

Future Directions in Feminist Phenomenology
The University of Western Ontario, London, Ontario
May 23-25, 2013
David Chu International Centre, WSS 2130

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Feminist Phenomenology and Democratic Citizenship

ABSTRACT

Feminist phenomenology offers important though untapped resources for democratic theory, in particular, for rethinking democratic citizenship and feminist politics in the light of post-foundationalism: the growing consensus amongst democratic theorists that the normative foundations of liberal democracy, democratic civic action and judgment are not universal, but rather contingent. These democratic theorists - in particular theorists of agonistic pluralism - rightly acknowledge the need for a new understanding of democratic citizenship in light of post-foundationalism, yet they have not convincingly countered the frequently-heard charge of advocating relativism. They also fail to account for the question of how and why citizens engage in or abstain from political action and judgment. This failure is due to the lack of an adequate notion of the *self* and of the *common good*. While the former is reduced to a mere effect of hegemonic power relations, the latter is ignored due to the emphasis on difference.