998) 'takes us to the limits of present-day gender theory.' (158) Halberstam's argument that women '[develop] their own unique kinds of masculine personae' (158) is both a delineation of one specific lesbian gender and a radical refutation that gender exists in any kind of binary. Halberstam's work is undoubtedly important but it does not stand alone. There are several points in this book where I feel that the authors pass over material but this represents the largest omission. The burgeoning body of transgender theory and activism, as well as its transsexual equivalents, makes little appearance here and yet both represent the cutting edge of 'gender' theory. Transgender and transsexual issues take us back to questions about gender identity that, particularly as feminists, we thought we had resolved. Gernaine Greer's recent attack on the kinds of body memories and corporeal certainties articulated by MTF transsexuals in her book *The Whole Woman* (1999) is just one example of how potentially disruptive crossing, or even 'double-crossing', the gender binary can be to feminism and gender studies as a whole. Such missed opportunities for critical analysis of gender are undoubtedly important but this book still represents an extremely useful survey of gender and its cultural formations. As an introduction to the issues and debates around gender it will be informative for readers new to gender studies, and will undoubtedly prove to be an excellent textbook for undergraduate courses on gender, literature and culture.

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Antigone's Claim: Kinship Between Life and Death

Judith Butler, Columbia University Press, 2000

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In *Antigone's Claim* Judith Butler offers a new interpretation of Sophocles' *Antigone*, taking Antigone's life to exemplify how symbolic kinship relations subvert and transform themselves through their internal operations. The reconsideration of Antigone thus consolidates Butler's earlier analyses of the instability endemic to sexual relations and gender identities. Her particular aim here is to oppose Lacan's idea that symbolic kinship relations form a fixed and invariant totality immune to change, by challenging his reading of *Antigone*. Her own understanding of Antigone emerges gradually as she criticizes Lacan's interpretation, as well as those by Hegel and, more briefly, Irigaray.

Hegel discusses Antigone in the *Phenomenology of Spirit* (ch. VI.a), describing ancient Greece as divided between two institutions, *polis* and family, whose conflict precipitates the collapse of Greek life. Creon and Antigone respectively uphold the customary laws of the *polis* and the divinely ordained laws of the family, the former concerning the 'universal'—the common good—and the latter the 'individual' good of particular, embodied, family members. Combating Hegel's depiction of Antigone as the representative of normative family relationships, Butler stresses how much she confounds kinship norms. Issuing from Oedipus' incestuous bond with Jocasta, for Antigone, all kinship terms are unstable: her father is also her brother; her brothers are symbolically indistinguishable from her father. Butler notes one suggested etymological derivation of the name 'Antigone' as 'against kin' (*gone* derives from *genos*). Antigone's love for her brother Polyneices can only be characterized as incestuous—though Hegel denies that these siblings could desire one another, as their blood is 'at rest'. Butler astutely responds: 'the *Phenomenology* becomes the textual instrument of the prohibition against incest, effecting what it cannot name, what it subsequently misnames through the figure of blood' (13). According to Butler, Hegel defensively

enforces the ban on incest by denying that Antigone infringes it and recasting her— perversely— as a defendant of stable kinship relations.

Butler also argues that Hegel comes close to recognizing a peculiarity in the 'divine' order Antigone defends. Hegel understands this as a legal order different from public law, barely expressible and hence imperfectly legal. For Butler these characteristics reveal Antigone's principles as the internally arising deformation of the public law, which just is the law regulating kinship. Hegel retreats from this insight, redescribing the family as a private sphere wholly incommensurate with the *polis*. By domesticating Antigone, he disavows the collapse of stable kinship that her life represents. Butler concludes that Hegel's dialectic fails when confronted with Antigone, suppressing her incestuous significance without preserving it. He even urges the *polis* to suppress the familial feminine opposition he constructs, so suppressing Antigone again. This last criticism of Butler's is misplaced: Hegel simply narrates the way the family/*polis* clash engenders the mutual destruction of both institutions, which get replaced by the abstract individualism marking Roman society. This initiates a process of reconciling familial particularism with political universalism, which Hegel generally advocates. Butler's insistence, *contra* Hegel, on Antigone's dislocated kinship status is illuminating and suggestive. Still, this need not be understood, with Butler, as arising from instability in the (political) kinship law. Hegel suggests an alternative understanding, claiming that Oedipus introduces deformation into his kinship relations by ignorantly overstepping kinship laws in acting for exclusively public ends.

Butler's substantial arguments for her own understanding of Antigone's kinship status appear in the context of her engagement with Lacan. Her central aim is to refute what she sees as his static view of kinship, drawing on Antigone to support this. Butler begins by lucidly reconstructing Lacan's thinking about kinship and the symbolic order. Following Lévi-Strauss's claim that it is the incest taboo that makes culture possible, Lacan further maintains that this taboo establishes the inter-defined 'positions' of different kinship relations within the family.

These 'relations of prohibition [are] thus encoded in the "position" that each of the family members occupies' (18) (the mother, for example, only has sex with the father, not with the son). The incest taboo thereby enables different forms of pronominal reference, which condition culturally intelligible speech and the possibility of recognition. Cultural intelligibility depends upon symbolic kinship, which depends upon the incest taboo. As the structure of symbolic kinship makes all culture and society possible, it cannot be a historically contingent social product, but remains constant while different social forms instantiate it. Butler comments: 'Although Lacan's theorization of the symbolic is meant to take the place of those accounts of kinship grounded in nature or theology, it continues to wield the force of universality' (44).

Lacan's belief in the invariance of kinship structures is Butler's primary target. Contesting its structuralist premises, she denies that kinship terms or 'positions' constitute a complete and fixed structure. The process whereby kinship terms are defined through their differences from one another occurs only over time, such that the meanings of those terms remain permanently incomplete, liable to deformation or transformation each time they are invoked. Indeed, for Butler, the incest ban itself always risks instigating the incestuous behaviour to which it points precisely in prohibiting it. Butler's critique of Lacan rests—as in her earlier writings— on a fusion of post-structuralism with Hegel's doctrine that every cultural arrangement contradicts itself, all prohibitions and mandates generating their antitheses.

In re-interpreting Antigone, Butler seeks support for this critique of Lacan's theory of symbolic kinship. Her re-interpretation thus remains close to Lacan's earlier reading of Antigone (see chapters 19–21 of his 1959–60 seminar, *The Ethics of Psychoanalysis*). As Butler reconstructs this reading, Lacan takes Antigone to represent the inauguration of the symbolic order as a set of kinship relations. More precisely, she represents the limit that is the condition of possibility for that symbolic order, a limit consisting of the unintelligible positions it excludes (but which Antigone's deformed kinship relations embody). Her kinship relations

cannot be lived; she stands in a state between life and death. In Lacan's formulation, she inhabits a zone beyond the 'limit' (*À l'è*) which human life can only briefly cross. Lacan, Butler summarizes, 'understands [Antigone's] death as precipitated precisely by the symbolic insupportability of her desire' (29), her location at the limit of culture itself.

While agreeing that Antigone represents the limit of culture, Butler insists that this limit is *internal* to the symbolic order, a deformation arising within it. Antigone can therefore challenge the régime that interdicts her relationships because, issuing from that same régime, her life and speech share in its intelligibility. This enables her to argue with that régime, to enter the public arena and dispute with Creon. The (at least partial) intelligibility of Antigone's life exposes the instability already internal to symbolic kinship. Lacan's view of kinship as a closed structure entailed that transgression could exist only as what Butler calls a 'static opposition', something altogether beyond culture, necessarily doomed and without politically transformative potential. By reconceiving the definition of kinship terms as a permeable, open-ended, process, Butler allows acts of opposition to dominant interpretations to count as fully cultural and to have politically transformative potential. In support of this reconceptualization, she foregrounds Antigone's public militancy, absent in Lacan's metaphysical construal of her.

Butler also looks to Sophocles' text for evidence that Antigone's anomalous kinship status arises as the internal deformation of normative kinship relations. Here Butler's reading of Antigone is weakest, for the evidence she finds is not in *Antigone* but *Oedipus at Colonus*, Sophocles' play about Oedipus' old age and death, written about 35 years after *Antigone*. She stresses how the curses and orders Oedipus bequeaths to his kin here will be carried out in ways that expose their intrinsic ambiguity. He declares to Antigone that she 'never shall have more love / From any man than you have had from me' (*Oedipus at Colonus* 1617-8)—yet her devotion to Polyneices leaves her equally loyal to Oedipus, the two men being symbolically indistinguishable. Via the same indistinguishability, Antigone in burying Polyneices subverts Oedipus' stipulation that she

may not bury his corpse. Her political activity enacts his repeated statements that she does not conform to standard gender roles (337-344, 1559-1563).

Although Butler sees Antigone as a genuine challenge to normative kinship relations, she emphasizes that Antigone is not a 'queer heroine': she never succeeds in creating a culturally viable way of living out her desires. She remains a purely negative figure, challenging the symbolic law's claim to exclusive intelligibility without finding or producing the political resources to legitimate her competing claim. On this point, Butler accuses Irigaray of romanticizing Antigone. As Butler summarizes, Irigaray champions Antigone for opposing the state in the name of kinship bonds based in bodily specificity, bonds necessarily excluded from any political régime based on abstract equality or sameness. Irigaray is, then, Butler's third main interlocutor in *Antigone's Claim*. Yet her engagement with Irigaray is minimal, leaving it to her readers to correlate their diverging readings of Antigone (for instance, Irigaray, like Butler, claims that Hegel represses Antigone's principles without preserving them, but Butler does not refer to this aspect of Irigaray's position). This is disappointing, especially as Butler had hinted in 1998 that she would be engaging in detail with Irigaray's views on kinship (see the preface to her recently re-issued *Subjects of Desire*). So I shall try to extrapolate from Butler's general theses in *Antigone's Claim* how she would assess Irigaray's picture of Antigone.

On Butler's reading, Irigaray and Hegel come surprisingly close, for both regard kinship as separated from the ancient *polis* through its orientation around bodily particularity. Irigaray, though, thinks (wrongly, I believe) that Hegel wants the *polis* to suppress kinship, in contrast advocating its political incorporation through the institution of new laws that value and recognize corporeal difference. For her, Antigone stands for a similar resistance to the suppression Hegel ostensibly urges. Yet from Butler's perspective, Irigaray elides Antigone's troubled kinship status just as Hegel did, likewise papering over the trouble with defensive imagery of 'blood ties'. Irigaray positions incest outside the kinship struc-

ture which she defines as natural and so immune to challenge. For Butler, then, Irigaray is a conservative thinker who, asking politics to express 'nature', insidiously demands that it enforce oppressively stable kinship structures, including normative heterosexuality and rigid gender dimorphism.

It is quite possible, however, that Antigone's troubled kinship status can be accommodated within Hegel's or Irigaray's perspectives. As I mentioned earlier, Hegel suggests that incest is one of the dislocations wrought in kinship when myopic political agents violate its norms. Developing Hegel's point, Irigaray argues that the political sphere splits from kinship when men flee from the threat of their difference from their mothers into an exclusively masculine social arena, remaining more or less unconsciously locked into a psychical relationship of fusion with their mothers. Men preserve this oedipal outlook in all their sexual and familial relations, thereby disrupting symbolic relations of genealogy, which could enable women to distinguish themselves from one another. Irigaray does not gloss over Antigone's troubled kinship relations but positions them as emblematic of the loss of identity that Western society unjustly visits upon women.

Although I still find this broadly Hegelian-Irigarayan approach more congruent with Sophocles' text than the interpretation which Butler presents, her insistence on the political status of kinship raises important questions about whether Irigaray (and Hegel) implicitly presuppose that normative sexual and genealogical relations arise as natural manifestations of bodily particularities. Butler does not pursue these underlying philosophical and political disputes with Irigaray or Hegel here, so her argument in *Antigone's Claim* remains inconclusive. Nonetheless, her critique of Lacan's theory of kinship is both thorough and forceful, perceptively highlighting the importance of Antigone's public, political activity, as well as shedding valuable further light on how deconstruction and immanent critique work together within Butler's distinctive approach to gender relations. Overall, then, *Antigone's Claim* opens up some fruitful new directions for exploring the structure and comparative mer-

its of Butler's approach to gender, and should prompt those interested in the philosophical reverberations of Antigone to consider how far she 'represents not kinship in its ideal form but its deformation' (24).

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The Metaphysics of Love: Gender and Transcendence in Levinas
Stella Sandford, Athlone Press, 2000

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Whether in the light of Simone de Beauvoir's accusation of an ineradicable masculine privilege, or Gayatri Spivak's more recently dismissive reference to a 'prurient, male-identified ethics', it is by no means clear that feminism can find anything to parallel its own project in the work of Emmanuel Levinas. And yet the search goes on, focused increasingly, as one might expect, on the usefulness or otherwise of Levinas' work in reformulating feminist ethics. Books like Kelly Oliver's *Family Values* (1997) and Cynthia Willett's *Maternal Ethics* (1996) take up the radically different vision of the subject/agent suggested by Levinas that seems both to undermine the logos whilst worryingly reproducing gender hierarchies. The question of the relation between the alterity of the Other and sexual difference in its positive, Irigarayan sense is a central theme of such work, and one to which Stella Sandford pays due regard. Nonetheless, her own concern is not with ethics as such, but rather with the nature and status of eros, or more generally love, as it functions in Levinas' texts.

Right from the start, *The Metaphysics of Love* deprioritizes ethics, not simply in order better to emphasize other aspects of Levinas' thought hitherto relatively neglected, but to make the bold claim that the thinking of transcendence is the primary motivating force of his philosophical project. For all that we are now accustomed to the radicality of the formulation 'ethics as first philosophy'—overturning the priority of the

question of being—Sandford asks us to reconsider metaphysics, not elided with ethics, as Levinas has seemed to suggest, but as something more fundamental. As she puts it: “Ethics” is the phenomenological account, the empirical possibility and/or actuality of transcendence in this world; as such, transcendence is presupposed’ (80).

In support of her contention she offers a close reading of a range of texts, winking out those places where Levinas makes explicit such a formulation, but more importantly focusing on his working out of the, admittedly enigmatic, Platonic reference to the ‘Good beyond being’. In place of the expectation that this might ground for Levinas the primordially of ethics, Sandford wants to show that a return to Plato, or at least to neo-Platonism, signals a transcendent ‘beyond’ irreducible to the phenomenology of the encounter with the Other. In elaborating the concept of the Good in terms of love, Sandford advances a detailed exposition of the *Symposium* (94–109). This text, as she notes, traces the same movement from eros to fecundity (as the masculine moment of the procreative good) that Levinas makes in his own trajectory from an emphasis on erotic love in the early work, to an abstract love which reaches towards the future in the later texts. Although the twists and contradictions of the *Symposium* are followed through by Sandford with great acumen, I am nevertheless uncertain why she insists on seeing it as so strikingly paralleled by Levinas. The slow evolution of the latter’s thought over a period of decades is surely of a quite different order. Moreover, as far as the working towards a notion of the Good goes, Sandford is obliged to concede that ‘(t)he naming of transcendence as “Goodness” is probably the most opaque moment in Levinas’s philosophy’ (110).

What cannot be denied, however, is the value of Sandford’s careful and insightful tracing of the way in which a cluster of terms associated with love—the caress, paternity, the feminine, fecundity, fraternity, maternity—are deployed by Levinas, and how these throw light on the problematic of sexual difference. Despite the book’s subtitle, it is certainly the latter and not gender that is at issue, and although the

ground has already been well-worked by feminists, Sandford brings to it an original stance. Interestingly, she holds in reserve the question of whether ‘the feminine’ is a useful or meaningful category, but makes clear from the start her view that in any case Levinas has ‘nothing to offer an appropriative feminism’ (4). In unfolding Levinas’ move from an approach to sexual difference through the medium of (heterosexual) erotic love, which positions the feminine as the Other par excellence, to a subsequent mistrust of the erotic which sees it as seemingly at odds with ethics, Sandford shows how Levinas consistently slips into an implicit (and sometimes explicit) privileging of the masculine. Although his concern is with the Other as a *philosophical* category, the formal structure of sexual difference—which might enable a philosophy of transcendence—is increasingly compromised by its phenomenological appearance in the alterity of the feminine (41). The erotic relation accordingly loses its philosophical status and becomes of merely anthropological interest.

By the time of *Toxality and Infinity* (1961), the asymmetry of the erotic that speaks to the possibility of transcendence is downgraded in favour of a distinctly masculine fecundity in which the father’s ‘relation with the son opens ... an absolute future or infinite time which overflows the destiny of any self-same ego’ (67–8). At the same time, the notion of the feminine appears swamped by its empirical content and capable only of playing the conventionally supporting role of what John Caputo has called the ‘Modest Maid’. Many feminist readers of Levinas would agree, though as Sandford points out, it is not the meaning of the gendered terms that is at issue, but ‘the way in which the philosophical argument is pursued on the back of ... ideological associations’ (69). Given the recalcitrance of the feminine, it is perhaps no surprise that the concept of sexual difference plays little further part in Levinas’ work. Although in *Otherwise than Being* (1974) maternity rather than paternity takes its place as a privileged trope, it is in turn surpassed by the turn to fraternity as the expression of the universal in which the feminine is once again absent.

As Sandford understands it, the difficulty experienced by Levinas in holding apart the philosophical from the empirical results in a series of slippages—rather than outright contradictions—that inhabit his work. In her painstaking analysis, Sandford provides a convincing explanation of why concepts like the erotic and sexual difference, which had seemed so promising, prove not only inadequate to Levinas' project, but finally undermine it. Although love remains a central concern, it is increasingly emptied out, becomes itself unrepresentable, as the attempt to recover transcendence through phenomenology fails in its aim.

But is transcendence the continuing and overriding principle at issue, as Sandford argues, or does Levinas himself implicitly acknowledge the impossibility of his project by shifting the focus to an ethics that must increasingly engage with the political? There is little room for doubt in the extra-philosophical texts that behind, or perhaps alongside, the stress on the primordially of the relation with the Other stands the relation with God, but nonetheless it is the possibility of an ethics for this world that occupies Levinas in his major texts. It is not that I think Sandford is mistaken to call attention to the significance of transcendence, but rather that she somewhat overstates her case with the result that she must give relatively little attention to the extensive passages that most fully develop Levinas' notion of ethics.

Despite my reservations, *The Metaphysics of Love* is intriguing and thought-provoking throughout in that it demands an approach to Levinas that not only opens up relatively unfamiliar areas, but also throws new light on some of the questions that have concerned feminists for many years. For Sandford, the emphasis on transcendence must be the primary claim to the book's originality, but it may prove to be of less consequence than her re-siting of the question of sexual difference. It is precisely Levinas' attempts to engage the feminine in his philosophical project that ultimately undo the metaphysical endeavour, and uncover the implausibility of direct feminist appropriation of his texts. I must admit that Levinas has long worried me as someone whose work both attracts me and arouses unease, although I have been less able to account

for the latter than the former. Sandford's text may go some way to clarifying that unease, at least in terms of the intricacies of her analysis of Levinas' account of 'the feminine', which at times she marks as 'just plain offensive' (46), but to which she more often gives a highly nuanced reading.

It is somewhat surprising, then, that she ends her book with the pious assertion that Levinas' work 'remains fundamentally incompatible with a feminist theoretical project which aims to help transform society through the location of the origin of meanings—including that of "the feminine"—in the finite structures of the world' (140). Well, yes and no. As she has painstakingly shown, it's all rather more complex than that. That one false note aside, *The Metaphysics of Love* is a highly sophisticated, demanding, and beautifully written text with which Levinas scholars should certainly engage.

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The Power of Feminist Theory: Domination, Resistance, Solidarity

Amy Allen, Westview Press, 1999

h/b £ 29.99 0 415 91244 X, p/b £ 8.99 0 415 91245 8

What is a feminist conception of power? Is it any account of power that can help to illuminate the lives of women, or is it more than this? Is it an account that derives from the very conditions of women's lived realities? While all feminists would no doubt agree that feminism needs to be able to illuminate the relation between women and power, the actual contours that the theory of power takes differ significantly from theorist to theorist.

As Amy Allen's opening chapter illustrates, feminists have approached the concept of power in a number of different ways. Those operating within a broadly liberal perspective have seen power as a re-

source to which women should have access. In order to secure gender justice, it is necessary to remove the obstacles that deny women power. Against this resource model of power, radical feminists posited the dual ideas that male power was a form of domination while female power could be thought of in terms of empowerment: less the power over others than the power to do things. Where the liberal model aimed at gender neutrality—though its critics charged that its model was actually androcentric—radical feminism sought to define a specifically feminine mode of power, grounded in the realities of women's experience, that could be counterposed to a more destructive virile conception.

While both liberal and radical feminist accounts have their strengths, for Allen they are ultimately insufficient for the task at hand. Feminism needs a theory of power that can accommodate *both* domination *and* empowerment and the way that these two moments intersect. It is not enough to say that men have power over women; women also have power over others. Likewise it is not enough to say that women's power is empowering and creative when it can also be dominating and restrictive. In order to generate a more adequate theory, Allen turns to the work of Michel Foucault, Judith Butler and Hannah Arendt.

It is the goal of Allen's book to produce an account of power that can accommodate what she regards as three necessary features of any feminist conception of power. First, that it must be able to explicate male domination of women; second, that it has to be able to explain female resistance; and third, that it has to have an account of female solidarity. Moreover, such an account must be normative—though frustratingly for this reader, the reasons why it should be normative are merely asserted *a priori* rather than debated and demonstrated. In order to construct what is ultimately a synthetic theory, Allen devotes a chapter each to Foucault, Butler and Arendt. Charting the pros and cons of their respective accounts of power, she shows how each thinker both supplements and remedies perceived deficiencies in the work of the other(s).

Foucault is seen as offering the insight that power is productive just as it is constraining. His work is deficient, however, in that it has a

paradoxical conception of agency and a strategic (rather than normative) account of solidarity. Butler provides a necessary corrective to Foucault's insufficient discussion of agency through the Derridean notion of citationality. She is able to demonstrate just how it is that a subject (who is subjected by power just at the same time as it is a subject of power) has agency. Nevertheless, Butler remains in the same normative quandary as Foucault. Butler is less aware than Foucault of non-discursive phenomena, but her version of solidarity, like Foucault's, is strategic rather than normative. It is Arendt, then, who supplies the necessary normative account of solidarity—although Allen recognizes that there are issues surrounding the extent to which 'concerted action' can be disrespectful to the other.

The final chapter of the book then sketches out the composite features of the feminist conception of power that Allen has been constructing block by block throughout. A feminist conception of power incorporates three central facets: power-over, power-to, and power-with. In this way, it can account for domination, resistance and solidarity—Allen's three key areas for any feminist account of power—though she is at pains to deny that these three areas are simply reducible to the three facets of power she has isolated. This analytical account of power is supplemented by some 'methodological considerations'. When assessing how power operates in any given context, one perspective is to focus on the 'foreground' where power-to, power-over and power-with function. This has to be complemented by 'background' work that exposes the context in which power (in its three facets) operates: questions about subject positions, institutions, cultural meanings and so forth.

There is no doubt that this is a book that will be of use to students: the individual chapters are all very clearly and succinctly written. The chapters on Foucault, Butler and Arendt summarize neatly the main themes of each thinker in respect of power and sketch some of the most pertinent criticisms levelled at those accounts. For the most part, however, they tread well-covered ground (at least in the case of Foucault and Arendt) and for established scholars will be less rewarding. There is rela-

tively little engagement in the book as a whole with the secondary literature. Overall, the approach is schematic rather than detailed. The section on power as a resource in Chapter 1, for instance, is very thin; it merely reports a debate between Okin and Young. The account of power as empowerment focuses almost exclusively on theories of care, neglecting other versions of power-to that have been developed within radical and other feminisms. As a summary of feminist theories of power it is far from full.

There is much that could be said about the book about the turn to Arendt, the distinction between normative and strategic conceptions of solidarity and so on. The most significant area, however, concerns the relation between the final chapter and the account of Butler and Foucault. The final chapter of the book sets out a typology of power that sees power as the 'ability or capacity of an actor or set of actors to act' (127). Allen thus adduces a *theory* of power that endeavours to capture the essential quality of power even as she concedes that it manifests itself in different ways. This is a far cry from Foucault who refuses to think in terms of a theory of power (what power is) and instead offers an *analytic* of power (that is, an exploration of power in its operation). Where one might expect Allen to encourage feminists to engage in genealogy (*à la* Foucault and Butler), she doesn't. Instead, she derives from the empirical work of both thinkers a set of propositions about power. There is something of a disjunction, then, between the final analytical chapter and the preceding accounts. Arguably this is less relevant to the account of Arendt because Arendt offers a theory of power (what it is, its distinction from violence, etc.).

My reservations go further than this. Power ultimately becomes a resource—an ability or capacity—of actors. This masks the ways in which for both Foucault and Butler power produces effects of all kinds: subjects, agency, institutions, surveillance, normalization and so on. In this her account loses some of the radical thrust of the work of Foucault and Butler in particular (though her account of solidarity is much closer, despite Allen's reservations, to Arendt's idea of concerted action). The

move that enables her to realign the observations of Foucault and Butler turns on how she recasts the notion of subjection. Foucault and Butler both treat subjection (*assujettissement*) as involving subjection by power just as one becomes a subject who can act.

Two things happen here. First, Allen reads this account of subjection as standing in for the work of power *per se*. In other words, power is treated as if it is always about producing subjects who are dominated and empowered by its actions. As just noted, it is not evident that this is the case for either Foucault or Butler. Certainly power generates subjects, but that is not all it does. Second, the twin dimensions of subjection are recast as domination (a form of power-over—defined by Allen as 'the ability of an actor or set of actors to constrain the choices available to another actor or set of actors in a non-trivial way' (123)) and as empowerment, or sometimes resistance—and there is some slippage between the two terms. The latter are forms of power-to, defined by Allen as 'the ability of an actor to attain an end or series of ends' (126).

This remapping of the dual nature of subjection loses sight of a number of features intrinsic to the Foucauldian/Butlerian account of power. Gone is the sense that resistance may not be end-oriented or goal-oriented but may be an unconscious response to the actions of power. Gone also is the sense that power produces the very actors that may or may not be able to act. (Interestingly, the question of subject positions is relegated to a 'background' consideration, the background being 'the complex *social* relations that ground every particular power relation' (131, my emphasis)). Gone too is the idea that power functions through such material entities as the panopticon generating effects of (self-)surveillance or the effects of power-discourse in naturalizing heterosexuality.

Despite her own acknowledgement of the complex intersections of these analytically disarticulated features of power, and the twin caveat that domination is just one type of power-over and resistance of power-to, the final chapter seems to jar with what has gone before. Allen wants to be able to distinguish normatively between bad power (domination)

and good (resistance and, of course, solidarity). To do so, she endeavours ultimately (recognizing her caveats) to align one aspect of subjection with 'bad power' and the other moment with 'good power'. Ultimately this doesn't work because these moments are not normatively invested. They are inseparable moments in the constitution of subjects: one is subjected to power just as one becomes a subject. Being subjected to power is equally as productive as becoming a subject who can act; becoming a subject who can act is equally as constraining as being subjected.

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May Sinclair: A Modern Victorian

Suzanne Raitt, Oxford University Press, 2000

h/b £ 19.99 0 19 8122985

Although any new biography of May Sinclair (1863–1946) must be a welcome event, from a philosophical point of view this new study by Suzanne Raitt deserves only a cautious welcome. Raitt tells us that although Sinclair's philosophical work was 'remarkable in its time, it has limited significance for philosophers nowadays' (10). But as much of Sinclair's literary output is informed by the philosophy that she develops in a number of early essays on the history of philosophy, in her poetry, in her essays on psychoanalysis and in two original works of philosophy, *A Defence of Idealism* (1917) and *The New Idealism* (1922), this is a most unhelpful decision. Furthermore, since Sinclair was passionate about Spinoza and was also a feminist, this is quite simply a mistake, as must be clear from reading 21st-century feminist Spinozists such as Moira Gatens, Susan James or Genevieve Lloyd.

Although Sinclair herself ventures into biography in *The Three Brontës* (1912), she was careful to assess the sisters' achievement in terms of their artistic endeavours. Raitt adopts a less generous approach, and reads Sinclair's attainment in terms of a failed personal (and sexual) life.

Since Sinclair covered her tracks well (excising revealing paragraphs from letters and completely destroying swathes of personal correspondence), Raitt has clearly had a rough time in tracking down intimate details. Her frustrations with her elusive author seem to have affected her own value judgments. Too often Raitt adopts a patronizing attitude towards Sinclair, judging her in terms of the vulgar psychoanalytic models that have been incorporated into present-day 'common sense' about the ills of female sexual repression. These are used to criticize her subject as 'freezing' into old age (260, 262), but are not themselves subject to critique—or even fully related to symptoms of Parkinson's disease which produces a notoriously mask-like immobility that matches that of Sinclair herself on her last public appearance in the US, aged 61.

Raitt gives us detailed—and often highly speculative—analyses of Sinclair's works, her motives, her (sublimated) sexuality and her failures, but Raitt's prying into personal relationships is not matched by an equivalent intellectual curiosity about the exact details of Sinclair's views. This is deeply ironic, since Sinclair was herself an early—very critical—reader of psychoanalysis. She helped set up (and funded) one of the earliest clinics for psychoanalysis in the UK (the Medico-Psychological Clinic, founded 1913), but she reads Freud and Jung critically, in terms of their contributions to a philosophical tradition, although she also allows their interest in childhood, self and memory to redirect her practice as a writer. She takes her definition of key concepts such as 'sublimation', 'self' and 'unconscious memory' from Hegel, Kant, Schopenhauer, Samuel Butler and Spinoza. Raitt seems to suppose that Sinclair is advocating Jung's version of sublimation (as opposed to that of Freud) in *Mary Olivier*, and too quickly dismisses Sinclair's 'bastardized' Jungianism as both inconsistent and inadequate in charting the relationship between the self and the unconscious drives in Sinclair's philosophy and fiction (232–3).

Apart from her ghost stories, only three novels, *The Three Sisters* (1914), *Mary Olivier: A Life* (1919) and *The Life and Death of Harriett Freen* (1922), have received relatively recent reprints. Of these, the last two

adopt modifications of the experimental 'stream of consciousness' technique: a phrase that Sinclair was responsible for introducing into literary criticism in her 1918 review of the opening volumes of Dorothy Richardson's *Pilgrimage*. Both can be usefully read in terms of the metaphysical system that is developed within Sinclair's *A Defence of Idealism*, in which being born a self means only 'that which is present to all states of consciousness in any one conscious organism' (*Defence*, 4). Specifically, being a self does not entail being an individual. Individuality is only attained gradually through the course of a life as the child develops into an adult and separates itself off from its ancestors and relatives.

For Sinclair, 'becoming an individual' and the simultaneous revelation of the illusory nature of individuality is what is charted in *Mary Olivier*. The failure to adequately individualize and the failure of individuality to break up into the pre-individual (as opposed to the sub-individual) is what is charted in *Harriett Frean*. To understand that this is not inconsistent, we need to grasp that individuality as such is not the focus of Sinclair's philosophical or literary concerns; nor is memory, which is presented as pre-individual and as non-identical with consciousness (*Defence*, 74, 77). Instead, the 'undivided, unapparent being' that is the self contains within itself 'all selves which are and shall be' (*Defence*, 31). This (Spinozist) substance or self is infinite, but manifests itself as particular finite individuals, and involves 'a plurality of illusory consciousness, a plurality of illusory selves, held together by one "real" self' (*Defence*, 377). We can become conscious of this 'real' non-individualized self that synthesizes materiality, time and space in new patterns that 'escape for ever the net of memory' in privileged moments of awareness revealed in the experience of beauty, love or danger (*Defence*, 74, 379).

Sinclair's philosophy fits broadly into an Idealist tradition influenced by T. H. Green, Hegel and Spinoza, as well as that peculiar combination of Kant, Plato, Hinduism and Buddhism that can be found in Schopenhauer. This is most evident in the plot of *Mary Olivier* in which the eponymous heroine—whose life coincides with that of the au-

thor in a multiplicity of ways—develops into a poet and a translator of Euripides' *Bacchae* (and in ways that might remind us of May Sinclair's young friend H.D., Hilda Doolittle, whose work Sinclair was one of the first to appreciate and critically place). *Mary Olivier* is a rare example of a female artist-novel: a classic *Künstler(in)roman* whose absence from the literary canons of modernism is, at least in part, explicable by her readers' failure to engage with the series of intellectual figures and ideas that mark its plot. Thus Mary reads and discusses (sometimes even quoting) all of the above philosophers, plus Locke, Hume, Sophocles' *Antigone*, Maudsley and Darwin, amongst others. Freud and Jung are not mentioned but their ideas are implicitly under critique (and are explicitly discussed in *A Defence* and elsewhere).

Mary Olivier starts inside/outside the consciousness of the two-year old infant Mary in her cot. The uncertain pronouns of the narrating consciousness ('she' and 'you') are maintained for most of the text, although by middle age Mary has attained individuality through a series of relational bondings and refusals. There is the sisterly identification with, and differences from, her brothers (who die one by one). The father is made subservient to the brothers and the mother in the family drama (although his body—its smell and its beard—are also the focus of a kind of primal horror). But above all it is the mother/daughter struggle that shapes the daughter's gradual attainment of individuality and the narrative itself. The similarities with and differences from Hegel (for whom the brother-sister relationship of *Antigone* is key to woman's identity) and Freud and Jung (who emphasize the daughter's love for the father) seem far from accidental.

Thus, in *Mary Olivier* the relational monism of *A Defence of Idealism* is exemplified through exploring the relationships that exist within the family unit, from cradle to the attainment of full individuality. As the mother lies close to death, the self begins to will freely but the still-not-fully-emergent self—now allocated the pronouns 'it' or 'you' and the demonstrative 'this', as in 'it wills', willing 'was this'—realises that 'nothing happens except God's will. God's will in your will. Self of your self.'

(*Mary Olivier*, 351). It is only at the end of the novel that a new pronoun emerges: a (hesitant and unstable) 'I' replaces the 'she', 'you' and 'it'. This 'I' finds itself in a Spinozistic moment of reconciling freedom and fate, self and universal.

Given the roles played in recent psychoanalytic theory by the German *es* (it/id) or the French *ça* (this) as signifiers of the unconscious, Sinclair's change of pronouns seems both sophisticated and subtle. But the reader who looks to the Raitt biography to confirm the above analysis of Sinclair's philosophy or its exemplification in the novels will be disappointed. Indeed, some of the useful information relating to philosophy included in the earlier biography by Theophilus E. M. Boll (1973) is omitted here.

Boll starts with a poignant scene of Sinclair reading a paper on 'Primary and Secondary Consciousness' to the Aristotelian Society in 1923 and being thoroughly discommoded by the need to deal with her audience's questions, which were fended for her by Alfred North Whitehead as Chair. Putting Boll's account together with that of her impending Parkinsonianism and dementia that Raitt supplies, an obvious hypothesis presents itself. But neither biographer explores this. However, perhaps this was also just that female discomfiture with the over-aggressive questioning that predominates in philosophy; perhaps that was as true in 1923 as it is for some women philosophy students now. In any case, Sinclair refused the invitation to contribute an essay later that year to John Henry Muirhead's *Contemporary British Philosophy*, even though Muirhead noted in his letter of invitation that she was the only British woman philosopher considered important enough to be invited.

What for Boll was a significant moment in Sinclair's intellectual life (the abandonment of philosophy) is in Raitt either missing entirely or confined to a footnote (42 fn.). Raitt's lack of philosophical curiosity is also revealed in her discussion of some of the early poetry. She guesses (36) that the title of the poem 'Apollodorus' refers to a Greek painter, and proceeds to offer a Lacanian analysis of this early text, published in 1886. But given that Sinclair refers to the Apollodorus of Socrates' dia-

logues in another poem, Raitt's speculation is unconvincing. It would have been more useful to explore the Apollodorus who is the lover of Socrates and the narrator of the *Symposium* and the character who weeps excessively as Socrates drinks hemlock in the *Phaedo*.

Much of the intellectual detail in Raitt's biography is either lacking or un compelling. But the biography is not without interest. It has tracked down new sources and offers plenty of details on Sinclair's relationships, her feminism, her interest in mysticism, as well as her brief expedition into Belgium as part of the ambulance corps during 1914–1918 war. Sinclair's attitude to war was disturbing: both ecstatic and naïve. Raitt portrays Sinclair here in a ridiculous light, and the details are certainly hard for a 21st-century reader to handle. But to me, Sinclair seems an overwhelmingly tragic figure: a kind of modern Antigone who disappears into silence for the last twenty years of her life as Parkinson's disease robs her of an individualized will and her authorial voice.

This biography is certainly a book worth ordering for a library or recommending to those interested in literary modernism or the history of psychoanalysis. But, as far as the history of women in philosophy is concerned, it leaves too many questions not only unanswered, but also utterly unexplored. Like the film *Iris* recently on general release in the UK—and also the associated film documentaries, biographies and reminiscences about Iris Murdoch (1909–1999)—it adopts a biographical approach that occludes a serious engagement with women as thinkers. In it, we can just glimpse the figure of a woman philosopher as she simultaneously disappears from the history of 20th-century philosophy.

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Luce Irigaray and the Question of the Divine

Alison Martin, Maney Publishing, Modern Humanities Research Association 2000.

h/b £ 29.99 0 415 91244 X, p/b £ 8.99 0 415 91245 8

Alison Martin's book is a brilliant, sympathetic, and invaluable explication of Irigaray's thinking of the female divine which, Martin argues, far from being an embarrassing and inexplicable turn in Irigaray's work, is central to her whole project. Against those who argue for a fundamental break in Irigaray's thought, Martin delineates three distinct stages: Irigaray's critique of patriarchy, her attempt to explore the feminine to find an enabling female subjectivity, and the development of a heterosexual order that clearly recognizes two sexed subjectivities.

In relation to the divine, Irigaray stands in the idealist tradition of Hegel and Feuerbach in asserting the importance of the self-other relationship and the necessity of an ideal representation locating the self in universal terms. However, she departs from Hegel in her assertion of the need for fidelity to sexual difference rather than the violent collapse of one to the other. Masculinity in Western culture has reached its limits. The old master/slave dialectic must be replaced by one taking place between two sexed subjectivities mutually recognizing one another, the only dialectic that can surmount the subject-object splitting of patriarchal culture. For Irigaray, the dialectic between these 'two rhythms' gives rise to a 'sensible transcendental' surmounting the spirit/matter, reason/body oppositions and other patriarchal dualisms.

Marx developed a materialist analysis emphasizing modes of production: Irigaray develops the analysis of matter and focuses on appropriation, especially the appropriation of female matter that constitutes the collapse of female genealogies. She goes beyond Marx's distinction between interpreting and changing the world to attempt both simultaneously. Far from remaining at the level of interpretation, or capitulating to any pre-Oedipal, naïve, unmediated body (a strategic or metaphysical essentialist position), Irigaray's project is to *cultivate* women.

Currently, women are not citizens: their genealogies are collapsed into the patriarchal order.

Apparently central to Irigaray's position is her experience of the contrast between Romania and India. Both are poor but while the first is bereft of its gods and dispirited, the second revels in a sophisticated spirituality. Women are also bereft of their gods and goddesses, but Irigaray's concern is not for a Goddess *movement* partly because the concept is plural and regressive. 'Divine Becoming', rather than divine beings, is the challenge, and Irigaray therefore argues for socio-symbolic practices and representational strategies empowering female becoming. Without such an ideal, she claims, women are left derelict, with no means of differentiating among themselves except derivatively in terms of their male relationships; they cannot go beyond patriarchal culture or develop universal female ideals. Female horizontal violence becomes inevitable. Martin's account of Irigaray on the divine would seem to indicate that Irigaray's position has little to do with onto-theology, traditionally understood, or even with metaphysical humanism. Her position has much in common with process or ecological theology. Her project is unashamedly universalist, yet her universalism is one that confounds the very meaning of the universal. She does not posit divine beings, but the Divine Becoming of two sexes.

For Irigaray, Being *is* matter, and matter is the feminine substratum that patriarchal culture consistently forgets, denies, or projects onto a Being in a subject-object relation. Her divine sexed beings are an attempt to re-establish the primacy of subject-subject relations, a primacy shattered through the 'Fall' which she interprets as a break between nature and grace, one that can be overcome only through new relationships between the sexes. She prioritizes gender as the primary category of oppression and hence analysis, and claims that Christianity, Buddhism, and Hinduism each offer ways to overcome the break with nature implied in patriarchal sexual relations.

Irigaray shares much of Nietzsche's critique of Christianity: the historical form deviated from its radical roots under the influence of res-

sentiment. But whereas Nietzsche blames Christ's teaching, she blames the historical conditions of reception. Nietzsche rejects the inner spirituality of Christ and Buddha as life-denying; Irigaray embraces it for its divine interiority, although she still regards it as problematic for its life-denying desire for nothingness (longing to return to primal oneness with the mother). Nietzsche embraced Dionysus; Irigaray considers Christ more respectful of women. Furthermore, she includes Nietzsche in her critique of moribund patriarchal philosophers. Where he blames priests, she blames patriarchy, especially its failure to recognize the other sex, leading to the multiple appropriations of the feminine, metaphysically expressed, sacrificially achieved, and mimetically represented in the patriarchal eucharist, which incidentally betrays both Jesus and women in its expression.

Rather than turning away from Christianity, Irigaray attempts to return to its radical roots. For all its difficulties, Christianity (which cannot be reduced to one form) has harnessed creative energies (possibly derived from its gynaeocratic past). Her concern is not to recuperate Christianity for its direct potential for any socio-economic change: indeed, she explicitly problematizes this 'option for the poor', given the dangers of manipulative rhetoric concerning salvation. Still less is she defending the 'truth' of Christianity. Her concern is for its symbolic potential for women becoming full agential subjects and thus her aim is to develop Christianity's sexed incarnation to include figures such as Mary and Anne, and to offer women options other than those typified in Freud's 'Three Caskets': the mother, the virgin, or the prostitute.

In elucidating this, Martin's book will stand alongside that of Whitford as one of the definitive texts on Irigaray's work to date. The book also elucidates questions to be asked of Irigaray that seem at the moment still to be left hanging. Feminist scholars of religion generally accept that there is no necessary correspondence between the gender of the deity and the liberation or subordination of women: the variables are extremely complex. Can systems of representation be recuperated, invented, or consciously constructed? Are there not positions other than

those allowed by Freud which are taken by women—slave owners, colonial servants, bourgeois capitalist—that might actively militate against women acting for themselves as well as in themselves? Was the break from kinship to kingship, from blood to social contract unilaterally negative or, like capitalism, a necessary stage in human development? In India, for instance, the caste system administers abjection and repudiation, while Western democracies were only made possible by *breaking up* the familial, feudal, and other dynasties (even though the ties of blood were symbolically retained in some monarchies), with abjection often displaced into the racial arena.

Irigaray's thinking of the divine is essentially work-in-progress. The ultimate test will be its ability to bear the weight of questions such as these.

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