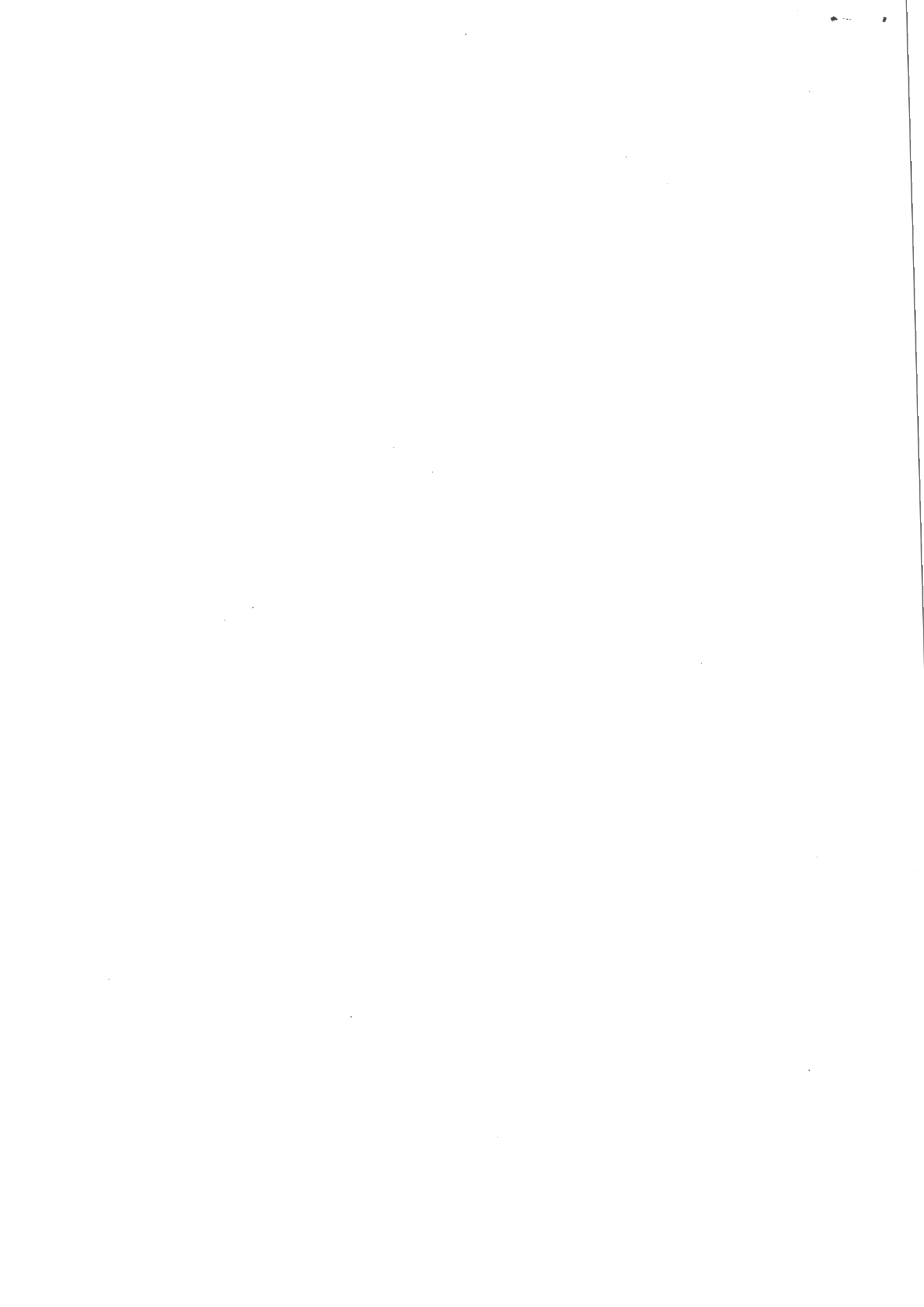


NEWSLETTER

Issue No 5 June 1991



A SOCIETY FOR WOMEN IN PHILOSOPHY - SWIP

Application for Membership 1991-1992

NAME:

ADDRESS:

.....

.....

Subscription to Newsletter (2 issues per year): waged £5; student/unwaged: £2.50
Cheques should be made payable to: **Women in Philosophy**

Names and Addresses of other women I think would like to receive the newsletter:

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.....

.....

.....

Registration fees for SWIP meetings will now be charged by the organisers. We are trying to make the newsletter and each of the meetings self-financing, instead of subsidising the newsletter from the meetings.

Please send completed form to: **Paula Boddington**
Department of Philosophy
University of Bristol
9 Woodland Road
Clifton
Bristol BS18 1TB

RESEARCH DETAILS FOR NETWORKING

This isn't working, because hardly anyone has sent in details. So we thought we'd circulate the membership list instead, so people would know who is in their area. Any comments?

Editorial

The first meeting of the American SWIP was in May 1972. Since then, as you probably know, it has expanded enormously and there are now three US branches, not to mention smaller regional branches. This year, several of the women who were involved from the early days have now finally published their collected essays (see review section for reviews of Kathryn Pyne Addelson, Sandra Lee Bartky and Iris Marion Young). The essays in each collection span one or two decades of thinking and writing, and are an impressive testimony to the work that can be inspired by a collective political movement and a supportive professional community. Sandra Lee Bartky describes in her introduction how she wrote her first paper for SWIP in order to bring feminist philosophy into existence: 'Clearly, if there were to be such a thing as feminist philosophy, we who were philosophers and feminists would have to invent it.'

Unfortunately we can't provide such a large and supportive community. We started much later and we are tiny in numbers compared to the US Society. However tentatively, though, we are in the process of inventing 'feminist philosophy'. It still needs a lot of nurturance in this country; it depends on a lot of extra hours and good will. And we think there are distinctive perspectives that women in the UK and Europe, for example, can offer. The example of the American women, while not immediately relevant, perhaps ('oh, but there are so many of them') can perhaps keep us from giving up when times are difficult and energies are low. One day, this newsletter may be reviewing your collected essays. And given that there are so few of us, we also need a network that simply keeps women in philosophy in touch with each other.

Elizabeth Minnich's book *Transforming Knowledge* (see review section) explains why it is so important not to give up. Those who attended the last SWIP meeting in London (in March) may be interested in her view that what is gendered about logic is not logic *per se* but the view that it is the 'highest' form of knowledge. Minnich spells out the implications of continuing to teach 'white western male philosophy' as though it were Philosophy (like continuing to teach that the earth is flat, she suggests!). Philosophy is too important to be left to philosophy departments' current definition of the discipline. If we can't change the curriculum, as Minnich urges us, we can at least begin the process of decentring it.

*Margaret Whitford
Morwenna Griffiths*

The next SWIP meeting will be held at **Wolverhampton Polytechnic, Dudley campus on Saturday 26 October 1991.** We are still looking for offers of papers. Anyone either wishing to offer a paper (in any area of feminism and philosophy), or wanting further details of the workshop should contact Moya Lloyd or Kimberly Hutchings at the address below. The cost for the meeting will be £5 waged; £2.50 unwaged.

Contact:

**Kimberly Hutchings and/or Moya Lloyd
SHASS
Wolverhampton Polytechnic
Castle View
DUDLEY
DY1 3HR**

or telephone (0902) 321000 and ask for either of the above.

Please publicise this conference!

Women and Philosophy

Conference call for papers on

Women, Power and Knowledge

The Conference will be held at Beechwood Co-operative Conference Centre, Leeds, from Thursday, 26 September 1991 to Sunday, 29 September.

We will seek to avoid the usual structure of stars and listeners by circulating the papers beforehand, and then meeting in groups to discuss the issues they raise.

Short papers of about 2,000 words are invited on the following topics:

1. *Women, Knowledge and Oppression*: ideology, false consciousness, knowledge as a social product, women and education, power and fantasy.
2. *Women, Knowledge and Empowerment*: liberating and subversive knowledge, disillusionment, the knowing subject, changing sides, the imagination, women and education.
3. *Women and Epistemology*: women's ways of knowing, knowledge?, democratic epistemologies.
4. *Women, cross-cultural challenges and gifts*: dilemmas of development, international movements, integrity and respect.

- None of these categories should be taken to imply that there is a perspective common to all women.
- Contributions from women who regard themselves as marginal to British academic philosophy will be especially welcome.
- Papers need not fall under these categories.

Dead-lines: Please send abstracts on one sheet, double spaced A4, to:
Alison Assiter,
119, Haringay Road,
London, N15.
by **March 29, 1991.**
Include your name and address.

Conference details: The conference will run from after lunch on Thursday to after lunch on Sunday. Accommodation will be in shared rooms, cost £94 per person, including meals. A creche will be available, 14 days notice needed. People wanting single rooms or more luxurious accommodation can book at neighbouring hotels, and pay a conference fee of £55, including lunch and dinner, or £25 without meals. There are 41 places available at the Conference Centre, and priority will be given to those sending papers.

As space is limited, please let Allison Assiter know if you intend to come and whether you will be resident or non-resident, preferably by end of January, and by 29 March at the latest.

Conference Organising Committee
Alison Assiter, Caroline Bailey, Anne Charlton, Morwenna Griffiths,
Judith Hughes, Kathleen Lennon, Anne Seller.
Queries: ring Mo Griffiths on 0602 484848 ext 2277

.....
Send to: Alison Assiter, 119, Haringay Road, London N15

I would like to come to the conference on Women, Power and Knowledge.

NAME:
ADDRESS:

INSTITUTION (IF ANY)
Delete as applicable:
I will / will not be sending in a paper.
I will / will not be wanting residential accommodation.

WOMEN'S STUDIES NETWORK (UK) CONFERENCE

NEW DIRECTIONS FOR WOMEN'S STUDIES IN THE 1990'S?

6 - 7 JULY 1991

Venue : Camden Girls' School, Sandall Rd., London

OPENING SPEAKERS :

Jo Richardson MP and Bea Campbell

PLENARY SPEAKERS :

Naila Kabeer, Institute of Development Studies, Sussex University

Felly Nkweto Simmonds, Newcastle Polytechnic

Rosi Braidotti, Centre for Women's Studies, Utrecht University

Diana Leonard, Institute of Education, London University

For further details, contact :

Anne Phoenix,

Thomas Coram Research Unit,

41, Brunswick Square,

London WC1N 1AZ

The conference will be divided into four strands :

1. International Feminisms
2. Commonalities and Differences between Women
3. New Developments in Feminist Theory
4. The Women's Movement and Women's Studies

Registration Fees :

	2 days	1 day
unwaged :	£20	£14
low-waged :	£30	£20
waged :	£40	£28

However, if you book the conference and pay your membership together (before date of conference), the conference fee will be lower.

WOMEN, VALUES AND LEADERSHIP

The Amsterdam Summer University 26-30 August 1991

The aim of the course is:

- to strengthen women's leadership by reflecting on the values which participants express in their lives and the strategies they use;
- to develop a way of support in creating a vision as women leaders.

The focus in this seminar is a reflection on women as female leaders. It is not a training in leadership or management techniques, but an inquiry into the different ways in which women as leaders have created their vision, thereby expressing values such as responsibility, caring, attending and bonding.

The course is meant for women who (wish to) express their own voice as a leader in male defined structures and who wish to enhance their personal effectiveness, their spiritual and emotional wholeness as a leader.

Final registration date 30 June 1991

No of participants: 40

There will also be a one-day seminar for up to 100 participants on **30 August**.

Applications to: Amsterdam Summer University
PO Box 53066
1007 RB Amsterdam The Netherlands

Phone: 010-31-20-6200225

Fax: 010-31-20-6249368

Cost: 1500 guilders for those whose expenses will be covered by their organisation, and 750 guilders for those who will pay their own expenses.

A limited number of bursaries will be available.

One-day seminar on 30 August

Cost: 350 guilders for those whose expenses will be covered by their organisation, and 175 guilders for those who will pay their own expenses.

Further details (description of course, names of programme leaders etc) from Margaret Whitford.

The Oppositional Imagination, Joan Cocks, Routledge, 1989, paperback

The focus of this book is eroticism - what Cocks calls the cultural-political regime of the Masculine/feminine. Cocks employs a composite critical theory/philosophy derived from the works of Gramsci, Said, Foucault, Williams and Hampshire to unpack the conceptions of power, sexuality and culture underwriting both the 'dominant' masculinist/androcentric discourse of desire, and radical feminism's alternative critique. What both the dominant and radical discourses share is a belief in differential male and female erotic natures; where they differ is how they characterise those natures. Cocks deconstructs the binary dualism at the heart of both these discourses - the masculine-feminine opposition - and offers in its place an alternative multifaceted eroticism untied to 'anatomico-genital' specificity. It is here that she evokes the personas of the critic, the rebel and the traitor (this latter a specifically masculine character - one who refuses in theory and in practice the role ascribed to him by the hegemonic discourse).

This is an ambitious book which seeks not only to dissolve the particular Masculine/feminine dichotomy discussed above, but also to dissolve the distinction between theory and practice (critics and rebels must unite in counter-hegemonic strategies) and to marry together poetry and philosophy as the language in which to speak of sensuous lived experience. Given the breadth of its scope it is not surprising that at times the book fails to live up to its author's expectations: the connections between the two parts of the book (Part 1 concerning critical theory and Part 2 focussing on desire) are often cryptic and insufficiently integrated. Nevertheless it is an engaging book - well worth the effort of reading.

Moya Lloyd

Feminist Interpretations and Political Theory, Mary Lyndon Shanley and Carole Pateman (eds), Polity, 1991, paperback

Western political theory rests, according to the editors of this fascinating collection of essays, on a conception of 'politics' constructed through the exclusion of women and femininity. It is the nature of this exclusion and its implications for both the conceptualisation of core political categories, and for issues of political practice - the question of 'difference' within feminism, say - that is explored by the feminist contributors to this volume. Some expose the masculinism of the Western tradition via close textual critiques of its central works, (see the contributions by Pateman, Spelman, Shanley, and Okin on Plato) whilst others offer reconstructed feminist readings of other works (see, for example, Okin on Rawls, Dietz, Fraser and Sawicki).

All in all fourteen major theorists are covered ranging from Plato and Aristotle to Rawls, Habermas, Arendt and Foucault, and including, somewhat unconventionally, Beauvoir and Woolstonecraft. There are no essays on medieval theorists. In addition, a wide range of feminist perspectives can be discerned, including the psychoanalytic reading of Marx offered by Di Stefano, the socialist feminist account of Habermas given by Fraser, and the feminist

Foucauldianism of Sawicki. This is an excellent book to dip into for alternative and incisively critical readings of the canon.

Moya Lloyd

Troubled Pleasures, Kate Soper, VERSO, 1990, pp290

This book is a collection of Kate Soper's essays over the past five years. To read it is to participate in an acute and politically engaged conversation with humanism, Marxism, feminism and postmodernism. The particular pleasure of the book is its refusal to accept oppositional categories. This is not to say that Kate Soper is uncommitted. The issues are discussed with a currently unfashionable moral edge. The author remains a socialist, humanistically interrogating the nature of human needs, yet accepting strains of postmodern scepticism which "cast doubt on some of the standard Marxist and socialist projections." Her use of postmodernism, however, is to "disturb" rather than "shatter" her convictions. "Cognizant of the conceptual dependency of social realities and the role played by language in their shaping", she nonetheless insists on "the existence of a realm of being which is both non-linguistic and always intrusively in play as a determinant upon what is or can be said." What we have here is a dialectic of the material and the linguistic.

In relation to feminism she expresses concern that "feminism as a campaigning movement is yielding to feminism as discourse" that "feminism as theory has pulled the rug from under feminism as politics." This isn't the cry of those who see feminism as necessarily anti-theory. Far from it. It is the response of a theoretician with a sensitive eye to the emancipatory potential of analytical positions. Here the problem is the postmodernist rejection of the categories of 'women', 'men', 'human', leading in her view to a hyper-individualism. "For politics is essentially a group affair, based on the idea of making a common cause." On the other hand, she finds the exponents of sexual difference equally problematic; whether in their post-Lacanian form or post-Gilligan, as espousing a particularist and materialist ethic. Here the worry is not only the reinforcement of a patriarchal ideology of femininity and masculinity. Because of the partiality of such representations, they "operate a kind of theft of subjectivity and betrayal of all these who fail to recognize themselves in the mirror it offers." While accepting the need for the categories 'women' and 'female experience' for identifying and transforming the circumstances of women's lives", Kate Soper refuses to accept that her "identity as a person is exhausted in [her] existence as a woman, she aspires to a state when gender categories are transformed and no longer polarize the sexes.

This is a thoughtful and intelligent book, troubling all the "isms" she discusses. Don't miss it!

Kathleen Lennon

Is Women's Philosophy Possible?, Nancy J Holland, Rowman and Littlefield
1990, \$33.50

Who is the audience for this book, I found myself wondering as I read it. (Probably philosophy students who are relatively unfamiliar with the feminist critiques of philosophy). In quite a familiar way, Nancy Holland challenges the belief that philosophy, particularly Anglo-American philosophy, is gender-neutral. The target of her critique is firstly, empiricism, and secondly, individualism. She claims that there is - can be - no women's philosophy within the empiricist tradition, because philosophy in that tradition has been defined in such a way that women's philosophy is logically impossible:

'The Empiricist tradition, then, represents any feminist argument as a question of induction at infinity, requiring that we establish our unjust exclusion from the philosophical in an infinite number of specific cases, rather than acknowledging philosophy to be a structural unity in which that exclusion is inscribed as a logical necessity.' (p4)

In addition, the analytical tools of Anglo-American philosophy are completely inadequate for women's philosophy; they have been developed out of specifically male (and ruling class) experience.

Chapter 1 on Locke, and chapter 2 on Hume set out to demonstrate these claims. Chapter 3 provides an overview of the feminist critique of individualism. Chapters 4 and 5 give a survey of various traditions in continental philosophy, assessing their value for feminist critique - Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty and Simone de Beauvoir; Barthes, Lacan, Foucault and Derrida. Holland has a particular sympathy for Derrida's methods, while emphasising that deconstruction should be seen primarily as a tool, or lever, which can "open up" or expose the metaphysical commitments of the Anglo-American tradition. Chapter 6 provides the now almost standard discussion of French feminism, although Holland remains quite sceptical:

'I would insist neither that Anglo-American feminists must understand, much less accept, French feminism nor that we should copy it in our own work. Rather, I would suggest that we might "translate" it, with all the baggage that word carries within deconstructive discourse, that is, that we might rewrite it, not in different words that refer to the same, universal, fixed referent beyond language, but in words that both shape and describe our unique experience of feminist consciousness in the contemporary world.' (p163)

The final chapter suggests a three-fold approach to doing women's philosophy (p167):

- 1 A historical dimension - the systematic deconstruction of the dominant discourse of our culture along gender lines (as in chapters 1 and 2);
- 2 the development of a detailed phenomenology of the lived experience of all kinds of women in a wide variety of life situations from all over the world;

- 3 the hermeneutical or interpretative reading, the deconstruction of women's histories.

It isn't a groundbreaking book and doesn't claim to be. However, it's a book that undergraduates would find clear and helpful. It provides a useful survey of the resources that different philosophical traditions might offer to women engaging philosophy, while at the same time being argumentative enough to stimulate discussion or disagreement.

Margaret Whitford

Transforming Knowledge, Elizabeth Kamarck Minnich, Temple University Press
\$29.95

The issue which this book addresses is of immediate, practical and vital concern to all of us involved in teaching (or expecting to become teachers). To put it in Elizabeth Minnich's terms, feminism is effecting a Copernican revolution in knowledge and, to change the metaphor very slightly, to go on teaching the same knowledge, the same syllabi and the same curricula is like continuing to teach that the earth is flat: 'Discoveries indicating that the world is round do not merely supplement knowledge shaped by and supportive of the theory that the world is flat' (31). Or, in other words, you can't just 'add women and stir.'

The aim of the book is to unravel 'the conceptual tangle resulting from the root problem of taking a dominant few as the inclusive group, the norm and the ideal for humankind' (48). We all notice, she says, when western males are left out of the curriculum; many of us do not notice when the majority of humankind are excluded (80). If we don't change, or support changes in the curriculum, we shall once again find that the usual categories of humanity are excluded, marginalised, defined as lesser or inferior.

The largest section of the book, chapter 4, sets out to show the errors perpetuated by the dominant tradition and argues that they need to be challenged at source, or they will simply reassert themselves. Here is her summary of those errors:

what we know reveals itself to contain errors of

- 1 faulty generalization (generalizing too far from too few without recognizing it), and
- 2 circularity of reasoning (drawing on definitions, principles, standards derived from faulty generalizations to explain and justify the continuing exclusion and devaluation of all that was held out of the original enquiry). The confusions that result underlie and perpetuate the creation of
- 3 mystified concepts (in which the partial origins of the hierarchically invidious tradition are hidden but continue to have effect), so that

- 4 partial modes of knowing, and knowledge systems, considered without analysis that reveals their contexts and consequences, produce ways of thinking about knowledge that, rather than providing perspective on those modes and systems, perpetuate and justify the original exclusions. (178)

Thus, a course on white western male philosophy should be labelled as such - if it isn't, the philosophy of white western males will continue to provide the normative definition of what philosophy is.

Why does it make people feel so uncomfortable when it is suggested that the curriculum perpetuates basic conceptual errors resulting from a partial tradition that claims to be universal? she asks. Part of her reply is that there is a fear of relativism (read: radical chaos) if Man is no longer the universal (87). At a time when the world is changing rapidly, it is easier to hold on to the old certainties. Minnich suggests that in fact, the pursuit of knowledge should return us to the uncertainty of all judgment. But 'the anger with which some defend their 'objective' knowledge' reveals something about objective knowledge; it is fraught with emotion and entangled with values that are themselves subjectively felt' (173).

Because people hold passionate views about curriculum change, her work aspires to be as unlike the 'adversary model' as possible: "I do not want to argue anyone into agreement; that kind of agreement is entirely unstable and rightly so I do not wish to compel agreement. I wish to invite it; and I would like the reasons for it to belong genuinely to each of those with whom I think' (37).

Minnich's book would be a good text to use on a philosophy foundation course; it would alert students to problems in the discipline and make them philosophically critical of Philosophy, and it would also be an invitation to the women, Black, or working class students to be more confident in their own perceptions.

Margaret Whitford

Impure Thoughts: Essays on Philosophy, Feminism and Ethics, Kathryn Pyne Addelson, Temple University Press \$27.95

'There is no politics that leads us to the peaceful innocence of the Garden, no politics for all women, no revolution for the future of all humanity. If we think there can be, if we believe we are the intellectuals of such a revolution, we deafen ourselves to the violence that we ourselves make in living our lives. There is no purity of heart. The best we can do is stand in humility before our violence and mitigate it to the degree that we can. The best we can do is to know and respect others as we act together with them. Reconciling love and anger has required that I accept the terrible pain of that truth'. (pp 146-7)

This is the paragraph that explains - partly - the title of *Impure Thoughts*. The strength of this book is that it shows us how Kathryn Pyne Addelson came to this

position as a feminist and a philosopher who has struggled to overcome the contradictions of being an academic and a feminist committed to social change.

British readers will probably know Addelson's work from her essays in Robert Solomon (ed), *Nietzsche* 1973, Julia Sherman and Evelyn Beck (eds), *The Prism of Sex* 1979, Sandra Harding and Merrill B Hintikka (eds), *Discovering Reality* 1983, and Eva Kittay and Diana Meyers (eds), *Women and Moral Theory* 1987, all of which are reprinted in revised form in Part I of this book, 'Writing Philosophy', which describes the process of 'making philosophy out of love and anger' (p8). In addition, the book includes two autobiographical accounts introducing each part, describing the author's personal and political trajectory and a second part entitled 'Writing Feminism' which is previously unpublished and which asks the question 'What kind of politics grows out of love and anger?' (p135). In the second part, she addresses the accusation that 'the women's movement is white and middle class' and through essays written over a period of more than a decade, often in collaboration, she shows how she came to her position of philosophical and political anarchism, based on the principles of nonhierarchy and respect for the other. There is a particularly opportune chapter (12) on being a feminist academic which, while of more relevance to the US situation than ours, could give us occasion for reflection on our role and position in the academy and what feminist philosophy should be trying to do.

Her communalist anarchist position leads her to challenge the foundations of academic moral philosophy and ethics (revolution rather than reform). Moral philosophy as it is currently practised in the universities, she argues, is derived from the presuppositions and experience of a dominant group. No amount of theorising can overcome the obstacle that the armchair theorist does not know the groups of people in the name of whom he (and sometimes she) is producing generalisable instances of moral reasoning - and thus in a crucial sense fails to show them respect. 'The very idea of a universal, genuine moral reasoning supports elites in their dominance' (p209). However, as she points out, the problem of a paradigm shift in moral theory is that the new theories cannot be justified in terms of the old paradigm. Thus the thrust of her book is towards showing that the creation of moral theories and vocabularies is a political act, not simply a conceptual one (pp116-7), given the function of authority and power in enforcing definitions.

This book seems to me feminist philosophy at its best. It is accessibly written and could be used on women's studies courses. I don't know if Temple University Press distributes in Britain; it is a pity if they don't, as this is a book that a lot of people will want to read.

Margaret Whitford

Gender and Knowledge: Elements of a Postmodern Feminism, Susan J Hekman, Polity Press £27.50

The relation between feminism and postmodernism is quite complex and one can distinguish variations on three different strands.

- 1 From one point of view, feminism and postmodernism have similar aims and objectives. They are both attempting to provide a fundamental critique of the presuppositions on which modern western culture is founded - the Enlightenment inheritance, or modernism as it is sometimes called.
- 2 From another point of view, feminist theory and postmodernism are in conflict. In its challenge to modernism, postmodernism confronts and displaces all the dichotomies of modernism, and in particular the pair male/female. It thus appears to remove the ground on which feminism is based. If woman is a contaminated metaphysical category, then in the long run it can only be a mistake to use it (this is roughly Hekman's position). Postmodernism, on this account, offers a useful vantage point from which to criticise certain forms of feminism.
- 3 From the third point of view, feminism provides a position from which to criticise postmodernism. For example, it can be argued that the emancipatory programme of the Enlightenment has been abandoned before it has been implemented.

In *Gender and Knowledge*, Hekman argues for a thoroughgoing postmodernist position. She is clearly a postmodernist first and a feminist second; (feminism falls short insofar as it is still 'modernist'). When it comes to a conflict between feminism and postmodernist positions, the criterion for adjudicating is the 'more sophisticated' postmodernist one. For example: 'A careful examination of the work of Derrida and Foucault from a feminist perspective can provide refutations of the objections of postmodernism's feminist critics' (p158). But if postmodernism displaces truth and knowledge, and given that there is no privileged standpoint (p154), as Hekman argues, what are the criteria for evaluation? This is something Hekman is a bit evasive about.

It seems to me this book begs a lot of questions. However, it is a sustained and sophisticated presentation of a postmodernist feminist position, and as such, a useful starting point for discussion. As a set book for women's studies courses in philosophy departments, it should provide (I would hope, anyway) lively discussion of the strengths and/or shortcomings of a postmodernist feminist position.

Margaret Whitford

Femininity and Domination: Studies in the Phenomenology of Oppression,
Sandra Lee Bartky, Routledge £9.50

This slim volume brings together Sandra Lee Bartky's essays written over a period of fifteen years. All but two have been published before. Most readers will already know 'Toward a Phenomenology of Feminist Consciousness' which appeared in the Vetterling-Braggin, Elliston and English collection *Feminism and Philosophy* in 1977.

Bartky's work uses the possibilities of phenomenology (but also deploys the tools of linguistic analysis, marxism, social science and psychoanalysis where these seem useful) for feminist ends. She attempts to describe in as immediate and vivid a way as possible 'the embodied consciousness of a feminine subject'. The modes of consciousness which interest her in particular are those which arise from oppressive intersubjective relationships, feelings that we would often prefer not to think about or feel that our feminism ought to have eradicated (but often hasn't): narcissism, masochism, shame, self-objectification. And she is also interested in the conflicts that arise between an old self that we can't quite put off and a new self that we can't quite put on. 'I want to understand how the values of a system that oppresses us are able to take up residence in our minds.' The titles of the essays indicate fairly clearly the contents of the book: 'Toward a Phenomenology of Feminist Consciousness', 'On Psychological Oppression', 'Narcissism, Femininity and Alienation', 'Feminine Masochism and the Politics of Personal Transformation', 'Foucault, Femininity and the Modernization of patriarchal Power', 'Shame and Gender', 'Feeding Egos and Tending Wounds: Deference and Disaffection in Women's Emotional labour.'

She explains the aim of her book in a nutshell: 'I am trying to get women angry.' There is a quality of immediacy in her essays, a directness and an ability to stay close to recognisable experience in order to make theoretical points, which make her work quite distinctive. No doubt this is partly because, as she explains in her introduction: 'I have mined my own fears and anxieties as well, drawn upon my own consciousness, indeed, the most chauvinized aspects of this consciousness, as a resource for theory.'

The fact that she highlights oppression over resistance has been a point of criticism for some reviewers already. A recent review of *Femininity and Domination* in *The Women's Review of Books* (March 1991) is entitled 'A Philosophy of Pessimism' and Bartky herself says that she has often been charged with defeatism. This seems to me a version of 'killing the messenger'. Bartky does what phenomenology - at least its Sartrean version - aimed at from the very beginning: to take the most commonplace of our everyday experience and make it philosophically relevant. Where women's experience is concerned - especially back in the seventies when some of these essays were written - that was quite an achievement.

This is a book which would be valuable on philosophy and women's studies courses. It is accessible to undergraduates as well as the more advanced. Most feminists teaching philosophy will probably want to have their own copy.

Margaret Whitford

Throwing Like a Girl, and other essays in Feminist Philosophy and Social theory,
Iris Marion Young, Indiana University Press

All but one of these essays have been previously published during the past decade; most readers are likely to have come across one or more of Iris Young's pieces eg her essay in *Feminism as Critique* or her 'Throwing Like a Girl' in *The Thinking Muse*, and will welcome this collection which brings together work

that has been published in widely scattered publications and journals. It is divided into three parts:

- 1 the socialist feminist essays;
- 2 the essays on the politics of difference;
- 3 the essays on female body experience.

In the first section, Young enters the debates around dual systems theory, and argues that a viable social theory should distinguish structural relations of labour and power from symbolic relations of culture; conceptually, male domination belongs to the former while gender differentiation belongs to the latter. In another essay she adopts a sympathetic but critical approach to psychoanalysis. On the one hand, psychoanalysis is 'indispensable to feminist social theory', especially the Lacanian account of the split subject; on the other hand, 'too often, psychoanalytic readings of interaction and cultural meanings obliterate economic and power structures.' In the second section, Young looks at three kinds of difference: between different kinds of feminism, between differently situated women, and the difference - theorised by postmodernism - that is suppressed by the construction of any unity or totality. She charts her way through the varied movements of feminist thought, coming down finally on the side of difference as 'reflection on and revaluation of female gendered experience' but theorising at the same time a politics of difference which would involve a heterogeneous public. The third section is a more phenomenological one. Like Sandra Lee Bartky, Iris Young here reflects on women's embodied oppression in four fascinating essays on movement (such as throwing a ball), women's relation to clothes, pregnancy, and women's relation to their breasts; in short, women's experience of the 'lived body', to use Merleau-Ponty's phrase. These papers criticise the implicit male norm of most phenomenology which, despite its focus on the body, in practice only attends to the male body.

These essays are thoughtful, trenchant and full of insights, informed by political commitment and critical verve. It is good to have the best of Iris Young's work together in one volume.

Incidentally, Indiana University Press is now distributing in Britain, via The Open University Press. This means that books are relatively more expensive than when they were ordered directly from the States, but it should mean that they are readily available in university bookshops. As Indiana publish a lot of interesting work in continental and feminist philosophy, this is a definite plus. Keep a look out and pressure your bookseller to stock these books.

Margaret Whitford

Announcement

Columbia University Press have just published a translation of **Marine Lover of Friedrich Nietzsche**, Irigaray's Nietzsche book. I haven't seen it yet - perhaps to be reviewed in the next issues?

Londoners and visitors may have noticed that Dillon's Bookshop in Malet Street (opposite the Students' Union) now has a feminist philosophy section in the philosophy department - if you have difficulty in obtaining the books you need, (and Compendium unexpectedly doesn't have them in stock) try Dillons.

Anyone who has any ideas for the newsletter, or has material which could usefully be included in it (eg information about conferences, books, journals, events, new groups, awards and posts, calls for papers, etc), please send to: Morwenna Griffiths, School of Education, University of Nottingham, University Park, Nottingham, NG7 2RD, or to Margaret Whitford, Department of French, St Mary and Westfield College, Mile End Road, London E1 4NS to ensure inclusion in the next issue, to be circulated in December. Book reviews are always welcome.