

even visited a major US city, as had a large number of my new college acquaintances. My high school curriculum was very limited, and I felt deeply ignorant next to fellow students who had taken calculus, economics, psychology — even philosophy — in high school. Although my politics were by no means clear to me, I was beginning to see that with respect to both political and religious values, I was on the verge of a great break with the traditions in which I had been raised, in a process that had already left me feeling alienated from and rejected by my hometown community. (I often wonder how many contemporary communitarians grew up in a small town.) It was therefore extremely valuable to me to discover a subject in which my background did not matter, in which I was encouraged to think that I could — and should — construct myself according to my own deepest understanding. The idea that I was entitled to autonomy was a notion that I had to work hard to absorb — it was not my birthright. It is an oft-cited aspect of the experience of marginality that the marginalized person is not permitted any individuality, but is instead taken as an exemplar for the group — individuality, the privilege of constructing oneself — is one of the prerogatives of privilege. Analytic philosophy, I submit, in encouraging a fantasy of unlocatedness, confers this privilege on everyone.

There is a great deal more I'd like to say about the ways in which the "male" aspects of analytic philosophy facilitated my own development as a feminist, and simply as a person, but I'll forebear. Let me just conclude by acknowledging two things: first, that power and freedom are hardly uncomplicated things, and hardly unequivocal goods. I insist only that they are goods of some sort. Second, I recognize that the fantasies I've been describing are fantasies. I know that reason does not always prevail, and I know that the vicious often claim it, with impunity, as their own. Finally, I recognize that all cognitive activity — because all activity — is materially located, that we cannot literally leave our bodies behind. I insist only that it is a sort of tyranny to maintain that one must remember this fact in everything one does.

Endnotes

1. "Feminism as a Meeting Place: Analytical and Continental Traditions," joint session sponsored by the Society for Analytical Feminism and the Society for Women in Philosophy, American Philosophical Association, Pacific Division Meeting, Seattle, March 2002
2. Janice Moulton, "A Paradigm of Philosophy: The Adversary Method," in *Discovering Reality*, ed. Sandra Harding and Merrill Hintikka (Dordrecht, Holland: Reidel Publishers, 1983), 149-164.
3. Genevieve Lloyd, *The Man of Reason* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984).
4. See, for example: Naomi Scheman. "Though This Be Method, Yet There is Madness in It: Paranoia and Liberal Epistemology," in *A Mind of One's Own*, ed. Louise Antony and Charlotte Witt (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 2nd edition, 2001), 177-205.
5. Lorraine Code, "Taking Subjectivity into Account," in *Feminist Epistemologies*, ed. by Linda Alcoff and Elizabeth Potter (New York: Routledge, Chapman and Hall, 1993), 15-48
6. I discuss challenges to this assumption in my "Embodiment and Epistemology," *Oxford Handbook of Epistemology*, ed. Paul Moser (forthcoming from Oxford University Press)
7. In *Throwing Like a Girl and Other Essays* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1990).
8. After making this quite useful and accurate distinction, Young goes on to commit humanistic feminists to another claim that I do not endorse, namely that male gender roles ought to be normative for everyone. This hardly follows from the first commitment, nor does it follow from the claim, which I do accept and argue for in what follows, that certain elements of the masculine gender role are more

appropriate as norms for human persons than the complementary elements in the feminine role. If one doesn't believe this, then one will have difficulty making out the case that occupants of the feminine role are oppressed at all, and Young does, indeed, struggle with this question.

While I'm clarifying my position, let me say, too, that I accept the label "humanist feminist," but not the label "liberal feminist" — the two are often used interchangeably, but this practice blurs important distinctions. "Humanism" signifies one's conception of the relation between gender and personhood, viz., that gender is an accidental property of persons. The term "liberal" can signify a variety of things, including one or more of the following: one's commitment to the fundamental importance in political theory of individual liberty, one's commitment to a set of fundamental civil and personal rights to liberty, or one's commitment to a capitalist system of ownership and exchange. Frequently these commitments are taken to form an indissoluble package, but they do not. I am committed to the centrality of autonomy, but not to capitalism — my politics are broadly socialist. (Indeed, I'd be prepared to argue that a proper understanding of autonomy leads to socialism.) The possibility of a position like mine is thus obscured by the term "liberal."

9. Excerpt from *The Emile of Jean-Jacques Rousseau*, ed. and trans. William Boyd (New York: Teachers College Press, 1962); reprinted in *Philosophy of Woman*, ed. Mary Briody Mahowald (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 3rd edition, 1994), 90

Revising Philosophy Through the Wide-Angle Lens of Feminism

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Introduction

What I want to look at is how feminism, conceived broadly as the consciousness of sexism and other hierarchical systems of oppression, whether coming out of analytic or continental traditions, has revised philosophical discourse.¹ Feminism questions, criticizes, and subverts the main fields of philosophy. Philosophical feminism is now itself a field — there are courses, textbooks, and job ads that go by its name — but it is a field rather on analogy with existentialism, not philosophy of science or ethics. That is, philosophical feminism is a pervasive worldview, a system, not just a topic. Thus, like existentialism (or materialism or many other isms I could name), feminism provides a lens for the revision of the entire philosophical project. Although philosophical feminism is still a marginalized field in philosophy, there can be no reasonable doubt that it has made its permanent marks on the discipline.

There are those who doubt that feminism has had such an effect on philosophy, however. Colin McGinn, in an article in the *Times Literary Supplement* that was supposedly assessing the effect that feminism has had in various disciplines, claimed that "feminism now has a place in many philosophy departments, for good or ill, but it has not made any impact on the core areas of the subject."² Although I think that the claim is so clearly false as not to be worthy of response, the rest of this paper constitutes, as a by-product of its main aim, a rebuttal. I will begin with the assumption that feminism has made very significant alterations in the terrain of philosophy and show how the dialogue of analytic and continental traditions within feminism has been fruitful in making these revisions. Analytic and continental traditions may debate the ownership of feminism as well as the ownership of philosophy generally. Yet, within this debate we can locate contributions from both sides not only to philosophy generally, but to almost any understanding of feminism.

In this paper I will illustrate some of the revisions of philosophy that feminists have created and point to ways in which the two traditions have complementary or converging views. As I see it, there are four main categories for the revisions that feminism makes in substantial issues of philosophy. First, feminism revises the questions that are approached philosophically. That is, feminism adds to the canon of interesting questions, and perhaps has shown some to be uninteresting, as well. What is a woman? This is a whole different question from Locke's question: what is a man?³ Second, feminism sets the terms in which some debates can be carried out. A simple example: one cannot use sexist language anymore without appearing to be picking a fight. But perhaps one will say that is not so much a philosophical point as a political one. Then consider: sex/gender, marginalization, standpoint epistemology, intersectionality, gynandry, phallocentrism, the gaze, embodiment, care, dependency, and on and on. These are all words that have been added to the philosopher's professional vocabulary by feminism. Third, feminism revises the criteria of adequacy for theories. Theories of justice, ethical theory, and philosophy of science that once looked plausible have come to be seen as implausible for what they leave out, for answers that they cannot provide or questions that they cannot address. And fourth, feminism affects the answers that are considered acceptable in philosophical debate. A sexist conclusion is no longer acceptable in any but the most isolated and praetorian philosophical community. Accounts of autonomy, objectivity, justice, or beauty can no longer assume the superiority or centrality of maleness without being rejected for that reason alone. In the rest of this essay I will take up examples in the first three categories (which also provide examples of the fourth) to illustrate the dialogue of continental and analytic feminist philosophy.

Questions

Here I shall take as my example the following question: How does our bodily existence define (at least in part) the self? This is not a question completely unknown to philosophers before feminism, but it was surely relatively unexplored territory on the frontier before feminists began to investigate the question of personhood. To take one influential feminist on this issue, Sandra Bartky has given us a continental-inspired analysis of bodily existence and sexual objectification, and the resultant shame that accompanies female selfhood.⁴ In doing so she has helped make bodies, particularly women's bodies and how they affect women's self-understanding, a primary topic of philosophical concern. In her article "Narcissism, Femininity and Alienation,"⁵ Bartky argues for a feminist understanding of the concept of alienation, which is typically in women a kind of self-estrangement or self-oppression. We in the contemporary Western world do that through our participation in and the internalization of the "fashion-beauty complex," which inspires in women the idea that we must be ever busy improving our looks, which are never good enough. Bartky writes:

I must cream my body with a thousand creams, each designed to act against a different deficiency, oil it, pumice it, shave it, pluck it, depilate it, deodorize it, ooze it into just the right foundation, reduce it through spartan dieting or else pump it up with silicon... There is no "dead time" in my day during which I do not stand under the imperative to improve myself.⁶

This imperative that we feel creates and reinforces in us the idea that we are inferior bodies, that we (unlike men) need to pay constant attention to our looks in order to be acceptable.

Feminine narcissism just is, according to Bartky, "infatuation with an inferiorized body."⁷ The result for women is a pervasive sense of shame, which Bartky sees as the dominant emotion in most women. Shame pervades our sense of ourselves; it is the ever-present feeling for the female-embodied subject. Bartky's theory of shame shows us how a predominant emotion can color our deepest sense of self.⁸ To understand the self, then, we must look to what our particular form of embodiment means in our cultures.

While Bartky draws largely on psychoanalytic and existentialist traditions for her penetrating analysis of female embodiment, Susan Brison's work on the effects of physical violence on the self draws mainly on work in cognitive and clinical psychology. In *Aftermath: Violence and the Remaking of a Self*, Brison writes about her survival of a brutal rape and attempted murder.⁹ Through the retelling of the event and its psychological aftermath, she assesses the Lockean theory of personal identity. According to Locke, a person is a set of continuous memories through time, so that when the prince's memories are placed in the cobbler's body, the resulting person is the prince. Brison's study of the effects of violence in part affirms the possibility of a different person coming to inhabit the body. Even though the body is continuous with the body before the attack, the person who is a victim of trauma is inalterably changed. After a traumatic event, that is, an event in which one feels helpless in the face of what is perceived as life-threatening force, victims often lose their memories of both the event itself and of previous events in their lives. She writes, "Not only are one's memories of an earlier life lost, along with the ability to envision a future, but one's basic cognitive and emotional capacities are gone, or radically altered, as well."¹⁰ Even if they regain those memories, as often happens, victims often feel as if they are no longer the same person, or that they are only the shell of a person. These reactions are so typical that they are part of the diagnosis of post-traumatic stress disorder, a recognized psychological disorder with recognized biochemical underpinnings. (Prozac turns out to be a helpful drug for many victims of post-traumatic stress disorder).

Now to the extent that the person really has changed through loss of memory and other cognitive and emotional capacities, Locke's theory has some validity. But where Brison clearly differs from Locke is in seeing how physical, bodily trauma effects these changes in the self. Brison shows that the body is inseparable from the person just in the sense that if we violently traumatize the body we change the person by significantly altering the chemical and neurological bases for personhood.

Although the traditional personal identity debate pits the body theory against the mind theory, feminism asks deeper questions about the way that embodiment affects the whole being of the person, so that the divide between the traditional theories of personhood are no longer viable. Bartky's analysis shows us that our embodiment (within a social context) causes our deepest sense of self to be in a particular affective mode. This belies the traditional thinking of mind theories of personal identity, in which it is only the cognitive that matters. Brison's analysis further shows us that under the pressure of bodily trauma the mental life of the self changes utterly.

Terms of the debate

Feminism has given us the sex/gender distinction, the most profound clarification by philosophers of the 20th century. The distinction was first formulated and clarified as the distinction between sex, conceived as natural or biological fact, and therefore not constructed by social context, and gender,

conceived as the socially constructed veneer on top of sexual difference. De Beauvoir's famous statement at the beginning of Book II of *The Second Sex*: "One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman."¹¹ is often recognized as the first explicit statement of this distinction. However, like that equally profound mind/body distinction, feminists are also critical of it. Judith Butler, another continental feminist, argues in *Gender Trouble* that gender is effectively determined by sex, so the categories are not really distinct.¹² Furthermore, sex is socially constructed in part, as well, in that it is determined to be a dimorphic category by the social significance invested in reproduction and normative heterosexuality.

Although Butler makes an excellent point about understanding sex/gender as a purely biological vs. social distinction, feminists have found that there is more to "gender" than her analysis allows. Sally Haslanger, in her "Gender and Race: (What) Are They? (What) Do We Want Them to Be?" argues that gender is primarily to be understood as a hierarchical system based on presumed sex.¹³ That is, if someone is presumed to be male then he is accorded the status of dominance vis-a-vis one who is presumed to be female. Hence, what the category gender adds to the apparently neutral biological sex distinction is the notion of hierarchy. Uncovering gender now is uncovering injustice.

Feminists from both analytic and continental traditions have created new meanings for the terms "sex" and "gender," and have shown that these terms are essential elements of debates about justice as well as sex.

Criteria of adequacy

Traditionally, justice has only to do with public spheres of politics, the courts, and the marketplace. This is as true of theories of justice of Kant, Hegel, and Habermas as it is of those by Mill and Rawls. On the traditional view, the private spheres of home and intimate relationships are to be kept separate from those of civic, political, and marketplace and relations within the former are not to be judged by rules of justice, which apply to the latter. Feminists from both the analytic and continental traditions have challenged this view and established justice in the family as a primary test of the adequacy of any theory of justice.

Susan Moller Okin, in *Justice, Gender, and the Family*, argues that if we understand justice as fairness along Rawlsian lines, then it is clear that there is a great deal of injustice in families.¹⁴ This injustice is systematically suffered by women, who are trapped in the domestic sphere, often as their second or even third shift, by their lesser power within marriage. Women have less power in marriage for several reasons, all of which stem from traditional norms about women and femininity. Since these are due to impersonal and morally arbitrary forces, they are unjust by liberal standards. Hence, a liberal theory of justice cannot be adequate unless it attends to matters of justice in family structures. There is yet a further argument for this conclusion that Okin provides. Families, she points out, are the place where children develop their moral and social capacities. If they must learn about justice and morality surrounded by unjust relations among family members, then they may well come to mistake such relations for inevitable, natural, loving, or perhaps even just relationships. Thus, a theory of justice that ignores family life is likely to be undermined by the moral development of those who follow it.

Eva Feder Kittay, in *Love's Labor*, makes what she calls the "dependency critique" of Rawls.¹⁵ Kittay argues that dependency is a ubiquitous feature of human life, and all persons will be dependent for some period of their lives. Thus,

society must create ways for the dependent to be cared for. In our society, as in most others, women are the primary caregivers of the dependent, and women of lower social status are even more likely than other women to spend much of their lives giving care. Furthermore, caregiving is accorded low status, as symbolized in our society by the fact that it is either unpaid or low paid labor. Women do this caregiving labor because they have been socialized to see it as their place and their role, and because they have been trained to have the emotional capacities and cognitive capacities necessary for competent caring. Kittay argues that because caring is inevitable and ubiquitous, all persons should be capable and obliged to care for others, and that this is a matter of justice. The capacity to recognize need and give care is as basic, she argues, as the two Rawlsian capacities of moral personhood: the capacity to have a sense of the good and the capacity to form a rational plan of life. In sum, Kittay has shown that the fact of human dependency cannot be ignored by any adequate theory of justice.

Cynthia Willett takes up the theme of the development of moral and social capacities and their connection to justice from a continental, psychoanalytic perspective in her book, *The Soul of Justice*.¹⁶ Here, and in her earlier book, *Maternal Ethics and Other Slave Moralities*,¹⁷ Willett argues that psychologists have demonstrated that human infants need human, physical touch and face-to-face encounters. Human touch seems to be so important that infants who are denied this often wither and die. Physical, cognitive, and emotional development can only be secured by adequate contact with other human bodies. This physico-social contact begins with the fetal-maternal bond, and develops as the baby is born and cared for in its early infancy and beyond. By treating this essential contact as primitive and pre-social, Willett argues, caregiving labor is devalued. Appropriating the language of the psychoanalyst, Willett calls these bodily, physical attachments "erotic" and "libidinal." Yet she clearly distinguishes her use of these terms from earlier Freudians. She wishes to capture a notion of physicality and sensuality that is not sexual or even quasi-sexual. Rather, it is the physical basis for sociality, and thus at the very root of our ability to interact morally. She writes:

The cradled baby yet unable to focus on the face of another is driven by the desire to be rocked, caressed, and held against the flesh of those who enjoy its warmth in return. The deprivation of touch, perhaps more so than the other forms of sensory engagement, hinders the libidinal development of the person. The infant who is deprived of touch can become excessively withdrawn or even violent, and incapable of sustaining social bonds in later life.¹⁸

Willett's work beautifully exemplifies the revision of philosophy through feminist sensibility. She brings embodiment into discourse about justice, and shows how human animality is the source, not shame, of our humanity as the traditional fathers of philosophy have taught us. We can, I think, infer two points about the criteria of adequacy of philosophical theories from this work: first, that a theory of justice that does not take human physical need for touch and personal, physical care into consideration is inadequate; and second, any philosophical theory that ignores the body or treats it as shameful is inadequate as a theory for human beings.

Conclusion

I want to close with one additional category of change that feminism is effecting in philosophical discourse, and that is in the manner of philosophical discussion and debate. Now it is

not true to say that feminists cannot be as strident in advocacy as their philosophical forefathers. Recall the subject of the last panel at American Philosophical Association Pacific Division Meeting that was sponsored by the Society for Analytical Feminism and the Society for Women in Philosophy, in which we discussed the “rules of engagement” for feminists, against the backdrop of Martha Nussbaum’s vigorous critique of Judith Butler.¹⁹ But the fact that we debated whether that sort of attack was legitimate is itself evidence that feminist philosophers are adding the issue of the manner of debate to the philosophical agenda. The panel for which this essay was written carries that debate forward. In creating this panel we hoped to bring out the meeting points of differing philosophical traditions, traditions that have been pitted against each other in ugly and unproductive ways. Although I was trained in graduate school by and mentored in my early career by philosophers firmly wedded to the analytic tradition, and jealous of any proposals by continentalists, since beginning to work on philosophical feminism I have begun to recognize the contributions that other traditions can make to my work. I thank feminists of all traditions for this continuing lesson in philosophy and community.

Feminism is not only alive and well in philosophy—it is revising philosophy. Some non-feminist philosophers may attempt to drag their feet, and backlash is certainly not unknown, but as Anita Superson, (chair of and organizer of the panel for which this paper was written), has put it elsewhere, “The tide is coming.”²⁰

Endnotes

1. Originally presented to a joint session of the Society for Analytical Feminism and the Society for Women in Philosophy, “Feminism as A Meeting Place: Analytic and Continental Traditions,” American Philosophical Association Pacific Division Meeting, Seattle, March 27, 2002.
2. Colin McGinn, “Feminism Revisited: A Symposium,” *Times Literary Supplement*, 20 March 1998, 13. Other philosophers have argued not that feminism has made no inroads, but that feminism has been a pernicious influence. In his address as chancellor of Boston University and host of the most recent World Congress of Philosophy, philosopher John Silber attacked feminist philosophy as “an assault on reason.”
3. John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985), Chapter XXVII.
4. Sandra Bartky, *Femininity and Domination* (New York: Routledge, 1990).
5. Bartky, *Femininity and Domination*, 33-44.
6. Bartky, *Femininity and Domination*, 40.
7. Bartky, *Femininity and Domination*, 40.
8. See “Shame and Gender” in Bartky, *Femininity and Domination*, 83-98.
9. Susan J. Brison, *Aftermath: Violence and the Remaking of the Self* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2002).
10. Brison, *Aftermath*, 50.
11. Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, trans. by H.M. Parshley (New York: Vintage Books, 1974), 301.
12. Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Gender and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1990).
13. Sally Haslanger, “Gender and Race: (What) Are They? (What) Do We Want Them to Be?” *Nous* 34 (2000): 31-55.
14. Susan Moller Okin, *Justice, Gender, and the Family* (New York: Basic Books, 1989).
15. Eva Feder Kittay, *Love’s Labor: Essays on Women, Equality, and Dependency* (New York: Routledge, 1999).
16. Cynthia Willett, *The Soul of Justice, Social Bonds and Racial Hubris* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2001).
17. Cynthia Willett, *Maternal Ethics and Other Slave Moralities* (New York: Routledge, 1995).
18. Willett, *Maternal Ethics*, 216.

19. Martha Nussbaum, “The Professor of Parody,” *New Republic*, 22 February 1999, 37-45. The panel was held at the American Philosophical Association Pacific Division Meeting, April 7, 2000.
20. Anita Superson, “Welcome to the Boys’ Club: Male Socialization and the Backlash against Feminism in Tenure Decisions,” in *Theorizing Backlash: Philosophical Reflections on the Resistance to Feminism*, ed. Anita M. Superson and Ann E. Cudd (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2002), 89-117, especially page 112.

Liberating the Self from Oppression: A Commentary on Multiple Feminist Perspectives

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The four preceding powerful papers on the contributions of feminism to philosophy span the spectrum from continental philosophy, postmodernism, pragmatism, and hermeneutics, to analytic philosophy. There are points of similarity, and points of difference. One common theme that constitutes our “meeting place” is a feminist conception of the self, particularly as it relates to women’s oppression, which will be my focus in this concluding paper.¹

Cynthia Willett challenges the notion of the self defended by autonomy theorists, who she classifies as liberal philosophers from the analytic tradition. This notion of the self includes libertarian versions that focus on freedom from unnecessary interference in the exercise of choice, Rawlsian versions that focus on the capacity for rational self-legislation, and modified versions such as that discussed by Mackenzie and Stoljar, who take the core of the self to be “the capacity for reflection on one’s motivational structure and the capacity to change it in response to reflection.”² The idea of the latter, more developed, view is that only those preferences we find ourselves having that survive a test of autonomous reflection are the ones that are our own, and that define the self. This theory of the self can be seen as responsive to oppression, for if our preferences are ones we come to have due largely to the influences of patriarchy, a promising way to eradicate or modify these heteronomous, deformed preferences is through rational reflection, such that those remaining will be ones that constitute the core of the autonomous self.

Willett notes that the autonomy theory of the self has been criticized as being too individualistic, and not sufficiently sensitive to and reflective of a person’s social connectedness. Autonomy theorists have responded to this charge by claiming that persons and their preferences are, indeed, constituted by their social relations. According to Mackenzie and Stoljar, they typically have cashed this out as a psychological point about how a person may understand her identity. In particular, they believe that only certain elements of the psychological makeup of a person, namely, those relating to self-esteem and self-trust, are produced heteronomously by social relations. In other words, care and nurturance from others are needed for a person to develop self-esteem and self-trust, and once she acquires these skills or attitudes, she can go on to make autonomous choices, and determine her preferences in a way that enables her to reject patriarchy’s influences. One obvious problem with this view, which I believe Willett acknowledges, is that our very notions of self-esteem and self-trust might be infused with patriarchal influences such that, even when they are supplemented with rational reflection, they might not screen out deformed preferences. Willett finds this view