

APA Newsletters

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NEWSLETTER ON FEMINISM AND PHILOSOPHY

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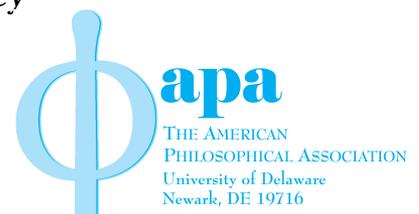
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FROM THE EDITOR

This issue of the *Newsletter* highlights the varying contributions of Iberian, Latina, Hispanic, and Chicana feminist philosophers and might profitably be read together with the *APA Newsletter on Hispanic/Latino Issues in Philosophy* edited by Eduardo Mendieta.

The three invited articles include “Philosophical Women of Early Modern Iberia” by Joan Gibson, “Public Philosophy and Feminist Gain in South America” by Amy Oliver, and “Chicana Feminisms and Lived Theory” by Jane Duran. Gibson explores some of the possible roots of Hispanic philosophy by looking at Iberian philosophers of the early modern period. She offers a fascinating look into the literature and culture of the period while also making an important contribution to our study of the history of philosophy. Gibson scrutinizes texts by female authors as well as texts about feminine deportment and morality.

Amy Oliver’s article takes us to Uruguay in the early part of the twentieth century. She recovers and analyzes some of the feminist insights from Carlos Vaz Ferreira and offers an original translation to part of his *Sobre feminismo* (On Feminism). As Oliver explains, “many of the ideas of this seminal Latin American social thinker and his provocative study of gender and family...appear as timely and universal today as they did when first delivered in Uruguay beginning in 1914.”

Jane Duran situates her article within the larger project of global feminist theory and emphasizes both the history and the contemporary relevance of certain facets of Chicana/Mexicana feminism. In particular, Duran discusses the “resuscitation of La Malinche” and the “predominance of metaphors surrounding the Virgen.” Her discussion also brings to light the invaluable work of Gloria Anzaldúa, who died earlier this year. In addition to her contributions to Chicana philosophy, Anzaldúa was a powerful force in publicizing the innovative work of diverse feminist scholars in her two co-edited collections, which form the basis of the review essay by Viki Soady.

Soady’s review, “Anzaldúa and the ‘Bridge’ as Home: Healing the Ruptures of Reason: *This Bridge We Call Home: Radical Visions for Transformation*,” presents the essays, memoirs, and poems of *This Bridge We Call Home* in light of the groundbreaking earlier collection *This Bridge Called My Back*. The juxtaposition of the two books, which share many of the same contributors, accentuates the work that still needs to be done for global feminism. Anzaldúa challenges readers to accept a new epistemological project that rejects dualisms and distancing in favor of “the possibility of wholeness.” This new perspective—the new project—is necessarily collective,

and the contributions to the two *Bridge* volumes demonstrate both the hazards of the old view and the potential of the new.

This issue of the *Newsletter* is rounded out with two compelling book reviews. The first is a review of Jane Duran’s *Worlds of Knowing: Global Feminist Epistemologies* by Catherine Hundleby. Like Anzaldúa, Duran has outlined a new epistemological project that considers the lived experiences of women throughout the world—including women from Mexico and Latin America. Hundleby offers an insightful analysis of Duran’s methodology and stresses the myriad strengths of Duran’s work. The second book review is a review of *The Subject of Care: Feminist Perspectives on Dependency* edited by Eva Feder Kittay and Ellen Feder. The review, by Lucinda Peach, summarizes and analyzes the various essays in the collection with an eye toward the influence of traditional women’s roles (as highlighted also in the articles by Oliver and Duran as well as Hundleby’s review) on philosophical thinking on “dependency.” In addition, Peach shows how certain of the essays participate in the larger discussions on global feminism that form a current running through all of the contributions to this issue of the *Newsletter*.

If you have an idea for a future issue of the *APA Newsletter on Feminism and Philosophy*, please contact the editor. As this issue demonstrates, the different meanings of feminist philosophy span multiple traditions and methodologies. The *Newsletter* is an excellent forum to give those diverse views a voice.

About the *Newsletter on Feminism and Philosophy*

The *Newsletter on Feminism and Philosophy* is sponsored by the APA Committee on the Status of Women (CSW). The *Newsletter* is designed to provide an introduction to recent philosophical work that addresses issues of gender. None of the varied philosophical views presented by authors of *Newsletter* articles necessarily reflect the views of any or all of the members of the Committee on the Status of Women, including the editor(s) of the *Newsletter*, nor does the committee advocate any particular type of feminist philosophy. We advocate only that serious philosophical attention be given to issues of gender, and that claims of gender bias in philosophy receive full and fair consideration.

Submission Guidelines and Information

1. Purpose: The purpose of the *Newsletter* is to publish information about the status of women in philosophy and to make the resources of feminist philosophy more widely available. The *Newsletter* contains discussions of recent developments in feminist philosophy and related work in other disciplines, literature overviews and book reviews, suggestions for eliminating gender bias in the traditional philosophy curriculum, and reflections on feminist pedagogy. It also informs the profession about the work of the APA Committee on the Status of Women. Articles submitted to the *Newsletter* should

be limited to 10 double-spaced pages and must follow the APA guidelines for gender-neutral language. Please submit four copies of essays, prepared for anonymous review. References should follow *The Chicago Manual of Style*.

2. Book Reviews and Reviewers: If you have published a book that is appropriate for review in the *Newsletter*, please have your publisher send us a copy of your book. We are always in need of book reviewers. To volunteer to review books (or some particular book), please send to the Editor a CV and letter of interest, including mention of your areas of research and teaching.

3. Where to Send Things: Please send all articles, comments, suggestions, books, and other communications to the Editor: Dr. Sally J. Scholz, Department of Philosophy, Villanova University, 800 Lancaster Avenue, Villanova, PA 19085-1699, sally.scholz@villanova.edu

4. Submission Deadlines: Submissions for Spring issues are due by the preceding September 1st; submissions for Fall issues are due by the preceding July 1.

NEWS FROM THE COMMITTEE ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN

Report from the Chair

Since last reporting to you in this Newsletter, the CSW has been very busy. As you will recall, the panel members at the 2003 APA Eastern Division Meeting in Washington, D.C. challenged the CSW and all the women in the profession to “open a discussion about the *institutional marginality* and *encapsulation* of feminist philosophy within professional philosophy, and about the link between the position of feminist philosophy and low representation of women in the field” (Margaret Urban Walker, “Diotima’s Ghost: Contribution to a Panel on Women Philosophers, Sidelined Challenges, and Professional Philosophy,” APA Eastern Division Meeting, 2003). That discussion was opened, and some of the results of it will be heard at the two CSW panels Sally Scholz has organized for the 2004 APA Eastern Division Meeting in Boston. One is entitled, “The Different Meanings of ‘Feminist Philosophy,’” and the other is called, “Feminists Connecting across Generations.” We hope that the sessions will be well attended so that we can gain greater clarity on matters of interest to the women in our profession.

Most of the members of the CSW were able to make either the Pacific Meeting in Pasadena or the Central meeting in Chicago. We held long meetings at both of these locations; but before I report on these meetings, I cannot resist mentioning the excellent quality of the Pacific Panel on the innovative work of Michèle Le Doeuff and the Central Panel on the timely issue of “Making Peace in Time of War.” Organized by Lorraine Code and Charlene Haddock Seigfreid respectively, these two panels demonstrated that women in the profession are as skilled at developing new theories (e.g., LeDoeuff’s *The Sex of Knowledge* in which she presents the philosophy of the “unthought”) as they are at analyzing pressing matters of public policy (e.g., the war in Iraq and “terrorism” in general and the troubling image of “Private Jessica Lynch” in particular). I left these panels energized and inspired by the collective brilliance and passion of the women in the profession of philosophy.

The CSW meetings held in Pasadena and Chicago were, as I suggested above, very productive. Among the matters we discussed, endorsed, enacted, and/or implemented were the following:

First, we endorsed a statement on inclusiveness forwarded by Lucius T. Outlaw to the Executive Board on behalf of the Committee on Inclusiveness. The statement read *in part* as follows:

- (A) Increasing the numbers and respected presence of persons from groups that have historically been subjected to invidious discrimination. These groups include, but are not limited to, disabled persons; persons of African descent; American Indians; Asians and Asian Americans; Hispanics and Latinos/as; Jews; persons of Middle Eastern descent; multiracial persons; lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender persons; women.
- (B) Recognizing and supporting the development of scholarly philosophical research, teaching service, and professional activity pertaining to the concerns of these groups.

Note that this statement is a work in progress and that it will be further developed and implemented by Joan Callahan, the incoming Chair of the Committee on Inclusiveness.

Second, we developed *four* ideas for large-scale projects we believe are worthy of external funding as the APA heads into a major fundraising campaign. Among these ideas (a full list is available from me) was one for a conference to address the role of women in philosophy. The purpose of the conference would be to provide a forum for women who do philosophy to voice their concerns about the *practice* of philosophy in general and about their role and status in the *profession* of philosophy in particular:

1. The number, rank, age, race/ethnicity/nation of origin of women in philosophy,
2. The areas of specialization and competence of women in philosophy,
3. The need for women in philosophy to strengthen networking and mentoring efforts,
4. The ways in which women philosophers have contributed to the development and transformation of the discipline of philosophy in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries,
5. The ways in which women do philosophy in disciplines other than philosophy and outside the academy’s boundaries,
6. The relationship between doing feminist philosophy and being a woman in philosophy (to what extent are there correlations? disjunctions?),
7. The relationship between feminist philosophy and the kinds of philosophy done by/represented by the APA diversity committees,
8. The relationship between U.S. women philosophers and women philosophers in other nations, particularly developing nations.

Third, we lamented the lack of good data about the status of women in the profession. In 1994, the CSW published a report on the status of women in the profession, but the results of this report were limited because, frankly speaking, a group such as the CSW does not have the time, expertise, resources, or funds to do high-quality empirical research. More recently the APA has published a report on the status of the profession but that report is also partial and provisional in nature due to the fact the only a relatively small number of philosophers

filled out the questionnaire upon which the report's full success hinged. Significantly, it was the data issue, more than any other single issue that led us to write a letter of support for the National Board's Proposed Amendments to the APA By-laws. We addressed the letter, which is posted on the CSW Web page, to Peter A. French, Chair of the Committee on the Status and Future of the Profession. In part it read:

What seems to still be at issue among some of the members of the Divisions is the balance of powers and of responsibilities of the National Office relative to the Divisions. It seems to us that two competing views of the APA emerge from the disagreement: (1) that the APA is essentially a loose confederation of Divisions, the primary purpose of which is to promote opportunities for members to meet regionally and exchange ideas—a sort of scholarly or learned society; and, (2) that the APA is a more centrally coherent and unified organization that actively promotes its members' professional interests in addition to those of organized scholarly exchanges—more like a professional organization.

For a multiplicity of reasons, including data gathering, the CSW supports the latter view of the APA and would welcome your reaction to our current position.

Fourth, we focused on the fact that some problems for women in the profession never go away. Recently, we discovered several large boxes of old CSW documents going back to 1980. We are currently sorting through those boxes and will post some of the results on the Web page, the updating of which remains a CSW priority. Among the documents are ones labeled: nonsexist language, sexual harassment, professional harassment, sexual orientation, hiring, promotion, retention problems, childcare (lack thereof), and data (lack thereof). Clearly, progress for women in the profession is oftentimes slowed by the fact that women are, after all, women with the problems and challenges that typically befall women in societies structured as ours.

Fifth, we realized the CSW needs better means of communication between it and The Association for Feminist Ethics and Social Theory (FEAST), Society for Women in Philosophy (SWIP), Feminist Approaches to Bioethics (FAB), and so forth. We welcome suggestions on other groups with which we should be better connected. We are also interested in ideas about how to develop a manageable communications system aimed at coordinating events, avoiding "wheel reinventing," minimizing confusion, and harnessing collective energies.

Sixth, we worried a great deal about the number of women in the profession who, for one reason or another, are not members of the APA, and who, for this reason, may not be as "plugged in" to the multiple networkings APA membership makes possible. In this connection, we also worried about the "classism" within the profession: oftentimes data gathering privileges schools with graduate programs over ones that do not have graduate programs, and four-year colleges are focused on to a degree that two-year colleges are not. Moreover, many "part-timers" and/or non-tenured philosophers are lost in the shuffle of the profession. This state of affairs is unfortunate for many reasons not the least being that we suspect that many women in the profession are located in the outposts of the profession. Our concern is that many women in the profession remain unrecognized, under-appreciated, or otherwise neglected.

Seventh, and on a happier note, we celebrated all of the accomplishments of women in our profession, vowing to work harder with the other APA diversity committees (Committee on American Indians in Philosophy, Committee on the Status of Asian and Asian-American Philosophers and Philosophies, Committee on Blacks in Philosophy, Committee on Hispanics, Committee on Inclusiveness, and the Committee on the Status of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender People in the Profession) to transform our profession—to make it more open to multiple views, and to make it more proactive in addressing our world's pressing concerns.

The CSW looks forward to hearing from you. We need your help to improve the status of women in the profession. Please get in touch with us with your ideas and suggestions.

Appreciatively,

Rosie Tong

ARTICLES

Philosophical Women of Early Modern Iberia

Joan Gibson

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The history of philosophy acknowledges very few women philosophers before about the eighteenth century.¹ Among these few, perhaps the only philosophically trained Hispanic woman generally known is the Mexican nun, Sor Juana, whose most explicitly philosophical work—a treatise on logic—is lost. The remaining, more literary, works are also richly philosophically informed. Her audacity in doing philosophy, and in incorporating it into such diverse genres, may appear without antecedents; but an understanding of sixteenth and seventeenth Iberian precedents can provide a background for the positive reception her learning received at the vice-regal courts. There had been earlier women, often associated with the Spanish and Portuguese royal courts and most noble houses. In these courts and nearby convents, they displayed publicly their mastery of philosophical material. Several of them also combined philosophical and literary interests as did Sor Juana. The memory of their accomplishments, attained and displayed close to centers of power, could have encouraged the vice-regal patronage which Sor Juana enjoyed. Other women, who like Sor Juana began as much more modestly placed, also studied and wrote or debated philosophically.

It is often assumed that there were few women in continental Iberia who had the prerequisite education to pursue philosophy especially since, by the seventeenth century, women's education had declined considerably there. Additionally, it may be thought that any women philosophers at the time would be found primarily among those intellectual women writing in the vernacular tradition of Platonic poems and treatises on love. But however true this may have been elsewhere on the continent, vernacular Platonism was not an especially popular genre for women on the peninsula. Few took up the challenge of Pietro Bembo's rhapsodic evocation of Platonic love in the closing pages of Balthasar Castiglione's *Book of the Courtier* (1528). Nevertheless, learned women, including female philosophers, were unusually prominent in Early Modern Iberian courts and convents, although following a different path. One difference lies in how Spanish and Portuguese women used their language skills.

The ability to read Latin was a prerequisite for serious study of most forms of philosophy. Latin was by far the most common language of philosophy, and few philosophical works had been translated at this period. The number of such translations specifically into Spanish and Portuguese was very low. In an unpublished paper, Felipe Ruan and I documented over sixty Latinate Iberian women in the period from the end of the fifteenth century through the early years of the seventeenth.² While this compares favorably with the known number of those with similar language skills documented in Italy and England, it appears that Iberian women had other ends in mind for their Latinity than the Italian and English women. For Spanish and Portuguese women, Latin was far less likely to be regarded as a social ornament or displayed in literary works. In the Iberian pattern, women were instead more apt to use Latin for reading, or for oral purposes rather than writing and to claim it for practical purposes. Among those practical purposes was the study and translation of scholarly material, some of which included philosophy. In both the humanistic and scholastic philosophical traditions, we can identify several philosophical women, and even specify some of their writings. Unfortunately, very little of their work is still extant to allow for more detailed analysis, and the current evidence is tantalizing as to what has been lost.

The study of ethics provides a particularly important area of study for women and philosophy. It is important to remember that in early modern texts, when the term “philosophy” occurs without a modifier, it should generally be understood as “moral philosophy,” and this was the form under which philosophy was most widely studied by both men and women. Given the profound concern with women’s virtue in the period, moral philosophy was especially prominent among women philosophers.³ In the humanist tradition, ethics had been refocused on issues of practical concerns, rather than on speculative ethics, and in particular on the obligations, temptations, and moral permissions of various estates of life. For women, notions of virtue were central to both decorous and moral behavior, and both were circumscribed by an insistent prescription of chastity, silence, and obedience, as suitable to the roles of daughter, wife and widow. Such emphases were scarcely new, having been a staple of popular ethics from the classical period and throughout the Middle Ages, as they were compatible with, and occasionally reinforced by, pagan standards of decorum and virtue for women.

Early modern humanists readily drew on Christian exhortation based in Latin patristics to address ethics across a range of topics, mixing it with the works of the Roman moralists and the neo-stoics. Ethical dilemmas which arose were discussed in a wide range of literary genres as well as in narrowly philosophical treatises. A thorough grounding in the Latin authors, such as Cicero, or—especially for the Spanish—their native son, Seneca, was thus a foundation of politico/ethical thought. This training was shared, for example, by powerful women such as Queen Isabel and her daughters, as well as by various Hapsburg women regents, who were approaching the task of rulership, and needed to read such staples of ethical/political theory as the mirrors of princes.

It is possible that a broadly moral philosophy was the basis for the ambiguous claim that Lucía de Medrano (1484-d. before 1527) was both a philosopher and a poet.⁴ Medrano was a highly educated woman who was designated as a *catedrática* or lecturer at the University of Salamanca. Although the term implies a faculty member holding a regular appointment, her exact status is not clear, nor is it known whether she lectured on law, philosophy, grammar, or Latin literature, although the latter two are the most plausible.⁵ It is very probable, however,

that it was the Roman philosophical tradition that nurtured María Pacheco (?-d. 1531), whose conversation with a wide circle of learned men was said to be “like that of a very wise philosopher.”⁶ She was a member of the very large and powerful Mendoza family who were distinguished for producing scholars as well as warriors, in both the male and female line. Íñigo López de Mendoza, second Count of Tendilla, had provided for both his daughters an extensive education in Latin and Greek. María was well-learned in mathematics, and medicine, history, poetry and Holy Scripture. In 1521, she led the resistance of the Toledo commune against Charles the V for nine months after her husband, Juan de Padilla, was captured and decapitated. When she soon decamped for Portugal shortly thereafter, she was accompanied by a long-time member of her entourage, Diego Sigeo, father of Luisa Sigea, a highly philosophical woman. Sigeo père, subsequently served the leading family of Portugal, the Dukes of Braganza, before eventually joining his daughters, Luisa and Ángela, at the royal court.

Luisa Sigea (1522-1560) served for over a dozen years in the household of the Infanta D. Maria (1521-1577), half-sister of the Portuguese King, João III.⁷ The Infanta was an extremely intelligent, virtuous, and charitable woman, a noted patron of the arts and letters who was said to be well-versed in history and the arts and sciences and was a generous patron of learning. Her court became legendary as the Academy of the Infanta, for the number of educated and talented women and men who attended there. It was to her that Luisa Sigea, a widely known and highly praised polyglot and poet, dedicated a Latin dialogue in 1552. *The conversation of two young women on life at court and private life (Duarum virginum colloquium de vita aulica et privata)* is the most extended piece of Latin philosophical writing left to us by an Iberian woman of the period, and Sigea is one of only two women whose extant work allows us to examine their philosophical interests.⁸ The introduction to the dialogue interestingly places it firmly in the context of a female (dare I say feminist) readership, alongside male readers. The dialogue takes up issues of personal morality and its intersections with public life in a manner similar to the male-centred dialogues of Balthasar Castiglione (1528) and Thomas More (1516). No woman I am aware of had publicly addressed both politics and women’s virtue since Christine de Pisan (1365-ca.1429).

To present her views, Sigea chose the genre of dialogue, newly revived from its classical precedents and enjoying a huge popularity from the fifteenth century through at least the eighteenth. Situated between rhetoric and dialectic, the dialogue form was especially appreciated for its ability to debate the practical problems of correct behavior within evolving social structures. Sigea’s is among the earliest known dialogues in which a woman makes use of the form. Only one woman had preceded her, the courtesan Tullia d’Aragona (c1510-1556) whose 1547 Italian treatise on the infinity of love (*Dialogo della infinità d’amore*) is cast within the tradition of philosophical discourses on the nature of love.

Sigea’s dialogue situates itself between the issues of Castiglione’s *Book of the Courtier* and Cicero’s *Tusculan Disputations* (44 BCE). It begins as a discussion of early modern court life, as seen from the perspective of a woman courtier, and finishes as a debate on the nature of the good life, with the contesting claims of the active and contemplative, the public and the private life. Her characters are Blesilla and Flaminia, who are enjoying a three-day retreat in a countryside villa, situated between the rustic and the urban or courtly. As the full title tells us, both participants are as noble as they are learned, and each displays both qualities in urging the pursuit of virtue within a different form of life. Blesilla, the elder of

the two young women, has retired from her former life at court to seek studious leisure. Her friend, Flaminia, is still in service and enjoys its liveliness, although she finds it sometimes tiring. She does not share a taste for what she terms Blesilla's "philosolitude," relishing instead, the ability to pass between the two worlds at will. Their individual characters pervade their approach to the choices they make: Blesilla is somewhat austere, and Flaminia more lighthearted and sociable.

Sigea assigns to her two protagonists a highly complex rhetorical performance. In her preface, Sigea claims that she will examine and attack the opinions of her two young women by testing them against the opinions of the wisest of men. In a virtuoso display, her characters then exchange over 472 citations taken directly from a formidable array of pagan and Christian authors. Both intersperse Greek and Hebrew quotations into the Latin text. Each uses material from the same author to respond to points made by the other. Neither ever indicates that this is unusual behavior for young court ladies. They call attention to their own acts of speaking, and invoke the standard of reason and philosophy as their ground, guide, and arbiter. Several times they indicate that each must decide a point for herself, or choose her own style of life. These moves, especially when combined with the practice of refuting each other with words drawn from the author just cited on the opposite side, reverses the announced strategy of testing the young women against the opinions of their authorities. Rather, it stresses the extent to which they are their own authorities, and that it is their own debate, not one between competing authorities, which is in issue. Blesilla dominates the dialogue throughout with a moral critique of the dangers to women (and men) at court and praises the life of retirement. Flaminia, nevertheless, puts up a spirited defense of the possibility of living a virtuous life amid the struggles of court, and shows a distaste for solitary piety. Not since Christine de Pisan, had a woman composed a work that so clearly addressed the actual complexities of a woman desiring moral autonomy.

The women's stance, as conducting a debate in moral philosophy, is highlighted by its reliance on a Christianized Stoicism, drawn especially from Cicero's dialogues *On the Chief Good and Evil (De Finibus)* and *The Tusculan Disputations*. Sigea follows him in equating the life of virtue with the highest good, and like him, leaves open the question of whether it is the only good, while her Christianity moves her beyond Cicero in her understanding of the end of contemplation. Cicero's pragmatic moderation of Stoic doctrine, especially as Christianized by later authors, makes him the most commonly cited of Sigea's pagan sources, and together with the unacknowledged Castiglione, furnishes her closest model for the shape of the dialogue. Her paean to divine union bears more resemblance to the longings expressed in the Psalms and the early Church Fathers than to neo-Platonic transcendence. At no point does she betray any interest in the Platonic forms of the virtues. She is equally uninterested in the Epicurean currents swirling submerged within much of the courtly and academic literature of the time, although Flaminia's preference for enjoyment in virtuous living, and in moderate indulgence, may signal the engagement of Epicureanism by Ciceronian Stoicism. Nor is Sigea much interested in the neo-scholastic Aristotelianism which dominated university discussions of morals at the time. Her more practically oriented ethics was in tune with the humanist moral treatises of the period, in which the rigorous form and deductive ethics of the universities is downplayed or ignored. Sigea's dialogue bears little trace of it, save in Flaminia's chosen definition of virtue as the mean, but this is again a point taken up for discussion by Cicero.

Although Sigea penned the only remaining philosophical work produced at the Portuguese court, she was not the only philosophical woman there nor was she even the only one writing. Two nieces of King João III (r. 1521-1557), D. Maria, (1538- 1577), and D. Catarina (1540-1614) were raised at the court of his sister the Infanta's Maria. Both girls knew Latin, and Maria was said to have known mathematics, natural philosophy, and theology—for which philosophy was generally prerequisite.⁹ A lost treatise on *The Opinions of the Holy Fathers* is attributed to her.¹⁰ After Catarina wed her cousin, João, the Duke of Braganza, she continued an active involvement in Portuguese intellectual life from their palace, Vila Viçosa, near Lisbon. Catarina became the patroness of another learned Portuguese woman, Hortensia Publica de Castro, (c.1548-?) who eventually became a nun in Évora. De Castro is reputed to have dressed as a boy to study humanities and philosophy at university and to have defended philosophical and theological theses at the University of Évora.¹¹ She took part in a public disputation on Aristotle when she was only seventeen.¹² She was especially renowned for her command of rhetoric and Aristotelian philosophy. De Castro is said to have debated publicly before kings, princes, and ambassadors, and even to have become something of a tourist attraction.¹³ None of her dialogues on religion and philosophy, her poems, or her letters are extant. There remain only eight psalms that she translated into Portuguese for the Duchess Catarina.

De Castro's Aristotelian background is significant since serious academic philosophy remained closely tied not only to Latin and Greek authors, but especially to the neoscholastic Aristotelian tradition. Spanish logicians of the sixteenth century played a leading role in the neoscholastic revival in Paris centered around the College de Montaigu, where Sigea's father and other Spanish and Portuguese court humanists had been educated, and who, in turn, educated their children and the children of their patrons. It may not be coincidental that Iberian women philosophers are unusually active in that area of philosophy. Although sometimes disputed, a work entitled *Notas y comentarios sobre Aristoteles* is attributed to "La Latina," the famous Latinist Beatriz Galindo (?1465/1475-1535), associated with the court of Isabel the Catholic.

Even the noted Spanish humanist, Juan Luis Vives had undertaken an intense, and originally enthusiastic, apprenticeship in scholastic philosophy in his Paris years. He was able to bring both his early training and his later reservations to bear in his long and close friendship with Mencía de Mendoza (1509-1554), who was his pupil and correspondent. As another granddaughter of the Marquis of Santillana, Mencía was a first cousin to María Pacheco and her sister. Unlike them, however, she did not begin serious studies in her youth, though she amply recouped lost ground as an adult.¹⁴ Vives spent several years near her estates in Nassau, perfecting her Latin, and composing several works there. His immensely popular dialogues to help students learn Latin (*Exercitatio linguae latinae*, 1538) and the commentary on Vergil's *Bucolics* (In *Bucolica Vergilii interpretatio*, 1537) may have been composed for her. His review and critique of Aristotle, the *Censura de Aristotelis operibus* (1538) was also probably influenced by her interests.¹⁵

Another particularly interesting example of a scholastic woman philosopher is the famous Isabel Joya, a woman with an extraordinary reputation for oratory and learning (Serrano y Sanz, 1.386). She seems to have been born in Barcelona near the end of the fifteenth or the beginning of the sixteenth century, but little else is known about her origins. She had received a humanist education, but also knew scholastic philosophy well, and was especially drawn to the work of Duns Scotus (c.1265-1308). Isabel felt a mission to convert the Jews

and wished to become a Jesuit to further that end. As part of that plan, she went to Rome in 1543, accompanied by a number of other women of Barcelona. Although they were not finally admitted into the Company of Jesus, Isabel argued Scotistic doctrines in philosophy and theology while in Rome before an assembly of cardinals, and stayed on to co-found the fraternity of the Blood of Christ.¹⁶ A similar theological examination on Scotus is also attributed to her companion Isabel Roser by Guillaume Postel, the French humanist, in his *Très merveilleuses victoires des Femmes* (1553), where it is located just after his lavish praise of Luisa Sigea.

To Oliva Sabuco, (c.1562-?1629) is attributed a lengthy treatise, *The New Philosophy of Human Nature not Known and not Reached by the Ancient Philosophers that Improves Human Life and Health (Nueva Filosofía)*, on medicine and medical philosophy, in which she explores extensively the relationship between emotional and bodily health.¹⁷ In the course of her work, she also broaches political philosophy, arguing for the state as a macrocosm of the individual, and commenting on a wide range of moral and practical topics, including the legal system and the contemporary educational system. Her stance is resolutely anti-Aristotelian, and the work included two brief discussions in Latin, one on human nature, and the other on the true philosophy.¹⁸

The last figure to be mentioned was another international prodigy famed for her mastery of over a dozen languages. Juliana Morella was born in Barcelona in 1594, and studied with the Dominican nuns there at a very tender age after her mother's death. At eight, she accompanied her father when he fled to his native France to escape a charge of murder, and continued her studies there. When she was twelve, she gave a public defense of theses in ethics and dialectics *Summa Cum Laude*, dedicating them to the Queen of Spain. She added to her knowledge of these subjects, rhetoric, music, physics, metaphysics and canon and civil law, which she again defended publicly at Avignon in 1608. Shortly after, she entered a Dominican convent in Avignon, where she led an exemplary life until her death in 1653. Her writings included a translation with commentary and notes of Vincent Ferrer's *Vita Spiritualis*, a French translation of the Rule of St. Augustine with additions (Avignon, 1680), and three hundred Latin poems on pious matters.¹⁹

It is extremely unfortunate that so little remains of the work of these early Iberian philosophers, and that even their names are not so widely known as they once were. Their fame for learning is well attested among their contemporaries and for the next few generations, in letters, memorial verses, and the books of praise of famous women. Juan Pérez de Moya (1513-1596) was the author of one such catalogue, which lists fifteen women learned in Latin and Greek including some discussed here.²⁰ He was a mathematician and natural philosopher, who later wrote in the moral-didactic tradition and gave expositions of mythology. Ilan Stavans asserts that Sor Juana was familiar with Pérez de Moya, though no specific works are specified.²¹ His catalogue is notable in that he includes both contemporary women and commoners in his praise of fifteen learned women who knew Latin. The continental fame of such women may have lingered long enough to have come with the vice-regal couples on their journey from Spain, to reinforce their appreciation of Sor Juana's achievements.

There are many areas in which there may well be names of other Iberian women philosophers waiting to be found. Convent education is still largely unexplored, as are the extensive circles of Erasmian women who combined moral philosophy with theology and gospel piety. We do not know

how the women philosophers of early-modern Iberia acquired their philosophical training. But it is good to know that the trail they opened, though long obscured, has been re-opened to their descendents.

Endnotes

1. An earlier version of this work was delivered at the Xth International Symposium of Women Philosophers, Barcelona, 2002.
2. Joan Gibson and Felipe Ruan, "Doña Latina: Latinized Women of Early Modern Iberia," unpublished.
3. Joan Gibson, "The Logic of Chastity: Women, Sex, and the History of Philosophy in the Early Modern Period," forthcoming.
4. Lucio Maríneo Sículo cited in Therese Oettel, "Una catedrática en el siglo de Isabel la Católica: Luisa (Lucía) de Medrano," *Boletín de la Real Academia de la Historia*, 107 (1935): 332-334.
5. *Ibid.*, 341.
6. Maria Dolores Gómez Molleda, "La cultura femenina en la época de Isabel la Católica," *Revista de archivos, bibliotecas y museos* 61 (1955): 181, citing Maríneo Sículo.
7. For an overview of the Infanta's court, see Carolina Michaëlis de Vasconcelos, *A Infanta D. Maria de Portugal (1521-1577) e suas Damas* (1902; reprint, with preface by Américo da Costa Ramalho, Lisbon: Biblioteca Nacional de Lisboa, 1983). Though she has been corrected in many details, I am grateful for her introduction to the court.
8. See Louise Sigée, *Dialogue de Deux Jeunes Filles Sur La Vie de Cour et La Vie de Retraite* (1552), trans. and notes Odette Sauvage (Fondation Calouste Gulbenkian, Publications du Centre Culturel Portugais, Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1970) and Léon Bourdon and Odette Sauvage, "Recherches sur Luisa Sigea" *Bulletin des études portugaises* 31 (1970): 33176, for the fullest discussion of Sigea.
9. Luís de Matos, *A Corte Literária dos Duques de Bragança no Renascimento* (Lisbon: Rundação da Casa de Bragança, 1956), 19-20.
10. Vasconcelos, 46.
11. Selvagem (10) believes she studied at the University of Coimbra, while Costa (110, 134-44) places her at Salamanca. Pinto (166) doubts that she actually attended at all. Carlos Selvagem, *Cultura portuguesa Vol. 6* (Lisbon: Emprensa Nacional de Publicidade, 1971), Sousa Costa, *Dona Catarina, duquesa de Bragança: rainha de Portugal à face do direito* (Lisbon: Fundação da Casa de Bragança, 1958), and Carla Alferes Pinto, *A Infanta Dona Maria de Portugal (1521-1577): o mecanato de uma princesa renacentista* (Lisboa: Fundação Oriente, 1998).
12. Jane Stevenson, *Women Latin Poets: Language, Gender, and Authority from Antiquity to the Eighteenth Century* (Forthcoming, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2004): ms. 215.
13. Vasconcelos, 112.
14. J. K. Steppe, "Mencía de Mendoza et ses Relations Avec Érasme, Gilles de Busleyden et Jean-Louis Vivès" *Scrinium Erasmianum* v. II (451-506), ed. J. Coppens (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1969), 482, 487-88, 498.
15. Carlos G. Noreña, *Juan Luis Vives. Archives internationales d'histoire des idées* n. 34 (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1970), 111.
16. Dominique de Courcelles, "Recherches sur les livres et les femmes en Catalogne aux XVe and XVIe siècles: figures de lectrices," in *Des femmes et des livres: France et Espagnes, XIVe-XVIIe siècle. Études et rencontres de L'École des Chartes* (4) ed. Dominique de Courcelles and Carmen Val Julian (Paris: École des Chartes, 1999), 109 and Manuel Serrano y Sanz, *Apuntes para una biblioteca de escritoras españolas desde el año 1401 al 1833*. 2 Vols. (Madrid: Sucesores de Rivadeneyra, 1903-05, reprint, Biblioteca de Autores Españoles, Madrid: Atlas, 1971), I: 610.

17. I have not been able to examine this work personally. The most extensive work on Sabuco has been by Mary Ellen Waithe and Maria E. Vintro. Their research has done much to call into question a reattribution of the treatise to her father, Miguel Sabuco, and restore Oliva to the position as author, which she held for over 300 years. Maria E. Vintro, "Oliva Sabuco" <http://sabuco.org/> and Mary Ellen Waithe, "Oliva Sabuco de Nantes Barrera," in *A History of Women Philosophers. Vol. II, Medieval, Renaissance and Enlightenment Women Philosophers*, ed. Mary Ellen Waithe (Boston: Kluwer, 1989).
18. The two *Dictae Breviae* have been translated from Latin by Angel Zorita and Mary Ellen Waithe. These opuscula are scheduled for publication along with Sabuco's treatise on the true medicine.
19. Ven. Mother Julianne Morrell, O.P., *Commentary on A Treatise on the Spiritual Life*, by Saint Vincent Ferrer, O.P., translated by the Dominican Nuns, Corpus Christi Monastery, Menlo Park, California. (London: Blackfriars Publications, 1957), 14.
20. The *Varia historia de sanctas e illustres mugeres* was published in Madrid in 1583. Juan Pérez de Moya, *Varia historia de sanctas e illustres mugeres*, in *Juan Pérez de Moya. 2 Vols.*, ed. Consolación Baranda (Madrid: Biblioteca Castro, 1996).
21. Stavans, Ilan. "Introduction" in *Poems, Protest, and a Dream: Selected writings of Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz*, trans. Margaret Sayers Peden (New York: Penguin Books, 1997), xx.

Vaz Ferreira (1871-1958).¹ Vaz Ferreira was a pioneer in feminist theory, and his impact and feminist projects together demonstrate a telling lesson about feminism in Latin America. His writings and feminist political stance had significant impact on women's rights throughout Latin America.²

Many of the ideas of this seminal Latin American social thinker and his provocative study of gender and family arguably appear as timely and universal today as they did when first delivered in Uruguay beginning in 1914. *Sobre feminismo (On Feminism)* is primarily concerned with examining "factual" differences between the sexes and with "normative" issues such as the political and civil rights of women, the social life of women, and the organization of the family within society. Vaz Ferreira analyzes the disproportion between the ideas and faculties of women and the scope that society allows to their activity. He advocates the right of women to participate in all that makes life valuable to the human being.

The ideas he expresses in *Sobre feminismo* are poignant, relevant, and innovative in light of contemporary social debates throughout the Americas: "His point of view, imparted through his university professorship, the press, and Parliament, essentially becomes official doctrine about women, and it gains wide acceptance throughout society."³

In terms of content and tone, and, more significantly, impact on elite thinking, the English-speaking counterpart of *Sobre feminismo* may be John Stuart Mill's *The Subjection of Women*, written in 1869. *Sobre feminismo*, however, reflects social changes that could be expected more than a half-century later. Vaz Ferreira's early influence on the suffrage movement was significant, and his contributions are especially noteworthy given that Hispanic men of his era, generally speaking, were not renowned for their progressive attitudes toward women. In Latin American intellectual circles in the early part of this century, one effect of pervasive *machismo* (and its complementary femininity) was to marginalize women so thoroughly that thought about gender and family roles could have more immediate, widespread impact when expressed by powerful men such as politicians or philosophers.

One of Latin America's most influential social philosophers in the early-twentieth century, Vaz Ferreira's complete works were collected in nineteen volumes and published in 1957 by the University Press of Montevideo. Although *Living Logic* (1920) and *Fermentary* (1938) are among his best-known works, and both have been translated into English and several other languages, his lesser-known essay on women, men, and their roles and rights within the family, *Sobre feminismo*, was first published in 1933, though it was written between 1914 and 1922, as segments of it were delivered as public lectures at the University of Montevideo where Vaz Ferreira was an internationally renowned professor. The lectures would likely have been published in book form much earlier than 1933 if the operations of the university press had not been suspended with some frequency. Subsequent Spanish-language editions of *Sobre feminismo* were published in 1945, 1957, and 1963.

Set within the Latin American experience, carefully examining *Sobre feminismo* has the advantage of building on a historically powerful document, one which presents cogent arguments against the marginalization of women, the infringement of their political rights, and the second-class status they experienced in marriage. Vaz Ferreira outlined a theory of cooperation between men and women that privileged monogamy, the family, and the equitable division of household tasks. He studied the ways in which pregnancy can be a disadvantage for women and suggested remedies to compensate for what he viewed as biological inequity. Well ahead of his time, Vaz Ferreira reflected on divorce, artificial insemination, and abortion.

Public Philosophy and Feminist Gain in South America

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Public philosophy is comparatively more widely practiced in Latin America where philosophers often play a more public role in several ways. For example, they deliver lectures and participate in panel discussions that are well attended by academics and the general public. Philosophers in Latin America regularly contribute long essays to newspapers as philosophers often do in Europe. In the United States, editorials written by academics tend to have a political, historical, or economic focus such as Paul Krugman's columns in *The New York Times*. Although philosophers in the United States can have much to contribute, philosophy is not the first discipline associated with participation in public discourse.

In Latin America, many universities have an "autonomous" status that is denoted in their name partly because they are perceived to play a socially valuable role as providers of independent or alternative perspectives on crucial issues of the day and in cultural preservation. In the early part of the twentieth century, many philosophers in Latin America were especially active participants in public discourse.

In the case of Uruguay, on which I will focus in this essay, intellectuals in general, and philosophers in particular, were an esteemed and integrated part of society. In addition to their frequent public lectures and writings in daily newspapers, they often spoke before the legislature. Beyond their university responsibilities, their role was to engage the public and to help sort out the cultural issues that kept Montevideo abuzz with activity.

Feminist philosophy that would still be considered theoretically rich today was written in Batllist Uruguay, by, among others, the major Uruguayan social philosopher, Carlos

Vaz Ferreira was a painstaking, self-consciously philosophical craftsman who clearly grappled with what “evidence” he could muster to support what was essentially cultural and social criticism of the intimate dealings of men and women. He was avid in applying the idea of avoiding contradiction, an insistence on philosophical probity not then expected in Latin American discourse about women’s roles. Some of his importance rests on just that point: he is considered a model of solid, anthropologically sensitive social philosophy.

Interestingly, the first printing of *Sobre feminismo* coincided with the year in which Uruguayan women’s suffrage was enacted. Since Uruguay was one of the first Latin American countries in which women’s suffrage was achieved, the lengthy gestation period and public lectures leading to the publication of the essay reveal both its timeliness within Uruguayan society and Vaz Ferreira’s role as an influential public thinker.

These dates are historically significant because they show that women and men have done systematic feminist thought in Latin America for nearly a century. The theories of Carlos Vaz Ferreira have not yet received the critical attention they deserve. In general, *Sobre feminismo* continues to be a relatively unknown work even in some militant circles in which European and North American analyses of the human condition in general, and feminism in particular, remain privileged and widely disseminated. One distinguishing feature of Vaz Ferreira’s work is that it includes analysis of justice for women within the context of the family, while many more contemporary theories of justice omit consideration of women in families. John Rawls, for example, in his well-known *A Theory of Justice*, did not address this problem.⁴ In the United States, women later published theories of justice that explicitly deal with the problem of the family.⁵

Sobre feminismo is an analysis of the social situation of the woman “of flesh and bone,” in Miguel de Unamuno’s terms, in the context of “feminism” and “anti-feminism.” Vaz Ferreira explains, “those terms ‘feminism’ and ‘antifeminism,’ ‘feminist’ and ‘antifeminist,’ in reality, do more harm than good, and they complicate the many and sometimes enormous difficulties of the problems: they complicate them further with questions of words and with confusions derived from the words.”⁶ Vaz Ferreira believes that a false polarization is produced by the terms “feminism” and “antifeminism,” because there are people who believe that “we are the true feminists because we want to preserve the distinctive traits of the female sex. You want to make men of women; your true name ought to be ‘hominists’ and not ‘feminists’”⁷ (17).

According to Vaz Ferreira, the issues are neither this polarized nor this simple, and this kind of resentment impedes serious analysis of the truly agonistic situation of modern woman. Nevertheless, considering the different connotations the word “feminism” has, the contemporary person sometimes runs the risk of being misunderstood when calling herself or himself a “feminist.” Vaz Ferreira recognizes the importance of clarifying language usage and, consequently, he tries to extract concrete meanings when discussing feminism. Still, he claimed, “if they want to call me a feminist, I will not contradict them.”⁸

The best strategy, according to Vaz Ferreira, for confronting the problem of the social situation of women has two steps: 1) examining questions of fact, the possible questions about the similarities and differences between the two sexes; 2) examining normative problems. Vaz Ferreira distinguished factual questions from normative ones in his *Living Logic* (1910). Factual questions are those of knowledge and verification. Normative questions are those of action, preference, and

choice. The second are most relevant to the condition of woman.

Among the questions of fact, of similarities and differences between the sexes, Vaz Ferreira maintains that there are debatable data and undebatable data. The undebatable fact that is most crucial and most radical for his time is: “From the union between a man and a woman, the woman can become pregnant; nothing happens to the man.”⁹ He argues, “Finding this fact to be satisfactory is to be ‘antifeminist.’”¹⁰

For Vaz Ferreira, factual data are of three types: 1) biological, 2) physiological, and 3) psychological. Today, as in Vaz Ferreira’s day, one of the most debated issues is that of “the comparative intelligence of the two sexes, a special case in the category of comparative psychology.”¹¹ In his treatment of the intelligence and mental aptitudes of women, Vaz Ferreira accepts the hypothesis that it could be verifiable that women might be less intelligent than men as he ponders why there have been no female Beethovens or Darwins, for example. This is the weakest point in his argument and one of the rare occasions when he fails to take socialization into account in ways we routinely use today when trying to explain differences between social groups and their roles.

More convincing is his treatment of normative problems in *Sobre feminismo*. The normative problems for Vaz Ferreira are: 1) a woman’s political rights; 2) a woman’s activity in society, her access to public office, her access to careers, professions, and education; 3) civil rights; and 4) the relations between the sexes and the organization of the family.

The central idea in his analysis of these problems is to maintain the difference between “feminism of equality” and “feminism of compensation.” “Feminism of equality,” according to Vaz Ferreira, is based on the idea that “jobs and careers should be open to women as they are to men; that women should have the same civil capacity as men, the same level of education; that, in general, the sexes should be equalized by diminishing the difference between them and by placing women in the same situation as men, making them more like men.”¹² For Vaz Ferreira, “feminism of equality” does not merit much attention because of the mere fact that women are biologically mistreated by the likelihood of pregnancy in their unions with men and, therefore, to speak of “equalization” is not possible. He writes, “To ignore it (that women can become pregnant as a result of sexual relations) is to be a common feminist, one who thinks of equality. To keep in mind this fact (pregnancy), to feel that some of its effects are painful and unjust, and to seek compensation for them—which could involve equalizing or unequalizing, depending on the issue—would be the true and good feminism.”¹³

For Vaz Ferreira, the only acceptable feminism is that of “compensation,” which is based on the idea that society must compensate physiological injustice, given that equalizing it will never be possible and that attempting equalization would be counterproductive. For Vaz Ferreira, “Antifeminism takes as its guide that fact (women’s biological disadvantage). Bad feminism does not even take it into account. Good feminism strives to correct it and compensate for it.”¹⁴

With respect to the civil and political rights of women and the social participation of women, Vaz Ferreira, working with many others, had a decisive impact in favor of women in the Uruguayan legislature. Suffrage in Uruguay was enacted in 1933, following the United States (1920) and Ecuador (1929), and before many European countries.

Vaz Ferreira also proposed a bill that passed into law exactly as he had conceived it: the law of “unilateral divorce,” which “gives women the power to obtain a divorce at will, without giving cause, while men have to show just cause.”¹⁵ This law

is consistent with his theory that the situations of men and women are fundamentally different.¹⁶ When the law was passed, “opponents of divorce did not like it because of their need to preserve the family as the basis of society. Proponents of the right to a divorce did not like it either because they framed the question as one of ‘equality.’”¹⁷

This position of Vaz Ferreira can be criticized as a case of reverse sexism in which men do not have the same right as women. It can also be placed in the context of his theory of “feminism of compensation,” and in this way he appears to propose replacing patriarchy with a form of matriarchy for the purpose of correcting historical inequities. To some extent, Vaz Ferreira also believes that matriarchy deserves a turn in beginning the long process of compensation.

The normative problems that most concern Vaz Ferreira are those of relations between the sexes and the organization of the family. He addresses the structural issues that suffragist feminists had not yet had time for, and made significant contributions to theorizing about women in relation to the family: “Vaz Ferreira’s ideas about the family and the role of women in it constitute, even today, a kind of paradigm in Uruguayan society.”¹⁸ His analysis of marriage and divorce is a curious mix of obsolete and progressive, contemporary ideas. On the one hand, he asserts that roles outside the home are for men and those inside the home are for women, that women may be less intelligent than men because the great cultural figures are men (Plato, Beethoven, Shakespeare, *et al.*), and that “free love” is a destructive social force.

On the other hand, Vaz Ferreira is a pioneer of feminist ideas that became widespread much later. For example, although he believes that relationships are ideally constituted as monogamous marriages, he identifies marriage as an institution that regulates and limits the role of women in professions and the workforce and, therefore, needs modification to correct the unfair treatment of women. In 1917, Vaz Ferreira wrote, “A woman’s ability to live for herself, which has to do with power, ability, and opportunity, should not depend wholly on marriage, as it appears to in mainstream society, which is one of the saddest and most unpleasant aspects of traditional society.”¹⁹ He also critiques the arguments of opponents of divorce who “reason as if those who support the right to a divorce maintained that divorce is a good.”²⁰

Vaz Ferreira critiques men’s sexual behavior, going so far as to cite the behavior of famous figures in history. For example, “In certain of Whitman’s poems, the memory he preserves of the different cities he has traversed is a recollection of women who have awakened next to him. An apologist for Whitman knows how to find phrases to sublimate his abandonment of the children he spawned in all those cities: He was a genius for whom it was not necessary to apply common morality.”²¹ His argument continues, “We must find a way that does not seem vulgar, bourgeois, or philistine of taking note of the idea that—without diminishing the artistic value of that sort of poetry—raising and loving children is, even aesthetically, more *beautiful* than abandoning them.”²²

Vaz Ferreira believes that expecting women to change their names when they marry while men do not modify theirs is unfair: “Isn’t this a relic of antiquated social structures in which the man owned the woman, or she was subordinate to him?”²³ He challenges the tradition of Hispanic surnames by proposing that surnames of married persons be joined with “con” (with) rather than “de” (of). “If Francisca López marries Antonio Pérez, today she would be known (in social relations and in the civil registry) as Francisca López de Pérez. However, he continues to be known as Antonio Pérez. Shouldn’t she be called Francisca López con Pérez and he, Antonio Pérez con López? This would be more feminist and more loving.”²⁴

He was also concerned with the plight of single women in Uruguayan society, and defended the right of women to choose to remain single without society looking askance at them. “A woman’s ability to live for herself, which has to do with power, ability, and opportunity, does not depend entirely on marriage, as society would have us believe...The horrible part is that society is organized around making pariahs of women who do not marry.”²⁵

Vaz Ferreira’s biography illuminates in part his interest in the rights of single women. In addition to his two brothers, a biologist and a lawyer, his sister, María Eugenia Vaz Ferreira (1880-1925), was a distinguished poet. The social pressure suffered by his sister did not escape Vaz Ferreira’s attention when she chose to remain single and defy familial and societal expectations. Throughout her life, María Eugenia’s single status often received more attention than her literary work. Cultural critics of the time even referred to her as an “autumnal virgin.” Her brother, in addition to defending the rights of single women, also understood the pressures suffered by married women in oppressive relationships. For that reason, he supported a woman’s right to divorce for “irreconcilable differences,” without further explanation or elaboration.

Generally, Carlos Vaz Ferreira was a progressive thinker, within whose vast writings occur some contradictions about women’s roles and history, but his study of women and family is as timely today, in many senses, as when he delivered his lectures on the subject in Montevideo beginning in 1917. He advanced the right of women to participate in all that is valuable for any human being. His public stance on issues about women represented a cultural watershed for such issues throughout educated groups in Latin America.

The impact of Vaz Ferreira’s thought was crucial to the artful and forceful discussion of the progress of Uruguayan women. It should be noted that he was not the only man working for women’s rights, and that many women were working toward the same goals. Vaz Ferreira’s writings belong to a period of great activity serving the improvement of social and political conditions for women. Vaz Ferreira’s originality lies in the philosophical seriousness of purpose we can see in his arguments and in the way he exercised his social standing for the benefit of women and society.

What follows is an original translation of a passage from *Sobre feminismo* in which Vaz Ferreira’s methodology and seriousness of purpose about women’s circumstance are evident:

[Beginning of translated text] I intend to analyze the problems related to the battle between “feminists” and “antifeminists.” After suitably distinguishing those problems, I will provide my opinion about each one. This is the bulk of the argument:

Suffrage is related to women’s political capability. It is the first thing that one thinks of, although it is not the most important. Suffrage is better addressed separately, and not simply because a practical struggle is the most obvious and, for that reason, has been given a name. Suffrage must be dealt with separately because the arguments that support it, as we will see, are of a special order, which makes this problem the most capable of being isolated.

In addition to the problem of political capability, there are many other problems related to women’s social activity. The issues of women’s access to public office, and to professions and careers, are, strictly speaking, distinguishable problems, but they are better examined together because of their reciprocal connections. (It is worthwhile to deal with the

predicament of women's education in conjunction with the other problems because of its similarity and relationship to them.)

All the previous problems are subordinated to the most important issue, which dominates and polarizes the rest, and which must be treated as fundamental. It must be dealt with, in part, inevitably, with the previous ones; however, in the end, it is worthwhile to deal with it separately, in and of itself. I refer to the basic problem of relations between the sexes and the organization of the family.

All those problems are "normative problems," in the sense developed in my *Living Logic*; problems of activity or ideal; problems dealing with what we should do, wish for, or prefer, which must be treated in a special way, and in which special errors are committed, because of which I feel obligated to ask that you keep in mind what I have demonstrated in my referenced work about these problems (for which there usually do not exist perfect solutions, but rather preferable solutions made by choice...).

Yet the following still remains:

These problems of "feminism" have data derived from facts (in this case, biological, physiological, and psychological data). If those pieces of information or facts were not controversial, they would be left behind, and only issues about what would have to be done or preferred, so-called normative problems, would be raised.

However it happens that, if some of those facts that serve as data are not disputed, there are others that can be discussed.

For example, we will not dispute the fundamental anatomical differences of the reproductive organs in one sex or the other, nor gestation, the birthing process, or lactation. There can still be discussion, for example, about whether women are as intelligent as men.

Thus, there are problems of *fact* that come first logically since their solution, or what is believed to be their solution, must be taken into account to deal with the normative problems. Whatever is believed about what *is* must be taken into account to resolve what must be done or desired. The most controversial of such previous problems of fact is that of the comparative intelligence of the two sexes, which is a special case of the more general problem of comparative psychology.

The best plan to examine the problems related to the debate about feminism would be, in order of logic, the following:

First and foremost, to examine the questions of fact: possible issues about the similarities and differences between the two sexes, especially the most controversial ones about women's intelligence and mental capabilities.

Then we can examine the normative problems:

First, there is the issue of women's political rights.

Second, there is the problem of women's social activity: their access to political office, administrative employment, and to careers and professions; their education: all of those listed above constitute one group of problems.

The problem of women's civil rights, although it belongs to the same group, and is not well separated from the previously mentioned list, can be isolated and treated separately (it would thus be the third problem), above all, because of its character of technical specialization.

Without doubt, together with those of the above group we can relate and begin to examine more deeply the organization of the family. Without detriment to this last issue, we also would have to examine it separately; it would become our fourth problem: the social relationships between the sexes.

That would be a good plan. I will follow it, although it will not be possible in these lectures to examine the issues in great depth. Rather, I present some suggestions about each one of them and explain my opinion or tendency. I will examine them in the order mentioned.

I will examine them *directly*, dispensing with existing theories, opinions, and *labels* such as whether the solution is "feminist" or not. These "feminist" and "antifeminist" terms do more harm than good, and they complicate the many, enormous, and real difficulties of the issues with matters of words and with confusions derived from words.

Of the confusions stemming from labels, some have to do with the fact the same terms are used for different problems. Others have to do with the incorrect use of words or the ambiguity of the terms themselves:

First, the use of the same terms to describe different problems.

One who maintains that women possess intelligence equal to that of men's is labeled "feminist." In the problem of suffrage, one who thinks that women should be given this right to vote is a feminist. In employment and careers, one who believes that positions should be widely available for women is a feminist. In the dilemma of civil rights, one who believes that women should enjoy the same rights as men is a feminist, etc.

Many believe or begin with the stance that we must take the position on all the problems that everything is labeled in the same way: one must take either the "feminist" or "anti-feminist" position. In other words, the solutions given the same label are in common cause.

For example, one who wishes to grant suffrage to women or to open the professions to them is thought to believe that women have intelligence equal to that of men. The others, the "antifeminists," must necessarily think the opposite.

Meanwhile, one can think that men and women possess unequal intelligence, and nevertheless, want to give women the right to vote (for example, because one thinks that women's intelligence is adequate, or because one thinks that women have other qualities such as common sense, sympathy, etc., that could supplement intelligence. One might even seek, as a basis on which to permit women's suffrage, to determine the psychological differences between the sexes, so that the actions of one and of the other complement and neutralize each another to produce a desirable result).

One might think that women lack originality or creative ability, and nevertheless want to give women the opportunity to have careers and hold public office. For example, one might believe it is not necessary to be a genius to hold public office because women can compensate with other aptitudes....One might even believe that genius would be an obstacle to holding public office and gaining employment, and that other qualities are more important. For example, one could hold that a particular aspiration renders a man, but not a woman, unfit for the continual and minute discharge of certain tasks. From another point of view, one might believe that the tests required for particular careers or the practice of certain professions serve as a control such that only qualified individuals are able to obtain a given position.

I mention those possible opinions only as examples; and you will be able to imagine others that relating the different problems could generate: nothing is easier, thus, than supposing in what state of spirit and with what arguments someone could sustain that women should have civil but not political rights, or vice versa, etc.

The aforementioned does not mean, naturally, that there is no particular connection between the solutions that carry the same label when applied to different problems.

What I want to say is that *solutions do not always share common cause, or that they may not be completely consistent*; for what is better in every respect is to disregard the nominal feature.

Secondly, terms are often misused in and of themselves. The terms “feminism” and “antifeminism,” “feminist” and “antifeminist,” are not very good, and they tend to generate questions and confusion. They suggest various meanings that sometimes interfere with one another: a sense of “favorable”; a sense of “equalizing”; a sense of “differentiating.”...

Thus, for example: to sustain that jobs, careers, etc., should be open to women just as much as to men; that women should have the same civil capacity as men, the same education as men; that in general, the two sexes should be equalized, represents the tendency that has come to be termed “feminist” in some sense. In a sense, it predicts the intention of elevating women, of dignifying them, of liberating them. Yet it tends to diminish the differences between the sexes, or the situations of the sexes. “Feminism” places women in men’s situations and makes them more like men. In this sense, the label does not settle very well: useless questions of word usage arise, such as those that have produced those writers who are arguing against people who call themselves feminists. They write: “we are the true feminists because we want to conserve the distinctive traits of the female sex. You all want to turn women into men; your true name should be ‘hominists’ and not ‘feminists,’ etc.”[End of translated text] (my translation; Ferreira 1945, 19-24)

Vaz Ferreira’s insistence on *différence* may seem peculiar, but preserving distinctive masculinity and distinctive femininity is, for better or for worse, a hallmark of Latin culture. Thus, he bristles at the notion of “equalization” of the sexes, without being opposed to various progressive principles. A distinctive feature of his arguments is that he strives to preserve the

distinctions for the most part, without jeopardizing women’s or men’s desirable possibilities in the world.

More recent feminist thought in Latin America can also be differentiated from many of its North American and northern European counterparts by a pervasive concern for the family and forms of Latin social life and relationships. While alternative lifestyles do exist among women in Latin America, commonly feminist philosophy has attempted to end discrimination against women while simultaneously accepting the family as the fundamental social unit. While many widely read translations of North American and northern European feminist thought are published in Latin America, their emphasis on the individual rather than family is not easily adaptable to some central Latin American contexts and is often seized on as evidence of unbridgeable cultural difference.

My purposes in providing this translated passage include opening a historical window on a feminist cultural moment in Latin American thought that also shows emphases on traditional notions of the feminine and masculine. To expect more in the early twentieth century is to misjudge the vast distances between feminist theory and analysis in our era and the situation of those pioneers, women and, as shown here, men committed to public exchange about improving women’s status and potential. Such writers and public figures also sought the overturning of what they saw as deeply unjust and wasteful forms of social domination and subjugation. Modern readers might find it fruitful to see in such early eras educated people rallying to feminist causes in Latin America clearly similar to those associated with John Stuart Mill and other men who spoke up for justice for women generally.

Endnotes

1. The period known as “Battlist Uruguay” reflects the decisive influence on many areas of Uruguayan life wielded by President José Batlle y Ordóñez, who served two terms (1903-1907 and 1911-1915). “Battlism” refers to state-sanctioned action against foreign “economic imperialism” and socially progressive programs such as unemployment compensation, eight-hour workdays, divorce laws, free education, etc.
2. For a more extensive analysis of the Latin American context in which Vaz Ferreira labored, see my “Early Twentieth-Century Feminist Philosophy in Uruguay,” *Thinking About Feminism in Latin America and Spain*, eds. Amy A. Oliver and María Luisa Femenías (Amsterdam, New York, NY: Rodopi, 2004).
3. Silvia Rodríguez Villamil and Graciela Sapriza, *El voto femenino en el Uruguay: ¿conquista o concesión?* (Montevideo, Uruguay: Grupo de Estudios sobre la Condición de la Mujer en el Uruguay, 1984), 12.
4. John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1971).
5. See, e.g., Susan Moller Okin, *Justice, Gender, and the Family* (New York: Basic Books, 1992).
6. Carlos Vaz Ferreira, *Sobre feminismo* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Losada, 1945).
7. *Ibid.*, 17.
8. *Ibid.*, 111.
9. *Ibid.*, 25.
10. *Ibid.*
11. *Ibid.*, 12.
12. *Ibid.*, 16.
13. *Ibid.*, 25.
14. *Ibid.*, 38.
15. *Ibid.*, 83.
16. Uruguay can be seen as progressive regarding divorce, especially when compared to Chile, in which divorce is finally becoming legal in 2004.

17. Carlos Vaz Ferreira, *Sobre feminismo*, 83.
18. Rodríguez Villamil and Sapriza, *El voto femenino en el Uruguay*, 12.
19. Carlos Vaz Ferreira, *Sobre feminismo*, 81.
20. *Ibid.*
21. *Ibid.*, 119-120.
22. *Ibid.*, 120.
23. *Ibid.*, 141.
24. *Ibid.*, 142.
25. *Ibid.*, 92.

Chicana Feminisms and Lived Theory

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Gloria Anzaldúa, noted Chicana feminist and originator of many of the “border” metaphors that Chicana/Latina feminists have found helpful and empowering, passed away shortly before this issue was to go to press. She was the co-editor, along with Cherrie Moraga, of the groundbreaking *This Bridge Called My Back* (New York: Kitchen Table Press, 1983), and author at a later point of *Borderlands: La Frontera* (San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books, 1999). Although her work is referred to herein, no brief mention of her influence can do justice to the enormous impact that her work had on the Chicano/Latino community.

Chicana/Mexicana feminisms are as old as the Southwest, and as contemporary as downtown Los Angeles.¹ Although it has been customary in the literature to distinguish between the North American influenced “Chicana/o” culture, and the cultures of Mexico itself, current immigration patterns mean that there is an enormous influx of cultural material from Mexico at any given moment.

One of the dominating features of Mexican life, and particularly its manifestation in the arts and intellectual realms, is the influence of the *mestizaje*. Today’s Mexican population is the product of centuries of intermarriage between persons of European origin—largely from Spain and Portugal—and indigenous Americans. (To be sure, although the influence in Mexico is not as large as in the surrounding Caribbean, there is also an admixture of African blood from the importation of slaves.) But the *mestizaje* itself, although pushed as a construct by the Mexican government in past decades, is a cultural trope with a strongly androcentric and/or masculinist construction, and one that frequently, in its more popular manifestations, is cast almost completely in male terms. From the popular *oleo* calendars that feature idealized scenes of family life to the dominating influence of thinkers such as Octavio Paz and his emphasis on “*hijos de la chingada*,”² the formation of the *mestizaje* derives much of its impetus from the violation of indigenous women by European men, and its highly metaphorical resonances, resulting in the “sons-of-violation” who provide Mexico with its own flavor.³

How the Chicana/Mexicana creates new feminisms and powerful tropes of gynocentricity from a melange of cultural artifacts available to her is an intriguing story, and one that is beginning to be told by a number of theorists.⁴ In this story, three lines tend to merge: one takes off from the overwhelming influence of the Virgen as a marker of culture, still another from the ancient and much retold story of Malinche, Cortez’s translator and, in the macho world, a betrayer of her people, and still another from the activist and community-organizing efforts of Dolores Huerta, co-founder of the farmworkers’ movement, and others like her.

I

The mythology surrounding Juan Diego’s original sighting of the Virgen of Guadalupe in the early part of the sixteenth century is only one of the features surrounding this symbol and its importance for Chicana/Mexicana feminism. Insofar as the virgin manifestly represents female strength and care in a careworn world, the various permutations of her influence are powerful and evocative metaphors. Juan Diego’s vision was, of course, related to the syncretism of Catholicism and reverence for the corn goddess—but this syncretism quickly became a harbinger of other forms of cultural growth. In his classic work on the history of Mexican-derived peoples in the United States, Julian Samora writes:

Along with the Sacred Heart, she [the Virgen] is also enthroned in the homes of Mexican Americans throughout the Southwest. Another important representation of the Virgen Mary is Nuestra Señora de los Lagos located in San Juan, Texas. Mexican American migrant workers make the shrine the focal point of the beginning and the end of their entry into the seasonal migrant stream; it is a tradition for many migrant families to have their vehicle blessed at the shrine before the beginning of their northern journey.⁵

The nurturing qualities of the Virgen make her an object of veneration, obviously, but they affect the growth of a *mujerisma* among Chicanas in numerous ways. Some are obvious: images of the Virgen are frequently spotted in natural objects, and almost every home has a small shrine within the home.

But, more metaphorically and with respect to the formation of the *mestizaje*—that is, the mixed-race culture that has Native American origins as a prominent part—the notion of curing has blended elements of veneration for the Virgen, the indigenous healing rites, (again goddess-related, in many cases) and generally Catholic reliance on saints into powerful strands of *curanderismo*. Lara Medina, writing in the contemporary anthology *Living Chicana Theory*, mentions “*consejeras, curanderas...espiritistas* and even *comadres* practiced and still practice their healing ways...”⁶ Each of these gynocentric or female-identified forms of folk worship takes off from indigenous practices interspersed with the influence of various permutations of the Virgen, and each has a powerful significance within the culture. Family celebrations such as Día de los Muertos take on a more powerful meaning because of the involvement of *abuelitas* and other family members whose knowledge of the culture is transmitted from generation to generation, and this in and of itself gives impetus to gynocentric cultural markers.

II

Just as important as the construct of the Virgen of Guadalupe has been the continuing reappropriation of La Malinche as a point of departure for young Chicanas/Mexicanas. In his crucial new work on the intersections of critical race theory and Chicana/o cultures, Carl Gutierrez-Jones mentions the work of Gloria Anzaldúa and its importance in refurbishing Malinche as a figure.⁷

Historically, Malinche, or Doña Marina, as the Spaniards called her, was seen as a betrayer of native peoples, since it was assumed that her ability with languages was one of the key features in the success of Cortez and others in their conquest. But from a more solidly feminist point of view, one can see Malinche as a young girl caught between forces in a male-dominated world. She learned to survive, and her survival lives on in the mixed-race natures of her literal and figurative descendants. According to Gutierrez-Jones, this new

appropriation of Malinche as survivor and translator in more ways than one “build(s) on the theory and practice of translation—with all the productive betrayal implied by La Malinche as a Chicana feminist force.”⁸ The notion of border-crossing or transgression becomes, of course, a sort of postmodern instantiation of what it means to be a Chicana in the United States today.

In this mode of thinking, new and powerful tools for the articulation of theory are available for the feminist, and innovative ways of thinking and categorization arise. Malinche was not only a translator and a border-crosser—she was a “mother” in many senses of the word. Without the race mixing, that which is specifically Mexican could not exist today—it can be separated, as the official discourse often does, from both its indigenous and European roots. Of this, Vicky Ruiz has written:

Given these symbolic meanings, one of the first tasks a Chicana feminist faced was that of revising the image of La Malinche. Adelaida Del Castillo’s pathbreaking 1977 article provided a new perspective by considering Malinche’s captivity, her age, and most important her conversion to Christianity. What emerges from Del Castillo’s account is a gifted young linguist who lived on the margins and made decisions within the borders of her world.⁹

All of the borders that can be crossed are, more-or-less, available to the young Chicana today—perhaps more so than her Mexican sisters—simply by virtue of her living in the cultural network that is the United States. Within the contemporary cultural framework, everything—identity, sexuality, language, customs, religion—is up for grabs, and because of this, the Chicana is, in a sense, more than postmodern.

But if Malinche has become a powerful trope—and if in some ways aspects of Malinche recapitulate aspects of the Virgen—there are other modes of identification that propel activism and a resurgent spirit.

III

Chicana/Mexicana women have long been at the forefront of labor movements, but, as is so commonly the case with endeavors by women, they often received little notice or credit at the time. As a number of historians were beginning their pathbreaking work on the Mexican-derived population in the 1960’s, Dolores Huerta was, in tandem with César Chávez, founding the United Farmworkers Movement. She had previously worked with the activist Community Service Organization groups, and came with ready knowledge and will. Drawing together some of the various strands of culture that have already been remarked upon here, Huerta and Chavez staged one of the largest and most successful protest marches of the 1960s from Delano to Sacramento, California, culminating on Easter Sunday, 1966. In a display of solidarity that drew on the strength of Catholic metaphors and symbols for those marching, thousands of men, women and children marched under a banner labeled “*peregrinación*”, with the image of Our Lady. The Rev. William Scholes, an observer, noted in an essay written in the 1960s:

At this writing the strike still continues, and the boycott has been shifted from Schenley to Di Giorgio products. The Spanish-speaking farm laborers who carried the emblem of Our Lady of Guadalupe from Delano to Sacramento have persevered longer than anyone thought possible, and have received more support from the public than even they dreamed of.¹⁰

It goes without saying, of course, that the women who marched under the banner decorated with the Virgen of Guadalupe were precisely those whose daily caretaking activities made the march possible. To recapitulate some of the labor history that culminated in the march and others like it, the historian Vicky Ruiz has gone back to examine records of labor activities involving women of Mexican ancestry throughout the Southwest. Through diligent effort, she is able to give a name and a face to many women whose efforts preceded the UFW:

As a twenty-three year old member of the Workers’ Alliance and secretary of the Texas Communist Party, Emma Tenayuca emerged as the fiery local leader. Although not a pecan sheller, Tenayuca, a San Antonio native, was elected to head the strike committee...Known as “La Pasionaria,” Tenayuca, in an interview with historian Zaragoza Vargas, reflected on her activism as follows: “I was pretty defiant. [I fought] against poverty, actually starvation, high infant death rates, disease and hunger and misery. I would do the same thing again.”¹¹

Ruiz was able to find records of activism and strike organizing going back to the pre-1910 period, and her research informs us of the efforts of many forgotten foresters. If many of the dominant cultural markers of the Mexican world itself are male-oriented, those markers ignore the work and efforts of millions of women.

To summarize, we can say that contemporary Chicana feminisms split into at least two broad strands—one strand we can take to merge with previous activism, but in a highly evocative way that does more to make a statement. Another, possibly more academic strand, has impacted not only Chicana/o Studies, but many other disciplines, and has built on a rich diversity of poststructuralist and postcolonial studies to make its points regarding such constructs as margins, borders and transgressions of all sorts.

We might trot out such phrases as “empowerment,” and try to make the claim that each of these strands pushes in that direction, but to say so much is to say comparatively little. The difference between these two directions parallels a distinction increasingly commonly made throughout the United States and other industrially developed countries: it is that between “real change,” necessitating community action, and that which more commonly involves an altered style of discourse. To be fair, since so many have no doubt been propelled into action by some of the “border” literature, the point may not be as well taken as it is in some circles.

In each case, Chicana feminisms have involved a complex reappropriation of modes and symbols pertaining to the Chicano/Mexicano community at large, and even, in a few cases, the larger American Latino community. The importance of crucial notions of the family, the signification of the mother/*abuela* and the strength of symbols such as the Virgin remain unabated, and cross over into activist efforts, as we have seen. Because of the power of the family as a construct and the hope to keep it intact and undiluted, many Chicanas have pressed beyond the “double duty” syndrome of a large number of American women and have undertaken a large number of tasks demanding much work in and outside of the home. Mary Pardo writes, for example, of Gloria, who became a leader in a local neighborhood organization in Los Angeles after taking a look at the problems around her:

Gloria was not working for wages at the time, and she held leadership for four years. Like the women in MELA (Mothers of East Los Angeles), to avoid

domestic disruption she continued to meet her household responsibilities. When I asked her how she managed to balance her household work with her activism, she acknowledged that it was difficult. Her strategy was to take care of household chores very early or very late in the day: “To avoid conflict in the home, I would get up at 5:00 in the morning, clean house, prepare dinner...I would come home from meetings, and be ironing at 11:00 at night...”¹²

Perhaps Gloria’s story is the best summation of all of the spirit of the Chicana feminisms, their intersections with classically Mexican tropes, and their impacts on their communities. Like the women of a number of differing geographical areas around the planet whose efforts and interests have drawn international attention—from Bangladesh to the Bronx, and from Afghanistan to Northern Canada—Chicanas and Mexicanas are forging their own paths. Their use of the material historically available to them in new and exciting ways is organic food for thought for us all.

Endnotes

1. Traditionally, “Chicana/o” refers to those persons born in the United States of Mexican ancestry. It is clear, however, that the distinction between those terms and “Mexicana/o” is becoming increasingly tenuous.
2. An exhibit titled “La Patria Portátil” at the Latino Museum of History, Art, and Culture in Los Angeles in 1999 detailed the place of oleo or chromo folk art in the Mexican home.
3. Octavio Paz, *The Labyrinth of Solitude* (New York: Grove Press, 1959).
4. Only a few works can be mentioned here. Aside from the classic work of Anzaldúa, new work of relevance is *Living Chicana Theory*, ed. Carla Trujillo (Berkeley: Third Woman Press, 1998); Mary S. Pardo, *Mexican American Women Activists* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1998); and Vicky L. Ruiz, *From out of the Shadows: Mexican Women in Twentieth Century America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988).
5. Julian Samora and Patricia Vandell Simon, *A History of the Mexican American People* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1993), 229.
6. Lara Medina, “Los Espiritus Siguen Hablando: Chicana Spiritualites,” in *Living Chicana*, ed. Trujillo, 189-213. This citation p. 189.
7. Carl Gutierrez-Jones, *Rethinking the Borderlands* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 188-219.
8. Ibid.
9. Ruiz, *Shadows*, 106-107.
10. Rev. William E. Scholes, “The Migrant Worker,” in *La Raza: the Forgotten Americans*, ed. Julian Samora (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1966), 87.
11. Ruiz, *Shadows*, 79.
12. Pardo, *Activists*, 37.

REVIEW ESSAY

Anzaldúa and the ‘Bridge’ as Home: Healing the Ruptures of Reason: This Bridge We Call Home: Radical Visions For Transformation Gloria Anzaldúa and AnaLouise Keating, eds. (New York: Routledge, 2002).

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Like many scholars trained in the rationalist tradition, I came to this book prepared to be dismissive of any worldview that smacked of goddess worship, or what I would see as a form of naïve essentializing about women and the nature of things. However, as I read Anzaldúa’s “*now let us shift...the path of *conocimiento*...inner work, public acts,*” the reflection with which this book concludes, within the context of the other 87 testimonios, memoirs, poems, artworks, and essays that appear in the work, I came to an epiphanic realization. Anzaldúa’s concepts of *conocimiento* and *El Mundo Zurdo* represent far less of a leap of faith than Plato’s Theory of Ideas. Plato asks us to believe in those abstractions that emanate from a more perfect world beyond our own. We must accept the “Truth” of the mind/body split and the hierarchical superiority of the mind, which is Reason. We must then order our epistemological, ontological, metaphysical and ethical constructs in terms of those binaries, in spite of the fact that we can never “grasp” the Ideal. The sects of Christianity have philosophical ties to Plato. Hence, in their more fundamentalist configurations, they, too, hold to hierarchies, and Truth(s) that come to them directly from God, the source of all knowledge. Each sect takes for itself, the power of appropriation, to speak for God. In the midst of all this Truth and Righteousness, a majority of the human race suffers greatly for imperfection of race, class, gender, and sexual orientation that are either deemed the “luck of the draw,” or, in the case of poverty and sexual practices, sinful situations of their own making. These are the outcomes of the “truths” that, as a nation, we hold to be self-evident.

These “truths” are also the source of the pathological ruptures that Gloria Anzaldúa would heal by encouraging individuals to elevate the spiritual to the level of science and rationality. By observing the ineluctable patterns and transformations of nature, seekers after *conocimiento* “challenge the old self’s orthodoxies” by creating “new stories” that build “a bridge home to the self” (540). Like the three natural stone bridges at State Beach in California where Anzaldúa used to walk along the bluffs before her recent death from diabetes, these bridges of understanding may be long-standing, but impermanent, and in that sense, unsafe. They must constantly be rebuilt and reformed through dialogical encounters with respected fellow travelers with whom one forms a “new tribalism” (540). This new tribe is, above all else, inclusive, as the contributors to *This Bridge We Call Home* reflect. All are welcome in the conversations of the transition state (*nepantla*): women, men, and transgender persons of all colors, ages and sexualities. Anzaldúa describes this vast, new knowledge project thusly:

The new accounts trace the process of shifting from old ways of viewing reality to new perceptions....Together you attempt to reverse the

Cartesian split that turned the world into an “other,” distancing humans from it. Though your body is still la otra and though pensamientos dualísticos still keep you from embracing and uniting corporally con esa otra, you dream the possibility of wholeness. Collectively you rewrite the story of “the Fall” and the story of western progress—two opposing versions of the evolution of human consciousness. Collectively you note the emergence of new gatekeepers of the earth’s wisdom. (562)

Structurally, *This Bridge We Call Home* is divided into seven sections that parallel Anzaldúa’s Seven Stages of *conocimiento*. The stages begin with reflections on finding and defining self and personal agency through acts of testimony for alliance building, and then progress to discussions of transformation and change. Interestingly, where *This Bridge Called My Back* (1981) had presented a nearly contemptuous rejection of academic feminism, the current volume recognizes the pivotal role of academe in gaining momentum for change by placing the section entitled “*shouldering more identity than we can bear, ...seeking allies in academe*,” fifth in order, just after the section on “*shaping our worlds*” and just before “*forging common ground*.” Sadly, the reports from the academy reflect inadequate acceptance of new knowledge and new faces in the classrooms and the professoriate.

In Section I, “*Looking for my own bridge to get over. . . exploring the impact*,” the eleven contributors each articulate how the *This Bridge Called My Back* sustains them in their struggle to transcend stereotypes and pre-formed cultural scripts to take agency in their own lives. Contributors include Hispanic, White, and Black women, some of whom are lesbians, and two Hispanic gay men. In “Chameleon,” Iobel Andemicael, a light-skinned young Third Wave woman with an Afro-Colombian mother and absent white father, struggles to overcome what she perceives as her lack of “authenticity” which has led to complete writer’s block. To end what she perceives as the state of invisibility caused by her racial ambiguity, she chooses to join the Black Student Center over the objections of her Colombian relations who see her as white enough to pass. In conversations with her mother and grandparents, she initially resists the cliché idea that persons of mixed race can or should act to form bridges between groups:

You romanticize bridges. It’s exhausting to constantly try to explain people to each other. Bridges may join two places but they themselves are nowhere—over precipices or cold water or highways....A bridge is what people trample to get where they are going. (34)

Later in the evening, however, while holed up in the library in a state of desperation over the poetry assignments that she cannot start, Andemicael happens upon a copy of *This Bridge Called My Back* and finds personal empowerment in Donna Kate Rushin’s “The Bridge Poem” where Rushin states:

I must be the road to nowhere

But my true self

And then

I will be useful. (xxi).

Rushin’s words freed Andemicael from the burden of stereotypes and role-modeling to discover her self-in-process. Her resultant poem epitomizes the personal liberation that Second Wave Feminism would ideally impart to Third Wave as Andemicael finds the language to express her independence and agency. She writes:

*I am my pounding heart, heavy, insistent, stubborn,
and young. I am*

Not my heart.

I am not invisible, nor should I be. (41)

By way of contrast with Andemicael’s poetic personal journey, section one of *This Bridge We Call Home* contains an incisive essay, “Thinking Again: ‘*This Bridge Called My Back*’ and the Challenge to Whiteness,” on opposing internalized racism through Whiteness Studies by Rebecca Aanerud of the University of Washington. A reflective piece by Caribbean scholar and gay/lesbian activist M. Jacqui Alexander, entitled “Remembering ‘*This Bridge*,’ Remembering Ourselves: Yearning, Memory and Desire,” recalls how the first book represented “an earlier historical moment when the vision of a pan-cultural radical feminist politics seemed more visible in the United States of North America” (82). Alexander reflects on how in the intervening twenty years since the publication of the first *Bridge*, radical activists have become too complacent, too attached to the material advantages and even the more specious discourses of equality and freedom that are the “*idea of America*” (87). She cautions that social progress must respect contexts and memories of oppressions if we are to continue our momentum as “refugees of a world on fire.” At the moment, this “world on fire” is emphatically our own. Fragile progress toward social justice is being lost, she states, because:

We live in a country apparently bent on inculcating a national will to amnesia, to excise certain pasts, particularly when a great wrong has occurred. The recent calls for this American nation to move ahead in the wake of the 2000 presidential election rest on forgetting. Forget intimidations at the polls and move on. Forget that citizenship is particular and does not guarantee a vote for everyone. Forget that we face the state reconsolidation of conservatism as the fragile seams of democracy come apart....Forget in the midst of a “booming” economy that there are more people hungry in New York than there were ten years ago. (94-95)

Section II, entitled “*still struggling with the boxes people try to put me in’...resisting the labels*,” further articulates Alexander’s message of the inseparability of the personal and the political. The reflections in this section all illustrate the gaps between outward appearances and inward subjectivities. In the opening essay to this section, “Los Intersticios: Recasting Moving Selves,” Evelyn Alsultany, an academic of Iraqi/Cuban descent, offers a premonitory warning that applies to all who would approach the writers who follow her in this book: “Ask me who I am. Don’t project your essentialisms onto my body and then project hatred because I do not conform to your notions of who I’m supposed to be” (110) In keeping with this theme and challenge to essentialist stereotypes, three essays counter established notions of queerness from unique perspectives: Hector Carbajal’s “A Letter to a Mother, from her Son”; Marla Morris’s “Young Man Popkin: A Queer Dystopia”; and Jody Norton’s “Transchildren, Changelings, and Fairies: Living the Dream and Surviving the Nightmare in Contemporary America.”

Resistance to the boxes and labels of victimhood is the subject of “Nomadic Existence: Exile, Gender, and Palestine,” by Palestinian expatriates and sisters, Reem and Rabab Abdulhabi. In dynamic e-mail exchanges, they share their love for their troubled homeland, their guilt and relief as exiles, and their determination to continue to represent the dignity and rights of Palestinian women and children both within and

outside Palestine. The dialogue concludes with a statement of gratitude for the inclusion of their nomadic perspective within the book and a description of the psychological distress of women and children who remain in Palestine:

The next generation of Palestinians has been marred by the scars of inhumanity. Statements such as those made by the Queen of Sweden, who questioned whether Palestinian mothers loved their children, further deepen Palestinian feelings of abandonment and alienation....We are, therefore, grateful to have this hospitable environment in *this bridge*, which allows us to grieve for all those who lost loved ones, to recognize our humanity, the complexities of our lives, and the shifting sands of our respective experiences without being forced to engage in the arrogant exercise of categorical conclusions. (179)

Native American activist and scholar Kimberly Roppolo provides the defining moment of section two with "The Real Americana," a poem that disrupts and reclaims almost every cliché and slur associated with women of color and women of poverty in America today. A stanza from near the end of the poem will exemplify its power:

I'll fix
your broken heart
And I'll break it
in two
again
if
necessary,
because
my children
must survive.
It's the first commandment
of my Great Mother.
You can call me
a bitch
if
you want to.
Just don't call me whore,
Christian, or capitalist
because
if you think
I'll be
your sucker,
you're dead
wrong
mister. (157-8)

Reclamation and expansion of psychological space for people of various ethnicities and sexual practices drive section III, "*locking arms in the master's house'...omissions, revisions, new issues.*" Papers addressing omissions explore the struggles of Native American, Hispanic, Asian, and Muslim women to achieve authentic cultural representation within American society. In, "'What's Wrong with a Little Fantasy?' Story telling from (the Still) Ivory Tower," Deborah A. Miranda describes the exclusion of writings by Native American women from

university curricula and makes the radical and potentially divisive claim that the literature of indigenous Americans defines America, while Arab-Americans Nada Elia and Asian Shirley Geok-Lin Lim assert that Muslim and Asian women have no nuanced, separate identity or acknowledged body of literature within "white" culture. Two contributors to *This Bridge Called My Back*, Cheryl Clarke and Max Wolf Valerio offer "revisions" of their former essays. In "Lesbianism 2000" Clarke revisits her much-read essay from the first book, "Lesbianism: An Act of Resistance," and concludes that neither women of color nor the feminist movement itself has yet provided sufficient support and validation for lesbian women. The optimism in her former essay has turned to anger. Anger also defines the current thinking of Native American, TGM, Max Wolf Valerio, who wrote as Anita Valerio in the first book. In, "'Now that You're a White Man': Changing Sex in a Postmodern World—Being, Becoming, Borders," Valerio describes the sexual and personal power of his newly-found male "privilege" and concludes that feminism is not well-prepared to embrace the gender performances and identities of transsexuals, especially those who transform from female to male.

Two remarkable essays by African-Americans Mary Loving Blanchard and Simona J. Hill point to new issues and new directions for academic feminism. In "Poets, Lovers, and the Master's Tools: A Conversation with Audre Lorde," Blanchard acknowledges her indebtedness to Lorde's famous essay in the first book, but then insists that black feminist writers must co-opt and own the "master's tools" of language as the only means of making new art:

Gaining agency through my specific use of the master's tools is important to me in part because, most times, it seems I have to make a choice between making new tools, or retooling these old worn-out tools of patriarchy and having time to write really necessary poetry and love really necessary poets. (256)

Blanchard's contention that younger feminists must go forward on their own terms and honor their own process is also taken up by Simona J. Hill in her provocative essay, "All I Can Cook is Crack on a Spoon: A Sign for a New Generation of Feminists." While serving as faculty in residence for a housing program aimed at creating understanding of women's issues, Hill was initially offended by a flyer posted on the Women's Studies House that read, "All I can cook is crack on a spoon." Hill initially found the message offensive because it seemed to be a racist allusion to the drug dependencies associated (wrongly) with poor inner-city women. But on further investigation and analysis, she came to discover that it was actually a statement of cheeky resistance put forward by much younger Third Wave feminists on her campus. The students described to her how the statement had several meanings in that it represented both a reaction against the traditional kitchen duties of women and a recognition that feminism has done little to address or deal with the problems of poor women. Indeed, some students related the phrase to a general feeling of inertia and lack of direction within the current feminist movement. It is Hill's hope that this new "in-your-face" attitude exhibited by Third Wave feminists will sustain the progress toward equality for all women.

Passing the torch is difficult, but the time has come. Thus, section IV entitled, "*a place at the table'... surviving the battles, shaping our worlds,*" consists of thirteen contributions that address primarily activist approaches aimed at ensuring equality and visibility for all who choose to join Anzaldúa's alliance of *El Mundo Zurdo*. The contributions address tactics for gaining cultural visibility for women of wide-ranging ethnicities. The

most provocative essay is provided by Chandra Brown, who, in “Standing on ‘*This Bridge*,’” describes how she had to report her brutal rape at the hands of a fellow black male student activist and thus, was forced to choose between her loyalty to her race, and her own integrity and the safety of other women on her campus.

Section IV is “bridged” by two strong contributions, one by Judith K. Witherow, “Yo’ Done Bridge is Fallin’ Down,” and another prepared jointly by Sarah J. Cervenak, Karina L. Cespedes, Caridad Souza, and Andrea Straub, four young feminists taking a course in U.S. Latina feminism at a northeastern university. Their essay, entitled “Imagining Differently: The Politics of Listening in a Feminist Classroom,” describes the conflict between theory and praxis among Latina students. Many of the students in the class, who were mostly Latinas, saw theory as the province of the white male and could not see the relevance of it to their lived experience. Following the pattern of the testimonios in the original *Bridge*, many students wished merely to speak of their experiences rather than to examine positions critically. This tendency to valorize differences uncritically led to the distinct feeling that they were not listening across their differences. The authors conclude that theory must not be essentialized as white and therefore dismissed, but rather, engaged in by feminists of all colors and used to reflect upon our variegated real-life experiences as Audre Lorde had theorized with her metaphor of the “dark space.” The four authors conclude their theoretically sound and sensitive essay with the following observation:

Complicated and engaged living requires not only that we learn to cherish our feelings but also that we respect those hidden sources of power where new knowledge is birthed, felt, and embodied. It is from this space of recognition that we begin to appreciate each other enough to listen and learn. (355)

By way of contrast, Witherow, in “Yo’ Done Bridge is Fallin’ Down,” has no patience for feminist theory or feminist praxis after a lifetime of working for causes and seeing none of her targets for change met. She states that for her, poverty has always represented the “bottom line,” and that when she began working as a feminist 25 years ago, she was told that the movement would address the praxis and politics of poverty—eventually. She is a Native American lesbian challenged by many health conditions, some of which may be traced back to the malnourishment of her youth. Witherow sees herself and others as having assimilated themselves to white, middle class causes to such a degree that issues of poverty, illiteracy, and the environmental hazards that cause illness, especially among the poor who live near, and work in, mines and factories, are yet to be addressed. For her, there is no “home” or “bridge” of safety to be found:

When you add generations of poverty, illiteracy, and abuse by the system, you don’t need a crystal ball to determine your destiny. What you do need is a nation willing to provide health care to everyone regardless of his or her ability to pay. (288)

These themes of the conflict between praxis and theory and the hazards of assimilation flow over into section V where the academic world is examined under the title “*shouldering more identity than we can bear’...seeking allies in academe.*” More than half of the ten authors in this section reflect directly on the sense of tokenism that they have experienced while rising through the ranks of academe. Tatiana de la Tierra, a “white” Colombian lesbian, Laura A. Harris, a black feminist and self-declared “welfare queen,” Kim Springer, a black

feminist, and Korean Jid Lee each remark on how it was possible for them to pass through the graduate ranks in the 1990s while only rarely seeing another candidate of their ethnicity. This isolation continues into their professorial lives as they find themselves having to choose friends and academic allies among white faculty who respect multiple identities and difference. In “The Cry-Smile Mask: A Korean Woman’s System of Resistance,” Jid Lee describes how she affects alternately the appearance of either a smiling or quietly compliant colleague to create an acceptable niche for herself as an Asian professor who is validated by white academic culture. Laura A. Harris flamboyantly describes how she was one of the last poor Americans to be sustained on welfare while she completed her graduate education. Her essay, entitled “Notes from a Welfare Queen in the Ivory Tower,” emphasizes her \$80,000 debt in student loans and her absolute refusal to assimilate by forgetting her difficult journey and the trials of others. She writes:

In the academy I refuse to be an American “success” story, to be another exotic animal in its multicultural petting zoo, or to walk quietly and self-contentedly down the halls to teach. I disdain the academy’s class hegemony. I want to use the skills and knowledge of a welfare queen equipped with the privileges I acquired along with my Ph.D. to rebuke the ivory tower’s insidious hierarchies daily. (380)

In “Aliens and Others in Search of the Tribe in Academe,” Tatiana de la Tierra corroborates Harris’s contempt for academic administrative structures by branding them as largely male, white and racist:

Institutionalized racism (and classism and sexism) in the academy translates into privileged white men making decisions that affect everyone within the system....We all know our place within the system; we take our positions and occupy the space allotted to us, nothing more. To transgress is to endanger the little that is ours. (360)

Cynthia Franklin and Sunu Chandy each discuss the exclusion of feminist authors from curriculum by white male professors who generally argue that their writings are “lightweight” and are therefore not worth student attention. In “Fire in My Heart,” Chandy describes how, in the early 1990s, *This Bridge Called My Back* was kept off the reading list for a Peace Studies program at her university, although no one on the committee had actually read the book and had not attended Gloria Anzaldúa’s appearance at their campus. Cynthia Franklin, in “Recollecting ‘*This Bridge*’ in an Anti-Affirmative Action Era: Literary Anthologies, Academic Memoir, and Institutional Autobiography,” tells the all-too-familiar tale of how, in the late 1990s, a senior colleague in an English department in Hawaii ran for election to the hiring committee on a platform of opposing future appointments of faculty whose applications used phrases such as “of color” or “colonial,” or exhibited other signs of “politically motivated” scholarship. As part of his campaign to trivialize cultural studies, he also ridiculed an entry by Gloria Anzaldúa that is included in the *Norton Anthology*. Faculty were forced to take sides and to experience the pain of the inevitable divide along lines of age, race, gender, and sexual orientation. Franklin’s essay follows the postmodern practice of writing academic memoirs as a means of narrating “otherness” within the academy. She also strongly supports the growth of Whiteness Studies as an anodyne to the notion that white is not a race and that whiteness does not possess a political agenda.

This section of the book is very revealing for what it does not contain. It does not contain one single submission from an academic of any race, gender, or sexual orientation or combination thereof, who feels supported by her or his university on issues of race, gender, diversity, and multiculturalism. It does not even contain a somewhat positive contribution that would attest to the idea of improving fortunes—a disturbing situation, to say the least. Under these circumstances, it is quite appropriate that Irene Lara closes this section with a ritual, “Healing Sueños (Dreams) for Academia.”

In sections VI and VII, ideas of healing and alliance move the reader beyond mere acceptance into Anzaldúa’s vision of a spiritual commitment to *El Mundo Zurdo*, that left-handed place where all who honor the diversity of earth’s natural creations gather in alliance to sustain not only each other, but also the earth itself by respecting environmental and ecological needs. Entitled, “yo soy tu otro yo—I am your other I... forging common ground,” section VI consists largely of *testimonios* expressing difference and desire for alliances. The potentiality for destruction self inherent in initiating gestures of trust is revealed in “Connection: The Bridge Finds its Voice,” by Maria Proitsaki. Proitsaki retells in poetic form the ancient Greek legend of the stone bridge at Arta that would not stand no matter how often it was rebuilt. The community elders decided on virgin sacrifice as a means of consecrating the bridge. There are many versions of this legend, but in the most popular, the spirit of the virgin cursed the bridge out of outrage for her mistreatment, and her own brother was killed in the collapse of the bridge that followed. Proitsaki’s poem makes the important distinction between alliance and exploitation:

Stone by stone they piled their frustration

On my shiny black hair

Vocal Chords arranged in numbness

This arch is not of glory

You parade on my back. (449)

“The Body Politic—Meditations on Identity” by Elana Dykewoman, and “Speaking of Privilege” by Diana Courvant, a transgender male to female, describe the difficulties of avoiding exploitation of the other and finding common ground even among the multivariant identities within sexual identities. The cultivation of a disposition to perceive and understand the other, however, lies at the core of social change. Dykewoman observes:

But how is it possible to have worked for thirty years in the anti-war, anti-racist, women’s and lesbian movements and still not be able to see the women next to me? Do the people I blur together threaten me? When women look at me, do they still see only one or two things, and expect me to have a certain way because of that? Somewhere our analysis—or our practice—has failed us. (456)

Fortunately, this pessimism is not shared by Migdalia Reyes, “The Latin American and Caribbean Feminist/Lesbian Encuentros: Crossing the Bridge of our Diverse Identities,” who has been a part of a number of conferences with encounter groups aimed at commensurating the many diversities among Latina women in this hemisphere. The greatest challenge of these meetings has been to build trust and heal rifts between more privileged lesbian Latinas in North America and lesbian Latinas from elsewhere in this hemisphere who face quite different cultural pressures.

In “Tenuous Alliance,” Arlene (Ari) Ishtar Lev, a white-skinned Ashkenazi Jewish lesbian, relates her own experiences in creating a multiracial family with her two adopted sons, one African-American and the other biracial in descent. Lev and her partner have managed to include the natural grandparents of their sons in the forging of a strong and supportive extended family in which the affinities of love matter far more than skin color, ethnicity, or sexual orientation. Lev is raising her sons to respect their uniqueness within a context of inclusion. She describes her personal journey from whiteness, to the recognition of her Jewishness and, from there, to alliance-building:

I do know one thing: I became a more effective ally for people of color after I did my homework. The more comfortable I became with my own legacy as a Jew, the more I could let into my heart the pride, and pain, that people of color experience....In our efforts to build coalitions across our difference, we cannot buy into the simplistic racist categories, but must face the challenge of embracing the intricacies, depth and complexities of the racial, cultural, and ethnic legacies we all bring to the table. (478)

The seventh and final section “i am the pivot for transformation’...enacting the vision” combines the practical/theoretical with the spiritual to close the circle of alliance for enlightened living. Helene Shulman Lorenz begins this section with “Thawing Hearts, opening a Path in the Woods, Founding a New Lineage,” an essay addressing the place of “rituals of reframing and restoration” in recouping the spirits of those who strive for change and social justice. As a professor of psychology, she has found that most university curriculum committees are not able to classify or appreciate *This Bridge Called My Back* because they are not yet ready to appreciate the challenges to established bodies of knowledge that the *Bridge* books represent. Lorenz artfully understates her point:

To imagine that the older frames of race, gender, sexuality, self, and other, cut across the whole field of knowledge over an entire historical era, that they are connected with colonial impulses, that they serve and reflect power, privilege, and hierarchy, and that they are filled with arbitrary exclusions and absences which need to be renegotiated would indeed be a revolutionary rupture in many disciplinary conversations. (501)

Lorenz counters the psychological “suffocation” of the traditional academy by engaging with her students and colleagues in what she calls “dialogical and cultural encounters” that take place in neutral “bridge” zones where conscientious interlocutors can “reach across unimaginable gulfs of difference” (502). Such conversations are “healing myth for souls in protest against a conversation designed to marginalize and pathologize them” (506).

In “Forging El Mundo Zurdo: Changing Ourselves, Changing the World,” AnaLouise Keating, co-editor of this anthology with Gloria Anzaldúa, offers a concrete five-point set of tactics for overcoming “racialized divisions” in our teaching and in our everyday discourse. Keating explains Anzaldúa’s spiritual concepts of *El Mundo Zurdo*, *conocimiento*, and *nepantla* in terms that allow rationalists, as well as spiritualists, to find a place on the bridge. In Anzaldúa’s view, we are living in a state of *nepantla*, transition between worldviews, in which we are all experiencing cultural pressures and impingements. Keating states: “Through exchanging stories, through exploring our differences without defensiveness or shame, we can learn from each other, share each other’s words” (530). As a result

of this interconnectedness, we will reach a state of higher consciousness (*conocimiento*), and those insights will help in the creation of *El Mundo Zurdo*, “the ‘Left-Handed World,’ a visionary place where people from diverse backgrounds with diverse needs and concerns co-exist and work together to bring about revolutionary change” (520). Keating admits that she is “intoxicated” by the visionary place, but is concerned, in her own way, with how to actualize the vision within the academy and the lived experiences of those who strive for social change.

El Mundo Zurdo with its bridges for “dialogical and cultural encounters,” (502) is a creative *locus amoenus* for all who wish to envision existence beyond the traditional, Western, subject/object divide. This book, like its predecessor, lays out future directions for building bridges of understanding and human equality.

REVIEWS

Worlds of Knowing: Global Feminist Epistemologies **Jane Duran (New York: Routledge, 2001).**

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Jane Duran begins an important project for contemporary feminism. To make progress despite feminist tendencies to promote only the interests of the world’s most privileged women, we must learn coalition across women’s differences. This central concern of the past twenty years must proceed beyond token inclusions—in this case of women of color, but the same holds for other forms of difference that intersect with gender—by building common terrain. Central to recognizing and developing shared starting points for global feminism is recognizing and developing shared ways of understanding, a feminist epistemics or gynocentric style of knowledge, Duran argues. Her book is extremely important in recognizing and carrying forward this project, by attending to women’s patterns of thought in a set of contemporary cultures and emancipatory movements. The fragmented epistemological patterns must be identified and drawn together if global feminism can proceed in a meaningful way. So, global feminism requires attending to the practical needs faced by women and to both traditional and revolutionary avenues of prestige and power that are encoded in different cultures’ and subcultures’ analogues for knowledge, belief, and justification. The danger of continuing colonization by defining women’s issues in Western terms persists, but can only be negotiated by concrete efforts to build shared forms of thought. Thus, we won’t ignore and perpetuate but can work out and mitigate the inevitable projection of Western standards by Western feminists. We may achieve more equalitarian relations among women around the world, and ultimately make feminism a truly global endeavor.

Duran’s book is substantially empirical and provides excellent groundwork for global feminist epistemologies. The first of her two major sections of postcolonial investigation addresses four Asian cultures and the presence and potential for gynocentric ways of thinking in each: Northern Indian; mostly southern, Dravidian India; Islamic Bangladesh; and

Buddhist Nepal and the Himalayan societies. The second set of investigations addresses cultures in the New World: Mexico and the *Mestizaje*; indigenous Guatemala; Chicana/os; and the U.S. African diaspora. Each culture is examined through a set of foci, beginning with the dominant androcentric thought, then describing the elements of gynocentrism in the culture, providing a historical overview of the women’s situation, relating current feminist movements, and finally discerning from this series of ruminations some potential and actual feminist epistemic practices.

Duran’s surveys will educate or provide points of contention for almost any reader, and so I heartily recommend that material. Building an account of similarities and differences among the cognitive resources available to women in various situations around the globe is the only way that a global feminist epistemology can proceed. So an explicit epistemology could be invaluable to the general project of global feminism (and an implicit one certainly must be). Moreover, the excellent initial grounding provided by Duran evokes a sense of immersion in the cultures she addresses that allows her reader to engage her and other writers both critically and constructively, and to carry forward the project she begins.

However, the empirical surveys are only the meat that fleshes out, but not the bones of Duran’s formulation of global feminist epistemology. The commonality first recognized by Duran, before her surveys even begin, is relatively uncontroversial. For decades feminists have attended to how reverence in many cultures for sacred and abstract knowledge brings with it denigration of typical women’s understandings of everyday empirical matters, such as finding and fetching water, and growing food. Moving into fresher territory, Duran suggests that written cultures will provide stronger analogues with Western epistemology because of the greater likelihood that the cultures have intersected before, and because modes of literacy affect cognition and conceptual patterns. However, whether disproportionate illiteracy among women might distinguish certain forms of gynocentric thought receives no comment. Instead, Duran derives analogues for identifying gynocentric thought in other cultures from considering how Western feminists have appropriated patriarchal political structures, and looking for ways in which women in other cultures do the same. She identifies two general categories of cultural reappropriation: commandeering knowledge categories usually monopolized by men, and struggling with knowledge categories associated with traditional female roles.

The reclamation of women’s traditional forms of thought brings with it a set of problems that Duran does not address. The most contentious aspect of her work, in *Worlds of Knowing* as elsewhere, is the use of the feminist versions of psychoanalytic object-relations theory. This theory posits that women, in general, have a more “relational” view of themselves and the world, and by contrast, men’s more abstract and atomized ways of thinking are problematic and central to sexist oppression. Bifurcating human ways of thinking in this fashion raises a number of issues, not the least of which is that to the extent that it appears to refer to a real difference, that difference is largely an artifact of sexism. Political structures discourage and disallow women from meaningful autonomy, which quashes the range of ways of thinking women can have (and likewise discourages men from pursuing any but the most accepted modes of thought). So, the apparent dichotomy between women’s and men’s modes of thought is as much part of the problem of sexism as it is a solution to it.

Of course, Duran repeatedly reminds us, building global feminism requires looking for commonalities among women’s cognitive practices, and the sorts of commonality an observer—

here the feminist epistemologist—is likely to recognize are those reflective of her own culture. Ideology pervades even the most basic philosophical terms, such as “epistemology,” “ethics,” “aesthetics,” even “knowledge,” “belief,” and “justification,” and—of course—“woman.” So, to successfully extend philosophical understandings across cultural boundaries, only the roughest analogies can be employed, and even still the analogies occasionally will be forced. Nevertheless, Duran argues, such awkward moves are necessary, or we risk a dangerous colonial attitude of ignoring cultures that differ significantly from our own.

So, if object-relations theory accurately characterizes Western ways of thinking, it would be a good starting place, or perhaps the only one really available. However, the problems with object-relations theory go beyond accepting the repressive uniformity in Western women’s thought, to assuming that women, even only in the West, have appropriately uniform childhood experiences, especially in regard to persistent intimacy with their mothers. This assumption does not bear out, however, which is another reason feminists largely abandoned object-relations theory.

I suggest that more promising for the project of global feminism might be contemporary materialist epistemologies because they are more closely tied to the details of women’s lived experience and practices. Although these post-Marxist accounts commingled with object-relations theory under the rubric of “feminist standpoint theory” in the 1980s, they provide a distinct set of resources for negotiating the epistemological aspects of identity politics and oppositional politics. These resources might better serve Duran’s project as they are less addled by the problematic assumption of gender uniformity in developmental psychology and resulting patterns of reason. She even seems to recognize this potential in the introduction and the conclusion of the book, where she suggests that human cultures have concepts of knowledge and knowledge acquisition in order to support the ways in which knowledge contributes to human survival. How women function in ensuring human survival may vary across cultures, but this common goal of thought demonstrates the potential for global feminist epistemology—and global epistemologies in general, we might add. However, the epistemological themes she takes up herself do not carry with them the materialist flavor of her framing observations.

Duran never explicitly introduces object-relations theory as part of the lens through which she views global feminism, but it is the central way that she interprets what counts as “gynocentric” in most of her case studies. What she considers distinctive of women’s thinking is a “relational” outlook, particularly for Bengali, Nepalese and Himalayan women, Chicanas, and African-American women. By contrast, cultures more influenced by European colonization, such as northern India, Mexico, and Chicano and African-American masculine culture, involve hierarchies and ideals of knowledge as an abstract totalizing system distinguished from embodiment and sensory understandings.

In addition to Duran’s view that gynocentric thinking is commonly “relational,” she points out that it is frequently ecologically sensitive and agrarian, notably in the cases of Mexican and Guatemalan women. Also, for southern Indian women the strength of *shakti*, how the purification of ritual manifests the Hindu (overarching) goddess in every woman, is considered a strong presence and influence on abilities that include thinking. These possible rallying points for developing feminist epistemology avoid most of the danger of object-relations accounts that clearly impose Western hegemonic categories, yet they ought likewise to be subject to critical scrutiny.

In particular, I suggest we beware of romanticizing the indigenous, in the way that Duran contrasts these indigenous views of the world with Western masculine, hierarchical, totalizing—and hence colonial—approaches to the world. That view of androcentrism is based on its manifestation in cultures with written language, and will keep feminists from recognizing how gender may be oppressive in other cultures. Indeed when Duran examines indigenous cultures, she finds little of the “static fixedness” of Western masculinity, and the sexist oppression she identifies is mostly a matter of colonization or domination by the written culture. Although it may be the case that cultures without written traditions resemble earlier cultures, and there may have been gynocentric earlier cultures, Duran seems hasty in eliding contemporary indigenous traditions with ancient matrifocal traditions.

Although I suggest some ways in which Duran’s answers seem too easy, it remains for others to account for the extent to which she is correct. Broad strokes are the best Duran hopes for, and indeed the best we can expect in initial forays into global feminist epistemology. The rest of us must proceed beyond, refine, update, and even refute her characterizations.

In a constructive spirit, I suggest that Duran’s characterization of African-American and Chicana thought offers clearly constructive potentials, bridges that can be built to the sounder portions of Western thought. Admittedly, identifying as gynocentric the equalitarianism of the Western African thought that was the background of most American slaves, as Duran suggests, seems peculiar on the surface because the African equalitarianism takes the form of androgyny. Yet, although not literally or exclusively gynocentric, androgynous equalitarianism is compatible with Western ideals, and with Western feminism especially as developed through some forms of lesbian-feminism.

Yet Duran does not take up these issues, keeping instead to the view that gynocentric thought must primarily be distinguished from androcentric thought as it has been constructed in the West. Following her too closely, we might miss what can still be reclaimed from the androcentric traditions of our own cultures and turned to feminist purposes, local and global. Reclamation is rarely straightforward, but, as Duran’s surveys demonstrate well, feminist reclamation of patriarchal terms and strategies is ubiquitous and frequently enough successful. It is also occasionally necessary, I suggest, if progress is to be more than isolated, and if feminism is to become truly global. As Duran herself argues, defensive maneuvers depend on concepts of positive similarity as well as positive difference because defining the colonized as negatively different is a tool of colonization.

The Subject of Care: Feminist Perspectives on Dependency

Eva Feder Kittay and Ellen Feder, eds. (Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield, 2002).

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Eva Kittay and Ellen Feder have brought together (and both contributed to) an excellent collection of essays on various aspects of relations of care, focused in particular on relations of dependency. The volume as a whole provides a rich resource for thinking about a number of dimensions of dependency, and relations of care for dependents. Eva Kittay aptly describes the multifaceted character of the term care as encompassing “a labor, an attitude, and a virtue” (259). All three of these features of care are central to the essays that comprise this volume, with most emphasis on the labor aspect, and the injustices of the caregiver’s (especially the woman’s) largely uncompensated care work in a number of different domains, including childcare, elder-care, and care for the mentally disabled.

Certain common threads or themes run throughout a number of the essays, which reflect, in part, the enormous influence that Eva Kittay and Martha Fineman’s work has had on other scholars of care and dependency theories. One of the most important of these common themes is the inevitability of human dependency, at least at some points in our lives, and the importance of not excluding such dependent persons from citizenship and the moral community. Another recurrent theme running through several of the essays is a critique of the liberal conception of the independent, autonomous self which denies or ignores the “brute fact” of human dependency and the interdependence of all of us on others and on the earth. A number of essays address the mobility or fluidity of the meaning of “dependency,” which has shifted significantly over time. Several selections explore how normative understandings of dependency (at least of adults) as the consequence of lack of paid employment further devalues the unwaged caring and other labor that is performed mostly by women in the domestic context, and how the price of such devaluation is the state intervention and surveillance that poor dependency workers must pay, especially in the context of non-traditional, non-normative family arrangements. A number of the authors address the need for the state (and, in some cases, like Fineman’s essay, also the market) to better support those who provide care to dependents, as well as the desirability of bringing justice into caregiving and care into the administration of justice.

There are also tensions, even inconsistencies, in the analyses in the volume, including, for example, that between whether caring has an emotional, affective dimension (Goodin and Gibson) or not (Bubeck); whether care is compatible with liberal understandings of justice (Kittay, Nussbaum) or not (Schutte, Fineman); and whether the conception of being “some mother’s child” (Kittay) is a sufficient image in a just society or not (Nussbaum).

The collection is divided into five parts. Part I comprises three essays under the heading “Contesting the ‘Independent Man.’” The essay by Nancy Fraser and Linda Gordon, entitled “A Genealogy of Dependency,” provides a well-researched and informative history of “dependency,” tracing how the term has shifted meanings from the feudal period, through the industrial revolution, the New Deal, and the contemporary welfare state. Their outline of a typology of four “registers” of

dependency: the economic, socio-legal, sociological, and psychological/subjective, is a useful conceptual framework, which they then fill out by describing how each of these registers has shifted its meaning over time. In general, their genealogy details how the term “dependency” has undergone a transformation from an unstigmatized state of economic dependence on others that was shared by wage laborers, paupers, women, and children, to a psychological or subjective state which understands dependency as an individual problem rather than one of social relations, and makes dependency a sexualized and racialized category of deviance or disease used to stigmatize and label dependency as unfit, the welfare mother being paradigmatic. Fraser and Gordon fittingly conclude that although “a genealogy cannot tell us how to respond politically to today’s discourse about welfare dependency,...a fitting response would need to question our received valuations and definitions of dependence and independence to allow new, emancipatory social visions to emerge” (33-34).

The second essay by Iris Marion Young, entitled “Autonomy, Welfare Reform, and Meaningful Work,” calls into question the “apparent consensus that the purpose of welfare is to make people self-sufficient” (41), and argues that it “expresses a damaging ideology that operates further to close the universe of discourse about the respect people deserve, the meaning and expectations of work, and aspirations for autonomy” (42). As Fraser and Gordon found in their interrogation of the term “dependency” (43), Young clarifies our understanding of dependency by introducing a distinction between “autonomy,” which she says is a right, and “self-sufficiency,” which she believes is “a normalizing and impossible ideal.”

Ricki Solinger’s essay, “Dependency and Choice,” rounds out this first section by addressing how these two terms have been defined as antitheses to one another in normatively defining motherhood, both in the 1950s, when (white) women’s dependence was promoted and their exercising choice was discouraged, and in the 1980s, when the dependency of poor women (especially those of color) on welfare came to be disparaged, and their choice—of whether to become mothers—was viewed negatively. She deftly uses historical sources to show how these two terms have been manipulated to justify restricting welfare-dependent women’s choices in relation to motherhood. Solinger persuasively concludes that “far from simply referring to the separate arenas of welfare and abortion, dependency and choice vibrantly interact with one another, depend on each other for meaning, and together shape and justify punitive and constraining public policies” (80).

Part II deals with “Legal and Economic Relations in the Face of Dependency.” Robin West’s “The Right to Care,” makes the simple, but ultimately unpersuasive, argument that individuals “have a fundamental *right*, in liberal societies that protect individual rights, to care for their dependents” (88). West admits that none of the rights that are in any way connected with women as caregivers “have ever been extended to include, or interpreted so as to imply, a right to material support from the state for the caregiving labor itself” (91), but argues that “liberalism ought to be expanded so as to embrace a right to care” (95).

“Subsidized Lives and the Ideology of Efficiency” by Martha McCluskey draws heavily on Martha Fineman’s work (a summary of her essay in the volume is included below) in a sophisticated analysis of the influence of neoliberal ideology—which promotes economic efficiency and individual responsibility—in constructing public subsidies for corporate and capital interests, as publicly beneficial while welfare and other caretaking subsidies as publicly burdensome. McCluskey shows how government employs a double standard in applying

the term “moral hazards” (government protections which encourage people to take less care to avoid the costs involved in certain risky activities than they would without those protections) to caretaking subsidies but not to corporate and capital ones, which itself rests on several problematic normative assumptions (126). She concludes that the critique of neoliberal ideology is a necessary step in the process of “challenging the supposed economic barriers to caretaking subsidies imposed by the dominant free-market ideology” (132).

In “Dependence Work, Women, and the Global Economy,” Ofelia Schutte also looks at neoliberalism, but applies what she terms an “ethical and existential” critique of social policy in relation to women’s unpaid dependency work in the global context, concluding that canceling programs that assist women caregivers (such as those that have been imposed pursuant to IMF and World Bank structural adjustment and debt repayment programs imposed on third world countries) contradicts the classical liberal goal of liberty for all citizens. Liberty, for Schutte, entails the goal of female independence from patriarchal constraints.

In addition to her fine analysis of the harms that neoliberal policies cause to caregivers in developing countries (who are mostly women), Schutte focuses more than many of the essays in the volume on the costs of caregiving for the caregiver, who may have to sacrifice even her own life’s goals because of the time demands of providing care (what she calls “time scarcity”) (141, 144, 152). Although “neoliberalism offers a temporary package of short-term benefits for women who abandon unpaid care work,” Schutte finds that efforts to improve the status of women in their respective countries are correlated with improved conditions for care work (154).

Part III contains three essays on “Just Social Arrangements and Familial Responsibility for Dependency.” In “Justice and the Labor of Care,” Diemut Grace Bubeck argues that the attentiveness and responsiveness to others that are necessarily entailed in good care work makes those who provide care “vulnerable to exploitation in a very specific way” (160). Understanding women’s work as care in this way, she argues, enables us to understand women’s exploitation and unjust treatment. Bubeck demonstrates, contra Marx, that care work is work which cannot be replaced by industrialized or technological advances, but needs to be done by people; further, that it “requires the exercise of our most distinctive capacities: language and thought and a complex emotional life that allows us to empathize with and understand others and meet their very individual needs” (162). Although I question her distinction between care work and providing a service, and even more so her view that care does not require an emotional bond between the carer and cared for (165), her arguments overall, and especially regarding the necessity of remunerating the caregiver in order to avoid burdening her (167) and the vicious “circle of care” that constructs women as caregivers and thereby maintains them in this social role, are persuasive.

Although a committed liberal herself, in “The Future of Feminist Liberalism,” Martha Nussbaum admits the failures of liberalism in two key areas of social life: “the need for care in times of extreme dependency, and the political role of the family.” She admits that in the area of thinking about the social provision of caregiving and care-receiving, tasks which have been largely relegated as “women’s work” everywhere in the world, that “a Kantian starting point (what she refers to as “the fiction of competent adulthood” (188) is likely to give bad guidance” because of its conception that human dignity and moral capacity are radically separate from the natural world of

physical and material needs (188). John Rawls’ theory of justice, which has been of seminal importance in liberal theory, is built on a principle of social cooperation which assumes a conception of persons as roughly equals “and has no explicit place for relations of extreme dependency” (189).

Despite these limitations with liberalism, Nussbaum does not thereby reject it. Instead, like West, Nussbaum offers proposed modifications to liberalism, in this case to substitute an Aristotelian conception of the person for a Kantian one, based on the rationale that the former “sees the person from the start as both capable and needy,” contrary to the latter, which sees only the capabilities (194), and thus reflects greater attention to the inevitabilities of human need and dependency (196). Despite the creative approach to amending liberal theory rather than jettisoning it, I question whether an Aristotelian view of the person is adequate to “fix liberalism,” particularly since Aristotle himself held deeply patriarchal and sexist views of women and saw no problem relegating them to roles as caregivers in the private, domestic sphere.

In the final essay in this section, “Masking Dependency,” Martha Fineman powerfully argues that if dependency is understood, as it should be, as “both inevitable and universal,” that there is a collective obligation in a society to provide for its weaker members, and this includes redistribution (what Fineman calls “market correcting”) for the consequences of previously uncompensated caretaking labor (215). Fineman critiques the normative concept of the family as deeply gendered and oppressive to women, and, as empirical studies show, as breaking down in the face of many social changes, including rising divorce rates, single-parent and non-traditional family units, women having babies outside of marriage, etc. Despite the reality that alternative types of living and parenting arrangements are more and more the “norm” in America, Fineman finds that the traditional archetype of an ideal “family” (defined as both “natural” and private) continues to operate undeterred, and in such a way as to prevent recognition of changes in the form and function of families, the need for the state and market to take a greater role in providing support for dependents and those who care for them outside of the rubric of the archetypal pattern of the “official family” (217) and the way that women “continue to bear the ‘burdens of intimacy’—the ‘costs’ of ‘inevitable dependency’—in our society” (221). One might agree in the abstract with Fineman’s conclusion that these considerations “form the basis for an entitlement to justice by mothers” (227), and yet be critical of the actual possibilities of realizing this ideal from a pragmatic perspective.

Part IV addresses a set of interesting cases under the rubric: “Dependency Care in Cases of Specific Vulnerability.” “The Decasualization of Eldercare” by Robert Goodin and Diane Gibson discusses the twin pressures on community or “casual” care (as opposed to commercially provided care). One of these pressures is the growing lack of people in the community to provide care in view of increasing pressures for labor force participation, especially of women, who have traditionally provided such care. The other is the increasing burden of providing the *kind* of care needed to be rendered, e.g., to the frail elderly, which is not susceptible to “casual” care but requires more full-time, intensive caring. They focus on the frail elderly by way of example, but presume that their conclusion that state support and subsidies would go a long way to relieving these pressures on private caregivers of other dependent groups and community care for dependents more generally.

Eva Feder Kittay’s essay, “When Caring is Just and Justice is Caring,” reiterates some of the themes articulated in other essays earlier in the volume, e.g., care as labor; the gendered

realities of caregiving; the vulnerability of caregivers to exploitation; and the inadequacies of the liberal conception of persons to account for dependents, caregivers, or the relations between them. One distinctive contribution of this essay (which is not to discount Kittay's vast contribution to thinking about dependency and care altogether) is to point out the bias of our political philosophy since Plato towards the intellect and the exercise of rationality as being the reason for giving human beings moral value (262). Another contribution is to propose an alternative conception of personhood, that is, "having the capacity to be in certain relationships with other persons, to sustain contact with other persons, to shape one's own world and the world of others, and to have a life that another person can conceive of as an imaginative possibility for him- or herself" (266). This understanding of personhood goes a long way toward eliminating the requirements of "rationality," intellect, education, etc., that are demanded by liberal theories.

In "Poverty, Race, and the Distortion of Dependency," Dorothy Roberts analyzes the racism and misguided policy rationales that subsidize foster care for dependent children at higher rates than financial support for poor black families. In effect such policies provide the very services to foster families that are denied to parents and thus work *against* the supposed mandate of the state to support the maintenance of intact families. The result of this skewed funding priority results in poor black mothers frequently having to transfer their parental authority over to the state as the price for state recognition of their children's dependency. Roberts focuses on kinship care, an arrangement similar to traditional, private African American extended family care arrangement, but regulated by state child welfare agencies, finding that in this form of foster care, "instead of respecting the dependency relations between children and their mothers or kin caregivers, the state appropriates that relationship" (282). In doing so, "the child welfare system reinforces the racist view of African Americans as dependent and in need of white supervision" (289). Roberts persuasively argues that the "assumption that parents are solely responsible for the care of children and that their inability to provide for them warrants coercive state intervention" is a "deep flaw in the philosophy underlying the child welfare system," one which "demonstrates the need for more generous state support of caregiving" (289).

In the final essay in this section, "Doctor's Orders: Parents and Intersexed Children," Ellen Feder explores the treatment of "intersexed" infants—children born with ambiguous genitalia—and their parents by the medical establishment. She uses Kittay's analysis of dependency and dependency work as well as Pierre Bourdieu's conception of *habitus* to better understand the treatment received from doctors by parents of intersexed children. Feder's use of narratives based on interviews with parents of intersexed children provides a fascinating view into the lives of these "dependency workers" and the way that their "transparent selves" have been compromised by the pressure that doctors impose to give their children a normal appearance (rather than identifying with their children's likely wish to retain physical sensation in their genitals if it would be sacrificed by cosmetic surgery to give them a "normal" appearance). Feder suggests that the clouding of parents' transparent self is a function of *habitus*—the tendency of culture to reproduce itself rather than adapt—rather than the insidious motives of either the parents or the physicians involved in recommending corrective genital surgery. She concludes that if parents of intersexed children worked to identify with their children as intersexed individuals, and to promote acceptance of genital variation, "the prevailing *habitus* would undergo genuine transformation" (315). Yet the

studies Feder cites as well as her own research suggest that the possibilities for this transformation are very remote indeed.

Finally, Part V deals with "Dependency, Subjectivity, and Identity." Kelly Oliver's article on "Subjectivity as Responsibility" draws on Hegel's account of subjectivity to examine and reconceive the relationship between dependence and independence, and subjectivity, using the concepts of responsibility and connection (324). She argues in favor of an ethical obligation as lying "at the heart of subjectivity itself" (325). Oliver's account of subjectivity is compelling, but she doesn't trace out the implications of her account of dependency for the kinds of issues of dependent care work, the gendered nature of care work, etc., that are the themes of the essays in the rest of the volume.

Elizabeth Spelman's "'Race' and the Labor of Love" is a fascinating analysis of the social construction of race and the formation of the racial identity of Black people within a racist society from the perspective of Black scholars and other authors. Its connection to the volume comes from her understanding that "a pernicious form of labor is exacted from blacks" in order to keep the social fabric of life in the United States from being rent" (335). Spelman's essay is reminiscent of Oliver's in its description of James Baldwin's conceptualization of the interdependence of blacks and whites for their identities. Spelman also draws on Judith Rollins' account of how white employers of black domestics demand that their employees confirm their superiority in subtle ways, from mode of address to mode of dress. She uses the concept of *social reproductive shadow work* (*shadow work* being a term used generally to designate work that is unpaid and invisible in part because it is not recognized as "productive" labor in the terminology of the labor market) to describe "the labor it takes to construct, reproduce, and maintain the idea of distinct white and black racial identities and the natural superiority of one to the other" (340). Spelman ends her eye-opening and provocative essay with a critique of how the privileges of being white "are the product of a highly exploitative form of social reproductive work exacted of blacks" (345).

In the final essay in the volume, "Dependence on Place, Dependence in Place," Bonnie Mann provides a global perspective on dependency relations by pointing to the inevitable human dependence on earth, and how this has been ignored and even opposed by humans intent upon building "a world." Mann describes her project as an effort "to articulate another understanding of the relation between Earth and world, not as a battle, though it easily becomes that, but as a morally charged relation of dependence" (349). The connection to dependence is, as Mann states, in the hope that this notion can "provide 'a knife sharp enough' to cut through the self-involved subjectivism that plagues us" (349). She draws on Kittay's work on dependency to argue that our failure to treat the Earth with respect and integrity, despite our inextricable relationship of dependency on the Earth, "bespeaks an unfathomable *moral and epistemological failure*" (358), and that our failure to care for one another, "as all equally dependent on the Earth," is a second moral failure (358).

One problem I find with Mann's argument is that her assumption that the "social, political, ethical, and spiritual direction" (363) to be ascertained from our relationship to and dependence upon *place*, discounts that humans are itinerant and migratory beings, more frequently, and in greater numbers in this age of increasing globalization and modernization. We are not "stuck" in a particular social and geographical "place" as we were in prior generations, although it is certainly the case that we are "stuck," at least for the foreseeable future, on being planetary beings.

In sum, this volume is rich with new terminology, fresh concepts and ideas, creative analyses and suggested novel approaches to intractable social problems, not only regarding relations of dependency, but also a number of other issues, including racism, sexism, classism, globalization, and environmental degradation. Although the essays mainly deal only with the United States, the text is nonetheless a valuable resource for feminists, both activists and scholars, both in the United States and elsewhere, as well as a useful text to use all or parts of in graduate seminars relating to feminist theory, sociology, economics, social ethics and political philosophy.

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

A memorial fund has been established in Gloria E. Anzaldúa's name to sustain the legacy of this internationally acclaimed cultural theorist, creative writer, and scholar. If you would like to contribute to the Gloria Anzaldúa Memorial Fund, please send checks to:

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