

## **Introduction:**

### **Hypatia Essays on the Place of Women in the Profession of Philosophy**

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*Hypatia* Virtual Issue: **“*Hypatia* Essays on the Place of Women in the Profession of Philosophy”**  
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This virtual issue brings together essays published by *Hypatia* over a twenty year timespan that address the question of women’s place in the profession of philosophy. The issue includes essays about women in the history of philosophy, empirical studies of the numbers of women at various stages in careers in philosophy, analytical essays about why women, including specifically women of color, are not reaching parity with white men in the profession, and essays and reports about what women are doing to change the representation of women in philosophy. The issue highlights the efforts that women have made through the centuries and in the pages of this Journal to demand a place for women as philosophers.

The first section, **“Women in Historical Perspective,”** includes three essays and one archival document. We begin with an essay by Eileen O’Neill, “Early Modern Women Philosophers and the History of Philosophy,” in which she recalls a 1990 session at the Eastern Division APA meeting where she listed some sixty women in the history of early modern philosophy, almost none of whom had even been heard of by the audience. O’Neill goes on to record how this changed somewhat in the intervening fifteen years. She analyzes some of the reasons for the exclusion of women from the canon, and how much work is still to be done to accord these historical women their proper places as philosophers. Next comes the archival document, a letter from the Harvard dissertation examining committee of Mary Calkins from 1899, introduced by Charleen Haddock Siegfried. Women were not eligible for a doctorate at Harvard, nor did Radcliffe have a doctoral program, at the time, and Calkins did not receive the degree, despite her excellent performance. In the third entry, “The Other Philosophy Club: America’s First Academic Women Philosophers,” Dorothy Rogers examines the philosophical contributions of women in academic philosophy departments in the United States in the years 1880-1900, focusing on the work of three of them, beginning with Calkins. The last paper in this section is Marjorie Altorf’s, “After Cursing the Library: Iris Murdoch and the Invisibility of Women in Philosophy,” which examines the gendered ways biographers have interpreted Iris Murdoch’s life and career as a writer, and constructs an alternative philosophical biography for her. Altorf also offers a critique of Sally Haslanger’s focus in her paper, “Not by Reason Alone,” (included later in this virtual issue), on the current markers of professional prestige.

The second section is **“Contemporary Analysis of Gender Exclusion,”** and includes five essays. The first is current *Hypatia* Editor Alison Wylie’s introduction to a recent issue’s “found” cluster, “Women in Philosophy: The Costs of Exclusion,” in which several of the articles republished in this virtual issue first appeared. Wylie begins her essay assembling the statistics on women and minorities in Philosophy from the available resources and discussing several previously published articles on the state of women in philosophy, before introducing the cluster theme of the heavy costs exclusion to the discipline as a whole, a major theme of this virtual issue as well. She writes, “what is at stake are not only principles of equity and a lamentable squandering of potential and realized philosophical talent but the systematic impoverishment of philosophy I itself, conceptually and intellectually.” (pp.376-7) The second essay in the section is Sara Ruddick’s review of Linda Martín Alcoff’s, *Singing in the Fire*, a book comprised of autobiographical essays by some of the most influential contemporary women philosophers. The third essay in this section is the instant classic, “Changing the Ideology and Culture of Philosophy: Not by Reason (Alone),” by Sally Haslanger. This essay launched a movement, embodied in the Women in Philosophy Task Force (WPhTF), and continues to inspire much self-reflection by departments and journals seeking to understand and change the profession to better welcome and recognize women and minorities. The final two essays in this section look at how and why women undergraduates are discouraged from majoring in philosophy. Cheshire Calhoun, in “The Undergraduate Pipeline Problem,” speculates that women come to college with gender schemas that hinder their attachment to philosophy, making it likely that they will easily give it up if they

encounter resistance or disappointment. In their just published, “Quantifying the Gender Gap: An Empirical Study of the Underrepresentation of Women in Philosophy,” Molly Paxton, Valerie Tiberius, Carrie Figdor conduct a rigorous empirical investigation of women in the philosophy training pipeline. They confirm that the major drop-off in representation of women is at the undergraduate level, but also find that the one factor that seems to make a difference in their persistence is the representation of women faculty in their programs.

Section III, “**Analysis of Race & Gender Exclusion,**” contains four essays in different genres: a “musing” essay, an interview and its introductory essay, and a book review. Kristie Dotson’s musing, “Concrete Flowers: Contemplating the Profession of Philosophy” begins the section with an analysis of the unattractiveness of philosophy for many who do not fit the dominant demographic of the discipline. Dotson argues that the methodological emphasis of mainstream philosophy on critique of a canon of anointed white male philosophers and ethnocentric topics is particularly unwelcoming and uninteresting to women of color. The next essay introduces an extended interview, organized and facilitated by George Yancy, with Anita Allen, Anika Mann, Michele Moody-Adams, Donna Marcano, and Jacqueline Scott. Yancy queries these African American women about what led them to become philosophers and the obstacles they have overcome in pursuing careers, resulting in five varied and fascinating narratives. Their dialogue also reveals many insights into how we can encourage and nurture more women of color in the future. The final essay is Laura Freeman’s book review of George Yancy’s *The Center Must Not Hold: White Women Philosophers on the Whiteness of Philosophy*, a book that brings together essays by twelve White women philosophers reflecting on white supremacy and ethnocentricity in the profession.

The final section, “**Positive Proposals for Change: What we are doing about it**” consists of four essays about methods for increasing the number and status of women and minorities and improving the quality of their professional lives. The first essay, “Beyond Gender Schemas: Improving the Advancement of Women in Academia,” is by Virginia Valian, a psychologist whose book *Why So Slow? The Advancement of Women* (MIT Press, 1999) introduced “gender schemas” and “accumulation of advantage” as analytical tools for understanding why equity has not been instantly achieved when professions were formally opened to women. In her essay Valian summarizes recent psychological research and offers several concrete procedures for enabling women to reach greater levels of success in academia. In the second essay, Kathryn Gines’s “Being a Black Woman Philosopher: Reflections on Founding the Collegium of Black Women Philosophers” describes her path into the profession and the events that led her to found the Collegium to help the some 125 Black women philosophers in the US find community. The third essay is a report by Louise Antony and Ann Cudd about “The Mentoring Project,” an effort started through the WiPHTF to mentor junior women faculty in philosophy. Finally, Jacqui Poltera’s essay “Women and the Ethos of Philosophy: Shedding Light on Mentoring and Competition,” offers wisdom about how women can mentor other women well, and also how that can go awry.

This virtual issue assembles the many pieces about women in the profession of philosophy that have appeared in *Hypatia*, for many years the only feminist philosophy journal. It bears witness to longstanding concern with the representation and status of women and minority group members in our profession. We hope it contributes to the groundswell of efforts to make philosophy a more welcoming place, and that it serves the end of improving the numbers and status of women and minorities in our profession, of making it a more welcoming place for diverse people and ideas, thereby also improving the quality of philosophical thought.