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Source: *Signs*, Vol. 31, No. 2 (Winter 2006), pp. 537-552

Published by: The University of Chicago Press

Stable URL: https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1086/491677

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Feminist Interpretations of the Philosophical Canon

As graduate students in philosophy in the late 1970s, we learned that almost every philosopher who had ever lived was male, and what little we learned about what these male philosophers thought about women was negative and degrading. To be perfectly honest, I can recall studying exactly one female philosopher (G. E. M. Anscombe), and I can remember only one class discussion of G. W. F. Hegel's views on women.[1] I recall annoyance at my professor's gleeful description of Hegel's assessment of women and the secondary (yet necessary) theoretical role women play in his political thought, but we all shared the assumption that whatever Hegel thought about women just wasn't all that important. For the most part what we learned about women in the history of philosophy was nothing.[2]

For the past six months I have had on my bookshelf twenty-four vol-

I would like to dedicate this essay to the memory of Susan Moller Okin, whose groundbreaking and important feminist work on the history of Western political thought inspired many of us in our research (see Okin 1979).

[1] It is noteworthy that the Re-reading the Canon Series discussed in this essay does not include a volume on Anscombe, who was a very influential thinker in certain circles. She died in 2001. John Haldane ends her online obituary: "She certainly has a good claim to be the greatest woman philosopher of whom we know, and to have been one of the finest philosophers of the twentieth century" (http://ethicscenter.nd.edu/news/documents/Haldob.pdf). One obvious reason for Anscombe's neglect by most feminists is her lifelong opposition to abortion.

[2] In part this was because analytic philosophy dominated the American scene in the 1970s, and it cultivated an ahistorical methodology. Analytic philosophers, modeling philosophy on science, were genuinely perplexed concerning what value the history of philosophy might have for philosophy and for philosophy's main function, which was solving philosophical problems. Consequently, analytic philosophers read only those philosophers who in one way or another were seen to prefigure a contemporary philosophical problem. And, prior to the development of feminist philosophy, there was no problem that might provoke interest in what earlier thinkers had said (or not said) about women. The absence of women philosophers in the historical record was considered a matter of fact and not a very philosophically interesting one at that. While continental philosophy did not disconnect philosophy from its history, and, indeed, in some cases stressed its historical horizons, the end result was no different with regard to women—as my Hegel anecdote attests.

[*Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 2006, vol. 31, no. 2]

umes in the Re-reading the Canon Series (edited by Nancy Tuana), which were published beginning in 1994.[3] There are six more volumes in the wings.[4] The series has the bold ambition of making feminist assessments of canonical philosophy widely available, and it has realized that ambition. Its broad reach includes the full sweep of the historical canon, including great philosophers of both the analytic and the continental traditions. Each volume contains a broad range of feminist interpretations of an individual philosopher, from Plato to David Hume to Martin Heidegger. My own contribution appears in the Aristotle volume (Witt 1998). Re-reading the Canon will be of interest and value to philosophers, feminist theorists, political scientists, historians, and other scholars in the humanities. An earlier appreciation of Re-reading the Canon provides an alternative overview of the purposes of the series and a focus on volumes different from those I have chosen to discuss here (Alcoff 2000).

All but five of the books in the series consider the thought of male philosophers; of women philosophers, only Mary Wollstonecraft, Simone de Beauvoir, Hannah Arendt, Mary Daly, and Ayn Rand are included. Their inclusion is both puzzling and provocative, and I will have more to say about the canon, the history of philosophy, and how to include women in either later on. In light of my graduate education, typical of philosophy in the 1970s, it is worth reviewing briefly how it is that this series (and the profusion of similar collections and monographs published over the past twenty-five years) could exist at all.[5] How did our understanding of the philosophical canon change so radically that, once silent on the topic of women and feminism, it now speaks in volumes?

As is well known, recent feminist scholarship grew out of an active social movement that began in the late 1960s and demanded the equality of the sexes and the end of male oppression.[6] These political goals were soon transferred to academic contexts as activist feminists began to examine both the assumptions of their disciplines and the structure of the

[3] See Tuana 1994; Honig 1995; Simons 1995; Falco 1996, 2004; Hekman 1996; Mills 1996; Holland 1997; Leon and Walsh 1997; Schott 1997a; Freeland 1998; Oliver and Pearsall 1998; Bordo 1999; Gladstein and Sciabarra 1999; Murphy 1999; Hoagland and Frye 2000; Jacobson 2000; Chanter 2001; Holland and Huntington 2001; Seigfried 2001; Code 2002; Lange 2002; Scheman and O'Connor 2002; Nelson and Nelson 2003.

[4] See Di Stefano forthcoming; Gatens forthcoming; Heberle forthcoming; Hirschmann and McClure forthcoming; Olkowski forthcoming; Stark forthcoming.

[5] See Lloyd (1984) 1993, 2002; Bordo 1987; LeDoeuff 1991; Tuana 1992; Bar On 1996a, 1996b; Ward 1996; Deutscher 1997; Alanen and Witt 2004.

[6] For a useful comparative study of the emergence of feminist work in five disciplines, including philosophy, see DuBois et al. 1985.

academy itself. During the same period, and independently of the advent of feminism and feminist scholarship, some philosophers and historians of philosophy began to reconsider the relationship between philosophy and its history as it was understood by analytic philosophy (Rorty, Schneewind, and Skinner 1984). The confluence of these two movements, one primarily political and the other primarily intellectual, began a new debate over the relationship between philosophy and its history, over how canons of philosophy are formed and how they change, and it raised broad questions of inclusion and exclusion in the academy.

Of course, both the political origin and the practical orientation of feminist scholarship are perfectly compatible with feminist scholarship contributing significantly to what we know about the history of philosophy. There is no reason to think that an interested, or pragmatic, search for truth and knowledge is impossible or that it is any less likely to succeed than a disinterested approach. Quite the contrary. It was precisely feminist scholars' situatedness as women and their pragmatic interests as feminists that made possible their significant contribution to the search for complete historical truth and genuine historical knowledge.[7] For example, the "discovery" of women philosophers and the recovery of their thought in the history of philosophy simply would not have happened without the advent of feminism and the interested work of women scholars.

The fact that feminist scholarship has an explicitly political goal (the equality of the sexes and the end of male oppression) puts it on a collision course with philosophy's traditional self-image as the disinterested search for truth and knowledge. Indeed, in relation to that self-image of philosophy, it is not surprising that the integration of feminist work into the philosophical canon has been problematic or that its claim to be truly philosophical has been questioned. Recent philosophy in both the analytic and the continental schools contains resources for changing the terms of debate concerning the pragmatism of feminist thought and the overt situatedness of feminist philosophers. In particular, as I discuss later, analytic philosophy following W. V. Quine has emphasized pragmatism and holism with regard to knowledge and belief. And continental philosophy following Heidegger has developed the idea of the pragmatic situatedness of human beings. The philosophical tradition itself offers different ways of thinking about what

[7] The volumes of Re-reading the Canon do contain some essays by men, as do other volumes of feminist work in the history of philosophy. A feminist orientation in theory or practice is available to both male and female philosophers, although women predominate in the field. This suggests that feminist work in the history of philosophy is often motivated by the philosophers' situatedness as women as well as by their feminist politics.

philosophy is, what it does, and who does it. These perspectives, I believe, can help formulate strategies of integration for feminist philosophy, including feminist history of philosophy.

I have argued elsewhere that feminist work on the history of philosophy divides into three basic categories: scholarship that revises the history of philosophy to include women philosophers, research that catalogs the explicit or theoretical misogyny of a canonical philosopher (or a historical period), and an exploration of what resources the tradition might hold for feminist purposes (Witt 2004). The first two categories of feminist work make clear contributions to the truth of the historical record of philosophy, and the third category provides new resources for feminist theory and opens up new avenues of interpretation of the classics. Most of the essays in the Re-reading the Canon Series explore issues of the third sort by debating a given canonical philosopher's potential for feminist theory, although many volumes also include discussions of sexism in a philosopher's work and in traditional interpretations of that work. Debates over the utility for feminist theory of a given philosopher inevitably raise broad questions about what feminism is and what kinds of theoretical resources it requires. Moreover, since feminist approaches to the history of philosophy have also helped, along with other trends in the field, to reawaken interest in and debate over the relationship between philosophy and its history, we might wonder what can be learned on that topic from Re-reading the Canon (LeDoeuff 1991; Freeland 2000; Lloyd 2000). I will return to these larger issues later. First, I want to consider how feminist work in the history of philosophy has amplified our understanding of that history by correcting the wholesale omission of women philosophers.

Rewriting the canon: Feminist revisions to the history of philosophy

Re-reading the Canon provides only a glimpse of the wide range of work done by feminist historians of philosophy seeking to reinscribe into history the names of forgotten women philosophers.[8] At first glance this limitation seems unproblematic since the series has another focus, namely, to provide feminist interpretations of canonical philosophers, and recently "discovered" women philosophers are certainly not part of the canon. But then Wollstonecraft, Beauvoir, Arendt, Daly, and Rand are not canonical figures in the normal sense of the term. Indeed, until very recently none of them

[8] The series volume on René Descartes is an exception; it contains four excellent essays on women philosophers influenced by Descartes (Harth 1999; O'Neill 1999; Perry 1999; Wartenberg 1999).

even received mention, let alone extended discussion, in standard reference works in philosophy.

The 1967 *Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Edwards 1967), with articles on more than nine hundred philosophers, turns up no entry for Arendt and not even a mention of Beauvoir, Wollstonecraft, or Rand.[9] Important women philosophers from earlier periods are missing as well: Hypatia, Anne Conway, Elizabeth of Bohemia, Damaris, Lady Masham. In sharp contrast, the 1998 *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Craig 1998) has entries for all of them and for many other important women philosophers.[10] The documentation of scores of women philosophers who would otherwise not have found their legitimate places in the history of philosophy is a major achievement of feminist historians of philosophy over the past twenty-five years. Mary Ellen Waithe's pioneering *History of Women Philosophers* (1987–91) must be mentioned in this connection, although many other scholars have done important work, especially on women philosophers in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (Wider 1986; Atherton 1994; O'Neill 1999). This is an enormous, ongoing scholarly project that includes extensive archival work, editing, and translating in order to make available for the first time in English the work of many forgotten women philosophers (Shapiro 2004).

As we know more and more about the existence and texts of women philosophers, questions arise concerning how to integrate them into the history of philosophy. Re-reading the Canon exemplifies one problem that faces those who would include women philosophers in the history of philosophy or in the canon. Given that the women philosophers included in the series are not canonical, why include *these* five women philosophers rather than others? Why include Arendt and Beauvoir rather than Anscombe and Iris Murdoch, who are arguably women philosophers of equal importance? Perhaps the inclusion of the five (and the omission of many other equally worthy women [or men] philosophers) was simply a practical matter of finding interested potential editors rather than a principled editorial decision. But the question I want to discuss is: What could serve as a principle underlying that decision? I raise this question because the brief list of women philosophers seems arbitrary in a way that the much longer list of men philosophers does not (even though some of them are arguably not canonical figures). Why is this?

[9] There is no entry for Daly, but this is not surprising since her first book was published in 1965 (Daly 1965).

[10] Daly does not have an entry, but she is mentioned several times in the "Feminist Theology" entry.

One reason is that philosophers often find it difficult to believe that women philosophers were omitted from philosophy's history just because they were women. And the reason they find it difficult to believe, even in the face of considerable evidence, is that philosophy presents itself as a gender-neutral activity and discipline. If a woman was omitted, there must have been good reason—she was not a philosopher at all or not a significant philosopher or not an original philosopher—take your pick. A recent dispute over whether Elizabeth of Bohemia warrants the title philosopher is an example of this phenomenon (Alanen 2004). The aura of arbitrariness that hovers over the five women philosophers included in the series draws on the same underlying intuition, which is that they were included just because they were women, and since philosophy is a gender-neutral discipline, that criterion is arbitrary. Notice that this image can withstand even the evidence of gender specificity presented in many of the essays in Re-reading the Canon because the gender neutrality of philosophy is normative and therefore not amenable to mere empirical refutation.

However, even if we become convinced that women philosophers really were omitted just because they were women and that therefore their inclusion as women is a necessary adjustment of the historical record, there still remains a question of how best to achieve this. How can they be rewoven into the history of philosophy so that they are an integral part of that history? In a recent essay, Lisa Shapiro (2004), considering the case of women philosophers in the early modern period, argues that it is not enough simply to add a woman philosopher or two to the reading list to rectify women's past exclusion. Rather, according to Shapiro, we need to find a stronger thread that provides internal reasons (rather than an external, feminist motivation on the part of the teacher or editor) for the inclusion of women.

One way to do this is to show how certain women philosophers made significant contributions to the work of male philosophers on central philosophical issues. We could call this the "Best Supporting Actress" approach in that the central cast remains male and the story line of philosophy is undisturbed. It is a good strategy for several reasons: it is relatively easy to accomplish, and it provides an internal anchor for women philosophers. On the other hand, it reinforces the secondary status of women thinkers, and if this were the only way of integrating women philosophers, that would be an unfortunate result. The wholly inadequate interpretation of Beauvoir's philosophical thought as a mere application of Jean-Paul Sartre's is a good example of the limitations of this strategy. Not only does it reinforce a secondary, handmaiden role for Beauvoir, but it also

promotes a distorted understanding and appreciation of her thought (Simons 1995).

Alternatively, we could find in the work of women philosophers issues that they have developed in a sequential fashion. Shapiro suggests that there are certain philosophical issues concerning women's rationality, nature, and education that women philosophers of the seventeenth century discuss extensively in a sequential, interactive fashion. The thread extends into the following century in the work of Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Wollstonecraft.[11] Since philosophers become canonical as part of a story anchored at one end by contemporary philosophical questions that are thought to be central, the task would be to make these questions ones that we turn to the tradition for help in answering. And, of course, these are precisely the central questions posed and discussed extensively by contemporary feminism. Thus, the idea is that as we pose new kinds of questions to the history of philosophy we will find in women philosophers an important, sequential discussion that we can securely thread into our curricula and textbooks.

However, as evidenced by Re-reading the Canon, just raising questions concerning women, rationality, and related issues need not do anything to include women philosophers in the conversation since these feminist questions are put to a mostly male cast of performers. So it may be the case that, at this stage, we still need an external motivation to include women philosophers, at least to the extent of insisting that it is important to hear what women philosophers thought on those topics because those views are generally overlooked and because their views might be of particular relevance since each of them lived as a woman and as a thinker.

Without discounting the subtle problems outlined by Shapiro, therefore, I endorse all three strategies for integrating women philosophers; at this relatively early stage of the process I think that we need them all. There is nothing wrong with a purely external approach. By all means one should include a woman philosopher on a topic just to provide an indication that there are some interesting and important women working on a particular topic. And the strategy of anchoring a woman philosopher's work to a male canonical figure can also be a useful strategy as long as it is done in a manner that preserves the independence and originality of her work. Finally, it is important to ask new questions of the tradition,

[11] Re-reading the Canon includes volumes on both Wollstonecraft (Falco 1996) and Rousseau (Lange 2002). It is interesting to note that the feminist interpreters of Rousseau do not use Wollstonecraft, and she is mentioned only a few times.

questions that might allow some women philosophers to play a starring role rather than a walk-on part. Most of the volumes in the Re-reading the Canon Series are intent on bringing feminist questions to bear on canonical texts written by male philosophers. As we will see in the next section, this approach not only has shed new light on their views of women and the role of gender in their thought but also has illuminated other aspects of their theories as useful for feminist theorizing.

Appropriating the canon: Feminist uses of the history of philosophy

One of the great strengths of Re-reading the Canon is its inclusive conception of the philosophical canon; the series includes both major and minor philosophers from the past (Plato *and* Niccolo Machiavelli) as well as leading contemporary figures from both the analytic and the continental traditions (Quine *and* Heidegger). Simply from the point of view of teaching and curriculum, the series allows anyone teaching a canonical figure (past, present, analytic, continental) to have available a broad range of feminist interpretations of that figure from which to choose. The meager number of volumes on women philosophers is an ironic but serious shortcoming of the series in this context. Still, the provision of generally high-quality feminist scholarship to the philosophical community is a significant accomplishment.[12]

The inclusion of contemporary philosophers, some of whom are still living, helps bridge the gap between the history of philosophy and contemporary philosophy. The reader cannot simply dismiss the present relevance of a feminist interpretation on the ground that "it's all ancient history." And the inclusion of the greats (and not-so-greats) of both the analytic and the continental traditions forecloses on the claim of one school or the other to be intrinsically more hospitable either to women or to the concerns of feminist thinking (though Sartre and Emmanuel Levinas, despite the heroic efforts of their feminist interpreters, do seem like throwbacks to the worst of the nineteenth century and lost causes to this reviewer).

Given this extremely broad historical and doctrinal range, it is not surprising that the focus of feminist interpretation varies as well. Unlike earlier feminist work on canonical figures, most of the volumes do not elaborate in great detail the sexist comments of past philosophers, nor do

[12] The volume on Rand (Gladstein and Sciabarra 1999) stands out for its poor level of scholarship and meager philosophical content. While there are weak individual papers in other volumes, and an uneven level of editorial consistency among volumes, this is to be expected given the size of the project.

they focus exclusively on the negative theoretical role that women or gender play. True, Immanuel Kant's supercilious views of women, ethics, and philosophy ("I hardly believe that the fair sex is capable of principles" [Schott 1997a, 324]) are ably recounted by Hannelore Schroder (1997) and Robin Schott (1997b) in their contributions to *Feminist Interpretations of Immanuel Kant* (Schott 1997a). And the Hegel volume does include critical discussion of the fact that he places full ethical life outside the grasp of women, who are also (and not coincidentally) unfit for philosophy (Benhabib 1996). Unsurprisingly, the volumes on Søren Kierkegaard and Friedrich Nietzsche contain papers that record each author's sexism and misogyny (Watkin 1997; Clark 1998), although other essays explore the resources that their philosophies offer for feminism. Keeping in mind the inevitable diversity in a large project, Re-reading the Canon primarily excavates the texts of mostly male, mostly great philosophers in search of useful ideas or fruitful theories for feminism. It marks a second stage of feminist commentary on the philosophical canon. The volume on Aristotle is typical in that it assumes, and builds upon, a foundation of feminist criticism of Aristotle's overt misogyny in considering (and debating) other important feminist issues, including the utility of his thought for feminist projects (Freeland 1998). The Aristotle volume broaches many interesting issues, including questions concerning method in the history of philosophy. Should feminist readings adhere to polite rules of historical interpretation, including the principle of charity? Or can they use irony, parody, and humor as well? Should they attempt to loosen or to tighten a knot in Aristotle's thought? Reading Aristotle from a feminist perspective also raises interesting questions about what feminism and a feminist perspective are. Can we simply mine Aristotle's texts for useful or interesting nuggets, or should we always regard his thought with suspicion? And, if we do endorse appropriation, we might wonder what makes an idea or theory useful or interesting for feminism and hence worthy of appropriation by feminists? What counts as a feminist appropriation?

The origin of feminist philosophy in a movement for political change provides one criterion for what might count as feminist philosophy, including feminist work in the history of philosophy. Feminist philosophers bring questions about women to the history of philosophy because they are interested in political change for women, and they wonder what resources the tradition might offer and what obstacles it might contain. Therefore one criterion for what counts as a feminist interpretation is that it yield pragmatic results for feminist theory and politics. So, one way canonical philosophers (no matter what they might have said about women or the role of gender in their theories) can serve as a resource is by

providing concepts and theories that are directly useful for framing feminist politics. We find this kind of direct political resource discussed (and debated) in the volumes on Arendt, Beauvoir, Rousseau, Plato, and others. While feminist interpreters do not embrace any of these philosophers' thoughts without criticism, there is a clear and direct connection between these philosophers' ideas and theories and the political goals of feminism broadly construed, and these volumes examine their ideas in relation to that connection.

We find a second, less direct appropriation of philosophical ideas for feminist purposes in other volumes, like those on Heidegger and Quine. These collections of feminist interpretations do not appear to meet the pragmatic criterion because there is no direct or obvious link between the ideas or theories under discussion and feminist theory or politics. Neither Heidegger nor Quine seems to provide much traction for feminist interpretations because they do not discuss women, feminism, ethics, or political philosophy.[13] How could ideas or theories culled from entirely nonpolitical, nonnormative theoretical projects provide inspiration for feminist theory, which must have a practical and normative dimension?

Given the philosophical chasm that divides them, the Heidegger and Quine volumes have fascinating similarities. Both open with a discussion of the puzzling lack of attention by feminist theorists to the philosopher and his work, and each maintains that this neglect is mistaken. Yet in light of what follows, that neglect seems neither puzzling nor mistaken. Both collections begin with introductions of more than fifty pages, which include long interpretations of each philosopher's thought that do not mention any issues pertinent to feminism; clearly, it is possible to provide a full description of the outlines of these theories without connecting them, either positively or negatively, to feminist projects. Why isn't benign neglect of their work by feminist interpreters perfectly sensible? And how can an appropriation of their ideas count as feminist given the pragmatic criterion?

Heidegger's philosophical writing is "suprapolitical, seemingly esoteric, and nonempirical" (Holland and Huntington 2001, 2) and explicitly gender neutral in the central figure of Dasein, an embodied, but not gendered, way of being. In her introduction, Patricia Huntington stresses the nonpragmatic character of Heidegger's thought, which puts it at odds with my suggested condition for feminist philosophy—namely, that it have a

[13] We know that both philosophers were conservative politically; Quine was a public supporter of Richard Nixon during the Vietnam War era, and Heidegger was a supporter of National Socialism and Adolf Hitler during the 1930s.

political goal: "The simple truth is that Heidegger's thought resists usage, 'being put to work' for ends of any kind, in a fundamental way" (Huntington 2001, 2). Yet Huntington describes Heidegger as a "seminal" theorist of interest to women and feminists because of his rejection of Western metaphysical thinking. Huntington emphasizes the resources in Heidegger for ecofeminism and feminist theology, and she holds up Heidegger's work tracing the metaphysics of presence in the Western philosophical tradition as a model for recent feminist work on the history of philosophy such as that of Luce Irigaray.

Since Quine is a neopragmatist and a friend of instrumental reason, his philosophical writings are apolitical in a different way from Heidegger's. Beginning with a radical critique of logical positivism, Quine's writings center on basic issues in epistemology and the philosophy of science, areas of thought that do not lend themselves in any obvious way to questions about gender or sex, on the one hand, or to thinking about political change, on the other. Yet the contributors to the volume explain how Quine's thought provides resources for feminist philosophers of science and epistemologists, especially for feminist critics of the logical positivist tradition. The basic idea is that feminist critics of science and its methods and of traditional philosophy of science can find important resources for these critiques in Quine. For example, Louise Antony ([1992] 2003) argues that naturalized epistemology provides an account of theory bias that might be useful for feminists, and other authors stress Quine's holism and naturalism as positive elements for feminists thinking about science and knowledge (Nelson [1990] 2003; Duran 2003).

The value of these philosophers for feminist theory and practice is indirect. Each connects to feminism via independent assumptions concerning the requirements of feminist theory. For example, we can find two basic assumptions connecting Heideggerian thought with feminism. One concerns Heidegger's understanding of the significance of the history of philosophy for philosophy, including feminism—in other words, the present significance of the philosophical tradition for feminism. This idea is central to the work of Irigaray and others, who think about women and gender through understanding their suppression in the history of philosophical thought. The second is an assumption about the relationship between feminism and modernity, namely, that feminist theory cannot be properly formulated using the concepts, theories, or presuppositions of the modern period. The articulation of this position can find much of use in Heidegger. But, of course, not all feminists would agree with the relevance to feminist projects of the two bridge theses.

In particular, I suspect that the feminist interpreters of Quine would

find little of interest for feminism there. Rather than reject the assimilation of all thinking with the methods and assumptions of the sciences characteristic of modernity (including instrumental reason), these feminists think that Quine has something important to offer them precisely with regard to our understanding of the sciences. For example, Quine's holism might provide an important resource to feminist philosophers of science interested in questioning the distinction between the origin and the justification of scientific theories. Quine's naturalism shifts the focus from viewing science as a normative, justificatory project whose structure can be probed in ideal terms to understanding science as the activity and product of human beings working in concrete cultures and specific contexts of inquiry. These "nuggets" are useful for those feminists who think it is important to engage critically with science, with what science tells us about being human, being female, and gender, because science is an important authority and source of knowledge in our culture. These assumptions are not shared, of course, with our sampling of Heideggerian feminists.

As we have just seen, Re-reading the Canon illuminates as much about issues in contemporary feminism as it does about what the views of canonical philosophers concerning women, gender, and political philosophy look like considered from a feminist perspective. Indeed, the series shows that there are many feminist perspectives from which to read and reread the philosophical canon. The very best essays in these collections prompt us to consider not only what we feminists can appropriate from canonical philosophy but also what we feminists ought to borrow from it. The inclusion of a wide range of philosophical perspectives is particularly useful in this regard since it disallows an overly simplified view of feminist thinking.

When it comes to appropriating the past, feminist historians of philosophy have been dexterous, imaginative, and greedy. They have provided many threads to connect feminist philosophy internally to the canon. One thread asks what the history of philosophy says or doesn't say about women and gender. Another thread considers women's nature, reason, and education. A third considers the history of political thought and ethics with an eye on the normative resources of Western philosophy. A fourth connects feminist issues to broad themes like the relation of philosophy to its history, the value and limitations of empiricism in the philosophy of science, and the legacy of modernity and the Enlightenment.

With so many themes and threads connecting feminist perspectives to issues in mainstream philosophy, their inclusion in teaching curricula and other academic contexts might seem a foregone conclusion. But it

is not, and I think the reason turns on the powerful self-image of philosophy as a nonsituated (gender-neutral) and nonpragmatic discipline, a self-understanding that is extremely resilient and resistant to alteration. It just seems deeply unphilosophical to include material in a philosophy course that is openly political and that transparently reflects the situation (the gender) of the author. What happens to the image of the disinterested, gender-neutral philosopher floating above all that and following reason wherever it may lead him?

There are many alternative ways to think about the person of the philosopher and the activity of philosophy. Indeed, as I mentioned earlier, both Quine and Heidegger provide resources for understanding philosophy as a pragmatic activity engaged in by situated thinkers, even though neither of them considered gender in relation to the context of inquiry or to the situation of the inquirer. But we can use their ideas to reframe the self-image of the philosopher in ways more hospitable to women and feminist work. We can think about her as using philosophical and nonphilosophical resources to write about women, reason, and subjectivity, as Beauvoir did. Or we can think of her as passionately interested in the history of philosophy and what it has to say about the family and political justice, as Susan Moller Okin was. It seems to me that the routine but genuine inclusion of women philosophers and feminist perspectives into the discussion of philosophical topics goes hand in hand with a richer, more varied image of the philosopher, what she does, and why she does it.

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