

to be necessary to create the harmony and balance that Gustafson's later poems desire. "The Disquisition" is not his last word. Love is.

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Sandra Lee Bartky. *Femininity and Domination: Studies in the Phenomenology of Oppression*. New York and London: Routledge, 1990. pp. 141. \$37.50; \$12.95 pb.

*Femininity and Domination* is an instance of philosophy at its best: a collection of essays filled with cogent arguments in support of critical insights, which clarify and enrich our understanding (in this case, of the nature of women's oppression), and which point to related avenues of critical exploration that the reader is sparked to pursue. The seven essays in this collection were written over a period of fifteen years. As such, they reflect, not only the author's progression of thought concerning the nature of women's oppression, but also the more general transformations within feminist theory.

The primary focus of Bartky's collection is upon the dynamic relations which hold between social structures oppressive to women and female subjectivity. In particular, Bartky's hybrid Marxist-Socialist-Radical-Foucauldian feminist analysis of the ways in which the values and norms of an oppressive society become internalized by oppressed subjects—written/inscribed upon our bodies/minds—reveals how the locus of power is displaced from the state to the subject (both as a class of subjects and as individual subjects), rendering it difficult to discern who has power over whom. Bartky reveals how oppressed subjects become complicit in our own oppression, how we as "individuals" (seemingly) "choose" to keep ourselves "in line" by abiding and striving to attain/live by the very conception of our "Selves" as inferior. Traditional liberal accounts (as well as feminist appropriations of such accounts) of the nature of "The Individual" and "his" relation to (that is, independence from) "The State" are called into question at a fundamental level.

Nowhere is this calling into question more apparent than in the three articles which constitute the "core" of Bartky's book: "On Psychological Oppression"; "Narcissism, Femininity, and Alienation"; and "Foucault, Femininity, and the Modernization of Power." Taken together, these three articles reveal what Bartky takes to be the *systemic* political nature, source, process, and effect of "psychic alienation" (30). Bartky describes alienation as involving a fragmentation as well as a "prohibition." Within North American liberal individualism, the ideal of a whole, integrated, rational, autonomous, free chooser is held out for all individuals to aspire to and to be measured against. At the same time, North American society systematically creates within oppressed individuals a fragmentation of consciousness which (together with more formal social barriers) prohibits the oppressed from attaining such an ideal. Fragmentation of consciousness involves "internaliz-

ing intimations of one's own inferiority" (22). The liberal emphasis on "individualism" frequently leads people with fragmented consciousness to assume that if they are not rational, in control, successful, and so on, then it is their own fault. That is, their lot in life is assumed to result solely from their individual shortcomings or their own inadequate life choices. In blaming only themselves for their "misfortunes" rather than looking outward to political systems as the source of such ills, oppressed persons—women among them—are less likely to develop the class consciousness necessary to challenge oppressive political systems.

Bartky draws heavily from Marxist theory in her analysis of alienation. She builds upon the Marxist notion of alienation, however, insofar as she clarifies a form of alienation that is unique to women: that of "feminine narcissism" (40). This form of extreme alienation is rooted in "sexual objectification" (43). In explicating this form of narcissism, Bartky clarifies just how women come to take "pleasure" in our own dehumanization and inferiority. No other form of alienation involves this pleasure. Bartky's account of sexual objectification and feminine narcissism will be pertinent to any feminist analysis of sexuality, as it will be to an understanding of the unique ways in which women are prohibited from becoming or approaching the "Ideal Individual" of liberalism.

The remainder of the seven essays in *Femininity and Domination* touch directly upon a multitude of issues of concern to contemporary feminism. "Toward a Phenomenology of Feminist Consciousness" was a ground-breaking article exploring the "gestalt-switches" that many feminists experience in coming to see the sex-gender system for the first time. This is the only article which I believe requires extensive revision in light of contemporary discussions over whether men can be feminists, as well as in light of discussions over the different experiences among feminist women. "Feminine Masochism and the Politics of Personal Transformation" is pertinent to the pornography and sexual liberalism debate within contemporary feminism. It also delves into questions of the nature and source of female desire and the shortcomings of "sexual voluntarism" (55).

Two of the seven articles in the book are new: "Shame and Gender" and "Feeding Egos and Tending Wounds: Deference and Disaffection in Women's Emotional Labour." While less cogently presented than the ideas in her other essays, the main ideas in these final essays are nevertheless certain to be of interest to anyone engaging in feminist ethics, analysis of moral agency, or analysis of the emotions. Both essays build on Bartky's analysis of female subjectivity as propounded in her earlier essays. "Shame and Gender" details how "bodily" shame becomes for women. Bartky eloquently outlines how politically debilitating this sense of shame can be, and how it is not "consistent" with the conscious beliefs that women may have about themselves. "Feeding Egos" goes deeply into the gender dynamics of "care-giving" and reveals the disempowerment of women which results from unrecipro-

cated caring. The lack of reciprocity between women and men in this regard actually serves to create a "false need" (42) in women for the attention of men (linking up blatantly with compulsory heterosexuality). Further, the nature of female "care-giving" seems to require that women give up their own "principles" and views of the world and merge with or affirm the views of the males for whom they care. One consequence is that (heterosexual) women thereby participate in maintaining practices oppressive to women. Feminists who advocate a "feminine" approach to ethics will find Bartky's insights especially valuable.

While Bartky's essays *directly* address the issues mentioned above, they *indirectly* engage the debates between those feminist theorists who embrace essentialist theories and those who embrace social constructivist theories concerning the "nature" of women. If women are alienated from "themselves," we may ask whether there is an underlying "True Self" which awaits discovery through peeling off layers of social construction. One possible "resolution" for this debate resides between the lines of Bartky's essays (that is, the resolution is not explicitly identified or developed by Bartky). We might acknowledge the presence of *essence-like* "natures" (bodily and psychic) which have been primarily socially constructed (the products of vast and intricate systems of meaning) and which are—though neither easily nor perhaps completely—alterable. Relatedly, we might argue that "True Selves" are merely the selves of women that *might* have developed had oppressive systems not intervened.

Bartky's work will provide all students of feminist theory (novices as well as more advanced students) with material for serious reflection. *Femininity and Domination* is appropriate for a multitude of levels of courses in feminist theory. In my own teaching of introductory feminist philosophy, I have found Bartky's work to be invaluable. Young women (especially white, middle-upper class, heterosexual women) who are new to feminism and are not yet convinced that there is a sex-gender system (still) in place, or who believe that even if there is such a system they can somehow simply "will" to escape its negative effects, are reached by Bartky's analysis. Such women are able to detect parallels between their own consciousness and the alienated feminine consciousness of which Bartky writes.

Bartky provides us with a good starting point for further inquiry. Today, it is common for feminists to acknowledge that, while we may offer an analysis of being oppressed *qua* woman, different women will experience "womanhood" differently according to race, economic class, sexual orientation or choice, and so on. It is also becoming apparent that there are a multitude of ways in which any two (or more) individuals may "negotiate" any given form of oppression. Pursuant to Bartky's work, we need to *weave stories of difference into Bartky's analysis of feminine alienation*. That is, we need to explore the variety of ways in which race, economic class, sexual practice, and so forth, intersect and mutate at the level of lived experience within individual female consciousnesses. (This is a different task than the one that Bartky engages

in her early essay "On Psychological Oppression," where she draws parallels between the mechanisms used for maintaining systems of race and gender oppression.) I strongly recommend that all feminist students and scholars read *Femininity and Domination*.

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Thomas Trezise. *Into The Breach: Samuel Beckett and the Ends of Literature*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1990. pp. xi, 176. \$27.50.

The title of Trezise's study of Beckett's trilogy does not allude to the battle-cry "once more unto the breach, dear friends," from *Henry V* (in which case the title might seem to call for a renewed critical assault upon Beckett's fortified position), but refers instead to a breach within the self, the constitutive lack for which both Georges Bataille and Gilles Deleuze use the term *fêture* (fault). Trezise's topic is the conception of subjectivity implicit within the trilogy *Molloy*, *Malone Dies*, *The Unnamable*. An understanding of this issue, he argues, challenges one entire line of Beckett criticism: that which sees Beckett's work as a roundabout affirmation of the human spirit in spite of all the difficulties of knowing, representing, and communicating which loom so large in the plays and the fiction. The goal of re-establishing Beckett criticism on the basis of a non-essentialist idea of the subject forms the core of Trezise's concern with "the ends of literature" (or the ends it has been made to serve). He argues that "the various ways in which Beckett's fundamentally critical work has been recuperated all rely on an unexamined notion of the human subject," thus becoming "exercises in ideology" (ix). To offer a more thoroughly examined view of the human subject, Trezise draws upon such theorists of the self, language, and literature as Freud, Bataille, Blanchot, Deleuze, and Derrida.

This focus on subjectivity is appropriate since in his trilogy of novels Beckett explores a first-person narrator-protagonist who "writes himself" to make up the text. Trezise's study traces the resemblance between the (for Beckett's protagonist) "problematic origin" of such a first person, and the "strange structure of the supplement" within the Derridean economy of signification. Briefly, just as signification produces "consciousness or the for-itself" and yet appears to be an effect of consciousness, so intersubjectivity produces the effect of a separated subject, who then construes intersubjectivity as a space between separated subjects. The space between, in this view, is a projection of an inner incompleteness, while the other "outside" ourselves points up the other within. This non-self-identity has been given various names: it may be called a central lack, or a *fêture*. For Trezise, it is this "breach" into which Beckett's writing attempts to move, as it explores the speaking first person, who, as the "subject of discourse," has become the centre of so much critical theory.

*Into The Breach* has three main parts. The first, "Dispossession," deals with time, specifically the way that, according to the economy of signifi-