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Article

Introduction

Karen Green* and Ruth Hagengruber†

The contributions to this issue of *The Monist* attest that the history of women's ideas has established itself as a rich new scholarly domain that raises substantive and methodological issues. In her contribution, Sarah Hutton theorizes the methodology involved in the project of retrieving historical women's philosophical contributions by way of a discussion of Bernard Williams's posthumously published essay, "Descartes and the Historiography of Philosophy" (2006), which develops ideas first broached in 1978. Williams differentiates the methods of the history of ideas, which locates a work in its historical context, from the history of philosophy, which extracts ideas pertinent to present debates from historical texts and treats the past, in Hagengruber's phrase, as a "quarry." Both approaches to the history of philosophy might be applied in order to weave women's writings into the narrative of philosophy's history, but Hutton ultimately suggests that a third approach, initially proposed by Lisa Shapiro and which sees philosophy as a conversation, holds out the best prospects for integrating women's contributions into philosophy.[1]

Mary Ellen Waithe demonstrates how the history of philosophy has traditionally been constructed as a history of the philosophical ideas of men. She treats the question of how to fit women into philosophy by focusing on their inclusion in the canon, and she offers a broad criterion of canon formation suggesting "philosophers who are the named subject of mid-sized philosophy encyclopedia articles have already made it into the canon."[2] On this analysis, the past exclusion is in the process of being rectified. Ruth Hagengruber, however, understands 'history' in a different way. On the one hand, one can identify history with the written record of the past, which exists at a time later than the events recorded. In this sense, the history of philosophy is a history of men's ideas and the canon has been male. But one can also identify history with the totality of past events. In this sense, Hagengruber insists that the history of philosophy has always, paradoxically, included the excluded women. She argues that it is just in those periods when philosophy flourished, the heyday of ancient philosophy and early modern period, that women's philosophical participation was greatest and that there is an uninterrupted tradition from the age of humanism and the Renaissance to today.

* University of Melbourne.
† Universität Paderborn.

Focusing on political philosophy has led Karen Green to trace women's arguments for their status as the moral, spiritual, and intellectual equals of men back to Christine de Pizan. She and Jacqueline Broad have argued that women's engagement with this issue flowed through a corpus of works written by Marguerite of Navarre, Marie de Gournay, Lucrezia Marinella, Moderata Fonte, Archangela Tarabotti, Madeleine de Scudéry, Anna Maria van Schurmann, Gabrielle Suchon, and Mary Astell.[3] Christine wrote just before the rediscovery of the Platonic corpus and, Green and Broad claim, later women were self-consciously contributing to a tradition that Christine initiated. In her recent continuation of the history of women's political thought into the eighteenth century, Green points to the figures of Anne Dacier and Madeleine de Scudéry as particularly significant for women who conceived of themselves as contributing to an already vibrant eighteenth-century female republic of letters. This came to include Catharine Trotter, Emilie Du Châtelet, Luise Gottsched, Catharine Macaulay, Olympe de Gouges, and Mary Wollstonecraft, to name only the most prominent.[4]

The editors are convinced that work on the history of women philosophers is integral to the development of philosophy as a discipline. As women have become better represented in the academy, they have turned to issues of relevance to women. But philosophy has lagged behind other humanities disciplines in appointing women.[5] There is disagreement over the reasons for this, but it is arguable that philosophy's own self-image continues to be tainted by a conception of objectivity that universalises men's perspectives.[6] Forty years ago, when feminists first fought to include feminist theory as an area of teaching and research within philosophy, feminism was opposed as not 'objective.'[7] In reaction to this, works such as Lloyd's *The Man of Reason* and the papers in Harding and Hintikka's *Discovering Reality*, among many others, challenged simplistic notions of 'objective reason'.[8] The results were, however, not entirely positive for the inclusion of women within philosophy, but encouraged the abandonment of philosophy in favour of literature, or women's studies, where methods were apparently less 'masculine.'

The very fact that a journal like *The Monist* is now publishing an issue on the history of women's contributions to philosophy is evidence that much has changed in the past forty years. As Waithe, Hutton, and Hagengruber demonstrate in their contributions, a growing number of women are now recognised as having engaged with philosophical problems in the past, some have left works which have been the object of contemporary scholarship, and some of these have been re-edited in contemporary editions. All this should facilitate the ongoing integration of their works into the canon. Moreover, work on historical women philosophers has important implications for our understanding of the history of our culture, what counts, or should count, as philosophy, the shape that the canon ought to take, and the criteria for truth and reason in a nonsexist society. Jonathan Rée concluded his early discussion, "Women Philosophers and the Canon," with the comment that integrating women philosophers into the history of philosophy would "require a reconfiguration of philosophical inquiry itself and a systematic reworking of its relations to its future and its past."[9] We agree.

The papers we present here manifest some of the differing approaches that might be taken to the history of women's contribution to philosophy. The paper by Luka Boršić and Ivana Skuhala Karasman contributes to the history of ideas. It offers a new reading of Isotta Nogarola's *Dialogue on the Equal and Unequal Sin of Adam and Eve*, and compares the early 1451 edition with a neglected 1563 edition produced by her grand-nephew. Nogarola's work was written during the Renaissance, at a moment in time and space when a woman's public participation in scholarly discussion with men laid her open to charges of immodesty. Boršić and Karasman reveal sophisticated levels of irony in Nogarola's text, which have not been appreciated by others. Because the issue of the sin of Eve is no longer of great moment, this paper seems to confirm Hutton's comment that, although a canon of women philosophers is fast emerging, there is no presumed genealogy of philosophical themes and arguments deriving from them. They are obvious examples of "philosophers of yore" who cannot be heard as "participating in modern debates" (in the words of Williams).[10]

While the paper on Nogarola adopts the approach of the history of ideas, the contribution on Mary Astell engages with her as a past participant in a modern debate, quarrying the past for contemporary concerns. Andreas Blank compares Astell's account of flattery with contemporary discussions of this vice, offering a new lens through which to read the works of this predecessor as relevant to a contemporary audience. Jessica Gordon-Wroth's paper evinces elements of both these approaches to the history of philosophy. She deepens our understanding of Catharine Cockburn's *Defence of Mr. Locke's Essay of Human Understanding* (1702), by concentrating on the discussion of his metaphysical views, and in particular by suggesting that Cockburn anticipated Edmund Law's reading of Locke on personal identity, a topic which is, of course, of considerable contemporary interest.

Three papers extend our knowledge of the moral and political philosophy developed by women. Jacqueline Broad offers the first extended discussion of Sarah Chapone's *The Hardships of the English Laws in Relation to Wives* (1735), demonstrating how Chapone applies the concept of freedom as nondomination in her condemnation of the contemporary legal status of women and her call for laws to protect women's rights within marriage. Karen Green takes a broader brush and argues that, from Mary Astell to Catharine Macaulay, philosophically informed eighteenth-century women in Britain accepted a distinctive form of Aristotelian *eudaimonism.* They universally believed that "there is a law of nature and accept[ed] that we desire happiness; that happiness depends on acting in a way that is conformable to the nature that God has given us; that we can discover what this nature is, and can discover what God wills for us."[11] Although they differed in their accounts of what happiness consists in, they tended to accept that we are by nature social animals, and so to argue that social life—far from being artificial and at odds with our nature, as apparently proposed by Hobbes—is necessary to our happiness. In her paper on Sophie Grouchy's *Letter on Sympathy*, Sandrine Berges in effect brings together themes found in both of these articles. She, like Broad, brings historical work on republican liberty to bear on her subject and discusses Grouchy as a republican thinker, demonstrating that she contributed to Condorcet's *Le Républicain*. She also

focuses on the way in which Grouchy "is very much concerned to show the implications of a moral theory which has sympathy as a central element, not just for the development of humanity in general, as is Smith's concern, but for those attempting to build a republic."[12]

The last paper introduces us to an early twentieth-century academic, Ksenija Atanasijevic (1894–1981), who taught at the University of Belgrade from 1924 and was a pioneer in the discussion of female contributors to ancient philosophy. In many ways her impulse, as a woman teaching philosophy, to include women within the tradition of the history of philosophy anticipates the trend to which this collection of papers contributes. Women not unnaturally assume that the philosophical conversation to which they are contributing cannot be one which is alien to women. Philosophy is not, nor has it ever been, just men's business. Or rather, perhaps one should say, in so far as a society is not patriarchal, there is no place within it for a philosophy which represents itself as 'just men's business.' Which brings us back to the observation—extended to apply not just to women in the history of philosophy but also to their inclusion in the present academic discipline—that including women requires a reconfiguration of philosophical inquiry itself.

Canons change as the focus and self-representation of the discipline evolves. There are also various canons, relating to the various subfields of the discipline, and each 'burning issue' tends to result in a penumbra of texts, more or less central to the topic. So we expect that it is only by changing the focus and self-representation of philosophy that its canon will transform to include female-authored texts. It is also to be expected that it will be easier for women to become canonical in some subfields than in others. Indeed, some 'burning issues' have already generated a penumbra of female-authored canonical texts. Parting from Hutton's suggestion that female philosophers of yore dealt with issues that are no longer central, we submit that there is at least one genealogy of themes and arguments deriving from women which is still very much a matter of modern debate; this is the genealogy of feminism.[13]

The history of feminism *is* part of the history of political philosophy. When considering women's contributions to the history of political philosophy in Europe, one comes to see that some of our current political and social assumptions originate with writers such as Marie de Gournay, Madeleine de Scudery, Anne Dacier, and Catharine Macaulay. One sees, as Broad and Berges's contributions demonstrate, that early modern debates which led to the transformation of the marriage relation, from a form of natural lordship into a form of friendship, are intertwined with contemporary debates that led to the transformation of civil government, from a relation of inherited lordship into a mechanism for representing the joint interests of political equals. The conversation that men and women continue to engage in, concerning justice in the state and the private sphere, and the interaction between them, is deepened when its historical antecedents are acknowledged. Political philosophy offers itself as ripe for transformation from a discourse engaged in by men, which assumes that the political subject is male, into a conversation between men and women of different classes and cultural origins over the complexities of delivering political justice and equality against the background of sexual, cultural, and historical difference. Works by women fit naturally into the canon of a political philosophy in this style.

Ethics is an area where women are already relatively well integrated into the canon, perhaps because during the twentieth century women were encouraged to do ethics, which was perceived as 'soft'. Yet more could still be done to enrich contemporary ethical discussion by relating it to earlier women's writing. Leibniz praised Scudéry's ethical insights, but for a long time she was not read as a moral philosopher even though her many discussions of virtue and friendship have contemporary relevance.[14] Philosophy of education is another area where women's works slot easily into a history of the subject in which women's texts are canonical.[15] It is somewhat more difficult to fit texts by women into the history of the development of metaphysics, epistemology, philosophy of science, logic, and philosophy of language, yet in each of these areas there are important female contributors and the philosophical conversation is enriched by their inclusion. As Hagengruber and others have demonstrated, Du Châtelet is an important figure in the history of physics.[16] It is only lack of scholarship which is to be blamed for the shallowness of our understanding of the philosophical contributions of women who contributed to these fields.

David Stove, who taught at the University of Sydney for many years, was one of those who was most vociferous in his opposition to the teaching of feminism in philosophy departments because of its lack of 'objectivity'. In 1993 he published "The Subjection of John Stuart Mill" in which he argued that Mill's claim that it was impossible to tell, given the standard of contemporary education, whether or not women were men's intellectual equals was unjustified.[17] The lack of significant contributions by women to philosophy throughout history was, according to Stove, sufficient evidence for women's inferior intellectual capacity. Stove begins his article by denying Cicero's maxim that "There is no opinion so absurd but that some philosopher has held it" by offering a pair of "absurd" opinions that no philosopher has ever held: that the intellectual capacity of women is superior to that of men, and that the intellectual capacity of women is equal to that of men. Stove's limited knowledge of the history of philosophy led him to assert, "There is not a single passage, intended for publication, in any philosopher that I know of, in which the intellectual equality of the two sexes is asserted."[18] This truth concerning Stove's complete ignorance concerning the history of philosophy might be passed over as an uninteresting fact about a minor philosopher from the antipodes. But it is worth remembering for two reasons. First it shows the depth of the sexism with which women have had to contend as recently as the 1990s, helping to explain, in great measure, their continued underrepresentation in the discipline. Second, it is gratifying that, in the light of the progress already made into the history of female philosophers, it seems unlikely that any salaried philosopher would now assert the extraordinarily ignorant claim that, "There is not a single passage, intended for publication, in any philosopher. . ., in which the intellectual equality of the two sexes is asserted." Not only does historical research reveal many philosophers who have asserted the intellectual equality of the two sexes, it also reveals many philosophical works in which women demonstrate that their capacity to philosophize is quite equal to that of men. Ignorance of the depth of women's past contributions to the field feeds into the perpetuation of gender stereotypes which subtly, and not so subtly, exclude women.[19] By transforming our understanding of women's contributions to the history of philosophy we are well

on the way to reconfiguring philosophy. That is, we shall be, so long as men are prepared to enter into serious philosophical discourse with women, both present and past. The sting in the tail is that, seeing that this issue is devoted to the history of women's ideas, most male philosophers will probably fail to read it.

NOTES

1. Lisa Shapiro, "The Place of Women in Early Modern Philosophy," in *Feminist Reflections on the History of Philosophy*, ed. Lilli Alanen and Charlotte Witt, (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 2004).
2. Mary Ellen Waithe, "From Canon Fodder to Canon-Formation: How Do We Get There from Here?" *The Monist* 98:1 (2015), 21–33 (this issue).
3. Jacqueline Broad and Karen Green, *A History of Women's Political Thought in Europe, 1400–1700* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).
4. Karen Green, *A History of Women's Political Thought in Europe, 1700–1800*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014).
5. See for instance Sally Haslanger, "Changing the Culture and Ideology of Philosophy: Not by Reason (Alone)," *Hypatia* 23 (2008), 210–20; Louise Antony, "Different Voices or Perfect Storm: Why Are There So Few Women in Philosophy?" *Journal of Social Philosophy* 43 (2012), 227–55.
6. Worrying data has emerged which demonstrates that the authors of papers published in a selection of 'generalist' high-impact journals rarely cite female-authored papers (http://kieranhealy.org/blog/archives/2013/06/18/a-co-citation-network-for-philosophy/).
7. Mary Warnock agreed and so excluded feminists from her book, *Women Philosophers* (London: J.M. Dent, 1996).
8. Genevieve Lloyd, *The Man of Reason: 'Male' and 'Female' in Western Philosophy* (London: Methuen, 1984); Sandra Harding and Merrill Hintikka, eds., *Discovering Reality* (Dordrecht: Reidel, 1983).
9. Jonathan Rée, "Women Philosophers and the Canon," *British Journal of the History of Philosophy* 10 (2002), 641–52, 652.
10. Sarah Hutton, "'Blue-Eyed Philosophers Born on Wednesdays': An Essay on Women and History of Philosophy," *The Monist*, 98:1 (2015), 7–20 (this issue).
11. Karen Green, "A Moral Philosophy of Their Own? The Moral and Political Thought of Eighteenth-Century British Women," *The Monist* 98:1 (2015), 89–101 (this issue).
12. Sandrine Berges, "Sophie de Grouchy on the Cost of Domination in the *Letters on Sympathy* and Two Anonymous Articles in *Le Républicain*," *The Monist* 98:1 (2015), 102–112 (this issue).
13. Karen Offen, *European Feminisms: A Political History, 1700–1950* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000).
14. C.I. Gerhard, ed. *Die Philosophischen Schriften von Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz*, 7 vols. (Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1960–1961), 7.546.
15. Important early educational texts include; Sarah Fielding, *The Governess or Little Female Academy* (London: Pandora, 1987); Catharine Macaulay, *Letters on Education. With Observations on Religious and Metaphysical Subjects* (London: C. Dilly, 1790); Louise d'Épinay, *Les Conversations d' Emilie*, ed. Rosena Davidson, (Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 1996); Stéphanie-Félicité de Genlis, *Adelaide and Theodore, or Letters on Education (1783)*, ed. Gillian Dow (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2007); Elizabeth Hamilton, *Letters on Education* (Bath, 1801); Maria Edgeworth, *The Parent's Assistant* (London, 1796); Maria Edgeworth and Richard Lovell Edgeworth, *Practical Education*, 2 vols. (London, 1798).
16. Ruth Hagengruber, *Emilie du Châtelet Between Leibniz and Newton* (Dordrecht/Heidelberg/London/New York: Springer 2011).
17. David Stove, "The Subjection of John Stuart Mill," *Philosophy* 68 (1993), 5–13.
18. Stove, "The Subjection of John Stuart Mill," 5.
19. Antony, "Different Voices or Perfect Storm."