



Elisabeth de Sotelo (Ed.)

# New Women of Spain

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LIT

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To my mother Claire Chlosta

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as a starting point for the publication in our Spanish-speaking environment of reflections on this field that are completely based on the philosophical and political premises of women working in feminist and psychoanalytic research in Spain. It is impossible to do more than mention their names here, as a detailed account would exceed the scope of this essay, as well as straying from the principal themes that interest us here, but we can point out that these rereadings of psychoanalysis have the twofold aspect which, as I suggested before regarding other fields, characterizes all feminist criticism: on the one hand, they aim to establish a genealogical record, recuperating for the historical record what they call the "first debate" of the dissident voices of Freud's original psychoanalysis (rescuing the contributions of pioneering women psychoanalysts such as Melanie Klein or Karen Horney, among others)<sup>31</sup>; on the other, these researchers – being expert psychoanalysts – also wish to select the finest fruit from the crop which they are harvesting with a tool which for them has two cutting edges: that of feminist and that of psychoanalytical criticism.<sup>32</sup>

There can be no doubt that the observations in this article, and the perforce summary bibliographical references to recent Spanish feminism that accompany them, can not – and do not attempt to – cover the entire the field of the work which is currently being carried out and which, moreover, is ever more abundant and enriching.

But I have at least endeavoured to demonstrate the current existence of such studies in our country, and their increasing importance in the various philosophical, sociopolitical, and even ethical discourses of our present. If we agree (and I, for my part, agree completely) with the proposition that "studying female thinkers or concentrating on describing things done by women is not necessarily synonymous with practicing criticism from the standpoint of gender or feminist hermeneutics"<sup>33</sup>, we shall be able to identify names and references – like those reproduced here – which testify to the existence of feminist research today which still bears the unmistakable seal of feminism.

(Translated by N. Lawson)

<sup>31</sup>M<sup>a</sup> Luisa Pérez Cavana: *Feminismo y psicoanálisis*. In: Celia Amorós (Ed.), o.c., 215-230.

<sup>32</sup>These theme is examined in recent studies such as that of Dio Bleichmar, Emilce (1997): *La sexualidad femenina: de la niña a la mujer*. Paidós, Barcelona; and previous compilations such as that of Burin, Mabel; Dio Bleichmar, Emilce (Eds.) (1996) In: *Género, psicoanálisis y subjetividad*. Paidós, or to work by writers with perspectives that are more philosophical and closer to Lacanian psicoanálisis, such as: Corral, Natividad (1996): *El cortejo del mal. Ética feminista y psicoanálisis*. Madrid: Talasa.

<sup>33</sup>Alicia H. Puleo, o. c., 19.

## Feminist Philosophy in Spain

María Xosé Agra Romero

In the "Libro Blanco" which discusses Women's Studies in Spanish universities from 1975 to 1991, the following observation appears in the section that covers philosophy: "Certainly the number of women teachers and researchers in the field of philosophy is very low, but their interest in the issues that concern us reflect a spectacular increase (...). In other words, a very small percentage of female professors demonstrate a primary interest in the themes related to women and, very likely, in what we would think of as feminist thought" (Ballarín; Gallego; Martínez 1995, 129).

In the book's update, which discusses the period of 1992-1996, "the great increase in the contributions of women philosophers in the last five years" is highlighted (Ortiz 1998, 12). In effect, we can say that the contribution of women philosophers has been significant, taking into account the philosophical and feminist contexts of Spain, and that the theoretical production and the polemics they generate are comparable to those that shape this area of research in other countries.

In general terms, when we approach the issue, we come across two fundamental texts: the Apéndice to the Spanish edition of *Las Filósofas*, by Giulio de Martino and Marina Bruzzese, entitled "Pensadoras Españolas" (Female Spanish Thinkers) and written by Alicia H. Puleo (1996); and one by Celia Amorós (1997): "Feminismo Filosófico Español: Modulaciones Hispánicas de la Polémica Feminista Igualdad-Diferencia" (Spanish Feminist Philosophy: Hispanic Modifications of the Equality-Difference Polemic) from "Tiempo de Feminismo" (Time of Feminism).

In "Pensadoras Españolas" Puleo covers the history of women's thought from the Renaissance to "second wave feminism". This selection of authors and texts addresses "thinkers" in broad terms and not only philosophers. It concludes with an epigraph entitled "Feminismo y Ética" (Feminism and Ethics) which deals with feminist philosophy itself. Here she indicates that it was Celia Amorós (professor of philosophy at the Universidad Complutense de Madrid and the first director of the university's Institute for Feminist Studies) who first brought feminist theory to Spanish philosophy. According to Puleo her book "Hacia una Crítica de la Razón Patriarcal" (Toward a Critique of Patriarchal Reason) (1985) constitutes a new focus for philosophy: From the perspective of gender, she makes clear that this supposedly objective and universal knowledge has a deep androcentric bias.

The historical construction of reason and philosophy in the framework of sexual inequality; the exclusion of women – which as an oppressed group are identified with Nature, with the irrational and inferior – in short, the gender based domination typical of the patriarchy demand a critical revision carried

out by the very women who have attained self-consciousness as an oppressed group. For Celia Amorós this does not entail a wholesale rejection of traditional philosophy, rather an analysis and selection of the elements that are compatible with the feminist ethical project" (1996, 572). Amorós takes feminism to be a project related to ethics and equality. Amelia Valcárcel has been characterized similarly. In her book "Sexo y Filosofía" (1991) she highlights

"the need to transform feminism into a political theory, a theory of power. Feminism as political philosophy in the Enlightenment tradition must reclaim the individuality that has always been denied to women" (199, 576).

Reference is made to Victoria Camps who "although she hasn't devoted her philosophical production to feminism" argues for the need to achieve sexual equality but along different lines from C. Amorós and A. Valcárcel. Camps emphasizes feminine values and is confident in their potential. Although these philosophers are the book's focal point, this text provides a good account of the state of Spanish feminist philosophy more generally, addressing those thinkers who have a developed body of work as well as those who are only beginning to do research in this area. Amorós' text tackles one of the main polemics of feminism, that of equality versus difference. This first developed as an issue for the Spanish feminist movement during the Jornadas de Granada (Conference in Granada) in 1979 when el feminismo de la diferencia (difference-based feminism) made its appearance. Its most developed theoretical expression was Victoria Sendón's "Sobre Diosas, Amazonas y Vestales: Utopías para un Feminismo Radical" (Of Goddesses, Amazons and Virgins: Utopias for a Radical Feminism) (1981) or "Quizás Hay que Ser Mujer" (Maybe We should be Women) (1980) by Carme Elejabeitia.

The first confrontation arose in the pages of "El Viejo Topo" (The Old Mole) (1980) with Valcárcel's provocative "El Derecho al Mal" (The Right to Evil), from the perspective of el feminismo de la igualdad (equality-based feminism), From here on out, el feminismo de igualdad would be at the heart of the philosophical project known as "Feminismo e Ilustración" (Feminism and the Enlightenment) that, under the direction of Amorós, became a permanent seminar at the Universidad Complutense in the academic year 1987-88 and is still fully active.

El feminismo de la diferencia, which shares some of the premises of the Italian version of difference-based feminism, converges around the work of historian Milagros Rivera. Nevertheless, as Amorós herself suggests, there has barely been any dialogue between the two feminisms and, as such, one must trace the polemic to the texts of the individual authors.

Taking these two texts as a reference point, I would like to present the positions of Spanish feminist philosophers in light of their most important works. I will basically focus on the various perspectives and controversies, specifically with respect to two of the most important; that of equality versus difference, and that of modernity versus post modernity.

There can be no doubt that "Hacia una Crítica de la Razón Patriarcal" served as the catalyst for feminist philosophy in Spain. In the introduction, Amorós notes what is going to be, along general lines, the constants of her theoretical position. The critique of patriarchal reason begins with a defense of rationality, one that, in agreement with Wollstonecraft, holds that "feminism is an appeal to the good sense of humanity", and takes its task to be a rereading of the history of philosophy from a critical perspective. It is a critique of patriarchal reason that is as much theoretical as practical, epistemological as well as ethical.

As such, it warns women researchers and professors of philosophy not to acritically accept the "discourse of the other". They should reread the history of philosophy, defend rationality and a qualified nominalism, and be concerned with ethical issues.

Amorós is critical of the basic tenet of el feminismo de la diferencia and of particular aspects of radical feminism. She includes herself in the ranks of el feminismo de la igualdad, as an emancipatory project, but nonetheless suggests the need to examine the projects of Enlightenment, of Marxism and related social movements, in order to reflect upon the crisis of the foundations of socialist feminism. Amorós' critique makes the sexist characteristics of philosophical discourse manifestly clear and underscores the problems of patriarchal legitimation. It also leads to a defense of feminism as "a radical ethical project", one that is transformative and critical rather than an abstract aestheticism and praxis which is blind to subjective and objective conditions. This is a position that assumes a "healthy nominalism", a qualified nominalism, and the ideal of a society of individuals in which sexual difference is no longer relevant.

In her later writings, the critique of patriarchal reason continues to be elaborated as a dense, taut exercise in historical reconstruction developed around the theoretical and practical link between feminism and the Enlightenment. Amorós demonstrates all of the critique's reconstructive and conceptual potential in "Tiempo de feminismo". Here, she situates herself in the debate over the constitution of the modern subject, that is, the notion of the subject, of rationality and universality, assuming the feminist hermeneutic of suspicion and distancing herself from postmodern positions. In a sense, according to Amorós, feminism can't help but raise the issue of the subject. The postmodern critic is missing the point, given that the subject's deconstruction would result in an "inverosímil" (implausible) version of the modern subject, one that precisely corresponds to the biased masculine version.

Using Amorós' own characterization, this is a subject "iniciático"; "un sujeto desmadrado" ( an "unmothered" subject) in the dual sense of being a subject that comes from a mother and a subject without a mother, absolute generator and engenderer of meaning. As such, she urges the historical reconstruction of a subject "verosímil", one with explicit Satrean connotations, rooted in

the "capacity for transcendence" with respect to assigned characteristics or given situations. This is a subject that allows for the possibility of distance from identity such that one can reinterpret and redefine oneself, a capacity considered to be of vital importance to the feminist emancipatory project. According to Amorós, gender identity is "the most fundamental and constrictive of our identities" which leads her to present "the strong and problematic thesis" that "there is a need to postulate a definitive constitutive hermeneutic" that corresponds to the idea that the mechanism of identification is an existential process (1997, 362). This model of the constitution of subjectivity doesn't fit within the context of identity politics and entails a commitment to ongoing development.

Another important issue is that the Enlightenment versus Post modernity. The difficulties related to Enlightenment abstractions, resulting from the way in which they have been generated, are analyzed: "that is, with what the post-modern philosophers call their 'constitutive outsides'. Any totalizing designation that constitutes a collective, even those as maximally inclusive as the enlightenment abstractions claim to be – subjects, citizens, individuals – presupposes, as a condition for its own possibility, the group of those who remain outside as its backdrop" (1997, 275). Now then, the problem of Enlightenment abstractions isn't resolved with rapid expedience; rather, it develops from reflexivity itself. Feminism sees itself as having a privileged perspective on the Enlightenment that reinforces and radicalizes the universalizing character of Enlightenment concepts, and realizes its hemorrhaging centers, its fissures, and its incoherencies. Feminism considers itself to be critical of a project that presents incoherencies, inconsistencies, and abstractions, and demands an "enlightenment of the Enlightenment".

The revision of the modern subject leads to critique of the view that the subject, reason and history are dead. Insisting on the historical roots of feminism and on its genuine link with the Enlightenment – basically coinciding with A. Wellmer and S. Benhabib in her interpretation and diagnosis of modernity – Amorós scrutinizes the "devenir-femme" of philosophy and insists on the rhetorical character of the strategy of feminization. Using the feminist hermeneutic of suspicion she stresses that it is symptomatic of such positions that they be accompanied by a retreat from politics and that, curiously, they produce "a femininity without women".

Deleuze, Guattari, Derrida, and Levinas are on the verge of advancing such a position as are those feminists who in some fashion commit to an alliance between feminism and postmodernism. The conclusion she establishes is that postmodernism isn't a good match for feminism, and we shouldn't let ourselves be seduced by it. Feminism must know who its allies are, clearly defining its theoretical and practical needs, determining which conception of rationality is the most appropriate for its critical tasks and its transformative project. As such feminism must tackle the question of which conception of the subject is the most appropriate, becoming fully immersed in the issue of the nature of

the constitution of subjectivity. The critical loyalty to the enlightenment that characterizes Amorós' thought drives her to a polemical confrontation with el feminismo de la diferencia and with postmodern feminism. She adds her voice to the current debate by providing arguments and substantive reasoning about the constitution of subjectivity.

#### The equality of power: Ethics and feminist politics

Beginning with the premise that philosophy is one of the normative vehicles of sexual dimorphism, in *Sexo y Filosofía: Sobre Mujer y Poder* (Sex and Philosophy: On Women and Power) (1991) Valcárcel insists on the need to unveil the more or less subtle relation between thought and power, between sex and philosophy. Without renouncing reason, she nevertheless asserts that reason "has given way and continues to give way to prejudices and special interests" (15). Yet she still believes that Enlightenment philosophy has emancipatory potential. She sees the reclamation of Simone de Beauvoir's philosophy as imperative and, in fact, Beauvoir's thought can be linked to fundamental aspects developed throughout this text and through Valcárcel's entire body of work: individuality, equipotencia, liberty and universality. According to Valcárcel, Beauvoir's struggle to be an individual, exempt neither from feminist criticism nor that of philosophy, her struggle to exercise equipotencia, that is, to achieve a relationship between equals, assumes an inheritance that neither feminism nor philosophy can ignore or reject.

Stressing the importance of equality, highlighting the historical moments most relevant to the question of sexual equality – the Sophist Enlightenment and the European enlightenment of the 18<sup>th</sup> century – Valcárcel defines feminism as "a certain type of thought about the theme of equality that is produced polemically and is framed during the Enlightenments, without implying any link to large scale social practices" (40). After reviewing the polemics and positions, she argues that feminism is a political philosophy that has not stopped producing in the last twenty years, that it must confront the preceding political traditions, and because of that, can't help but address the debate over "power". It must, then, oppose the comparison between power and corruption or evil.

To dare to tackle the theory of power and to invoke a fear of equality are two fundamental objectives that presuppose a displacement toward ethics and political philosophy. Valcárcel proceeds to examine the thesis of power as evil, as well as its various analogues, its different names, to demonstrate that the sort of power that really counts is that written with a lower case "p", one which is individualistic, Spinozan.

The reclamation of individuality presupposes a defense of equipotencia, of the ethics of power. This is an ethic of the present moment and something beyond mere desire without means. This cannot be taken as a fixed ethical

norm, given that there are neither recipes nor essences: "there are, simply put, more individuals involved and it is necessary to know how to argue what is best for all" (70). She insists on the need to procure alternatives for the present by modifying utopianism and distancing herself from ultimate solutions. Feminist politics and ethics cannot abstain from power; power which is not univocal and can be expressed in many ways. The central elements of feminist philosophy defended by this author - anti-essentialism, nominalism, equality as equitencia, and a critique of the patriarchy - serve as a response to the question of the legitimacy of "woman" as a gender and constitute a clear defense of greater universality. From an Enlightenment feminism perspective, that of the feminism of equality, as such, Valcárcel is critical of el feminismo de la diferencia and so radicalizes her position to defend "the right to evil" (1980).

In 1997 "La Política de las Mujeres" (The Politics of Women) is published, a work which continues along the same lines, combining a critique of essentialism and romantic misogyny with a defense of individuality and equality from the perspective that feminism is "the direct heir of enlightenment concepts and is itself an enlightenment movement". Here, equality is understood to be a "negotiated affair" according to certain parameters, not to be confused with the principle of sameness; equality is not the same thing as a principle of indiscernability. The task of feminism is set forth as the necessity to recast the basic order of things. This is of clear concern to feminist philosophy for which all ontologies are oppositional schemes. Because feminism is not committed to an oppositional framework it must take on such a task; a move towards deconstruction is unnecessary. This is Valcárcel's response to the philosophical question: "Is the thinking machine capable of doing anything if it isn't working with oppositional pairs?" (18). The normative construction of sex must be examined in each moment and each culture to see how it operates in the world, because the point is to "rigorously analyze how sex is one of the important keys and perhaps the most important in the vision of the world" (74).

A fundamental part of her analysis is focused on the problems of attaining equality. In addition to advocating for the need to offer concrete political proposals, she insists on recognizing that there is an absence of models and continuity in the philosophical tradition. This leads her to affirm that "we must be mothers to our female ancestors. This is what always happens to the founders of a lineage. We have been left with no other option, given how things have turned out, than to systematically reconstruct our own validation" (86). Similarly, she focuses on the question of the exercise of political power and examines the conditions in which women have to exercise it in an attempt to diagnose the current limitations in Northern societies.

Because feminism is an international movement, she presents solidarity among women as unavoidable. As such, we must construct a pragmatically adequate "we". Valcárcel is optimistic to a certain extent and considers the idea of equality to be one the most powerful concepts of traditional political

thought. Feminism's greatest strength continues to be its ethical credibility. The teleology of feminism is individualism and nominalism, which is why it questions communitarian thought as well as postmodernism.

#### The ethics of justice and the ethics of care

In the field of ethics, the work of Victoria Camps marks an important reference point. However, as I have indicated, feminism is not at the center of her concerns and so, before the publication of "El Siglo de las Mujeres" (The Century of Women) (1998), her contributions emerge as a counterpoint and she questions the positions held by Valcárcel y Amorós on el feminismo de la igualdad. Although Camps recognizes her debt to feminist philosophers, she does not see herself as a pioneer and explains that her path to feminism was "hesitant and somewhat indirect".

Although there is a tension between her ideas and those el feminismo de la igualdad, she does not abandon the idea that feminism is the social movement of the 20<sup>th</sup> century nor does she renounce the idea of equality. Rather, she sees feminism as having finished a cycle and needing to start a new one that recognizes the injustice and inequality that continues to be perpetuated despite the existence of formal equality. What is needed is a confrontation with the two basic obstacles that impede the realization of genuine equality: the discrimination against women in the private sphere which maintains the traditional division of labor, and women's slow access to positions of responsibility.

Camps' approach to women's issues and her theoretical positions develop in tandem with her ethical thinking and, specifically, in connection with her views on the controversy of the "ethics of justice" and "ethics of care". She emphasizes the value of the contributions of the ethics of care along the lines of C. Gilligan and the idea that feminine values should be universalized and passed on to males.

This leads her to distance herself from the cold, excessively rationalist, universalist values of the enlightenment and of human rights and to propose that they be supplemented with warmer, feminine values. She sees feeling and sensitivity as an undeniable part of human beings and, as such, insists that they must shape moral discourse.

The issue is not one of radicalizing individualism, rather one of realizing that "thinking ethically entails thinking of others". In agreement with the feminist ethicists who critique universalist liberalism, she argues for an approach which combines justice and care, on the view that women are better equipped for care. This doesn't mean that she sees herself as subscribing to el feminismo de la diferencia. She shares the belief that the feminine difference, which highlights the "feminine disposition", the "special view point" expressed by women and feminine culture as a whole, is something valuable and worthwhile.

Nonetheless, she affirms that “to speak of masculine and feminine values need not imply the consecration of the generic dichotomy advanced by the so called ‘feminismo de la diferencia’. The point is not to maintain, as that version of feminism usually does, essentialist postures. On the contrary, the point is to advocate for a society that accepts ‘other ways of looking at things’ and, as a result, other ways of acting” (17). Her proposal hinges on the necessity to “feminize men”, not to be anchored in the classic reindications, rather to include more diversity and more aggressiveness in the arenas of education, employment, politics and ethical values. To her way of thinking, this is the challenge facing the new feminism. They must remove the obstacles that impede the realization of equal opportunity, address the problems of discrimination in the job market and achieve democratic equality.

However, this must also be a democracy that is deliberative and communicative, one that counteracts economic and consumerist absolutism and no longer regards as contemptuous and inferior the values that women, as women, possess and can contribute to public life. Insisting on the ethics of care and responsibility, she proposes a moral discourse that is kinder. Justice is necessary and valuable but it is not sufficient. The care of others, the recognition of the value of private and “reproductive” time, the feminization of men and, by extension, of society, presupposes a transmutation of values, all of which has important public and political consequences. Her proposal implies a “new grammar of power”, the necessity to counteract masculine cultural imperialism with a “politics of presence”, one which, nonetheless, “should signify the presence of a culture, a way of doing things, not feminine exactly, but diverse, different, one that makes private and public life compatible and impregnates public life with the values of private life” (107).

The critics of the moral and political shortcomings of liberalism regard this only as a starting point rather than as a destination. Nor does communitarianism escape her objections. In short, Camps sees a transformative potential in women, one that can revitalize and enrich both private and public life, one that must not close in on itself but transmit its knowledge, its phronesis. It must take what is valuable and worthy in the feminine difference and universalize it.

#### Gender and memory

While it is crucial to offer critiques of androcentric patriarchal reason as it has operated in the history of Western philosophy this doesn’t exhaust the avenues of reflection about philosophy and conceptions of the feminine. This is Fina Birulés’s point of view, shared by the research group that participates in the “Philosophy and Gender Seminar”, whose goal is

“not so much to analyze what philosophers have written about women (...) as to recover and study the texts that contain women’s philosophical work and, in the same

gesture, examine and reconsider the criteria of hermeneutic philosophy – historical and current – about the foundation of categories such as those of gender, femininity, difference...”(1999, 12).

This indicates, then, a line of thought that will place emphasis on the reconstruction of the history of women philosophers – recognizing that they have been excluded and silenced, but also trying to overcome this condition – ‘letting them speak’ so that they tell us ‘who’ they are or were. Employing a methodology that is responsive to this process of discrimination and exclusion is important, however, it has little impact on the work of women from the past nor on their ability to transmit their knowledge in the absence of tradition. In short, it has little effect on the memory and the genealogy of women. Such a project implies new modes of relating to and recovering the past. A constructive approach (and not one that is solely deconstructive) is necessary to address the history of women, one that “must cling to the idea of transmissibility of the sign and the fragment”. Facilitating this communication, allowing them to speak and rearranging the fragments, implies a specific connection between gender and memory, a form of memory that is linked to identity, to the production of meaning and to transmission and narration.

This is a fragile identity in that it falls within conditions of heterogeneity, contingency and the constant need to reconceive it and to modify the story as new fragments appear. As Birulés states: “But our identity doesn’t depend exclusively on the capacity we demonstrate to reappropriate the past; we don’t measure ourselves solely according to the fragments of ‘what has already been.’ Rather, thanks to the detours of the narrative, we also express that which ‘is yet to be.’ That is, in the same gesture we tell ourselves through the mediation of a story how things have occurred and how we wish they had been. From this point of view, perhaps there is nothing contradictory in affirming that women, in a certain way, must move backwards into the future” (17, emphasis in original). The reclamation of memory as a means of generating meaning goes hand in hand with the idea of providing a historical account that shows women’s present but remembers their past as well so that women’s tracks are never erased and no woman has to start from zero. As such, it looks more deeply into the feminist project itself with respect to “la miseria simbólica” (symbolic misery). The narrative or story makes it possible to produce meaning and is also a form of communication.

From this point of view, the need to create women’s genealogies makes sense, a constructive process of various women’s traditions, educated women, models of virtue, and attention to the intermediate spaces between public and private. Memory, then, works against invisibility and oblivion. Visibility and method are used to address the lack of women’s transmissions and the absence of tradition. In her writings Birulés sketches this reconstructive methodology of the history of women philosophers. The work to be carried out “must tackle the historical construction of the writings and words of women and not only to

right an injustice, but also to mark the gaps in the dominant knowledge" (1997, 19). The point is not to search for a feminine "essence" but rather to rely on the significance of "the sign and the fragment" since it is through them that the disparity and distance of other women's experience is made clear and also where women philosophers acquire a voice of their own.

From this perspective, equality comes to be equated with equality of rights and not identification with the cultural role played by men. This constructive work is characterized by an analysis attentive to the "unforeseen, that which has not been examined by the tradition, through a method that is micrological and fragmentary". It allows for a consideration of the "exceptionality" of those fragments that break the "historical continuum" and gives back the voice of women philosophers as "signs of that which has been discarded". She subscribes, then, to the so-called "paradigma indiciario (evidential paradigm)" that takes Carlo Ginzburg and Walter Benjamin as its referents, with roots in the psychoanalytic method of Freud. At the same time, she believes that postmodern thought and feminism take different paths with respect to the modern conception of reason. The proposal is to continue the necessary critical or deconstructive work as opposed to perpetuating the myth of philosophy's neutrality, without collapsing neutrality and universality.

#### From invisibility to fiction

Rosa María Rodríguez Magda adopts a Foucauldian perspective to examine the question of "thinking in a feminine register" and "thinking about the feminine". In "Feminino Fin de Siglo: La Seducción de la Diferencia" (The Feminine at the End of the Century: The Seduction of Difference) she begins with the claim that sex as a unitary universal signifier has died at the very moment that a proliferation of normalizing discourses has been produced. She raises the question of the possibility of comprehending the notion of woman given that such a notion has been the object of instrumentalization and discrimination. The problem is "Which model of discourse/power offers us a version that is closer and more approximate?" The method and manner of approaching the problem presuppose that one adopt a particular epistemological stance as well as a theory of power. Pausing in her examination of the dialectic method, in the Marxist interpretations and those of el feminismo de igualdad, she regards them as being in debt to the master/slave dialectic and adopts a critical position towards it. Applying such dialectic to the man/woman relation cannot help but corroborate the Hegelian link between master/man and slave/woman, falling into the essentialism in which el feminismo de la diferencia is also trapped.

Opposing a substantialist interpretation and avoiding the exclusivity of the dialectic model, she proposes an alternative means of approaching the concept of power and believes it necessary to use methods other than the dialectic.

Her model of approaching "feminism at the end of the century" turns out to be a "vigilant rejection of any model based on domination, a concept that is negative and joyful (...) because here and now .....perhaps we should be women" (47). Now then, this does not entail a return to the previous notion of the subject. An attempt to conceive and define man/woman identity this way would be a step backwards. Rodríguez points toward a genealogy of woman as object and subject of desire, toward un feminismo fin de siglo in which difference as seduction triumphs.

In her writings she emphasizes her interest in introducing alternative historical models and provides a model of the feminist critic whose objective is reconstruction, that of rescuing the contributions of women philosophers from invisibility. From a genealogical, Foucauldian position, she believes it is necessary to define the various meanings of the term "genealogy" and "epistemologically profile the configuration of the generic 'women', who we want to be the subject and object of our discourse." The methodological reflection is crucial and must be a good fit with the discipline that is being studied. In this case, one must attend to the specificity of feminist philosophical criticism, differentiating the version which is developed and valid for history from that which developed for literary criticism.

Once she has evaluated the strategies of feminist philosophical criticism, she focuses on the area she finds most productive: the Foucauldian archeological method. Her goal is not to import a method, but rather to develop an alternative means of historical construction, from a nominalist position that is empiricist and cautious in the face of essentialism.

Beginning with Foucault's concept of "problematization", she argues that it is necessary to carry out an archeology of woman, a "general history" rather than a Global History, given that Global History has turned out to be "foreign and inhospitable" to women. What Rodríguez finds to be of interest to feminist thought from the work of Foucault and the structuralist critics (Derrida, Deleuze, Guattari) is their problematization of the idea of "book" and literary "work", because this allows for the investigation of new "discursive units, series, fragments, archives, strokes, that more adequately capture the feminine presence, such a stranger to historical records and academic transmissions" (46). At the same time, she critiques the Western metaphysical tradition – in agreement with a certain strand of feminist thought – that, from her point of view, is closer to Derrida than to Foucault.

Returning to Foucault's discussion of archeology and genealogy, she insists on the contributions of archeology, but establishes that this methodological perspective doesn't guarantee that women will be included among the protagonists of history. Specifically, if one focuses solely on "discursive events" while reviewing discursive formations, one may fail to attend to those non-discursive events "that are the most typical among those deprived of 'discourse'." Nonetheless, archeology is a valid method for feminist history despite



the inadequacy of its focus on the discursive fact. In summary, Rodríguez' position addresses the following: the mutability of the concept "woman" and, as such, attention to the formation of that concept; a rejection of the sort of continuity assumed by a concept such as Global History in favor of a history of women that reconsiders the hierarchies, teleologies, the invisibility and the periodizations; a critique of logocentricism and phallogocentricism, following Derrida, that is consistent with materiality and la escritura, and which serves as a corrective to the insufficiency of the archeological method.

The thesis that Rodríguez sets forth, then, is constructionist. Woman lacks essence and so "has passed from invisibility to fiction in that she has been constructed by the discourses and expectations of others. But, at the same time, from this lack of essence emerges her possibility for action: if others have had the power to invent her, today, master of her discourse, she can construct her own fiction rather than reiterate images from the past," (54). Her proposal of women's genealogy directs the interested researcher to seek out local knowledge, biographical experiences, oral traditions. At the same time, she points to an interdisciplinary perspective that requires a "historical ontology of ourselves". This approach contrasts with the idea of a patriarchal genealogy in that it stresses a genealogical utility, both deconstructive and constructive, one in which fiction plays a productive role.

After this summary presentation, we cannot help but conclude on a positive note. Since the 1980s, the intellectual production and academic presence of feminist philosophy in Spain has continued to grow. In addition to those philosophers discussed here we would need to acknowledge many others who develop their research from a feminist perspective. For example, important work is being done by feminists in the area of philosophy of science and philosophy of law, to take some significant fields, but there are also many more who are concerned with the reconstruction of the history of philosophy, of justice, of citizenship and with multiculturalism.<sup>1</sup> That it is difficult to even name all of them in the space available here provides some idea of the collective importance of Spanish feminist philosophy. Although, of course, we still have some distance to go before we achieve full recognition, we are confident that the time for Spanish feminist philosophy has come.

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<sup>1</sup>A good and more comprehensive treatment of the contributions of Spanish feminist philosophy as well as bibliographical references can be found in A. Puleo (2002): *Philosophie und Geschlecht in Spanien*. *Die Philosophin* 26: 29-42.

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