

# APA Newsletters

NEWSLETTER ON FEMINISM AND PHILOSOPHY

Volume 11, Number 1

Fall 2011

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# Feminism and Philosophy

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Christina M. Bellon, Editor

Fall 2011

Volume 11, Number 1

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## FROM THE EDITOR

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Dear readers, this is the last editorial I will write in my capacity as editor of the *Newsletter*. Not to despair, however, as I am passing the reins to a woman whose commitment to feminist philosophy and the improvement of the lot of women in professional philosophy is unwavering. So, I leave you in good hands.

As my final issue of the *Newsletter*, I thought it appropriate to go out on another note of some progress in the role and place of women in philosophy. With the help of Margaret Urban Walker, who originally organized the panel, I am printing the contributions of four philosophers on a CSW panel which proceeded at the last Eastern APA in Boston—remember, the one which was almost completely snowed in and which far too many of us were unable to attend. The topic of this panel was the climate for women in philosophy. A climate which is rather heating up these days, much like the climate affected by the increasing warmth of the planet.

The status of women has always been a contested matter, ever since the first woman asked, “What do you mean, ‘The Woman Question?’!” This summer, with the release of the *Pluralists’ Guide to Philosophy* (Alcoff speaks to this development in her essay, included here) and its attendant Report of the Climate for Women in Philosophy, a firestorm of controversy has been similarly released. As with most Rankings and Reports on contested matters, nothing is settled, all is controversial, and many have opinions, some worth the effort to read, some very much worth the effort to forget. Alcoff has found herself, along with her *Pluralists’ Guide* colleagues, in a hot seat, finding herself the target of a campaign to remove her from her position as Vice-President (soon to be President) of the Eastern APA. The *Guide’s* ranking of philosophy programs for their diversity-friendliness is critical of many top schools, it also praises many top and unconventional schools. But few seem happy with its final status. Disputes about methodology, bias, implied charges of an organized cabal, have the philosophy blogosphere all atwitter—literally, on Twitter.

Regardless of how you feel about conflict among colleagues, or about philosophers’ easy resort to *ad hominem*s, *reductio ad absurdum*s, and other fallacious reasoning all in defense of her or his favored program, school, or tradition, position, what this controversy does mark is the OPEN and perhaps potentially FORTHRIGHT discussion of the status of minorities in this discipline of ours. This public conversation is LONG overdue, despite the heroic efforts of many in these pages, in the *ad hoc* committees of the APA, in professional

associations and societies outside and apart from the APA, in hallways and department meeting rooms across the continent, and increasingly in the blogosphere. Finally, we are talking openly. Finally, we are letting our voices be heard, some of us more loudly and assertively than others. Finally, also, we are asking questions—not merely of those who produced the *Pluralists’ Guide* and its rankings, but also asked (perhaps, finally, loudly *demand*ed) from those who rest behind the status quo, safe in the assumption that since *real* evidence of a problem is lacking, so long as it’s lacking, need not make any effort to change.

As you read these articles herein, and as you follow the fallout in the philosophy blogs, remember to ask yourself, why is it that philosophy rates so far behind every other discipline—even the traditional and guarded preserves of powerful men, such as the scientific and technological fields—in the cultivating, hiring, and promoting of talented women and minorities? Ask yourself also, what can *I* do about it?

On that note, it is my extreme pleasure to entrust the future management of this *Newsletter* to our colleague Margaret Crouch, at Eastern Michigan University. Subsequent to this issue, please direct all inquiries to Margaret at [mcrouch@emich.edu](mailto:mcrouch@emich.edu). I have every confidence that the *Newsletter* will flourish under her editorship! Join me in welcoming her, and look forward for her insight and commentary in these pages.

Thanks for reading!

Christina Bellon

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## ABOUT THE NEWSLETTER ON FEMINISM AND PHILOSOPHY

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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.

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## SUBMISSION GUIDELINES AND INFORMATION

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**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 essays electronically to the editor or send four copies of essays via regular mail. All manuscripts should be 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 seeking new book reviewers. To volunteer to review books (or some particular book), please send 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. Margaret Crouch, History & Philosophy Department, Eastern Michigan University, 204 Hoyt, Ypsilanti, MI 48197; [mcrouch@emich.edu](mailto:mcrouch@emich.edu).

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

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## NEWS FROM THE COMMITTEE ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN

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The members of Committee on the Status of Women were deeply saddened to hear about the death of Sara Ruddick. There will be a number of upcoming CSW-sponsored sessions devoted to remembering her and her work. A session at the 2011 Eastern division meeting is being organized by Kate Norlock, Margaret Walker, Hilde Lindemann, and Eva Kittay; a session at the 2012 Central Division meeting is being organized by Diana Meyer; and a session at the 2012 Pacific meeting is being organized by Amy Kind.

Laurie Paul has organized a session on implicit bias for the Eastern Division meetings in 2011. The CSW has continued its efforts to improve data collection within the APA by coordinating with the APA Inclusiveness Committee and the Women in Philosophy Task Force. To this end the following letter was sent to the APA Executive Director (David Schrader) and the APA Board of Officers from The Women in Philosophy Task Force (WPHTF) Data Committee (Peggy DesAutels, Sally Haslanger, Linda Martin-Alcoff, Kate Norlock, Miriam Solomon), The APA Committee on the Status of Women (Chair: Peggy DesAutels), the APA Committee on Inclusiveness (Chair: Anita Silvers) on September 29, 2010:

*We are writing to request **regular and systematic data collection** on the membership of the profession of philosophy in the USA by the National Office of the APA. The APA Committee on the Status of Women (CSW) has asked for this in the past, and the Women in Philosophy Task Force (WPHTF, established August 2009) identified this as a priority in its efforts to advance women in philosophy. Ongoing data on the demographics and employment of the APA membership is a prerequisite for identifying issues of concern and for assessing attempts to improve the status of women (such as the mentoring of junior scholars program that the WPHTF is beginning). Data collection is also vital for monitoring the status of other minority groups in philosophy, and we make our requests with these groups also in mind.*

*Most professional academic societies keep statistics on their membership (including humanities societies such as the Modern Language Association and the American Historical Association). These are of value for many professional initiatives and for the representation of the society's interests. Although the APA Executive Director (David Schrader) agreed in principle to supplying this information several years ago, the APA office has been unable to produce much information. We have been told that the main obstacle has been computer software problems. There is also some concern that APA members will not supply the requested information during e.g. membership renewals or job searches. We are aware of the recent optional link to supply demographic information that appears on the membership page of the APA website. We think that this is unlikely to yield adequate data because it is not an integrated part of the membership renewal process. The only area in which there has been progress is in the tracking of hiring in philosophy, and here the data has been incomplete and mostly not reported to the profession. (Miriam Solomon from CSW collaborated with the APA to collect JFP employment data in 2007-8; this was published in Proceedings but no employment data has been officially disseminated since then.)*

*In order to assist the APA, we have a list of the **minimum** data that we would like to see collected on (1) the membership of the APA, annually, and (2) the job market, annually. We repeat this list (with a few modifications) below. We do not think that the obstacles to providing the data are weighty enough to justify delay. We ask that the Board of Officers direct the National Office to produce and disseminate this data regularly, granting the National Office any resources (staffing, tech support, statistical expertise) it may need to carry out this important work. We suggest October 1 as the annual date for receiving statistics (soon after membership renewals and well after the end of the job market for the previous year), beginning October 1, 2011.*

*Members should be clearly prompted to supply demographic and employment information before annual renewals. They can be informed that supplying the information is voluntary and that the information will be used only for the purpose of maintaining demographics on the profession. Suitable statements about data privacy are widely available (e.g. on the website of the American Sociological Association). We suggest that data collection be automated as much as*

possible. Demographic and educational information can be routinely requested of those registering for the job placement service. We also suggest not only contacting the advertising departments for follow up to JFP ads, but also checking on-line philosophy blogs which often post the outcome of searches. We ask that efforts begin right away so that any difficulties can be identified and addressed with time and experience.

1. Database of APA membership that includes, for each person (assigned a non-identifying number in the database):

- **Year of PhD**
- **Salary range** (from annual dues category)
- **Tenure/tenure-track/full time temporary, part time temporary/unemployed/employed outside of philosophy/graduate student/retired**
- **Rank** (adjunct, lecturer, assistant, associate, full, emeritus)
- **Gender** (male, female, other)
- **Race/ethnicity** (write-in)
- **Disability** (yes/no)

We recommend that the database be supplied to the Chairs of all APA Diversity Committees (so that any further statistical computations can be automated). It is desirable that some basic statistical results (e.g. % of women and minorities, stratified by rank) be already calculated.

2. Full job seeking database to include

- **For each job listed in JFP (Institution, Rank, tenure, tenure-track or temporary, AOS in ad and AOC in ad)**
- **Name of person(s) hired OR statement “no hire resulted”**
- *PhD granting institution of person hired*
- *Date of PhD of person hired*
- *Tenure, tenure-track or temporary*
- *Rank of person hired*
- *Gender of person hired*
- *Race/ethnicity of person hired*
- *Disability status of person hired*
- *AOS of person hired*
- *AOC of person hired*
- *Number of applicants for the position and number of women and minority applicants*
- **Database of those registering for the job placement service, including year of PhD, gender, race/ethnicity, disability status (minimal data is in bold, all data is requested).**

Again, this data should be supplied to the Chairs of all APA Diversity Committees. We would be happy to provide any assistance to the National Office that we can. Please let us know your response to this request.

Contact persons:

Miriam Solomon, Temple University  
[msolomon@temple.edu](mailto:msolomon@temple.edu)

Peggy DesAutels, University of Dayton  
[peggy.desautels@notes.dayton.edu](mailto:peggy.desautels@notes.dayton.edu)

Anita Silvers, San Francisco State University  
[asilvers@sfsu.edu](mailto:asilvers@sfsu.edu)

Since sending this letter, Miriam Solomon has been coordinating with David Schrader in order to determine exactly what data will be collected and how it will be collected. The CSW remains optimistic that there will finally be some movement in the APA's collecting data essential to addressing diversity in the APA's membership.

Peggy DesAutels, University of Dayton  
Chair, Committee on the Status of Women

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## ARTICLES

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### Why So Stuck?

Margaret Urban Walker  
Marquette University

In a 1998 book, the psychologist Virginia Valian asked the question of her title, *Why So Slow? The Advancement of Women* (Valian 1998). This question has become perennial specifically within the profession of philosophy, where the advancement, or just the representation, of women seems a bit worse than slow. While the past decades have seen advances in our numbers within professional philosophy, in recent years we seem to be stuck. When I reviewed data gathered by the APA on women in philosophy in the mid-1990s for an article in 2005, 29.2% of those receiving philosophy Ph.D.s in 1996 were women, compared to only 17.4% of the total of Ph.D.s in philosophy in 1995 (Walker 2005). Yet the most recent reports from multiple sources show that the percentage of women Ph.D.s in philosophy are “relatively static since at least 1997,” ranging from 25%-33% each year, with no growth pattern (Solomon and Clarke 2009, includes other references). Kathryn Norlock's investigation, with the help of a statistician for the National Center for Education Statistics, estimated based on 2003 federal payroll data that the percentage of women employed in post-secondary philosophy education was around 21% (Norlock 2006). Because the *Digest of Education Statistics* now sorts out philosophy, Norlock has been able to confirm recently the 21% figure for women post-secondary philosophy teachers; but the figure of women employed *full-time* in philosophy comes in at an anemic 16.6% (DES 2009, Table 256). That is not the only reason it is sad to look at this table; miserably, no percentages at all appear for Black, Hispanic, Asian/Pacific Islander, and American Indian/Alaska Native women, who “round to zero” in our profession.

The dramatic and continuing under-representation of women in academic philosophy (as a post-graduate discipline and as an academic profession) is getting persistent attention at this point—at least from women in philosophy. Inquiries, some of them prompted by the APA's Committee on the Status of Women, have bunched up in recent years. A 2007 CSW panel at the Central Meeting explored the question: Why still only (roughly) 21% (and even that, inclusive of women teaching philosophy part-time)? At the Eastern Division Meeting in 2010, the CSW sponsored a panel, “Is the Climate Any Warmer for Women in Philosophy?” At the Pacific Division Meeting in 2011, the CSW arranged a session on “Gender Climate, Institutional Recognition, and Material Compensation.” Clearly, philosophy seems to be stuck, as regards women, and it is not going unnoticed, at least by women. The four contributions that follow were parts of the 2010 session at the Eastern Division Meeting in Boston, where several participants were snowed



out of the meeting, although their papers made it. These papers move in the direction set by Sally Haslanger's powerful essay on "Changing the Ideology and Culture of Philosophy: Not by Reason (Alone)," moving beyond where we are stuck to deeper understanding of how and why (Haslanger 2008).

Peggy DesAutels (current Chair of the Committee on the Status of Women) is right to remind us that, beyond some rough head-counting, we are not in a position yet to answer many questions about trends, and much less about professional climate. Our professional association, the APA, has been late to begin collecting basic data on underrepresented groups in the academic profession of philosophy, although that work is (only) now starting. We are fortunate, however, to be able to learn even now from other fields where investigation of discrimination, bias, and climate issues is farther advanced. DesAutels is able to report to us from research in the STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) fields, that certain trends—overt discrimination and subtle bias—are likely relevant to philosophy due to the failure of women to reach "critical mass" of at least 25% in the field. No one who has worked in our profession or attended our APA conferences will fail to see the potential of these findings for professional philosophy. It is the likelihood that STEM findings will bear on philosophy that situates the anecdotal evidence that continues to pile up. Linda Alcoff, whose moving and disturbing book *Singing in the Fire: Stories of Women in Philosophy* (Alcoff 2003) collected harrowing tales from successful women in the profession (raising the question of what might have happened to less successful ones), acknowledges that the past decades have seen significant and positive changes in the situation and prospects of women in philosophy. Yet current reports, including ones now collecting in the recently emergent philosophical blogosphere, reveal that stunning and overt forms of sexism, including physical aggression, are not, it seems, uncommon. Michelle Saint, a recently minted Ph.D., digs into the new virtual world surrounding our profession, with decidedly mixed results. I repeat: anecdotal evidence remains important against the backdrop of what has been established in other professional academic areas through careful research. The anecdotal evidence should make us feel an urgent need to have such careful research done for our own discipline and profession; in the meanwhile, it brings to life vividly what it is like to live in those worlds characterized by "overt discrimination and subtle bias," and worse, by sexual predation, harassment, and demeaning insult.

Our contributors, however, do not leave us in despondency. On the contrary, they bring forward not only fresh information, but also reports of effective interventions, grass roots movements, novel channels of information, and targeted trainings and practices, that offer us things most of us can actually do and insist upon, as well as learn and educate about, to start moving our profession forward in more gender-just and gender-friendly directions, as well as toward greater diversity, desperately needed, of other kinds. DesAutels conducts workshops, based in the body of research already available, aimed at advancing women faculty and improving the gender climate in STEM fields, targeting basic and changeable features of academic practices and physical environments, and this could clearly be done in philosophy. Alcoff is one architect of a forthcoming web resource, "The Pluralist's Guide to Philosophy," that will provide, at long last, fair and accurate information on opportunities for graduate work in areas such as feminist philosophy, critical race theory, GLBT philosophy, and continental philosophy that are marginalized and misrepresented in the disproportionately influential Leiter Report. Alcoff urges us to think politically and institutionally about how to change obstacles that are politically and institutionally maintained within our universities and within our profession. Michelle Saint emphasizes the

novel potential of the professional philosophical blogosphere, despite its own dangers and morale traps. She directs us (as do DesAutels and Alcoff) to the unprecedented and revealing blog, *What Is It Like To Be A Woman in Philosophy?* (<http://beingawomaninphilosophy.wordpress.com/>), and its more recent pendant blog, *What We're Doing About What It's Like* (<http://whatweredoingaboutwhatitslike.wordpress.com/>). Saint also alerts us to the aggressive public stand taken by several male philosophers on ways to discredit known sexual harassers. The hierarchical structures, formal and informal, of academic institutions and departments have made it difficult for those most vulnerable to abusive and disrespectful treatment to speak up or find allies within or beyond their environments. The virtual philosophical community might change that in important ways, by recruiting new and wide communities of concern and solidarity.

Finally, Rae Langton returns us to the question of what the profession itself can accomplish institutionally. She provides us with the brief overview of a report on women in philosophy in universities in Australia, compiled with almost complete participation of Philosophy Departments and sponsored by the Australasian Association of Philosophy, the counterpart to our APA. Here we get useful comparative data and recommendations. Now all we need is something to compare them to.

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## *Is the Climate any Warmer for Women in Philosophy?*

**Peggy DesAutels**  
*University of Dayton*

Is the climate any warmer for women in philosophy? Unfortunately, there is no way to answer this question with much confidence. There are no systematic measures of even the numbers of women in philosophy let alone systematic measures of the overall climate. When we add in that the climate for women varies significantly from department to department and subfield to subfield, assessing the climate for women in philosophy becomes even more difficult. I take climate to include overt instances of sex discrimination and sexual harassment as well as cumulative instances of subtle bias against women. Both overt and subtle contributors to climate are difficult to ferret out and summarize even for a

single department let alone for such a wide-ranging group of people as philosophers and the diverse departments these philosophers inhabit.

The APA is significantly behind other professional organizations in collecting data about and assessing the climate for underrepresented groups. There are a number of efforts underway to remedy this. As you may know, some philosophers have formed themselves into the Women in Philosophy Task Force. The group's subcommittee on data (Sally Haslanger, Kate Norlock, Linda Alcoff, Miriam Solomon, and I) recently sent a letter to the APA Board of Officers that met at the beginning of November 2010. The letter emphasizes the need for gathering data on underrepresented groups in philosophy and urges the Board to take specific immediate steps to obtain relevant data about APA members and about hiring outcomes. The APA Committee on the Status of Women and the Inclusiveness Committee were co-signatories of the letter. A special thanks goes to Miriam Solomon for her relentless efforts in drafting this letter and moving it forward. As a result of these efforts, the APA agreed to gather data on APA members and from departments advertising in JFP. Nonetheless, there has been difficulty bringing new software online, so it remains unclear how much can be done anytime soon. The APA board is supposed to provide a report by the beginning of February updating the Inclusiveness Committee and the Committee on the Status of Women on its progress in collecting data, so stay tuned.

Meanwhile, more qualitative data on the climate for women in philosophy is being collected, albeit non-systematically, by a recent blog entitled "What is it Like to Be a Woman in Philosophy" (<http://beingawomaninphilosophy.wordpress.com/>) and the even more recent "What We're Doing About What Its Like: Making Things Better for Women in Philosophy?" (<http://whatweredoingaboutwhatitslike.wordpress.com/>). Female and even a few male philosophers have sent in short accounts of their individual experiences, both negative and positive, related to being a woman in philosophy. The stories range from horrifying to quite encouraging. But for the most part, readers write in that when strung together, the stories leave them discouraged and depressed. At the very least, philosophy appears to house a number of very bad apples who harass and discriminate against women often with impunity. But exactly how many overt harassers and discriminators are at large within philosophy at this time is impossible to determine. Meanwhile, if you haven't yet visited this blog, I encourage that you do so.

Although we know very little about the degrees and extents of either overt or subtle discrimination against women in philosophy today, the National Science Foundation has funded a number of studies and initiatives tied to hiring and advancing women faculty in Science, Engineering, Technology, and Math (STEM). There are clearly a number of parallels between issues tied to STEM women faculty and those tied to philosophy women faculty. For example, studies show that there are special climate-related issues for any minority group that has failed to reach critical mass in a particular field. Critical mass is reached when a group comprises at least 25% of a field. Right now, our best calculations estimate that women faculty comprise approximately 23% of philosophy faculty in the United States. For some subfields in philosophy this percentage is lower. Although I have no data to back me up, based on my own experiences at various conferences, my guess is that the percentages of philosophers who are women are even lower in such subfields as metaphysics, philosophy of mind, and philosophy of language, and are higher in such fields as feminist philosophy, applied ethics, and possibly even philosophy of science.

When a minority group does not reach critical mass in a field, studies show that it is far more likely that this group will be subject to both overt discrimination and subtle bias that in turn prevents members of that group from being hired or advanced. Certainly, other factors contribute to a continuing chilly climate for women in philosophy, but I think that much insight can be gained by focusing on issues tied to the failure of women faculty in philosophy to reach critical mass. It would be interesting, for example, to compare the climates for women in departments in which women have reached or surpassed critical mass and those that fall far short of the mark. Although such studies have not been done, I can report from personal experience the climate warmth in my own department. My department is quite large (fifteen or so tenure/tenure-track positions) and is very women- and feminist- friendly. I maintain that much of the warmth of our departmental climate is tied to the fact that we have seven tenured and tenure-track women in the department, two of whom are full professors. Thus over forty percent of our philosophy faculty is women and thirty-three percent of our department's full professors is women. It is approaching "normal" to be both a woman and a philosopher at my particular university. Having a significant number of women in a department means that overt instances of discrimination against and harassment of women faculty by other faculty members in the department are much more likely to be challenged and reduced. When departments add in training on implicit bias and implement best practices to prevent it, even the more subtle forms of discrimination have a better chance of being identified and reduced.

Unfortunately, the ratio of women to men philosophy faculty found in my own department is anything but normal nationwide. What I would like to do with the remainder of my time is describe some of the findings of relevance to the climate for women in philosophy tied to implicit bias and a lack of critical mass. I have been building my knowledge on this topic over the past several years, ever since I began serving as a principal on a National Science Foundation ADVANCE grant. This grant was awarded to four Dayton, Ohio regional degree-granting institutions: University of Dayton, Wright State University, Central State University, and Air Force Institute of Technology. Like many other ADVANCE grants awarded throughout the country, this is a five-year, multi-million dollar grant given out by the National Science Foundation with the goal of increasing the representation and advancement of women in academic science and engineering careers, thereby contributing to the development of a more diverse science and engineering workforce. My job on this grant is to conduct workshops for faculty and staff at all four institutions on best practices tied to increasing the numbers of and advancing women faculty in STEM fields. One of my emphases is on how best to recognize and address implicit gender biases that contribute to barriers against recruiting and advancing women STEM faculty. Although NSF funds only projects tied to STEM women faculty, much of the research and best practices coming out of these grants are directly relevant to climate issues for women faculty in philosophy. I should note here that there is at least one other philosopher, Carla Fehr, a philosopher of science at Iowa State, who has actively worked on an NSF ADVANCE project.

For a very nice summary of relevant research to date on recruiting and advancing women STEM faculty, see *Beyond Bias and Barriers: Fulfilling the Potential of Women in Academic Science and Engineering* (National Academy of Sciences, 2007), put out both online and in hardcover. For more general gender-related psychological and neuroscientific research, see *Delusions of Gender: How Our Minds, Society, and Neurosexism Create Difference* (Fine, 2010). And for specific work on gender schemas and the role they play in the advancement of women

in academia, *Why So Slow?: The Advancement of Women* (Valian, 1998). For those unfamiliar with Virginia Valian's work, gender schemas (or implicit biases) involve non-conscious expectations or stereotypes associated with members of a group that guide perceptions and behaviors. Schemas influence the judgments of both non-group members and group members themselves. These biased judgments affect hiring and advancement and result in an accumulation of disadvantage. Schemas are widely culturally shared; both men and women hold them about gender; both whites and people of color hold them about race. Of special relevance to philosophy, schemas are more likely to be invoked when groups (e.g. women) lack critical mass. We no longer rely on group-based schemas when there are many individuals, since we cannot differentiate among these individuals by resorting to these schemas. On the other hand, when there are very few women and minorities on a faculty, schemas are much more likely to be invoked.

Some of the more striking studies showing the effects of implicit bias on judgments include: (1) A study involving hiring for orchestras. When auditions were behind a screen, the percentage of female new hires for orchestral jobs increased 25-46% (Goldin and Rouse, 2000). (2) A study involving hiring of faculty for psychology departments. When evaluating identical application packages, male and female university psychology professors preferred 2:1 to hire "Brian" over "Karen" (Steinpreis, Anders, and Ritzke, 1999). And (3) A study examining letters of recommendation for successful medical school faculty applicants. Letters for men were longer and contained more references to the applicants' CVs, publications, patients, and colleagues. Letters for women were shorter and contained more references to personal life as well as more "doubt raisers" (e.g., hedges, faint praise, and irrelevancies). Comments in letters for women included: "It's amazing how much she's accomplished." "It appears her health is stable." "She is close to my wife" (Trix and Psenka, 2003).

Other studies of relevance to the climate for women in philosophy are tied to women's reticence to participate in fields where women are outnumbered by men. As Cordelia Fine points out, there are a number of subtle ways that women can be sent the message that they "don't belong" in particular fields. For instance, one study shows how changing the physical environment from "geeky" to "less geeky" (e.g., from a room containing Star Trek posters, geeky comics, technical magazines, junk food, video game boxes, electronic equipment to a room containing art posters, general interest magazines, and water bottles) significantly increased women's expressed interest in technical jobs and internships (Fine, 45-46). I was reminded by this study of my own graduate student days. All four walls of the graduate student lounge were lined with blown-up photos of past chairs of the department of philosophy—all of them white males. In another study of special relevance to philosophy meetings, advanced women undergraduates were attached to equipment that recorded heart rate and skin conductance and then shown advertising videos for a Math, Science, and Engineering (MSE) conference.

There were two, near-identical videos, depicting about 150 people. However, in one video the ratio of men to women approximated the actual gender ratio of MSE degrees: there were three men to every woman. In the second video, men and women were featured in equal numbers. Women who saw the gender-equal video responded very much like men, both physiologically and in their sense of belonging and interest in the conference. But for women who saw the more realistically imbalanced version, it was a very different experience. They became more aroused—an

indicator of physiological vigilance. They expressed less interest in attending the conference when it was gender unbalanced. ...And although women and men who saw the gender-balanced video very strongly agreed that they belonged there, the conviction of this agreement among women who saw a gender imbalance was significantly lower. (Fine, 42)

How many times have I attended a philosophy conference that consisted almost entirely of men? Although there were many reasons why I decided to engage in feminist philosophy, one of these reasons was simply so that I could attend feminist conferences where for once the women outnumbered the men—where for once I belonged.

Let's go back to the question of whether the climate is warming for women in philosophy. Not only are the chances quite slim of the climate's warming significantly as long as woman faculty fail to reach critical mass, but the APA's ability adequately to assess past, present, and future climates for women in philosophy is grossly inadequate. One of the first expectations for those institutions receiving NSF ADVANCE grants is that there is an assessment of the success of these grants in achieving NSF's goal of warming the climate for STEM women faculty. The only way to assess the degree to which this goal is achieved is to design and implement pre- and post-grant climate surveys that are distributed to both female and male STEM faculty. These surveys are then analyzed for sex effects tied to the degree to which responders agree with such statements as: My department does not engage in sex discrimination; my department is open to women; women have influence in the department; I am able to maintain a good balance between my personal and professional life; and so on. Such surveys are difficult to design well and analyze meaningfully especially when they involve multiple institutions. As a result, these surveys need the expertise of those trained in psychology. Ideally, we will find ways to conduct similar surveys in the APA. Unfortunately, however, NSF doesn't provide funding for philosophy-related projects. I think an important next step for both the Women in Philosophy Task Force and the relevant APA committees is to identify expertise and funding for collecting meaningful demographic data and conducting climate surveys. Once this is done, we can begin to target the chilliest aspects of the climate for women in philosophy and apply best practices towards warming these aspects. As the current Chair for the APA's Committee for the Status of Women and as a member of the Women in Philosophy Task Force, I will do what I can to promote and collaborate on important data collection and climate assessments. Who knows? Perhaps someday in the not-too-distant future, women in philosophy will finally reach a critical mass; all philosophers will live in balmy warmth; and no APA meetings will involve blizzards.

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## A Call for Climate Change

Linda Martín Alcoff

Hunter College and CUNY Graduate Center

The story in a nutshell about the climate for women in philosophy is this: Although there are more of us than ever, the climate is still bad. We need to take serious steps toward climate change, but the philosophy profession as a whole is as full of denial about this situation as Fox News is full of denials about global warming.

Recently I was sitting in a coffee shop near NYU, reading the blog "What Is It Like to Be a Woman in Philosophy?" and finding myself, with some embarrassment, tearing up.<sup>1</sup> The blog is over-full with stories of disrespect, harassment, sexual objectification, even an attempted rape at an APA conference. Where else but in the U.S. military are women the targets of such regular abuse by their own close colleagues? I have been in departments where new female graduate students are looked over as the new meat in town. At the department holiday party I attended just a few months ago, one of my female students said afterward, "That was a good party! No one groped me in the corner this year." Turns out that happened six years ago and she has not been back to a department party since that time.

I have also known about consensual relationships that developed between male faculty and female students that seemed to be benign, but there continues to be an adverse effect on the general credibility of women students (even women faculty) when such relationships are even suspected: it raises the specter of favoritism and unfair advantages, a specter that can tar anyone's career. Even more disturbing is that, in the consensual relationships I have seen between male faculty and female graduate students, the women almost always drop out of the field. Causality is, of course, difficult to trace with any certainty, yet one begins to wonder. Perhaps the psychic shift from apprentice to lover creates a category transference that changes one's self-understanding. I remember vividly a brilliant young female philosophy student who was very shaken up by a come-on from her (much older) main professor, asking me, "Was that what all his compliments about my exams and papers were really about?" She later "chose" not to pursue philosophy.

But the principal issue that comes out in sharp relief from the blog "What Is It Like to Be a Woman in Philosophy?" is not about harassment or come-ons but the thousand daily cuts that collectively dissuade women from staying in: the aggressive and peremptory dismissals in seminar, the *a priori* rejections and derision of feminist philosophy, the ignoring, the assumptions that affirmative action is the only reason someone has been accepted, the nasty notes put in mailboxes and under one's door, such as the note that just said "whore" in large letters.

Some men have been writing into this blog with surprise, real concern, indignation. I take their concern to be legitimate, and don't think we should scoff too much at their surprise and naiveté. They live and work in a parallel universe, a profession without sexual overtones to be negotiated and managed, and most have never heard women talk in an honest way about the situation they experience.

In my experience, women in our profession are, as a group, afraid to complain, loathe to complain, absolutely committed to not complaining. When I began editing the collection that became *Singing in the Fire: Tales of Women in Philosophy* more than ten years ago, I found that senior women, even women with tenure who had great jobs and enormous prestige, were quite fearful of looking like self-indulgent whiners or political activists rather than philosophers.<sup>2</sup> Several declined my invitation to write for the book with letters outlining these concerns. They were afraid they'd lose male friends and support just by the act of truthfully describing their experiences of making it into the profession. And, of course, they were right to be afraid. We get reputations for being certain sorts of philosophers, for operating in certain sorts of ways professionally. And successful women who are attractive are whispered about, as using their sexuality for advancement. When even tenured and powerful women keep silent about this situation, it keeps well-meaning men in the dark, lets perpetrators get away with murder, and maintains the climate of victim-blaming.

Reading the blog (and *Singing in the Fire*) will also convey that there has been some significant change over the last 20-25 years. Many more women (at least white women) are in the field, without a doubt. Some female faculty are portrayed in the blog as hostile to women students, as even harassers themselves. I don't doubt these stories, but I'd want to underscore that the overall situation in philosophy is hardly one in which male graduate students are preyed upon sexually or experience objectifying remarks on a regular basis, as well as hostility in seminars and barely concealed disbelief that they might be equally smart. Some men may indeed get belittled, but (white) men as a group are not viewed with skepticism about their abilities or their right to be in the profession given their gender identity.

Anecdotal reports need to be interpreted in light of an understanding of the overall situation. Statistics can help.

### Some Recent Statistics:

In 2008 the percentage of PhD's earned by women in the U.S. in all fields was a respectable 46%.<sup>3</sup>

But, of course, this is not distributed evenly across the disciplines. Two-thirds of Ph.D.'s in Education were female; 58% of PhD's in the social sciences were female. Only 28% of PhD's in the physical sciences went to women, and only 22% of those in engineering. This is still a big increase from 1978, 30 years earlier, when only 10% of PhD's in the physical sciences went to women and 2% in engineering.

In terms of racial and ethnic identities, 23% of PhD's in 2008 were earned by minorities **who reported their identities**. Asians earned the most, 2,543, with African Americans earning 2,030, Latinos 1,765, and American Indians 123. Interestingly, there is a noticeable concentration of minority doctorate recipients in a small number of institutions, a noticeably greater institutional concentration than for the doctorates as a whole. This is an important phenomenon that requires analysis. I would suggest it largely accords with the situation in philosophy.<sup>4</sup>

In regard to philosophy, as we know, the numbers of women are much more comparable to the physical sciences than to the humanities, a fact that no doubt pleases those among us with closet or otherwise unexamined scientific tendencies. The numbers are striking: 21% of employed philosophers are women, compared to 41% in the humanities as a whole.

Also striking is the following. About 27% of PhD's in philosophy have been going to women on average over the last 15-20 years (there may be a bump in a year here and there, but the average remains about this). In the mid-1980s the percentage was 24%. This indicates that we have been stuck

for perhaps three decades at a plateau of roughly one quarter of the profession, mysteriously unable to make significant gains beyond this.

Another interesting set of data comes from Julie Van Camp's ingenious idea to compare the percentage of women in a department to its status in the Leiter, or the Philosophical Gourmet, Report.<sup>5</sup> What is revealed is something of a reverse correlation, where the higher the percentages of women, the lower the rankings. Departments concerned about their Leiter ranking would be "rational," then, to forego hiring too many women.

Van Camp helpfully lists the percentage of women in graduate departments, together with their Leiter rankings, even as these rankings have varied over the years. Departments listed at the top have the largest percentage of women, and then as one reads down the list the percentage of women faculty drops. To find the top 10 departments on Leiter's list, you have to drop down Van Camp's list to numbers 18, 20, 21, then to 37, 41, 56, 61, 62, and 64. The top rated department on Leiter's list comes in at #77 on Van Camp's list. I find this interesting.

It reminds me of the point feminist historians made some years ago that our conventions of historical periodization needed to be changed. The Renaissance, it turned out, was not really a renaissance for women; we were being burned at the stake by the thousands, we lost property rights, the right to join guilds, our dominance of the health field, and so on. The period marked as "the Renaissance" by mainstream historians was a period of serious setbacks for women in Europe, both rich and poor, urban and rural. So this makes me wonder: When we say that Leiter's list gives us the "top departments," what are we really saying? For whom are these the top departments in which to study philosophy? Do we really only care about the guys?

What is the problem with philosophy? This cannot be approached rationally, as Sally Haslanger has so effectively argued.<sup>6</sup> Among other problems, there is a pretty obvious but largely unarticulated concern about the fact that the humanities, in general, has strong feminine gendered correlations. The humanities are soft, qualitative, vague, and concerned with style. Philosophy's own self image does not fit well here, and thus it has a fear of its own feminization as the numbers of women in the field increase. Philosophy's self-image as the most rational of disciplines, where reason giving and critical thought rules along with purity and clarity and technical mastery, would be compromised by acknowledging its problems, such as irrational sexism and racism, much less addressing them. Recent historical and sociological analyses of the developments in the history of philosophy further suggest that the outcomes of our debates are not entirely determined by internal argumentation but also sometimes by external social conditions.<sup>7</sup>

We need also to consider the connection between the climate for women and the attitude toward feminist philosophy. I believe that women who believe they can avoid gender stigma by avoiding feminist philosophy are fooling themselves. They may rightfully choose to work in other areas of philosophy than feminist philosophy, but the assessment of their work may yet be compromised by the derision with which feminist philosophy is viewed nonetheless. One possible reason that feminist philosophy is rejected by so many in an *a priori* fashion is that it threatens to make philosophy accountable for its sexism. We thus need to make these connections manifest, and defend feminist philosophy as a valid enterprise, even while we fight for a climate in which women can do whatever form of philosophy they want.

## What Is to Be Done?

We have a political challenge here that needs to be approached politically.

What this means is that women need to think politically about how to survive in the profession. They must gain allies, even partial allies, forego their illusions about the absolute rationality and meritocracy of the discipline, give up trying to win over recalcitrant members of the old guard, and instead work on building power bases.

We should give up on trying to convince either the methodological center or the right-wing of the discipline.

We should recognize that administrators are sometimes our most reliable allies: deans and provosts often know more about sexual harassment litigation, and, with some notable exceptions at Harvard, they may well be more socially egalitarian than our colleagues.

The good news is that there is much ferment afoot, indicating that we can still legitimately encourage women to pursue philosophy careers. Examples include: PIKSI (Philosophy in an Inclusive Key), CUSP (Cultivating Underrepresented Students in Philosophy), the Rutgers Summer Institute for Diversity in Philosophy, SWIP's various branches, the journal of feminist philosophy *Hypatia*, FEAST (Association for Feminist Ethics and Social Theory), FEMMSS (Association for Feminist Epistemologies, Methodologies, Metaphysics and Science Studies), CBWP (The Collegium of Black Women Philosophers), CPA (The Caribbean Philosophers Association), and others.<sup>8</sup> In these sites and others new philosophical voices and approaches are having a chance to develop.

The Leiter Report has been a serious problem. It works to reward convention and punish departments that take the risk of supporting an area of scholarship that is not (yet) widely accepted or respected in the profession. Hiring in the areas of critical race philosophy or feminist philosophy is not going to improve a department's ranking. As a result, philosophy departments are trying to outdo themselves in conformism and "tailism"—tailing the mediocre mainstream rather than leading. The APA Board has recently committed to providing its own source of objective information on departments so that graduate students will have more than Leiter as a resource. Perhaps the motivational structures that determine hiring practices may branch out from an exclusive concern with their rankings in the Leiter scale. I have been working for the past two years with Paul Taylor and Bill Wilkerson on a new rating system, not a ranking but a rating, to help those considering graduate school determine the best places to pursue philosophical work in feminist philosophy, critical race theory, American philosophy, continental philosophy, and GLBT studies. Our new guide, aptly named "The Pluralist's Guide to Philosophy," should be accessible on the web by the time this article goes to print, at <http://pluralistsguide.org>. We hope this guide will be shared and distributed and linked to other sites, encouraging a broader and more varied view of philosophy. The reality is, there are many different kinds of excellent philosophy being done today, and getting published.

It is illuminating to look at examples provided by other similar disciplines, almost all of whom have been engaging for some time in a vigorous proactive effort to diversify. We don't even need to look at other fields in the humanities. Consider the American Political Science Association. The APSA represents a discipline that philosophers might be surprised to learn is not very diverse. Yet somebody has been doing some work. The APSA has designated a Task Force to assess their discipline for the 21<sup>st</sup> century, and charged it with assessing in particular the profession's breadth, vibrancy, and democracy. They also set up awards for mentoring minorities and an assessment system for

judging whether introductory textbooks are inclusive. They have discipline wide surveys, online syllabi projects, and recognized caucuses and sections within their organization, as well as the usual committees, to foster communication, recognize leadership in the field, facilitate research and publication opportunities, and create forums for developing theoretical models for the study of diversity. They have dissertation awards, book awards, teaching awards, and paper prizes specifically aimed at promoting diversity. On their website, the APSA lists as one of its “core objectives”: “diversifying the profession and representing its diversity.”

We have some work to do.

#### Endnotes

1. <http://beingawomaninphilosophy.wordpress.com/>
2. *Singing in the Fire: Stories of Women in Philosophy* (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 2003).
3. The following statistics are available on nsf.gov.
4. The University of Memphis Ph.D. program in philosophy, for example, is well known for producing African American women philosophers in particular. There is a critical mass phenomenon that helps this work. It does not necessarily augment the national standing of the department. I was accused a few years back by a colleague of wanting to “bring down” the Syracuse philosophy department to the level of Memphis, a charge that was interesting in light of the success of Memphis in its numbers of African Americans.
5. [http://www.csulb.edu/~jvancamp/doctoral\\_2004.html](http://www.csulb.edu/~jvancamp/doctoral_2004.html)
6. Sally Haslanger, “Changing the Ideology and Culture of Philosophy: Not by Reason (Alone)” *Hypatia* 23:2 (April-June 2008): 210-223.
7. See, e.g., John McCumber, *Time in the Ditch: American Philosophy and the McCarthy Era* (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 2001).
8. SWIP: <http://www.uh.edu/~cfreelan/SWIP/>  
CUSP: <http://philosophy.la.psu.edu/graduate/cusp.shtml>  
Rutgers Summer Institute: <http://www.philosophy.rutgers.edu/events/summer-institute>  
PIKSI: <http://rocketics.psu.edu/education/piksi/>  
The Collegium: <http://web.me.com/kgphd/CBWP/Welcome.html>  
The CPA: <http://www.temple.edu/isrst/Events/CPA.asp>  
FEAST: <http://www.afeast.org/>  
FEMSS: <http://femss.org/>  
Hypatia: <http://depts.washington.edu/hypatia/>

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## Women, the Profession, and the Blogs

**Michelle Saint**  
*Rollins College*

The Internet has given us new means of communication and new tools for professional development. However, we have not, as a profession, put much thought into how these tools should be used. In this paper, I will focus on one aspect of the Internet that has an immediate effect on how philosophers interact with each other: weblogs, or blogs. The “philosophy blogosphere” is now the *de facto* home to debate about professional standards and expectations. On a blog, one has the ability to communicate with one’s peers anonymously or semi-anonymously, allowing for extraordinarily frank conversations about the nature of the profession to be hosted in publicly accessible areas of the Internet. What I find most intriguing about the philosophy blogosphere is the strange push and pull between one’s identity as a professional philosopher and the

desire to discuss issues about the profession candidly. This is particularly noteworthy when considering the status of women in the profession because, oftentimes, what one is willing to say about women can be shockingly different, depending on whether one is talking anonymously or not. The philosophy blogosphere does not provide *new* problems for women in academic philosophy, but reflects the same problems women have always faced in a new way.

I must apologize, because the word “blogosphere” is ugly and a little embarrassing, but it is the best we have. “Blogosphere” refers in general to the total collection of all blogs. To call something a blog is to say that it is a webpage that is updated regularly and often in response to events as they happen. There are two main components to a blog: posts and comments. Posts usually can only be added by the blog’s owner, or a small cohort of managers who are considered the authors of the blog and have special permissions. Posts show up on the blog’s main page. Comments, on the other hand, are replies to a particular post. Comments only show up on subsidiary pages. A blog’s owner can control who can comment and how. Many blogs allow for entirely anonymous comments, so that anyone can reply to a post without providing any identifying information. Other blogs require users to provide an e-mail address to avoid abuse and spam. Some blogs have moderated comments, meaning that each comment that is published on the blog has been reviewed by one of the blog’s managers. A few blogs do not allow comments at all. Who can write posts and how comments are managed on a blog determines the atmosphere, the types of conversations that are possible, and what community can grow in tandem with the blog.

By far, the most influential philosophy blog is Leiter Reports.<sup>1</sup> Leiter Reports is maintained by Brian Leiter, and he is the only author of the blog. Leiter covers everything from departmental hires, philosophically relevant news articles, discussions of professional standards, and actual philosophic debate. When the 2010 Eastern APA faced hectic alterations due to a blizzard, Leiter’s blog was the only trustworthy and up-to-date source for information. While all comments are moderated by Leiter himself, what comments are allowed depends on the topic of particular posts. Some posts do not allow comments at all. On other posts, Leiter will only publish “signed” comments, in which the author provides her full name. For discussions where less-established philosophers may wish to contribute without the risk of harming their careers, such as topics related to the job market, Leiter permits anonymous comments.

The rest of the philosophy blogosphere can be broken down by topic. There are blogs that focus mostly on actual philosophy, such as PEA Soup or Experimental Philosophy. Some blogs focus on pedagogy, such as In Socrates’ Wake. There are also blogs that focus specifically on professional gossip—everything from starting salaries, stories about disastrous fly-out interviews, and irksome students. Philosophers Anonymous, for instance, allows philosophers to discuss touchy topics about the profession without the risk of embarrassing themselves or threatening their careers. It is managed by a self-described “old cranky jerk who happens to be a professional philosopher.” This old cranky jerk calls himself “Spiros.” Another anonymous blog is The Philosophy Smoker, which has several authors who are all anonymous. There is evidence of stable and close-knit communities associated with these anonymous blogs, but one would have to be “in the know” to recognize them. While I am an avid follower of each blog discussed and occasionally comment on them, I, unfortunately, am not in the know.

There is not space sufficient to describe fully how the philosophy blogosphere is affecting women in the profession. I will limit myself to discussing three cases which, I believe,

represent both the harmful and beneficial aspects of the philosophy blogosphere. Each case raises different questions about how philosophers should present themselves on blogs, whether anonymous or not. In each case, the comments I discuss are still available—the records are still maintained. In the end, I have no answers for the concerns I raise. I hope only to support the conclusion that these are, in fact, important concerns that require attention. In general, I take the three cases below to be evidence that more reflection is needed on what it means to be a professional philosopher in an environment like the blogosphere, where extraordinary candidness is encouraged in an extraordinarily public setting.

### Case 1

My first case is very personal, since it is about how the philosophy blogosphere affected me in 2009. It was my first time on the job market—I was still a graduate student. I was nervous and scared. I wanted advice from every source I could find, and this included several philosophy blogs.

One issue in particular that worried me was professional attire: During an interview, how exactly is a woman supposed to dress? I felt relieved to see a post at The Philosophy Smoker on the very topic of attire, though the post's author admitted he was "incompetent to discuss women's clothing," and thus invited "people who know what they're talking about to leave advice in the comment thread."<sup>2</sup> This was understandable. I watched the post's comment thread carefully, and I waited for someone to provide advice.

This occurred in the 9<sup>th</sup> comment, which, of course, was anonymous. The commenter said, "women should not wear suits. Period. Jacket and skirt combo is ok, but never pants and jacket. They come across as unfeminine and lose points for that (think Hillary Clinton). If the search committee is interested at all in hiring women, it's not because they can look and act like men, but because those women will be comfortable as women and bring all those feminine charms to the table."

My jaw dropped. I was stunned.

This comment represents the first time I had seen, in a particularly philosophical setting, someone presenting such a sexist and demeaning position. (I have since learned how lucky I am to be able to say this.) This was the first time I had seen it suggested that the role I play in a department should be related to my "feminine charms"—that someone would see me first as a woman and only second as a philosopher. This was the first time I had seen it suggested that I was not to be judged as an equal to my male colleagues, but that departments would only be interested in me "at all" because I am somehow different from them.

Because the comment is anonymous, there is no way to know who said it. It could have been someone completely unaffiliated with professional philosophy. Since blogs are entirely public, any blog that allows anonymous commenting may contain "trolls," or users who purposefully post inflammatory comments just to enjoy the angry responses that follow. It is possible, then, that I was trolled and the post that upset me was the product of some random stranger's twisted sense of humor. This, however, seems unlikely. How bored would some Internet troll have to be, to stumble across a blog about academic dress standards and then compose a detailed comment in response?

Far more likely is that the comment was written in good faith, that this person who believes it appropriate and accurate to say all women philosophers (including me) are being judged by our "feminine charms" is someone I will run into at the APA, someone who will blind review my papers for publication, and perhaps even someone who will sit across from me at an interview table and have control over the success of my career.

There is no way to know. As I went to my interviews—which, again, were my very first ones—I was regularly struck by this ignorance.

As the thread continued, I was glad to see someone tell the previous commenter that they were "completely wrong." I was disturbed, however, to see the content of their disagreement: "Women should wear suits...You should wear a suit that you look good in. If you're a woman, you should feel beautiful in your suit. Not overly sexy or anything, but beautiful. For the record, there are plenty of well-cut pants that women look great in and that don't remotely look like women are trying to be men." In other words, the reason why the previous commenter had been wrong is that the comment had misrepresented whether or not women could look sufficiently feminine and beautiful in a suit. This commenter does not disagree with the basic assumption that women must attempt to look beautiful. This commenter is not calling the previous one completely wrong for claiming women are meant to live up to a standard of femininity and, if they do not, are not worth hiring—instead, this commenter simply believes the previous one had been wrong about how that standard of femininity could be met. This only further wrecked my self-confidence and exploded my self-consciousness.

Again, because this is anonymous, I cannot know who this person is. It is impossible to tell how much of the profession their view represents. I do not know if the commenter is one of the leading scholars in the country or some misguided first-year graduate student. It is also possible that the view presented is not the commenter's actual opinion. Blogs are informal, especially when one is posting anonymously. Perhaps the commenter wrote hastily and failed to check their wording. In the end, it does not matter: once something is published on the Internet, it is quite likely to stay there. The Internet's memory almost never fails. The conversation is still there, available for anyone curious enough to go searching for it. Anyone who may have an interest in understanding what the world of professional philosophy is like can find these words and judge our profession by them.

A blog maintained by professional philosophers, even if anonymous, is a representation of our profession as a whole. This cannot be helped. The reason why some philosophy blogs are anonymous is because it allows one to speak more freely. In our profession, we are judged by our names, and so we cannot converse freely and candidly so long as our words are attached to our names. The anonymity is a comfort, and it serves an important purpose. Anonymous philosophy blogs are meant to be like shady backrooms at a bar, where participants can remove the mask of professional title, comfortably interact without the pressure of official guidelines, and simply shoot the breeze. But the Internet is not a shady backroom. The Internet, by its nature, is public, and what is said anonymously on a blog is part of a record that is very unlikely ever to disappear. When we comment anonymously on a blog intended for professional philosophers, we may successfully hide our exact identity, but we do so by identifying ourselves *only* as professional philosophers. The individual is safe, but only by appearing as a mouthpiece for professional philosophy as a whole.

### Case 2

Brian Leiter is the only person who can publish posts on Leiter Reports, but he will often post e-mails from others. This is what he did on September 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2010, when he was sent a proposal from Deborah Mayo at Virginia Tech.<sup>3</sup> Mayo's e-mail says in part, "Am I the only female who thinks it silly in 2010 to force departments to pay many hundreds of dollars (coming right out of our budget) to exclude a certain piece of furniture in the interview room?...Isn't there already sufficient incentive



to be 100% professional at interviews? Is being interviewed behind closed doors in a suite more acceptable than in a room containing a bed, as opposed to a couch, or a screened bed? Does it really help to shroud beds, cots, or couches? (It's a bit like shrouding females to insure no unwanted attention?) *Kick the bed to the side, sit on a chair!*" By posting Mayo's e-mail, Leiter invited a discussion about whether or not we, as philosophers, really need to ban interviews in bedrooms. Leiter allowed anonymous comments in response, but expressed a preference for signed ones.

The vast majority of commenters replied that yes, actually, the ban on interviews in bedrooms serves an important purpose. A few, however, disagreed, and two did so in notable ways. These two notable comments are my focus.

The first comment was signed by Robert Allen. His comment said in full, "I should have thought that we philosophers were a little more relaxed in our dealings with each other than to fuss over interview settings (or even 'stares and worse,' i.e., boys being boys). Whatever happened to being of good cheer and leaving the professionalism to the attorneys and politicians?" This comment represents several of the standard ways in which the concerns of women in the profession are undermined and discounted. Allen poses the problem as merely "boys being boys" and implies the only appropriate response is to "be of good cheer." It is implied that those who support the ban misunderstand the nature of professional philosophy. There is an undertone to his language: if you are uncomfortable being interviewed in a bedroom, you have the wrong attitude and should leave for another profession.

The second comment, signed by Alex Taylor, is too long to quote in its entirety. He presents two major points. First, Taylor accepts that it is not at all professional to interview in a bedroom but, "if I wanted to be professional I would have gone into business." Second, Taylor argues that "Beer bottles and bare feet are not [sexual] harassment, they are signs of humanity, and I personally would not want to work (let alone socialize) with anyone uncomfortable by such things...I am puzzled to see that so few [other commenters] have realized that sexual harassment can happen in a suite just as easily as it can in a bedroom. If Dr. Creepy wants to harass a woman interviewee he can do so with or without a bed." Again, we have the same general theme as in Allen's comment: there is no appropriate reason for anyone to be uncomfortable while interviewed in a bedroom, and anyone who is so uncomfortable should leave for another profession. If the state of academic philosophy makes a woman uncomfortable, that's a sign that *she* has a problem and should just get out.

Much of the rest of the comment thread revolves around these two. A considerable number of voices were raised, expressing why the view presented in these comments is mistaken and harmful to the profession. Other philosophy blogs posted about Leiter's discussion, and the conversation thus continued throughout much of the philosophy blogosphere. Throughout, the same theme continued: Allen and Taylor's views were critiqued as inappropriate and misguided. But there was another theme, as well.

A question that was raised in several places was why Leiter had been willing to post the original e-mail and these two comments at all. After all, Leiter's blog is heavily moderated. He keeps final control over every comment that is published on his blog. There is even an instance in the comment thread in question where Leiter published a comment only with an editor's note underneath, claiming that the comment presented an "unfair" response to what someone else had said. He made clear that the comment seemed inappropriate to him but he had chosen to publish it only because it had been signed.

The question then is, why was no similar note attached to the inappropriate comments above? Why had they been published on Leiter's blog at all?

On one hand, an answer seems obvious: censoring opinions is not a good thing. This seems like the most reasonable explanation for Leiter's choices. He has taken the role of moderator on his blog to ensure conversations remain mature and on-topic. Were he willing to moderate comments on the basis of the views presented in them, he would in effect be the arbiter of which opinions are acceptable and which are not. Since his blog is so important to the profession, in effect acting as the flagship for academic philosophy online, it would be dangerous for him to limit the opinions philosophers could express. Furthermore, had those two comments not been published, no one could have responded to the views they contain. Discussion would be stifled, and Allen and Taylor would never have received information about why their views are misguided. Any censorship of opinions presented in good faith stifles true conversation.

On the other hand, given the importance Leiter Reports has for philosophy as a profession, the requirements for the true conversation cannot be his blog's only concern. What is said on Leiter's blog gains attention. To be the flagship for academic philosophy online is to represent the views and concerns of the profession as a whole. When Leiter publishes a post that questions whether the ban on interviews in bedrooms is necessary, this implies that professional philosophy as a whole is questioning whether the ban is necessary. The simple act of posting Mayo's original e-mail legitimizes the view that such bans are unnecessary. The simple choice to publish the comments by Allen and Taylor without any note of condemnation alongside them legitimizes their viewpoint.

Leiter Reports is not intended to be some shady backroom, as are anonymous blogs. It is, instead, the most public and mainstream expression of our profession online. It is the first result in Google when one searches simply for "philosophy blog." It is the source we can expect non-philosophers to turn to in order to understand who and what we are. There is a reason why Leiter has such a strong preference for signed comments: there is greater accountability when one's words are associated with one's name, and the special position Leiter Reports has within the philosophy blogosphere requires greater accountability. The problem is that greater accountability also correlates with greater credibility.

It would be unfair and inappropriate to hold Leiter responsible for offensive views published on his website. Moderating a public forum is difficult, and there are hard questions to ask about how one should ever react to offensive comments made publicly. I have no answers to these hard questions. I do not envy Leiter the task of moderating his blog, and I recognize the effort and skill that must go into moderating it as well as he does. But there is still need to acknowledge that posts and comments on his blog are perceived as a reflection of our profession as a whole. We cannot converse online about our profession or our shared identity as philosophers without our conversation appearing as a lasting record of what it means to be a professional philosopher.

### Case 3

This last case is both far more terrible and far more wonderful than the previous two. I do not want to draw attention to any single post on a blog, but instead to a blog in its totality: What Is It Like To Be a Woman in Philosophy?<sup>4</sup>

The purpose of the blog is simple: to collect anecdotes about what it is like being a woman in philosophy. Anyone at all can send in a story about their experiences as (or with) a

woman in philosophy. These stories are meant to be entirely anonymous and no identifying information is ever posted publicly. If identifying details are included in a submitted story, the blog's moderator will edit them out. The point is not to shame, to accuse, to vindicate, or to gripe. Instead, the point is merely to educate, to explain. Each entry on the blog is a way of saying, "I was here, and I experienced this. This happens."

Too many of the stories are too impressive for me to pick out a few for quotations. Instead, I encourage my reader to go to the blog itself and read the entries—read as many as you can stand. The majority of the posts are negative, as women tell their personal stories of being dismissed, harassed, or even assaulted. Some are by men, describing what they have witnessed, what they have done, or even how the blog itself has altered their perceptions. However, it is important to note that not all of the stories are negative: some, labeled "do try this at home," are positive, in which women explain how they have been treated well.

Because this blog is anonymous, much of the anger and frustration that often comes along with discussions of gender are not present. None of the harassers, abusers, or others represented in the stories are named, and so the blog contents cannot be seen as accusations, libel, or small-minded attempts to denigrate those who have behaved poorly. Because no one is identified, no one is accused. And because no one is accused, there is no room for debating the circumstances or intentions behind the posts. There can be no "he said/she said" argument when it is not clear who "he" and "she" are. Because the stories are not from some *one* woman, or even just a *few*, but instead from *any* who feel like participating, it is hard to dismiss them as flukes. Because there are no comments allowed on any of the posts, there is no room for dismissing a story, arguing with the particulars, or otherwise drawing attention away from the testimony. The form of the blog makes its purpose perfectly clear: just listen, and become aware. Just really listen to what these women have to say.

The preliminary results were amazing. Discussions of this blog spread like wildfire, in part thanks to a strong endorsement on Leiter Reports. Many times, men express shock or amazement at what they read. If one has not been privy to sexism or harassment, this blog will open one's eyes and make one shudder. The blog sheds light on some of the darkest secrets of professional philosophy. It has led many philosophers to understand the problem our profession has with women in a way they otherwise never would.

What Is It Like To Be a Woman in Philosophy? went on a four-month hiatus starting in December 2010. The blog had been so successful at disseminating knowledge about what women in the profession face that the blog's moderator, "Jender," found herself with a difficult problem: What now? The blog had helped raise awareness in an amazing, unprecedented way. But, sooner or later, awareness alone is not enough. After reading through even a fraction of the stories posted, one cannot help but feel moved to act. But act how? What can we *do* with the awareness given by this blog?

Part of the answer is in the newly developed sister blog, entitled What We're Doing About What It's Like.<sup>5</sup> This blog will focus on stories about combating sexism and misogyny. Given its positive message, stories for this blog do not need to be anonymous. Jender, who also moderates this blog, is also maintaining the Gendered Conference Campaign, which publicizes how many conferences have no female participants, why lack of female participants should be avoided, and how to add more women to conferences. Both of these new projects share the original blog's emphasis on raising awareness in some way. The goal is to give individual philosophers with positions of

influence suggestions and resources for improving the position of women in the profession.

Recently, there has been a more active suggestion. Three authors of the blog, New APPS, all of whom are male, expressed growing frustration at the number of stories of sexual harassment within philosophy and the extraordinarily small number of stories of anything being done about that harassment.<sup>6</sup> Since official responses to sexual harassment in an academic setting are so rare, Mark Lance, John Protevi, and Eric Schliesser offer an alternative: unofficial responses, from those in the profession, in the form of shunning. Do not invite known sexual harassers to conferences, do not extend them invitations for publications, do not speak to them. Ostracize them. Do this, in order to affirm that professional philosophy is not a place for abusers. Do this, to alter the atmosphere in our profession so it is harassers who are uncomfortable, as opposed to the victims.

A central assumption to the New APPS suggestion is that harassment occurs because no one talks about it publicly. Harassers depend on their victims remaining quiet. Victims may be willing to whisper warnings to others, but these never percolate into public condemnations. In other words, central to the New APPS suggestion is that professional philosophers need to strip harassers of their anonymity and that the blogosphere provides the resources necessary for doing so.

As I write this, the New APPS suggestion is being hotly debated. It has been written about in Inside Higher Education and even covered by the extremely popular gossip blogs, Gawker and Jezebel. In short, it is getting attention. The problems women face in philosophy are getting more attention than ever before, and it appears that more people are willing to work to address these problems than ever before. It is still unclear what will come of the shunning suggestion or how successful What We're Doing About What It's Like will be, but they are prime examples of how the blogosphere can provide publicity to the problems in our profession that so desperately need it.

As I said at the beginning, there are no *new* problems that women face in professional philosophy, given the nature of the blogosphere. Instead, the same problems that women have always faced are simply presented in a new and highly public way. While I was shocked by the comments about attire in my first case, I am only too sad to admit how easy it is to imagine any number of philosophers I know personally saying the same—the only difference would be that I would know the identity of the speaker, they would be speaking directly to me, and the conversation would be private. While the attitudes presented on Leiter's blog in the second case are distressing, I am sure everyone is depressingly aware of how many others share the same opinions—those opinions simply are not given so wide an audience. Lastly, any philosopher willing to listen to female colleagues and students could easily become aware of the same issues presented in What Is It Like To Be a Woman in Philosophy? The blog succeeds where other attempts at awareness have failed only because of the sheer number of participants who are willing to create a permanent, public, yet anonymous record of their struggles. We need to consider how professional philosophy is presented in the blogosphere, not because blogs somehow warp and misrepresent our profession, but instead because blogs represent our profession's flaws only too accurately and publicly.

#### Endnotes

1. Each blog can be found by searching Google for the blog's name.
2. See <http://philosophysmoker.blogspot.com/2009/12/fashion.html> for the original post and all quoted comments.

3. See <http://leiterreports.typepad.com/blog/2010/09/should-departments-required-to-rent-suites-at-the-apa-hotel-for-interview-purposes.html>.
4. <http://beingawomaninphilosophy.wordpress.com/>.
5. <https://whatweredoingaboutwhatitslike.wordpress.com/>.
6. <http://www.newappsblog.com/2011/03/what-is-to-be-done-about-sexual-harassment-in-the-philosophy-profession.html#tp>.

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## **Women in Philosophy: An Australian Initiative**

**Rae Langton**

*Massachusetts Institute of Technology*

At the December 2010 meeting of the Eastern APA I described some efforts by the Australasian Association of Philosophy (the Australasian counterpart of the APA) to collect data on the participation of women in philosophy at undergraduate, graduate and faculty levels, and make some recommendations for improvement. The investigation, 'Improving the Participation of Women in the Philosophy Profession' was published in 2008, and is available in its full form at the AAP website, at <http://www.aap.org.au> (go to 'Women' in the bar on the left hand side). The investigation is a tribute to the hard work of the many people involved in collecting the data and thinking through recommendations; and also perhaps to the relatively small and collaborative Philosophy profession in Australia. Despite some differences in our situation, it should be of considerable interest to philosophers in the USA for at least three reasons: the data on women's participation itself, the ideas for improvement, and last but not least, the strategies for gathering the data.

### **1. Highlights of methodology.**

The investigation was conducted with the sponsorship of the AAP, the agreement of all Heads of Philosophy Departments in Australia at a meeting of the AAP, and assisted by a small amount of funding for an administrator from the University of Wollongong. The figures were gathered, with the blessing of Heads of Department, by administrative and secretarial staff of the different Philosophy Departments, and sent to the investigation's administrator. (Almost all—92%—of Philosophy Departments provided data.) They address the participation of women at each of these levels in all Philosophy programs in Australia, comparing them to the participation of women across the wider universities (gathered by a different body, the Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee). Data were also gathered on the numbers of women applicants for positions in philosophy. An important factor was that the investigation was led by 'a committee of senior academics', Professor Susan Dodds (Chair), Dr Lynda Burns, Professor Mark Colyvan, Professor Frank Jackson, Dr Karen Jones and Associate Professor Catriona Mackenzie.

### **2. Highlights of findings**

*2.1. Basic data on women's participation.* Women hold 24% of continuing positions in 2006 (compared to 4% in 1970). 72% of Departments have at least one woman (compared to 27% in 1970); of those, women hold an average of 1.9 positions. (There are 25 departments, of which 7 had no women in 2006.)

*2.2. Inverse relation between gender and seniority level.* This applies for faculty and students alike. In 2006, women were 40% of level A or B (lecturer), 11% of positions above that, and 6% of E (full professor). Average enrolment of women students in Philosophy classes: 57% in 1<sup>st</sup> year, tailing off to 47% in (optional) honours year, and 39% in doctorates. A correlation was noted between proportion of women on faculty and proportion of

women as students.

*2.3. Appointments in relation to applicants.* Appointments of women were made roughly in same proportion as applicants. Bias may affect evaluations sometimes, with regard to quality and area, but main factors are shortage of women applicants, and retention.

### **3. Highlights of recommendations**

*Appointments.* Take steps to increase women's applications; include administration and teaching as well as research, in appointments criteria; ensure gender equity in distribution of administration and teaching, and make sure they count; have a senior woman (possibly external) on every appointments committee.

*Pipeline.* Take steps to retain honours and postgraduate students, develop supportive culture; encouragement of women through letters and meetings with promising undergraduate women; general peer encouragement and information sharing with undergraduates to increase visibility of philosophy as a prospect.

*Other.* Put this Report on a meeting agenda for every Philosophy Department, ask for constructive reflection and concrete recommendations; nominate eligible women for key organizations including ARC, Academy of Humanities; publicize Report.

The Committee's 'Executive Summary' of the Report appears below. I am grateful for the permission of the Chair, Prof. Susan Dodds, and the assistance of the administrator, Eliza Goddard, enabling me to make this report available to a wider audience in the USA. And I do encourage readers to go to the AAP website above for the full report.

#### **Begin Executive Summary**

### ***Improving the Participation of Women in the Philosophy Profession*\***

#### **Executive Summary May 2008**

**Eliza Goddard**

On behalf of the Committee of Senior Academics Addressing the Status of Women in the Philosophy Profession: Professor Susan Dodds (Chair), Dr Lynda Burns, Professor Mark Colyvan, Professor Frank Jackson, Dr Karen Jones and Associate Professor Catriona Mackenzie.

#### **1. Description of the Project**

*Despite a number of successful initiatives to improve gender equity in Universities, the participation of women in philosophy programs appears to lag behind that in other areas of the Humanities and Social Sciences. In 2006 a Committee of Senior Academic Philosophers was formed to address the Status of Women in Philosophy in Australia.*

The project, *Improving the Participation of Women in the Philosophy Profession*, investigates some possible causes for an anomaly: that more than half of the students enrolled in undergraduate philosophy subjects in most Universities are women, and yet there is only a small proportion of women philosophers holding higher level positions in the profession. The project involved the collection and analysis of data pertaining to staff and students in philosophy programs in Australia. These data were then compared with data from the Australian University sector generally to ascertain the key stages in women's education or careers where they are likely to either leave Philosophy or stall in their academic careers.

The identification of these stages would then provide the information needed to develop targeted strategies to enhance women’s participation in the profession.

## 2. Main questions the Committee was asking of philosophy in Australia

Whilst Universities have promoted gender equity, there is still much to be done across the sector to ensure the equal participation of women staff at all levels of the academy. In 1998 the Australian Vice-Chancellors’ Committee (AVCC; now Universities Australia) published the first AVCC Action Plan for Women Employed in Australian Universities 1999-2003, and in 2006 the second Action Plan for Women Employed in Australian Universities 2006-2010. The AVCC publishes data pertaining to staff by gender across the sector and sets benchmarks for women’s staff participation.

The AVCC data shows that in 2005, across the sector, the percentage of female academic participation is 36% of all Full Time and Fractional Full Time (FFT) work contracts (up from 28.6% in 1996).<sup>1</sup> The AVCC’s critical targets and measures include (amongst others): to increase the proportion of women at Level E from 16% in 2004 to 25% by 2010; to increase women at Level D from 24% in 2004 to 35% by 2010; and to increase the number of women academics with PhDs.<sup>2</sup>

Data collected by the Australasian Association of Philosophy (AAP) shows that, as of 2005, Australian philosophy programs are behind the Australian higher education sector and a very long way behind the AVCC targets for 2010. The percentage female philosophers is 23% of all Full Time and Fractional Full Time work contracts (FFT).<sup>3</sup> The proportion of all FFT Teaching & Research (T&R) philosophers FTE by level and the proportion of women FFT T&R philosophers FTE by level is as shown in the following table:

The table shows that the proportion of women employed in Fractional and Full Time work contracts in philosophy programs, is lower at all levels than the participation rates of women across the university sector. Most significantly, the proportion of women in philosophy above level B, that is in senior positions, is significantly lower than rates across the sector, despite the higher than sector average proportion of T&R philosophers at levels C through E.

Since the 1980’s several reports enquiring into the philosophy profession and also the status of Women within the profession have been undertaken. These have included: *To investigate the special problems concerning women in the philosophy profession* (1982) and *Employment of Women*

1983-9 (1990). Since this time a number of initiatives have been undertaken by Australian women, and the profession as a whole, to improve the situation of women in the profession, including (but not limited to): the Development of the Women in Philosophy (WIP) Conference associated with the AAP annual conference (then ‘streaming’ of WIP as part of AAP); Tracking recruitment, short-listing and job offers by gender (AAP Collections Monitor); The collection of data on women in profession; Policies on the hiring of Women by the Australasian Association of Philosophy; and offering sessions on job-hunting, career planning to junior women (and all junior philosophers).

A report prepared at the Australian Parliamentary Library (Carrington and Pratt, 2003) seeking to understand gender disparities in the Australian Higher Education system suggests the following range of explanations for gender inequities in Australian academic staffing, echoing several issues raised in the reports on women in philosophy:

- the poor representation of women on key decision-making bodies, such as academic senates and councils and university promotion panels
- that notions of merit and success in universities are based more closely on what men in universities do well, to the overall detriment of women
- that the career paths of academic women are more likely to be interrupted by nurturing children than is the case for men, undermining their competitiveness when it comes to promotion
- that women do not apply as often as men for senior posts
- that women tend to begin their academic careers at lower levels (level A, not B), and are less likely than men to have a PhD—an almost universal criterion for employment and promotion in the current university environment
- as research output tends to count most when it comes to promotion, women, who assume a greater share of family responsibility and do less research, are disadvantaged
- that female academics are less likely than male academics to work in areas where academic research is most able to attract industry funding
- that the national research priorities tend to favour those research fields where male academics mostly predominate, and
- that cultural impediments peculiar to the academy place informal organisational obstacles in the way of women’s career advancement (Carrington and Pratt, 2003, pp 7-8, notes omitted)

Since 1981, the percentage of women philosophers employed in continuing positions in philosophy programs has improved overall from 8% to 23% in 2006; there has also been an improvement in percentage participation at all levels (A-E). Although there have been substantive increases in women’s participation, the discipline of philosophy still lags behind the overall university sector, as indicated by the table below. The AAP data show that in 1994 women comprised 16% of all academics in continuing positions in philosophy, rising to 23% by 2006.<sup>5</sup> By

Level	FFT T&R Phil’ers FTE	% of FTE at level / all T&R Phil’ers	%FTE at level across University sector (AVCC)	FFT Male/ Female Phil’ers FTE	% of FTE women at level / all at level Phil’ers	%FTE women/ all at level across University sector (AVCC)	% of FTE women at level / all women T&R Phil’ers
A Assoc Lecturer	9.5	<b>5.8%</b>	19.6%	5.0 M/ 4.5 F	47%	54%	<b>12.0%</b>
B Lecturer	47.1	<b>28.5%</b>	33.9%	28.4 M/ 18.7 F	40%	48%	<b>50%</b>
C Sr Lecturer	51.2	<b>31.0%</b>	24.1%	44.5 M/ 6.7 F	13%	35%	<b>17.9%</b>
D Assoc. Prof	36	<b>21.8%</b>	11.1%	29.5 M/ 6.5 F	18%	26%	<b>17.4%</b>
E Professor	21.3	<b>12.9%</b>	10.3%	20.3 M/ 1 F	5%	17%	<b>2.7%</b>

Table 1. AAP Philosophy Staff data and AVCC University sector Staff data 2005<sup>4</sup>



	1994	1996	2002 (DEST only)	2006 (AAP only)		
	AAP % Female Philosophy Academics	DEST % Female University Academics	AAP % Female Philosophy Academics	DEST % Female University Academics	DEST % Female University Academics	AAP % Female Philosophy Academics
Above Senior Lecturer (D/E)	8%	12%	9%	13%	18%	11%
Senior Lecturer (C)	13%	22%	15%	24%	32%	14%
Lecturer (B)	24%	40%	26%	42%	46%	40%
Lecturer (A)	24%	52%	18%	52%	54%	40%
<b>Total</b>	<b>16%</b>	<b>33%</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>34%</b>	<b>38%</b>	<b>23%</b>

**Table 2.** Women as a percentage of university academics at level 1994-2006.<sup>7</sup>

comparison the AVCC/ Universities Australia data (1994-2002)<sup>6</sup> show that the total proportion of women academic staff in 1994 was 34% and the proportion of women at level D and E was 13% of all academics at those levels. By 2002, women comprised 38% of all academics in universities and 18% at level D or E (the AAP data show that in Philosophy women comprised 13.08% of those at level D or E in 2005). Further, across the University sector, between 1994 and 2002 the percentage of women at level D or E (as a proportion of women academics) rose from 35% to 48%. Within philosophy the proportion of women (to all women philosophers in continuing positions) at level D or E in 1994 was 11.59%, rising to 17.75% by 2006.

Across the Australian university sector a number of trends exist that are also visible within Philosophy: a slowing of growth in the number of positions after the rapid boom of the late 1970s and early 1980s; a bulge of middle-aged academics in continuing positions (aged 50+) with an imbalance between the genders (women academics in continuing positions are likely to be younger and less bunched at senior lecturer and Associate Professor levels, but are also over-represented among staff in contract and non-continuing positions).<sup>8</sup>

A number of factors may therefore help to shift the overall gender-balance at all levels in Philosophy, including the eventual retirement of male philosophers appointed during the first “boom” of Australian mass education, who have held more senior positions for several decades and their replacement by men and women at more representative rates; and increasingly centralised promotion processes that are better able to recognise contributions to teaching, curriculum development and governance.<sup>9</sup> However, these factors alone will not substantially address the low participation of women in the profession, given the very slow rate of growth in the total number of philosophy positions in Australia. Proactive measures must be taken to increase women’s participation at a rate to approach the existing record across the sector, and also to begin to approach the benchmarks set by AVCC. It is very unlikely that philosophy will be able to contribute to the AVCC targets of 25% women at level E in 2010, given that in 2006, female philosophers were employed in 6% (1 position<sup>10</sup>) of continuing professorial positions. A similar gap between the AVCC targets and the discipline of philosophy occurs at level D (The AVCC target is 35% women at level D in 2010; in 2006 the participation rate of women in philosophy at Level D is 12%). In order to substantially shift the gender imbalance in the medium term, attention must be given not only to appointment and promotion of women within philosophy but also to the attraction and retention of good women philosophy students into Honours and PhD programs so that there will be a strong cohort of applicants for positions as they arise.

### 3. Main Findings

*The questions:*

The following three questions were addressed:

At what rates and at what levels are women currently employed within the profession? At what rates are women appointed in the profession? What is the gender ratio of men to women in the student population?

*Summary of Main Findings:*

Female philosophers are better represented in the profession as a whole than 36 years ago. In 2006 female philosophers held 23% of continuing positions, compared with 4% of continuing positions in 1970. This increase is partially a reflection of the fact that women were represented at very low levels in the profession in the 1970’s. Female philosophers are also better represented at all levels (Level A-E) than 36 years ago. There is, however, an inverse relation between gender and level of seniority. In 2006 female philosophers held 11% of all continuing positions above the level of Lecturer (Level B). In 2006 women comprised 9% of Heads of philosophy programs and 6% of professors in continuing positions. Female philosophers are better represented in individual philosophy programs than 36 years ago. In 2006, the percentage of philosophy programs in which female philosophers hold continuing positions was 72%, an increase from 27% in 1970. In the philosophy programs in which female philosophers are employed in continuing positions, on average women are employed in 1.9 positions.

It appears that women are largely appointed in the proportions at which they apply for continuing positions, thus, on the assumption that there’s no statistically significant difference in the quality of male and female applicant pools, the cause of women’s low participation does not appear to be current bias in selection committees. This finding notwithstanding, two further points should be kept in mind. Firstly, it is important to note that there are still several philosophy programs in Australia in which there are no women in continuing positions. In order to increase the percentage of female philosophers in continuing positions, more female applicants need to be encouraged. The challenge here is that there are very few continuing positions being offered. Making changes in the short to mid-term will be difficult. Secondly, there are reasons to think that selection committees unintentionally may discount the quality and significance of women’s research.<sup>11</sup> These unconscious factors may also affect the numbers of women who complete Honours and PhD programs, hence contributing to the low rate of women applicants for academic positions.

In terms of student population there is an inverse relation between gender and level of course. In Bachelor courses

women up make up on average 55% of student load (EFTSL). In Doctorate by research courses women make up on average 36% of student load (EFTSL). By contrast, in 2002 women comprised 56% of the overall postgraduate research cohort among those in the broad field of education “society and culture”, which includes philosophy; the rate of postgraduate participation by women in philosophy is closer to those traditionally male-dominated areas, e.g. engineering and related technologies (20% female research postgraduates), or information technology (26%) and is well below the natural and physical sciences (45%) (Carrington and Pratt, 2003, p. 13 using 2002 DEST data).

In the collected data we have identified three areas for specific attention:

1. The mal-distribution of women in philosophy positions (women more likely to be in contract and casual positions and to be at levels A and B)
2. The low numbers of women applying for philosophy positions.
3. The loss of a large number of women students from philosophy at upper levels of study (there is a general decline from 1<sup>st</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> year and then a large drop from 3<sup>rd</sup> year to honours—this decline in women’s enrolment at upper levels has increased 2000-2006).

Clearly points two and three are related: if there are fewer women than men completing honours, then the field of potential women PhD students will be small and the number of successful PhD completions who might apply for new positions is diminished.

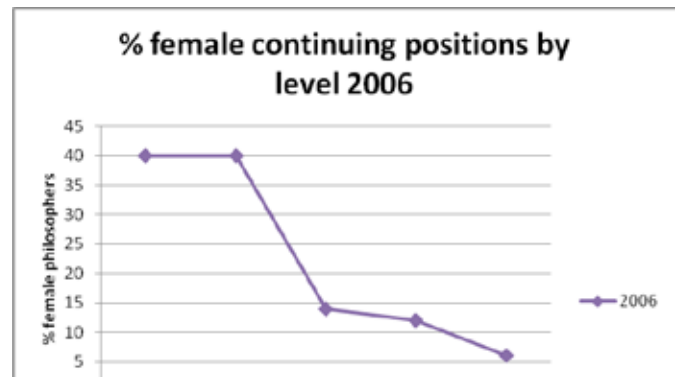
In order to be able to redress the current state of continuing Teaching and Research positions (and Research Only positions) within the profession, there are good grounds for seeking to increase the number of women completing philosophy Honours, enrolling into PhD’s in philosophy and completing those PhDs, so that there will be women applicants with appropriate qualifications able to compete for continuing philosophy positions as they arise. In order to redress the mal-distribution of women in higher levels of philosophy positions, there should be considerable effort made to retain women philosophers and to improve their opportunities for promotion within philosophy.

#### Main findings:

##### A) Staff:

There has been a steady increase in the percentage of female philosophers in philosophy programs since 1970. In 1970 female philosophers held 4% of continuing positions in philosophy programs, in 1988 12% and in 2006, 23%. Female philosophers are also better represented at all levels (Level A-E). In 1988 female philosophers held 29% of continuing positions at Level B; 9% at Level C; 0% at Level D and 5% at Level E. In 2006 female philosophers held 40% of Level B positions; 14% of Level C positions; 12% of Level D positions and 6% of Level E positions.<sup>12</sup> These figures show an inverse relationship between gender and seniority. Moreover, these figures show that the trend itself has not changed in any significant fashion over the last two decades – that is, the relative increases in the numbers of women holding continuing positions in philosophy programs has failed to address the inverse relationship between gender and seniority. While the proportion of women at higher levels have increased, the rate of increase has not substantially increased relative to the overall shift in the distribution of philosophers, the bulk of the shift at higher levels appears to reflect the retirement or voluntary redundancy of older (and more senior) male philosophers. There was a big increase in the number of women in continuing teaching and research philosophy

positions between 1984 and 1994 (more than doubling from 13 to 34.5) which has now levelled off (to 33.8 in 2006); over the same period, there was an overall increase in the total number of philosophy positions from 158.7 to 212.5, dropping to 148.6 in 2006). In 1984 the average philosopher was a Senior Lecturer, with 45% of philosophers at that level and 29.7% at level D or E (25.3% at level B), by 2006 the career profile had become more evenly distributed (reflecting, in part, the voluntary retirements of the late 1990s), with 58.6% at levels A or B; 26.2% at level C, 24.2% at level D, and 11% at level E (a drop from the high-point, 1976, when professors comprised 17% of continuing philosophy positions). In 2006 female philosophers held only 11% of all continuing positions above the Level of Lecturer (Level B). In 2006 9% of Heads of philosophy programs was female. The % of continuing positions held by female philosophers by level in 2006 is shown in the table below:



**Figure 1.** Percentage female continuing positions by level in 2006  
Source: AAP Benchmarking Collection

There has been an increase in the percentage of female philosophers employed in continuing positions across individual philosophy programs since 1970. In 1970 female philosophers were employed in continuing positions in 27% of philosophy programs. In 2006 female philosophers were employed in continuing positions in 72% of philosophy programs; in these programs female philosophers are in the minority, employed on average in 1.9 FTE positions (in an average program of 6.7 FTE continuing positions), most of which are at junior to middle level positions. Surprisingly there remains a substantial proportion of philosophy programs in which no women are employed on a continuing basis (7 of 25 or 28% of philosophy programs).

The bulk of women’s employment in philosophy occurs in fixed-term contract and casual teaching and research positions. In 2006 the percentage female philosophers employed on fixed term Teaching and Research contracts was 31% and the percentage employed on Research Only contracts was 28%. In 2006 the percentage female philosophers employed to teach casually was 31% – 19% of lecturers teaching 35% of lecture courses and 35% of tutors teaching 36% of tutorial hours. In 2006 the percentage female philosophers employed to conduct research on a casual basis was 52% and the percentage of research hours was 67%. The long-term impact of casualisation of teaching in philosophy is likely to produce short term “employment traps” for many women philosophers; positions demanding large numbers of teaching hours or casual research assistance hours without providing security of employment or opportunities for conducting original research and publications necessary for securing continuing positions.

Overall, the one area of growth in appointments in philosophy has been research only positions or direct appointment of mid-career and senior philosophers through

processes that vary from those characteristic of the bulk of the appointments discussed in this report. Research only positions (which may involve some teaching) have grown by approximately 30% over the past 8 years. The appointment of research associates or research fellows funded by research grants and the direct appointment of senior “research intensive” academics frequently do not involve the familiar advertisement, short-listing and interview structure through which Heads of Schools/philosophy programs are closely involved in the process of recruitment. Given the disparity in women’s participation at all levels, it is important that all philosophers who participate in recruitment of staff attend to the goals of increasing both the number of women employed in philosophy to more closely represent the proportion of women who study philosophy and the number of women who attain higher level positions within philosophy.

**B) Appointments:**

There were a total of 13 appointments to continuing teaching and research positions in 2005-2006, as a result it is difficult to make generalisations about the data based on these small numbers. In 2006 female philosophers were appointed to 33% of continuing T&R positions (33% in 2005). No female philosophers were appointed to the two continuing Research positions offered in 2006. In 2006 the percentage of female philosophers represented on short-lists was 24% (33% in 2005). Comparison with AAP appointments data shows an increase in the number and proportion of women in applicant pools from 1989 to 2006 (rising from about 12% to 30% of applicant pools), whilst the percentage of continuing positions to which women are appointed has remained nearly constant over the same period (around 30% of appointments).

In 2006 female philosophers were appointed to 35% of fixed term T&R contracts (out of 23 fixed term T & R positions available) (45% of 11 fixed term T&R positions in 2005) and 31% of 32 Research Only contracts (33% of 10 Research Only contracts in 2005).

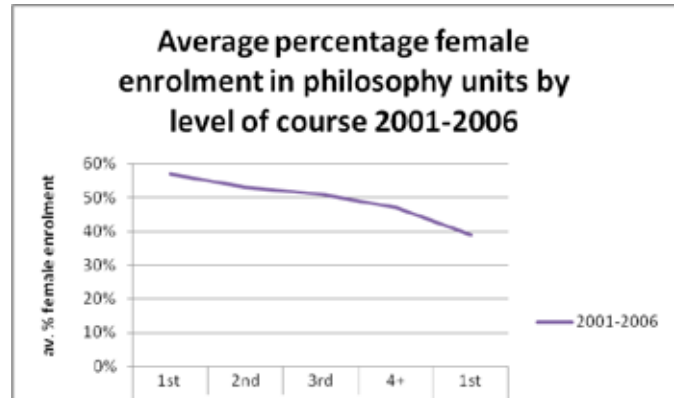
**C) Students:**

There is an inverse relationship between level of course and % female enrolment – % female enrolment drops as level of course increases. Table iv) below shows that the average percentage female enrolment for philosophy units in 1<sup>st</sup> year 2001-2006 is 57%, at 2<sup>nd</sup> year is 53%, at 3<sup>rd</sup> year is 51%, at 4 plus years is 47%, and in 1<sup>st</sup> year Doctorate by research is 39%.

This report indicates that whilst female participation rates may be higher than male participation rates, female participation rates in a major and subsequently honours are an area of concern. It appears that whilst there has been success in attracting women to philosophy, there has been less success in keeping women students throughout the major and into honours. Thus areas that need to be addressed are retaining female enrolments into upper levels, attracting women to philosophy majors and encouraging them to make the transition to honours.

In 2006 women comprised 35% of the PhD population, 37% of these are enrolled part time. In 2006 33% of the masters population was female, 36% of which are part time. Women are enrolled in PhDs part time at similar rates to their percentage of the PhD population. At masters level women are enrolled at higher rates than their percentage of the overall population – at 55%.

Women submitted theses in 2005 and 2006 at higher levels than their % of the 2006 population and were also withdrawing from PhD programs at rates higher than their % of the 2006 PhD student population. In both the Masters and PhD population female students were enrolled on a PT basis at a slightly higher rate than their male counterparts.



**Figure 2.** Average percentage female enrolment in philosophy units by level of course 2001-2006. Source: *Students, Selected Higher Education Statistics*, DEEWR

There is a correlation between philosophy programs which have a low % of women holding continuing positions and a low % of female students in the PhD population.

**4. Recommendations:**

In order to improve the overall participation rate of women in the discipline of philosophy and their participation at all position levels the following steps are recommended to The AAP Council and Association, Heads of philosophy programs, philosophers who are involved in recruitment at all levels and philosophy programs in Australia. It is recognised that the actual implementation will vary across institutions and departments/programs/Schools.

**Recommendation 1:** Take steps to increase the percentage of female applicants for continuing (and contract) positions. Because there are very few continuing positions advertised each year, this recommendation on its own is unlikely to make a significant change to women’s participation in the short to mid-term.

To AAP Council and Association, Heads of School/philosophy programs and program staff.

**Recommendation 2:** Position descriptions for continuing positions should include administrative/governance, research and teaching components of the position and that candidates should be assessed in relation to all these aspects for appointments and promotion.

To AAP Council and Association, Heads of School/philosophy programs.

**Recommendation 3:** Ensure gender-equity in the distribution of tasks relating to governance and curriculum development and support recognition of contribution in these areas in selection and promotion processes.

To AAP Council and Association, Heads of School/philosophy programs and Selection Committees.

**Recommendation 4:** That Heads of Schools/philosophy programs and those who Chair selection processes should take steps to ensure that at least one senior female philosopher is a member of every selection committee for continuing positions in philosophy. Where a program does not include a senior woman philosopher, the program should invite an external senior woman philosopher to participate in the selection process.

To AAP Council and Association, Heads of School/philosophy programs and Selection Committees.

**Recommendation 5:** That those philosophers involved in recruitment of philosophers in short term Research only and continuing or contract direct appointment of philosophers

(i.e. recruitment that fall outside of the normal advertisement and selection processes), should attend to the goals of this project and to attempt, where possible to ensure that women philosophers are not disadvantaged in the process of recruitment and in career opportunities.

To AAP Council and Association, Heads of School/philosophy programs, Selection Committees and those involved in direct appointment of philosophers.

**Recommendation 6:** Increase the percentage of commencing and completing female philosophy PhD candidates. To do this there must also be encouragement of women into a completion of major and honours in philosophy. Such encouragements might include writing letters or arranging meetings with promising 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> year women students to encourage them to consider honours, creating reading groups as a “pre-honours” program and strongly encouraging women to participate; ensuring that the process for applying for Honours or PhD candidature are discussed with all eligible 3<sup>rd</sup> year students (e.g. in a tutorial) and Honours students, making students aware of the availability of staff specifically to discuss Honours and PG work. Honours and PG workshops or seminars to which undergraduate students, Honours students, current and recent PhD students are invited can also assist in peer-encouragement and information sharing.

To AAP Council and Association and Heads of School/philosophy programs.

**Recommendation 7:** In order to retain Honours, Masters and PhD candidates, philosophy programs and AAP conference organisers should seek to ensure that the research culture is supportive, constructive and distributes resources (e.g. rooms, facilities, conference attendance support or opportunities for paid work) on a fair basis.

To AAP Council and Association and Heads of School/philosophy programs.

**Recommendation 8:** That Heads of School/philosophy programs

- Put this executive summary document on the agenda at a department meeting and ask their staff to consider what as a department they could do about the discrepancy it reveals between the participation rate of women in philosophy and the participation rate of women in other academic disciplines
- In particular they should ask their department to suggest targets they should aim at, in line with the AVCC Action Plan for the participation of women in Universities to reduce the disparity in their department in enrolments between women and men at Honours level, to reduce the disparity in enrolments between women and men at PhD level and to increase the percentage of female applicants for positions, especially continuing positions
- Ask their staff to consider what strategies they could implement over a specific timeframe to reach the targets they adopt
- Discuss with other Heads any targets set, strategies planned or any problems encountered at the annual AAP Heads of Department meeting and consider there how the AAP could support their efforts.

To AAP Council and Association, Heads of School/philosophy programs and program staff.

**Recommendation 9:** Encouragement and support of nominations of senior female philosophers to committees of key organisations such as the Australian Research Council, National Health and Medical Research Council and the Carrick Institute.

To AAP Council and Association and Heads of School/philosophy programs.

**Recommendation 10:** Encouragement and support of nominations of senior female philosophers to the Australian Academy of Humanities and the Australian Council for Social Sciences.

To AAP Council and Association and Heads of School/philosophy programs.

**Recommendation 11:** That this report and previous AAP reports on the status of women in the profession be made available on the AAP website for AAP members to access and distribute.

To AAP Council

## 5. Further issues to pursue

Noting that there appears to be a significant drop in women’s participation at Honours and PhD level (relative to enrolment in earlier years), it is important to conduct more research into the possible causes.

A qualitative study of 60-80 men and women in Honours and PhD programs to ascertain the reasons shaping students decisions to continue or not continue with philosophy. A representative sample of philosophy programs to include: metropolitan/regional campuses; traditional/newer programs (for example, University of Sydney & Deakin Universities) and programs in which there are higher proportion of men and those at which there is a higher proportion of women in continuing positions.

A study to identify any connection between those Research-intensive institutions, such as those listed on the Leiter Report, and the lower % female graduates in their PhD Programs. If the growth area in employment in philosophy programs is in fixed-term Research Only contracts (there has been a three-fold growth in these since 1998), then low female postgraduate populations in these elite philosophy programs is likely to have a negative effect on women’s participation in the profession overall.

**Recommendation 12:** That AAP Council provide support for the pursuit of the research on Honours and PhD students outlined above.

To AAP Council

## 6. Appendix

### *The Committee*

The Committee of Senior Academics Addressing the Status of Women in Philosophy consists of the Chair Professor Susan Dodds and committee members Dr Lynda Burns Professor Mark Colyvan, Professor Frank Jackson, Dr Karen Jones and Associate Professor Catriona Mackenzie. Eliza Goddard was employed as the Project Officer, responsible for the research and the production of the Reports for the project.

### *Funding*

The project *Improving the Participation of Women in the Philosophy Profession* was funded by a University of Wollongong Vice Chancellor’s Challenge Grant and by the Australasian Association of Philosophy.

The committee of the project *Improving the Participation of Women in the Philosophy Profession* would like to thank the Australasian Association of Philosophy for use of their data on the profession and to the Heads of Departments and their administrators for their generous contribution of figures for this, and indeed other, projects.

### *Notes on statistics*

The aim has been to provide data on all Universities in Australia that offer a philosophy program. Where data has been sought



from the philosophy profession, from Heads of Departments and AAP Figures on the Profession, it represents most programs (92% of the philosophy programs). These figures, where possible, have been cross-checked against data obtained from external sources, from DEEWR (formerly DEST) and University Planning Offices. Data from external sources confirms the figures collected internally by the Profession itself. In cases where full data has been unavailable from sources internal to the profession, external sources have been used to provide an indication of trends for the profession.

## 7. References

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The second AVCC Action Plan for Women Employed in Australian Universities 2006-2010, 2006, [http://www.universitiesaustralia.edu.au/documents/policies\\_programs/women/AVCC-Action-Plan-for-Women-2006.pdf](http://www.universitiesaustralia.edu.au/documents/policies_programs/women/AVCC-Action-Plan-for-Women-2006.pdf)

Farrar, A., Campbell, K., Neurath, R., Patton, P. and Poole, R., *To enquire into the difficulties facing philosophers in finding opportunities to practice their profession*, Report to AAP Council, 1981.

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Tapper, Marion and Thompson, Janna, *Employment of Women 1983-9*, Report to AAP Council, 1990.

## End Executive Summary.

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For copies of this report please contact:

Executive Officer

Australasian Association of Philosophy

GPO Box 1978

HOBART AUSTRALIA 7001

[admin@aap.org.au](mailto:admin@aap.org.au)

The report can also be accessed via the AAP website at: <http://www.aap.org.au>

## Endnotes

1. University Australia Statistics, University Staff Profile 1996-2005, Table 4. Female Staff: % Full-time and Fractional Full-time by Classification 1996-2005, <http://www.universitiesaustralia.edu.au/content.asp?page=/publications/stats/staff.htm>
2. The Second AVCC Action Plan for Women Employed in Australian Universities 2006-10, p. 2., [http://www.universitiesaustralia.edu.au/documents/policies\\_programs/women/AVCC-Action-Plan-for-Women-2006.pdf](http://www.universitiesaustralia.edu.au/documents/policies_programs/women/AVCC-Action-Plan-for-Women-2006.pdf).
3. This figure represents Teaching and Research Positions, and not Research Only positions. If Research Only positions

are included the figures remains 23%. AAP Benchmarking Collection 1998-2006.

4. Data sourced from AVCC website, 'University Staff Profile 1996-2005': <http://www.universitiesaustralia.edu.au/content.asp?page=/publications/stats/staff.htm>
5. Report A.
6. Universities Australia, *Academic Staff by Classification and Gender 1994-2002* (4 July 2003, available at [www.universitiesaustralia.edu.au/content.asp?page=/policies\\_programs/women/index.htm](http://www.universitiesaustralia.edu.au/content.asp?page=/policies_programs/women/index.htm) (accessed 10 March 2008)) See also Kerry Carrington and Angela Pratt (2003) "How Far Have We Come? Gender Disparities in the Australian Higher Education System" Dept of the Parliamentary Library Current Issues Brief No 31 2002-03. Available at <http://www.aph.gov.au/library/pubs/CIB/cib02-03.htm>, accessed 10 March 2008.
7. Source: DEST, Selected Higher Education Staff Statistics, 1994-2002, AAP Data.
8. Graeme Hugo (2007) "Demographics – the need for renewal" paper presented at the Council for the Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences (7 March 2008) available at <http://www.chass.org.au/events/2008/phd/index.php#program> Accessed 11 March 2008.
9. This may improve women's likelihood of promotion, given that when women are appointed, they are more often appointed to teaching positions and are more likely to have done contract and casual teaching and research work than having had the opportunity to pursue post-doctoral or other research only positions than their male peers.
10. Continuing positions occupied by staff on ARC contracts are not included in these figures.
11. See Sally Haslanger's comments at the Central APA panel, 2007. Haslanger, S., Changing the Ideology and Culture of Philosophy: Not by Reason (Alone)', 2007. <http://www.mit.edu/%7eshaslang/papers/HaslangerWomeninPhil07.pdf>
12. Female philosophers were employed in 40% of Level A positions in 2006. There are no comparable figures at Level A for 1988 as appointments at this level are not recorded until 1994. In 1994 female philosophers were employed in 24% of Level A positions.

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## BOOK REVIEWS

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### *Cheating on the Sisterhood: Infidelity and Feminism*

Lauren Rosewarne (Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger, 2009). 272 pages. ISBN: 978-0-313-36031-2

Reviewed by **Celina M. Bragagnolo**

*Stony Brook University*; [cbragagn@ic.sunysb.edu](mailto:cbragagn@ic.sunysb.edu)

Infidelity to a committed relationship is "an activity ripe for criticism, with participation just as readily dubbed feminist as unfeminist" (7). Thus writes Lauren Rosewarne in the introductory chapter of her work, *Cheating on the Sisterhood: Infidelity and Feminism*, a feminist critique of infidelity. This work weaves scholarly research and a first-person account from the Other Woman perspective, together with an extensive array of pop culture material that, Rosewarne argues, has influenced her Generation Y political identity. The author's research focuses on a particular kind of affair: the committed man/single woman liaison. While infidelity in other sorts of configurations display their own problems—there are certainly women who cheat, as well as those who are in committed gay relationships—the committed man/single woman relationship has the potential to

mirror certain patriarchal structures that should be criticized. To her own dismay, Rosewarne, an insightful, intelligent, and self-described feminist, occupied the Other Woman position in one such relationship that spanned several painful and at times lonely years. As such, the book is, among other things, an “examination of allegedly feminist justifications for infidelity” (8). More accurately, it could be described as a third-wave *justification* of infidelity that at the same time recognizes the elements and actions in such relationships that further patriarchal values. As she describes her third-wave standpoint, “analyzing the negative ways that power disparities can be illustrated through infidelity is fundamental. Of equal salience is investigating how infidelity can be framed as an act of feminism, as personal liberation, as illustrative of attempts to alleviate feelings of disempowerment and as a survival strategy” (xiii).

As Rosewarne’s research and personal experience make clear, this type of affair has the propensity to uphold and reproduce patriarchal values. How does this particular kind of affair—the committed man/single woman kind—amplify the inequalities that result from the patriarchal values plaguing heterosexual relationships? What is it that makes this kind of infidelity ripe for critique? Due to space limitations I can only mention four characteristics of these types of relationships that impact negatively on sexual equality in that they leave women—the Other as well as the Betrayed—disempowered. Most of these problems are well-known and widely researched in feminist literature but have not been pursued under the lens of infidelity.

To begin with, the committed man/single woman affair reproduces and solidifies problematic gender stereotypes. The Betrayed Woman is frequently portrayed as a Madonna figure symbolizing “female ethical superiority” as well as nurturing towards her family: noble, pure, self-sacrificing, and restrained (43). Women have been taught and are thus expected to repress anger and negative feelings. In contrast, the Other Woman is portrayed as a whore, a woman who is sexually open and available. She is seen as the cause of the man’s transgression and responsible for his infidelity towards his wife. Equally problematic is the picture of the Other Woman as someone who does in bed what the wife does not want to do. Patriarchal culture attempts to retain the image of wives as pure, motherly, and chaste (43). A male’s sexual fantasies cannot be played out with the mother of his children. Sexual liaisons outside the marriage and household allow men to freely engage in activities that would degrade their wives. Of course, this is not reflective of all affairs and for someone like Rosewarne there is an opportunity for both participants to gain empowerment by engaging in sexual activity outside traditional structures of heterosexual monogamy. However, the idea that the man cannot or will not engage in sexual fantasies with his partner but feels free to do so with someone else is, as Rosewarne suggests, a part of the feminist research repertoire (53).

Rosewarne touches on the “ethics of care” in a couple of chapters pointing to the ways in which women “in practice”—not as a product of some essential characteristic—prioritize different values within relationships. In the woman’s case, this involves prioritizing care to a greater extent than men and prioritizing the man’s well being above her own. In many instances, the committed man with whom Rosewarne was involved would seek her consolation when he missed his long-time partner. At other times, he would call Rosewarne to talk about whether he should get back with her. While she would always be available and caring towards him, “I am hard pressed identifying times,” she says, “when I ever felt convinced that he cared about me more than he did about himself” (36). Indeed, as much research on the ethics of care argues, women

in relationships are encumbered in ways that men are not and that hinder independent action. While this might not be the case in many heterosexual relationships, it does become magnified, Rosewarne argues, in affairs like hers “where the man simply *can’t* provide the woman support she needs, *particularly* when *he* is the source of her pain” (197, author’s italics).

A third issue that the author’s story showcases is the problem of choice (28). Committed men who have affairs tend to have the power to choose between two women who want them, effectively granting them power over the relationship. As Rosewarne confesses, her always “wanting more” contributed to this: “While keeping his options open may empower the man, it is an unworkable scenario for the betrayed partner and the single woman who becomes *disempowered* in such an arrangement” (28, author’s italics). The false hope that oftentimes accompanies the Other Woman position is further disempowering since she is time and again led to postpone future plans of her own. Being subjected to his inability to choose among his various of alternatives reduces single women’s control over time, whether it results in “staying at home waiting for their man to call” or because they spent ten years in an affair and are now approaching forty, single, and childless (33). “For the single woman to relinquish the control of her time and wait for crumbs is a key aspect of her subordination” (170). Rosewarne painfully narrates episode after episode where her settling for “crumbs” clearly left her disempowered.

But perhaps the most interesting challenge that infidelity poses for feminism is the question that Rosewarne proposes in the title of her book. Are we cheating on the sisterhood by getting involved with a committed man? This is a thorny issue, particularly since the first question to be asked is whether, in the first place, there is *a* sisterhood or multiple sisterhoods? While female friendship and companionship are idealized in our culture, “the darker side of sisterhood,” as Rosewarne calls it, is a well-known fact: “it is other women whom we most vigorously compete with” (38). Is this lack of unity, this lack of solidarity, the product of our multiple identities? (41) Could our lack of a “single, macro sisterhood” be the product of patriarchy? Of women competing for male attention? (51) Rosewarne seems to answer affirmatively to all of these questions: “Although I contend that no singular sisterhood exists, this is neither a situation existing because of a biological imperative for women to be spiteful, mean, or malicious nor because of an innate yen to be competitive; rather it is spawned from unequal power relations between men and women. Infidelity is a perfect case study to examine women undermining sisterhoods, as well as men facilitating, and encouraging, such behavior” (41). While Rosewarne argues that there is no single sisterhood—our culture of fractured identities, heightened individualism, and patriarchal structures get in the way of such a construction—she insists that both women tend to become disempowered in affairs.

How then does Rosewarne, the feminist, justify her involvement in such an unequal relationship? This is a question that I kept asking myself from the time I began to learn how emotionally abusive this relationship was. While Rosewarne attempts to rationalize her decision based on factors such as “the demographic issue of the man drought” in countries like Australia (13), the culture of compulsive heterosexuality and celebration of heterosexual coupling (12), society’s belief in the individual’s right to pursue pleasure (72), as well as a consumer culture that values newness and disposable objects (chapter 5), time and again I found myself wondering (as did her friends and family) why she stayed. In addition to “cultural forces” that might induce us to enter into an affair, Rosewarne does indeed

put forth strong arguments which point to how our capacity to experience sexual pleasure outside traditional forms of coupling and committed relationships can indeed be a feminist practice of empowerment. However, it doesn't necessarily follow that this must come at the price of feeling anxious, rejected, manipulated, and disempowered. In a chapter entitled "Ouch! Don't Stop! Infidelity as Sadomasochism," Rosewarne highlights how the issues of consent and choice become highly problematic in affairs. While "safewords" exist in sadomasochistic sexual activities, for example, giving those involved the freedom to explore different forms of dominance and submission, there is no such "safeword" in affairs. While the affair gives participants freedom to explore relationships outside of "prescriptive" committed relationships, this freedom is *hindered* by the fact that there is no "safeword" available to stop a relationship that has gotten out of hand. "While the single woman may have chosen to get involved," Rosewarne argues,

while she may have even chosen to be in a situation that she knew could be highly painful, can she ever *really* consent to the amount of pain that might transpire?...The safeword exists in sadomasochism because it is acknowledged that a situation where pain is sought and consented to can easily get out of hand. In infidelity, the single woman may be in a situation more painful than she would ever have consented to, but she stays and her pain continues. (180, author's italics)

Can one really gain empowerment if one is in a situation which one has no control over, as Rosewarne describes her affair? Without a "safeword," it seems like experimenting with dominance and submission is not only risky business, as Rosewarne knew, but extremely disempowering. Is this the kind of relationship we would want for our sisters, whomever we choose to include in such a category?

Rosewarne seems to grant towards the end of the book, and the end of her story, that desire trumps politics: "knowing that certain behavior conflicts with feminism is insufficient to eliminate desire and nor is it enough incentive to deprive ourselves of it. Feminist politics, no matter how ardent, are unlikely to drown out desires in a culture that encourages their sating. To pretend that a desire does not exist can mean denying the aspects of our identities that makes us individuals" (114). Yes, desire exists, and it often trumps politics, but this is *precisely* where feminist critiques can and must step in. Desire has been well researched in feminist scholarship, particularly in the area of psychoanalysis, since desire is heavily implicated in structures of domination, especially patriarchal ones. Because for Rosewarne politics can do nothing when confronted with desire, feminist critique can only go so far. In her understanding, feminism becomes a means, a "tool," for analyzing action, for critical self-awareness. "Sure, feminism became an important framework for me to intellectualize my behavior and his behavior and hers, but it was a tool. It was a reference point and it was a tactic of rationalization. But politics could never be as important to me as the experience. ...To do what I thought would bring me pleasure, would bring me *empowerment*. And I used feminism to analyze it" (238). A politically relevant feminist critique can and must be allowed more force than this.

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## **Contemporary Feminist Theory and Activism: Six Global Issues**

Wendy Lynne Lee (Buffalo, NY: Broadview Press, 2010). 244 pp. ISBN 1551119048 \$29.95

**Reviewed by Margaret A. Crouch**  
*Eastern Michigan University; [mcrouch@emich.edu](mailto:mcrouch@emich.edu)*

The new century has given rise to reconsiderations of many twentieth-century preoccupations. Wendy Lynne Lee's collection of essays uses the analysis of six critical issues facing the world today to redefine feminism for the twenty-first century, or, at least, to demonstrate the limitations of major conceptions of feminism of the late twentieth century. The book is best described as a collection of essays, for the structure of the work is not a linear argument, or even the application of a clearly defined perspective to different issues. Rather, it is primarily a work in applied philosophy, employing the critical tools of the discipline to argue for a feminism that is broad enough to be relevant to understanding and addressing any and all of the critical issues of our day, from climate change to terrorism to globalization in all its permutations. A form of socialist feminism informed primarily by critical theory and globalization emerges from the theoretical tools employed in the analyses of the issues. The argument for this new critical feminist perspective consists primarily in its usefulness for illuminating connections between a wide array of seemingly disparate topics. In the course of the analyses of these topics, the primary opponents of feminism in the contemporary world emerge: religious fundamentalism and free market capitalism.

This is an ambitious book, with multiple aims articulated for the book as a whole, as well as for each chapter. In the introduction, Lee states the primary aims for the book: (1) to "demonstrate the relevance of feminist theorizing to issues that may seem less directly about the status and emancipation of women...but which...are more relevant now than ever" (8-9); (2) to "show how feminist thinking can usefully illuminate the conceptual, political, economic, and morally relevant links between a range of pressing contemporary issues" (9); and (3) to show that feminist theorizing has the capacity to "elucidate some of the key relationships among seemingly disparate issues that are likely to define the twenty-first century" (9). To accomplish these aims, Lee chooses to address six global issues: sexual identities, reproductive technology, global economic inequality, the culture industry, religious fundamentalism, and the environment. These are all already recognizable issues of concern for feminists, but Lee chooses these particular issues for analysis because they are being transformed by the introduction of new technologies and the effects of globalization. These transformations call into question older conceptions of feminism and feminist analyses of these issues, thus demonstrating both the need for a different conception of feminism, and for understanding the relevance of feminism to issues that are now more complex and more clearly connected to other emancipatory movements.

For example, in Chapter II, "Sexual Identities: Institutionalized Discrimination, Medical/Technological Possibility, and the (Slow) Death of Binary Nature," Lee lists four contemporary events that have transformed feminist analyses of sexual identity. These are: (1) state legislation that aims to make heterosexuality "the only legitimate expression of sexual desire" (15); (2) technologies that make possible multiple combinations of sex and gender; (3) the challenges to "social and religious institutions such as marriage and 'the family'"

posed by transsexual identity (16); and (4) the emergence of a global market in sex-assignment procedures. Ultimately, Lee seeks to show that current battles over sexual identity are also struggles over what it means to be a citizen, and, ultimately, a human being. According to Lee, it should be feminists and their allies who help to articulate the meanings of these concepts, rather than ceding to religious fundamentalists.

Lee focuses on SB 1250, a bill that proposed an amendment to the Constitution of Pennsylvania: “No union other than a marriage between one man and one woman shall be valid or recognized as marriage or the functional equivalent of marriage by the Commonwealth” (quoted, 18). As Lee points out, the proposed amendment assumes that everyone *is*, or can be identified, as either a man or a woman. However, our knowledge of biology demonstrates this is not true, and technology has made it possible for people to change from one to another, or to something in between. And yet, sex-reassignment surgery, which many believe to be an emancipatory and progressive development, is based on the same binary logic. But, then, so is the sort of feminist identity politics that is premised on a conception of “woman” that is opposed to “man.” So, we have religion (a primary motivation for SB 1250 and similar legislation) and feminism and other progressives all making the same faulty assumption.

After exposing the faulty logic underlying these different approaches to sexual identity, Lee poses the critical question for feminists: If feminists must give up on identity politics, based on some common conception of “woman,” what does feminism become? According to Lee, the question for feminism must be transformed from something like, “How do we emancipate women?” to, “How do we create a livable world based on the values of ‘emancipation, mutual respect, tenacity, compassion, and joyfulness?’” (43) But Lee recognizes that such a question requires an answer to the further question, “A livable world...for whom?” (44) Lee does not answer this question, but convincingly demonstrates that this is at least part of what is at issue between religious fundamentalists, who want to reconstruct and shore up binary sexual identity, and those who do not. Part of this demonstration is a turn to Haraway (whose work figures prominently in this collection) to emphasize that it is not just sexual identity that is constructed, but human beings themselves. Technology is increasingly challenging the boundaries not only between men and women, but between human and non-human. So, if feminism’s task is to create a livable world, for whom is it to be livable? Here, Lee emphasizes the role of the market in defining the context of the post-modern human being. To take the example of sex-reassignment procedures, a website for a prominent Bangkok clinic lists its “products” and their prices, for example, “Secondary Labiaplasty: \$3,000” (46). This is sexual identity as a product, and body as a commodity, available to anyone who can afford it. What is available depends on demand, as with any market-driven industry. And, ironically, this aspect of the “culture industry” is in demand precisely because of those who want everyone to be either man or woman, especially religious fundamentalists. Their intolerance for fluid sexual identity leads to the creation of “men” and “women” who fit the categories, but also do not.

Lee never does answer the question of what to do about the culture wars around the definitions of “sexual identity” and “human being,” but it is a great service to have demonstrated the underlying struggles for power and how much can be shared by apparent opponents in those struggles.

Lee’s chapter on reproductive technology, “Reproductive Technology and the Global Exploitation of Women’s Sexuality,” shows how she believes feminist bioethics *ought* to be done.

She takes up issues surrounding IVF in order to explore “some of the thorniest issues of feminist bioethics” (57). Just as Thailand has become a Mecca for sex-reassignment surgery, India has become the place to go for surrogates. Wealthy Westerners operate through agencies to have a woman impregnated using IVF technologies, pay a fee, of which some goes to the surrogate, and get, in return, a healthy child. Why go to India? Because it is easier (fewer regulations) and much, much cheaper. And this is because the women who “choose” to serve as surrogates are among the most vulnerable. Feminists have analyzed such practices from the perspectives of socialist feminism, care ethics, and human rights; but Lee finds all of them lacking. Furthermore, it is not the technology of IVF itself that is evil, it is the way it is used. So, how should it be used? Lee points to some considerations that should frame an answer, but she does not provide an answer. She ends with a question: “How can we think about contemporary technologies as tools with which to confront oppression and justice?” (88) As in the case of the chapter on sexual identities, the value of the chapter is the analysis itself, which shows that there are no easy answers, and raising fascinating questions along the way.

Chapter VI, “Religious Fundamentalism, Terrorism and the ‘New’ Anti-Feminism,” was, for me, the most fascinating chapter. Lee relies heavily on Rosalind Petchesky’s “Phantom Towers: Reflections on the Battle between Global Capitalism and Fundamentalist Terrorists”<sup>1</sup> to analyze the relationship between free-market capitalism and religious causes of international terrorism. Petchesky argues that terrorist recruits often come from the economically disenfranchised, and that their economic situation is in part traceable to U.S. corporate and financial interests, but that the leaders of the terrorists, such as Osama bin Laden, are also motivated in part by just the same economic benefits as those Western economic institutions. Lee uses Petchesky’s explanation of the causes and motivations of terrorism to take on critics of feminist perspectives, especially Daphne Patai and Phyllis Chesler, who brand as “unpatriotic” anyone who criticizes Western free-market capitalism, and who label feminists who do not condemn radical Islam for its oppression of women “un-feminist” or “inconsistent.” After examining Patai and Chesler’s writings on these issues, Lee concludes that there is no real argument for either of these claims, and that what is really behind the attack is the ideological assertion that Christianity is right and good and Islam wrong and oppressive.

In response to this ideological claim, Lee compares Hajja Faiza, a Muslim woman in Cairo, with Sarah Palin. Faiza shows how, “within the context of instruction to piety—to become a better Muslim—...women can become agents of their own decision making” (176), thus showing that Islam is not necessarily wrong and oppressive to women. Palin, an advocate of Patai and Chesler’s view, does not want to allow American women to be agents of their own decision making with regard to reproduction. Who is more like the Taliban, the Muslim woman or the Christian woman? “Palin’s claim that women should be ‘empowered’ only to make the decision supported by her religious fundamentalism is plainly doublespeak, and in this respect is no different than the Taliban’s insistence that Islamic women are ‘free’ only when they are protected from Western influence and their own evil impulses” (185).

Lee’s chapter on the environment, Chapter VII, “Ecological Feminism: A Critical Praxis for the Future as Now,” brings a feminist perspective to the overwhelming environmental issues facing us: climate change, deforestation, pollution, the depletion of fossil fuels, the extinction of species, etc. According to Lee, one of the main causes of these problems is a philosophical perspective on non-human nature that is rooted



in Christianity. Lee claims that “sexuality, gender, and race” each play a role in supporting the human chauvinism that is destroying the earth. In supporting this claim, Lee explores the practice of anthropomorphizing and the ways in which it carries with it assumptions about what is normal, or natural: “We anthropomorphize when we attribute human characteristics to nonhuman animals, and in so doing elevate their status, and we animalize when we attribute ‘animal’ or ‘bestly’ characteristics to human beings, but in doing so devalue their status” (202). In an insightful discussion of anthropomorphizing and race, Lee analyzes the phenomenon of the Barack Obama Sock Monkey Puppet, and criticizes Patricia Hill Collins’ explanation of the demeaning practice of comparing African Americans men to animals. Collins says that calling an African American man a “buck,” for example, demeans him by denying his humanity, and characterizing him as having the characteristics of nonhuman animals. But Lee says that this does not go far enough, and is chauvinistic in its turn: it assumes that nonhuman animals are inferior and that their commodification is just. “What’s troubling is that by making the comparison of African men and women to nonhuman animals solely about its consequences for human beings...Collins effectively condones the view that exploitation is bad because it’s bad for us, but this creates another ‘other’: this ‘bad’ is not bad for any nonhuman ‘them’” (211).

Lee’s recommendation is “an alternative approach grounded in analyses of the patterns of oppression and exploitation institutionalized via the logic of domination” that draws “comparisons between the factors connecting, for example, the ‘resource first’ justification of aerial wolf hunting to other forms of genocide, or the suffering of individual cows to other forms of commodification. Such comparisons demonstrate the profoundly racialized, sexed, and gendered reality of precisely the chauvinism that is responsible for unnecessary human and nonhuman animal suffering and environmental deterioration...the same logic is behind both” (215-216). I quote this at length because I believe it to be the clearest expression of Lee’s overall approach in this set of essays.

It is telling, I think, that the last chapter of the text is titled “Epilogue: Life as Activism.” The title of the book is *Contemporary Feminist Theory and Activism*, but there is actually very little explicit discussion of activism. This is not to say that what Lee does have to say about what it means to be a feminist activist is not interesting—there is just not enough of it to warrant the title.

I cannot do justice to the range of issues addressed, or the insights and connections that emerge, in these essays. Lee’s attention to the differences in feminist thinking and action that globalization and technology ought to make is much to be praised. This book is essential for anyone interested in the feminism or any of the many issues addressed in these enlightening essays.

#### Endnotes

1. Rosalind Petchesky, “Phantom Towers: Feminist Reflections on the Battle between Global Capitalism and Fundamentalist Terrorists,” in *Nothing Sacred: Women Respond to Religious Fundamentalism and Terror*, ed. Betsy Reed and Katha Pollit (New York: Nation Books, 2002), 357-72.

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## *The Feminine Matrix of Sex and Gender in Classical Athens*

Kate Gilhuly (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009). 208 pp. \$84.00 (Hardback), ISBN 978-0-521-89998-7

Reviewed by **Lisa A. Wilkinson**

Nebraska Wesleyan University;  
[lwilkins@nebrwesleyan.edu](mailto:lwilkins@nebrwesleyan.edu)

This sensitively written and profoundly relevant book challenges the assumption that representations of a sex/gender system in classical Athenian literature form a coherent image of a “masculine” or “feminine” subject. Rather, “the incongruities in representations of the feminine” (6) that exist between four male-authored texts signify a general incoherence in the Athenian sex/gender system. The co-existence of opposing discursive strategies for sexuality and gender implies not only that “the Athenians had more than one way of thinking and talking about sex and gender,” but the discernible varieties of the ways they do think and talk about sex/gender afford us a robust “heterogeneity of discourse” that can provide “an escape hatch from the binary structure that has shaped the discussion of ancient sexuality” (9).

Gilhuly avoids gender binarism by proposing a “multivalent feminine” discursive strategy, a matrix that configures relationships between “the prostitute, the wife, and the priestess or other ritual agent” (2) in texts attributed to pseudo-Demosthenes, Plato, Xenophon, and Aristophanes. The “feminine matrix” represents a feminine continuum, allowing “for one type of woman to be defined in relation to others” (3) rather than in opposition to masculine and male typologies. This method is thoroughly appropriate to her project of illuminating “a classical Athenian ideological structure” (24) in which “gender is a powerful organizing rubric” (5); although the feminine roles that configure the matrix “are being calibrated for an audience of men” (12), Gilhuly shows how each author’s use and appropriation of the matrix is “integral to the project of constructing the masculine self” (12), i.e., how male authors negotiate the “complex nuances” of appropriate Athenian civic behavior and identity through “projection onto the feminine continuum” (22). Since these male-authored texts have “less to say about the actual roles of women than they convey about Athenian masculine identity” (29), Gilhuly’s project highlights how significant the “negotiation” of feminine roles was to the construction of Athenian masculinity as well as how incoherent was that construction. She explains: “my analysis demands that we understand the incongruities in representations of the feminine as a sign of the incoherence of the masculine self...the co-existence of different strategies for representing women... implies that masculinity is not a rationalized whole” (6).

The three roles that configure the “feminine matrix,” the prostitute, the wife, and the ritual agent, represent “a range of civic spheres—the marketplace, government and social institutions, and the religious sector” (23). While each civic sphere seems to generate its own scripts for appropriate behavior and identity, the “persistent association” of one type of feminine role with another in the Athenian public transcript suggests how “each feminine type symbolizes a realm of masculine identity” and how each realm can be “understood in relation to the others” (23). Taken all together, the types represent “different ends of a spectrum that might be described as ‘a symbolic world of transactions’” (23). Transactions in classical Athenian life are regulated between long-range and short-term



exchanges, between “maintaining a static and timeless order” over the long-term and the “luxury, competition, individual appropriation, sensuality, and youthful exuberance” (24) of the short-term. Although long-term and short-term exchanges are meant to be kept separate, their relationship is complicated by “graduating temporal and moral commitments” (23): short-term exchanges can be converted for “the purposes of the long-term order,” but the converse is “morally reprehensible” (24). The “moral code” that connects and distinguishes differing realms of exchange leads one to expect that while the “prostitute” is associated with short-term exchange, the “wife” and “ritual agent” represent long-term exchange. Yet texts that represent the prostitute, the wife, and the ritual agent in relation to one another can complicate the “symbolic world of transactions”; by subverting or transgressing the boundaries between feminine types each author manipulates the matrix for his own juridical, political, or philosophic purposes. For instance, while both Plato and Xenophon appropriate the matrix to and for a new vision of Socratic pederasty in their *Symposium*, their visions are, to an extent, at cross-purposes. That male authors can and do represent a feminine continuum in ways, and for reasons, that are often in opposition to one another reinforces one of the significant claims of the work: Not only does classical Athenian literature fail to yield coherent representations of the feminine, “fractured and flexible” discourses *about the feminine* fail to yield a coherent ideology of Athenian masculine civic behavior and identity as well. Resisting the “relentless polarization of male and female in Athenian literature” (3), one of Gilhuly’s goals is “to intervene at the juncture between gender studies and the history of sexuality” (10) by presenting a more nuanced or “complex feminine” for our “richer understanding of the construction of ancient sexuality” (10). As Gilhuly notes, scholars who embrace feminist theory and scholars concerned with issues of gender and sexuality in ancient texts face “the problem of the feminist’s relation to textual material” (5) that is, almost in its entirety, composed and performed by and for men. The prostitute and the ritual agent, however, “were women who performed in public” (9), their behaviors and identities were scripted by and through a public transcript that configures them as types in relation to a less public type, “the wife.” Making explicit the constraints, regulations, and “contradictory impulses evident in Athenian representations of women” illuminates the dynamics of an Athenian ideology of gender and sexuality as it is being constructed.

Gilhuly’s choice of texts, then, is as purposeful as it is effective. “Against Neaira,” Plato’s and Xenophon’s *Symposium*, and Aristophanes’ *Lysistrata*, are almost “canonical in the study of gender and sexuality” (25), and each text—in its own ways—represents “the prostitute, the wife, and priestess or other ritual agent” in relation to one another. Her “close readings” of each complete text include a wealth of historical and sociocultural detail, inviting readers alongside her evaluations. As she says, she is reading old texts, but “in new ways,” and these new ways include presenting each text in chapters “arranged nearly in reverse chronological order” (25). Working “backward” within the period 411-343 BCE allows her to forestall assumptions of “a literary evolution” as well as recognize each author’s participation in “a shared ideology” (25), namely, the appropriation of the matrix as “an organizing principle” for an Athenian “social imaginary” (2). That this social imaginary does contain some “recourse to notions of feminine agency” (187) does not negate the instability of these notions or the “constraints under which Athenian women lived” (10). It does, however, suggest that—*then as now*—“incoherence in the public transcript” prescribing for women’s behaviors and identities provides “the possibility of contest and negotiation” (187): “Discourse is inherently unstable. It is both the means

and effect of power, but it can also be the starting point of resistance to power” (3).

In this way, readers usually not concerned with issues of gender and sexuality in ancient Athenian texts will find Gilhuly’s work relevant to their own understandings of discursive strategies and the relationships of gender and sexuality to subjectivity. The appeal of this work beyond “classics” is also in part due to the care Gilhuly takes to orient readers to the texts she analyzes and the scope of her research and thought. A full “Introduction” to her project as well as introductory passages to each chapter alert readers to Gilhuly’s theoretical commitments, the specific contexts of the literature she examines, the direction of her analysis, and reflection upon how each individual text can be situated in relation to one another. For instance, Chapter Two, “Collapsing Order: Typologies of Women in the Speech ‘Against Neaira,’” examines a pseudo-Demosthenes text representing the prosecution of Neaira, a former *hetaira* accused as “a foreigner living in illegal “marriage” with an Athenian citizen,” Stephanos (30). In Gilhuly’s reading, the primary narrator of the speech, Apollodorus, never proves the claim against Neaira, rather he “uses gender in a juridical maneuver” (31) to ostracize Stephanos; the genuine accused is an Athenian male whose prostitute/wife collapses distinctions in the transactional order “constitutive of Athenian masculine identity” (57). On the other hand, Xenophon’s *Symposium* (Chapter Four, “Bringing the *Polis* Home: Private Performance and the Civic Gaze in Xenophon’s *Symposium*), can be read as a discursive attempt to reverse the order of these distinctions, “to eroticize the wife...[in order] to demonstrate Socrates’ commitment to Athenian interests” (139). Yet, while both of these texts “share a commitment to civic health” (139) that is regulated and sustained within a heterosexual paradigm, Plato’s Socrates (Chapter Three, “Why is Diotima a Priestess? The Feminine Continuum in Plato’s *Symposium*) appropriates the matrix in order to transcend gender and sexuality, in order “to ascend into a realm beyond embodiment, beyond reproduction, and ultimately beyond the *polis*” (97). Alternatively, Aristophanes (Chapter Five, “Sex and Sacrifice in Aristophanes’ *Lysistrata*) superimposes the prostitute and the priestess, collapsing distinctions between “sex and ritual” for a superficially comic effect that actually conceals “a violent undertone to the play” (140). Within and between four male-authored texts, then, the feminine matrix refocuses “a spectrum of reference through which various aspects of sex and gender, both male and female, become culturally legible” (13).

In “Conclusion” Gilhuly offers a summary of the similarities, oppositions, and possible discursive intents of the four texts examined. She also discusses some of the theoretical implications of her evaluations. To the extent that our own social taxonomies continue to preclude some subjects from even “the possibility of contest and negotiation,” Gilhuly’s work and its implications form a significant effort against that trend.

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## ***The Promise of Happiness***

Sara Ahmed (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2010). 315 pp. \$23.95. ISBN 978-0-8223-4725-5

**Reviewed by Ami Harbin**

*Dalhousie University*; [amiharbin@dal.ca](mailto:amiharbin@dal.ca)

In this book, Sara Ahmed offers a crucial corrective—contra traditional figures who have taken happiness for granted as a basic element of the good life for all, happiness is not an unproblematic end, not equally available to all individuals, and

not straightforwardly reflective of what is essentially valuable for our lives. Ahmed flags recent trends in self-help, policy, and economics towards “the science of happiness.” She argues that “the happiness turn” has recently made it harder than ever to see the way that happiness positions particular norms (and not others) as not just normal, but *good*. She reads the history of moral and political philosophy as in part a “history of happiness” which characterizes happiness as being simply whatever we want, where the content of what we want varies amongst philosophical schools. The book is meant to provide a counter-history, a “history of unhappiness,” which, like the tradition it counters, is driven partly by the sense that the phenomenon for which it gives a history has been and remains central and motivating to the lives of many.

*The Promise of Happiness* is the next in a series of Ahmed’s interventions in social and political philosophy, following *Differences that Matter* (Cambridge 1998); *Strange Encounters* (Routledge 2000); *The Cultural Politics of Emotion* (Routledge 2004); and *Queer Phenomenology* (Duke 2006). Ahmed remains interested in experience, embodiment, and offers critical perspectives on the harms of particular normative systems. She approaches crucial questions from unanticipated directions: like her other texts, this reads as gripping, novel, and provocative.

The book works from feminist, anti-racist, and queer theory and politics to engage with major figures in the history of philosophy (Plato, Aristotle, Hume, Bentham, Mill, Marx, Marcuse, Locke, Rousseau, Wollstonecraft, Schopenhauer, Leibniz, and others), from a sustained focus on the limits of the tradition’s history of happiness. It won’t speak solely to philosophers, though it is certainly an important text for feminist, political, and moral philosophers writing now. As Ahmed claims, “Of all the words we can think of as ‘emotion words,’ as words that operate as if they are signs of emotion, *happiness* seems the most pointed because happiness has been so closely tied to ethics. For some, the good life is the happy life. Or the virtuous person is the happy person. Or the best society is the happiest society. ... We need to consider the intimacy of happiness and ethics in order to appreciate more fully the weightiness of happiness as a word” (204-205).

Ahmed structures the book around the “unhappy archives” she draws from figures who have tended to be marginalized or excluded from happiness: feminists, queers, migrants, and revolutionaries. She draws on accessible, contemporary references throughout: films, *Educating Rita*, *Happy-Go-Lucky*, *The Hours*, *If These Walls Could Talk 2*, *Bend it Like Beckham*, *East is East*, *Children of Men*, and *The Island*; and novels/stories, *Family Happiness*, *The Mill on the Floss*, *Ruby Fruit Jungle*, *The Bluest Eye*, *Spring Fire*, *The Well of Loneliness*, *Anita and Me*, *Brave New World*, and “The People Who Walked Away from Omelas.”

The book begins with a concerted explanation of what Ahmed will throughout refer to as “happy objects,” where “objects” refers to physical things as well as to values, practices, and plans. Feelings are attributed to objects, making some objects “happiness causes” and others not. By virtue of social involvements structured by capitalism, colonialism, heteronormativity, and other systems of harm, we inherit the expectations that some objects (e.g., marriages, houses, children) are good and will make us happy, and the expectations that others will not. Ahmed’s argument for the contingency rather than intrinsic character of happy objects is complex and important for the rest of the book: it decenters the thought that happiness reflects value that already resides in some objects rather than others. It’s not that heterosexual marriage simply *is* good and therefore likely to make us happy; rather,

good feelings have been attributed to marriage, making them happiness causes. Happiness causes become reified within a self-affirming social system unless or until (and too often despite the fact that) many people find themselves unhappy within it. Rhetorics of happiness have been powerful in shaping the ways individuals see our lives and options for action and the pursuit of happiness, construed in particular ways, can become a duty: we ought to be happy. Ahmed analyses the way that the duty to be happy translates into expectations of what we owe each other, of what we are owed, of what we ought to do, and of what will follow from certain patterns of action.

In “Feminist Killjoys,” Ahmed begins by examining the genealogy of the unhappy housewife, highlighting the ways that women and other marginalized individuals can be taught to align their desires with the desires of others (e.g., parents, husbands) with the goal of preserving the happiness of all. Women have responded to the duty to reorient their desire toward the common good sometimes by passing as happy, but at other times, as the feminist archives of Friedan, Butler, Frye, Lorde, hooks, Firestone, and others show, by refusing to obscure their own unhappiness. Feminists become troublemakers and killjoys when they raise unhappy topics and refuse to participate in ways of being that eclipse the unhappiness of some with the happiness of others; the angry black woman and the woman who refuses to smile unless she is pleased are examples of such figures. Feminist consciousness-raising is in part education about what has been “concealed by signs of happiness” (86). Ahmed concludes with a suggestion that we revitalize the feminist critique of the positioning of happiness as the ideal framework for thinking about rights, responsibilities, and politics, and points toward the need to draw nearer to unhappiness in feminist work.

In “Unhappy Queers,” Ahmed examines the unhappiness of the queer archive, which gets made unhappy through the queer’s inability to have a happy ending: to settle into a world, to follow heteronorms of relationship, and to reproduce. The too-typical response of parents who say “But I just want you to be happy” when their children come out highlights the ways in which parents can be worried less about queerness itself and more about the queer child’s destiny to be unhappy. Yet the unhappiness of queer lives is not without promise: it can offer or necessitate new modes of kinship and can maintain queers’ clarity of vision about the unhappiness of others. For these and other reasons, Ahmed argues, we need to be cautious of inclinations to make central visions of the “happy queer,” which can threaten to make homonormativity rather than queerness a straightforward object of attention.

In “Melancholy Migrants,” Ahmed draws attention to the figure of the foreigner who arrives but does not affectively assimilate, remaining melancholically attached to what they have lost. If happiness is being propelled forward into the future, the melancholic migrant remains unhappy as she remains attached to parts of the past that cannot be retrieved. The task of the migrant is to be sufficiently happy to repay the citizenship she has been granted; yet migrant memoirs draw attention to the unhappiness of leaving, arriving, and of staying where one is out of place. The whitewashing project of converting migrants to British and otherwise imperialist ways of being happy fails to accomplish its most important colonialist goal of putting the past behind us. As Ahmed argues, the migrant’s unhappiness signals “the persistence of histories that cannot be wished away by happiness” (159).

In “Happy Futures,” Ahmed focuses on the future-orientedness of happiness in terms of political struggle, suggesting that happiness might depend on their being a future, and that political struggle might be “a struggle over happiness,

in the recognition that the future might be a time of loss” (163). Unhappiness can be characteristic of revolutionaries, but does not automatically indicate political right-headedness or serve as a predictor of efficacy. The affect of the revolutionary is complex, sometimes taking on hope which covers over suffering, sometimes refusing both happiness and the desire for it. Ahmed’s focus remains on the promise of refusing happiness which too often marginalizes the other’s suffering. As she summarizes one of her main claims, “It is not that unhappiness becomes our telos: rather, if we no longer presume happiness is our telos, unhappiness would register as more than what gets in the way” (195).

The chapters are self-contained but all aim at establishing an archive of the promise of unhappiness, and at securing the main point that an exclusive focus on happiness will neglect the lives and experiences of those who are not made happy by the proper objects. Throughout, Ahmed draws attention to affects that do not participate in “happiness ethics”—promoting the freedom to be unhappy, and to be happy in inappropriate ways (e.g., silliness).

Ahmed’s intervention can be experienced as a jolt: the assumption that happiness is something to be argued for rather than argued about, the taken-for-granted starting point for so much of moral and political philosophy that the task is to make ourselves and others as happy as we deserve to be, is shown to be an assumption, and then shown to be questionable. This is a bold and innovative text, which could both benefit scholars and be drawn on usefully in classrooms.

Ahmed’s challenge is compelling, and it leaves questions to be grappled with. We might simply ask why Ahmed stops where she does. Having convincingly demonstrated why the history provided by many of the “greats” in western philosophy has been limited and exclusory, having centralized and expanded on major voices from the margins to outline a counter-history, and having offered a building, powerful critique of the persistent problem of failing to question whose and what kinds of values are endorsed in traditional accounts of “the good life,” Ahmed concludes with more interest in allowing freedom for unhappiness than freedom to re-envision happiness. I wonder about the possibility of further reworking happiness as a less unquestioned, more critically available resource for thinking about moral and political aims. Because historically only certain paths have been available under structures of happiness does not mean that new paths cannot be created, new objects of happiness be affirmed, informed by the experience and desires of those who resist traditional objects. This question parallels one particular to the queer context: just because we have inherited heteronorms about identity, partnership, and family cannot mean that the only option for queers is to depart from social inheritances. There must be avenues for reworking norms, reworking inheritances, and, bolstered by Ahmed’s critique, for reconsidering the good of being happy.

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## ***Universal Human Rights in a World of Difference***

Brooke A. Ackerly (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge UP, 2008). 388 pp. \$33.99. ISBN 978-0521707558

### **Reviewed by Jane Mummery**

*University of Ballarat, [j.mummery@ballarat.edu.au](mailto:j.mummery@ballarat.edu.au)*

We need to and can begin only where we are, and we are, Brooke Ackerly stresses, in a terrain of “disagreement, value and

political pluralism, and epistemological dissensus” (46, original emphasis). We are in a terrain of changing material conditions and complex inter-imbrications of political, economic, and socio-cultural structures, a terrain in which we can be sure that “there is inhumane treatment of some humans occurring now, somewhere” (215), or in which we cannot ever be sure that such treatment is not occurring. This is the terrain of insecurity and inequality, and of attempts to make insecurities and inequalities visible and thereby addressable. This is also the terrain of disputes about how to best achieve this, disputes that play out in both practical and scholarly contexts, involving both activists and political theorists. This finally is also the terrain of Ackerly’s book, *Universal Human Rights in a World of Difference*.

In beginning with this world of difference a reader might expect Ackerly to frame her title as a question, to ask whether there are in fact universal human rights in a world of difference. This would be a mistake. Certainly Ackerly recognizes the draw of cultural relativisms; like relativists she is convinced that rights claims are culturally embedded and understood (“What isn’t?” she asks (84)), but, she contends with Tariq Ramadan, relativist arguments too easily confuse the recognition of values and rights claims as contextual with respect for them as contextual. Ackerly rather argues for an approach able to affirm both the diversity of our world and the universality of human rights. This approach, however, cannot therefore ground itself in any ideal theory, by which Ackerly—drawing productively from John Rawls’ distinction between ideal and non-ideal theory—means any theory that “begins with a methodological assumption of universal agreement, political consensus despite value pluralism, and shared standards for justification” (46). Such theory, after all, does not reflect where we actually are.

Ackerly instead argues for an approach to and account of human rights that retains universality in important ways, but is theoretically non-ideal and thereby immanent, that is feminist activist informed rather than transcendently justified. Such an approach and account, however, must be able to remain attentive to diversity and disagreement without marking an abandonment of a certain universality; that of the ubiquitousness of power, of continued dispute, and of an “epistemological obligation to challenge the unexamined, the absent, and the silent” (33). Ackerly demands, in other words, a universality that is normatively legitimated, and this, in her view, can be extrapolated from the commitments and discourse of women’s human rights theory and activism. Such commitments in turn mark one of the key drawcards of this book; Ackerly’s approach privileges the local experiences and voices of human rights activists met and interviewed at various human rights fora and heard through email questionnaires and the exchanges taking place in online working groups. And it is on the basis of the cacophony of these voices—as opposed to any basis promised by foundational or transcendental principles—that Ackerly argues for the dynamic nature, indivisibility, and inter-relatedness of human rights, and that human rights can only be secured by working across the full “fabric of social, political, and economic life” (211).

The delivery of this approach and account comprises the scope and argument of the book. Dividing her argument into three main sections, Ackerly’s concern in Section 1 is to tease out key theoretical and methodological concerns that underpin universal human rights theory. Here she ranges from a detailed examination of the ideal universal human rights theory of John Rawls, to consideration of the various human rights theories proposed by Charles Taylor, Joshua Cohen, and Martha Nussbaum, describing the work of Taylor, Cohen, and Nussbaum as seeking to ground a universal theory of human

rights on a foundational principle drawn from within the context of human experience. Whilst Ackerly applauds the refocusing of human rights on the immanent by all three, and indeed is able to identify key components for an immanent and universal theory of human rights within their works, she contends finally that Taylor, Cohen, and Nussbaum are all eventually unable to realize such a theory, each being at the end insufficiently reflective on her or his epistemological assumptions.

It is on the basis of these critical examinations that Ackerly is able, in Section 2, to propose a method for her non-ideal immanent and universal theory of human rights. This includes not just the delineation of her epistemological perspective—a productive conception she terms “curb-cut feminism,” drawn from the activist model of the American Disabilities movement (134)—but her methods for both data collection and analysis. As she stresses in this section, it is imperative here for her theory that her epistemological perspective and methods for collecting and analyzing data reflect an attentiveness to difference, dissent, and silence, as well as demonstrating the capacity for sceptical self-scrutiny, for the theory itself to be reworked through practice. After all, as she stresses, her methodology can only be based on “imperfect practice, not on a[ny] transcendental or epistemological authority” (195), and it must therefore be responsive to this imperfection.

In Section 3 Ackerly offers an exposition of her theory in practice, demonstrating both how it might be used by both theorists and activists, as well as showing how it obligates all of us to be aware of and to try to end human rights violations. Specifically she shows us here that commonplace (theoretical and practical) reasons for foreclosing our own social criticism with regard to human rights violations are not sufficient. Immanent and universal human rights theory marks obligations to work through the cacophony, the terrain of difficulty that is human rights, to “take on the responsibility of ongoing, attentive listening, of shared learning, thinking differently through epistemological and normative differences” (235). It is the responsibility of building stronger bridges and making stronger circles.

Ackerly’s book overall is complex, theoretically dense in parts, but extremely rewarding. She delivers an insightful and convincing argument for re-reading human rights debates through central insights from feminist epistemologies, for partnered engagements of human rights activists with academic political theorists, and for the difficulties of traversing the terrains of human rights disputes to not be seen as insuperable. This is a book that will challenge and reward readers engaged in all aspects of the terrain of difficulty that is human rights, along with political theorists, feminist and gender studies scholars, and researchers of social movements. I cannot recommend this book enough.

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## ***The Book of Peace***

Christine de Pizan. Edited by Karen Green, Constant J. Mews, and Janice Pinder. (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2008). 347 pp. \$75 U.S. (hardcover); \$25 U.S. (paperback). ISBN: 978-0271033976 (paperback).

**Reviewed by Sarah Tyson**  
*Vanderbilt University*

In an essay discussing the difficult work of reclaiming women in the history of philosophy, Eileen O’Neill observes:

Determining the philosophical value of a text requires that we first understand the context in which a text was written, what its philosophical goals are, what the argumentational strategies are, and so on. Accomplishing all this in the absence of any preexisting critical and historical literature on the text is very difficult. It typically takes many scholars, working hard for some time, before we can properly interpret, and thus be in a position to evaluate the philosophical significance of, a text. (O’Neill 2005, 194)

In the case of most women philosophers prior to the twentieth century, such work is just leaving the beginning stages. Happily, that is not so with Christine de Pizan. There has been twenty years of attention, through translation and interpretive scholarship, that has made De Pizan’s thought accessible to modern readers and helped establish its philosophical significance.

The editors of *The Book of Peace* situate this volume as part of the effort by offering “this translation of De Pizan’s last major work” (5). In so doing, they undersell their project. This volume is a wonderful introduction to De Pizan’s work that also advances scholarship on her political writing. The editors have not only shown the importance of the antecedent scholarship and offer interventions into interpretive questions, they have also produced a superlative work of reclamation. In this volume are: an essay by Karen Green that orients a reader to De Pizan’s life, times, and corpus and, thereby, helps to create more competent readers of her; an essay by Constant Mews on the literary sources De Pizan used in *The Book of Peace* that gives fascinating insight into the work of reconstructing a medieval author’s sources (supplemented by an easy to navigate and rich appendix of literary sources); an essay on the manuscripts from which the translation was rendered by Tania Van Hemelryck that illuminates the difficulties of establishing a source text; and notes by Janice Pinder on both the French text presented in this volume and the English translation with insights into the decisions the editors made in presenting this text and its translation. All in all, the front matter of the book offers readers access to a creature that is often not believed to exist—a well-educated woman philosopher in the medieval period. That alone recommends it.

Of course, the heart of the book is De Pizan’s advice to Louis of Guyenne. Written at a time when the King of France, Charles VI, was often unable to rule due to mental illness, and the queen, Isabeau, had to work around limitations to her authority put in place by men prone to fighting each other for more power, *The Book of Peace* was De Pizan’s third address to the young heir to the throne. De Pizan began writing it after Louis helped to establish a short-lived peace in the midst of hostile clashes between rival dukes and, thus, after praising God, she lavishly praises the prince. De Pizan wrote the last two sections of the book after the peace failed and was re-established. Louis’s hand in the re-establishment of the peace leads her to praise him again in the second section. Praise is not, however, the overall tenor of De Pizan’s address to the prince. Her focus is nurturing the prince’s vocation as a peacemaker and steering him away from the libertinage and indulgence in music for which he had also gained a reputation.

To that end, De Pizan has advice on everything from how to give gifts and ensure that everyone is properly dressed (no one ought to be allowed to dress above their station) to how to choose good counselors and avoid the punishment God metes out to cruel princes. But more than a collection of advice on varied subjects, in *The Book of Peace* De Pizan presents the importance of seven virtues for a ruler: prudence, justice, magnanimity or greatness of heart, fortitude, clemency,

liberality, and truth. De Pizan's advice flows from her views on these virtues and is meant to help the prince understand how to cultivate them. And, as Green observes, this text is "a mature formulation of her thoughts on good government" (5). *The Book of Peace* incorporates decades of thinking and writing about politics and ethics, made possible because nobles paid De Pizan for this work.

Good government for De Pizan is one in which the proper hierarchies are observed, and the virtues of the lower estates are engendered by the virtue of the monarch. The ruler's virtues will not just result in the virtue of the lower estates, but in peace that cannot be shaken by misfortune. The model of kingly virtue for De Pizan is Louis's grandfather, Charles V. A man, De Pizan is clear, who knew how to make war and keep the lands thereby gained. Peace is a domestic affair, in De Pizan's thinking, and keeping the nobles ready for armed conflict is essential to keeping proper order in the state. So is, De Pizan urges, keeping the common people in line through denying them the right to assembly and free speech (148).

Each chapter begins with a quotation from classical and Biblical authorities that De Pizan interprets with the end of showing how the virtues support a well-run kingdom. By interpreting authorities to advise a prince, De Pizan shows her erudition and claims her own authority. It is easy in the course of reading this engaging text to forget what an extraordinary act this is on the part of a medieval woman. Not only can she read, but she also purports to guide a prince in his understanding of what he reads. To claim such authority, De Pizan employs her hallmark facility with metaphors:

Although it is clear to me most noble and venerable prince (may God by his grace ever cause your fair youth to flourish), that you have always been from first childhood to the present day, admonished and guided in the way of good conduct and praiseworthy virtues by wise nobles (honest men in your circle, whom your noble nature inclines you to retain), nevertheless I, as your own creature, absorbed as I am in laborious and lonely study, have gathered fine and tender flowers from the fields of literature to make a wreath to grace your youthful brow—in order that the joy that you gave us may endure till we see you in full kingly raiment. (65)

De Pizan uses a domestic and decorative activity—that of making wreaths—combined with a picture of her own monastic toil—engaging the quintessential image of a medieval philosopher—to offer knowledge to the prince. This is a clever image: De Pizan does nothing more than gather flowers, but they are flowers that will help a prince survive to inherit the throne and survive with the virtues of a peacemaker. De Pizan authorizes herself as a philosopher by making it an activity proper to a woman.

De Pizan thus presents a challenge to feminist reclamationists. She champions hierarchy; her political and ethical thought aims at its preservation. Yet, she uses tropes of femininity against their grain to establish her authority as a thinker. De Pizan, we might conclude, is an imperfect feminist foremother. But resting with that conclusion would do injustice to the complex philosophical work that De Pizan gives us. *The Book of Peace* presents challenge that goes beyond understanding the context in which De Pizan was writing and explaining her commitment to hierarchy as an inevitable commitment of her time. De Pizan was clever enough to question, and question well enough to support herself and her family, the exclusion of women from intellectual work. That does not mean that she should have been able to transcend

her time and question all the hierarchies of her society. Instead, it challenges us to see how her ability to claim authority as a thinker and her views on virtue, good government, and the proper ordering of society interrelate. De Pizan's importance as a feminist foremother and a philosopher arises, at least in part, from the way consolidating some hierarchies allowed her to problematize and transgress others.<sup>17</sup> While her allegiance to monarchy is a commitment unavailable to us now, the dependence of her claims to speak on the silencing of others is a problem with which modern feminists are familiar. De Pizan is an exemplary feminist foremother. Our challenge is to be equal to reading her as such.

Through their translation and essays, the editors of *The City of Peace* allow us to consider again what it means to include women in the history of philosophy. This volume allows us to reflect on what philosophy and feminism are, what they ought to be, and what they mean to each other. It allows us to do so with an engaging and creative thinker who successfully challenged her place in society and, in so doing, gave us the opportunity to challenge what we know about our philosophical history. *The City of Peace* and the wonderful work by the women who present us with this volume is a boon, to feminism, to philosophy, and to those of us laboring in the no-longer so lonely places of their intersection.

#### Endnotes

1. My point here owes much to Penelope Deutscher's "When Feminism Is 'High' and Ignorance Is 'Low': Harriet Taylor Mill on the Progress of the Species" (*Hypatia* 21.3 (Summer 2006) 136-150).

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## CONTRIBUTORS

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**Celina Bragagnolo** is a graduate student at Stony Brook University. Her area of research is in social and political philosophy.

**Margaret Crouch** is professor of philosophy at Eastern Michigan University. She teaches global ethics, gender and philosophy, as well as team-taught interdisciplinary courses. She is currently engaged in co-directing a faculty seminar designed to globalize the curriculum across the university, and is piloting a team-taught interdisciplinary course involving faculty and students from the U.S. and Brazil this summer. Her research focuses on sexual harassment and the effects of the audit culture in academe on gender and other forms of diversity.

**Peggy DesAutels** is associate professor of philosophy at University of Dayton. She currently serves as the chair of the APA Committee on the Status of Women and is an active member of the Women in Philosophy Task Force (chaired by Sally Haslanger). In addition, she serves as a principal personnel on a National Science Foundation ADVANCE grant. The purpose of this grant is to advance women faculty in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) fields.

**Ami Harbin** recently completed her Ph.D. at Dalhousie University. Her philosophical interests are in moral, social, and feminist philosophies, moral psychology, and in their application in individual and collective efforts against injustice. She has articles published or forthcoming in *Hypatia*, *Dialogue*, *Sexualities*, and the *Canadian Journal of Aesthetics*.



**Linda Martin Alcoff** is professor of philosophy at Hunter College and the CUNY Graduate Center. Her most recent book is *Feminism, Sexuality, and the Return of Religion*, co-edited with Jack Caputo (Indiana Press). For more information go to [www.alcoff.com](http://www.alcoff.com).

**Jane Mummery** is a senior lecturer in philosophy at the University of Ballarat, Australia. Framed by the continental and feminist traditions, her research concentrates on questions in moral and political philosophy. The author of *The Post to Come: An Outline of Post-Metaphysical Ethics* (Peter Lang 2005) and *Understanding Feminism* (with Peta Bowden, Acumen 2009), her current research is concerned with the varying threads of radical democracy and its possible roles given the ethical and political challenges of the 21st century.

**Michelle Saint** received her Ph.D. from Arizona State University and will be joining Western Washington University as a visiting assistant professor in Fall 2011. Her work is generally focused on the philosophy of fiction, but she's been reading blogs as a means of procrastination since before the term "blog" was coined.

**Sarah Tyson** is a Ph.D. candidate in philosophy at Vanderbilt University, currently preparing to defend her dissertation, *Models of Engagement: Luce Irigaray, Genevieve Lloyd, Michèle*

*Le Doeuff and the History of Philosophy*. Her primary areas of research are feminist philosophy of history, philosophy of gender, and contemporary French philosophy.

**Margaret Urban Walker's** work has always been informed, even driven, by concern with the roles of voice, silence, credibility, and marginality in maintaining social and moral inequalities. She wrote extensively about "epistemic rigging" in *Moral Understandings: A Feminist Study in Ethics*, first published in 1998. In its simplest form, epistemic rigging consists in the arranged absence of certain kinds of people from places and standings of social and epistemic authority. After thirty-seven years in the profession of academic philosophy, she is astonished that we still have the need for discussions about why the profession remains so male and so white. But we do still have that need, so once again, into the fray...

**Lisa Wilkinson** has been teaching philosophy at Nebraska Wesleyan since 2002. While she tends to write about things "ancient and Greek," she teaches Feminist Theories and Philosophies of Race and Gender for Nebraska Wesleyan's nationally recognized Gender Studies program. She is currently an officer for ESWIP, and has focused her "committee" work on campus to issues of diversity, most recently transgender.