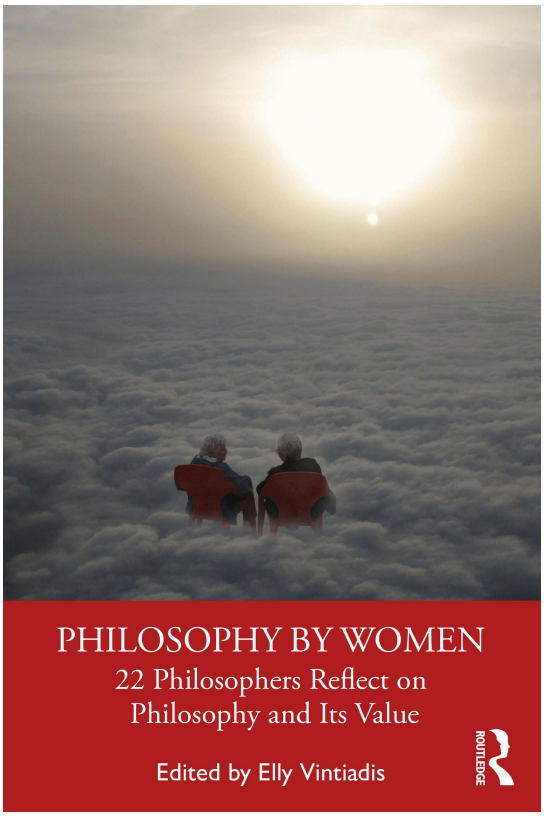
Philosophy by Women

22 Philosophers Reflect on Philosophy and Its Value

Elly Vintiadis



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What is philosophy, why does it matter, and how would it be different if women wrote more of it? At a time when the importance of philosophy, and the humanities in general, is being questioned and at a time when the question of gender equality is a huge public question, 22 women in philosophy lay out in this book how they think of philosophy, what they actually do, and how that is applied to actual problems. By bringing together accounts of the personal experiences of women in philosophy, this book provides a new understanding of the ways in which the place of women in philosophy has changed in recent decades while also introducing the reader to the nature and the value of philosophy.

Elly Vintiadis is a philosopher of mind and psychiatry at Deree, the American College of Greece. She has previously taught at the City College of New York and the Hellenic Naval Staff and Command College. Her work focuses mainly on what mental disorders can tell us about the nature of the mind, and on emergence and explanation, but her research also extends to animal ethics and epistemology. Her publications include *Brute Facts* (2018, coedited with Constantinos Mekios) and *Animals and Us* (2020, in Greek).

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Edited by

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Dedication

In memory of Emanuela, who would have loved this.

Contents

Contributors

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Heisook Kim is the 16th President of Ewha Womans University where she has taught since 1987. Dr. Kim became the first Dean of Ewha Scranton College in 2007 and created the Scranton Honors Program, which allows students to experience innovative educational opportunities across academic fields. Heisook Kim has successively filled leading posts in national, as well as international academic societies of philosophy including President of the Korean Philosophical Association. She served as a committee director of the International Federation of Philosophical Societies and is one of nine board members of the International Association of Women Philosophers.

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Women, Equality and Dependency, (Routledge 2nd edition, 2019), and *Learning from My Daughter: The Value and Care of Disabled Minds* (Oxford UP, 2019).

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Rónké A. Òké specializes in race and identity formation with a particular emphasis on the African Diaspora, multiple acculturation theories, AfroFeminism, and restructurative justice. In the past, her work sought to reconstruct a philosophical account of lived experience that does justice to the experience of race. Currently Dr.

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Elly Vintiadis is a philosopher of mind and psychiatry at Deree, the American College of Greece, and prior to that has taught at the City College of New York and the Hellenic Naval Staff and Command College. Her work focuses mainly on what mental disorders can tell us about the nature of the mind, and on emergence and explanation, but her research also extends to animal ethics and epistemology. Her publications include the anthology *Brute Facts* (Oxford UP, 2018) of which she is the first editor and the book *Animals and Us* (epbooks, 2020/ in Greek).

Penelope Voutsina studied theology, history, and philosophy of science at the University of Athens and analytic philosophy at the University of Sheffield. She is a PhD candidate at the University of Sheffield and deputy head teacher at the Moraitis School in Athens where she teaches religious studies and philosophy. Her work falls in the sub-fields of philosophy of education, philosophy of religion, and epistemology.

Fay Zika is Associate Professor of Philosophy and Theory of Art at the Art Theory and History Department of the Athens School of Fine Arts. Her research interests include color theory and practice, multisensory perception and aesthetics, identity and gender, the relation between art and nature, and the relation between philosophy and the arts and sciences. Many of these appear in her latest book *Arts and Thoughts: Philosophical Investigations in Contemporary Art* (Agra Publications, 2018/ in Greek).

Acknowledgements

I am deeply indebted to all the contributors for taking time from their very busy schedules to write an original essay for this anthology. I realize that for some of them, writing this essay was a move out of their comfort zones – I am profoundly appreciative of this and think that this volume is better for it. I am also indebted to the contributors because in one way or another, they were a part of this volume beyond their written contributions: they were a constant source of ideas, support, and contacts when they were truly needed. Our shared enthusiasm for the project brought us all together and the result is truly a collaborative effort.

I must also thank Andy Beck for his invaluable help, guidance, and patience throughout the whole process that made this book happen, and also for his taking a leap of faith and trusting in this endeavor from the very beginning.

Introduction

Elly Vintiadis

The idea for this volume originally sprung late one summer night from two realizations. The first one was that many people, and most people in Greece where I live, don't really know what philosophy is and what we, as philosophers, do. It is commonplace, even as far back as Aristophane's *Clouds* to treat philosophy as something very abstract, possibly subversive and with no practical applications, but if you ask most people what philosophy is they have a very unclear idea about it, if they have any idea at all. Consequently, they don't know what the usefulness or importance of philosophy may be. The second realization was that most people generally do not know of philosophers who are women, and the typical association made when they think of a philosopher, is that they think of a man. This is a shame, both because philosophy has a lot to offer and because there are many women in philosophy who are doing important and interesting work.

So the initial aim of this anthology was to put together a book accessible to the non-a cademic public to address these two issues. The first explicitly, by having philosophers talk about philosophy so that readers can get a better idea of what it is we do and why it is important, and the second implicitly, by introducing readers to philosophers who are women. That is, as an attempt to counter through examples the misleading stereotype of philosophy as an ivory tower discipline for old men with grey hair and beards and to register in people's minds that there are many women who do philosophy and do it well, just as well as men do.

Both these issues seem particularly relevant right now. The usefulness of philosophy, and the humanities in general, is being questioned and philosophy (just as other humanities') departments are closing down all around the world, while in the public sphere the importance of reasoned arguments and evidence is being doubted. At the same time, the voices of minorities are being heard around the world and the question of gender equality is a huge public question. One aspect of this question is the place of women in philosophy, both historically and today. It is within this background that I thought that this book would be a timely addition to the literature.

I should start by saying that I do not like the term "women philosophers" because it seems to separate us from "regular" philosophers, which usually means male philosophers. However, as things now stand, this term is sometimes necessary in order to conceptually distinguish between two unequally represented groups and to be able to bring to light their sometimes distinct interests. I should also say that though this book is feminist in the broad sense since it promotes the visibility of women and philosophy

done by women, it is not a feminist philosophy book in the sense that its subject matter is not feminist philosophy or feminist theory. There are contributors who work on feminist philosophy but other than that this is just a book about philosophy written by philosophers who happen to be women.

Some will undoubtedly have reservations about whether such a book is needed and about whether it helps the predicament that women find themselves in in our field. It might also strike some as exclusionary and discriminatory and it is, but not, as far as I can tell, in an objectionable way. Discrimination is not inherently bad, even though the term has acquired that connotation; we can discriminate between people with different interests, in the sense of treating them differently, even if temporarily, precisely to protect those interests. In the sense in which discrimination is something wrong it is not just distinguishing between different groups of people, but it is giving some kind of preference or advantage to one already privileged group at the expense of some already underprivileged group. Kate Manne has pointed out in another context that focussing on women is an incomplete perspective, but it is a legitimate and useful one. I agree. So though one would be right, strictly speaking, to call this book sexist based on the meaning of the term "sexism," it would be like calling the Black Lives Matter movement racist based on the literal meaning of the word "racism." That would be missing the point and disregarding the reasons why such a move became necessary. It would, in effect, be approaching this issue in a historical and social void.

But we do not live in a void and gender need not just be a "fashionable distraction from the core business of philosophy," as a critic called it. I think we can all agree that a person's gender should be irrelevant to her opportunities and to the assessment of her intellectual work because what matters in such work is the individual mind, not one's gender. And, of course, women doing philosophy write philosophy, we do philosophy, we don't write about what it is like for a woman to do philosophy. Yet, unfortunately, it still remains the case that gender plays a role in philosophy.

So there is a political aspect to this book; by putting together an anthology of only women, I am pointing to a historical injustice, that of exclusion of women in philosophy. My philosophical education consisted of texts written by white, Western men, which really makes up the history of philosophy as it is usually conceived. Though other groups and traditions are lately sometimes given lip service and today there are philosophers from minority groups, the world of philosophy has been, and still is, predominantly male. It is an astounding fact that one can become a philosopher, or can have a degree in philosophy, without ever having come across the work of non-male philosophers. And this is not because there are no women doing philosophy. In fact, in the history of philosophy prior to the twentieth century there have been many women doing philosophy (often, but not always, by communicating their thoughts to male philosophers) despite the obstacles they faced (often, but not always, they had to do it anonymously). Yet, to use Eileen O'Neill's words, it seems that for reasons other than their absence, historically women's philosophical writing has been written in disappearing ink and this, which for a very long time went unnoticed, sends out

the implicit message that philosophy is only a product of Western men, or that men are better at philosophy than women are. (Mind you, it is not only women doing philosophy that have been seen as encroaching on an exclusively male discipline, it is also women reading philosophy or attending philosophy lectures. A famous example of this is that of the *Bergsoniennes*, as the women who attended Bergson's lectures in Paris were called. They were not only ridiculed and often perceived as a nuisance, as Emily Herring has pointed out, but critics of Bergson used the fact that he had a big following of women to discredit his philosophy.)

There is also, however, a philosophical message in this; that it is not only as a matter of justice that philosophy should become more open, inclusive and diverse, it is also important in order to make philosophy better, because inclusivity is not only about what people enter in philosophy, it is also about the ideas and perspectives that are allowed to be heard. Since what kinds of questions are given importance and priority largely depends on who is raising them and the context in which they are being raised, these ultimately depend on who is doing philosophy. This means that, circumscribing the narrative of the history of philosophy as white, Western and male (as well as non-disabled, straight and cis) and limiting the world of reason to this group, in effect making it what Mickaella Perina describes in her essay as a "bounded territory," can deprive us of ways of thinking that could be beneficial and enlightening. This doesn't mean that anything new introduced will automatically be good or accepted as true. It should be subject to the normal philosophical scrutiny and some of it will survive, some of it will not. But it does mean that we must rethink how we assess philosophical ideas and topics and become aware of how history narrows enquiry and excludes certain questions.

The kinds of lives we lead and the experiences we have affect our approach to the world and thus the kinds of questions that are important to us. This is perfectly natural and I think that the way we are in the world should inform our philosophy – after all, we are not just disembodied minds, but embodied and situated beings that have a history, a background and a biology. The problem arises when there is homogeneity in the kind of people that do philosophy and that, in turn, leads to homogeneity in the kinds of problems that are approached, in the way that they are approached and, ultimately, to a homogeneous canon. One of the dangers of having a homogeneous canon is that the assumptions and presuppositions we hold both about what questions we tackle and about how we tackle them can become rigid and we can lose our ability to see beyond them, assuming that these are the right or the only way of looking at things. The other danger is that it compromises the very nature of philosophy which is, as Melenia Arouh describes it in her contribution to this volume, plethoric. In this sense, diversity is good for philosophy because it challenges the established point of view and allows for a broader subject matter. Indeed, one can see even from the essays in this collection that by opening philosophy to other ways of thinking it easily becomes apparent how traditional question in philosophy require re- thinking. And this does not apply only to specific fields in philosophy. For as can be seen by Fay Zika's description

of her work on different issues, even the most seemingly disparate fields of philosophy come together and affect each other.

So though it is to be expected that the demographics of our profession will affect what we consider important, it becomes detrimental to the profession when these demographics narrow our scope and do not allow for other points of view, with possibly different priorities, to have a voice, thus marginalizing certain questions. And if philosophy is taught without pointing out the lack of diversity in its canon –and by this I do not mean mere difference or variety or an equal distribution of different groups, but difference and variety of certain traditionally excluded groups – then I think we can say that it sustains and contributes to it. Opening up who does philosophy, how philosophy is done but also what counts as philosophy will, of course, threaten existing power structures (and the philosophical hegemony doesn't typically like touching this topic, especially when it comes to their discipline), but it is necessary, as Maria Brincker, Quill R Kukla and Briana Toole all discuss in their essays, in order to check our biases, our narratives and to expand our conceptual resources.

If nothing else, one must consider that we don't really know what aspects of human life might give rise to (good) philosophy, or what kinds of human beings might produce it, in what circumstances or social conditions. This in itself would be a reason to be as open as possible to different perspectives – rather as Mill argued in *On Liberty* about "experiments in living." The analogy with Mill would be that we should allow for experimentation because as we extend our sense of what possibilities there are for human living by considering the contributions made by many different kinds of experiments in living, we similarly extend our sense of what possibilities there are for philosophy by considering the contributions made by many different kinds of people. So though diversity does not necessarily guarantee better philosophy, it opens up p ossibilities which might be excluded by the stereotypes we have.

Another point worth making is that working on this book it became a pparent that there was an expectation that we ought to explain what a woman's point of view can offer to philosophy – a question that I am sure was never posed for an anthology composed of all male contributors precisely because men's point of view is the default point of view. In a sense, our voices ceased to be philosophers' voices but had to be women's voices as if women would necessarily have another point of view, as a group, instead of being the individual points of view taken by philosophers. The idea was that since all of the contributing philosophers to this volume are women, there will emerge different ways of thinking, doing and applying philosophy because of that. Or at least that was necessary to explain why an anthology would only have women contributors.

But the essays in this book need not necessarily, or only, be viewed as "women's point of view." There is no claim being made that women think differently than men, or that there is such a thing as "women's philosophy." Rather, the idea is that the lives of women (in the way society is structured today, at least) can sometimes put them in the position to contribute differently, or to have different "philosophical material" as Quill R Kukla puts it in her essay in this volume. Nor is there a claim made that women all

think in the same way; this is why this collection includes a demographically diverse group of contributors with different approaches. Of course, because the essays in this book are written by women, there is a, trivial, sense in which they express women's points of view, but they are also written by individual philosophers who have abilities independent of their gender; for careful analysis, logical rigour, creativity and so on. As philosophers we will disagree on positions, views and assumptions held, and we will even disagree about how to go about working towards making things better in our discipline. Yet, as women, we are also members of an underrepresented group in our field – so this is one sense in which it is significant that the contributors of this book are all women: a statement is being made by that fact alone. In a context in which gender has historically played a role, either as explicit bias or as implicit/ unconscious bias, giving a platform such as this book for women's voices to be heard is an unfortunate, and hopefully only temporary, necessity. And, to be charitable, this might go some way towards explaining the need to explain why our point of view is important and why this book is needed when, until ten years ago, no remark on gender would have been included in a book with all male contributors.

Ultimately, the way we see the world is affected by the way we think about the world, and the concepts we have to think about it delineate what is permissible and what is possible. A clear contemporary example of this is the #MeToo movement. Different descriptions of an action, coming from different points of view, change our perception about how things are and how they ought to be. It also broadens the scope of what can be spoken of by giving names to things that were not available before. By putting together a book composed only of texts by women in philosophy, we show what is actually the case while also providing counter- stereotypical examples that can also serve as role models, and thus show what is possible, hopefully motivating more women to pursue goals that they might otherwise have shied away from. This can be a way to combat the "stereotype threat" that Emily Thomas mentions in her contribution to this volume. So to use Wittgenstein's metaphor, I see this book as one of the ladders we need to climb only to throw away once we reach our destination where we can "see the world aright." Once this happens, books such as this will no longer be necessary – not because the philosophy in it will no longer be useful, but because it will no longer be necessary to have a book wholly written by women.

Yet, because of our lived experience, as women there are certain experiences that we share and that are important to us and there will be practical matters that are of concern to us, in addition to our more narrow academic interests. Including philosophical reflection on such aspects of our common experience can result in progress in philosophy by developing our understanding of the world. (Note here that, as Agnes Callard points out in her essay, the fact that women do philosophy professionally nowadays is already a form of progress in philosophy.) Notable recent examples of such progress that has been hugely influential within and beyond academia is Kate Manne's *Down Girl* in which Manne drew our attention to a systemic bias, and Miranda Fricker's *Epistemic Injustice* in which she identified testimonial and hermeneutical injustice, both

powerful forces of injustice. Both these philosophers invented whole new categories and both identify sources of harm in these works that previously went largely unseen. By introducing new concepts to describe the world they also showcase how philosophy can be empowering and liberating, a theme that comes up in many of the essays in this volume. Both these works also build on previous work, like that of Simone de Beauvoir and Martha Nussbaum who have argued that freedom and rights are impotent if our situations deprive us from the possibility to act, that shows that even if legal barriers fall, actual equality is a far more complicated matter – something that Eva Kittay discusses in relation to care in her essay in this volume.

It is, of course, logically possible that male philosophers could have come up with these concepts and theories, but they didn't. Rather, it is more plausible to argue that it is as a result of the authors' experiences that these works originally came into being. Just as Elizabeth Barnes' eye opening book on the perils and injustices of ableism, *The Minority Body,* and Carrie Jenkins' critical enquiry into heteronormativity and amatonormativity in *What Love Is.* Our lived experience not only may open up new questions in philosophy but can also point to new ways of thinking that are needed in order to address issues absent for most of philosophical history that can also be relevant to people's actual lives.

We like to think of philosophy as a purely disinterested enquiry done from the view from nowhere, untouched by our history or our culture. Even if such an approach were possible in any field (and I do not think there is such a thing as a value- free theoretical claim in any field of enquiry), what disinterestedness has been traditionally associated with is one particular point of view, the established one – only that is universal and everything else is local. It is because of this association that, even though we are bringing politics into our considerations, this is not necessarily politicizing the content of philosophical enquiry. Instead, it is an attempt to make enquiry pluralistic, broader and more objective. For introducing different points of view should not be seen as a threat to objective or disinterested enquiry but should be seen as an addition to it by being open to things that might be important – something that Briana Toole tries to make explicit in her essay in this collection. So the demand for greater diversity in philosophy becomes a matter of not just political but philosophical importance for a subjective viewpoint may be the only way of bringing to light important truths.

This importance manifests itself in another way too. Mary Midgley once wrote that philosophy is like plumbing; not only "grand and elegant and difficult, but [...] also needed." Midgley draws a comparison between philosophy and plumbing as two structures that we rely on everyday but that mostly lie beneath the surface unseen. That is, just as plumbing usually goes unseen and we rely on it without thinking about it until something falls apart, so, too, philosophy underlies our culture and the need for it becomes apparent when we are faced with some sort of failure. Yet, even though we live in a time – like all human times, really – that is full of uncertainty and challenges, our philosophical tools seem to exist only for the privileged few. As a result, philosophy

is perceived as irrelevant, increasingly dropping out of educational curricula and losing its voice in the public sphere.

By offering essays on the nature of philosophy and its value, this volume aims to contribute to a move towards philosophy looking outward. For if philosophy is needed, as I think it is, it is important for it to engage with the world it is a philosophy of. After all, you can't help if no one is listening or no one knows you are there. So I think it is important at least that people outside our field be introduced to the work that philosophers actually do, especially those aspects of it that can be relevant in our everyday life. Indeed, there have recently been moves towards opening philosophical thinking to the public, for instance, by having philosophers actively engage with contemporary issues and writing in a non- academic manner about philosophical questions. And the American Philosophical Association has recently suggested that philosophical work that appeals to the public should count in academic evaluations. In general, I think that especially in times in which there are major changes in society and there is a lot of misinformation and unclear thinking, philosophical reflection and analysis can be of great importance.

At the same time though, in the essays in this collection philosophers are looking inward, to philosophy itself. By trying to explain what philosophy is – which is itself a very difficult task – and how it is being done today, some essays, like mine and Chris Meyns', include criticism of contemporary academic philosophy. Such a critical view that challenges the status quo is essential for the evolution of any discipline that does not want to remain stagnant and especially for a discipline like philosophy that requires constant self- examination. The essays also address the question whether philosophy matters in today's world and do so from different viewpoints. They thus showcase the ubiquity and unavoidability of philosophy as well as its practical effects and the role it can play in people's lives by helping us to address challenges we face.

Though the essays in this collection can be read on their own right because there is substantial diversity in them, both in content and in style, there are some common themes that arise in them. I have thus organized the essays in two sections: one in which the papers primarily take up the question of what philosophy is and one in which the papers are mainly about aspects of practising philosophy. Admittedly, this separation is not clear- cut. Many of the essays' topics overlap – for instance, most at some point in their discussion refer to the place of women in philosophy – and it is not always clear to which category each essay should be assigned. But this categorization reflects a different focus and is meant to help the reader navigate through the material in this book. I have left considerable freedom to the authors to pursue their own way of thinking about philosophy, as well as their own writing style, precisely so that we can break moulds and come up with new ideas and approaches when thinking about, but also when doing, philosophy. So some contributors in this book explain what philosophy is by describing part of their research, others give a detailed exposition of the field of philosophy they work in or explain what an area of philosophy is and why it is valuable thus focussing on what philosophers do. I try to tackle the question

of the nature of philosophy directly, while others describe how and why they got into philosophy or take up one question about philosophy and address it. Others still, reflect on their personal experience (that many would share) of what actually being in the profession is often like. Just as this book tries to break a stereotype by presenting examples of philosophy done by women, so too it is meant to show what philosophy is by having philosophers talk about their work, their research interests and their experiences in philosophy and as philosophers. By writing about what they work on, these philosophers give readers a sense of the breadth of philosophy that spans the very different interests that philosophers have. In the end though, all these essays aim to contribute to moving beyond our discipline's past and its male canon and to challenging the invisibility of women in our field while also bringing philosophy to the general public.

One interesting thing that becomes apparent in reading these essays is that, unlike the vast majority of academic philosophy in which topics are approached in a detached way, in these essays philosophers are personally engaged with their subject. Some even include an autobiographical narrative which, as Eva Feder Kittay points out, is tabooed in today's philosophical milieu. And, though all philosophers in this book have various strictly academic interests, many of them chose to talk about aspects of their work that are less philosophically abstract and more about things that matter either in their own lives, or that have applications in general beyond academia. A consensus seems to emerge that philosophy is connected to practice in many different ways. That is, that it is not something that is only done for its own sake, even though it has intrinsic value. Rather, it is a tool that can be used to make our lives, our societies and also ourselves, better, and as Gina Shouten argues in her essay, this outward orientation of philosophy need not compromise the rigorousness of philosophical thinking. Maybe this is a form of what Carrie Jenkins describes in her contribution to this volume as "job crafting" and a part of what women bring to philosophy beyond their strictly academic contributions. As Ellen Fridland points out in her essay, women tend to ask questions that concern people and that matter to their lives and maybe this is also why, as Teresa Marques notes, women who work in the philosophy of language have displayed more of an interest in language use in politics: genocidal language games, hate speech, silencing, dogwhistles, figleaves, meaning perversions, slurs and pejoratives – topics about which many if not most women philosophers of language have written about. By taking up questions that matter in our lives, like questions about implicit bias, mental health and stigma, love and relationships, political discourse and propaganda, identity and labels, disability and the importance and meaning of care or by taking up questions about the status of our discipline, the philosophers in this collection raise questions of meaning, equality and justice that can contribute to developing practical solutions for issues of interpersonal interactions. This might be a step towards helping invigorate philosophy and making it relevant again.

Another interesting thing, related to the above, that emerges from these papers is how many of the philosophers in this collection see philosophy as a collaborative effort,

as a dialogue, whose creative element is often better done in groups where people can engage with people from different backgrounds that have views different from their own. Philosophers are often portrayed as secluded from society, sitting in an armchair thinking or contentiously arguing back and forth among themselves defending their positions, and this, as Gina Shouten and others point out in their essays, is very much in accordance with the individualistic terms in which we often think of philosophy and its value. For we often think of philosophy as an instrument that can help promote our personal interests: professional philosophers try to make their individual mark on the history of ideas (as Heisook Kim also points out in her essay) and students of philosophy hone skills that will allow them to achieve their life's goals and become more competitive in today's world, no matter what their future profession will be. After all, as Mary Margaret McCabe reminds us, the philosopher escapes alone from the Cave in the *Republic*. Yet, she also r eminds us that there is a tradition of philosophy being practised collaboratively or thought of as a conversation, a dialectic. Rónké Òké sees the classroom as the space in which we enact the praxis that is the embodied discipline of philosophy, as does Penelope Voutsina who urges us to pay attention to children and their experiences and through classrooms to introduce them to the community of enquiry. Lisa Bortolotti and Sophie Stammers point out in their piece that Socrates practised philosophy in the *agora*, and that today philosophical discussions often take place in groups: on social media, with friends, over dinner, in debates. Bortolotti and Stammers also draw our attention to what Rosalind Pulvermacher calls "pop- up philosophy groups": groups of people meeting to do philosophy together with a common goal, often regarding issues of social importance. If we accept that philosophy can play an important role in our lives and thus in how we live together, such respectful collaborative thinking (which I well understand can go against the rigid attitude we have towards the authorship of ideas) can be of immense, and transformational, importance. Because, ultimately, the more we explore a claim from different perspectives, the more open we are to imaginatively considering many points of view, and the less set we are in defending *our* claim as if we were opponents in a playing field (as is common case today in the highly antagonistic philosophical culture whose source, Rónké Òké argues, is the Socratic method), the more chances we have of understanding its meaning and its implications. Interestingly – and this is also possibly indicative of the reasons behind the split between traditional Western and Asian philosophical traditions – both these ideas, that philosophy is a kind of discourse but also a practice, are mentioned by Kyoo Lee in her piece when she refers to how philosophy is conceived of in the East Asian tradition.

I should end this rather lengthy introduction by saying that I felt that we need a collection of essays that enriches the options of how to conceive of philosophy. Philosophy has grown and is growing yet we always seem stuck reading the same things by the same people and approaching the world through the same lenses. With this anthology, I want to offer an alternative view and for this reason I wanted this anthology to be as inclusive and diverse as possible. I have not succeeded in that. All contributors to

this volume are fluent in English and thus are part of a privileged group, because, in philosophy at least, English is hegemonic and that immediately puts philosophers that are not fluent in English at a considerable disadvantage. This, as well as other difficulties faced by philosophers in many parts of the world, is something that is often ignored, or missed, by philosophers in the (wealthy) Anglosaxon academic world, of which most philosophers in this volume are part. For though lately it is acknowledged that philosophy is very male, and also very Western, it is sometimes forgotten that it is a special kind of Western too. So I tried to include philosophers from parts of Europe that are underrepresented, like southern Europe, as well as other underrepresented parts of the globe, to try to right some of the imbalances due to this. I do not feel that I have done as well as I should have in this regard. There are many brilliant philosophers missing from this book to whom I apologize. I did not mean to ostracize anyone, ignore any school of thought, tradition or sub- discipline or create the impression that some topics and issues are more important than others. The selection of philosophers in this volume undoubtedly reflects my academic interests and connections, as well as the availability of overworked academics, but it would also be shortsighted and dishonest to say that it is not reflective of the general demographics of philosophy, as they also apply to women working in philosophy. Indeed, when I started putting this book together I realized how limited my knowledge of women working in philosophy is and this made me even more confident that such a book is needed. So, I too, belong to the group that needs to do better.

I also wanted to avoid the gender binary trap, which I also failed at but I definitely do not endorse. There is much more diversity in the world than what the contributors to this book mirror. I am also willing to grant that the boundaries of "woman" are fuzzy and that it is still an open question who we should eventually include under that heading. These are very difficult questions not to be settled here – fortunately there are excellent philosophers who work on such issues. What is clear though is that this volume was never intended to include only Western, wealthy, white, cis, non- disabled and straight women who cleanly identify as such. In the end, I do not pretend that this book can change the status quo, but I hope that it can be another brick taken out of the wall between what is and what should be.

PART I: Thinking about Philosophy

1. Philosophy as a Means of Empowerment and Self-advocacy

Lisa Bortolotti and Sophie Stammers

Philosophy is both a subject and a discipline. As with any other *subject*, we a cquire and consolidate knowledge when we study it. As with any other *discipline*, we learn a range of skills when we practise it. But when philosophy is combined with the relevant empirical knowledge, it has the distinctive power of shedding light on our limitations as agents and help us take measures to overcome such limitations. First, we describe the practice of philosophy as the gradual process by which we come to appreciate our weaknesses and develop the means to turn the agents we are into the agents we want to be. Next, we show how this applies to two concrete cases where we learn to manage and control those environmental cues and unconscious biases that exercise an influence on our judgements and decisions. With philosophy we can enhance our knowledge of ourselves and our capacity to make choices that reflect our values; philosophy also helps address the need to reduce the underrepresentation of marginalised groups in some contexts, such as women in academic philosophy.

Doing Philosophy

Doing philosophy means adopting a critical attitude towards received information or opinion. This applies both to information presented as authoritative and seemingly supported by evidence, and to information that is conveyed by means of an aesthetically pleasing and engaging story. In philosophy the aim is to acquire and exercise the capacity to assess and develop arguments for or against a certain position. Budding philosophers learn how to spot weaknesses in other people's arguments, but also how to anticipate objections when they put forward arguments of their own. Proficiency in philosophy translates into being able to weigh the evidence for and against a position, avoiding common fallacies when presenting an argument, expressing a thought clearly and p ersuasively, striving for coherence between existing beliefs and new hypotheses, and being prepared to revise hypotheses in the light of counterevidence. *To what* we then apply the *philosophical method* is to some extent up to us, and philosophers (just like scientists) have a variety of interests, from the nature of free will to nonhuman animal rights. In terms of content, then, philosophy is about understanding the problems

that matter to us and applying analytical and argumentative skills to those problems, with a view to solving them or at least making progress towards their solution.

Philosophy can be done very successfully "in the armchair", and the traditional image of the philosopher is that of a mature, bearded man sitting somewhere dark and quiet with his head in his hands or an inquisitive look on his face, surrounded by scrolls or books. However, given the discursive nature of the argumentative skills required in philosophy, philosophy is best done *in groups*: in the classroom, around the dinner table, in any place where people can engage with views different from their own and practise their argumentative and persuasive skills. Socrates was onto this, according to Plato, and was doing philosophy in the *agora*, what was then the market square. Socrates is often represented as a mature, bearded man but he is not sitting in his armchair and hiding from people, rather he is talking to people (mostly, other men). In much the same way, we might do philosophy when we chat in the pub, exchanging views on current affairs and participating in debates about things that matter to us. More recently, a proportion of this activity takes place on social media sites such as Twitter and Facebook, where the dialectic structure of debates between interlocutors is evident.

Today's professional philosopher is typically still a white man, working for a university or a similar institution where he teaches his subject to students and conducts his research, publishing papers in specialised journals and giving talks at conferences. Most of his work is aimed at other philosophers interested in the same issues who work in other institutions. That said, this picture is evolving and it is becoming increasingly common for philosophers to collaborate with other researchers interested in the same topics, either other philosophers, from the same tradition of thought or a different tradition, or researchers from other disciplinary backgrounds. A philosopher of time might find it useful to talk to physicists, whereas a philosopher of mind might engage with cognitive science research. The recent flourishing and increased respectability of collaborative and interdisciplinary research in philosophy has opened interesting conversations about the value and distinctiveness of philosophy as a style of enquiry, as well as prompting questions as to whether philosophy is (or should be) *dead*.

Still at the margins of the discipline, but viewed with decreasing levels of suspicion, is the practice of some philosophers who reach out to and engage with wider audiences, on podcasts or TV, at festivals, on social media, and in blogs. Most of these forms of engagement are unidirectional though, with simplified versions of arguments being proposed by the philosopher in the public sphere and comments being raised by their audiences. A more dynamic model is the idea of *pop-u p philosophy groups,* a useful expression coined by Rosalind Pulvermacher. These are communities of people meeting with the purpose of doing philosophy together, often focussing on specific issues that generate controversy and are relevant to practice or policy. This has been successfully attempted with children in schools where children address for the first time some "big questions" and are gently introduced to critical thinking and the *community of inquiry*.

In such a community, not all perspectives have the same value but all are respected and appreciated, something on which Laura D'Olimpio reflects in her work.

The creation of philosophical communities can also help mental health p roviders, service users, carers, and activists engage in a reflection on conceptions of mental health and their personal experiences of distress. Questions include how we should think about distress and what implications different accounts of distress have for diagnosis, treatment, and interactions between clinicians and users. As part of our philosophy research project (PERFECT), we ran a series "philosophy of mind" workshops, in partnership with the mental health organisation Mind in Camden, in which participants debated the concepts and assumptions embedded in mental health diagnosis and treatment, and more widely in societal discourse around mental health. The same workshop series has been adapted for delivery in prisons and at career professional development events for healthcare professionals.

Doing philosophy in the community and in a collaborative format offers an important opportunity for dialogue across different backgrounds, as participants listen to experiences that are at times very different from their own, incorporating them into their evolving idea of what mental health is and how it can be preserved. Participants do not necessarily agree on all points, but share a common purpose: to investigate, challenge, and re- establish philosophical accounts that best capture and validate their different experiences of mental health. Drawing on participant feedback, such pop-u p philosophy groups may have the potential to reduce stigma, as well as the potential to alleviate certain experiences of injustice. More important to our purposes in this essay, we found that in our pop- up group participants felt better equipped at advocating for themselves and other people with lived experience of mental health struggles by acquiring the concept of epistemic injustice and practising their critical and argumentative skills.

Cognition, Rationality, and Empowerment

In this section, we would like to explore one way in which doing philosophy can be seen as empowering. Although it would be preferable for agents to have rational beliefs as such beliefs that would be conducive to a better understanding of themselves and of their environment, the reality is that many of the beliefs agents adopt are not well supported by evidence.

Here is an example of a common form of irrationality. People sometimes e xplain their choices in a way that makes such choices sound reasonable although the explanation does not reflect how or why people made their choices. In a now classic psychological study on unexpected influence on decision-m aking, Richard Nisbett and Tim Wilson asked to what extent people are aware of their mental processes when they are asked to give reasons for their choices. Research participants were asked to choose some items as part of a consumer survey. Some participants were asked to choose be-

tween four pairs of nylon stockings which were all identical. Then, participants were asked to explain their choices. Participants' choices were very heavily influenced by the position of the items, and the item that was most on their right was the one they systematically preferred. But when people offered explanations for their choices, they did not mention the position of the chosen items as a factor influencing their choices. Rather, they mentioned features of the items, such as softness or colour, even when the items they chose from differed only in their position.

The authors argued that, when participants are asked to explain their choices, they have no access to the mental processes responsible for their choices because such processes are characterised by effects that are not evident – you would need to have studied psychology to recognise their influence and know that right- handed people tend to prefer items on the right. No matter how they make their decisions, participants provide an explanation that is plausible given their background beliefs about what makes items such as stockings preferable. As a result, their explanations are not reflecting the processes responsible for those choices, but generally plausible reasons for choosing among stockings. The explanations people offer are obviously inaccurate, but they are offered sincerely, and they have one advantage: they enable people to maintain an image of themselves as discerning customers who make choices for good reasons.

Moreover, offering an explanation instead of admitting ignorance may create the opportunity to reflect on and even revise the explanation. Even when the explanation is not accurate, what people share about their values (e.g. whether they like soft or bright stockings) contributes to a conversation about their choices that invites a reaction from the people around them. By providing further information about themselves, people can be challenged about what they share, and this can help them build critical distance from their initial explanation ("Did you say you chose these stockings because of their colour? But aren't they the same colour as the other stockings?").

If people see themselves as agents who are in control of the choices they make, they are likely to feel less helpless when they experience setbacks, and sustain their motivation to pursue their goals in adverse circumstances. Psychologists tell us that a strong sense of agency contributes to productivity, resilience, better planning, and more effective problem- solving, as in the work by Shelley Taylor on positive illusions. But isn't that sense of agency an illusion, given that the explanations supporting it are inaccurate? Here is where philosophy comes in. The empirical evidence tells us that how people make decisions: e.g. when engaging in consumer choice, they are influenced by the position of the available items. Philosophical reflection can explore what the effects of these influences are on behaviour and suggest ways in which people can reduce such effects in order to make choices that truly reflect their values. This may not matter when people choose stockings, but becomes important when people need to make choices about their education, occupation, romantic partners, political allegiances, and so on. When people start appreciating the role of unconscious effects on their decisions, they have the opportunity to discount them or compensate from them. They acquire some understanding of the underlying processes causing their choices and

develop strategies to reduce the influence of factors they have little control over. In the long run, this may translate into people making better choices altogether.

When people use knowledge of the psychological mechanisms responsible for their choices to understand their strengths and limitations as decision- makers, they gain the power to make decisions in a way that better reflects their values. Acknowledging the causes of their behaviour may lead people to be more critical about their choices and even override unwanted effects ("I am inclined to think those stockings on the right are better, but why? Is it their colour, their texture, or just their position? Aren't they all the same?"). As a result of this process, there is a shift in our understanding of what makes us good agents. Competent decision-m aking may not be a condition for effective agency, but the capacity for self-c orrection is: we can review and improve our decisions, aligning them with our values.

Recognising Bias and Improving Debate

In this section we look more closely at the issues affecting perceptions of women in debate. We first explore some historical background to understand the challenges of gender bias that we still face, both within the discipline of philosophy, and beyond it. We think there is a way to do philosophy that can help us recognise and mitigate against these biases, improving the self-u nderstanding and self-a dvocacy of women, as well as improving interlocutors' perceptions of them, with the result of promoting better quality debate.

Recall the traditional image of the philosopher, a mature, bearded man that we mentioned earlier. How do women fit into the picture? There are historical women philosophers whose work has been systematically excluded from the traditional philosophical canon, and more recently, contemporary researchers are making efforts to ensure students can access and study their ideas, along with those of philosophers from other marginalised groups. However, there is also a long history (both within philosophy itself, and beyond) of dissociating women from notions of reason and rationality (thought to be domains for men's thinking) and associating them instead with emotion and irrationality – as can be appreciated in the work of Sally Haslanger and Jennifer Saul.

Reasons for having excluded women from philosophy, as with many other aspects of society, are diverse, but since the relevant cognitive processes are not always deliberate, their operation can be hard to spot, and to correct for. Of particular interest here, is research revealing fast acting cognitive processes that mean we more readily associate stereotypical characteristics with different genders, and this can adversely affect the way we evaluate and treat people. Researchers dub the resultant cognitions "implicit biases", although exactly what is *implicit* about them is the subject of debate. There is a risk of gender bias when thinking about different academic disciplines. For instance, it has been shown that people are quicker to associate STEM fields with men, and arts

and humanities fields with women, than the reverse pairings. Academic philosophy is often thought of as "the science of argument", and with its emphasis on logical proofs and the rules of argumentation, we may well show similar patterns of gender association as with the STEM fields.

We can see traces of the association between emotionality and irrationality and women in our language. For instance, consider the terms "hysteria" and "hysterical", used today to describe overemotional or irrational behaviour. Originating from the Greek for womb (hence why we call it a *hyster*ectomy), hysteria was a nineteenth-century diagnosis involving mental disturbances thought to be caused by problems with the womb. Hysteria as a condition is now widely regarded as scientifically bunk, but the term "hysteria", with its connotations of irrationality and history of gendered application, persists in our language.

This association between women and irrationality can be weaponised against women in debate. We see this frequently in the world of politics: recall British Labour Party MP Angela Eagle being told by the then Prime Minister David Cameron to "calm down, dear" during a *Prime Minister's Questions* debate. Cath Elliot, commentating on this episode argues that "calm down, dear" is "tired old gender stereotyping", suggesting that women cannot keep their emotions in check and thus are not suited to political debate. Of course, there is a place for emotion in debate. Emotion may well manifest in an appropriate and fitting way given the point a debate participant is making, but it can often be perceived as ill-fi tting and irrational when the participant is a woman. Consider the critical reactions climate campaigner Greta Thunberg received following her emotional speech to the UN in the autumn of 2019. Arguably, Thunberg's emotional appeal is an appropriate response to a dire situation that disproportionately affects her generation, but critics lambasted her speech for its emotion, and found it appropriate to draw attention to her neuro-d ivergence (her diagnosis of Asperger's) as a means of undermining her contribution as a serious participant in the debate. Perceiving the contribution of women in debate as invalid due to an association with irrationality constitutes a moral harm, in that it is unfair and unjust. But it also constitutes an intellectual harm: by silencing, or at least reducing the extent to which women's contributions are heard, we risk missing out on developments in knowledge. Debate is of a worse quality as a result, and opportunities for learning by all participants are missed.

Even though philosophers of the past have been partly responsible for perpetuating the stereotype of women as irrational, or at least as less capable of reasoning than men, we suggest that one of remedies for mitigating against this stereotype is to make it, and our imperfect cognitive mechanisms more broadly, the subject of group philosophical debate. As we have already discussed, philosophy is about uncovering and interrogating the assumptions in the way we think about ourselves, each other, and our world, and if we find them to be unsupported, replacing them with beliefs that more accurately reflect reality.

We are all likely to have implicit biases against women (as well as against other marginalised groups). Discovering this can bring about feelings of shame, and even resistance to accepting the evidence, due to the motivation to maintain a consistent and positive self- image – the majority of people consciously believe themselves to be egalitarian. We suggest that making the topic of implicit bias the subject of a group philosophical discussion can remedy these issues.

First, it gives people a forum for properly discussing the relevant scientific findings, and the opportunity to understand different kinds of cognitions that make up a person. Implicit biases are not the same as core personal beliefs about which we have made considered judgements. For instance, conference delegates can consent sincerely and enthusiastically to the claim that women should enjoy the same opportunities than men in academia (*core belief*) and yet can behave in a way that discriminates against women by being more likely to question the credentials of women than those of men (*implicit bias*). Understanding the distinction between implicit bias and core belief may make people more likely to accept the evidence of widespread implicit bias (including, for instance, how they conduct themselves in debate and how seriously they take women participants in debate) and reflect on times in which they may have inadvertently displayed bias. Groups also offer an opportunity to reflect on societal and structural inequalities that contribute to the development of biases, although this doesn't imply that there aren't expectations on individuals to take steps to control the manifestation of their biases.

Second, discussing these issues in a group setting empowers people to take action in a way that they might not if considering the relevant empirical findings on their own. People are generally better at spotting biased thinking in others than themselves, and they may be more motivated to take the necessary steps to mitigate against their biases if there is some peer pressure for them to do so. As a result of group discussion and connection, people can both hold each other to account and encourage each other along the way.

Third, we believe philosophy can make a substantial contribution to interpreting the relevant empirical findings, in the case of bias as in the case of consumer choice we discussed earlier, and this further empowers philosophy group participants to advocate for improved understanding. With its emphasis on making important conceptual distinctions, philosophy facilitates deeper understanding of empirical data. For example, consider how philosopher Jules Holroyd distinguishes between senses of "awareness" that are conflated in much empirical literature on implicit bias, when biased thoughts and behaviours are described as something that people are not aware of. Does the fact that we are not aware of our biases imply that we cannot control them? This is not a distinction that was made in the scientific literature before a philosopher put it forward. Making such distinctions advances scientific knowledge and also enables us to make more fine- grained predictions. In this respect, doing philosophy can contribute to future empirical investigations, their interpretation, and their application to real-life contexts.

Finally, doing philosophy gives women and other participants from marginalised groups an opportunity to participate and engage in the very kind of thinking and debating practices that they may lack access, support, or encouragement to do elsewhere, because of pervasive stereotypes. For this to be successful, it may sometimes be appropriate for philosophy groups to have a facilitator who is knowledgeable of issues such as implicit bias so that they can set up inclusive and welcoming practices at the start of the group meetings, and prevent the perpetuation of stereotypes that might harm group members (e.g. the association of women or people with experiences of mental distress with irrationality) and ultimately inhibit learning.

Practised with this in mind, we think doing philosophy in groups provides a means of uncoupling the association between women and irrationality, partly because it gives women a platform for reasoning and arguing, and partly because interlocutors should be motivated to keep in check their own biases, and not to use rhetorical putdowns that play on the speaker's gender as a means of reply. Debate will be improved as a result, and women may be more motivated to self- advocate in the future.

Conclusion

We are not ideally rational agents, but imperfect agents. We sometimes behave irrationally: for instance, our choices and judgements are affected by unconscious drives and implicit biases. Here, we argued that science offers us evidence of our limitations and the study and practice of philosophy help us identify the implications of those limitations for how we live our lives and can also guide us in finding solutions. Embarking on this journey, we can become better agents. By this we mean that, if we can exercise more control over our choices and judgements, we have better chances of deciding and judging in a way that reflects our values and core beliefs. This includes choosing items for the qualities we genuinely value as opposed to contextual cues that have no significance for us; and behaving as the egalitarians we feel we are when interacting with fellow agents rather than succumbing to the power of stereotypical associations.

Due to the limits of introspection and our strong motivation to maintain a positive and coherent self-i mage, we are not very good at detecting our own imperfections as agents – while we are masters at uncovering, and ready to point out, other people's imperfections. That is why communities of enquirers, pop-u p philosophy groups, and more generally opportunities to engage in respectful and inclusive exchanges are sometimes more successful at delivering self- revelation and at dislodging prejudice than lonesome philosophical investigations. In our experience, they are more fun too.

2. What is Philosophy and Why Does It Matter?: A Situated, Pluralist, Social, Caring – and Perhaps Rebellious Response

Maria Brincker

What is philosophy? And is it worth our while? Or as many in our current environment of neo-l iberal austerity might frame it: is it worth individual and societal investment?

Many things have been said about the nature and value of philosophy, and what I have to add here will not be exhaustive. As a matter of fact, I think that it is crucial to the value and nature of philosophy that it always stays open-e nded and not too neatly defined. But, when posed the question about how to characterise the myriads of different kinds of philosophy that the world has seen, this is what I propose:

- Philosophy is a situated social practice of trying to conceptualise aspects of our worlds, predicaments, possibilities and responsibilities as living agents.
- Why does it matter? Because of what it produces: theories, concepts – and critical re-c onceptualisations – of the nature and purposes of our socially shared worlds, which have consequences for both individual and collective destinies.
- Given these two points: the situatedness and the effect of ideas, I add that responsible philosophy should allow for pluralistic voices and open-e nded methodologies. And most importantly it should know its own position in society and care about its consequences.

I feel this rough definition should not be too controversial. Nor should the additional guidelines. But it certainly has been and probably still is. So, I shall try to make my case.

Philosophy Produces Ideas and Re- Conceptualise Our Frames of Understanding

I suggested that what philosophy produces are theories and ideas, or " conceptualizations". It is certainly a fact that new ways of understanding ourselves, our worlds and our values have been heralded by philosophers. One might go further and say that this is simply what philosophy does – it brings about new understandings and brings old meanings into language in a new way.

But doesn't that make all novel expressions philosophical then? I wouldn't mind saying that there is some truth to that. I am thinking of a child creating a new joke, or a poet at work, and it often does have a philosophical tinge. Again, if philosophy is about innovation of ideas then it must not too neatly circumscribe.

That being said, if we want a slightly less broad and permissive story, or something like "proto- type" philosophy, like a robin might be a good prototype bird, then a good candidate could be: the explicit conceptualisation of implicit knowledges, and re-c onceptualisation of existing frames of interpretation and understanding.

Toy example: you might ask me "What day is it today?" and I might answer "Sunday" then hesitate and say "Actually that depends on where you are. It's already Monday if you are in Indonesia. And if you are on Mars, I actually don't really know...".

Now if this progression of thought is suggested as an analogy to what philosophy does, then some might respond that this only shows the utter uselessness and foolishness of philosophy. In a sense knowledge is *lost* rather than won in this exchange. But isn't it just that the conversation gave rise to an insight that was about the question, rather than one that simply answered it? What we have learned is that calendar time is relative to location, and further that it is a human measure not something that can readily be found on Mars.

But what if we just want to get on with it – or worse, if we might miss something important to us – then we will be anxious and annoyed by the frame- questioning response. Just tell me what day it is already! Now this friction points to two additional things that can be learned from the exchange: (1) In our *practical* doings, we rely on assumed and unquestioned frames of knowledge *all the time* and therefore (2) when these assumptions are challenged it can be quite emotional – distressing even, if we in one way or the other have built our lives around this conceptual frame.

In short, I suggest that philosophy asks about and beyond the frames within which our questions can be given precise and easily accepted answers. This is why we often say that philosophy is a field without right answers. Many take that to mean that philosophy is useless or that anything goes. But my point is that this is what makes it important and politically fraught and controversial. It is a highly contentious practice to ask about frames that matter to someone's practices because it compromises their frictionless capabilities to get on with it – at least in the short term. The key is to see

that capabilities are power, and that social capabilities depend on shared assumptions, and as we all know threatening someone's power standing is fraught territory.

Now, philosophers constantly tell each other the story of Socrates who lost his life for philosophy and the pursuit of truth, who was literally given the death sentence for "corrupting the youth", for upsetting the powers that be through his words and questions. Socrates' trial was notably during a period of democracy in ancient Athens. But it is well known that authoritarian regimes typically start by prosecuting or disappearing the intellectuals when they come to power. Many philosophical ideas have been treated as political threats and implied in that treatment is of course the acknowledgement that philosophy has powerful consequences.

Yet surprisingly, philosophy is thought by many to be if not useless then at least harmless. This view is even sometimes expressed by philosophers themselves. Is it that past aristocracies, tyrants and people in general have mis- understood the powers of philosophy then? The typical answer is: no! Some are afraid of philosophy simply because they are afraid of the truth, but the truth is never bad in itself, only for bad people who have "something to hide" so to speak. Like tyrants and other selfish, bad or irrational people.

In this way, both philosophers – and natural scientists for that matter – often attempt to duck questions about responsibility by saying that they are simply looking for the truth. But what if there is not only one truth to tell? If we think of truth as plural and as dependent on one's perspective – then things instantly become trickier. Now some local truths might not just be inconvenient given one's purposes, but they might actually be misleading and even a barrier for other kinds of knowledge.

In 1933 the Polish scholar Alfred Korzybski captured many of these tensions when he wrote:

> The map is not the territory, the word is not the thing it describes. Whenever the map is confused with the territory, a "semantic disturbance" is set up in the organism. The disturbance continues until the limitation of the map is recognised.

If "the map is not the territory", then we know that there is no such thing as "the" perfect map. Rather each map leaves out truths about the territory, and there can be many good and useful maps that each represent different aspects and serve distinct purposes. We also have to understand not only the value of maps, but also their distorting and potentially harmful powers, the "semantic disturbances" that they can create if their biases and limitations are not known.

Thus we must acknowledge the value-l aden choices and responsibilities that comes with being a mapmaker. In the case of philosophy, this means that there are real questions about which truths one sees as valuable enough to pursue. And, about which ground to shake and when, and how much attention we should pay the damages. How much attention one should pay to one's own blind-spots and interpretive biases.

Philosophy as Situated

I claim that philosophy is a situated practice. What does that even mean? The point is to some extent a reminder of the obvious: that philosophy is a series of actions produced by actual human organisms in social and historical contexts. As practices do in general, philosophy depends on the lived perspective of p eople and lots of existing cultural products and historically invented technologies.

In an essay on black women's voices in philosophy, and their value and detrimental historical absence, George Yancy, a philosophy professor at Emory University, encapsulates a lot of what I want to elaborate on in this essay. He writes:

> *Doing* philosophy is an activity. Like all activities, philosophy is situated. As a situated activity, philosophy is shaped according to various norms, assumptions, intuitions, and ways of thinking and feeling about the world. Fundamentally, philosophy is a form of engagement; it is always already a process in *medias res*. Despite their pretensions to the contrary, philosophers are unable to brush off the dust of history and begin doing philosophy ex nihilo. Hence, to do philosophy is to be ensconced in history. More specifically, philosophizing is an embodied activity that begins within and grows out of diverse *lived* contexts; philosophizing takes place within the fray of the everyday. On this score, philosophizing is a plural and diverse form of activity.

I shall return to Yancy again. But first a few words to expand on this situatedness and how it links to the first point that what philosophy produces is ideas and conceptualisations.

Philosophy also depends intimately on the languages in which it expressed. Linguistic expressions are always social and historically dependent as their meanings are products of both speakers and listeners. They depend on a shared repertoire of meanings. Therefore, we must know something about how the rest of the society uses and interprets a language to have agility and capacity to express ourselves. Even the grammatical structures themselves convey slightly different world representations. Languages constrain our possibilities but in ways that allow for creativity and innovation. This possibility for innovation is crucial to philosophy.

We can think of languages as culturally shared bodies, as "social motor systems" if you will. Each language allows certain actions and not others. The differences typically become obvious if you try to translate a joke from one language to another. Even for bilinguals the humour easily can get lost or become nearly inexpressible due to subtle both cultural and grammatical differences.

But even with all that, language is only one aspect of philosophy's situatedness. More important are our lived needs and desires, and how our judgements, our values and our imaginations are situated.

The question is why this embodied, social and historical situatedness of philosophy matters? Well mostly because it is so often ignored or perhaps even actively denied. The quote by Yancy above continues:

> In their attempt to escape the social, to defy history, and to reject the body, many philosophers have pretensions of being godlike. They attempt to defy the confluent social forces that shape their historicity and particularity. They see themselves as detached from the often inchoate, existential traffic of life and the background assumptions that are constitutive of a particular horizon of understanding. It is then that philosophy becomes a site of bad faith, presuming to reside in the realm of the static and the disembodied. Having "departed" from life, having rejected the force of "effective history," philosophy is just as well dead, devoid of relevance, devoid of particularity, and escapist.

There are many insights to highlight in this passage. But let me start with the question of escapism. I think that philosophy must acknowledge its dependence and responsible interconnectedness with the society it inhabits and thus must be relevant and valuable to either our present or future world – and yet I see a purpose in relative divisions of labour, and of philosophers being situated at some distance from certain pressures.

The little "what day is it?" sequence was meant to illustrate not only the frameshifting knowledge that can come from philosophy, but also that it often gives rise to tensions, as frame shifting typically slows us down and might be costly.

A sports analogy: if we are to learn to make a move in a new way – soccer, dance you name it – then we typically first experience a decline or deterioration and then only after a significant period of practice, do we see overall improvement. Imagine the outrage if the change is imposed and we do not see or trust the possibility of eventual improvement. Now philosophy is of course not exactly like athletic skill. Philosophical ideas do not all catch on nor do they influence different corners of society equally – and the consequences are certainly not immediate. But I would like to use the analogy to make a couple of suggestions.

Perhaps we could see aspects of the situated context of academic philosophers, e.g., tenure protections, as providing a buffer from coercive pressures, which again eases freedom of thought. However, the ultimate purpose and justification for these thoughts, and therefore for their protections, should be found in the effects on the broader society. Yet the ability to carry on with a bit of distance – to e.g. some of the politics of the present – would be a beneficial condition if one is to experiment with our frames of understanding.

Much like we need to find a calm place to focus inwards, or to sleep to maintain our bodies and sanity for the purpose of facing daytime challenges and turmoil of the social world, philosophy can benefit from the calm of the "ivory tower". However, if philosophy

forgets that the purpose – and the cost- bearer – of the tower is outside of it, then we have a problem. Or, worse if one enjoys this privileged, protected and supported situatedness, and then proceeds to use it to deny that philosophy and knowledge in general are situated, then philosophy become as Yancy writes, "a site of bad faith".

Many philosophers – particularly within disabilities studies, science & t echnology studies, queer, feminist and critical race theory – have, like Yancy, been vocal about the situatedness of knowledge for many decades. But these exact voices have been largely ignored or even excluded from philosophy proper. One of the tools of this exclusion process has been a narrow definition of what philosophy is and an enforcement mechanism of policing of who can get hired or even thought of as a philosopher. The refrain being something like: "Whatever these thinkers were doing it is not actual philosophy".

A detour will be necessary to explain the particularly malignant nature of this exclusion manoeuvre. It will begin with my experience studying the "Western canon" of philosophy.

The Genesis Myth of Philosophy

From my first high school encounter with philosophy, I was told that the word "philosophia" means "love of wisdom" in Greek. Now so far so good. If philosophy is about the appreciation and drive towards knowledge and understanding, then that fits quite well with the idea of philosophy as a practice done by a plurality of people with culturally diverging tools and concerns. After all it seems that the basic drive towards understanding is as old as humanity. But those early introductions to the Greek term came with another core pillar, what we could call: "The genesis myth of philosophy".

The story goes very roughly like this: before the beginning of philosophy p eople would ask questions about their lives and world, their origins and purposes. But these questions would not be answered philosophically (or scientifically) rather they would be answered with myths, and irrational stories of gods and fantasy creatures. The problem was that these anthropomorphic explainers were arbitrary and that they themselves were left unexplained by the "pre- philosophical" stories. Then with the arrival of pre-S ocratic philosophers and eventually with Socrates himself this all changed. Now the old questions were met with new more empirical and/or systematised and rationally founded answers.

Thales, writing around 600–550 BC is seen as an example of the early natural science variety, as he was looking for naturalistic explanations. His famous claim that "all is water" might be false but it is heralded for its ambition to hypothesise about universal principles and give unifying explanations of the world we experience.

Or take the grand idea of Parmenides a few hundred years later, that "what is is". The radical logical conclusion he drew from this simple claim was that change must be impossible. The reasoning went like this: for something to exist, it could not also not exist. It would be logically incoherent to say of the same thing that it both exists

and does not exist, thus what exists must necessarily exist. Parmenides then concluded that change was not just hard to understand but actually was *logically impossible*. For now, the key is that this style of reasoning exemplifies the new use of rationality to answer perennial questions.

My mission is not to take cheap shots at the pre- Socratics or early Greek philosophy, as a matter of fact I am a bit of a fan. But I have like many grown unsatisfied – both empirically and rationally if you will – with this genesis story, which surrounds these philosophers, and all the histories and alternative perspectives and possibilities that it refuses to include.

Most of us would probably agree that Thales and Parmenides and the other early Greek philosophers did not quite get it right, and that a lot of things were left unquestioned. But such limitations are to be expected from any philosophy, after all "the map is not the territory". What is problematic in my view is that there were a lot of things that their heralded methodologies of universal categories and language- based logic systematically excluded from questioning.

One example is the assumption that the ultimate truth about the world must be intelligible to the human mind. Parmenides is a spectacularly notorious – but certainly not isolated – example. His either/or logic lead him to deny the possibility of any change at all. Whereas many reasonable people would have concluded instead, that timeless logic is not always the right tool to use (particularly if the topic is change). However, such a frame shifting move was inacceptable to Parmenides, and Plato and many others, who concluded instead that the change we experience is illusionary in one way or the other. The driving article of faith being that the world must be logical, neatly categorisable and understandable. Even at the cost of our ordinary experience.

Now the question we face is this: how can a strand of enquiry like philosophy on the one hand claim to have broken up with myth, arbitrary assumptions, and "unexplained explainers" if you will, and at the same time use such unexplained assumptions to tell others that what they are doing is not philosophy?

If someone has other insights and methodologies to explain the world that we are faced with, how could it be in the spirit of post-m ythological "love of wisdom" to exclude these new ideas as non- philosophical simply because they do not conform to one's own traditions and presuppositions?

Human Knowledge as Limited Yet Productive: Lao-Tzu and the Tao te Ching

The irony gets even thicker, when we notice which thoughts were excluded from the philosophical canon, and that whole traditions in ancient China raised fundamental questions regarding precisely what Parmenides and company faithfully assumed,

namely, our human capability to understand the inner most meaning and working of reality.

The *Tao te Ching*, presumably written by Lao-T zu around 600 BC, has been notoriously hard to both interpret and translate due to its poetic form and also to its ancient Chinese grammatically sparse notation. It reads as wisdom coming from an almost shared voice, and it is even unclear if Lao- Tzu was in fact the sole author. But these complexities remind us of the situated nature of philosophy and the difficulties of moving insights between wildly different contexts and audience expectations.

Further it shines a light on the individualist position of most Western philosophers. In this essay, *I argue* xyz, but is it not my social position, e.g., in a liberal democracy that in part allows me this individual stand? The Spanish nun Teresa D'Avila, in 1577 anticipated many of Descartes' most famous insights yet her work is rarely taught. I think today it might only indirectly be because she is a woman. Most directly it might be because she does not position the arguments and insights as her own, but rather as God speaking through her. But the difficulty is that had she claimed them as her own, she might not have survived their publication. Now we must ask: would it be fair to demand that only persons privileged and politically protected enough to own their position individually can write philosophy?

Now back to the Tao te Ching. The opening lines goes – at least in one often used translation – as follows:

The tao that can be told is not the eternal Tao The name that can be named is not the eternal Name.

The unnamable is the eternally real.

Naming is the origin of all particular things.

Without going too deep into the notion of Tao or "the way" what I want to highlight are two profound insights of these opening lines. (1) That we cannot capture the ultimate tao and presumably the ultimate reality with words or names. But yet (2) that our words frame and thus generate "particular things" or what we could think of as our lived reality.

Note that these two insights are from around the same time as the early pre- Socratics, but clearly resist the strict logic of Parmenides and company. They commit the sin of relativising human knowledge and suggest that the ultimate nature of things might simply be unknowable. But the heresy does not stop there. The further claim is that our humanly produced knowledge actually has consequences. It does not leave the world intact, it produces things.

These lines lay bare a deep tension in the self-i mage of Western philosophy. On the one hand, it prides itself with a genesis narrative intimately intertwined with natural science, math and technological invention. Here it is obvious that knowledge has real life effects. We have quite literally built the complex fabric of modern human societies on these kinds of knowledge.

On the other hand, many canonical philosophers have sought to ignore the generative aspect of knowledge, and with that the notion that the production of ideas might

come with a great deal of responsibility. The assumption is that philosophy is either mainly descriptive, as a pursuit of truth, or alternatively overtly about values and morality, about how we ought to live our lives and construct our worlds. The implicit idea is that in the latter case we can expect controversy but not in the former. However, if we think of our knowledge about the world as generative then we will need – as the contemporary Indian philosopher Sundar Sarukkai has suggested – an "ethics of curiosity".

An analogy: we teach our kids to not stare at strangers, and that it is not all truths that should be told. We teach them to be sensitive and that knowledge about others comes with the responsibility to care. Thus Lao-T zu – and parental wisdom – tells us that all our ideas have effects and construct our worlds, also those that seek truth. The map cannot, but also should not, contain everything.

Now with these insights we can turn back to the genesis myth of philosophy, and perhaps get a clearer view of why I see it as harmful. Lao- Tzu provides one of the oldest written sources for some of the ideas of philosophy that I express in this essay. However according to the "origin myth" of Western philosophy the Tao te Ching does not really count. It is not philosophy. But why? Throughout my schooling I have repeatedly seen two different justifications spring up: one is about methodology and tools, e.g., the universal explanations and logic that we have seen in Thales and Parmenides. But as Western philosophers themselves began to question these methodologies and their unquestioned assumptions about whether the world is necessarily logical, a second kind justification is frequently used. Namely that it is about a cultural heritage and a textual genealogy if you will.

Post- Kantian Philosophy, Policing Strategies and the Analytic- Continental Split

The interesting second act of the Greek origin myth is that many philosophers, not only in ancient China and India have pondered the limitations of our experience and of logic and rationality as tools of knowledge. Within the Greek/Western tradition these questions reared their heads already among pre- Socratics, like Heraclitus did with his ideas about constant change and of the world as being in flux. But Heraclitus has not been seen as central to the canon and has often been dismissed as a kind of mystic. It is perhaps only with Kant's systematic philosophy that old assumptions of the world as logical and mirrored in human understanding get its core challenge from within.

One of Kant's main insights was our knowledge about the world is relative to aspects of our own minds, and that we can never know the world as it is "in itself" – independently of our minds. This is a dangerous challenge to a self- conception of philosophy as pursuit of ultimate truths about the world through a method of logical and empirical reasoning.

Even Kant himself sought to temper the earthquakes of his own views by arguing for a universally shared rational human mind (somehow compatible with his racism and misogyny). But his evidence here was perhaps more wishful than his cumbersome methodology suggests.

In any case a tsunami of "post- Kantian" philosophy was unleashed – and with Hegel and Nietzsche – not to mention the French – the seeds were ignited for almost a civil war within many philosophy departments in the twentieth century – between the so-called "continental" and "analytic" traditions.

Now I came of age within philosophy during these often quite dramatic continental-analytic divides. To over simplify we can say that the continental were the post-K antians that problematised the foundations of universal knowledge and the – often Anglo-A merican – analytic philosophers were those who insisted on rationality, logic and empirical perception as unproblematic and necessary tools for philosophy. All else was nonsense.

But now where does all this leave us in terms of the question of what philosophy is and why it matters? We saw that the first act of the myth of the Greek genesis of philosophy pointed basically to the appearance of the tools of analytic philosophy and science: systematised and logically categorised empirical observation. Now after Kant how do we see this genesis story? Can we think of these post-K antians as philosophers at all? If they – like Lao-T zu and Heraclitus did – suggest that these tools might not be able to yield ultimate knowledge, wouldn't that exclude them from being philosophers proper? This has in a sense been the view of many analytic philosophers.

But particularly within the continental tradition another – and dare I say x enophobic – second act of the genesis myth became common. Namely that what is proper philosophy is the thinking that has the right ancestry, the thinking that stands in the right relations to the ancient Greek philosophers. The Nazi- supporting German philosopher Martin Heidegger stands out as a glorious example. His philosophy, which took much inspiration from Asian philosophers, poets and many other uncredited sources, was truly taking on board the relativity of being and our knowledge and also the complexities of truth seeking. However, in a 1955 lecture entitled "What is that – philosophy?" he wrote this highly revealing and hypocritical passage:

> The often-h eard expression "Occidental-E uropean philosophy," is in truth a tautology. Why? Because "philosophy" is in its nature Greek... The proposition that philosophy is in its nature Greek says nothing but that the Occident and Europe, that they alone, are in the innermost course of their history originally "philosophical." This is attested by the rise and domination of the sciences. It is because they stem from the innermost Occidental-European course of history, that is the philosophical course, that they are today able to put their specific imprint upon the history of mankind over the whole earth.

This is what I call the second act of the Greek genesis myth – and the twisted self-s erving contradictions are eye-p opping. Without attempting to summarise Heidegger's thought the point is this: his own philosophy is not the kind that is intertwined with science, nor is his view of truth that "might makes right", that truth is dominance and power. Rather truth is an "uncovering" that rely on an attitude of listening – and even care – that allows the world to appear as it itself. Yet he claims that his writings – as opposed to those of other non- European thinkers from which he steals – are philosophy because of his "Europeanness", his ancestral history. Thus, not only excluding, without principle the voices of others, but even silencing his own influences as they do not have the right ancestral standing to count. Mansplaining and whitesplaining galore: only when he – or someone of his ilk – says it, does it become philosophy.

Now to sum up, the Greek genesis myth have gone through several iterations – with various harmful effects:

1. The myth of the end of myth: the fiction of a radical beginning, and a neat rational basis of both philosophy and knowledge itself. The nature and position of the "knower" and the possibility of truth through reason and passive perception were simply assumed and thus left as unexplained dogma. Western philosophy has in this way been intimately tied to the idea that the embodiment and situation of the knower was irrelevant.

2. The plot thickens as this neutral, ahistorical and disembodied notion of knowledge is threatened not only by alternative traditions of thought, but from within. Now how does one police what counts as philosophy and what doesn't?

3. The favoured methods have been: A) To expel the heretics – this has been the methodology within many more analytically inclined communities. B) To tell an ancestral narrative of shared heritage, texts and private clubs. This has been the method within many continental communities. Or C) some hybrid of the two.

A Future of Philosophy beyond the Flat Earth Society

The tragic irony that I have sought to expose in this essay is that philosophy has constructed a fictional self- image that denied its own situatedness and its own dependencies and responsibilities. This lie has been maintained by systematically denying anyone into the club that through their different perspectives would expose the cracks in the foundational myth.

One might want to draw an analogy to the "Flat earth society", which has gained "around the world" support – through internet and telecommunications supported by orbiting satellites. The point is that internal consistency given a narrow observational

perspective is not a guarantee for truth or wisdom – even or perhaps especially about our relative dependencies and responsibilities.

But the silence is broken. The rubber is meeting the road and we are finally beginning to see a new pluralistic, situated and social world of philosophy. Many are beginning to listen to – and of course appropriate – the many voices, past and present, that have been excluded.

Donna Haraway reminds us in her famous 1988 article "Situated Knowledges" – that if philosophy is a situated and embodied practice then we should not expect self-t ransparency, nor should we expect our insights to come without cost. In her words:

> Vision is always a question of the power to see – and perhaps of the violence implicit in our visualizing practices. With whose blood were my eyes crafted? These points also apply to testimony from the position of "oneself". We are not immediately present to ourselves. Self-k nowledge requires a semiotic- material technology to link meanings and bodies. Self-i dentity is a bad visual system. Fusion is a bad strategy of positioning.

We will arrive at any question with our entire situated selves, and therefore with host of tacit assumptions. Our pragmatic lenses if you will, are always shaped in ways that we neither control nor easily grasp. Self-k nowledge cannot be taken for granted but takes work, and a special kind of work, it takes the integration of a multitude of perspectives. It is not only that the kind of mythological and magic disembodied philosophical knowledge is impossible – it is also not desirable given the social and situated purposes philosophy serves, as "Fusion is a bad strategy of positioning".

Ideas change us, which is why it matters who our philosophers are and how they are situated. And, what their perspective and social context allow them to understand, to value – and not least to say.

3. Does Philosophy Progress?

Agnes Callard

Does philosophy progress? If we are to evaluate philosophy from the inside, which is to say, to gauge its progress as a form of learning or knowledge in its own right, we must acknowledge that philosophy, as it is currently practised, is not in the business of building consensus. In this respect, it differs from many academic disciplines. It also differs from earlier incarnations of itself: think of Plato's Academy, or Zeno and the Stoa, or German idealism or the Vienna Circle. Think of Aquinas and Augustine and all the great religious philosophers who are philosophising strictly within Christianity. Think of Maimonides' commitment to reconciling the Rabbinical teachings with Aristotle. Each of these philosophers lived inside a philosophical world of a particular character, within which progress was possible because of the practice of handing down teachings. My philosophical colleagues and I don't do that. We don't expect our students to progress within the framework we set down for them.

Though I think all of those philosophers are worth reading— more on that below— I believe the turn away from schools, teachings and doctrines is itself one of the great instances of philosophical progress. In philosophy, there is nothing "we" think. Some of us believe there are true contradictions. Some of us believe that possible worlds are real. Some of us believe that, because we can't create our characters, and our characters determine how we act, we can't ever be morally responsible for anything we do. Indeed, there is not even a consensus about who "we" are: some of us believe that "philosopher" is an academic title that belongs to those who are being, or have been, educated in a certain kind of institution; others believe that anyone who calls herself a philosopher is a philosopher. We are a very motley crew.

Instead of gauging progress by asking what "we" philosophers agree about, one should ask whether someone who wants to do philosophy is in a better position to do so today than she would've been 10 or 100 or 1000 years ago? The answer is: certainly. Here are two very different reasons to answer yes:

1. If she is a she, there would have been major obstacles to her doing it at all until fairly recently. (This is also true of many— most—"he"s.)

2. There are many great philosophical arguments and ideas available for her to engage with. She has better interlocutors to think with than people did 10 or 100 or 1000 years ago: later philosophers always have the advantage. The more we respond to one another, the better materials we hand down to our descendants

> for thinking with. For example, nowadays if you want to go ahead and assert, in a philosophical context, that there aren't any true contradictions or that what didn't but could've happened is unreal, or that you are sometimes morally responsible for some of the things you do, there are philosophers who have made it hard for you to do that. Graham Priest and David Lewis and Galen Strawson have, respectively, raised the cost of saying what you're reflexively inclined to say. They've made you work for it— made you think for it.

Priest, Lewis and Strawson offer the person who is willing to do this work a decrease in the entropy in their original claim, which now has to be more specific and determinate. What one had before encountering them was, one now sees, nothing more than a way of vaguely gesturing at the idea in question. Engaging with them introduces order into one's thinking as to what *exactly* is meant by claiming, e.g. that one is morally responsible. If someone is willing to do the work, she can have thoughts about this common sense, intuitive claims that are better than anyone could've had 10 or 100 or 1000 years ago. What greater gift can one possibly ask for?

But if philosophical thinking is getting better and better— more precise, truthful, articulate, deep— why should we still read Aristotle or Maimonides? The reason we need to do the history of philosophy is precisely that philosophy has *caused* massive amounts of progress: it has filtered into, shaped and organised common sense, ordinary thought. Indeed, it constitutes much of that thought. A historian of philosophy named Wolfgang Mann wrote a book called *The Discovery of Things*. He argues, just as the title of his book suggests, that Aristotle discovered things. It's a book about the distinction between subject and predicate in Aristotle's *Categories*—between *what* is and *how* it is. You may not have realised this but: someone had to come up with that! Many of the things that seem obvious to you— that human beings have basic rights, that knowledge requires justification, that modus ponens is a valid syllogistic form, that the world is filled with things—p eople had to come up with those ideas. And the people who came up with them were philosophers.

So you are pretty much constantly thinking thoughts that, in one way or another, you inherited from philosophers. You don't see it, because *philosophical exports are the kinds of thing that, once you internalise them, just seem like the way things are.* So the reason to read Aristotle isn't (just) that he's a great philosopher, but that he's colonised large parts of your mind. Not everyone is interested in learning about the history of philosophy. But if you are the kind of person who is not happy about having delegated some of your most fundamental thinking to other people; if you want to go back and retrace those steps to make sure you are on board; if you want to take full ownership of your own mind, well, in that case the history of philosophy might be for you.

Let me end with a reflection on something that might underlie complaints about philosophy's failure to progress. We don't demand progress in the fields of fashion or literature, because these things please us. Philosophy, by contrast, is bitter, and we

want to know what good it will do us, and when, finally, it will be over. It is not pleasant to be told that maybe you don't know who you are, or how to treat your friends, or how to be happy. It's not pleasant to have it pointed out to you that maybe nothing you have ever done matters, or that, for all you know, there is nothing out there at all.

Sometimes, the demand for philosophical progress is a way of asking: "When will philosophy finally go away? When will they stop raising questions about whether my own will is free, or saying that I can't tell whether I'm leading my life or it's leading me? When will they stop telling me that I need to read this or that book in order to be fully human? When will they leave me alone?" The answer is: never.

It is not the point of philosophy to end philosophy, to "solve" the deep questions so that people can stop thinking about them. It is the point of people to think about these questions, and the job of philosophers to rub their faces in that fact.

The first philosopher was once asked this question:

> Tell me, Socrates, are we to take you as being in earnest now, or joking? For if you are in earnest, and these things you're saying are really true, won't this human life of ours be turned upside down, and won't everything we do evidently be the opposite of what we should do?

Perhaps one way to gauge the success—t hought not the progress—o f philosophy is by the fact that it has, for thousands of years now, succeeded in maintaining earnestness in the face of such incredulity.

4. Adventures in Philosophy

Ellen Fridland

I had just returned from a summer of travel in the Middle East. Two months spent on Kibbutz in northern Israel and three weeks traveling across Egypt and into Jordan. This wasn't the first time that I had left the country but it was the first time that I had been on an adventure. Eighteen- years- old, in the desert with a group of newly made friends, naïve and curious and in good spirits—w e were free in a way that I'd never known was possible. We were a traveling comedy. We had floated up the Nile on what was called a Falucca but was really just a glorified raft. We had slept on a rooftop directly overlooking the pyramids. We had smoked lots of sheesha and ate lentils in countless forms.

When I returned to Boston, my skin was more tan and my hair more short and white than it had ever been before. My parents didn't recognize me at the airport. It was only a few weeks before my second year at university was set to begin and I was in complete wanderlust. I wanted to explore and travel. I longed to understand the oddities, connections, beauty, and bizarreness of human beings and their human cultures—I wanted to soak in and soak up the human condition. I announced that I wasn't going to return to college that year. Travel was going to be my education.

I had started college thinking that I would study something reasonable and practical. Something that would fit into my family's understanding of what university education was for: getting a job. I thought I'd study biology but I had no real drive in that direction and the truth was that I had no idea, really, of what I wanted to be "when I grew up". But here was something that I did know: I wanted to travel! I really, really, really wanted to travel—o n a shoestring, on a budget— all over the world. I wanted to experience being alive in ways that were unfamiliar and new, uncomfortable, challenging, and transformative. I wanted to understand difference and sameness and shared common humanity, the thrill of uncertainty and discovery, the lightness of surprise, and the stillness of deep, experiential, human knowledge.

But my parents had other ideas. Driving to campus a couple of weeks later, in response to my increasingly frantic protests, my dad made me a sort of devil's bargain: he would continue to pay for my university and I could "explore" the world of ideas. I would stay put, less than 30 miles from my childhood home, and get an education in the formal sense, but the shape and direction of that education would be mine to choose. In short, I could travel through the course catalog.

I took my first philosophy class after that deal with my father. It was a philosophy of law class that was filled mostly with philosophy majors. I don't remember much of

what we covered but I do remember that I made a few friends in the class and that we studied together for the mid- term. We studied well into the night in an empty classroom in the Arts and Sciences building, a building that, at the time, never locked its doors. I don't think I had ever studied so seriously for an exam. It was tough stuff. I earned a C-. I was floored. And I was hooked.

That philosophy class wasn't the first time I had gotten a bad grade. But it was the first time that I really, truly, honestly tried to understand something and, to boot, really thought I had understood it—b ut it turned out that I hadn't. I didn't know what I had missed but I knew that whatever it was, I wanted to figure it out—I wanted to see why my reasoning hadn't stretched far enough or deep enough or flexibly enough. I sensed that whatever I had missed wasn't some fact about the philosophy of law but a way of understanding the system's logic. I didn't know how to think and I really wanted to know how to think.

Twenty years later, when I talk to my students about studying philosophy, about reasoning like a philosopher, I tell them that in my class they will learn how to think. I tell them that the questions and the content are in some ways beside the point (that's not exactly right, as we will see below, but it is close as an approximation). The power is in the method. In philosophy, I tell them, we learn to examine claims. We learn to decipher arguments. We develop the ability to clearly, concisely, and with rigor identify a position, not just some vague or amorphous sense of what someone claims or believes or argues. This sounds like nothing but it is far from it. I tell my students that the power of philosophy is the ability to lift up an argument in order to really look at it. Not just take it or accept it, and not just to answer some question or another about it—b ut to really think about a problem or a position and to see several answers from different angles. To see their strengths and their pitfalls, their assumptions and implications. To see complexity. To be comfortable with complexity. To be comfortable without a clear answer but holding the weights of different answers in the balance. What we learn is how to know where to push for an objection. And, let's be honest, philosophy is always more objection- obsessed than solution oriented.

For this reason, philosophy's power can often be overshadowed by its t ediousness: constant finger pointing, flaw finding, and hand-w ringing. Getting stuck on the most irrelevant detail and almost never finding or even pretending to find a stable solution. In this way, philosophy as it is practiced in the academy, can often lead from one objection to two or three, and from two responses to three, that each spawn their own objections, that then lead to five attempts at a solution. But the solutions are now to objections rather than to the original problems and the further away the discussion lands from the initial question, the more timid and insipid the proposals become. There are entire branches of philosophy that proceed by way of thinking in tiny steps, with their only aim to defend against the most outlandish and far- fetched counterexamples. Cycles upon cycles of quibbling and nitpicking. Death by counterexample. Death by irrelevance.

Perhaps most disappointingly, often it is the circus tricks, hoop jumping, and mental acrobatics required for handling the 300-headed monster of nit-p icky, tiny objections that is seen as "the really hard stuff" of philosophy. The types of questions that normal people (who philosophers call "laymen") can't decipher or understand or see the importance of, those are the ones that real philosophers get off on. Serious Men, I mean, Serious Philosophers think of these as the technical and serious questions. The image of Socrates with his rump in the air, examining with a magnifying glass some irrelevant and insignificant aspect of the landscape still seems somewhat apt for a lot of what passes as serious philosophy.

In some ways, the reason for this is easy to explain. Contemporary philosophers think of philosophy as a pursuit akin to science. And so being obscure and technical is a sign of great achievement. After all, normal people can't understand the math behind genetic cloning—w hy should they understand or bother themselves with the nature of meaning or knowledge? But, of course, even normal people ask questions concerning knowledge and meaning and so philosophy finds itself in an awkward position. In becoming more scientific, it has gone from a field that asked BIG questions concerning experience, value, and the good life to a field that asks tiny questions that can be subdivided endlessly into countless iterations of conceptual clarifications and distinction drawing.

As a result, often, what gets considered "real philosophy" is inversely proportional to the significance that the pursuit has to normal people living in the world. In fact, the phrase, "that's not really philosophy" is used so often and so disparagingly that you'd think the question "what is philosophy?" isn't itself a philosophical question. Which, of course, it is! This kind of gatekeeping has largely made Anglo-A merican analytic philosophy a cloistered discipline that is neither interesting nor applicable to people concerned with living a human life. The human kinds of questions are left to psychologists. Sometimes politicians. But philosophers talk to philosophers and it isn't that what they ponder is always so abstract that it must maintain distance from the world but that the questions are so intertwined with the web of objections and responses that they are hardly at all concerned with why anyone began asking those questions in the first place.

The saddest part of this is that what Serious Men deem to be *serious* determines in many ways what students understand as valuable and worthy of study. We all like gold stars and doing *serious* work on *serious* questions, serious by the discipline's own lights, is how you make a career. Philosophy is, after all, an academic profession—o ne that in the end, you hope, will land you a job. But you get the job by impressing Serious Men. In such a climate, women philosophers who want to be taken seriously don't often pursue the human questions that often led them to fall in love with philosophy in the first place but ask and pursue questions that are uninspired, dry, formal, rigorous and artificial. To the contemporary analytic philosopher, armed with a scalpel, the whole world is composed of tiny question that can be dissected, separated, sorted, and suspended— dead, in a solution of intense, serious, brow- furrowing, head grasping

thought. The *serious* things to study are not the ones that apply to normal people or that most people wonder about. There is very little wisdom that the contemporary philosopher can offer to non-p hilosophers. We can offer a method, of course, a tool. And it's a good tool. But we need more tools. Not pool noodles, of course, but tools that can handle bigger, more dynamic, more systematic, more contextual, and more human kinds of questions.

Without question, Anglo-A merican analytic philosophy is a powerful method—a tool that can cut through to the heart of a problem. But what often goes unnoticed is that the problem first has to be wrestled into a form that can be handled by this particular kind of tool. After all, questions and problems are not just found in nature—they are not rocks or trees or predators. They are constructs in conceptual space. Contemporary analytic philosophy is a fine- toothed comb. It is a scalpel. But like any tool, it distorts the problem space— it creates the problem in a shape that the tool can handle. Like the old saying goes: to a hammer, every problem is a nail.

And so, whereas I began my philosophical journey looking to harness a powerful method in order to traverse a landscape of potent and transformative ideas, I found a practical formula for traversing a career in the academy. Writing safe papers, displaying my mastery of a tiny tool that makes very sharp incisions in microscopic portions of topics that were only tangentially related to the big questions that got me excited about thinking seriously in the first place.

The good news, however, is that Serious Men with serious concerns are losing their hold of the field. There is a cohort of terribly serious women in the field of philosophy who are bringing the discipline back into contact with questions that concern people—back into contact with the world. People like Sally Haslanger, Elizabeth Camp, Laurie Paul, Miranda Fricker, Rebecca Kukla, Kate Manne and so many others. They are tackling big questions of meaning and experience and justice. They are tackling questions that require machetes and not scalpels. They are bringing to philosophy the ability to honor complexity and connection, rather than cut it away. The field is getting interesting and exciting and RELEVANT. Just you wait! We are starting to ask *these questions over here* and these questions really are THE questions. And so, as the years go on, and as we go on, as humans do, to wonder about our place in the world and what it means to live a purposeful life and to act with wisdom, knowledge, justice, and authenticity, I predict that philosophy will once again begin to play a central role in the life of actual people. Because now that we have started, brick by brick, to remove the barricade of *seriousness*— we can start actually doing serious work. I'm really looking forward to seeing it become so!

5. When Love Stinks, Call a Conceptual Plumber

C.S.I. Jenkins

Conceptual Plumbing

You know that feeling, when there's a bad smell hanging around and you can't figure out why? You spray the rose- scented air freshener around, but the nose isn't fooled.

British philosopher Mary Midgley has long thought of philosophy as plumbing. The metaphor is brilliant and multi-d imensional: among other things, it captures how often philosophical work is inglorious. In a 2001 interview for *New Scientist*, Midgley put it this way:

> People think of philosophy as a special and rather grand subject cut off from others, something you could put on the mantelpiece. I think it is much more like plumbing— the sort of thinking that people do even in the most prudent, practical areas always has a whole system of thought under the surface which we are not aware of. Then suddenly we become aware of some bad smells, and we have to take up the floorboards and look at the concepts of even the most ordinary piece of thinking.

Pay attention to the bad smells. Take up the floorboards. *Look at the concepts of even the most ordinary piece of thinking.* That's not only good advice, but also a great description of the kind of work a philosopher can do.

It's not always fun, though. When ferreting about under the floorboards isn't enough to resolve the problem, taking your task to its natural conclusion lands you in the sewer. I've been knee-d eep in the inglorious side of philosophy for a few years now. But one thing I've learned is that *the stink means you are on to something.* You're poking where the problem is.

Engineering pays better than plumbing, and that difference tracks a class distinction. So perhaps it's unsurprising that in the world of academic philosophy— often rather more concerned with status than its remit might suggest to a casual observer—t he phrase "conceptual engineering" is more popular than "conceptual plumbing." The idea

of engineering with concepts was seeded by some of Rudolf Carnap's work in the mid-t wentieth century. In his 1947 book *Meaning and Necessity*, he says:

> [T]he choice of a language suitable for the purposes of physics and mathematics involves problems quite different from those involved in the choice of a suitable motor for a freight airplane; but, in a sense, both are engineering problems ...

I don't mind this engineering nomenclature. As long as we are still prepared to show up with a plunger and waders.

Sometimes, the main problem with the plumbing is that it's missing. The system you need is not in place, so everything you flush away is pooling up in the basement. If you live in the penthouse, you probably aren't going to notice that for a long time. Still, it would be unwise to imagine that it's not your problem. When residents of the lower levels start to smell it, and say there is a problem, you really ought to believe them.

During my time as an undergraduate at Cambridge, I attended a stand-o ut lecture course taught by Miranda Fricker. Some of the ideas I first came across in those lectures developed into Fricker's 2007 book *Epistemic Injustice: Power and the Ethics of Knowing*, a work now appreciated as a major event in epistemology (and in academic philosophy more generally).

Back then, Fricker's lectures were part of a third- year course in *Feminist Philosophy*, a "special subject" that wasn't always available. In other years, the "special subject" was *Kant* or *Wittgenstein*. One or another dead white man vs. the entirety of feminist thought in general; quite the balancing act. But such are the institutional structures that, like "our" concepts, frame academic life. The frame feels unquestionable, as if only what we see *inside* the frame can come and go.

Carnap argued that conceptual frames are actually selected on pragmatic grounds: like good engineers, we should select the concepts that make best sense of our world. But Fricker draws attention to ethical and political dimensions of the selection procedure, especially how the absence of needed conceptual plumbing can generate what she calls "hermeneutical injustice." This happens when unequal social power results in a group of relatively powerless people lacking the concepts to speak audibly—o r even think clearly—a bout their own experiences. One of her examples is the concept of *sexual harassment*. That concept wasn't around in the *Mad Men* era, but the activity certainly was. Lacking the concept, the experiences of harassed women would be packaged in terms of *office banter* or even *flirtation*—c oncepts fitting the experiences of people on the other side of these gendered power dynamics.

It matters who "we" are. Who gets to decide on "our" concepts? Who gets to introduce new concepts, and be confident that they will enjoy broad uptake? A core lesson of Fricker's work is that the answer is usually: the powerful people.

It is in the interests of harassed women to be able to put a label on what's happening to them, and have that label be widely understood. In that sense, the concept itself is

empowering: adding it to our conceptual repertoire, as a society, can help us address one form of social injustice. Likewise, it serves the immediate interests of harassers for there to be no such concept, and no widely understood terminology to express it. They may be motivated to ridicule and undermine that concept when it begins to appear, in hopes of preventing broad uptake: to stop us installing the needed conceptual plumbing.

In fact, it is in everyone's best interests to sort out the stink, even if the people in the penthouse don't yet see why they should contribute to the cost. If you don't know there is such a thing as sexual harassment, you may unwittingly harm people you care about and respect. You may lose your best employees or friends, and be clueless as to why. For these and many other reasons, feminism is good for everyone, not just for women.

Conceptual plumbing isn't a one- and- done, it's a lifelong service contract. As an undergraduate listening to Fricker's lectures, I knew about *sexual harassment*, but my conceptual repertoire was lacking in other ways I didn't appreciate at the time. You don't know what gaps there are in your conceptual plumbing at the moment. These things fester beneath the floorboards of awareness. It's about what— and whom— we cannot hear.

Labour and Love

Much academic philosophy of love is pursued in an oddly detached manner, as if its participants had no skin in the game, and weren't dragging in a lifetime's worth of baggage behind each unstated assumption. There are certainly interesting ideas in the journal debates, but most of the effort is concentrated on a few specific questions, such as: *is it rational to love someone?* These are not my own most urgent philosophical questions about love, so I have often felt the need to broaden my field of vision, to look elsewhere for tools and strategies that might address the questions I have. I don't think a philosopher's outlook should be limited to the "philosophy" section of a university library in any case. The conceptual tools we need might be anywhere, and we might learn from anybody.

The concept of *job-crafting* was introduced by Amy Wrzesniewski and Jane Dutton in a 2001 article called "Crafting a Job: Re- Envisioning Employees as Active Crafters of Their Work," in *Academy of Management Review*. They defined it as "actions employees take to shape, mold, and re- define their jobs." Like Midgley's plumbing metaphor, this crafting metaphor is apt in many ways. For example, "[t]he work tasks and interactions that compose the days, the jobs, and, ultimately, the lives of employees are the *raw materials* (my emphasis) employees use to craft their jobs." So having a contractually delimited role at work does not necessarily mean you cannot exercise any agency in its scope and/or performance, though it may serve as a constraint. Even more interestingly, the metaphor of job- *crafting* suggests an activity that is *intentional* and

creative, allowing us to conceive of contractual job descriptions as analogous to the creative constraints within which an artist might work.

Here is Wrzesniewski, in a live presentation, describing one of the best- known cases of job- crafting, among the original inspirations for her theory:

> ...one of the members of the [university hospital] cleaning crew we talked with worked on a floor that cared for patients who were in comas... and in describing the tasks that were part of her job, she described taking down the pictures that hung in the hospital patients' rooms on a regular basis and moving them around, switching them around between rooms. And when we asked her why it was she did this, she said that her thought was perhaps something about changing some aspect in the environment of the patients, though they were unconscious, might spark recovery in some way. We became very intrigued by this and asked, "Is this part of your role, given that you work on this kind of floor?" And what she told us was: "That's not part of my job, but that's part of me."

(A video of the full presentation is available on YouTube, under the title "Job Crafting— Amy Wrzesniewski on creating meaning in your own work.") This is an example of one specific form of job- crafting, which the researchers call *task-crafting* : adjusting the actual tasks performed in the course of one's work. Other forms they identify are *relational crafting*, forging working relationships that alter or go beyond formal job descriptions, and *cognitive crafting*, which is ... well, potentially about the meaning of life.

No, really. Cognitive crafting, as Wrzesniewski puts it in her talk, is about "how people perceive the tasks and their meaning." Job-c rafting "changes both the meaning and the purpose of the work," and "gives people an opportunity to have their own agentic impact on how it is that they're thinking about their contribution to the organization, to the world, the role of work in their life." This can, potentially, generate huge changes in well-b eing. (What, exactly, is "well- being?" Good question. Hold that thought.)

Job-c rafting is happening all over the place. People do it even when it is explicitly forbidden, and in ways that are definitely against the rules. Here is Wrzesniewski again:

> In asking the cleaners about the kinds of things they were doing on the job ... they talked about doing things like walking the elderly visitors of patients all the way back through the Byzantine structure of the hospital to their cars—w hich was an offense for which they could be fired—s o that the visitors would not get lost, thus worrying the patient about whether their family members were OK.

Although the researchers first discovered job- crafting "in the wild," they subsequently found ways to encourage it through deliberate interventions, and found that

job-c rafting led to improvements in performance, mobility among roles, and happiness (as measured by other people working with the study subjects).

The crafting metaphor is valuable insofar as it illuminates connections, not just with the artistic, but also with the scientific and the practical. Just as sculptors who work in metals benefit from advances in metals science, job- crafting can be informed by research on the psychology and neuroscience of agency and decision- making. And just as well- crafted furniture can improve our day- to- day lives in all kinds of ways, well-c rafted jobs can "bring about numerous positive outcomes, including engagement, job satisfaction, resilience, and thriving." (This wording comes from "What Is Job Crafting and Why Does It Matter?" a briefing by Wrzesniewski and her collaborators, released by the University of Michigan in 2007.)

Agency and decision-m aking have been linked to happiness more generally, and the link can be partly understood in biological terms. For example, in *The Upward Spiral* (New Harbinger, 2015), Alex Korb explains that, in one fMRI study, "[a]ctively choosing caused changes in attention circuits and in how the participants felt about the action, and it increased rewarding dopamine activity." He adds: "not only is dopamine released when you finally achieve a long- term goal but it's also released with each step you make as you move closer towards achieving it."

Dopamine reward may feel good, but to fully understand the deep value of job-crafting, we need to bear in mind a philosophical distinction between *hedonic* happiness (good feelings) and *eudaimonic* happiness (a sense that one's life is meaningful, that one is flourishing). Job- crafting is about more than its links to hedonic happiness (intriguing though these are).

Job- crafting "creates opportunities for employees to experience the meaning of their work differently by aligning the job with their values, motivations, and beliefs." (This statement appears in a 2013 paper by Wrzesniewski and others, published in the journal *Advances in Positive Organizational Psychology.*)

It is in this connection between agency and meaning, between job- crafting and eudaimonic happiness, that something important takes root. Something that may branch out into positive feelings, lowered stress, better health, even survival, but is not constituted by those things.

Viktor Frankl, author of *Man's Search for Meaning*, says that meaning must be directed at something other than oneself. Meaning isn't all about you. I would add that the practice of working towards meaningful goals and values is collaborative, and in that sense, agency isn't all about you: it's also about whether the world is ready to let you make certain kinds of decisions, ready to respect them, ready to work with you to achieve something together.

The Oracle and the Zeitgeist

I sometimes call Google our modern oracle. We go there looking for answers, and we usually get *something* back, although it might not be obvious what it means. Google watches us too, and as it watches, it transmutes itself into a weird, distorting mirror of whatever's going on out here. Through this glass we see darkly fractured reflections of our collective semi- conscious psyche, constantly searching for ... something.

When I Google "job-c rafting," I quickly pull up lots of hits about the relevant research. Scholarly papers, video explainers, tips on practical ways of implementing the idea. But when I Google "love-c rafting," all I find are *people who love crafting.* Ok, I think to myself, how about "love-c raft?" Geek readers are probably way ahead of me here, but that of course just brings me to the creator of Cthulu. Next I try "relationship- crafting," and I turn up a video on how to construct better relationships with "customers, readers and subscribers." I go looking for love and Google brings me back to labour. (For those who want to pursue the significance of this connection, Moira Weigel's 2016 book *Labor of Love: The Invention of Dating* offers significant insights on the historical and contemporary connections between the two.)

The way I approach my work on love has actually become a form of job- crafting for me. I didn't know that label for it when I started out, but I knew I needed to do something that went beyond philosophy's business-a s-u sual, to be in dialogue with the world beyond academia, to throw whatever skills I have as a philosopher and as a human into a collaborative activity that is meaningful to me in—w hat I now recognise as—s omething like Frankl's sense. And I think this activity is philosophy in something like Midgley's sense.

So I've been poking at the nature of love for a few years now, and something stinks around here for sure. In 2017, the ABC News show *Nightline* broadcast a report on my life and work, then posted a link on the official *Nightline* Facebook page. The reporting emphasised that I was polyamorous and in two loving relationships, and that my work discusses philosophical issues relating to polyamory. The top comments on Facebook were "Immoral," "Odd balls," "Fucked up," "Sick," "It's stupid," and (from one person swimming against the tide) "Interesting."

Others spend more time and effort crafting their message. "THIS WOMAN IS A DISGUSTING ANIMAL," someone posted on one of my old YouTube videos, after reading a profile of me in the *Chronicle of Higher Education.* It continues:

> A far far left-w ing freak that desires to completely overthrow Western Christian Civilization. IT'S WAR ON your ethos Carrie! Every God- loving human on this planet needs to realise WE ARE AT WAR with these commies. End of Story. Oh forgot to add: PLEASE CHOKE YOURSELF CARRIE. Thanks and have a nice God-l oving, mom, the flag and apple pie [sic]. God Bless America. Let Freedom Ring. Stand up and defend your 2nd Amendment rights. Have happy Christ-c entered marriages with lost

[sic] of Christian children who hug and feed the poor and ...

(This goes on for several more posts.)

I expected this, which doesn't mean I was ready for it. (How can one be?) And then there was everything I *hadn't* expected, like the racism. As a white woman, I move through the world with the privilege of having racism largely hidden from my view. "Ray and Jon [sic] look like brothers though," said one email. "Are they both Chinese? I bet they cook you nice spring rolls for breakfast but whose spring rolls are better..."

Our fairy tale romantic story, in which one-(white-)prince-m eets-o ne(white-)princess, is a fine story. The problem is that if we only tell one story over and over, it becomes a norm. And once it's a norm it is weaponised: go off-s cript, and you are made to suffer. We can spray the scent of roses all over how "romantic" the one story is, but it doesn't cover up that moral stench.

I do not fit my assigned role in the story. Or it does not fit me. However you like to look at it, I'm *love-crafting* : altering or re-e nvisioning the "job description" for a "partner" that I've been handed by society. A society that thinks it is the boss of me.

In my life, love-c rafting has partly been about crafting loving relationships outside of the monogamous norm. But I don't do this because I want to be a "rebel," or because I want to "experiment" with love (except in the sense that all love is an experiment). I am truly the world's worst rebel. I am more of an approval junkie. I was the Hermione Granger kid all through school: good grades, a hard worker, never wanting any trouble. Once, a teacher separated me from my friend because we were giggling in class. I never got over it. I'm not a rebel, just an approval junkie who gets hate mail.

Job- crafting happens organically and spontaneously, even when it is forbidden and explicitly breaks the rules. Love-c rafting is the same. Some of us will break the "rules" to practise love as we want or need to, because it is important. It means something.

Like job-c rafting, love-c rafting "creates opportunities for [lovers] to experience the meaning of their [love] differently by aligning the [relationship] with their values, motivations, and beliefs." Love-c rafting also happens "in the wild" when deep facts about our strengths, preferences, values, desires, or identities are misaligned with society's standard job-d escription for a romantic partner. But love-c rafting *could* be deliberately encouraged, recognised, and rewarded. We aren't doing this. As things stand, the better end of the spectrum of responses to non- normative love consists mostly of "tolerance."

If we could move beyond certain preconceptions, the leap from job- crafting to love-c rafting would not be so very great. Frankl himself drew an explicit connection between the search for meaning, work, and love:

> This uniqueness and singleness which distinguishes each individual and gives a meaning to his existence has a bearing on creative work as much as it does on human love. When the impossibility of replacing a person is realised, it allows the responsibility which a man has for his existence and its

> continuance to appear in all its magnitude. A man who becomes conscious of *the responsibility he bears toward a human being who affectionately waits for him, or to an unfinished work*, will never be able to throw away his life. (My emphasis.)

Moves in the right direction have been made, though they are not (yet) taken up into broad public awareness. For example, in their 1980 book *Metaphors We Live By*, George Lakoff and Mark Johnson propose what they call a "new metaphor" for love: LOVE IS A COLLABORATIVE WORK OF ART. They argue that, unlike such existing metaphors as LOVE IS WAR and LOVE IS MADNESS, their new metaphor emphasises (among other things) that love is active and involves creativity.

Love- crafting also has historical ties to another concept: *intentional love*. The idea of love as intentional has its roots in a tradition that passes through Martin Luther King, Eric Fromm, M. Scott Peck, and bell hooks, among others. Any vision of "love" as out of control, unpredictable, an "addiction," and so on cannot be a vision of intentional love; it is something else. I have started using the label *phenomenal love* to highlight the distinction with intentional love. Around the edges of the zeitgeist, I see signs of a growing openness to understandings of love as intentional. But we are not there yet.

One way to encourage job- crafting is to use periodic reviews not simply as assessments of how well the employee is "performing," as measured against pre- determined standards, but also as opportunities to discuss how the job might be made a better fit for the employee's strengths and motivations. (Wrzesniewski discusses this in the YouTube presentation I mentioned earlier.) In the world of love, the renewable "relationship contract" has arisen organically as a kind of analogue for the latter.

Mandy Len Catron writes about this, in a *New York Times* column titled "To Stay in Love, Sign on the Dotted Line:"

> Writing a relationship contract may sound calculating or unromantic, but every relationship is contractual; we're just making the terms more explicit. It reminds us that love isn't something that happens to us— it's something we're making together.

I often say that a relationship is like a living thing that grows and changes. Catron's relationship contract is up for renewal every 12 months. She and her partner set aside time to consider how they, and their relationship, are changing over time, and how they can craft their relationship to get the best fit with their values and passions and strengths *as they are*, not as they were when they first met, or as they are expected to be by other people.

Her approach to love is intentional: it focusses on agency rather than passivity. If indeed it sounds "unromantic," it's worth pausing to ask in whose interests it is for such things to go *un*discussed, and for the status quo to be passively accepted. Who benefits when all the parameters for a relationship are set to "default" without further

discussion? The answer is, of course, those whom our default "romantic" ideology is designed to benefit.

It's key here, though, that if it weren't for her beautiful and wildly popular writing, Catron's might easily be perceived as a "normal" relationship. The art of love- crafting conceals itself, when it cannot be brushed off as "rebellion."

Judge Me By My Size, Do You?

Is it annually renewable relationship contracts, then, that will secure everyone their happy-ever-afters?

Of course not. If you're asking that question, you're still in the grip of the fairy tale, just trying to rewrite one part of it. The point is that there is no single story that works for everyone. Not everyone is looking for "happy" ever after: there are other goals that they may value more. Not everyone is looking for *anything* ever after: great love can occur in temporary relationships. Not everyone is looking for a romance, fairy tale or otherwise. There is nothing broken about all of this diversity. It's the uniformity of our narrative that is broken, that leaves us without adequate conceptual plumbing. The richness of our real lives and real loves cannot be forced into one narrow channel. It is overflowing everywhere.

Love-c rafting is not rebellion or experiment. Mislabelling it in these ways serves to put a lot of people off, and this isn't an accident: it's *supposed* to do exactly that. To classify me as a rebel is to call attention to how different I am from "normal" people. To classify my relationships as experimental presents them as unstable, and liable to fail. It suggests that I'm just "trying something out." Using the wrong concepts makes something creative and life-a ffirming appear risky and weird. It's a kind of illusion-mongering. Conceptual misdirection.

And yet all kinds of love- crafting keep happening. Some people love- craft by designing a network of loving friendships that don't include a focal romantic relationship. I do it by crafting a non- monogamous relationship structure. Others—a nd this is important—d o it in apparently "normal" relationships: the difference between a monogamous, hetero (etc.) relationship that's been *fallen into* by default, and one that has been intentionally chosen in awareness of the alternatives, is all the difference in the world.

Concepts are powerful things. We must not underestimate them just because they're small: word-s ized tools can be just as important as book-s ized tools, or even more so. The potential of a concept like *love-crafting* is formidable: it suggests that the deliberate tailoring of relationships can be creative, original, expressive, and collaborative. It suggests links to science, and practical payoffs. It doesn't *say* any of these things— it doesn't need to. It builds them right into the way we *think* about love.

Forcing thought into more conventional channels better suits the forces of social conservatism. Where *love-crafting* sets us free, *rebel* keeps us in line. Where *love-crafting* empowers us to challenge established norms, *experimental* shuts us down by raising the spectre of "failure."

But it's not enough for me to want the concept of *love-crafting* , or even to write essays about it. Uptake is what matters. How do I get you to adopt this concept?

The answer is I don't. That sort of thing isn't up to me. All I can say is trust your nose.

6. Moving the Contexts of Philosophy

Heisook Kim

I once worked as a member of the programme committee for the 22nd World Congress of Philosophy held in Seoul from July 30 to August 5, 2008. The WCP is a global meeting of philosophers that takes place every five years. In one of the programme committee meetings, we were discussing the issue of locating East Asian philosophical thoughts in terms of Western philosophical frameworks and problematics. A French philosopher insisted that philosophy was distinctively of Greek origin. What he meant was that there was a way of thought, a system of knowledge, and a method or logic of thinking that defined philosophy as was understood in the general intellectual community of the world and they were distinctively of Greek origin. The Asian intellectual tradition could not be categorised as "philosophy" by his standard. It was, he thought, not so much philosophy as ideas and thoughts. Western philosophy has configured the general agenda and main problems of philosophy as an intellectual discipline, and the philosophical questions it has generated have been considered to be universal in the sense that human reason in general must seek to find answers. Some people may agree with this idea and some may not. It may take an entire book to process the question of what philosophy is and to make comparisons among various philosophical traditions in terms of their methods, worldviews, and norms of rationality. But, even if we accept the proposition that philosophy is a discipline that uniquely emerged from Western culture, it is ironic that even most Westerners have little idea of what philosophy is. Philosophy seems to them too abstruse, recondite, and remote, even when it deals with the problems we face in the real world. Today, philosophy seems to be losing its appeal as an intellectual discipline that remains meaningful and beneficial to the world and our lives.

Philosophy has been defined in many terms as follows:

Philosophy is a search for truth and knowledge.

Philosophy is the normative activity of human beings.

Philosophy is questioning.

Philosophy is doubting.

Philosophy is reflecting.

Philosophy is criticism.

Philosophy is system- building.

Philosophy is wisdom.

Philosophy is a way of life.

Philosophy is a method.

Philosophy is a world- view (Weltanschauung).

Philosophy is distancing from the ordinary.

Philosophy is transcending and going beyond. Philosophy is dialogue.

It seems that philosophy, regardless of its origin, is related to these propositions in one way or another. However, instead of starting from defining what philosophy is, I would like to think about the way in which I first encountered philosophy. I went to college in the early 1970s. It was a time when Korea was suffering from political instability under the dictatorship of the late President Park Chung Hee, who governed the country for 18 years. Young college students at that time yearned for democracy and political freedom and protested against the authoritative rule of the government. I was also deeply involved in the student movement. When I reached my senior year of college, however, I was captured by strong scepticism; scepticism towards my beliefs, or more specifically, about whether I had a clear understanding of what I think is right and just. I asked myself, "By what right do you claim what you believe to be true?" My mind became so muddled that I did not feel like speaking a single word. I had to do something— anything— to escape from the mental chaos under which I was simply unable to make reasonable normative judgements. I felt shame about the shallowness of my knowledge, i.e., knowledge of society, of human history, and above all, of truth and fundamental values to live by. Truth seemed to be very much relative and contingent upon the time and space in which one was located, in addition to the experiences that one had. The ground that I used to stand on and I believed to be firm seemed to fall out from underneath me.

In my professional life, I remain strongly attached to scepticism as a philosophical stance and theory. When I later read Sextus Empiricus and Ancient Greek scepticism in my graduate studies, I was keenly reminded of the sceptical period in my youth. I was almost like an ascetic who had no interest in holding personal beliefs in one way or another. I had to find a way out that would bring me to a place where I would be able to hold a normative stance, or even my own perspective at the very least. What I wanted most was a systematic eye that would enable me to have clear views about myself and the world. I wanted to find rational explanations of all the questions I was struggling with. I thought philosophy could be the key to this end. But the philosophy I encountered during my graduate studies amidst the heyday of analytic philosophy in the 1970s was too narrow in setting its philosophical agenda. I felt like I was doing mathematics and logic without any opportunity to consider the grand problems of

humanity. Philosophers seemed to have a kind of inferiority complex towards scientists. Many analytic philosophers in the logical positivist tradition thought that philosophy should be as rigorous as the natural sciences. Philosophical knowledge must neither be arbitrary, nor a matter of "believe it or not". Philosophy must be more than "whistling in the dark". It must seek "a secure path of science (Wissenschaft)", to borrow Kant's vernacular. This concept of philosophy as objective knowledge, in fact, represents the ideal that traditional Western metaphysics has pursued. Philosophers have always wanted knowledge of what is ultimate, what is fundamental, and what is certain.

At first, I was deeply attracted to logical analysis and abstract thinking through rigorous argumentation, because there was no need to fight over inextricable problems concerning what is right and wrong and what is just and unjust. Regardless of one's political positions and normative stances, one must follow the general rules of the logic and the norms of justification and arguments. The significance of a conclusion is not so important as the process of the argument that was undertaken to reach the conclusion. If you cannot justify your own positions in rational and logical terms that are shared by interlocutors, you must withdraw your claim. During my MA studies, I was able to escape from the aforementioned intellectually inert state of mind, not because I was able to develop a definite and systematic framework of knowledge, but because I accepted the limits of rationality. I was freed from the sense of guilt that I could not make decisive judgements about what is right and what is true. I became an ardent believer in Wittgensteinian silentism that asserts, "You must be silent about what cannot be said". As for what can be said, I had rigorously ventured as far as I can. But how was I to know what can be said and what cannot be said? I had to deepen my studies even further.

During my PhD programme in the US, I was thrilled by epistemological problems, i.e., problems of objectivity, justification, norms of rationality, criteria of knowing, methods of ascertaining the truth, etc. They were compelling to my sceptical mind. One day in my doctoral studies, one of my American classmates accompanied me on the way to a class and asked me the question, "Why are you studying Western philosophy?" What he meant was probably that Western philosophy belonged to Western culture and thus to Westerners. He was probably wondering how and why an Asian woman became interested in his own intellectual tradition. I could not answer right away. I was somewhat shocked by the question, as I thought at the time that problems of Western philosophy carried significance that resonated with universal values. Regardless of the culture, one must have pondered the problems of Western philosophy if one wished to conduct any kind of research on philosophy, or so I thought at that time. But I could not answer, "Look, Western philosophy is of universal value, whereas Asian philosophical thoughts are parochial. That's why I chose to study Western philosophy". I felt ashamed of not being able to answer his question immediately. His questions damaged the pride I had as a philosophy student from the East. But I had no intention of giving up on my doctoral studies. I had to find the answer to my earlier question about what can

be said, the limit of rationality and the way to determine it. However, throughout my doctoral studies, my friend's question lingered deep inside my mind.

Philosophy is an intellectual endeavour to discover the whole, the totality. It does not care about the meaning of one thing or another, but rather about the meaning of being in general, or the meaning of human life in general, or the meaning of the world in general, or even the meaning of meaning in general. Philosophers of mind are not concerned with specific mental symptoms and phenomena, but rather with the nature of the mind and mentality in general. Philosophers of knowledge do not analyse the objectivity or factuality of certain claims. Instead, they investigate the general conditions under which certain claims become objective and true. They call into question the entirety of our knowledge, rather than this or that particular claim. Philosophy is an intellectual discipline that leads us to pose questions about the whole, as if philosophers themselves are not part of it (the whole) and instead outside of it, or, at least, at the boundary of it. To put the whole into parentheses, you must be able to stand outside of these metaphorical parentheses. But by remaining outside of the parentheses, you have not yet put the whole into parentheses, because you are also a part of the whole. Even if you are successful in encapsulating the whole into parentheses in its entirety from inside of (not outside of) the whole, the parentheses themselves are not part of the whole, as they envelop the whole from the outside. Or are they indeed part of the whole? In this metaphor, philosophy is an overviewing (or transcendental) point outside of the whole, or the very parentheses that define and limit the whole in its entirety. Either way, a paradoxical situation is unavoidable. The reason why philosophy seems complex and intriguing lies in this paradoxical nature of philosophical endeavours. Philosophical reflection itself involves paradox. It is interesting to note that it is also a valid philosophical agendum to ask what philosophy is. The philosophy of asking about philosophy is also philosophy. But how can we understand this kind of knowledge? What is the object and the goal towards which philosophy is headed? These are the questions meta-p hilosophy tries to answer. I believe that philosophy as a form of knowledge shows an important aspect of human reason as the reflective activity of the human mind.

When I came back to Korea in the late 1980s, I had to face an enormous challenge in my career that originated from the political instability under the military regime. Protest movements were everyday occurrences. Universities became important havens where students overtly and covertly organised anti- government movements. Tear gas and gasoline bombs were part of everyday campus life. Philosophy was almost a luxury at a time when many students were arrested by the police and charged with inciting violence. I felt somewhat helpless and ashamed about my teaching Western philosophy, especially of the analytic tradition, because it emphasised detached logical argumentation instead of passionate social engagements that students wanted. Epistemology and metaphysics might provide us with fundamental questions that are crucial in adding layers of sophistication to our thoughts, but, ironically, do not answer the problems we face in everyday life, in the here and now. Philosophy is full of paradox, and life

is full of irony. Once again, I had to deal with the question, "Why do you study philosophy?" I asked myself, "What is the point of teaching philosophy in Korea?" I had to find answers for the questions of what and why I wanted to teach. I had to think about the meaning of working on Western philosophy in East Asia, an environment with a different cultural and intellectual background from the West. The ultimate goal of studying philosophy is doing philosophy, i.e., to philosophise. Philosophy is possible only in the state of a spontaneous and free mind motivated from within. Thinking, by nature, is always spontaneous, and human freedom is predicated upon the spontaneity of thought. Nothing prevents the way I think. Philosophers are mental labourers who strive to pave their own path, which is untrodden by any other. I had to philosophise on my own intellectual ground with as much material as I could obtain on philosophical thinking in the context that I was living under. In other words, I had to reorganise my mental framework to reflect the situation amidst which I was located. Based on the awareness that I knew little about the philosophical tradition of the East, I started to learn Classical Chinese to read the cardinal texts of Confucianism that had influenced the Korean mind for over 500 years. As I was attracted to the a priori foundation of knowledge and philosophical arguments to defend it, I wanted to examine the cultural a priori, the episteme, of East Asia.

When I decided to contextualise my philosophical works, I faced another challenge, i.e., women, as being an Asian and being a woman were the foremost constituents of my identity. Confucian culture is notoriously patriarchal, and so has Korean society for a long time. Confucian culture has long defined women through the ideology of yin and yang that categorises women as yin, the dark and low, and men into yang, the bright and high. Yin and yang constituted both a metaphysical and an epistemological foundation of Confucian culture. Harmony between the opposites has always been the ideal goal of Confucian society. Women are different from men, and not identical. They have different responsibilities and rights within society that are defined in terms of social and familial relations under the patriarchal order. Harmony can be achieved only when there are differences. I took it as my philosophical duty as a female philosopher who had a feminist perspective to deconstruct this yin-y ang ideology. For the last 20 years of my career, I have struggled with questions like "Who am I?", "What is my philosophical goal?", "What is it that I want to convey to my students?", and "What do I want to write about?" But above all, my friend's question, "Why do you study Western philosophy?", has always lingered in my mind.

7. Philosophy, Comedy, and the Need for Good Material

Quill R Kukla

Giving a precise definition of philosophy seems impossible. Rather than having a canonical set of methods, our discipline draws upon a range of different and loosely grouped methods, which sometimes overlap with those of other disciplines, and which go in and out of favour across time and context. It avails itself of a loose and gigantic set of texts, with no real rules about which are useful for which purposes. Unlike most scientific fields, there is nothing resembling any consensus about the state of our knowledge; philosophers radically disagree even about the most basic questions in our field, such as how many kinds of substance there are, what morality is, whether there is free will, or whether we can know anything. Indeed, we often don't even agree about what counts as a philosophical question in the first place. For example, in a wide and extensive survey of philosophers' on central philosophical questions done in 2009, there proved to be no consensus on any topic (*[[https://philpapers.org/surveys/results.pl][philpapers.org*)]]. (The belief on which we were closest to consensus is that there is no god. But even this was not an overwhelming consensus.) Moreover, it is significant how many people answered 'other' for each question, usually indicating that they did not see the question as well- formed or answerable in the first place. We cannot even agree on the questions, not to mention their answers.

Perhaps more damning, philosophy, unlike any other scholarly discipline, literally has no topic or subject matter. One can philosophise about absolutely anything, from the nature of the will to what makes art beautiful, from the ethics of having children to the politics of civil disobedience to the formal structure of indexical sentences, and anything in between or outside of these. How can we possibly define a discipline that can be about absolutely anything and is beholden to nothing?

I used to say that we know philosophy when we see it, but I am increasingly certain that this isn't so. I now think that our intuitions about what 'counts as' philosophy are so deeply marked by the distortions and limitations of our training, identity, social position, and region as to be worse than useless— they tell us nothing concrete but instead tend to reinforce existing power structures. These intuitions are typically about what 'feels like philosophy' to those in control of the profession, but with no standards or tests for checking these intuitions, they generally end up recreating biases, and shutting out the insights and perspectives of different kinds of people who may have different intuitions.

I will not offer a definition of philosophy here; I don't think it can be done. The best I can do is to say that philosophy consists of a loose and shifting network of methods, questions, texts, and intellectual sensibilities. Instead I want to talk about one important precondition for doing philosophy well; one central function that philosophy often plays; and the importance to the field of having different kinds of people with different social positions and different kinds of bodies doing philosophy. These will turn out to be linked points.

I am fascinated by the deep similarities between philosophy and stand- up comedy. Comedy shares with philosophy its lack of a distinctive subject matter—o ne can do comedy about literally anything. Both philosophers and comedians are, in some sense that it is hard or impossible to pin down, tasked with displaying how the world actually is, in a novel way, showing us features of it that we have not noticed before even though they were there to be noticed without special equipment. Both philosophers and comedians reveal hidden assumptions that we take for granted, and make us see normal, everyday situations and activities as worthy of curiosity and critical examination. Although training and practice are clearly important to both, comedy, like philosophy, has no definitive methods, and no universally shared standards of success. It's not even clear that comedy is held to the standard of being funny; some successful comedy is dark and reflective rather than chuckle- worthy.

Because philosophy and comedy have no distinctive subject matter and can be about anything, they both need to be about *something*; that is, both philosophers and comedians need *material*. We are used to this turn of phrase for comedians, but philosophers also need material. Precisely because our topic is the whole world in all its complexity, we philosophers and comedians need worldly experience— real, complex engagement with various parts and dimensions of the world— in order to practise our trade.

In an interview with *Daily Nous* in 2018, philosopher Olúfẹmi Táíwò, who writes about race and about climate justice, commented in response to a question about his second career as a musician,

> I think being deeply immersed in something outside of philosophy has made me a better philosopher. It's easy to get into the habit of responding to the field and the literature rather than directly to the world—t hat is, where the answers to the questions that the field and the literature are trying to answer live, and where all of the people live who have to deal with the fallout of the answers we endorse.

I think this idea that good, illuminating, interesting philosophy responds to the *world* rather than just to other philosophy is fundamentally important. Just as important is Taiwo's insight that in order to respond to the world, we have to spend time in it, really engaging with it. If we only spend our time and attention on philosophy, we become bad philosophers, precisely because philosophy doesn't have a subject matter

per se. A close friend, Dan Steinberg, complains about comedians who start doing bits focussed on travelling on airplanes, because that has become the only part of the world they experience. Good comedy requires living a rich life outside of doing comedy that we can then be comedic about, and the same goes for philosophy. One could likely be a good molecular biologist, albeit perhaps a boring human, by spending all one's time learning everything about organic molecules, or a good watchmaker by spending all one's time practising making watches. But philosophers have no given subject matter to learn about, and if we spend all our time doing philosophy, we become self-r eferential beings who just respond to other philosophy, and this makes us stop being able to display interesting things about the world itself.

Comedy uses humour as its central tool for displaying part of the world in a new light. What are the central tools of philosophy? While I don't think any are definitional, one does fascinate me and strike me as especially important: I will call it *denaturalization.* Almost all of us believe all sorts of things about the basic structure of the world not only with total confidence, but without even noticing that these are beliefs that we have that need justification, because they are built so deeply into our assumptions. These beliefs show up to us as *natural* facts about the world that don't need justification or examination because they are just *plain old how things 'naturally' are.* One of the key functions of philosophy is to take these seeming natural givens and denaturalise them—that is, to give us critical distance from them, make us question them explicitly, and reveal their need for careful explanation and justification. Philosophers ask questions such as, how do I know that I am the same person over time, and what does this mean? Does there need to be a god in order for there to be moral truths? What is it to have a gender, and how is that connected to having a particular kind of body? Why should we obey laws? Without philosophical enquiry, such questions often do not even emerge as needing to be asked. This is because our senses of self and of moral truth are, as it were, baked into the background through centuries of induction into particular practices and ideologies, which insert us into frameworks that make the questions look not only already a nswered, but not even questions at all. Undoing that effect is denaturalisation.

Much good philosophy begins immersed in an everyday picture of the world that we don't even notice needs questioning, and then pulls back from it, exposing it as a product of a complex and often internally contradictory set of ideas and historically situated practices, rather than as a natural given. We use many different characteristic techniques for denaturalising. These include making hidden assumptions explicit; drawing distinctions between concepts that are commonly blurred together in ways that make them too messy to critique effectively; and, giving an intellectual history of an idea, which shows it emerging out of ideological pressures and contingencies, rather than being just given and ahistorical. A comedian almost certainly won't be funny if their bit is about a domain of life that they haven't actually experienced themselves. Likewise, in order to do a good job of denaturalising a phenomenon, I'd like to suggest, it's important for a philosopher to have a rich experiential understanding of that phe-

nomenon. We can only find the cracks, contingencies, and hidden shapes and structures in things by understanding them deeply.

When we think of philosophy and denaturalisation as requiring rich worldly experience, it gives us some new reasons to think that it is important that philosophy be done by a wide variety of people, who come from different regions, and who have different shapes, abilities, gender identities, religious affiliations, and economic backgrounds. This is for two reasons. First, people with different backgrounds, bodies, and identities are likely to have experienced different dimensions and parts of the world from one another, and hence they have different philosophical material. Second, which norms and ideas show up to us as 'natural' depends on how we are positioned with respect to these norms and ideas. So different kinds of people will be good at denaturalising different things. I will discuss these claims, in turn, by way of some examples.

Consider first a couple of examples of how different experiences of the world open up new philosophical questions by giving philosophers new material. For a long time, there was really no philosophical work concerning childhood, pregnancy, or the bodily labour of giving care. This was presumably because philosophy was even more dominated by men than it is today. As women who had caregiving responsibilities and who had experienced pregnancy and infant care began to have more voice in the profession, they opened up a range of new philosophical questions and issues, including the relationship between embodied care work and other kinds of work; the agency and moral status of infants and children; and what autonomy means for pregnant women upon whom the life of another future person depends. To give another example, English-l anguage philosophy has long been dominated by white scholars from Europe or North America. But in recent decades, scholars from or with ties to colonised countries in Africa, Asia, and South America have opened up an entire new field of philosophical enquiry, by talking about colonisation as a political and cultural phenomenon. The creation of postcolonial philosophy also allowed for normative questions about what decolonisation involves and the distinctive duties of colonising countries to colonised countries. Traditional philosophical models of relationships between states left no conceptual space for the distinctive processes of exploitation, cultural appropriation, and consumption that characterise colonisation, or the way that colonisation affects personal identity and agency. This is so even though the majority of the world's population lives in countries that have been colonised, or have colonised others, or both.

People who have socially dominant positions are disproportionately the ones who get to shape institutions and norms, and so the world is built around their perspectives and needs, to a large extent. This can make facts about their particular contingent experience look like natural facts, while simultaneously making other kinds of experiences invisible or incomprehensible. Karl Marx and Fredrich Engles argued that ideologies are designed to make social institutions and norms that protect the interests and ways of life of the dominant group look 'natural' To take a classic example, the idea that aristocrats are superior by 'blood' or that white people are superior by 'genes' naturalises the greater social opportunities and resources of each, and inoculates this inequality

from critique. Likewise, the idea that the free market is a natural instituter of and proxy for justice (rather than one human choice about how to organise the distribution of resources among many) naturalises capitalism, and benefits the owners of the means of production over wage workers.

This is why people with identities, social positions, and bodies that are d ifferent from the dominant norm are especially well positioned to denaturalise norms and ideas. When philosophers have non- dominant positions or nonstandard bodies, they are positioned differently with respect to such naturalised norms and ideologies. Because their experience doesn't match the naturalised understanding of reality, they are in an especially good position to see this understanding as contingent and in need of critical examination. This can lead to important philosophical insights that are not available to those for whom the naturalised norms and ideologies were built. (It is worth noting that what I am articulating here is the central tenet of what is known as 'standpoint epistemology.')

For instance, it was taken for granted by generations of political philosophers that the paradigmatic person—t he basic unit of political association and economic activity—w as an independent individual without bodily needs and with full decisional autonomy. All of our political and economic theories were based on this model of the human, which was taken to be the 'natural' unit of political theorising. Meanwhile, women who cared for small children, along with many disabled people and their caregivers, were well aware from their daily lives that a huge number of humans did not fit that model. Children, old people, and people with various nonstandard physical or cognitive abilities who rely on help to function are all among those who do not fit this model of independence, and whose personhood and needs are not well represented by the traditional theories. When disabled people and caregivers started doing philosophy and being heard, they radically changed political theory, by critiquing and denaturalising what had appeared to be a natural assumption that did not need justification. Such scholars could see clearly that failing to fit the traditional model is not just a marginal deviation from the norm, but also a central fact of the human c ondition, which includes frailty, finitude, and social connection.

To give another example, the assumption that sex, sexual orientation, and gender are all 'naturally' aligned, and that all of them can be 'naturally' and immediately read off of how a body looks, appeared as a commonsense fact that did not need questioning to cis-g endered and gender-c onforming philosophers for ages. But trans, queer, and other gender non- conforming people directly experience these beliefs as social impositions rather than as natural facts, and they have opened up space for much more subtle, denaturalised philosophical accounts of sex, sexuality, and gender.

More generally, people who are disabled, gender non-c onforming, fat, or racialised as not white, among others, are simply not allowed to forget that they have a body, and that bodies are relevantly different. Our institutions are set up to make white, cis, non- disabled, thin bodies fit seamlessly into their environment, and to make the social production of that environment invisible to them. Seats on buses and airplanes

fit them; they can easily meet codes of professional respectability; they don't stand out as suspicious or find themselves under surveillance as they move through streets and buildings. Because such normative bodies fit so smoothly with their environment, it is much easier, if one has such a body, for that environment to seem to be just 'naturally' how things are, rather than a contingent product of practices that privilege and centre some bodies over others.

Across epistemology, philosophy of mind, and social philosophy, philosophers with non-n ormative bodies have drawn on their first-p erson experience to denaturalise our environment and our social norms. They have made clear the vivid and contingent role of the body in how we think, how we know, how we are assessed by others, what opportunities we have, how social norms shape our sense of self, and much more. This has opened up whole new domains of philosophical enquiry, and created new philosophical concepts. For example, Patricia Hill Collins argued influentially that the race and gender of our body, and not just the quality of our justifications or our expertise, help to determine when and whether others see us as trustworthy knowers and testimonial reporters. Alison Reiheld and others have shown how fat bodies are taken as untrustworthy in medical contexts, with disastrous effects. For scholars with non-n ormative bodies, such epistemic assessments and disadvantages are part of the daily experience of life. But they were mostly invisible in philosophy when overwhelmingly white, able- bodied, cis men took it as 'natural' that the only way we decided who to believe was by assessing the reliability of their words.

I suspect that here, again, what goes for philosophy, goes for comedy as well. Comedians have long been a diverse group, and comedians of different races, body shapes, and gender identities have been noticeably visible and successful. I hypothesise that the reasons why comedy has benefited from having diverse practitioners bear a deep relationship to the reasons why philosophy needs diversity. But it is not my place here to give a theory of comedy.

I have argued that good philosophy calls for engagement with the world, and not just with more philosophy. I have also claimed that philosophy needs the voices of people with diverse perspectives, including especially those with non-d ominant identities and non-n ormative bodies, in part precisely because their engagement with the world will be different, and will yield questions and insights otherwise invisible. As philosophers become a more diverse and inclusive group, the topics, methods, questions, and subject matter of philosophy will morph. This is intellectually healthy. Establishing boundaries around what counts as 'real philosophy' will exclude new work by non- dominant folks, to the detriment of the discipline. This provides us with yet another reason to suspect that giving a rigid definition of philosophy is both hopeless and foolhardy.

8. Hypatia's Gaze

Kyoo Lee

> Ther comes a time in everyones lief whan 'tis gode think on ones condition & look ahead by looking in. [...] A time to speech ma minding 'n let some wisdam yrise. Call on a friendly assembly for fair share & witnessing, and there let ones hair down!
>
> – Caroline Bergvall, *Alisoun Sings*

Hi y'all, my meme is Hypatia (FYI: just so you know, I'm channelling my friend Caroline who begins her recent book, *Alisoun Sings*, with "Hi you all, I am Alisoun," so simple, so cool, so go open the book, but not now). You might know mee as a buddy of Sophia's, the one from/in/of philoSOPHIA (WISDOM), who is probably better known and nowadays, I see, she is more artificially present. The same difference? She, highly patient too, is the one with the Botox smile.

Just googled my, I mean, meme-s elf, just curious yes. The first entry by or as we say "hit" from ENCYCLOPÆDIA BRITANNICA, penned by Michael Deakin, says this about my double me: Hypatia, (born c. 355 CE—d ied March 415, Alexandria), mathematician, astronomer and philosopher who lived in a very turbulent era in Alexandria's history. She is the earliest female mathematician of whose life and work reasonably detailed knowledge exists.

You could go read there a reasonably detailed summary of the reasonably detailed knowledge about this other one whose "philosophy also led her to embrace the life of dedicated virginity." A nun too? Who knew? When? Two Hypatias? Maybe even three?

> As for dress I take all ma Qs from Getalife, will get back to what.
>
> – Caroline Bergvall, *Alisoun Sings*

In any case, like my big sis Simone (de Beauvoir, 1908–1986), yeah, who wrote *The Second Sex* (1949), another life- long embracer of dedicated philosophising, who was also known for her unavoidable beauty, not unlike her I have been rather "hesitating" to write this out, "for a long time," yes, this very note on philosophia, as our Elly knows all too well, but then when I heard the other day my girlcrush Alisoun singing out loud in *Alisoun Sings* (2019), ALL LISTEN ALISOUN SINGING!—yeah that voluble beauty from *The Canterbury's Tales*, Al we call her, who just got revived so awesomely resonatingly by Caroline Bergvall, as I think I mentioned earlier—I got so

aMUSEd, aroused, psyched and all that, thinking well yeah why not, 'tis about time, #philosopHERS too."Sbeen a long timem," as dear Al says, indeed, patient, high again. Dunno Alisoun? Fine, no fame, no shame.

No shame either in not knowing. It is nice to know that everyone is ignorant of at least one thing, something. It is not nice to know that many, far too many, ignore *that*, ignoring the obvious that should be acknowledged as such, at least minimally, that is. How so everyday *and* so esoteric ...

Remember just that, **Point #1**. The first and one last thing this lady philosopher, mee, whosbeen teaching philosophy 101 for over two decades, transcontinentally too, in Europe, in Asia, in North America, would ask you from the start even if you're an indoctrinated professional type or especially *if* you are, is to remember, **re-m ember the obvious, something so obvious as to be obliterated in front of our eyes**, "hidden in plain sight." How does that happen? Almost always.

Almost always, the mind connected to the body and vice versa, call it a mindbody, is where such a vibrantly membraned perspicuity— foresights and insights— of perception gets stored, sharpened, cultivated, amplified, and shared. *Con*sider it, all *sides*, like lovers' words, like liars covers, first and last and in between. When we hear the legendary Socrates saying "know yourself" or him on about some stunningly beautiful soul in an unremarkably ordinary body that often gets overlooked in *this* world, we hear a troubled, and desiring, mind nursing its own unknowing or semi- knowing through a body that senses its mortal defects and wishes.

Philosophers whose main business is to think ... thinks things *through*. It inhabits that love of or passion for X, or more like friendship (*philos*) with it, like some oddly gluey arrow that would pass through and connect all sorts of bodies that think while being thought at least in thought. As René Descartes (1596–1650) saw it, who could *not but* think, one simply thinks, no matter what. In other words, I think, or more precisely, I *am* thinking, no matter who, or what, or where I am.

If, however, the Cartesian tendency of a modernised consciousness to escape to an island of iThink seems rather limiting, if you reckon its tendency towards narcissistically truncated self-r egard psychopathologically excessive, potentially or actually—a lthough I must also point out, as I did in *Reading Descartes Otherwise* (2013), that this man of ambitious reason did try to include all broadly conscious activities in his conception of *cogitare* (to think) and so what we might need to do is not to reject him and his philosophical legacy altogether, which is neither possible nor desirable, too late, history's part of us, but rather to *re*think all such by *re- re*ading them— we can also, quickly here, turn to another sense of philosophy from the East Asian Sinographic sphere, for instance. "Philosophy ☒☒," retroactively reconstructed like so in a kind of modern epochal response to the "Western" philosophy is, to think of it literally through its etymological signal, a kind of thorough(ly analytic *and* synthetic) discourse, verbal networks ☒ (a mouth, an entrance) that would skilfully ax ☒the object at hand☒, sort of cracking it, its code, in which what is stressed is this simple, powerful point that philosophy is also a practice through and through, not just a series of sayings. In

sum, philosophers are those who, while thinking thoroughly, do philosophy, and female philosophers are those who do that while female.

For now then, going back to Alisoun, whom we must also re- member: just con- sider this about her, the following, two together as in, say, two of a kind. First, our Alisoun is an intriguingly juicy and juicily controversial "Dame," as Caroline stresses right from the start of her *Alisoun Sings*, the title of the first chapter. She, (springing from) the Wife of Bath, a strong, sassy, mature woman, is the singular female "soveraynetee" among a nun and the Prioress in that aforementioned unfinished poetic masterpiece by Geoffrey Chaucer, "the Founder of the English language," "the Father of English literature," etc., I mean, EnglysSHE. Now then, also note that there is another Alisoun in Chaucer's tales, from the Miller's Tale, much younger, an intriguingly juicy and juicily controversial local beauty, also noted for the strength of her character. What I want to do here and with you all, is to bring them together, mingling the Alisounian senses and references. What I want us to enter together is a kind of Alisoun in wonderland sonically gathered here, a world of transgenerational alternativity. Consider both and many sides of HER at once, the manifold character(s) overlapping in one and the same name.

For instance, one of (younger) Alisoun's meme-w orthy moments is when she stuck her "naked ers" (arse, which does now sound like ears too) out the window in place of her mouth so wanted by many opposite mouths of the opposite sex, when Absolon, an unwanted suitor, eagerly offered a wet lingering nightly kiss. Now, as if that were not hot(ly sore) enough, her lover of the night, dashing Nicholas, after co-g iggling wildly and solo-f arting pointedly on her behalf, when Absolon returns with a hot iron poker and a 2nd offer of his moist lips, gets his buttocks branded.

So what? What has this bit of classy ob-s cenity got to do with philosophy? Look, read it again:

First, one, including you, could see this case of displaced orality or replaced anality, perhaps equally banal and equally cerebral, as 2 men fighting over 1 woman who, then, outlives the battle. Also for the record, **Point #2**: note foshur that **she, "the 2nd sex," did it 1st,** the ers- sticking, she did done it already, which makes him a 2nd fiddle. It was also HER, another Al-L istener all the way back, Eve, who got curious, first, **who *wants* to know that thing unlike her boo**. Who, practically, started the tree of knowledge? Who first ate that apple and took a s***?

Likewise, though it might be a stretch to call Alisoun a feminist performance artist or thinker in action, this hyper- hetero- sexualised Wife of B**o**th, her ~~m~~oral (NB: ~~m~~Oral) sexual activism, her counter- active dual lipkinkiness, remains amply instructive. Her oranal bi- portal fluidity is ...

> Btw nat worry should ma language feeling it weirdo, rude & cueryous at first. Rough as a cats lick or like a dress whats travagant [...] as though am speechin many languages at once. Whats forshur! And many stories too!

> In many gay apparel! [...] the northern sea rushing between my herculean legs splashes against the mixed wools of my quim.
>
> - Caroline Bergvall, *Alisoun Sings*

yes, cueryously or qriously, which way you put it, "as agile ... as a french kiss or a sailing cog in the storm," as the smoothly "frenchy" lower- case alisoun puts it. Hélène Cixous, the avant-g arde thinker-s cholar-w riter, a poet, a critic, a professor, also a playwright who plays right all around, another feministar, "Jewish-A lgerian-F rench," the Jewish Women's Archive.org says, dubbed this move that counters the phallic language- centred norms in intellection, "*l'écriture féminine*" (womanly writing); if interested, go read, not now though, her braingasmic 1975 essay "*Le Rire de la Méduse*" (The Laugh of the Medusa). Poignant hilarity continues, the echo of. The title almost says it all, if you care to hear it— yes, *through* that castrated, viral head of hers that just can't stop reproducing her- othered- weathered- selves, viscerally menstrually questioning, threatening, that is, the monosyllabic monolithic monolingual monologic monadic monotonous monosexualised and monopolised one-n ess of phallic proselytising. Her problem? Too many fizzy phalluses? But just because her hairs are fab doesn't mean you'd have a bad hair day, right?

> Say- so maself sbeen good, spite a beating, or two.
>
> - Caroline Bergvall, *Alisoun Sings*

Re-cognising in 2020 the polyphallic mobilisation and postmodern retreatment of the Medusa's hair inseparable from her head and then her face and her gaze and her mouth and her voice and so on that overlaps with many others' to be *all*isouned to, I cannot but entertain this notion again, "*l'écriture feminine philosophique*" "if I may just add the word "philosophical" freely incorrectly subterraneanly unfrenchly to the concept," as I was also making this point in a recent (2017) article on "Second Languaging *The Second Sex*, Its Conceptual Genius." Well, here, having come this far, I might as well go further to say, *l'écriture feminine philosophysique.* What glues the Medusa's oracerebral fecundity and Alisoun's oranal fluidity, what runs through them supplely ever after is their contemporarised pre-p osterity, their profoundly embodied, philoSOPHIC vibrancy that challenges the tyranny of over- professionalised philosophy, which, I, Prof. Dr. Lee, one professing the love of wisdom to a P.H. degree, feel compelled to amplify.

Nowadays in the age of #MeToo movements, when old new stories about the boundary-v iolating sexual behaviours of some mature folks, mostly men, of tenured reason begin to surface as newspaper headlines, as if in part to fill the void in the increasingly philosophy-f ree world often found *in* the world of institutional(ly empowered and impoverished) philosophy, what we are witnessing through the eyes of Sophia, the object of philosophic love, is a mundane, and at times alarmingly academic,

allegory of philosophy. Just imagine a kind of high-f unctioning artificial intelligence phenomenally naturalised, theoretically sexualised. Warmly welcome those "real dolls" tagged with their own school email addresses too, the impossibly lovely lips and buttocks and holy holes of youthful, often female, graduate student assistants or fresh admirers *in the eyes of* those often in a position to be able to call themselves distinguished philosophers. Consider how they, some real lovers of Sophia in their own salaried mind of purity, could therefore abuse and exploit such eroticised objects *in the name of* philosophy, the shared love of intellection.

Quite simply, what would Sophia look like, this metonymic object? With "long hairs, short ideas," as Michèle Le Dœuff quips, one of the most spirited philosophers today (who by the way happens to be usually very sexily short- haired, although the length of her hair is essentially her own business of course, which also would have no correlation to the philosophic power of her head per se), the stereotypical image of Sophia as an object of (modern) philosophical contemplation, namely, as nature itself or herself (*la nature*), still appears to be almost, mysteriously, just given. While really hoping that I myself might be really just anachronistic about this in this day and age, I note that this sort of cognitive shortcut many thinking folks have still internalised and even buy into, "a long-h aired woman = a bimbo," this sort of rudimentarily sexist code of generic (un)attractiveness socially *naturalised* as such (for one does not instantly undervalue the *intelligence* of long-h aired dudes) needs to be cracked, especially philosophically.

Still unclear? Not quite convinced? Try this too then, quickly.

Google "Sophia" and you will mostly see the contemporary AI version, with almost no hair, for presumably the thinking machines would need to be ventilated in order to operate well and her gender code is often in the digitally modified red lips or else in her slightly twitchy lips or just the name, of course. Another thing about the Sophic face that may not have escaped your attention is her racialised code, of course. Why (not)? We might also want to ask why some noticed that and, perhaps more importantly, some didn't. What is the colour, and cost, of that techno-a bstraction? Again, do not ignore the obvious that remains obscure. Re- register the fact.

Google, this time, "Sophia the goddess of wisdom" and you will get a variety of long-h aired versions, the classical conundrum I am alluding to, the issue being that Sophia has either a (very, and often supposedly lovely) long hair or else a (very, and often reactionarily or defensively politicised) short hair, but hardly a neutral hair style of her own (choosing), except when, perhaps, she gets to be lucky enough to become part of a community that can afford to forget about all this hairy headache at least for a while. The long mythological resonance about wisely long- haired Sophia notwithstanding (the long-b earded, differently gendered, while related, is a topic for a whole new paper), a modern and still often academically secondarised Sophia still seems to have little room to grow in further unless she flips her beautiful long hairs so cuttingly, so wildly, so radically so long, to become a really long-h aired ghost that can even neither publish nor perish. Can Sophia think? Does Sophia have a mind, a language, a world, of her own?

That is: if this kind of often lopsided—u nrequited, in a feminised language— and misguided, almost instantly fetishised, institutionally twisted *philia* for SOPHIAs is or has become part of the normalised, normativised, ob- scenity of philosophic thinking, how should philosophers love?

Note forshur that my point is not to moralise or police the freedom of loving, of living lovingly. Also, note foshur that not all philosophers are actually *doing* philosophy, many just studying it. On the contrary, what I am suggesting is that philosophia will become most beautifully powerful when it remains self-c ritical while creatively attuned to its own blindness. In that spirit, let me put my **Point #3** in the form of a question: **could Sophia become a sobject?** (subject *and* object)

Here comes Hypatia again, who would love Sophia and think as Sophia. And where is she now?

You might have seen my meme and some of her buddies in your PHI 101 class or the cover of the syllabus if your college professor chose to use some visual shortcut, "The School of Athens" (1509–1511) by Raphael. It's everywhere, again google it, if you don't know what I'm on about (Figure 8.1).

If you cannot find our #philosopHER, perhaps this caption from the Vatican might help?

> The most famous philosophers of ancient times move within an imposing Renaissance architecture which is inspired by Bramante's project for the renewal of the early Christian basilica of St Peter. Some of these are easily recognizable. In the centre Plato points upwards with a finger and holds his book Timeus in his hand, flanked by Aristotle with Ethics; Pythagoras is shown in the foreground intent on explaining the diatesseron.
>
> Diogenes is lying on the stairs with a dish, while the pessimist philosopher, Heracleitus, a portrait of Michelangelo, is leaning against a block of marble, writing on a sheet of paper. Michelangelo was in those years executing the paintings in the nearby Sistine Chapel.
>
> [...] according to crockery hierarchies, keep this one in this one out for freshness, usefulness, dominant criteria, & makes a master meal for a High Table none of us binvited to!
>
> – Caroline Bergvall, *Alisoun Sings*

If you still cannot spot her, it really is not your fault, there are just so many there, and also given what is usually said about the picture as above, as if there were ultimately just two guys arguing about some world up there (Plato) or down here (Aristotle), and the rest is just extra, "footnotes" to masters. But well, yes, hello, she is still standing there, quite tall, quite queenly, centre-l eft between Pythagoras and Parmenides (neither of whom were listed above) ... OK, we might need to revert to the original title of the painting, "*Causarum Cognitio*" (Seek to know the causes).

FIGURE 8.1 Raphael: The School of Athens (1509–1510) Vatican Palace, Stanza della. Segnatura. http://www.eurocare.it/Caption/tabid/70/Default.aspx

Why is she typically, almost totally, absent present? What (non-)sense could we make of it?

If you could see her only now, that distinguishable figure, why is Hypatia there and not there?

Is she less than obvious? Is she not there more than obviously? Has she not been there all along?

Re-member this cueryously translocalised transhistoric summit of philosophers from the Greco-E gyptian antiquities (often cropped as "Greek antiquities," it must be also pointed out even in passing, for we say that as if, for instance, Alexandria were also *in* Athens). As the story goes, Raphael had to end up constructing something of an old boys' club under a theocratical pressure from the Bishop who had commissioned the artist to decorate the rooms of the Apostolic Palace in the Vatican. Now, re-c on-s ider that one lady philosopher, Hypatia, whose name does rhyme with Sophia (also Diotima, albeit more distantly). Allegedly, Raphael, who much appreciated her philosophic genius and legacy had intended to place her in the centre on the marble steps right beneath and between Plato and Aristotle, and yet when his sketch was rejected by the Bishop who demanded that *that woman*— whom the clergy had no knowledge of— be removed, he had to do something about that, and his solution was to codify her presence, to hide her in plain sight.

> [...] that's my whole megafony!
>
> – Caroline Bergvall, *Alisoun Sings*

The fact that Hypatia is the only woman in this classical, almost dead- metaphorised, gallery of Sophia-l oving all "Greek" fraternity is obvious enough, although, as I also have been trying to keep reminding my-o ur-s elves, there are countless subtexts and uncontested axioms built into the kaleidoscopic and cartographic obscurities of the obvious itself, of what is often unquestioningly taken to be part and parcel of the unquestionable norms, which is again often *just* the naturalised cognitive limits of the privileged who, almost structurally, cannot see, hear, sense stuff otherwise and yet feel and can in fact be practically *justified* in holding onto their baseless base. All such lessons count, or if not, must, and that is one way philosophy remains *con*temporarily relevant.

The fact that I, a woman philosopher "of colo(u)r," find Hypatia & Associates so colourfully relatable and mobilisable this allegorical way, is not irrelevant to the fact that philoSOPHY in its trans-r adical contemporaneity, is such a conceptual storehouse for all who can think and think none the less. The fact that Hypatia was flayed alive by a mob of religiously misogynistic (anti- Neo- Platonist) fanatics is not irrelevant, either. The fact that even *She* is, however, still un- seen in the scene of "mainstream" academic philosophising is a philosophical problem *par excellence*.

Look again, does she come alive—t o you? You see? Which part of her? And which she in you?

I am not trying to be bossy. I am just pointing to the grass that is green or perhaps now greener, if you did or do hear me saying it *is* green. Look at the one looking at you as if right through you, the only one looking *out* as if she had to throw *out* her menstrual towel again and again at those catcallers in a critical defiling of the philoSOAPurity of groupie philosophy boys— except that, here, she is also being kind of ignored even by a few seemingly eager mansplainers, since all the other members of the school are famously busy, buried in themselves, pontificating, meditating, debating with their opponents ... but with Raphael, some of us are gazing back at her, now.

9. Philosophy as a Helping Profession?[1]

Gina Schouten

I started college as a Social Work and Spanish major. People had told me I was well- suited to work in a "helping profession," and that seemed right to me. I cared about vulnerable people, and I had the vague sense that I might find work helping new Spanish- speaking immigrants in the US to access community resources, find jobs, and navigate social support systems. I didn't have anything very precise in mind, but I trusted that if I developed skills to lend a hand, someone would put me to work doing it.

And maybe they would have. But I never got that far. The plan fell apart even as it was still taking shape.

My social work classes were my least favorite. And I wasn't doing particularly well in them, either. I'd started out thinking that I wanted to learn to be an effective advocate and ally for those whom "the system" had failed. But I kept getting derailed by questions about "the system" that had done the failing. This is no criticism of social work or social workers. Even then, I was (rightly) irritated with myself for not buckling down. We live in a big, unjust world, but we should not let the structural-n ess of injustice keep us from doing what we can to make things go better for its victims. Still, even as I wanted to help care for the people around me who needed help, I was hungry to think about big questions.

Meanwhile, I *was* thinking about *some* big questions. Just for fun, I'd taken a general, introductory philosophy class that first semester of college. By the end of that semester, I'd decided to use all my electives taking philosophy classes. The new plan seemed like the perfect arrangement: I'd learn social work for my job and study philosophy for fun.

Then that plan, too, fell apart. I gradually came to learn, and then to accept, that I loved philosophy. It felt so powerful and so democratic. You didn't need any special equipment or professional-l ooking clothes. You didn't need to talk smoothly or feign confidence you didn't feel. You didn't need to remember a lot of facts, and you didn't need to get anything done quickly. You just needed to care enough about the questions to figure out what you thought about them, and then figure out why you thought that.

[1] Thanks to Hayley Clatterbuck, Shanna Slank, Kathryn Joyce, and Harry Brighouse for helping me with this essay.

That "just" is deceiving! Figuring out what you think and why you think it is a long and arduous process. How perfect, then, that philosophers seemed to take things slowly. (It is much to the credit of my philosophy teachers that these were my early impressions of the discipline!)

Philosophy never felt inevitable to me. I could always imagine other paths. But I didn't *want* those other paths. And so I had to let go of the security of studying for a profession. I also had to let go of the image I had of myself as someone who was destined for a helping profession.

The rest is the story of trying to claw that image of myself back again.

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Because I'd started out to find a job helping others, the notion of "becoming a philosopher" felt like a self-indulgence. The feeling remains even today. I accepted a generous financial aid package to go to college at a regional public university. I then left the state and now have a job in what often feels like a foreign country. I don't say that anyone who does this work is self- indulgent, only that *I* have felt that way, because of the circumstances and because of the much different path I'd planned to take.

I had these reservations even in those college days when the new path was beginning to take shape, but they were often crowded out by a dizzy sort of wander. I would go to my philosophy classes, and I would sit and think about just the questions I most wanted to think about. I would talk about those questions with classmates who loved them too, and with professors who had made a life out of loving them. I knew that I wanted to take a shot at making a life out of teaching philosophy, so I made a deal with myself: I would give this thing a go, but I would look for some way to make it socially useful.

I formed a hazy notion of philosophy as a helping profession, and I resolved to strive for that ideal.

***

Almost as soon as I formulated the ideal, I saw that I had great role models. The very professors whose teaching had so drawn me to philosophy had helped *me*. And once I knew what I was looking for, I saw that they were helping plenty of others as well, including their many students who had no aspirations of following in their footsteps. My professors were helping us to develop skills for thinking clearly and methodically about the world and our place in it. And there was plenty of richness to discover. In my epistemology class, I was thinking harder than before— and in different ways than before— about what it means to be a knower. I was questioning certain commitments that I'd taken for granted, and I was thinking about how deeply social our ways of knowing are. In metaphysics, I was thinking about how and why it matters to who I am that I'm a woman, or that I've had the particular set of experiences I've had, and about what changes I might undergo and still be me. In ethics and political philosophy courses, I was learning to think more clearly and methodically about what it means— and about how difficult it is!—to be a good person and a good citizen. Asking these

questions and coming to appreciate how difficult they are to answer has made me a more careful thinker and a more caring person.

One way of helping, then, was through teaching. I could make space for others to ask these questions and thereby become more careful and more caring too. As I learned more about the structure of the academic profession, I realized I'd have to overcome powerful professional incentives to make this a high priority. But again, I had plenty of excellent role models: teachers who were making care for their students a top priority. These professors also modeled a commitment to supporting students who most needed their support: for example, first-g eneration or low-i ncome students, for whom the culture of college can be foreign and intimidating. Incidentally, students who have special need of support would often not find their way into philosophy without conscientious teachers welcoming them there.

In research, too, I saw that plenty of folks already were doing philosophy as a helping profession, even if they weren't thinking of it in those terms. Philosophers think about hard questions that can't be answered empirically. They propose answers to those questions, which they put in conversation with the answers others have proposed, in the hope that, together, over time, we will make progress toward better understanding the questions and maybe even learning their answers. The questions are profoundly important to how we live, and to how we live *together*, and one of the great joys of reading philosophy comes from seeing just how illuminating this slow, collaborative thinking- through can be.

As an example, consider a contribution from Shanna Slank, a philosopher who teaches at Kansas State University. (You can learn more about Slank's work and read the article on imposter syndrome that I describe here at her website, https:// sites.google.com/view/skslank). Among lots of other things, Slank thinks about impostor syndrome: roughly, the phenomenon in which someone experiences doubt that they *deserve* some success they've had— perhaps the success of being accepted into college. They feel fraudulent, like they don't belong, like they're less competent than others perceive them to be. And they fear being found out for being frauds. Those who experience impostor syndrome feel like their success is due largely to external factors rather than to them, and that it thus may be difficult to sustain or replicate going forward. Impostor syndrome is meant to be a cognitive distortion. But Slank asks a simple yet transformative question: Who is really suffering the cognitive distortion? Those who see their success as attributable in large part to good fortune? Or those who think their successes are fully *due to them*? Slank suggests that those who *downplay* the role of fortunate contingencies are the ones making a mistake. After all, even talent and strong work ethic require favorable circumstances to develop. Those who work hard to attain success can certainly be proud, but they would be mistaken to think there's no good fortune involved.

Slank proceeds to intervene philosophically in this important conversation, raising doubts about the most basic framing assumptions, proposing that we revise our thinking about impostor syndrome, and eventually proposing a shift in how we respond to it:

The right response to the badness of feeling like a fraud is not cognitive rehabilitation; what we need is a reality check and a realignment of institutional rhetoric and practice to reflect that reality check. *Nobody's* success is due entirely to them; and *everyone* needs favorable circumstances if success is to be replicated. Those who experience impostor syndrome are mistaken only in thinking that the role of good fortune in their success *sets them apart.*

This might sound like a project in psychology, and certainly it's directed at a psychological issue. But Shanna's paper is thoroughly philosophical. She arrays premises many of her readers will already be inclined to accept, and she shows how those premises support a conclusion that those readers never considered and wouldn't have been inclined to endorse prior to seeing that it can be inferred from what they already believe. For me, the realization that this revisionary conclusion about impostor syndrome followed from what I already took to be true has been immensely helpful. I've always feared that, because my accomplishments are due to good fortune more than they're due to me, I can't sustain them and so eventually will disappoint people who think highly of me. Now, reflecting on Slank's work, I am able to re- center on a feeling of gratitude for favorable circumstances and (meta!)-gratitude that I'm now able to think of my good fortune gratefully rather than guiltily or anxiously. And I'm able to reorient toward thinking about how I can make someone else's circumstances more favorable. If I ever do that successfully, that's one ripple of Slank's practice of philosophy as a helping profession.

***

Now, eight years into my journey as a philosophy professor, I still try to think of my work in terms of helping. I'm not delusional: I don't know how good a social worker I'd have been, but if I'd stuck with it, it's likely I would have done more helping through that than I've managed to do teaching and writing philosophy. But I think I've done more helping as a philosopher guided by the ideal of my work as helping than I would have if I'd not committed to thinking of it that way.

And, if this basic case is sound— if philosophy can coherently be thought of as a discipline that *aspires to be* a helping profession—t hen I think that aspiration should inform the way we talk to students and to the public about what our discipline does and what students can expect if they study philosophy. Let me finish up by explaining why I think "philosophy as a helping profession" might make for good messaging.

Consider the work of social psychologists Nicole Stephens and Sarah Townsend, which they've recently written up at the website Politico. ("The unseen reason working-class students drop out.")Their research focuses on some under- appreciated causes of the achievement gap in higher education between low-i ncome and first-g eneration students on the one hand, and those students' more privileged peers on the other. This achievement gap persists even when universities provide academic support and work to ensure that all students' basic needs for food and housing are met. And the gap persists even when we control for academic achievement prior to college.

What gives?

Stephens and Townsend argue that an important obstacle to success for working-c lass students in selective institutions of higher education is a "cultural mismatch" between those students and the institutions. Students report feeling like their schools aren't meant for students "like them."

Here's the key dimension of this cultural mismatch: "Universities tend to rely on standards of merit that reflect *independent* values, leading educators to assume that students should pave their own paths, be independent thinkers, challenge norms and rules, and feel comfortable expressing their personal preferences." Meanwhile, "decades of research in the social sciences shows that people from working-c lass communities tend to prioritise a different set of values, including being socially responsive, adjusting to others, and being part of a group — values of *interdependence*."

This values difference is reflected in the motivations that drive students to college in the first place:

> When asked why they're motivated to attend college, students from m iddle- and upper-c lass backgrounds tend to focus on goals that reflect universities' standards of independence, such as exploring personal passions or making a mark on the world. By contrast, ... working-c lass students more often focus on goals that reflect standards of interdependence, such as helping their families or giving back to their communities. They often enter educational settings with little experience focusing on themselves and exploring personal passions, and are instead more prepared to focus on others and contribute to a group. When working- class students don't promote their individual interests like their middle-c lass peers have learned to do, they often get viewed as lesser or deficient.

So working- class students have a cultural mismatch to navigate, between their own values and the values expressed in the culture of the institutions they attend. This mismatch increases stress among working- class students, diminishes their sense of belonging, and hinders academic performance. Meanwhile, institutional cultures valorizing independence encourage students to think that they alone are responsible for their struggles, thus discouraging them from seeking help. So the cultural mismatch both causes underperformance and discourages the very help- seeking behavior that, within institutions infused with middle- class values, is taken to be the hallmark of student engagement and commitment.

But there's good news: Institutional culture is malleable. In fact, Stephens and Townsend argue that we can make a difference simply by incorporating some nods to interdependence within existing culture:

> In our studies, we find that doing something as simple as revising a u niversity welcome message to include concepts of interdependence (e.g., be part of a community) leads working-c lass students to perform just as well as their socioeconomically advantaged peers on an academic task.

I think we have good reason to believe that part of philosophy's failure to a ttract more diverse groups of students into our classrooms and our majors results from the individualistic terms on which we talk about philosophy and the value it offers. Our messaging tends to spotlight philosophy as instrumental for realizing the values of independence: Become a critical thinker; slay the LSAT; make your mark on the world of ideas. This plausibly helps to explain why we disproportionally attract economically privileged students relative to working- class students and white students relative to non-w hite students. I suspect it also helps to explain why we attract relatively more men than women.

But there's discipline-l evel good news, too. We might make our discipline more welcoming to working-c lass and poor students, non-w hite students, and women by celebrating interdependence in our talk about what our discipline does and who it is *for*: Philosophy will help you learn to be a skilled critical thinker, *and skilled critical thinking is hugely important for responsible citizenship.* You'll think about what it means to be a good *friend*, a good *partner*, a good *parent*, a good *child* to your own parents. You'll have opportunities to ask *why communities matter* in the first place, and when— and why—i ndividuals might be morally required to defer their own individual interests in favor of the good of community or society. Indeed, you can think about the extent to which our distinctively human capabilities are due to the social structures in which we're embedded and our desire to learn from one another. You can think about what makes you *you*, a person who persists over time, and what role your embeddedness in communities plays in that. You can think about how we know what we know, and the distortions *and* clarities that come along with our practices for knowing together.

If I am right that "philosophy as a helping profession" is a worthy aspiration for our discipline, then this messaging need involve no dishonesty. Nor is there any good reason to think it would come at a cost to the rigor our discipline rightly prizes so highly: Thinking well and philosophically with an interdependent orientation need be no less rigorous than thinking well and philosophically with both eyes on oneself as the object of enrichment. And, as the case of the university welcoming message suggests, this may be an area in which small changes can yield large gains: both for our discipline and for the students we reach.

If philosophy as a helping profession is a worthy aspiration, then there's no reason our disciplinary messaging and practice shouldn't celebrate interdependence. If failing to celebrate interdependence is part of what's holding philosophy back from being the richly inclusive discipline it should be and *must* be if it's to do its good work well, then we have much to gain by taking the leap.

10. What Philosophy is and What It Could Be[(2)]

Elly Vintiadis

Whenever the question of what philosophy is comes up, three quotes always come to my mind. The first quote is from Wilfrid Sellars: "The aim of philosophy, abstractly formulated, is to understand how things in the broadest possible sense of the term hang together in the broadest possible sense of the term." The second one is from David Hills: "Philosophy is the ungainly attempt to tackle questions that come naturally to children, using methods that come naturally to lawyers." And the third comes from Virginia Woolf's *To the Lighthouse*:

> She asked him what his father's books were about. Subject and object and the nature of reality, Andrew had said. And when she had said Heavens, she had no notion of what that meant. "Think of a kitchen table, then," he told her, "when you're not there."

The first quote is the best description of philosophy. It is the discipline that aims to a general understanding of things; of ourselves, others, the world (broadly understood to include everything), our relationship to the world and others and the obligations (of all kinds) that such a relationship brings with it. This includes a vast number of questions on every topic imaginable, from mathematics and science to art and religion, and from politics to metaphysics, including how these relate to each other, how they "hang together" in Sellars' words: how religion relates to science, how mathematics relate to physics and metaphysics, how ethics relate to politics and so on. Sellars had in mind how the world as science describes it that is made of nuons and gluons and neurons, can fit together with the world as we experience it in our everyday lives that includes restaurants, moral values and soccer goals. It falls within the purview of the discipline of philosophy to get clear about how everything fits together in this large puzzle of immense variety and complexity.

This unique breadth of philosophy is captured in the very word "philosophy" – the love of wisdom – which does not specify any specific subject matter or method of enquiry. It talks of wisdom, as opposed to knowledge, contrasting it to giving answers to

(2) My title is inspired by Carrie Jenkins' *What Love Is and What It Could be*, which, as well as being an excellent book on its subject, is a model of how to apply philosophical thinking to an important

questions the way science does by providing us with a body of facts. So philosophy is broad because the questions it asks are not limited to a specific kind of thing, or a particular subject. Although like all disciplines it pursues truth, its aim is something more than that; it is a comprehensive understanding of things. And in order to achieve that it raises questions at a different level than other disciplines: it asks general questions about all subject matters. What these questions are may change; different philosophers, in different traditions and different eras will raise different questions, but the aim is to achieve knowledge about the truth concerning things and their connections, and clarity about how we think about these things. And this is what to my mind makes philosophy incredibly important because without clear thinking we cannot do much well and, more importantly, we cannot change much. But I will return to this latter.

The second quote refers to the sort of questions philosophers ask and how they go about answering them. Philosophy asks fundamental questions, the kind of questions that children raise, and that address our most basic understanding of the world and our relationship to it. These are the seemingly simplest questions that when you try to answer, confident that you know the answer and understand the question, you realise that you don't quite. Fundamental questions are the kinds of questions that cannot be settled by a scientific experiment or by other empirical means since they are not empirical questions, and they arise both in our intellectual pursuits and in our everyday life. For instance, all disciplines pursue knowledge, but it is philosophy that asks the fundamental philosophical questions about the nature of knowledge and its scope, "what is knowledge?" or "can we know anything?." Similarly, in philosophy we take up questions like "What is justice?," "What is a fact?," "Do numbers exist?," "Are ethical judgements objective?," "What kind of knowledge can science give us?," "Could this all be a dream?." Children usually grow out of asking such questions, but philosophers don't, and once you delve into these question that, under scrutiny, bring to the surface our deepest presuppositions and assumptions that pervade and often drive our thinking, a myriad more arise and philosophers spend their lives working on them.

This quote also gives us a sense of how philosophers go about answering such questions: by breaking down claims, analysing them rigorously, being extremely (usually painfully and often annoyingly) precise, unearthing hidden assumptions and by forming arguments based on reason and evidence. In this sense it resembles all good human enquiry, which requires critical thinking but is not exhausted by it, and intellectually honesty, i.e., assessing evidence very carefully and letting your judgements be formed by that evidence, even if that does not support your initial hypothesis. But there is a way in which this quote can also be misleading. Though it is true that the methods of lawyers resemble those of philosophers, there is a fundamental difference between the two. A lawyer tries to win a case by persuading her audience. A philosopher pursues understanding, even if that should lead her to revise her views. So though philosophy

question that matters to people.

is bound by reasoned argument and evidence, it is not about winning an argument, though it may sometimes seem that way. Of course, that is not to say that philosophy is exhausted by arguments, for if that were the case a lot of great philosophy would be excluded, but the way academic philosophy is done today, argumentation – which can be done in a variety of ways – is a big part of it.

Finally, the third quote from Virginia Woolf's *To The Lighthouse*, highlights not only the fundamental simplicity and generality of philosophical questions, but also brings forth a preoccupation that underlies, in one form or another, almost all philosophy: the distinction between appearance and reality. From the beginnings of philosophy to today, in all areas of philosophy, this distinction permeates philosophical thinking, sometimes explicitly as in epistemology or metaphysics, and at other times implicitly. From questions about what exists to what we can know, from the existence of free will to the nature of space and time, from questions about identity to questions about ethics, we try to distinguish between what seems to us to be the case and what actually is the case.

So these three quotes capture some features that, I think, are central to philosophy and make it the extraordinary discipline that it is: its unparalleled breadth, the fundamentality and generality of the questions it raises and tackles and its preoccupation with the distinction between what appears to be the case and what is the case. All three require, as William James put it in describing philosophy, "an unusually stubborn effort to think clearly."

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Maybe because of the generality, abstractness and fundamentality of p hilosophical questions philosophy is sometimes taken to be an impractical and useless discipline. But I have always thought of philosophy as a very practical discipline, not in the sense that it gives us toasters and airplanes, but in the sense that any activity one undertakes, including any kind of human enquiry, has philosophical baggage and this baggage makes a world of difference in practice. This is precisely why for every discipline in existence there is also a philosophy of that discipline.

For example (and this is just one example of many, I do not want to imply that philosophers are principally interested in science), people often tend to think that philosophical ideas are just, at best, ornaments or parasitic comments on the tangible and objective triumphs of science and that the things that philosophers preoccupy themselves with are unnecessary. Yet not every question can be answered scientifically and, more importantly, underlying science there are philosophical presuppositions. In this sense, there cannot be science without philosophy.

I am not referring to the fact that modern science came from a family of philosophical world systems that posed questions about what kinds of things exist, how the relate to each other and what organising principles govern them. My point is not that, in this sense, there would not have been science as we know it without philosophy. Nor do I mean that the work of science somehow depends on the work of academic philosophy. Though one can easily cite exceptions, in general I think most academic philosophy

has no relation to the practice of science and, for instance, physicists seem to do very well in physics though most of them are very bad philosophers. What I mean is that though academic philosophy is not necessary for science, there can be no science that does not include philosophical thinking in its practice. That is, there can be no science without delving into, and holding assumptions about, questions about methodology, the nature of theories and their confirmation and so on – and these questions come up in the practice of science, especially in times of crisis.

Though the vast majority of scientists work within a framework that they do not question – they do what Kuhn called "normal science" – the theory makers in the sciences in many ways go beyond the painfully functional and empirical work that we usually associate with science and contrast philosophy to and, instead, worry about things like unification, symmetry and elegance of theories. (This, mind you, is the case in all disciplines: where the crucial theoretical work is done the boundaries are blurred with philosophy.) But even in the work of scientists doing normal science, there are underlying philosophical assumptions at work: for instance, about what counts as an explanation, about how we should choose one theory over another, about the nature of evidence and about the scope and validity of scientific knowledge claims.

So at a certain level, the fundamental questions of science are philosophical. This does not mean that science and philosophy are the same, nor that the scientists and philosophers are equally good at addressing them. These are the kinds of questions and assumptions that philosophers are specially trained to identify and tackle and that philosophers, not scientists, would typically write papers about – and in this philosophy is clearly separated by science by the amount of work that has historically been put into tackling these questions in the field of philosophy. For though we like to think of science as a purely evidence-b ased process that is perfectly rational, science is a collective and social human endeavour, and, as such, within it there will be products of a long history of human thought, as well as elements of specific cultural and historical settings that deeply influence scientists' thinking. It is part of philosophy to identify and scrutinise such contingent elements in human thought, and these do not go away as science progresses, but are always there.

Similarly, in our everyday life and in the public sphere, philosophical q uestions are ubiquitous. Just think of the questions parents ask themselves about how to raise their children, or the questions a person asks when deciding what is best for her life. When we have a dispute about political correctness, freedom of speech, gay rights, abortion or animal rights, we raise questions about how the notion of harm should be understood, how we ought to treat each other, what is natural and what that means, what a person is, where life begins, whether a foetus or an animal is a person, or in virtue of what the moral community ought to be defined. These are philosophical questions, as are questions about our ability to know things, our freedom or about love.

The fundamentality of philosophical questions makes raising them i nevitable in our private and public life. Such philosophical questions need to be settled, or at least addressed and agree upon, in order to be able to make progress. And, at least partially,

it is this fundamentality which makes everyone feel that they can criticise philosophers in the way that, say, they wouldn't a scientist – because the questions we deal with are questions that concern everyone and that matter to people and on which almost everyone has an opinion.

But opinions are not enough. Knowledge, arguments and evidence are needed. In such disputes clarity is needed to make progress, as well as creativity in order to propose new ways of doing, or thinking about, things. Often, mistakes in reasoning are made, arguments put forward are unsound or fallacious and sometimes the concepts used are not clear. So philosophers, by working on these arguments, identifying mistakes – and here even logic, the most technical philosophy of all, is connected to practice – and formulating new alternatives, can contribute to progress in the social sphere. By offering insights and perspective to questions, by sharpening our thinking, by asking questions that others might not, by asking what certain things mean and what they imply, by exploring alternatives and offering new ways of doing things, philosophy can help make the word a better place. As teachers also, teaching students who will go on to work in different professions to think clearly and be able to express themselves effectively can have a huge practical impact.

Of course, it is true that academic philosophy is a lot more abstract than what I have been describing, but this is because professional philosophers spend years working on specific questions, breaking down questions and answers and following the thread of arguments wherever they go. And it is unavoidable that in a discipline with such a long history, questions will be broken down to details. So it is to be expected that some of the questions that philosophers work on will not have practical value. But that shouldn't worry us, as it shouldn't when mathematicians or physicists work on things that have no applications. Such knowledge, like knowledge from the arts, is valuable for its own sake. Nonetheless, some of the most abstract questions in philosophy often lead back to the reformulation of the original questions posed and, in this sense, even the most abstract philosophical thinking can inform our original questions.

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I do not mean to draw a hagiographic picture of philosophy. I am well aware that the expertise of philosophers in the matters discussed above is often questioned, as is the usefulness of philosophy as a discipline. This is a result of different factors. One is that people often forget that thinking and concepts don't just exist in a void, but have a history behind them – both a personal and a collective one – and that thus, a certain level of knowledge is needed to approach them. People also often forget, or are unaware of the fact, that such expertise requires rigorous, clear and honest thinking and this requires skill (for instance, in breaking down claims, identifying and evaluating assumptions, evaluating empirical evidence, drawing distinctions and finding connections), discipline, and years of very hard work to achieve. But beyond these factors, there is also the way academic philosophy is currently structured, in the Anglo Saxon world at least that I am familiar with.

Philosophers are under a lot of pressure to publish in specific peer-r eviewed journals and in a very narrow range of topics in order to advance their careers. This has led to a very obvious homogeneity in philosophy departments and to a very restricted canon, mostly centred on specific topics that are deemed important and specific ways of addressing them, while a vast number of questions are left in the margins undervalued. That is, current publication standards have bred tunnel vision and conservatism and have dangerously narrowed the scope of what we do, and I think this comes to the detriment not only of what philosophy can offer to the world, but also of philosophy itself.

Philosophy is the only discipline that does not pass on the asking of fundamental questions to others, and that does not defer to tradition or authority. The fundamentality and pervasiveness of philosophical enquiry means that for philosophers, as for children, no claim is beyond scrutiny and nothing is taken as a given beyond question. In this sense philosophy is by nature iconoclastic, rebellious and subversive – it is the Socratic gadfly that refuses to accept anything without critically examining it. And this makes it difficult for anyone, but especially annoying to people who want to hold on to certain beliefs that they take at face value and that they deem are obvious. Of course, such beliefs might turn out to be right after all, but they cannot be taken to be so without being critically examined, and this is something that philosophers take the time to do.

Yet, because of the way academia is structured today, most philosophers do not address many issues that may be important to them (and to others beyond the academic environment) because they are not the kind of thing that would help them advance their careers. In addition to this, and maybe partly because of this, they also to a large extent have lost the ability to explain their philosophical work in a manner accessible to people outside the profession. The point here is not that we should popularise, or "sell," our discipline to the world. Academic philosophy, like any other academic discipline, will be extremely specialised, technical, often dry and pedantic and beyond the reach of non-s pecialists. This is natural in any discipline at a certain level, but this specialisation has led many philosophers to lose track of the big picture and this is really unfortunate because it has led, as the wonderful Mary Midgley put it, to the loss of much of the poetry of philosophy and of our involvement with things that matter. For though approaching questions abstractly can be beneficial, confining ourselves to that conception in the long run can lead to the impoverishment of our field. I have often found myself thinking that philosophy today is like an old couple or a pair of siblings that argue about things that happened years ago, splitting hairs, losing themselves in details of their argument that has been going on for years, and completely losing track of the big picture and the reason they started to argue in the first place. And by losing track of that we seem to have lost our ability to step back to see the wider context and recognise the complexity of the world and our ability to do good in it.

Anita Allen has argued that philosophy, because of its narrowness and lack of inclusivity, does not have enough to offer women of colour and I think she is right. I also think that this applies in general: philosophy remains stuck in its ways sustaining rather than challenging the status quo and is becoming irrelevant in an ever-c hanging and increasingly multicultural world. I believe that in order to make philosophy matter again it needs to regain its breadth and in order to do that it needs to open up to different ways of thinking, diversify its content, and address public questions. This will make philosophy more relevant and accessible to a wider audience, it will attract more people into the profession and, of course, more inclusive work can better address the complexity of the world and thus increase our chance of making progress by improving our understanding of things.

Investigating beyond our intellectual culture and the established canon, and working with colleagues from other disciplines, can help us uncover and check our own fundamental assumptions. The danger with established canons is that they can become solidified and rigid and immune to revision. And by not including certain questions and by excluding certain traditions, we are implicit giving the message that these are not important and nothing of value can be found in them. But philosophy is the discipline that provides one with the fantastic ability to think for oneself and which cultivates the imagination to entertain perspectives different from one's own. So posing such limits is counterproductive in the quest for understanding and truth and to the universal significance that philosophy lays claim to. If philosophy is to remain the unrestricted pursuit of wisdom sustaining the Socratic aim of figuring out how we ought to live, we need to engage more with the world and systematically engage with other points of view, curricula need to be expanded and philosophers need to be given the flexibility to address problems that people are confronted with in their lived experience and to write about things they care about – something that is becoming exceedingly difficult for non- established philosophers (and non- tenured philosophers in the US) under the current publication paradigm.

There are many incredibly important social and political issues that are c urrently debated that we can contribute to and it is astounding how little philosophical work – academic and public – has been done on matters of crucial importance in today's world that are ripe with philosophical questions, like immigration, disability, race, gay marriage, gender issues, religious tolerance, to name a few. Such topics are usually taken up either as side projects or at the margins of our field. Typically, it is acceptable for philosophers to take up questions they are personally invested in only if they have first an established record in "hard core" work. And it is often the case that when such questions are taken up it is usually in the field of ethics. But potentially relevant questions can be addressed through other areas of philosophy, like philosophy of mind, or metaphysics – for instance, questions about the metaphysics of identity and of the construction the "other".

We live in a time when there is a wide interest among the general educated readership in philosophy as well as a significant interest in philosophers. We also live in a

time when the level of public discourse is remarkably low. So it is an ideal time for philosophy to reinvent itself; to become more open and inclusive and rethink what we take to be its core, for philosophers to engage the public by writing on philosophical themes, or on philosophers, clearly in a manner understandable to people not acquainted with philosophical jargon. I think this is not only necessary in order to promote our discipline, I think it is also our responsibility. For though philosophers, at least since Aristophanes' *Clouds*, have been ridiculed as having their heads in the clouds, the truth is that the marks of philosophical work on many things that we take for granted today are all around us and a lot of our thinking has been formed by philosophical ideas that have contributed to most, if not all, disciplines. And there are different ways to live, but as philosophers we ask how we ought to live and we can use our skills to contribute to knowledge and understanding and to make this a better world. I think we have the responsibility to do so. This might not always translate in quantifiable impact in the sense that academic impact is assessed, but it can be deeply important impact nonetheless.

PART II: Doing and Valuing Philosophy

11. What is the Philosophy of Cinema? An Alternative Reading

Melenia Arouh

It was 28 December 1895 at the basement of the Grand Café in Paris when A uguste and Louis Lumière presented to an audience of about 100 people footage they had recorded with their new camera, the cinematograph. Their short films were slices of recorded reality showing among other things, workers exiting a factory, Auguste's family having breakfast and a train arriving at La Ciotat station. When the lights came back to the room the stunned audience applauded. The reception of these early films was enthusiastic; like nothing they had seen before these images *moved* granting the audience a new access to reality. The history of perception was thus irrevocably changed. These first films, these "actualities" as they are sometimes referred to, were not easy to classify. Their nature had to be defined, the experience understood, their impact determined. It is unsurprising then, that theorists from a variety of disciplines such as psychology, sociology and art criticism became interested in the topic offering their informed insights.

But what made cinema interesting to philosophers? Philosophers of course are interested in all manner of things, from the nature of the universe to social structures and from the possibility of knowledge to existence itself, so it was unavoidable that their attention would eventually fall on this technological marvel. Since cinema's birth then, philosophers have contributed to the theoretical development of its study. Philosophical investigations are very much interested in the explication of things, adding rigor to the discipline and examining the different kinds of arguments put forth. Argumentation becomes central in the attempt to understand both the medium and its reception, but also the theories framing the practice. Much philosophical attention is given to examining the theories already in place: evaluating the different arguments and positions and refining the theoretical framework of the study of cinema. To this end, philosophical discourse deals with what is generally termed Film Theory – that is, an amalgam of writings from sociology, cultural studies, gender studies and psychology. Philosophers frequently emphasize the disambiguation of terms, connect topics of discussion with the relevant philosophical tradition highlighting ideas that have informed such debates, and explore the limits of our thinking about cinema. But it's not just that; philosophers are also interested in defining cinema, understanding spectatorship and of course interpreting film texts. In many ways, philosophers tackle cinema, its study and place in our culture, from all conceivable angles. Philosophical thinking

on cinema is valuable not simply because it proposes an alternative way of thinking about cinema, sometimes different sometimes enhancing of more traditional academic film study, but because of the way in which philosophical enquiry reasons through the different common assumptions and ideas about the nature and impact of this mass medium. Philosophical enquiry matters because it strengthens and fosters our thinking, asking questions that are difficult to answer and proposing views that often resist beliefs that are held without proper inspection or scrutiny. It should be noted, however, that different philosophers have different ways of doing philosophy and may not even agree on what philosophy is or who is a proper philosopher. This is certainly not a single, let alone coherent, field of expertise with a fixed scientific method. Due to this plethoric nature, philosophical thinking about cinema follows similar patterns: it is diverse in manner and method, approach, context and even style of writing. However, it is still very much part of the philosophical conversation about objects in our world that has endured over the centuries.

This essay aims to introduce the philosophy of cinema and highlight key issues through the work of women philosophers. Given the scope of this anthology I wish to prioritize the philosophical writings of women without arguing that the work included here is superior than this written by men philosophers but that it can be equally compelling and comprehensive. It is part of an effort to give priority to women philosophers and introduce this kind of study through a very particular filter. The aim is not just to be historically accurate but to be inclusive and exclusive in a different kind of way. Therefore, this introduction is certainly selective and idiosyncratic – in that these are not the usual philosophers referenced in an introduction to the philosophy of cinema. Although this is a discipline that is supportive of women philosophers, a typical introduction would focus on the work of André Bazin, Stanley Cavell, Alain Badiou, Gilles Deleuze, Noël Carroll, Murray Smith and Stephen Mulhall as it is their writings that have shaped much of the discourse as it exists today. As such, the account presented here is not a conventional introduction to the subject; yet it allows for an alternative reading of the discipline where women's voices dominate such discussion. So this should be seen as a type of affirmative action were the priority given does not necessarily mirror the more conventional processes of selection and decision-m aking present in the writing of an introduction to the topic.

An Art Form Is Born

The origins of any philosophical discussion about cinema can be traced back to the beginnings of film theory *circa* 1915. In particular, early film commentators devoted a significant portion of their attention to questions such as: is there a cinematic language? Is cinema a new art form? Is cinema essentially representational? All these questions can be thought of as philosophical in kind as they attempt to delineate the nature or essence of cinema, classify it as an object in our world and determine the practices

surrounding it. One of the most pressing early philosophical issues was whether cinema is in fact an art form on a par with other arts. This proved a necessary enquiry because in the first years after the invention of the moving image cinema was not perceived as art but simply as a technological gadget, or even a fad that would eventually run out of steam. The idea that a film could be considered a work of art was unimaginable. Specifically, the general opinion was that films were not objects of beauty or worthy of aesthetic contemplation as they simply reproduced the world in grainy, silent, headache-i nducing, black and white moving images. There was no artistry involved in the making of a film, it was argued. All that cinematographer needs to do is to press a button and reality is recorded. Cinematic technology was simply a gadget that allowed us to record the world around us. As the years went by, however, and the camera started to move and editing techniques developed it became obvious that cinema was more than a gadget and that it had in fact an affinity with other art forms. Cinema was beginning to look like art, to resemble other arts in both form and style. As a consequence, early film theory had to demonstrate through argument that cinema was an art, and that some films were therefore works of art.

Theorists such as André Bazin, Hugo Münsterberg and Rudolf Arnheim e ngaged with the topic of cinema as art, very much like philosophers of art engage with questions concerning the nature of art, aesthetic experience, artistic expression, beauty, criticism and appreciation. For instance, Susanne Langer discussed cinema as a new art, a new "poetic mode" and declared it to be distinct from drama and closer to the literary tradition. She argued that cinema becomes art when the moving camera is introduced divorcing it from the stage and swallowing many other arts as it goes. For Langer cinema creates a virtual present, a kind of "dream mode" where there is presence and immediacy of action. The camera is in the place of the dreamer but of course is not a dreamer, not an agent. It delivers us a dream, an endless "now". Langer's discussion touches upon several issues highly relevant in philosophical explorations as this is an effort not only to understand and define the mode of being of cinema, its nature, but also to demarcate it from other arts so as to explain its uniqueness. The specificity of the medium became a central topic of philosophical debate as cinema had to establish itself as distinct; not simply a copy or collage of other arts. There had to be something, some mode of expression, some ability, some presence, that no other art could manage. For if it were just a copy of the world or a collage of other arts then it should not be considered as a genuine, proper art.

It is important to note here that this line of thinking has never been detached from the actual practice of filmmaking as many filmmakers themselves engage with such ideas. For instance, François Truffaut denounced the literary tradition of French cinema; Alfred Hitchcock supported what he termed "pure cinema", a type of expression that would depend more on imagery than words; the Dogma 95 filmmakers (like Lars Von Trier and Thomas Vinterberg) dictated rules that would bind their films to reality, for them the essence of cinema. Questions about the status of cinema as an art and its

distinct nature are very much part of an effort that runs in parallel to practical and artistic concerns.

Work on the aesthetics of cinema developed and thrived in the work of V. F. Perkins, Alexander Sesonske and more recently Andrew Klevan. Flo Leibowitz, for example, discusses more traditional expressive theories in relation to film. She notices that expressive theories that wish to attribute the emotion expressed to the artist do not manage to explain well the filmmaking process whereby a lot of artists and craftsmen have to work together. As anyone who has sat through the credits at the end of a film can tell you it takes a village to make a film and focussing on a single artist's expression does not seem to make sense. Leibowitz argues that a camera movement, a technique like slow motion, or the colours used, may express an emotion but this is not necessarily the cinematographers but rather it is there to serve some other purpose. In *Schindler's List* (Steven Spielberg, 1993) the movie is filmed in black and white not because of some nostalgia for the 1940s but rather to communicate the feeling as if one is looking at old photographs; the quality of the family album. As such, Leibowitz argues, it is expressive of feelings you get when you look at photos of relatives you have never met, but only heard stories of.

Exploring the artistic possibilities of cinema as an art form and noticing the different ways in which the medium exists is one of the most important philosophical contributions to this study. Definitional concerns that attempt to articulate the nature of cinema and understand the techniques and practices lead to contributions that provide us with insight into cinematic nature. This effort is valuable not just for philosophers but also for film theorists and film practitioners. In figuring out what this medium is one gains the most precious commodity of all: knowledge. It should be noted, however, that this understanding is never settled; philosophers argue back and forth on all the details of an account. As such, there is little consensus, still, over what cinema is, what it does do, what it does do best, how it differs from other media and so on and so forth.

Philosophy of Cinema

By the late 1970s cinema had taken over the world as the number one form of entertainment and arguably the most accessible type of art. Given how common the experience of watching a film was many philosophers started teaching university classes on the topic, engaging with the various dimensions of the film experience, and even adding films to their existing curricula. And it was not only philosophers of art that took a keen interest; indeed, philosophers of mind and language, ethics and metaphysics became interested in the study. The kinds of questions they were asking permeated the whole cinematic experience from production to reception creating a vast area of enquiry referred to as the philosophy of cinema.

Philosophers in the last decades, such as Gregory Currie, Paisley Livingston, Carl Plantinga and Murray Smith, revisit arguments and positions from both philosophy and film theory to check their validity and offer new accounts regarding the cinematic experience. Katherine Thomson-J ones, for example, explores the nature of film viewership and questions the usual framing of this type of spectatorship as being effortless and passive. Specifically she summarizes, relying on the work of David Bordwell, the three principle activities that occur when watching a film: comprehension, interpretation and evaluation. Comprehension refers to the understanding of what we are watching and to what extent this depends solely on what is on screen or on knowledge that we bring with us to the film. For instance, when we see a character waking up, yawning, turning off his alarm clock and then cut to him getting coffee at the local shop we do not assume he was magically transported there clean shaven and fully dressed. We understand the omission of time for what it is within the context of film viewership. Interpretation, which dominates over analysis and evaluation in film scholarship, will often rely on theoretical schemata to explain the film. Psychoanalytic concepts will lead one, for example, to interpret camera movement as being voyeuristic or penetrative thus establishing the male gaze. Thomson-J ones acknowledges that usually viewers skip this part and go straight to evaluation: "I watched the new Greta Gerwig film last night" "Any good?" "I loved it don't you dare miss it." All three activities merit philosophical attention as together they constitute the different layers of our experience. And this is very much part of the effort of the philosophy of cinema; to understand cinema and gain insight into this complex, fascinating and so common of experiences.

Borrowing from a long tradition of philosophical writings on narrative arts, philosophers look at the kinds of stories films told, often continuing discussions that began with Plato and Aristotle and seem to find a new home here. For instance, Aristotle in his *Poetics* defines the nature of tragedy and argues that it must arouse and purge (catharsis) the emotions of pity and fear; a distinct kind of pleasure arising from the experience of painful content. Later on, this became known as the paradox of tragedy: how is it possible for an audience to experience both pain and pleasure at the same time? In philosophical writings about films this question is often transfigured to explore the horror genre. How is it, as Noël Carrol asks, that some of us enjoy horror films? Gleefully pay the ticket price, eat our popcorn, and cheer at the decapitation of monsters and protagonists alike.

Several philosophers of film have engaged with the topic, often stretching the discussion to explore the way horror films engage with our emotions (in terms of empathy or sympathy) and pose moral dilemmas. Cynthia Freeland, for instance, looks at realist horror films, a subgenre of horror that begun flourishing in the 1960s and took its cue from the public's fascination with serial killers who often achieved celebrity status. In such films, such as *Henry: Portrait of a Serial Killer* (John McNaughton, 1986), the monsters are based on real characters and the action is often random, reductive and repetitive thus not allowing us an aesthetic distance so as to contemplate these as

representations of reality with a firm plot. For Freeland such movies push the audience to become aware of their own fascination with these horrifying spectacles.

In certain ways horror films can be seen as morally problematic as we are often moved to sympathize with the monster as in *Silence of the Lambs* (Jonathan Demme, 1991) where we are asked to see Hannibal Lecter (Anthony Hopkins) in a favourable light. Consider for example the scene in which he is introduced: Clarice (Jodie Foster), our protagonist, is greeted at the prison by an unlikable director who patronizes her. She then walks down a badly lit corridor passing several inmates who hiss things at her to finally arrive at Lecter's cell. The cell, although grey, is well-l it and one can see his drawings of European landscapes. He is well- mannered, polite, articulate, educated, highly intelligent and utterly terrifying. Of all the men Clarice has met so far, he is certainly the one to gain our sympathy independently of his taste for chianti, fava beans and human liver. In this instance we are very much enjoying the company of a monster whose character is inspired by a real- life cannibal. Philosophical attention to these instances is important as it aims to understand both the nature of the narrative but also our responses to this narrative. This kind of attention can go both ways: either looking at the object and its unique capacity to influence or even manipulate our emotions, or looking at the subject and trying to understand the different types of emotional responses that we are capable of as an audience and to what extent these are rational, moral or not.

The morality that underlines our emotional engagement with films is a topic that has troubled philosophers. For instance, Mary Devereaux writes about the problematic of watching Leni Riefenstahl's *Triumph of the Will* (1935) as a contemporary audience. Riefenstahl's film purports to document the 1934 Nuremberg rally of the National Socialist German Worker's Party. The documentary, although its status as a documentary is contested, was conceived and executed with the blessing of Adolf Hitler and the assistance of the Third Reich. Its purpose was to show a powerful Germany uniting under Hitler's leadership and these ideas permeate the whole film providing its grand narrative and visual identity. The film is considered a masterpiece in documentary history because of the innovative way in which it was filmed through mobile cinematography, but also its style of rhythmic editing and composition. It was enthusiastically received in Germany but also won awards at the Venice and Paris film festivals. As Deveraux explains, to watch this film is to be moved by the Third Reich; to follow the rhythm and symbolism of the composition is to allow your senses to be overtaken by the supposed glory and power of the movement. And although you may have been forgiven for surrendering to its wiles at the time, watching it as a contemporary audience renders the whole experience toxic. It is not a matter of acquiring some aesthetic distance from the work that will allow you to savour the techniques and artistic nuances. The intention behind the creation of this documentary is very much ingrained in its form. For the aesthetic experience to work in this case you have to give in to its seductive power. Is the solution then to ban this film for mythologizing the Third Reich and putting its audience in danger? To dispute its value in

the development of filmmaking practices? These are important moral questions that philosophers do not shy away from.

Ethical discussion about films often extends to the very technologies available to filmmakers. Jane Stadler, for example, explores "digital doubles" and how technological advancement of this kind poses difficult philosophical questions. Stadler looks closely at the ways in which the filmmakers of *Blade Runner 2049* (Denis Villeneuve, 2017) recreated Sean Young's younger self through performance capture technologies, so that she can appear exactly as she was in the original *Blade Runner* released in 1982 (Ridley Scott). Such digital interventions can duplicate human beings, alive or dead, with their consent or not, allowing for new artistic and narrative possibilities. They can change the age of the actor, the colour of their skin, their body size or shape tailoring the appearance and voice to match their filmmaking needs. And although Sean Young actively participated in this enterprise, Peter Cushing who died in 1994 was digitally brought back to life as Grand Moff Tarkin in *Rogue One: A Star Wars Story* (Gareth Edwards, 2016). For Stadler the ethical dimensions of this digital existence (and afterlife) demand attention as they touch upon issues of social identity and agency. This discussion might even have legal dimensions as deepfake videos can reproduce likeness of any person spreading misinformation and opening up a can of ethical conundrums; for instance, when real women's faces are digitized onto pornographic films as has happened with Gal Gadot and Emma Watson. The ethical questions posed by Stadler extend beyond the limits of the narrative fiction to reflect upon the technologies themselves and their impact on culture and society.

Cinematic Philosophy

Currently the most flourishing part of the philosophy of cinema is a group of writings referred to as "philosophy and film" (or philosophy in film or film- philosophy or filmoshophy). Here philosophers, such as Stanley Cavell, Daniel Frampton, Thomas Wartenberg and Robert Sinnerbrink, discuss philosophical themes or questions that arise from films, make philosophical interpretations of films and most importantly determine how particular films engage in philosophical argumentation themselves. This attention has been further aided by new technologies such as DVDs and streaming. All these developments provide unprecedented access to films and the ability to watch, re-w atch, pause, slow down and examine in minute detail how a film communicates.

Philosophical interpretation of films is a continuation of a long tradition of applying philosophical thought to narrative forms. Interpretations of works of literature have often benefited from engagement with such thinking, as characters and plots become stand-i ns for greater themes of human thought and enterprise through these readings. It is unsurprising then, that this type of interpretation and analysis should find a suitable home in cinema as well. Looking for example at how life, love and death are embodied in popular stories from *Casablanca* (Michael Curtiz, 1942) to *Love Story*

(Arthur Hiller, 1970) and all the way to *Twilight* (Catherine Hardwicke, 2008) can provide insight into the human condition. Jennifer L. McMahon, for instance, offers an existential reading of *Frankenstein* (James Whale, 1931). She interprets the plot as illustrative of Martin Heidegger's ideas about death and how our awareness and subsequent anxiety over our mortality leads us to deny death and live an inauthentic life. In her analysis she looks at details of the plot and visual composition, as for example how the movie opens during a burial at a barren landscape allowing us to note the grief of those attending and the sounds of a tolling bell. All symbols of our mortality and fear of death. However, McMahon pushes the argument further examining how Mary Shelley's Frankenstein is not simply an archetype of this fear of death. The character is symbolic of the idea that our desire to master death compromises our human sensibility. Frankenstein in the film is shown as a changed man, becoming strange, maniacal and paranoid in the course of his research, referring to corpses not as dead but simply as resting and subsequently losing not only his sanity but also his humanity. McMahon argues that this reinforces Heidegger's idea that our awareness and fear of death marks us as unique. By conquering death, the scientist has lost his humanity thus becoming the monster. Such attention to the story offers insight that allows the viewer not only to consider the meanings of the story but also to engage with various philosophical arguments.

Perhaps the genre that was benefited most from such close inspection is that of science fiction. Science fiction films are often invitations to contemplate humanity, the nature of the cosmos, the role of technology in society and allow us to consider dystopias that are informed by our anxieties today. In the same way that myths of gods and heroes have been used to make sense of the world around us, science fiction invites us to consider closely how we live and our place in the universe. In many cases as well, these films allow for philosophical thought to play out in narrative form. For instance, *Matrix* (Lana and Lilly Wachowski, 1999) allows us to consider the duality of mind and body; *2001: A Space Odyssey* (Stanley Kubrick, 1968) pushes us to think about the ways in which machines think or acquire consciousness. *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind* (Michel Gondry, 2004) and *Dark City* (Alex Proyas, 1998) let us wonder about the nature of memory in the shaping of personal identity.

Apart from philosophical interpretations of films several philosophers wish to argue something further, namely, that films are not simply texts that can be interpreted through already existing philosophical ideas. Instead, films are capable of producing philosophical content, they are capable of arguing and contributing thus to philosophical discourse. Maybe this idea rings true if one considers conceptually challenging productions that wish to engage the audience in new ways; or the films of Terrence Mallick who studied philosophy and thus has the necessary training to engage with such ideas. Philosophers, however, are not necessarily interested in the specific films that engage with various arguments but in understanding the particular way this medium is able to express philosophical thought in ways that are similar, or even superior, to the written text. Karen Hansen, for instance, considers what is meant by the assertion

that film is a language and as a medium capable of communicating thought and not just feelings and whether a Descartes of today would write his *Discourse* on video (probably uploading it in weekly segments on TikTok). Are philosophical projects incompatible with movies? She contends that there are important differences between film and philosophy and to reduce the one to the other would be inappropriate. However, a movie can still engage with a philosophical subject, such as self-d eception or friendship, fully and persuasively. We have the opportunity to see the subjects without intruding, we are "empowered in judgment" and allowed to interpret what we see. This line of thinking opens up a lot of questions concerning both the potential and capacity of cinema, and the nature of philosophy itself. Is philosophy a type of enterprise strictly limited to language and standard modes of expression? Is thought expressed only in language? Or is it possible for a versatile visual medium such as film to articulate original philosophical thought? Questions in this area of enquiry attempt to explain not only the particulars of the cinematic medium but also the nature of philosophical thought and argument.

Jinhee Choi explores the topic further by looking at how *avant garde* filmmaking pushes away from conventions and norms and contributes philosophically by suggesting new hypotheses regarding the medium itself. To this end she looks closely at Kurt Kren's film *TV 15/67* (1967) a 4-minute film that is basically a repetition of five different shots that follow a mathematical structure. The relationship between the representations and the structural system invite the viewer to predict the logic underneath but also defy his or her ability to grasp it. She explains how the film offers experiential knowledge to the viewer as we come to understand a theoretical issue through our experience of the film. The experience alone, of course, is not knowledge but it becomes so in the combination with the knowledge already present through inference and reasoning, something that is philosophically important.

From 1895 until today philosophers have contributed to the study of the cinematic medium through different types of arguments and theorizations. Their work stands out both because it offers pertinent explanations but also because its emphasis on argument and justification solidifies a theoretical framework of study. The study of cinema today has been shaped by philosophical thinking and philosophical articulations have contributed to a better understanding of what a film is and how it exists in our culture. The philosophy of cinema is nothing more and nothing less than the study of cinema and everything relevant to its production and reception.

12. Becoming a Humbler Philosopher: My Life in Philosophy as a Woman

Eva Feder Kittay

My entrance into philosophy was at once accidental and inevitable. Chance led me to my first philosophy course in college. I wanted to enroll in a biology course, but the class was closed out, filled by aspiring medical school applicants more committed to that path than I had been. My advisor suggested that I trial the very first course offering of a new faculty member, a Hungarian Sorbonne- trained woman about whom people were very excited. The course was entitled Philosophy and Literature.

The professor was an utterly brilliant, intense young woman. Her penetrating blue eyes had an irresistible twinkle in them— that is, when they weren't gazing piercingly into eternity, intent on retrieving the perfect illumination of the work we were discussing. The works we read were at once eye-o pening— and so familiar. I was the child of two Holocaust survivors, born immediately after the war. The unimaginable horror and loss my parents endured suffused the air I breathed. Growing up in this thick atmosphere of trauma and sorrow had made me into a thinking, pondering young woman. Thus, I was primed for philosophy. When I sat in class or read the works we were studying, I felt like a fish who first felt water on its skin and knew immediately that this was the home it had been seeking. Until that first class, I had no clue that there was a profession, a disciple, in which the ramblings of my mind (and sometimes my pen) could take shape. I was entirely new to philosophy, yet had been doing, reading, thinking and feeling philosophy all of my life. The headiest moment came at the end of the year, when the goddess who led me to philosophy suggested that this was the area of study I should pursue.

And so, I did— although, I did not go to graduate school immediately. Though I took some philosophy courses after college; I also engaged in political activism; and when I became pregnant, I returned to thoughts of science and medical school. Shortly after the birth of my first child, I was swept up in a tsunami that washed me back onto the shores of philosophy. We learned that our beautiful sweet baby whom we fell in love the moment she appeared had extensive cognitive and motor impairments. She was not to live the life we had imagined for our future feminist offspring. Attempting to cope with the pain and anguish of the evolving diagnosis, having nothing to hang my

imagination of a future on, it seemed that the only way forward was to drop freshman biology and medical school plans, and opt for the bracing hard work of p hilosophy— a place, to borrow from Adrienne Rich, in which I was no one's mother. My mind had a place to go, one far away from the helplessness of what I could only see as an unfolding disaster. When I consider that dark time, I am grateful to philosophy, but still more grateful for the beautiful woman my sweet baby grew to be, and for the joy and richness she has added to my life.

At that time, however, being in love with philosophy and in love with my daughter, I faced a perplexity. The love for philosophy was enmeshed in a love of the mind and of reason. My favorite philosopher out of college was Baruch Spinoza— still my favorite these many years later— the preeminent rationalist. Yet I faced the likelihood that my daughter could never partake in life of the mind— she was unlikely to speak much or learn much. Her reason was not her value—b ut then she taught me that reason is not the deity I took it to be. Her world contains so much more than our philosophies have dreamt of.

In graduate school I hoped to study ethics and political philosophy. It was, after all, a preoccupation with evil in the world that was the chrysalis for my philosophical self. But contemporary work in the area was less interested in normative questions than metaethical ones. (For example, it was then the style to ask *how we used the word* "good" rather than *what the good was.*)

I therefore shifted my core interests in philosophy and began my philosophical career by taking on issues in the philosophy of language. In college anthropology classes I became fascinated by the role of symbolism and metaphors in the magic spells and rituals of what we then called "primitive societies." There was certainly nothing primitive about the astonishing use of these aspects of language. How might we understand why a sign or a symbol could carry as much meaning as it does— more meaning than a proposition? (Think the American flag, the Christian cross, and the Nazi swastika). Learning how symbolism was woven into rituals that organized life in these societies might help reveal how symbols create worlds that shape thoughts and feelings, spur us on to political movement and heroics, but also to horrors. The philosophy of language had a place for such questions in the study of metaphor. My doctoral dissertation on that topic and the dissertation eventually morphed into my first book, *Metaphor: Its Linguistic Structure and Cognitive Force,* which was accepted in Oxford's premier Clarendon Press Series. It's publication secured my promotion to Associate Professor

Having been taught philosophy by a woman, I had not thought at first about the discipline as an exclusive male enclave—e xcept, of course, that the canon was virtually exclusively male. Yet there was a vivid moment in a class on a dialog of Plato, when our professor (many years before the feminist movement was in full swing) pointed out how, as women students of the text, we were meant to identify with the male derogatory views of the "feminine" or the "womanly". That moment of irony and dissonance never left my reading of the canonical texts. Thus, when women philosophers began—v ery slowly—t o examine philosophical aspects of women's lives (abortion or workplace

discrimination, for example) or the misogyny in the works of Great Thinkers, I was ready to engage.

And so, while the study of the philosophy of language was my main interest in my early professional life, I puttered on the margins of feminist thought with essays on the harm of pornography, womb envy, and the metaphorical use of woman to represent the supposedly rightful superiority and sovereignty of men.

Then came the publication of Carol Gilligan's *In a Different Voice*.

Whatever the empirical data yields in confirming or refuting the thesis that there are gendered moral voices, I recognized in Gilligan's writings the two distinct and sometimes conflicting moral voices of my mother and my father. My mother was a woman of steel. She endured the loss of home, family, dreams, and experienced first-h and the horrors of Auschwitz, and other labor and death camps. But she retained her caring self through it all. She survived those terrible years and found recovery from irretrievable loss by working together with other women in the camps. These women risked their small morels of bread and sips of soup, indeed their very lives, for one another. And it was by risking their lives that they regained their lives and came out whole. I probably have a book's worth of stories that she recounted to me.

My father, a scholar and young businessman in Poland who lost all his family but one brother, was more quiet about his experiences. He never spoke about his cooperation with others—o nly about the loneliness and hardship of being on one's own. The depth of his pain and bitterness was evident whenever he spoke of those years. My father shared my liberal politics (my mother less so) and had a deep sense of injustices suffered. He also had a sense of humanity that did not leave him— but it was one expressed in Gilligan's voice of justice rather than in the distinctively caring voice of my mother.

In college, I had loved Kant and had little use for sentimentalist moral t heories. Living an ethical life is hard. If all we needed for morality was the goodness evident in fine daily interactions, ordinary folks would not so easily come to accept, much less tolerate brutal totalitarianisms—w ould not betray and slay their neighbors. My father was an implicit Kantian— at one with the Judaic influence in Kant's work. But reading Gilligan brought me to see the deeply moral character of my mother, and the important and neglected moral work of care.

With Gilligan and feminist philosophy, some of the preoccupations that brought me to philosophy in the first place found expression. But rather than focus on the source of evil, I found myself interested in the good generated in caring relationships. Ironically, I wound up closer to the sentimentalists I had distained earlier.

Doubtless this shift was due in part to life with my daughter, for whom constant care was her lifeline. In caring for my daughter and employing committed and talented care-givers, I became increasing captivated by the complexity and meaningfulness of care. True care was as demanding a moral stance as Kantianism. Yet the interlocutors were not all the rational, independent equals of modern enlightenment and liberal thought. Care gave life and love and purpose to interactions between unequals who might not

be capable of reciprocity in kind. Increasingly, my interests turned to understanding a concept, care. Care, as an ethical concept, is arguably a rare new object under the sun for a discipline that the philosopher Whitehead declared was all a footnote to Plato.

The same teacher who first introduced me to philosophy called me back to my Alma Mater many years later to deliver an inaugural address on "Elusive Equality." This was also a time when the US Congress and eventually President Clinton was attempting to end "welfare dependency" by depriving families with dependent children living in poverty a guaranteed income. Although "welfare" as we knew it in the US was demeaning and meager, at least, it would not leave poor women and their children homeless and hungry. I used a sabbatical to get into the thick of the fight against the "welfare reform" legislation. Surprised that more feminists had not taken up the issue, I joined with other feminist academics and activists to frame this as a feminist issue. We had moderate success reframing the issue, none in preventing the legislation from passing. While better situated women who formerly used state welfare have managed with the new regime, the consequences of the new policies on the most desperate women, many traumatized by abuse, or either disabled or caring for a disabled child, have been devastating.

Thoughts about a moral theory of care, the dependency of my disabled daughter on care, the vilification of poor solo mothers as "dependent" when they were dependent on government assistance precisely because they took care of dependents, led to a realization that all women who care for dependents (and even men who do carework) are dependent on some provider. I had my main thesis: equality remained elusive for women—e ven as legal barriers dropped and women were entering the job market—b ecause, at least in part, women remain the primary carers for dependents. As caregivers (or dependency workers, a term I coined) they enter into economic competition with at least one hand tied behind their back. This remains true, and while the urgency of child-c are and paid family leave are being increasingly recognized, especially in light of the COVID19 pandemic, important policy proposals still have trouble holding the public spotlight. Even though women are increasingly breadwinners, the view that care is a *private* matter—n ot the stuff of public policy—r emains engrained along the political spectrum. Care remains a side issue.

All these musings were far too much for a paper and lead to *Love's Labor: Dependency, Women and Equality.* In the last two chapters of the book, came my big reveal: the philosophical meticulously argued critique of John Rawls' theory of justice (the theory propounded by the preeminent political philosopher of our time) was inspired by my experience of mothering a very significantly disabled child, my daughter Sesha. Her life together with the caring labor that made *my* philosophical career possible, enabled me to bring together my love for philosophy and my love for my child.

The audacious move to include two autobiographically based chapters in *Love's Labor* had its precedent in work by other feminist scholars. As those chapters were the ballast for the theoretical and politically oriented work in the preceding chapters,

I felt that without the narrative, my arguments remained untethered and their weight would be missed.

Still, I left the personal for last. I felt the need to establish my philosophical "creds" before my readers could appreciate the relationship between the philosophical, the personal, and the political.

In *Love's Labor*, the women who did the dependency work are featured, but the importance of the dependency relation, and the center of dependency concerns, the dependent, are also highlighted. The work after *Love's Labor* has featured the experiences with my daughter more prominently.

My work glided into disability studies— I was not a disabled person who could say, "nothing about us, without us," and not steeped in disability history or scholarship. My political activism had not directed to the disabled— no doubt, I viewed Sesha differently from the muscled wheelchair veterans raising righteous hell in Berkeley. But as I began to write philosophically about Sesha, the world of disability studies beckoned. There were echoes of what happened many years ago with feminism and philosophy in the concerns of disability and philosophy. And today we have the field "philosophy of disability."

Before speaking of last stage in my philosophical wanderings, I would like to step back, to reflect on my years as a philosophy teacher, rather than researcher. When first deciding to pursue philosophy, I thought that a life steeped in the great philosophical literature of the past, teaching and discussing it with students would be a life of bliss. Aiming to be an original philosopher would be far too grand. Only when writing papers for graduate school, and completing the dissertation, did I discover that not exegesis, but exploring new questions were what excited me Navigating the classroom in a large university was challenging since all I had known was the intimate setting of the small progressive college. In time, I think, I developed into a passably good undergraduate classroom teacher, largely because every semester I fell in love with the students. Each had something unique to offer, and my job was to offer something significant. In addition, I had the great privilege of teaching some spectacular graduate students. While working with very talented men graduate students, the continuing minority status of women in the profession of philosophy, the need for a female mentor for female graduate students meant that the majority of my mentees have been women. Virtually all of them have stayed in the profession, got good tenure track positions, publish constantly, and train their own graduate students, thereby leaving the mistaken impression that I have had scores of students.

A great reward of a lifetime of teaching has been to maintain contact with most of my former advisees, watch them move gracefully through the stages of professional development, grow their own families, and cultivate their advisees. I now have very many "philosophy grandchildren." Perhaps male philosophers enjoy this sort of continued friendship, but as a woman in the profession, I may have been able to give my students additional things to hang on to in this male- dominated scene, just as my undergraduate female philosophy professor did for me: that one can hold one's own,

that despite the obstacles, the inevitable insecurities, challenges of sexual harassment, and disparagement, one can do good work, be recognized, and make a contribution. It is striking that virtually all my former female (and male) graduate students have families, whether they are gay or straight and whether they are in primarily teaching or research institutions. This is not an insignificant consideration since historically, professional women philosophers had largely forgone family life with children.

A serious regret has been the paucity of students of color, and the continuing whiteness of the field. My efforts to alter that situation have focused on heading up a committee of like-m inded faculty that created a summer program for undergraduate students from underrepresented groups in philosophy. While we started Philosophy in an Inclusive Key Summer Institute (PIKSI) with all- white, mostly mid- career and middle- aged women philosophy professors, the program is now run by women philosophers of many colors and minority statuses. We convinced the American Philosophical Association and a university to fund us for several years until the Mellon Foundation took over the major costs and helped expand the program. To date PIKSI and many programs that followed in its wake have put scores of people into philosophy graduate schools who never would have considered the option.

The passion is to see philosophy become more diversified is driven not only by the injustice of depriving potential students of the opportunity to work in a rich and challenging area of scholarship, but also by the ineluctable fact that philosophy expands with different voices. Philosophy in its old form is no doubt grand and beautiful. But if philosophy has any valid claim to universality, it cannot remain a language for a few privileged men. How could philosophers have missed the importance of care as a moral concept? How could they believe that they didn't need to deal with the embodied existence of race, sex, gender and disability? Philosophy has overlooked much that matters in life because of its exclusiveness.

I also want to reflect on the choice of the questions I pursued. Philosophy of language in the 1970s–1980s was among the most mined fields in the analytic tradition (the tradition in which I was being trained). Rather than choose "hot" topics such as "the twin earth problem" or internalism versus externalism, I chose to work on metaphor—a topic with a short bibliography. It was "fringy" one might say—a bit on the margins. As semantics moved away from logic and truth tables to more pragmatic aspects of language, it has left the fringes, but I moved on.

In 1979 when I first taught feminist philosophy, there were perhaps seven texts; now they are innumerable. Diana Meyers, a former fellow graduate student, and I organized the first philosophical conference to explore the idea of care as an ethic. Today care ethics gets included in many textbooks on ethics. I am now working in the philosophy of disability, an area that did not even exist before 1995 or so.

I prefer, it seems, to enter a field where there is a lacuna. Mastering an area of scholarship with an extensive literature leaves me little time for creative thought nor time to explore the unexplored. It is in this space—a tabula rasa, so to speak— that my creativity is released and I do my best work.

The philosophy I do today, have taught in the past, and have advocated for is the product of my particular situation. The desire to till the soil left untouched by previous philosophy also derives from the particular position from which I reflect. This can be best understood from a passage that begins my latest book, *Learning from My Daughter: The Value and Care of Disabled Minds.*

> On a *Washington Post* editorial page, one parent of a child with severe disabilities wrote that having a child with a severe disability made of every parent a philosopher (Cohen 1982). What if you are already a philosopher and are raising a child with multiple and severe disabilities, including severe cognitive disabilities? You become a *humbler* philosopher. Having a child with a severe disability makes of every parent a philosopher because it makes one search anew for what makes life worth living. Philosopher Susan Brison has remarked that while she was not sure if an unexamined life is not worth living, she is sure that an unlived life is not worth examining. That is, it is the reality of lived lives that bears examination, not an idealized life. The reality of a disabled life and of a life with a disabled person is the life I hope to examine.

A penchant for entering philosophy from the side door, so to speak, and avoiding the grand entrance of canonical problems and literature derives from a humility in the face of the life I have lived as a parent with a disabled person. I will leave it to my readers to determine if that humbler position leaves me on margins or the forefront of the field.

Now in this last stage of my philosophical life, my project looks different from where I started. I write in *Learning from My Daughter:* "A work of philosophy normally begins with the birth of an idea, but we begin instead with the birth of a child."

For the first 20 years of my professional life, I never wrote about the dissonance between being a mother who holds in the highest esteem a person with very impaired cognitive abilities, and a philosopher, working in a field where reason is thought to be the conveyor of value and the basis of rights, dignity, and moral community. When I finally determined to move my simmering thoughts from a back burner to the front of my concerns, the thoughts quickly bubbled over: what in philosophy did not require rethinking when we add disability to the pot and stir? Justice, value, well-b eing, the good life, the role of care in our moral life, the ideals of independence and rationality, equality, dignity, embodiment, epistemic, and metaphysical conceptions of the sources of knowledge and the reality of our being, and the very idea of personhood. There are more—i ssues in aesthetics, language, neuro-e thics. But clearly, I can take on only a few of these.

Learning from My Daughter is the first of two planned books. Yet in retrospect it is really the second of a trilogy that began with *Love's Labor*, where I introduced my daughter Sesha into the philosophical literature, and examined Rawls' theory of

justice in light of the experience of raising an entirely dependent disabled child. In *Learning from My Daughter*, the focus moves to the dependent and to disability. I inquire about a presumption that normalcy is a precondition for a good life and in the process explore what the components of a good life can be that are not focused on the intellection we usually expect from philosophical texts. My daughter has a good life—in what does that goodness consist? How far does this conception of goodness extend, and what can we learn about well-b eing from her life? These questions have led me into bioethical discussions about reproductive procedures and diagnostic techniques that attempt to reduce the incidence of the birth of infants with significant abnormalities. Can we at once honor the claims of the disability community that such interventions express the view that disabled people are not welcomed in this world, and the choice women need to be able to make, especially given the fact that that the needs of care remain gendered and privatized?

A reconciliation lies in an ethic of care. I try to fashion a conception of care that navigates the narrow strait between the Scylla of paternalism and condescension and the Charybdis of neglect, which can come from indifference or from a misplaced reverence for another's autonomy. Finally, I test drive a theory of care by considering a notorious procedure carried out in the name of care, altering the bodies and attenuating the growth of children with very significant cognitive and ambulatory disabilities. The procedure, I argue, fails to accord with a properly construed ethic of care.

In the final book tentatively entitled *Who's Truly Human*, which will complete this trilogy, I circle back to the questions of justice and equality that I pursued in *Love's Labor*. Dignity and equal justice are conjoined concepts: we are due justice because we are creatures with singular worth, with dignity. Both justice and dignity are rooted in conceptions of personhood that in the Western tradition are laden with an overvaluation of the capacity for reason. I point to the perniciousness of defining what is valuable in our humanity this way. By arguing that people such as my daughter must be regarded as persons entitled to justice and dignity, we can explode some dogmas that philosophers have held onto, and awake from their slumbers philosophers who are open to an unknown world of cognitive disability.

As I approach the last productive phase of my philosophical life, I cannot possibly revisit all the fields that need to be plowed and re- plowed. But the great, great reward of reaching this point in my life is that I see younger philosophers who take up these questions—w ho, as philosopher Julia Ward puts it "expand the problem set of philosophy." Still more important is their questioning of well-s edimented ideas, thus exposing conceptions that limit our philosophical understanding of ourselves and our place in the universe.

And that's the work that this woman in philosophy does.

13. Philosopher Queens? The Wrong Question at the Wrong Time[(3)]

Mary Margaret McCabe

Introductory: Long Ago and Far Away

Plato's *Republic* is written in style: and its style has substance. One of the most notorious pieces of elaboration is the introduction of the proverb 'common among friends' amid the discussion of the philosopher- rulers in the central books. The notoriety is two-f old: the extreme elitism of the proposal that philosophers should rule; and the half-h earted – and sexist – discussion whether women might be included in that elite. Long ago and far away, of course: perhaps this approach to the social context of philosophy is just of antiquarian interest with no philosophical significance. It is not proper philosophy anyway, some say: this is all a piece of pre-a nalytic fiction, the poverty of its arguments camouflaged by its style. The style hides the substance and the substance is anyway, so Plato's opponents say, pernicious.

Why might the proposal of philosopher-q ueens be objectionable? Socrates concludes that women both can and should be rulers on the basis of an a rgument from nature:

'Do we think that female guard- dogs should guard together the things which the male guard- dogs guard, and hunt together with them and do everything else in common? Or do we think they should stay indoors, since they are incapable because of their puppy-b earing and nurturing, and should leave the males to work and take care of the herds?' 'They should do everything in common,' he [Glaucon] said, 'except that we treat the females as weaker, the males as stronger'.

(Republic 451d)

The difference between male and female animals is not a difference in nature but rather a difference in capacity: men and women are both humans, even if women are

(3) I would like to thank Elly Vintiadis for inviting me to contribute to this volume; my great gratitude also to Raphael Woolf, whose interpretation of this passage inspired mine, and to Verity Harte and the group of scholars with whom I have had the privilege to discuss the *Republic* in the Yale-K CL workshop over the last years; my thanks also to the A.G.Leventis Foundation, under whose generous auspices I wrote this piece.

weaker in all respects. So women may have the innate natures to become philosophers and will be capable to developing as philosophers – only they will not be so good... (their physical slightness, Socrates seems to assume, is parallel to some kind of intellectual weakness). The argument is – certainly to those of us who have encountered sexist attitudes to women *as philosophers* – both poor and profoundly depressing. It is poor because the move from the physical nature of male dogs to the intellectual capacity of female thinkers is tendentious. It is profoundly depressing in its apparent endorsement of the characteristic of the history of philosophy, that almost all the voices that are heard are the voices of men.

The concession to philosopher-q ueens on the basis of nature might underpin a further argument that women have the same rights as men for participation in education and political engagement. In this work about justice does Plato recognise that there is injustice done when women are excluded from the franchise (call this the *equality* concern)? Or does he include philosopher- queens on the grounds that women have a different perspective on education and political engagement which should not (for whatever kind of 'should') be ignored? In that case – again in this work about justice – there may be here a recognition of some kind of epistemic injustice in ignoring different points of view (call this the *difference* concern). This might be narrow (about women only) or broad – after all, in the ancient city state few were citizens: the young, women, metics (resident aliens) and slaves were all excluded from the franchise. So, *mutatis mutandis*, does Plato here display a more diverse interest, either in the deprivation of all those who deserve equal treatment or in the recognition of the importance, both epistemic and ethical, of all sorts of different points of view? Or is none of this about justice at all, but only about practicality: women's role in the state is simply determined by the interests of the state: and the same for any other kind of inclusivity (call this the *pragmatic* concern)? That it is philosopher- *queens* at issue here may be insignificant to any discussion of principle.

In any case, why should it matter what was said, long ago and far away? This is a broad question for the history of philosophy: what to make of isolated ideas with a modern look, whose context is so alien that they are intractable to us? One response is that the ancient context allows a kind of focus – just *because* it is so different, so far away – for such isolated ideas: a challenge to how exactly they are based on principle and a reflection of our own background principles, by contrast. Or maybe there is more going on here. For Plato mounts – I shall suggest – quite different considerations about the subjects of cognition, considerations which amplify the maxim 'common among friends'. A focus on the 'philosopher-q ueens' question misses the ways in which the methodology of the work itself (that is, the methodology practised by Plato, in writing the work, along with his reader in the course of its being read) displays both the equality concern and the difference concern. The methodology of philosophical conversation, I shall argue, is here privileged just because the suggestion about philosopher-q ueens was challenging at the time (the wrong time) and leads to some bizarre claims about public psychology (the wrong question). Instead, the very

intractability of the 'philosopher-q ueen' question reveals a far better view of both the epistemology and the ethics of conversation than would be offered by the austere idealism commonly attributed to Plato; the *Republic* itself, considered as a whole, style and substance, invites that conclusion.

Common among Friends

The construction of Kallipolis, the ideal city of the *Republic*, claims that the best natures of its citizens are discovered and developed by education and nurture. Only then will those who rule the state be able to see how the city should instantiate the old proverb *koina ta philôn*: 'common among friends' (424a2–3). The repeated expression has the enigmatic character we would expect from a proverb: but at the outset it seems to be a question about property (hence 'common are the *things* of friends'), about how friends share and share alike, whether their children or their wives. That *this* might be the basis for some claim of women to equality might strike us, from a modern perspective, as surprising, if not offensive: but surprise is part of the design of the passage as a whole. For in the framing of the discussion the question about how things are 'common' is reiterated and strikingly changed: shifting away from the question about property or possession to a question of agency in the discussion of the dialogue itself. This prefigures, I propose, both the ways in which the explicit argument about philosopher-q ueens fails and the ways in which the discussion as a whole might succeed, in offering principles both of equality and of difference that are indifferent to gender, or even to time and place. It is the *Republic*'s reflection on how the joint activity of discussion works that offers significant revolution, rather than the specific proposals inside Kallipolis.

The central books of the *Republic* project are shaped by a series of marine images to emphasise the hazard of the questions they are now facing. These are the 'three waves', apparently all subject to the maxim 'common among friends':

I. Can and should women be rulers? (451d–457b)

II. How do 'we' have women and children in common? (457b–472a)

III. How can this state come about? By philosophers ruling (472a–540d)

These three questions – about women as rulers, about women and children 'in common', and about philosophers as rulers – are formally connected by the repeated theme of what is 'common'. But at first sight that connection is factitious: why should we think that the question about 'women and children in common' has anything to do with the complex arrangements for the education of philosopher- rulers? And how might we be persuaded that these are the crucial questions, connected in order of significance, that are left over from the formal founding of the city and the structure

of the soul at the end of Book 4? What does 'common among friends' tell us about the coherence of the three issues in this thread?

Women and the State: Philosopher- Queens as Agents

The first wave seems at first to address the 'possession and use' of women in Kallipolis, but Socrates turns swiftly to thinking about what women will do: although women are weaker, they still have the same nature as men, so if they have the same education and nurture, they will make adequate guardians, even if inferior ones. This flies in the face of convention, Socrates observes. The implication that women are secondary may affront the modern eye; but to the ancient audience represented here this equality in education is both shocking and vulgar (gym 'in common', forsooth!). However, both responses, ancient and modern, miss the way that Plato hides progress in plain sight. For the significant thing about the argument may not be its unconventional or shocking features, but its grammar.

The discussion begins by treating women and children as possessions, as the objects belonging to, and disposable by, the friends. But the argument about philosopher-queens presents women as the subjects of action, education and development. Women are eligible to be the sharers, not the shared; and eligible, too, to be thought of among the group of friends, the original subjects of the proverb. The shock of Socrates' argument for the integration of women draws attention to this formal shift, from object to subject: women are not merely possessions, but agents, capable of action, even of the joint action required in the state.

In the second wave, the same shift occurs. At first, women and children are the common possessions of the men in the state; but this gives way to a question about practicality. In Kallipolis men and women will live together all the time: so there are bound to be erotic relations between them. This then requires – Socrates suggests – careful management of sex and marriage. Again, the proposals themselves are grim and brutish, and they have a sharply alienating effect. But might that be the point? Socrates is Plato's fiction: the real conversation here is directed at Plato's reader. The alienating sense of oddity may stop the reader in her tracks: these are, one might think, ethical aberrations beyond which we cannot go. But that revulsion may have a dialectical effect: to shift attention away from the exact legislation for some ideal city towards a detailed analysis of 'common among friends': both of what counts as common and of what counts as a friend.

Socrates asks how the state will hold together and achieve its greatest good: by a commonality of pleasure and pain, when 'as much as possible all the citizens feel pleasure and pain at pretty much the same events and losses'(462b): for division occurs when the same events make some delighted and others distraught. So far, so com-

monplace. Or is it? (Book 4 suggested a quite different principle of unification, both political and psychological, namely the rational part's understanding of the good.) Socrates surprisingly moves to a discussion of pronouns: unity on the state occurs when possessive adjectives are applied to the same things; and dissension when they are applied differently. So the best state, and the most unified, is when the most possible people use 'mine' and 'not mine' for the same thing, in the same respects and in the same way. But this means something quite different from the communal possession of women and children: the objective is to have a state that is just like a single person. In a single person, when a finger hurts, it is the whole which feels pain, the person who is pained (rather than the finger). In the unified state, when a single citizen suffers some good or evil, the whole state feels the pain: exactly that pain, not some secondary affect. So the whole political organism is the primary locus of pleasure and pain: the suffering of a citizen is the pain of the whole. Likewise for pleasure: hence the complex organisation of sex and marriage in and for the state as a whole.

Again a surprising train of thought focusses on community. Here, community is at its most extreme: a single individual state, which feels pleasure and pain as a communal organism. Socrates moves (ostentatiously) from thinking about what is objectively common (wives and children) to thinking about how that commonality functions – now in terms of the subjects of affective verbs. The maxim 'common among friends' has moved radically beyond the first wave (that female guardians should share the tasks of the male guardians) to its embodiment in a unified state: everyone in the state shares in the very same affections – pleasure and pains of the state as a whole. Individual citizens have here no standing of their own; instead they are assimilated into the whole, just as are the parts of the soul in the individual. In Kallipolis, only Kallipolis counts (not only women are objects here).

Once again, Socrates' exploration of the standing *of women* in the ideal state is disappointing. In the first wave he countenanced philosopher-q ueens; but by insisting on female weakness he rendered their standing only half- heartedly equal. In the second wave he moved away from treating women as objects (in particular, as sex-objects) into thinking of them, not so much as agents with standing, but rather as the subjects of affections (pleasure and pain). As in the first wave, Socrates gives women subjecthood with one hand, and takes it away with the other – because their subjecthood is secondary to their participation in the state. Even if Socrates does address the pragmatic concern, whether Kallipolis is possible, there is little to recommend his discussion when it comes to either the equality concern or the difference concern. For no individual has standing as such in this homogeneous state, whether as an equal individual or as a distinct one. The question about women seems to be the wrong question. And it seems to disappear altogether as the third wave threatens: so at the wrong time, too. Is anything left of the maxim 'common among friends'?

The Third Wave, Dialectic and Escape

The third wave swamps the discussion to the end of Book 7. It begins with a discussion of the object of love for the philosopher, the lover of wisdom, then an analysis of knowledge/wisdom both as a capacity and as a virtue. This leads to an extended account of the education of philosophers amid the grand metaphysics and epistemology of the three images of the sun, the divided line and the cave. In all of this 'common among friends' seems to disappear from view. For the education of the philosopher (whether male or female) – who escapes from the cave, who goes behind the hypotheses of the mathematicians and the allied sciences, and who sees the form of the good – seems resolutely solitary. The philosophical nature is corrupted by the bad influence of others, but the philosopher herself seems to flee alone from the world of political shadow. Is all we have here – three waves and philosopher- queens notwithstanding – a mere device to lead into the grandeurs of a transcendent metaphysics and a solo escape from the ordinary world?

Philosophical education ensures that the philosopher has a 'dialectical n ature' and is a 'synoptic dialectician'. Is this an appeal to a term of art ('dialectic') whose explanation comes from outside this text? Would this meet Adeimantus' insistence that Socrates' argument proceed step by step and with clarity? Does the philosopher have some special skill, with an honorific name, and private to herself? Is her synoptic view just a private experience, analogous to direct perception? And is community now the commonality of the *objects* of this kind of thought, with no longer any attention to subjects of expertise or of experience or affection?

'Dialectic' is derived from the verb *dialegesthai* – 'to discuss', 'to have a conversation' – a dominant theme in the *Republic* from the beginning: Socrates, on his way back from the Piraeus, is detained by Polemarchus, invited to Cephalus' house, and stays there – ostensibly perforce – in conversation. As the work continues, banal conversation gives way to precise series of questions and answers. Since between question and answer there is not, or not yet, agreement, the relation between questioner and answerer is one of *difference*. Even where the questioner avows no particular point of view, or suspends judgement, or just wonders, the epistemic stance *of the questioner as such* is agnostic about the answer. This relation of difference between the interlocutors in a conversation is marked (in Greek by the prefix *dia-:* 'differently' or 'apart'), and it also reflects the idea of doing things in common (among friends) (in Greek with the prefix also used to characterise pleasure and pain felt as one, *sun-,* 'together'). These two modes prefigure the two concerns I noted: the concern of equality (how things work together) and the concern of difference (how things work apart). How then should we understand the shift between conversation in the early stages of the work and dialectic as Socrates breasts the third wave? Is there any kind of continuity between the two?

Three things stand out. First 'dialectic' is a normative expression, capable of being done well or badly, or of failing altogether. When Socrates has completed his account of the 'preliminaries' of education (arithmetic, geometry, astronomy, harmonics) and

turns to the dialectician, he is specific about its conditions: dialectic fails among those who are unable to give and to receive an account of what they are supposed to know. But the same is true of conversation: it is in contrast, for one thing, with contentious argument; that may give the illusion of conversation, but it too fails if it is done in the wrong way (without proper attention to the different sides, for example) and for the wrong reasons (to win, rather than to investigate the subject in hand). Second, this normativity, both of dialectic and of conversation, depends on the relations between two parties or two points of view: central to dialectic is the idea of giving *and taking* an account; central to conversation is the speaking and listening relation between the two sides. This makes dialectic a prime candidate for the role first claimed for it in the divided line: of unravelling the postulates of other sciences by inspecting their principles (their 'account'). But this also makes it look like vernacular conversation, where that is done in the right way. Third, so far from being merely the end state of some educational business, dialectic is also a process, well described as an ongoing, careful, slow give and take between two or more people: giving an account, asking and answering questions, using reason to examine and defend a view against disagreement. So its very name is tagged to a joint activity, with a determinate end: the synoptic view of the truth. If that is right, the prefix that insists on difference is not merely an allusion to the distinctions that the dialectician will make, but to the different points of view that the conversational process requires. This then might make us hesitate to suppose that the process of emergence from the cave is a solitary one. On the contrary, even when the prisoner is first released, she is subject to question and answer: to the challenging and rethinking of her earlier assumptions in a conversational structure. So – if this is an image for dialectical progress – the differences embedded in conversation are embedded in dialectic too: and the development of the term of art 'dialectic' from the vernacular business of discussion and hence from the fictional conversation of the dialogue itself is natural and well supported.

Return now to the three waves. If the focus of the education of the philosopher is not solitary, but conversational and dialectical, then this sequence of thought, too, falls under the maxim 'common among friends', and the three waves are organically connected. The parties to the conversation announced at the beginning of the work are manifestly friends and relations (even the headstrong Thrasymachus). The language of commonality is a regular feature of the way they talk about their discussions, notably when they are wondering about whether the discussion is going on in the right way (conversation, at such points, is notably normative). Indeed if the theme of 'common among friends' runs through all three waves, the earlier illuminate the later in several ways. First of all, the first two waves underline the shift from thinking of common objects to thinking about subjects doing, or feeling, things in common: especially for knowledge, here understood as a capacity of soul. Second, friendship here is both complex (non- uniform) and normative (friends are constrained by concern for their friends: Thrasymachus' later appearances provide an object lesson). Third, and consequently,

what counts as commonality throughout the three waves is not at all the same thing as sheer uniformity: for without differences, the conversation never develops at all.

Those differences that are essential to conversation themselves differ, however, from the kinds of generic difference discussed in the first wave, under the guise of the natures of the guardians, or in the second, in terms of dissenting parts or groups in the state. For conversation is essentially a process occurring between two individuals, not between groups (the escaping prisoner and her first interlocutor, for example). When we think of the subjects of the verbs for conversation and intellectual progress, those subjects are particular individuals, not to be understood (as the first wave seemed to suggest) in terms of a group or a section of the population. In that case, the juxtaposition of these three waves may be supposed to focus on their formal contrasts, dominated by the maxim 'common among friends'. The first two waves bring out the difference between thinking of women as objects and thinking of them as subjects; and they focus on two aspects of what is common: acting together; and being affected together. But once we move to the third wave, those contrasts start to be understood, not in terms of what is common at the level of the group, but rather what is common between individuals, and how that is modified by difference, notably in the exchanges of conversation, of giving and taking an account. This – in ways that the language of the *Republic* brings out – shows the epistemic centrality of the exchanges between individuals fictionalised in the dialogue itself. And in the conversations of dialectic both parties have the same claim to be accountable (the equality concern) but bring their different perspectives to bear on the subject in hand (the difference concern).

The Wandering 'We'

The move from generic equality and difference to the give and take between individuals is shown up by a shiftiness of who counts, at each stage of the reported conversation, as 'we': sometimes it is the parties to the dialogue, sometimes ordinary received opinion and sometimes the citizens within the ideal state. That shiftiness calls attention to itself, to the question of who counts as 'we' at each stage, who is engaged with whom. This, in turn, invites the reader to note her own position, sometimes a part of this 'we' (in agreeing or disagreeing with what the dramatis personae say) and sometimes alien to it (a long time ago and far away). So we notice our own stance to what is said, we make the first-p erson pronouns expressly our own or we disavow them: as so often in this work, this device makes us highly self- conscious readers. We notice, then, the fictionality of the dialogue between the creatures of their creator. At the same time (and by virtue of the same device) we notice the converse: that, as we read, we are not fictional at all. That recognition goes hand in hand, I suggest, with a sense of singularity: just as the author is a single individual, so too is the reader. The reader is not 'we', but 'I': the individual participant in the alarums and excursions created by the genius of the work's singular author. The effect of the three waves in

sequence is to give this individual point of view purchase in the ongoing arguments of the work.

In the *Phaedrus* – a dialogue about friendship, about rhetoric and speech, and about philosophy – Socrates tells the story of Theuth, the Egyptian who invents writing. Rushing to tell his king of his discovery, he is dashed by the king's displeasure. Written books – says the king – are unable to adapt or defend themselves; they will be a poison for memory, not its saviour. The written word, Socrates continues, is like painting:

> A painting stands there as if it is alive, and if someone asks it a question, it sticks to a high-m inded silence. The same is true of written words. You might think that they have something in mind when they speak, but if you want to understand what they mean, and ask them a question about any of the things they say, they just say the same solitary thing, over and over again. Once something is written down, what is written rolls around presenting itself in the same way both to those who know and to those who have no business with it, and it has no idea whom it should converse with and whom it should ignore. (*Phaedrus* 275d-e).

This puzzling (and resonant) passage focusses our attention – as we read – on the position of the reader and the text, of this reader with this text. But even if the written word stays fixed, words that puzzle, like the written challenge to writing, have a particular effect on a particular reader at the time they are read. The puzzle arises just because the reader sees the tension between the puzzle about the written word and the words which pose it (if it is true, then should we believe it? If it is true, why should we believe it? If it is false, does it exemplify the puzzle?). These puzzles, like the conversations of the *Republic,* work on individual interlocutors, this reader at this time, that reader at that time, and their individual author. If there is anything 'common' here, it is not between groups, or types, or natures, but between individuals, at some indefinite time.

So what? The *Phaedrus* characterises its reader as a particular individual, but also as indeterminate. The text itself cannot fix who can read it, cannot determine in advance who is to have access, or who is to engage in the conversation between author and reader that the *Phaedrus* so vividly calls into question. This has a quality of equity: any reader, at any time and place, under any circumstances that allow the reading of this book, may read this book. The relation between author and reader is, in this way, impartial: it does not discriminate between readers, or between groups or races or genders or castes or orientations or ideologies of readers: any reader will do. So the book itself has a character of justice, since it is explicitly even- handed about its interlocutor.

Impartiality towards the individual reader does look like a standpoint of justice. For it admits anyone: just anyone can read, reflect, accept or reject and be puzzled by this text and just anyone can have their role as the reader brought to their attention

by the complexity of how Plato writes. This is inclusive, especially by virtue of the focus on the individual as opposed to the group: to whatever group, with whatever advantage or disadvantage you belong, the philosophical discourse of this text is within your purview: anyone, on this account, can be a guardian, if only they are able. This might be true to the demotic spirit of Socrates' encounters in Athens: he will talk to anyone. And impartiality of this kind meets the equality concern.

But this might not be enough, at least for epistemic justice. For it is an important consideration for philosopher-q ueens: will they always be second-r ate? The problems of the first wave simply illustrate where the injustice occurs – towards groups, genders, sexes, castes, etc., as such – and where injustice intensifies. For it is a running theme of the *Republic* to show that nature is not merely an innate capacity, nor merely a fact of where and to whom one is born, but rather something that develops through 'education and nurture': so that 'philosophical nature', properly understood, has developed over years of education and enquiry. But this already excludes. It excludes, not only disadvantaged groups, but also their perspectives: and those perspectives themselves are a part of understanding what it is to understand. In order to get a grip on epistemic justice and its counterpart injustice, and in order to promote equality of (disadvantaged) groups, there is no answer to be found in thinking of individuals shorn of the appurtenances of the group. For that restriction will occlude all sorts of assumptions and prejudices, both from the point of view of the author and from the point of view of the interlocutor herself: and it renders invisible, too, the important brilliance of different points of view. To be an impartial reader, we need to be impartial ourselves and to ourselves. Either it is a sad truth that bias and prejudice and disadvantage run too deep for that; or it is a dangerous falsehood that impartiality is what we should seek. If there are to be philosopher- queens, the question needs to be asked elsewhere.

14. How Can Philosophy of Language Help Us Navigate the Political News Cycle?

Teresa Marques

In this essay, I try to answer the above question, and another question that it presupposes. The presupposed question is: *can* philosophy of language help us navigate the political news cycle? A reader can be sceptical of a positive answer to the latter question; after all, citizens, political theorists, and journalists seem to be capable of following current politics and its coverage in the news, and there is no reason to think that philosophy of language in particular should be capable of helping people make sense and respond to the news.

I should first clarify what I take philosophy and philosophy of language to be concerned with. I don't mean to give a definition of philosophy, but merely an idiosyncratic and rough view of what I take myself to be engaged in. I take philosophy to be a critical, reflective, honest, and systematic investigation, carried out in dialogue with other people (dead or alive!), into the more fundamental and general topics that we, as humans, can care about in our relationship and experiences with the world and each other. It includes the reflection about whether we can know anything, how we can meaningfully communicate with each other, whether anything is right or wrong, good or bad, what is the meaning of life, if there's any meaning in life, or how we should organise ourselves socially and politically.

Philosophy of language, as you can guess, investigates how we can meaningfully communicate with each other. But philosophy of language is not philology: it does not study particular languages such as Portuguese or Spanish. It is also not linguistics, although it is often informed by, and informs, research in linguistics. Philosophy of language investigates general concepts that are central to our use of language – meaning, reference, truth – and in relation to our linguistic capacity and practice as humans.

It might be surprising, then, to ask such a concrete applied question as the title of this essay does. In recent years, however, more and more philosophers of language are trying to understand what politicians say and mean, what their statements reveal about their plans, what they expect from voters, or which linguistic mechanisms are deployed in political propaganda. Several philosophers of language have started to deploy their skills and theoretical tools (let's call them that) to explain the differences

between lying, misleading, and deceiving, and whether these have the same negative moral value. Or to explain how politicians can convey racist or xenophobic messages, while plausibly denying doing so. Or, still, to explain the semantic and pragmatic mechanisms operating in what George Orwell called *doublethink* and *doublespeak*.

I'm just one among many female philosophers engaging in applied p hilosophy of language: Saray Ayala, Claudia Bianchi, Renée Bolinger, Elisabeth Camp, Laura Caponetto, Bianca Cepollaro, Esa Díaz- León, Robin Jeshion, Rae Langton, Mary Kate McGowan, Ishani Maitra, Eleonore Neufeld, Jennifer Saul, Marina Sbisá, Laura Schroeter, Rachel Sterken, or Lynne Tirell are just a few of the many women doing this kind of work. Now, I don't have an explanation as to why there are so many female philosophers especially interested in applied philosophy. There's a Wikipedia page on women in philosophy that portrays the low numbers of professional women in philosophy in the US and the UK. Perhaps there's a connection between being under-represented in one's profession and trying to make sense of concrete problems in the world, but this is a mere hypothesis that I am in no position to test. And it might be wrong!

In the remaining of this essay, I will illustrate the application of philosophy of language to three contrasting strategies of political propaganda: dogwhistles, meaning perversions, and bald- faced lies. I hope that these help us see that philosophy of language can be a good tool in diagnosing demagoguery, and in resisting it.

Dogwhistles

In 2011, before Obama's re- election in 2012, Donald Trump tried to alarm people about that prospect:

> If we keep on this path, if we re- elect Barack Obama, the America we leave our kids and grandkids won't look like the America we were blessed to grow up in. The American Dream will be in hock. The shining city on the hill will start to look like an inner- city wreck.
>
> *(Trump, 2011, Time to Get Tough: Making America #1 Again)*

Very notably, Trump uses words that have a real- world reference. He used "shining city on the hill" to refer to the US, and used "inner-c ity wreck" to talk about city centres. Trump was not merely referring to the US or central urban areas. He was also conveying a contrasting positive and negative value by using those expressions. This additional conveyed message is not explicit in the sentences used. For simplicity, we can paraphrase what he explicitly said as "If we re-e lect Obama, America will start to look like an inner-c ity wreck." But what he implicitly conveys is rather "If we re-e lect Obama, America will start to be dominated by poor, lazy, criminal black people." In the US, as is discussed by Jennifer Saul, it is known that "inner city" works as a

way to negatively refer to black people (Tali Mendelberg, in her book, *The Race Card*, talks of such *implicit political communication* and how it can change the acceptability of racist discrimination in the US, mostly after the 1960s. Now, a racist dogwhistle, as a form of implicitly political communication, allows a speaker to violate a norm of racial equality with plausible deniability. In fact, a speaker like Trump can try to get away from accusations of racism with: "I didn't say anything about *race*, you're the one playing the *race card*!"

How can philosophy of language help us in understanding how dogwhistles convey such racist contents? Jennifer Saul distinguishes between *overt* and *covert* dogwhistles. Her distinction can be summarised as follows:

Overt dogwhistles are designed with intent to allow two plausible interpretations:

• i. a private content aimed at a desired target audience – for instance, George W. Bush's use of "wonder- working power" during an election as a dogwhistle to reach Christian evangelical fundamentalists, who would take it as a sign of faith in the power of Christ.

ii. a plausible non- racist content for a broader audience.

• *Covert dogwhistles*, for instance "inner city" as used by Donald Trump above, are designed with intent to get an audience that disapproves, e.g., of explicitly racist speech, but who feels okay with apparently reasonable claims that are implicitly discriminatory.

Now, there is quite a lot of debate about how exactly dogwhistles convey their implicit racist content and animate racial resentment. I can't get into the details of this debate here. But a central feature especially of covert dogwhistles is that they allow for the negation, without contradiction, of the presumed racist content conveyed. In that regard, they contrast with other phrases that communicate something that is not explicitly stated or asserted. Consider for instance, the following: "It was Betty who bought the last copy of *Invisible Women*. No one bought the last copy of *Invisible Women*." The first sentence seems to presuppose, but does not state, what is denied by the second sentence. Because of that, the two together appear contradictory. If there is any contradiction, it must be because the meaning of "it was Betty who did so-a nd-s o" presupposes that so- and- so did happen. Now, in contrast, even if unlikely, Trump could have said, "If we re-e lect Obama, America will start to look like an inner-c ity wreck. But I don't have anything against poor black people; my best friends are black and I donate to charities to help inner- cities." There is no contradiction in saying both sentences in the same breath, although we could suspect that what came after "But I don't..." is not sincere.

A second feature of dogwhistles is that the racist implicit content they c onvey can be reinforced and be made more explicit. Yet, not all communicated content that is not explicitly asserted allows for this. Here's what I mean. Suppose someone says "It was Betty who bought the last copy of *Invisible Women*; and what's more, someone bought the last copy of *Invisible Women*!" The normal response to hearing these two sentences is to say "yeah, I know, you just said it was Betty who did it."

The lesson here is that content that is not asserted, but seems rather to be presupposed, is automatically *accommodated* by the audience (unless someone interrupts the speaker, saying for instance, "hey, wait a minute! I didn't realise that..."). In the example I gave earlier, it is the proposition that someone bought the last copy of *Invisible Women* that is automatically *accommodated*. Unless someone objects with surprise, that proposition will now be taken for granted by the interlocutors. Moreover, it will sound redundant if it is explicitly asserted. In short, reinforcement sounds like redundancy. However, it would not be redundant for Trump to reinforce the implicitly racist message of his statement by adding something explicitly racist, for instance saying: "If we re- elect Obama, America will start to look like an inner- city wreck. *And what's more*, I think that the guy is lazy. It's probably not his fault, because laziness is a trait in blacks."

These two features of dogwhistles, that what they implicitly convey can be plausibly denied without contradiction, and that what they implicitly convey can be reinforced without redundancy, indicate that the implicit message is conveyed pragmatically. It would seem, then, that dogwhistles work as conversational implicatures, a notion introduced by Paul Grice. With an implicature, a speaker can imply one thing by saying something else. With conversational implicatures, speakers take advantage of cooperative conversational principles or maxims, such as the conversational maxims: *Be truthful! Be relevant!* As an illustration of the maxim of relevance, consider this example: if my best friend asks me if I'll go to the concert next week, and I reply, "I've got to finish to grade my students' papers" she will take me to mean that I cannot go to the concert, although I did not say so out loud. She can infer that is what I meant because she assumes that what I say is a *relevant* answer to her question.

I think that dogwhistles depend on something like conversational implicatures, although this is not the place to make that argument. Intuitively, the motivating idea can be easily grasped: what is the relevance of bringing up city centres, which (the audience presumably assumes) are overpopulated, crime- ridden, and whose population is mostly black, *while advising against re-e lecting the first black president*? Unless there is some connection between the two, the audience would not take the speaker to be saying something relevant.

As I said earlier, I won't have the space here to explain how I think that pragmatic process operates. But I want to point to an effect of the use of racist dogwhistles. It seems that the implicit political content they communicate nonetheless succeeds, if it is accepted, in changing what speakers take for granted, in particular, in changing the social norms that regulate permissible behaviour. This is, perhaps, the most serious consequence of the use of dogwhistles in political propaganda. The lesson here is that we should make sure whether we are accepting something that sounds reasonable, and perhaps even true, but at the same time acquiescing to racist or xenophobic attitudes. Knowing how dogwhistles actually work (semantically or pragmatically) is hence important to properly asses their impact, and respond to coded discourse. An advantage of understanding dogwhistles as conversational implicatures is that not everything we

dislike hearing will be a dogwhistle. There must be a rational reconstruction of the underlying process that produces the implicature.

Meaning Perversions

In an excellent article from 2017 in the *New York Review of Books*, "The Autocrat's Language," the journalist and writer Masha Gessen said:

> A Russian poet named Sergei Gandlevsky once said that in the late Soviet period he became obsessed with hardware-s tore nomenclature. He loved the word secateurs, for example...In a world where words were constantly used to mean their opposite, being able to call secateurs "secateurs" – and nothing else – was freedom. "Freedom," on the other hand, was, as you know, slavery. That's Orwell's *1984*. And it is also the USSR, a country that had "laws," a "constitution," and even "elections," also known as the "free expression of citizen will..." There was nothing free about it, it did not constitute expression, it had no relationship to citizenship or will because it granted the subject no agency... it eviscerated the words "election," "free," "expression," "citizen," and "will," and it also left the thing itself undescribed... an experience that could be accurately described as, say, an "election," or "free," had been preemptively discredited because those words had been used to denote something entirely different.

The examples that Gessen gives of words whose meaning is perverted in the mouth of the autocrat recall what George Orwell called *doublespeak* and *doublethink*. It is no accident that she mentions Orwell's *1984* and one of the *doublethink* pairs from the book: "freedom is slavery." So, what do propaganda slogans like "The free expression of citizens will!" do? They seem to exploit the *normative* or *evaluative* connotation of literal sincere uses of a phrase. For instance, "Free homeland!" seems to have a positive connotation as good and desirable, whereas "the enemy of the people" is just the opposite. That positive value of "free" is exploited to induce acceptance of the regime and its practices. To refer to the ritual in the former USSR as a "free election" made it hard to resist the regime's control – A citizen would be faced with questions like "how can you be against the free exercise of citizens will?"

My view is that meaning perversions are *undermining norm-enforcements* . While they appear to rely on, and enforce, shared norms or values (of justice, politics, or morality), they actually undermine and erode those very same norms. In other words, they are like a wolf in sheep's skin. Meaning perversions differ from dogwhistles in significant aspects. Meaning perversions *exploit* pre-existing normative connotations that are common knowledge, and use words *to denote unsuitable referents*, for instance, "freedom" to talk about slavery, or "free expression of citizen will" for a compulsory ritual that is not an exercise of citizens' agency. Dogwhistles in contrast are words that are

used to denote their proper referents, while used to convey that those referents have a positive or negative value that in fact they lack. Now, with a dogwhistle, a speaker can deflect criticism of the implicitly conveyed content with plausible deniability – "I didn't say anything about race, you're the one playing the race card again!" In contrast, with a meaning perversion, the speaker can deflect criticism by appearing to enforce, while undermining, the norms or values the word actually connotes: "How can you: be against free elections? Against democracy? The will of the people? Taking back control? Defend an enemy of the people?"

We should pay attention and check if the norms and values that are being conveyed in political discourse actually fit the things the speaker is talking about – free elections are a good and desirable thing, but what if the speaker is referring to a process that is coerced and is not the exercise of political deliberation by all citizens in equal conditions? Contemporary examples abound. For instance, the slogan "take back control" used by the Leave campaign during the 2016 Brexit referendum presupposes that British people lost control (of what, exactly?) at some point, so it would be a good thing for Britons to exercise their autonomy and regain control over their political future. But what if Britain never lost control – not in any relevant sense, at least – and leaving the European Union is in fact a way to lose not just political but also financial control of the future of the UK?

The lesson here is that we should pay attention and check if by accepting something apparently desirable we are actually buying into something against our best interests. The media has an option in deciding whether to repeat political discourse as it is produced – including dogwhistles and *doublespeak*, or to paraphrase it with the correct connotations of the presupposed norms and values, and denoting the right referents. Deliberation in liberal democratic societies requires that journalists and regular citizens are aware that they should make their decisions on the basis of a reflective and critical assessment of political demagoguery. This brings us to the last case study I will discuss.

Bald- Faced Lies

Everybody lies, and naturally all politicians lie. But not everyone lies brazenly, all the time, with confidence, and without trying to conceal that what they say is false. Those who do so with such blatant shamelessness – bald- faced liars – can pose a particular kind of threat to others when they enter the public political domain. In 2017, the *New York Times* published what it regrettably called "The Definitive List of Donald Trump's Lies," which was definitely not definitive (at the end of 2019 the *Washington Post* reported that Trump had lied as a president over 15 000 times). Here's an excerpt of the lies and untruths from only half of October 2017, from the *New York Times* article. Trump's claims are followed with fact- checking (there were links to relevant news articles in the original):

> Oct. 16 "I hear that Ireland is going to be reducing their corporate rates down to 8 percent from 12." (Ireland has no plans to cut its tax rate.) Oct. 16 "If you look at President Obama and other presidents, most of them didn't make calls." (They did call families of soldiers killed in action.) Oct. 16 "All I can say is it's totally fake news, just fake. It's fake. It's made- up stuff, and it's disgraceful what happens, but that happens in the world of politics." (Trump himself has bragged about groping women.)... Oct. 17 "Right now, we are the highest- taxed nation anywhere in the world. You can even say developed or undeveloped." (We're not.) Oct. 17 "As far as I'm concerned, I think we're really essentially the highest. But if you'd like to add the developed nation, you can say that, too." (Taxes in the U.S. are lower than in most developed countries.)... Oct. 17 "I wish President Obama didn't get out the way he got out. Because that left a vacuum and ISIS was formed." (The group's origins date to 2004.) Oct. 18 "Democrat Congresswoman totally fabricated what I said to the wife of a soldier who died in action (and I have proof)." (The wife confirmed Representative Frederica Wilson's account.) Oct. 18 "The Coast Guard in Texas saved 16,000 lives." (The real number was smaller.) Oct. 18 "Nobody has ever heard of a five hitting land." (Category 5 storms have hit land before.) Oct. 24 "Under our plan, more than 30 million Americans who own small businesses will get a 40 per cent cut to their top marginal tax rate." (The real number is estimated to be less than 1 million.) Oct. 25 "We have trade deficits with almost everybody." (We have trade surpluses with more than 100 countries.) Oct. 27 "Wacky & totally unhinged Tom Steyer, who has been fighting me and my Make America Great Again agenda from beginning, never wins elections!" (Steyer has financially supported many winning candidates.)

It is either common ground that each of those claims is a lie, or it can be easily learned since the correct information is publicly available. But what is the effect of such a deluge of lies on public discourse? In January 2019, Dahlia Lithwick correctly diagnosed the problem in an article in *Slate*:

> We've grown so hopelessly accustomed to a journalism reduced to daily fact checking, and a politics reduced to daily fact checking, and fact checking reduced to daily white noise that we forget that there is more to daily public life than endlessly correcting the record.

The effects of such "daily white noise" on democratic deliberation are very serious. This deluge of blatant shameless lies is a means of dominating the conversation, manipulating the public, and ultimately controlling reality. Here, philosophy of language can once more help us to understand the mechanism at work.

An effect of having our beliefs and knowledge contradicted with such c onfidence – what the philosopher J.L. Austin called a *perlocutionary effect* – is that we often start to doubt what we previously took for granted. This is a psychological effect, studied as *gaslighting*. We can deploy good semantic and pragmatic theories to explain *what* the bald- faced liar is doing, and not just the effects of his actions. The bald- faced liar blatantly violates what Paul Grice called *The Cooperative Principle* of conversations of which the conversational maxims I referred to earlier are a part (*Be truthful! Be relevant!* etc).

The Cooperative Principle says: *Make your contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged*. The principle assumes that cooperative participants in a conversation try to consider the purposes and interests of the conversational setting, as well as other things that they take for granted. In so doing they should be truthful, perspicuous, relevant, not redundant, etc. But a bald- faced liar blatantly ignores or violates the accepted shared purposes of conversations. He confidently and shamelessly says what is commonly known, that is, taken for granted, to be false, and *in so doing* indicates that he is not interested in being cooperative. Rather, he forces others to accept *his* purposes and to control the direction of the conversation. In politics, in particular, this strategy can have tremendous effects: the replacement of the joint deliberative process of open debate that is central to liberal democracies with the assertion of power and domination of autocracy. As Masha Gessen wrote in another 2016 article in the *New York Review of Books*, "The Putin Paradigm":

> *Lying is the message*. It's not just that both Putin and Trump lie, it is that they lie in the same way and for the same purpose: blatantly, to assert power over truth itself. Take, for example, Putin's statements on Ukraine. In March 2014 he claimed that there were no Russian troops in newly annexed Crimea; a month later he affirmed that Russians troops had been on the ground. Throughout 2014 and 2015, he repeatedly denied that Russian troops were fighting in eastern Ukraine; in 2016 he easily acknowledged that they were there. In each case, Putin insisted on lying in the face of clear and convincing evidence to the contrary, and in each case his subsequent shift to truthful statements were not admissions given under duress: they were proud, even boastful affirmatives made at his convenience... Putin's power lies in being able to say what he wants, when he wants, regardless of the facts.

We can, and should, understand what the point of such brazen lying is, and think of our role in public debate, either as journalists or as individual citizens. Political opposition and differences of opinion are not only legitimate in deliberate democracies, but are one of the fundamental bases of deliberate democracy itself. Deliberative democracy assumes that all people are fundamentally equal in rights and obligations

under the law, and that other parties – whatever their status or views – are equally legitimate participants in public life. Strong disagreement and opposition are legitimate in democracy. But they require a common ground of truth and facts, of trust in rational ways to find out what reality is before we decide what to do, of respect for the legitimacy of differences of opinion, and respect for the rule of law and the institutions that protect democratic participation and representation.

Understanding mechanisms of political demagoguery such as dogwhistles, meaning perversions, or bald-f aced lies is necessary to understand and respond appropriately to the threats they pose to rational deliberation in democratic society. This brief essay serves as an illustration of *how* philosophy of language can help us navigate the political news cycle, and, I hope, confirms *that* philosophy of language can indeed help us make sense of political debate.

15. Philosophy as Work

Chris Meyns
Position: Philosophy professional
Location: Variable
Employment: Temporary
Working hours: 100%
Vacancy reference: PHIL-2020/001
Starting date: As soon as possible
Closing date: Tomorrow

Overview

Philosophy today is radically different from the enterprise that burst onto the world scene some millennia ago. A poor counterfeit of the tool that helped the great Peseshet transform death from a minor inconvenience into existence's central object. A stand-i n at best to the majesty who visited Boethius' cell when he was doing time for conspiracy to overthrow government. Philosophy's trademark questions about the nature and purpose of reality, blisteringly general, have vanished like a speaker's sense of self-w orth after a rough Q&A session. Such piercing queries are now routinely outsourced to unicorn start- ups with baffling brand identities, such as Mathematics, Chemistry or Sociology. Forget busying yourself with queries such as 'What is?' (the contract for which has been won by Physics), 'What is life?' (which went to Biology), 'What just happened?' (to History). Instead, in our current age Philosophy holds the magnificent, hassle- free position of having no longer any peculiar domain of enquiry whatsoever.

Our vision for Philosophy is to embrace this lack of a dedicated subject matter. It is Philosophy's main positive trait, our unique selling point. Absolved from any concern about trifles such as reality, truth, or how things actually are, we see a distinct opportunity to flood the marketplace of ideas with free- floating, unhinged reflection on matters that in most cases could not be so resolved, or do not allow for an answer in the first place. Our mission is to take philosophy's new- found liberties to the next stage by promoting our o ccupational freedom as well, on the 'Netflix for academia' model; a future of the Academy as a Service (AaaS).

We are now recruiting a barefaced philosophy professional who can push through the inevitable challenges and pressures this path requires, and who will exhibit a strong

commitment to our core values of *performance of genius*, *argument*, and *intellectual conformity* to join us on this exciting journey.

About the role

The successful applicant will be providing independent philosophical services at our newly refurbished Philosophy Service Unit, which is part of our tightly curated portfolio of offerings in regular on-d emand intellectual productions. The person appointed will report to the line manager.

The area of specialisation for this position is open. The role will require the employment of near- average mastery of philosophy's trademark technical operations—o r, as officials at the Career Service call it, good old 'transferable skills'. These will include the ability to analyse complex texts, draw some inferences, build arguments ... or more generally, to apply one's superior logical gaze to any random subject matter whatsoever, unhampered by anything so unbearably dull as actual familiarity with whatever one is reflecting upon.

A strategic priority associated with this position, building on glories from the past, is to keep the discipline of philosophy away from concerns with trivia such as contingent fact and forecast. Instead, we have been able to successfully monetise the brilliant concoction (if we may say so) that there are such things 'concepts'. It has taken us prolonged campaigns by philosophy influencers with the right audience demographic, brand alignment, and publish- to-c onversion rate to promote this model (not to mention continued efforts to mute the psychologists on the subject). We are now proud to project that for the period 2020–2045 we will continue to sustain high follower loyalty for the position that 'concepts' (whatever they might be) can be investigated absent any historical, contextual, or social awareness, but simply by applying a stern, dictionary- infused look of logic— or, dare we say, *a-na-ly-sis* ? The real killer is that audiences gulp the idea that any of this could actually be informative about anything beyond the individual speculator's idiosyncrasies.

What you will do

The successful applicant is expected to carve out a position in logical space on any phenomenon that takes their fancy. Topics associated with intellectual trends dredged up from other disciplines about two decades after their 'consume by'-date, or material already covered to gags by other philosophers— fellows currently breathing or long-d eceased, it matters not—w ould be most welcome, as long as they are repackaged with a gentle word shuffle to make sure they align with our brand.

The position will involve writing up speculations in article form using recognisably academic formalisations, half- page footnotes, sauced with abundant in-c rowd

technical slang, and novelty terms where appropriate. The main aim here is to keep revenue streams of friendly for-p rofit academic publishers going by submitting these scribblings for publication to journals guarded by a paywall so high that at most two committed colleagues may venture to climb them, and with a bundle subscription that smilingly squeezes the last drop of life out of institutional library budgets already on life- support. (See: bit.ly/ preferredsuppliers for our list of eligible outlets.)

In addition, we must keep room bookings and catering satisfied by organising and participating in professional séances (occasionally these are called 'conferences' or 'talks'), where hour-l ong ceremonies of monotonous incantation pass for a position statement. The subsequent acts of what the feeble minded may call collective ritual humiliation, in which the speaker 'fight[s] for the life' of their ideas, are really only just opportunities to help colleagues see that spontaneous reversal of the icecaps' melting would be more likely than their (what is to pass for a) 'position' making any sense. Give up already.

In philosophy, as in any other domain of the influencer industry, it is evident that 'good and bad ideas compete for attention', which itself comes in limited supply. For this role we expect the candidate to seize this condition of scarcity as an ideal space for maintaining an active branding and engagement strategy, both on- and offline, and to have a track record of achieving month- on- month follower growth for their personal brand.

What we look for

The successful applicant is expected to have the following attributes or qualifications.

Essential

- You thrive on the feeling of being recognised as smart. You can spot and exploit opportunities for being showered in such recognition by either colleagues or strangers, and will moreover actively facilitate its occurrence by citing shiny affiliations, or by name-d ropping disciplinary big shots that once passed within a few meters' proximity of you when going for yet another solitary beer.

- You are willing to defend under any circumstance the long- refuted claim that doing well in philosophy requires some unnamed, but definitely innate, special 'talent' or 'genius'—rather than, say, actual work, c onnections, and being rich and stubborn enough to shoulder the years of unpaid initiation followed by yet more under-p aid hopping between short-t erm, precarious contracts. Ability to cite dusty nineteenth- century phrenology texts in support would be a real plus.

- Our organisation has special needs in side-s tepping recurrent complaints that our professionals are disproportionately inclined to cite only pale European blokes. It is therefore essential that the successful candidate has experience in conclusively refuting any such pronouncements either by changing the subject, or by pointing out that we really could not possibly compromise on quality.

- You are skilled in brushing off suggestions that philosophy produced by our professionals is in any way discriminatory on the grounds of disability, personal appearance, body size, race, ethnicity, age, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, nationality, or other similar characteristics by using the conclusive retort that one was simply 'reflecting on a concept'.

- You are committed to the view of philosophy as 'a zero- sum game': instances of other people's mental shortcomings must in all cases gracefully be compensated for by foregrounding one's own towering achievements.

Desirable

- You are accomplished in using volume, rhetorical shape- shifting and appeal to 'common- sense' to force others to admit their faults in proposing anything diverging from one's own tight spot in logical space; thus confirming one's status as a Big Thinker.

- You are able to use the format of a request for clarification in official gatherings to conceal that one is actually bringing about the crumbling downfall of what the other person has just argued for; or a willingness to acquire this skill within two years of assuming the position.

- You endorse philosophy as a way of life. Not that we would in any way expect a philosophy professional to match actions to words, in the manner of the social virtue theory of Ban Zhao (c. 45–116 CE), the asceticism of Theano of Croton's (who flourished in the sixth century BCE), or Arete of Cyrene's (from the fifth or fourth century BCE) hedonism. Rather, we would expect them to regard the activity doing philosophy for our organisation as a way of being in the world to which they are willing to dedicate their entire life.

- You would enjoy the thrill of competing with others for research grants, publication opportunities, employment security, office space, coffee mugs, dignity.

- Someone who either by identity, inheritance, or years of 'training, socialisation, and immersion' has come to look and sound much like the people currently already dominating the corridors would be the best fit for this position.

What we offer

Employment

The successful candidate will be understood to provide a service to our o rganisation on the AaaS enterprise model (occupational Terms and Conditional apply). Hence they will be considered an independent contractor rather than an employee of our organisation. They can look forward to having all standard benefits that would come with standard employment security withheld.

Salary

Most of our contracted philosophers regard the ability to provide a service to our organisation as a reward in its own right. Our organisation goes above and beyond this, by in addition paying all our contractors in exposure— offering a unique opportunity to uplift their personal brand. Exposure will come in two forms: first, to *students* in the form of the opportunity to teach (up to, and typically no fewer than, 6 classes per semester); second, to *other professionals*, by offering them a chance to compete with similarly contracted philosophers to have their name listed on our website and to be allowed to use institutional letterhead.

Work hours

We know that a main priority for professional philosophy service providers is freedom, and that most find strict working hours limiting. Hence the successful applicant will be given the liberty to be able to make their own choices about where and when to carry out their philosophy service work—w hether this be in our HQ's freshly refurbished co-w orking space (charges will be applied at market rate), in a corridor, a park bench, sobbing on the bathroom floor, or during one of the shifts of additional labour one will inevitably have to take up to ward off starvation. We will not restrict any contractor by allocating limited work hours and offer anyone the opportunity to work between 0 and 168 hours a week as they see fit.

Apply

A complete application must be submitted online by the closing date.

More information about the conditions of employment can be obtained at the following web address: doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.2407748. (We are aware that rumours are circulating that academic philosophy's work arrangements would resemble those of a drug gang. For our own and other people's safety, we could not possibly comment.)

We are strongly committed to using the label Equal Opportunity Employer to ourselves and have yet to encounter anyone flush enough with cash to afford the legal

fees to challenge us on this assertion in court. We would certainly consider providing an inclusive, non- discriminatory, and harassment- free working environment, provided that doing so does not require us to make any changes to the superbly efficient way we are currently running our organisation. We are proud to offer a platform which ensures that members of presently dominant groups in the profession will continue to see themselves overrepresented in the discipline.

16. Thinking-emoting-reflecting: Beyond Love

Rónké Òké

I fell in love with philosophy as a college student at Spelman College. At that time philosophy was an "elective": courses I added to my schedule for pure enjoyment and little investment; courses that catered to my furtive liking of inquiry; courses that did not distract from my more important pursuits to become an attorney. By the time I decided to pursue a Master's degree, philosophy had become more integral to my life. I found in philosophy a solace that made me more confident as a *thinking-emoting-reflecting* Black woman in the world, yet even more vulnerable about my place in it. As I *think-emote-reflect* on my experiences to write this essay I return to the most impactful moment in my philosophical life, namely, my first foray into Existential philosophy and learning about "meaning- making." Thus, it seems natural to begin this essay with a discussion of the meaning of philosophy. From the Greek word *philo* (meaning "love of") and *sophia* (meaning "wisdom") we get the definition of philosophy as *the love of wisdom*. Although accurate, this definition fails to capture the *meaning* of philosophy or my entryway into this field. This definition makes philosophers appear to be self-i ndulgent and romanticizes a field that, especially for many philosophers of color, is at times incapable of loving you back. As a philosophical subdiscipline, Existentialism taught me a fundamental difference between *definitions* and *meanings*. *Definitions* offer a shared clarity of understanding and are often accepted as truth without much discourse. *Meanings* help mediate the relationships we forge between ourselves and everything that is both internal and external to this starting point. Understanding what philosophy is (and hence, what philosophy is good for) requires that I recount the moment when the work I do as a professional philosopher became clearest to me. It might come as a surprise to learn that I did not know what "Ph.D." stood for until I submitted the graduation papers for my doctoral program. PhD is the Latin abbreviation of *philosophiae doctor* making anyone who obtains a PhD—no matter their field of study—e ssentially a "doctor of philosophy" in their particular discipline. In other words, *philosophy is the bedrock of every discipline*. It is one of the few fields that lends itself to be in the service of every other discipline.

Through the course of this essay I attempt to merge various aspects of philosophy in order to move beyond a merely erotic (love of) relationship to philosophy. My goal is to present philosophy as (1) a discipline I love (even when it does not love me);

(2) a "meaning-m aking" tool that has helped me to make sense of who I am; (3) a multifaceted field of study that enables me to think locally while acting globally; and (4) how women-c entered approaches to philosophy has deepened my understanding and confidence as a *thinking-emoting- reflecting* Black woman philosopher.

Philosophy as Egomania

I am fundamentally invested in the discipline of philosophy. It is my chosen intellectual home and has provided me with the tools and resources I need to engage in this world in a more meaningful and authentic way. More importantly, it has allowed me to ask and explore my most personal and urgent questions. Whenever I give public talks I begin by designating my research agenda as "*egocentric*" and note that "my work is an exercise of *egomania*." I describe my philosophical approach in this way because philosophy has helped me understand who I am (in terms of identity and as the Existential question I am to myself) and has helped me come to terms with the complexities of that understanding. There are factual claims that can give the impression that the question is easily resolved: a) I was born in Nigeria; b) both of my parents are Nigerian. Therefore, *I am Nigerian*. But before accepting this conclusion wholesale, the statement— *I am Nigerian*— needs to be unpacked. Philosophers like to use the word "unpack" in conversation. In a way unpacking is the core methodology of the discipline. Unpacking a concept or a statement means that you expose all of the underlying (i.e., *sedimented*) historical, sociopolitical, psychic, and anthropological assumptions—c onscious and subconscious—t hat imbue that concept/statement with meaning. Unpacking is akin to peeling an onion in order to uncover its core, similar to how philosophy is at the core of every discipline. Understanding my claim to a Nigerian identity is to explore what it means to don that claim as an identity and to wrestle with the contradictions that lie within.

I was born in Nigeria *yet* I was raised in the US. I was born in Nigeria *yet* I do not speak any of the languages native to Nigeria. Both of my parents are Nigerian *yet* we do not share any experiences of being or living as a Nigerian. I have been told that I neither look nor act like a Nigerian (whatever that means). So, *am I Nigerian*? My earliest childhood memories are not of Nigeria but of how I used to be bullied, taunted, called many names (none of which was my birthname), the things that were thrown at me, and other formidable feelings of isolation. All of this occurred, as I was told by my African American peers, because I was African (not African American), and further more because I was the *wrong type* of African. It was in those pubescent moments that I first suffered my Africanness. Although I shared the same phenotypic attributes with those that told me I was too African to interact with, too African to be included and, too African to share certain spaces, there was a difference: they represented a community I did not belong to. I was *not* African American and as (un) official gate keepers of Blackness, I believed that they knew who did and did not

belong. In response I retreated to the Nigerian sub-c ommunity that was beginning to burgeon in my hometown and emerge in my parent's lives. This was a turning point for me. As my parents started to form deep friendships with families from the same tribe (Yoruba) or locality, they were able to find solace in these spaces. They found others who were going through the same difficulties and expressing the same struggle to cope with this new world. They found solidarity, community, a home—t he essential aspects of a shared identity— and became comfortable in their surroundings. I thought I would enter into these Nigerian spaces and instantly find refuge like my parents. I soon came to realize that what was actually to be found was the same type of rejection that greeted me at school. I was told by my Nigerian peers and family friends that I was not Nigerian, *but* African American. Within the Nigerian community I perfectly embodied this hyphenated identity: I am an African who had become Americanized.

In addition to finding out I was not African American, childhood also brought with it the knowledge that I was not Nigerian either. Unfortunately, these are not indefensible assertions. There are good grounds to support the claim that I am *not* African American. For example, many of the African American cultural references are lost on me indicating that I could not extract any communal meanings from the experiences they had or we shared. My favorite food is moi-m oi and egusi while my peers tend to enjoy pizza or soul food. Most significantly, I grew up in a house that was culturally Nigerian with Nigerian values and when asked where I am from I reply "Nigeria." There are even good grounds to claim that I am *not* Nigerian. For one, I grew up in a house that was functionally American and I hold American values. I do not have a customary Nigerian accent. Apparently, I cannot pronounce my own name "correctly" and I cannot speak Yoruba. Furthermore, many of the Nigerian cultural references too are lost on me. The meaning-m aking signposts that govern each cultural and ethnic foundation did not root me in either the Nigerian category or African American category.

So, *am I Nigerian or African American?* As you can see, deciding whether I am Nigerian or African American is a complicated decision that forces us to approach the question not of what to choose, but the more primordial question of how does one select their identity. Spending years trying to provide a suitable answer to this question allowed me to understand (and also to embody) in a cavernous way the Existential concept of *ambiguity* and what it means to live one's identity in ambiguity. To capture the ambiguity of identity means to ask the central question of identity—t hat is, *what does it mean to say x is my identity*— in an intentional way. Philosophy has introduced into my analysis theoretical frameworks that have proved useful in thinking about my identity. The reason why my research is egocentric is because there can only be an ambiguous resolution to the question *am I Nigerian or African American* and I am trying to make sense of these experiences of crises this ambiguity produces. Although it is in crises that these structures of identity are made explicit, it is not only in crisis that these issues of identity emerge. Philosophically, we all live unashamedly on the boundaries of our own identities. Given this, I engage in living my identity everyday

(the practice of meaning-m aking) and find new and different ways to express my ambiguity.

In 2008 I was crowned Miss Nigeria in America. To me this pageant aptly captured my ambiguity. There were many blurred boundaries throughout the competition. During the pageant we represented various Nigerian tribes and had to write a paper on the dialect in these tribes. But the entire pageant was spoken in English with minor interruptions of Yoruba/Igbo/Hausa. We also wore both traditional clothes and pageant dresses. No one complained about the inauthenticity of our claims to ambiguity or suggested that our pageantry assumed boldfaced contradictions. I interacted with those who felt their identities like I did, walked around embodied by the experiences I have. I finally found my community. I welcomed the crown and title with open arms and tears of joy because I realize that I exist in the *borderlands.*

Philosophy as Praxis

Philosophy is a doing; it is a *praxis.* Philosophy is a field that (should) strive to bridge the theoretical with its practical correlate. Most of the work we do as professional philosophers occurs in the classroom. Consequently, the classroom becomes the space where we enact our praxis. As the only woman of color and philosopher many of my University students will encounter in their entire four years, I hold a very unique position in their intellectual development and knowledge of the world. This is what makes philosophy, at least for me, an *embodied* discipline. In addition to bringing ideas to the classroom my students bring themselves. They bring experiences, historical contexts, educational training, biological and biographical information, fears and biases, social influences, and religious/moral views. Likewise, I bring myself to every meeting with them. I fully understand that my presence may challenge theirs, as well as the reality that they may stand in contrast to my real and lived experience. But this is the gift. The questioning of the other, the challenge of contradiction, and the discomfort of difference rips us from our egocentricity and causes us to see our own realities differently. Students will bring themselves fully to class; they will remain perspectival, sighted only by a lens that reflects outwards, and replicate those ideas that bias their testimony. It is their default position. But *my* presence, the readings from different philosophers, traditions, and backgrounds, the contributions from other classmates and the encounter with alterity (otherness) will create a space for new ideas to be created. If I bring myself, fully, into the dialogical space, and encourage my students to do the same we can have a genuine moment of rebirth. Philosophy is a dialectical enterprise. It is the synthetic result of a meeting between two speaking, thinking subjects. What we currently know about race, identity and "multiculturalism" has been informed by our dialogues with speaking and thinking subjects, and these dialogues inscribe certain narrative structures as they shape their reflexive application. Dialogue has the ability to teach us something new and reveal something new to us; it is transformational. For

this reason, the nature of dialogue is of particular importance to me as a professional philosopher and dialogue is the fulcrum of the work I do as a philosopher.

I challenge my students to achieve free and authentic thinking. Thinking is free when it remains in the motion of the present and is allowed to fashion itself at will. And it is authentic when it arises out of organic processes and remains true to its freedom to construct an environment on its terms alone. This amounts to a classroom of speakers and thinkers who not only benefit from the exchange of ideas but participate in the creation of knowledge and in the construction of new collective realities. More and more I have come to understand that philosophy needs to be in service to the world and, therefore, I recognize the limits of my training and reinvest in my commitment to serve the communities in which I belong and those I do not. I am a pseudo-African, pseudo-N igerian, pseudo-A merican, pseudo-i mmigrant, pseudo- transnationalist, pseudo-militant, cis-gender, well-educated, middle-class, able- bodied, Christian, non- conformist Black woman who has spent most of her intellectual career ruminating and disambiguating identity categories and labels in order to make sense of the phenomenal experiences and political life of belonging, home, citizenship, and alienation that animate most of my experiences. I understand the specificity of my identity and work to ensure these positional locations do not overdetermine my analyses. I stand firm on the idea that the work of a philosopher begins in experience, extends through the classroom and re- enters into the world.

Philosophical Killjoys

Above all else, philosophy is a "discipline." Throughout this essay I have been shifting between two meanings of the word, *discipline*. I have used *discipline* to describe philosophy as a branch of knowledge (or field of academic study), detailing from my own perspective what philosophy is, what philosophers do, and how philosophy has helped me disentangle my personal experiences. In the concluding section of this essay, I want to outline how philosophy can be understood as a *discipline* in another more deleterious sense, that is, as an indoctrinating mechanism that regulates human behavior and thinking. I want to explore the ways philosophy exists as a normative (and normalizing) tool in order to outline what women in philosophy have contributed to philosophical discourse and how we can change the "discipline" of philosophy by making it more inclusive.

The history of Western philosophy, as we know it, is rooted in the figure of Socrates as "the *gadfly* of Athens" (See Plato's "The Apology"). A *gadfly* is someone who annoys, rouses, and provokes others with their incessant questioning and criticism. On the one hand, this Socratic method has produced the foundational skills and critical analyses paramount to the study of philosophy. On the other hand, it is the source of the highly antagonistic, competitive and combative culture of professional philosophical spaces and interpersonal dynamics. (Including more women in philosophy would reverse this

conceptual engineering and would reinforce our general (and philosophical commitment to socio-m aterial change for all.) But this is not the only reason why the "gadfly" trope fails to resonate with me. In my experience, it is difficult to operate as a gadfly *and* as a Black woman in philosophy. The policing practices in philosophy make it such that you often have to fight against philosophy in order to pursue the research projects that are most meaningful to you, and even for your testimony and experiences in the discipline (and in the world) to be recognized as a true account of reality. I remember finally summoning the courage to ask a question in one of my graduate seminars. I was roused to ask whether Hegel relegates Africans to the level of symbolic art or if Hegel believed that even this primary externalization of the beautiful was impossible for Black people. The professor responded by dismissing the question: "we will get to it later" (we never did attend to the racial divisions in his Aesthetic work). In that space, I failed to become a gadfly. No one was provoked to take my question seriously, let alone challenge their reading and thinking on racial distinctions in this canonical philosophical text. I realized then that something else was occurring in these spaces that had little to do with my ability to push philosophical boundaries and had more to do with my positionality as a *thinking-emoting-reflecting* Black woman. This moment represented for me the limits and dangers of the political and academic project of the "discipline." It was not until I began shifting my intellectual focus to more women-c entered approaches to philosophy that I understood that I was not a gadfly but a racial and philosophical *killjoy.* A killjoy is someone who deliberately putrefies the enjoyment of others. (My students lovingly joke that "*I do not want people to be happy.*") My use of "killjoy" comes from Sara Ahmed's work, most notably the final chapters of her book, *Living a Feminist Life.* Conceptually "killjoy" better describes the verbal and nonverbal ways that my presence in the world can arouse, provoke, and create resistance, and entails the various ways my incessant questioning stops, interrupts, and ruptures the flow of conversation. It also captures the ways I operate in this role that often turns back on the spaces and communities I belong to and those I do not, continuously pushing boundaries beyond their limits.

This is the life of a philosophical killjoy. And it is a necessary role to play. Women- centered approaches to philosophy, especially, transnational women- centered approaches—c reate moments to critically analyze philosophical safety zones. When I think of canonical philosophical texts, I have in mind Oyeronke Oyewumi whose *The Invention of Women: Making an African Sense of Western Gender Discourses* continues the work of decolonializing gender by challenging Westernized conceptions of gender as they impose themselves on the African context. I also have in mind Iris Marion Young whose collection of essays (most notably, "Breasted Experience: The Look and the Feeling," "Menstrual Meditations," and "Throwing Like a Girl") taught me to how apply this framework directly to my life. And finally, I think of bell hooks' *Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center* which first help me to enact this shift to a Black woman centered approach. These texts continue to deepen my understanding and confidence as a thinker.

Being a philosophical killjoy is a daunting excision of the intellectual life, especially in a field that at times works against your own survival in it. In her chapter outlining her own "killjoy survival kit" Ahmed writes about how essential *other killjoys* are to her own survival and by extension, to her ability to continue the work she performs. As she explains, "I cannot think of being a killjoy without the company of other killjoys. This is not about identity; it is not about assuming a community of killjoys [....] Rather, it is about the experience of having others who recognise the dynamics because they too have been there, in that place, that difficult place" (*Living a Feminist Life*, 235). This collection of essays was intended to enact a similar shift toward women-c entered approaches by highlighting a variety of women philosophers. With this in mind, I would like to conclude with a litany of women I have encountered throughout my philosophical journey—m y bevy of *other killjoys*—w ho have shaped my understanding of the field and have been instrumental in forming my philosophical orientation (#TribeGoals).

This essay is dedicated to Dr. **Shaeeda Mensah** (Philosophy of Punishment & Sexuality/Gender) and our shared journey in this field. I had Dr. Mensah in mind as I tried to articulate the limits of the concept of love to capture the depth of any one philosophical experience (like friendship). She taught me how to survive this field and that the key to doing so is to maintain a healthy (but necessary) detachment from it. Without a doubt, Dr. Mensah is one of the brightest minds we have in this field and she embodies what it means for philosophy to be in the *service of life*. Dr. **Qrescent Mali Mason** (Feminist Philosophy & #BlackGirlMagic) taught me that joy, play and dance are truly what uphold a love of anything, and once the *thinking-reflecting* practice of philosophy loses sight of the *emotive* it stops being a viable space for the nourishment of your *body+mind+soul+spirit+living+doing*. Dr. **Camisha Russell** (Bioethics & Feminism) taught me how to hone the craft of writing and how enjoyable it is to read well- written, sharp, provocative essays. Dr. **Axelle Karera** (Contemporary Critical Theories & Environmental Humanities) taught me how to find myself within and through philosophy, and helped me stabilize my voice when others tried to make it quiver. More importantly she helped me to realize that I will not be happy in life unless I am able to both create and inspire. She remains the indefatigable pulse of philosophy. Dr. **Nathifa Greene** (Ethics & Decolonial Philosophy of the Americas) taught me an important lesson about scholarly confidence and how each oral presentation makes way for a unique encounter with yourself, which coincidently helped me eradicate the fatal threat of my imposter syndrome. Dr. **Vanessa Wills** (Marxism & Political Philosophy) taught me the importance of having and building supportive philosophical networks. Dr. **Gertrude Gonzalez de Allen** was the first one to see my philosophical potential. She forced me to accept that there was space for someone like me in philosophy and has mentored me throughout my journey. Dr. **Al- Yasha Williams** introduced me to Michel Foucault's *Discipline and Punish*, which (as you can tell from this essay) inspired my thinking on the nature of "discipline." **Ndidi Nwaneri** taught me that Nigeria has plenty of professional philosophers but not enough women philosophers with a desire to work in local communities. Drs. **Nancy Tuana and**

Shannon Sullivan taught me that it is possible to do philosophical work adjacent to the University and to lean into that desire. Dr. **Jameliah Shorter-Bourhanou** (Kant & Cosmopolitanism) taught me not to be ashamed of my preference for teaching over research. She also taught me the most about how to honor our commitments to undergraduate students of color. **Allilia Price** (Aesthetics) taught me that my skillset extends beyond the academic disciplining of philosophy and reminded me to connect my work to more artistic expressions. Dr. **Gabriella Beckles- Raymond** (Critical Philosophy of Race) taught me that being successful in this discipline does not require you to sacrifice everything dear to you but to fashion your career in a way that brings you the most happiness. Dr. **Tiffany Tsantsoulas** (Feminist Philosophy & Critical Phenomenology) taught me how to read texts in a pleasurable way. I have never met another person who can deconstruct, interpret and transform ideas with such ease. My goal in life is to be half of the educator she is. She is terrifyingly good. Dr. **Elisabeth Pasquette** (Feminist Theory & Political Philosophy) taught me (and by extension, her partner Dr. Andrea Pitts) the importance of creating spaces of intellectual nourishment and to continue to read against both the canon and my own intellectual safety zones. Dr. **Desiree Valentine** (Critical Philosophy of Race (CPR) & Queer Theory) taught me to enjoy the pace of my career and to embrace opportunities as they come. Most importantly she taught me that writing papers for publication does not need to be a demoralizing task and encouraged me to alter my relation to philosophical writing. Dr. **Myisha Cherry** (Moral Psychology & SocioPolitical) taught me that my philosophical career can be broader than the confines of the University and that public philosophical discourse is integral to the work that we do. Drs. **Jea Sophia Oh, Joan Woolfrey, and Helen Schroepfer** taught me about how to balance teaching and research without losing my sanity (or compassion). **Theodra Bane** (Social Justice & Decoloniality) taught me to explore new philosophical resources. She was there when I transformed my philosophical turn toward African literature into a public programming platform (The African Literati @theafricanliterati). **Emma Valez** (Latinx Feminisms) taught me how to be a critical, decolonial feminist. Her work continues to inspire my thinking on AfroFeminism. **Nicole Yokum** taught me the importance of shared spaces of mutuality, that is, how important it is to be in these spaces so that others can know how important it is for them to be in these spaces. Dr. **Ayesha Abdullah (**Twentieth Century Continental) taught me to follow my heart and have courage. I learned from her that I can be an exceptional philosopher and still choose another path. Dr. **Lindsey Stewart** (Black Feminism & Political Agency) taught me to love the stories of Black women and the importance of centering our experiences in my research. Dr. **Kimberly Ann Harris** (History of Philosophy) taught me a lot about discipline and how important it is to change the physical location from which one writes from. Dr. **Aminah Hasan- Birdwell** (Modern Philosophy) encouraged my love for Levinasian ethics and, while doing, taught me the importance of biography to the contextualization of philosophical ideas. Dr. **Avril Fuller** was the first to teach me about interdisciplinarity and how easy it is to take philosophy into any disci-

pline. Dr. **Tamara Haywood** taught me that my philosophical career is a marathon not a race. Dr. **Samaiyah Jones- Scott** (African American Philosophy) exposed me to the works of notable African American thinkers and taught me to take these canonical figures seriously. **Romy Opperman** taught me how to be a full person, an authentic self *and* a philosopher. Dr. **Janine Jones** taught me everything I need to know about taking up space as a Black woman in a room. Her command of the room and lack of intimidation always seemed to reverberate through each person in the room. Dr. **Falguni Sheth** (Political Philosophy of Race) taught me how to ask profound questions that tear away the superficial, questions that are simultaneously robust, piercing, critical, prospective and constructive. Dr. **Alia Al- Saji** taught me how to integrate my experiences (and those of my community and background) into my densely philosophical work while respecting the communities/experiences I draw from. Dr. **Kris Sealey** (Levinas & Postcolonial Theory) has been a role model throughout my philosophical career. She taught me how to do this work well and without losing my integrity. More importantly she taught me that I never have to choose between competing philosophical commitments. Dr. **Sarah Clark- Miller** (Feminist Ethics) taught me what ethics looks like in practice and embodied. She has been an advocate for many of the women listed here and has taught me what it means to invest in others and support the women coming after me in this field. Dr. **Mariana Ortega** is who I have in mind when I think of "radical feminist killjoys." Her presence makes you believe in the future of philosophy. Dr. **Rozena Maart** (Political Philosophy & Black Consciousness) taught me to enjoy my philosophical voice and the way it articulates my inner life. She also taught me to explore fiction writing and I am happy to report that I am in the processes of completing my first novel. Dr. **Desiree H. Melton** (Social/Political Philosophy) taught me how to thrive in this field and make philosophy work for me. Dr. **Jacqueline Scott** (Nietzsche & Critical Philosophy of Race) taught me most about kindness and being an authentic person. Her advice during the early years of my tenure-t rack forged my "radical pedagogy" which I used to help my students produce "The Black Womxn Collective" newsletter (The first issue can be found here: https:/ /mailchi.mp/b374c55ac5cd/newsletter-f ebruary-2019-the- blk-womxn-collective) . Dr. **Kristie Dotson** (Epistemology & Black Feminism) taught me about the politics of publishing and citation practices. More importantly she taught me that, although you must remain adept in the type of philosophy that panders to maleness and whiteness, your approach to philosophy should be personal and draw on commitments that begin prior to your encounter with this discipline. And finally, Dr. **Anika Simpson** taught me that the philosophical journey is non- linear, and that it is important to pursue the type of career that works best for you, even if your colleagues do not understand. Ultimately, as she has shown through her most recent research project, what you draw from the personal to create the philosophical will become a truly beautiful and revolutionary act that will push the ever-s tagnant grain of philosophical discourse. These are certainly not all the women, nor all the lessons that have shaped me as a philosopher

but hopefully they help you both begin and understand what philosophers do, what philosophy is good for, and why we need more voices like these in our discipline.

17. On Doing Philosophy: Territory, Discipline and Practices

Mickaella Perina

In this essay, after briefly positing philosophy as a discipline I examine p hilosophy as a practice of interrogation to account for the diversity of traditions within philosophy and discuss its potential benefits. I propose an interrogation of the concepts of self and others within French Caribbean thought as an example of what that practice of interrogation can be and examine the challenges of integrating marginalized or silenced voices and ignored texts.

Philosophy in Western academia, like other disciplines, can be represented as a bounded territory within which some practices and inquiries are deemed legitimate and others are not. The territory maintains its identity through the policing of an external border often conceived of as impermeable and operating as a wall separating academic philosophy from other disciplines, other inquiries, and other methodologies. Additionally the territory comprises sub- territories— subfields such as history of philosophy, political philosophy or Africana philosophy— contained by internal borders occasionally regarded as less porous than the external border. These borders are seen as necessary to the very existence of the territory—t he more stringent the border, the stronger the territory— and border crossing is often a perilous enterprise. Indeed internal and external borders are maintained by practices designed to select not only adequate skills and proper inquiries but also suitable candidates to full or temporary membership. Often this territory is not regarded as located in either time or space, and as a result inquiries and methodologies appear as universal when they are in fact historically and geographically situated. In other words, what is often regarded as philosophy is Western philosophy and what is often unnamed or denied by assumed universalist claims are the other world philosophies. But the territory could be imagined differently; the diversity of traditions within the territory— including commonalities and differences— and the necessary moderate permeability of borders could be recognized and affirmed. While I appreciate the importance of the discipline of philosophy in academia, in the West and elsewhere, I want to underscore and question the historical process that put the Western tradition at the center and all other traditions at the periphery of the discipline. In what follows I also make the case for a conception of philosophy as a practice of interrogation that is more encompassing and able to account for both what takes place in academia for academics but also what can be made accessible to a larger audience. While some philosophical questions are of interest mainly to

experts, others are relevant to the lives of many who are not professional philosophers and of interest to them.

An Exercise in Philosophical Interrogation: Self and Others in Francophone Caribbean Thought

What does it mean to be human? How do we relate to one another? These questions have been at the heart of humans' concerns, and they have been answered in a great variety of ways. These answers differ and at times conflict with one another. In Francophone Caribbean thought—d iscussed below through the contributions of Aimé and Suzanne Césaire, Frantz Fanon, Edouard Glissant and Maryse Condé—t he lived experience of colonialism, imperialism, slavery, and racism has been regarded as central to the understanding of self and others. In Aimé Césaire's view, for instance, experience is central to consciousness and understanding, as much central as self-e xamination and logical operation of abstraction are in other traditions. For Césaire, the specific experience of slavery and colonialism grounds a phenomenological experience of the colonized, and the practice of interrogation becomes a tool to clarify and articulate inter-s ubjectivity. In the process of addressing the question of alterity, the state of being different, his main question becomes how to end what he understood as the colonization of lands, bodies and minds.

Within the same tradition and providing also an account of self and others, Frantz Fanon addresses a slightly different, although not unrelated, question. He asked how the subjectivity of a colonized subject is constructed and how the politics of (white) assimilation contributed to self- fragmentation. He contends that the idea of the "human" that comes from the European tradition is fundamentally racial and is deployed as a tool of alienation for the colonized. In his view, white social and cultural norms are imposed on the colonized subject who must wear a white mask that produces in the colonized subject a sense of alienation and homelessness. The colonized, however, retains the ability to resist and re- configure her subjectivity. The understanding of the self under colonialism and imperialism provided by Fanon is both grounded in the very particular experience of colonialism but remains relevant to others who do not have that experience. While the objectification of the colonized is a personal and intimate experience, it leads to the universal. In this perspective alienation is a manifestation of the self, in the colonized self the unity of the self— typically assumed to be universal— is lacking and the colonized self is a fragmented self. Consequently, colonialism is understood to be a threat to the unity of the self. Fanon explains that under conditions of colonialism the self is governed by the other, which leads to a form of self-m isrecognition, but it can be recovered. He calls this recovering of the self after colonialism dis- alienation.

Still in this tradition, Edouard Glissant proposes yet another set of interrogations: How to be oneself without closing one's self off from the other? How to open oneself to the other without losing oneself? He examines the complexities of subjective identification in the context of what he conceived of as a creolizing Caribbean experience resulting from colonization. This leads him to interrogate assumptions about self,

identity and place. He conceives of the Caribbean Sea as a place of passage, a place of transience, a place that implies relativity and is open to diversity. Against the idea of root- identity he proposes the idea of rhizomic identity, an identity that reach out through multiple roots, to insist on fragmentation and doubling. Instead of tracing origins back to a single root, the rhizomic, multiple- rooted identity reflects a plural identity. Understanding identity as rhizomic implies an emphasis on the role of space and place over that of temporality, as well as a focus on intersection and interdependence. For Glissant, the encounter between self and others produces recognition and awareness instead of re- inscribing domination and difference. The encounter does not produce knowledge of the other or transparency. Opacity is an important conceptual tool to understand the grounding of relationships between individuals and communities. The idea is that there is a zone of opacity in any individual or community that cannot be communicated; in other words opacity is that part of identity that remains inaccessible to outsiders. The rejection of transparency as ground for relation is a response to the conceptual history of transparency, by which in Glissant's view Europeans sought to make the "opaque Other" transparent. The opacity, the incapability of being known, becomes an alternative acknowledgement of subjectivity.

On my reading the three thinkers I have discussed so far have produced important conceptual tools and conducted philosophical inquiries to account for important human experiences. They have used a practice of interrogation and have articulated their understanding of an experience that is relevant to the lives of many. They have done so from their own situated-n ess, from the perspective of "colonised" or "post-c olonised" men, and it is legitimate to ask whether this very situatedness is not emphasized at the exclusion of others, namely at the exclusion of the experience of women writers. What we take to be representative of the field or the bounded territory is not immune to exclusion and oppression, and we must question what we include and do not include. There is no reason why Caribbean thought would be immune, and it is important to acknowledge the voices that are often not mentioned or counted among those who have provided conceptual tools to account for this experience. There are numerous overlooked or ignored voices that are typically not invoked as full members of this tradition, in part because of the form they chose to express themselves. These contributions deserve a full discussion that must be postponed for now, it is impossible to do them justice in the limited space allocated here given that they would need to be fully introduced first. I will nevertheless cite Suzanne Roussi Césaire here as an example. In 1942 in her essay "An Impoverished poetry" she called for a true Martinican poetry conceiving of it as literary cannibalism against what she saw as "sugar and vanilla literature." For the Guadeloupian novelist and essayist Maryse Condé, Suzanne Césaire's contributions are of the utmost significance; Condé argues that the failure to recognize her as an important Caribbean thinker is a result of gender bias. In my view, Condé's understanding of Suzanne Césaire's contributions places them in a tradition that interrogates conceptions of the self and others. She sees Suzanne Césaire's work as

demonstrating that African and European transformed or renewed in the new cultural contexts of the Caribbean.

The experience of colonialism, imperialism, slavery, racism, and racialization in the Caribbean is central to these various practices of interrogation as well as to the analysis and understanding of self and others. Conceptions of colonized bodies and minds, fragmented and dis- alienated selves, and relational selves contribute to further an understanding of subjectivity achieved through encounters.

Doing Philosophy Taking Situatedness and Embodiment Seriously

Understanding philosophy as both an academic discipline and a practice of interrogation invites questions about the possible permeability of the borders described above. It suggests that the level of permeability between subfields and between traditions might be less stringent that initially understood and perhaps, moreover, that a moderate permeability is both necessary and desirable. Such understanding is likely to make border crossing or interdisciplinarity less risky and to create incentive for addressing questions that are relevant to two or more subfields. It will also, and perhaps more importantly, make conceivable the extension of the initial external border to integrate inquiries, understanding and concepts originally excluded or regarded as foreign to the discipline. Philosophers understood as practitioners appear situated geographically, historically, religiously, socially, culturally, sexually, etc., and their inquiries and conceptual analyses are not disembodied. The practitioner navigates the territory aware of her own situatedness, although not bounded by it, and takes both her own experience and epistemic situatedness seriously.

The practice of philosophical interrogation takes various forms in different traditions while addressing difficult problems involving skills and understandings that are potentially beneficial to all. To take situatedness seriously means to be willing to question one's own situation in regard to the production of what counts or does not count as philosophical analysis and to examine how and why particular experiences and understandings have been excluded as irrelevant. To take embodiment seriously is to acknowledge and challenge the ways in which aspects of group identities including practices, values, understandings and experiences are being assigned or denied meaning within established processes of production and reproduction of philosophical knowledge. In that sense, the philosophical practice of interrogation is not always a neutral enterprise.

Each discipline— and philosophy is no exception— has its own language and its own tools. The dynamics of concept creation and knowledge production have the potential both to afford power and to take power away. Once embodiment and situatedness are taken seriously, the unbalance between those primarily regarded as knowledge- makers and those primarily conceived of as objects of knowledge is clear. Knowledge production is an activity that creates categories, and by doing so it always has the potential for oppression, domination and alienation. Philosophy as an academic discipline has not been immune to such consequence.

Black women philosophers have experienced the unbalance inherent to knowledge production in the academic discipline of philosophy and it is no secret that they have found the discipline inhospitable. Despite their small number, they have expressed concerns about the environment and about the definition of philosophy that excludes specific issues, methodologies and understandings. What explains this exclusion? In a 2012 article, Kristie Dotson writes "Ultimately I claim that the environment of professional philosophy particularly in the US bears symptoms of a culture of justification, which creates a difficult working environment for many diverse practitioners." The "culture of justification" is the culture that demands a "legitimation narrative" based on pre- established norms and, on that basis, determines what counts as philosophy. This culture makes questions relevant to specific groups necessarily foreign to the assumed canon and to the discipline. To return to the image of philosophy as a bounded territory that I used at the beginning of this essay, one can see this culture of justification as doing the policing of the external border to decide who and what inquiry belongs or does not. Against it, Dotson calls for a shift within the profession and proposes a "culture of Praxis" that would make possible the inclusion of diverse practices and voices. This culture of praxis involves both the recognition of a variety of canons (as opposed to one) and an appreciation for the diversity of relevant issues that will be raised in relation to experiences in various groups. The idea of philosophy as a practice of interrogation based on experience that I discussed here is very compatible with Dotson's "culture of Praxis" and yet it is dissimilar. As I understand it her "culture of praxis" is a professional culture that applies or should apply to professional philosophy; the practice of interrogation I defend take various forms some of them reserved to professional philosophers others accessible to non-p rofessional. This shift is much needed but remains a challenge; the borders of the discipline continue to be regarded as impermeable when they need to be seen as moderately permeable.

The Challenge of Including Unnoticed Voices and Neglected Texts

When committed to historicity, situatedness and finding knowledge in e xperience the practice of philosophical interrogation can challenge biases and promote relationality. I do not mean to suggest that committing one's practice to situatedness, historicity, and experience and recognizing other understandings and experiences as worthy of intellectual engagement necessarily eradicates biases but rather that it is a necessary condition for the very possibility of challenging existing biases. Engaging with other's experiences and understandings of themselves and the world is also valuable for the practitioner's self-k nowledge. Those whose experiences, understandings and conceptualizations have been denied proper recognition—a s exemplified earlier in the case of women writers— are not immune from internalizing and reproducing processes of exclu-

sion, and they may even be tempted to insist on differences and on the impermeability of the borders I described in the first section. The point here is that moderate permeability between sub- territories is both required and desirable if we are to recognize the value of doing philosophy in different traditions. Practices that regard other practices, understandings, or simply embodiments as necessarily suspicious or necessarily lacking credibility need to be questioned and challenged.

Those belonging to the sphere of under- represented practices and u nderstandings have, perhaps, a responsibility to be especially attentive to the deployments of power in contexts of knowledge production and reproduction, whether these deployments are overtly manifested or whether they are in disguise. It is often easier to be suspicious toward discourses and analyses produced by those identified as others, i.e., those we see as not belonging, and to be receptive to discourses produced by those seen as full members. Both attitudes can do harm and, historically, significant harm has been done. It is important to allow and to account for dissent within communities of knowledge producers; in my view philosophical inquiry requires interrogation and understanding, not agreement.

Various calls across the globe to "decolonise knowledge" continue to be made today. Calls to "decolonise" are certainly not new, but the worldwide "decolonizing project" seems back on the agenda although it is no longer related to nation building as it was in the 1950s and 1960s. This agenda includes a criticism of Eurocentric and imperial knowledge production and an effort to determine what the alternative would be. It is fair to say that the most recent iteration of the decolonizing project have produced a number of new c onceptual tools. These include, but are not limited to, "epistemology of ignorance," "epistemic coloniality," "epistemic oppression," "epistemic exclusion," "epistemic disobedience," and "epistemology of resistance."

I will elaborate here on only one of these tools, namely the epistemology of ignorance. At first glance, epistemology and ignorance may seem opposite; indeed on the one hand epistemology is typically understood as the study of how we acquire knowledge and on the other hand ignorance is the condition of not knowing. But can these definitions hold under all circumstances? The argument is that under specific circumstances such as racism there exists a phenomenon of ignorance that produces an inverted epistemology. The "epistemology of ignorance" is the tool to examine ignorance as a substantive epistemic productive practice, a practice that is not simply neglectful but that connects knowledge to specific aspects of exclusive group identities and to oppressive system. As a conceptual tool, the epistemology of ignorance makes possible the identification and the naming of the problem and the search for means to counter it. As Linda Alcoff pointed out, a serious examination of the problem of ignorance must include an analysis of how epistemic resources are distributed and organized within a broader structure of oppression. It is important to recognize the inverted epistemology at play to address the ignorance that, in Charles Mills' words, "presents itself as knowledge" and excludes others' experiences and understandings as irrelevant.

Arguably women and groups traditionally under-r epresented in the discipline as individuals and as members of communities have been negotiating, revising and at times subverting the hegemony of philosophical discourse, thereby playing an active role in redefining the terms of the relations between the concepts, methodologies, understandings traditionally included and those traditionally excluded.

Conclusion

While philosophy arguably means different things to different people, it is important to many both within and outside academia and for different reasons. Although philosophy is mostly and primarily referred to as an academic discipline I have suggested that its definition can be more encompassing when understood as a practice of interrogation. I submit that the questions asked by philosophers or the philosophical questions asked by non-p hilosophers can be of interest to many beyond the boundaries of the academic discipline of philosophy, and it is important to make these contributions accessible. Moreover, the challenges within the discipline are likely to mirror challenges experienced outside the discipline and might be of interest to those who are not professional philosophers. I discussed philosophy as a practice of interrogation that takes various forms and involves specific skills. Understood as such, as opposed to an exclusive academic discourse that must fit predetermined norms, philosophy can account for various traditions and address human problems relevant to various groups. I then turned to two specific issues—t he construction of "self" and "others"— that I see as central to the discipline of philosophy and also of interest to many non- philosophers. My discussion of French Caribbean thinkers emphasizes how their main interrogations exemplify what I see as a practice of philosophical interrogation. Last I examined the challenges of including unheard voices and neglected texts and analyzed processes of exclusion and alienation to stress that a philosophical practice committed to historicity, situatedness and finding knowledge in experience can contribute to a better inclusivity of women's and other under- represented voices.

18. The History of Philosophy and Its Disappeared Women

Emily Thomas

Naming historical philosophers is easy. Plato. Aristotle. Descartes. Naming *historians* of philosophy – people who study Plato and Descartes – is harder. Yet history of philosophy has been around, in one form or other, as long as philosophy itself. Aristotle studied his predecessors, and much of what we know about the pre-S ocratics comes from his writings. In the third century, Diogenes Laertius wrote biographies of earlier philosophers. Medieval thinkers produced copious "commentaries" on Aristotle, critiquing his thought. English-l anguage histories of philosophy mushroomed during the first half of the twentieth century; more emerged then than during the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries combined.

Here is another group of scholars it's difficult to name: *women* philosophers. Yet women have been philosophising since at least the sixth century BCE – b efore that, the historical record itself become hazy. This essay explores the changing attitudes of history of philosophy towards women. Along the way, I'll give a brief history of the history of philosophy, and discuss its value. I'll show that evolving attitudes towards historical women philosophers provides a fresh source of worth for the history of philosophy, tackling some of philosophy's diversity problems.

A Brief History of Western History of Philosophy

History of philosophy is a kind of *history*. It's the history of philosophical t heories, arguments, zeitgeists, philosophers. It can also be a kind of *philosophy*. You might think philosophy is about certain topics: mind, beauty, reality. Or, you might think philosophy is about certain methods: arguing, uncovering assumptions, making distinctions. Either way, history of philosophy can be philosophy. A historian of philosophy puzzling over Descartes' theory of mind is worrying about minds, using philosophical methods.

Western philosophers have regularly looked to the past. Yet history of philosophy in its current form developed in the seventeenth century. In his co-authored book *Models of the History of Philosophy: From Its Origins in the Renaissance to the 'Historia Philosophica'*, Luciano Malusa argues that the date 1655 was pivotal. This year saw the publication of Georg Hornius' *Historia philosophica*, and the first volume of

Thomas Stanley's *History of Philosophy: Containing the Lives, Opinions, Actions and Discourses of the Philosophers of Every Sect*. Malusa argues these books showed the growing European need for history of philosophy. Almost a century later, from 1742 to 1744, Johann Brucker published his *Historia critica philosophiae.* Earlier writers had focussed on the lives or actions of past philosophers. Instead, Brucker focussed on their philosophical *systems*. From this point on, history of philosophy as we know it began to flourish.

Today, Western history of philosophy thrives. Scholars publish original research on all kinds of historical philosophers and movements. There are dedicated periodicals, such as *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, founded in 1963; and *British Journal for the History of Philosophy*, founded in 1993. Each receives hundreds of submissions every year. History of philosophy courses are widely taught, in universities and online. There are many textbooks and critical editions designed to help students understand the likes of Aristotle and Descartes. Is all this work worthwhile?

The Value of History of Philosophy

Let's assume that philosophy is valuable – that it's worthwhile to study the nature of reality, truth, or morality. What's the point of *history* of philosophy? The last decade has seen renewed interest in this question. Notable contributions include Ryan Nichols' 2006 article "Why is History of Philosophy Worth Our Study?"; Tim Crane's 2012 paper "Philosophy, Logic, Science, History"; and the 2013 volume *Philosophy and Its History: Aims and Methods in the Study of Early Modern Philosophy*, edited by Mogens Lærke, Justin Smith, and Eric Schliesser. Philosophers argue that history of philosophy is valuable in at least one of three ways.

First, the history of philosophy is *intrinsically* valuable – it is valuable in itself. You might think that history of all kinds is intrinsically valuable, from the history of the Roman Empire, to the history of postage stamps. As a form of history, the history of philosophy has value.

Second, history of philosophy is valuable because philosophy is a valuable activity, and philosophy is *essentially* historical. You might think philosophy is the kind of discipline whose history is "built in". You can't do philosophy independent of its history.

Finally, history of philosophy can be *instrumentally* valuable to philosophy. It can be a useful tool. While studying a philosophical question, it seems prudent to see what earlier philosophers said about it. Back in 1930, Cambridge philosopher C. D. Broad argued in this vein:

> It appears to me that the best preparation for original work on any philosophic problem is to study the solutions which have been proposed for it by men of genius whose views differ from each other as much as possible. The clash of their opinions may strike a light which will enable us to avoid

> the mistakes into which they have fallen; and by noticing the strong and weak points of each theory we may discover the direction in which further progress can be made.

Others have argued that history of philosophy can be useful to philosophy because it can broaden our philosophical horizons. Offer fresh perspectives. As Charles Taylor put it in 1984, the history of philosophy can free us from philosophic views that have become so deeply embedded they are mere "inarticulate assumptions".

I am a historian of philosophy, and I find the history of philosophy to be valuable in all these ways. I think most kinds of history are profitable, history *is* built into philosophy, and the history of philosophy can be useful to philosophy. However, I want to focus on a fourth way that history of philosophy can be valuable. History of philosophy can help philosophy *as a profession*, with regard to its gender diversity.

Women make up half the world's population, but they do not make up half the world's professional philosophers. A 2011 study of UK philosophy showed that women make up 44% of philosophy undergraduates, 26% of lecturers, and 19% of professors. Why is this the case? Another, 2015 study found that philosophy is "coded as male": students see philosophy as a male pursuit. This study found this created problems for female philosophy students: they saw themselves as less able to do well in philosophy than their male peers.

Psychology has identified a phenomenon called "stereotype threat". It occurs when group members, who identify with a negative stereotype about that group, underperform as a result. For example, stereotypically boys are better than girls at maths. Studies have shown that, when reminded of this stereotype, girls underperform in mathematics compared to boys. If students see philosophy as male, female students are at risk of stereotype threat.

It is not difficult to see why Western philosophy is coded male. Ask anyone to name a Western philosopher and they will almost certainly name a man, likely one of the "greats". Great classical thinkers include Socrates, Plato, Aristotle. Early modern greats include Descartes, Spinoza, Hobbes. As Broad wrote above, we should consider earlier solutions to philosophic problems by *men* of genius. Not only do male philosophers spring to mind more easily than female philosophers, there is a lack of women role models. Due to the low representation of women in professional philosophy, students are more likely to be taught by men than women.

How do we disrupt the coding of philosophy as male? In 2013, Jennifer Saul made the sensible suggestion that we should expose people to female philosophers. We could achieve this in many ways. For example, we can make an effort to teach the work of women philosophers, and include more of their writings on student reading lists. Also, we can show that the history of philosophy is not just a history of men – women have been in it all along.

History of Philosophy and Women

As a doctoral student, I came across Jacqueline Broad's 2002 *Women Philosophers of the Seventeenth Century.* This book was a revelation. Before reading it, I had assumed women first started practising philosophy in the twentieth century. I discovered how wrong that was. Women have been practising philosophy as far back as our records stretch.

From 1987 to 1995, Mary Ellen Waithe published her four-v olume *A History of Women Philosophers;* the first volume covers *Ancient Women Philosophers, 600 BC–500 AD* and Waithe describes the project in her introduction to the series:

> By the end of 1981 I had concluded that the accomplishments of some one hundred or more women philosophers had been omitted from the standard philosophic reference works and histories of philosophy... If the women are mentioned at all, it is in passing, in a footnote...
>
> We would help restore women's contributions to the history of philosophy through a program of careful research and scholarship.

Ancient women philosophers include Theano, Diotima, and Julia Domna. Medieval and early moderns include Hildegard of Bingen, Elisabeth of Bohemia, and Anne Conway. Late moderns include Mary Sommerville, Harriet Martineau, and Clemence Royer. Before Waithe, twentieth- century scholarship on historical women philosophers was rare. She accomplished a leviathan recovery project, demonstrating the presence of women philosophers throughout history. Her volumes became a turning point.

Gradually, more scholarship followed. Margaret Atherton's 1994 *Women Philosophers of the Early Modern Period* collected and reprinted key texts. Eileen O'Neill's 1998 article "Disappearing Ink: Early Modern Women Philosophers and Their Fate in History" reflected on how women philosophers disappeared from history. Broad published on seventeenth-c entury women, while Jane Duran's 2006 book *Eight Women Philosophers* spanned medieval to twentieth- century philosophy. My 2018 volume, *Early Modern Women on Metaphysics*, stressed that women philosophers worked on an area of philosophy stereotypically conceived as male – metaphysics, the study of reality.

Why were women philosophers almost unknown before the 1980s? O'Neill's "Disappearing Ink" asks exactly that question. She showed that the answer lies in shifting history of philosophy. She points out that earlier histories of philosophy did include women. In the seventeenth century, Stanley's *History of Philosophy* contained brief discussions of 24 women philosophers. Other books were dedicated to them, such as Jean de La Forge's 1663 *The Circle of Women Scholars*, and Gilles Ménage's 1690 *The History of Women Philosophers.* However, by the nineteenth century, few women appeared in histories of philosophy.

O'Neill argues many factors likely played a role in this. One may be the socially encouraged practice of women publishing anonymously. Another may be the preference of many women philosophers for religious topics, which later came to be seen as unphilosophical. However, O'Neill argues a significant, additional factor was the French Revolution. She argues that around the late eighteenth century women authors, particularly philosophical ones, were perceived to be a social and political threat. It follows that their works would have been suppressed to ameliorate it.

In my own research on British- American early twentieth- century philosophy, I have found related patterns. During this period, women began publishing on philosophy exceptionally widely. Some of these philosophers held professional university positions, and served as presidents of prestigious philosophical societies. Here are some examples.

From 1891 to 1929, Mary Calkins taught philosophy and psychology at Wellesley College, Massachusetts. During her career she published four books and over a hundred papers; in 1918, she became the first woman President of the American Philosophical Society. From 1897 to 1933, Beatrice Edgell taught philosophy and psychology at Bedford College, University of London. In 1930, she became the first woman President of the Aristotelian Society. Susan Stebbing became a lecturer in philosophy at Bedford College in 1920, and made headlines in 1933 when she became the UK's first woman philosophy professor. Stebbing became the second woman President of the Aristotelian Society in 1933. From 1900, Hilda Oakeley taught philosophy at McGill, Manchester University, and King's College, London. In 1940, Oakeley became the third woman President of the Aristotelian Society.

The twentieth century saw a sharp upswing in English-l anguage histories of philosophy. From 1600 to 1900, I have found that around twenty distinct authors published histories of philosophy. From 1900 to 1950, a mere 50 years, that number was equalled. By the mid-t wentieth century, histories of philosophy appeared that covered philosophy up to this point. These included Bertrand Russell's 1945 *A History of Western Philosophy,* John Passmore's 1957 *A Hundred Years of Philosophy*, G. J. Warnock's 1958 *English Philosophy Since 1900*, Dagobert Runes' 1959 *Pictorial History of Philosophy*, and Frederick Copleston's 1966 *A History of Philosophy Volume 8: Bentham to Russell.*

Calkins, Edgell, Stebbing, and Oakeley all published large volumes of p hilosophy, and were honoured by the profession. You would expect these women to appear in histories of their era. Yet they don't. Calkins receives an entry in Runes, and a passing mention in Passmore – and that's it. Edgell, S tebbing, and Oakeley do not appear in any of them. In 1959, our old friend Cambridge philosopher C. D. Broad wrote, "Philosophy is essentially a middle- aged man's game". Judging by these histories of philosophy, he spoke truly.

Final Thoughts

The recovery projects kickstarted by Waithe seek to return women to our histories of philosophy. This scholarship is valuable in all kinds of ways. It increases the accuracy of our histories: women philosophers were active in the past, and our histories should reflect this. It provides fresh philosophical ideas, arguments, and positions. This increases our understanding of historical philosophy, and may even prove useful to twenty- first- century philosophers.

And, most importantly, this scholarship helps to break down the perception that philosophy is male. Showing that the history of philosophy is not all "men of genius" helps disrupt the male coding of philosophy. Further, the work of Waithe and others makes it easier to include historical women philosophers in philosophy courses. Philosophy students need scholarship to help them understand vintage texts, and these recovery projects provide it. This provides a new way that the history of philosophy can have value: it may help professional philosophy diversify. History of philosophy can un- disappear women, and encourage new women to enter philosophy.

19. Believing is Seeing: Feminist Philosophy, Knowledge, and Perception

Briana Toole

We live our lives taking for granted certain assumptions about how we interact with the world. For instance, we might assume that in most cases we can believe the world is the way we perceive it to be. Or, we might think that, in most cases, people all see the world in the same way. These assumptions make our lives easier, allowing us to take shortcuts and respond to our environment more quickly and effectively.

It is the job of philosophers, in general, and epistemologists and philosophers of mind, in particular, to unpack these assumptions in order to determine if they are good rules to live by. Philosophers may ask whether these assumptions actually make our lives easier, or if living by them cause us to miss out on certain parts of our environment.

For much of philosophy's history, we have been guided by the idea that, in attempting to answer these questions, we should take a "view from nowhere." What this means is that we should be objective, and abstract away from the particularities of individuals. Feminist philosophers, by contrast, investigate the costs imposed by such a view.

Feminist philosophers have offered numerous insights, chief among them the idea that much of how we see and interpret this world depends on facts about the individual. In turn, they have rejected the idea that we should be guided by a "view from nowhere," since much of what we know about the world assumes a "view from somewhere."

In this essay, I explore the contributions of feminist philosophy as it bears on the questions of how we see and what we can know about the world.

Proverbs to Live By

"Seeing is believing," so goes the old adage. What does this proverb amount to? In plain language, it captures the idea that one needs to see some phenomenon in order to believe in the existence of that phenomenon. Here I examine the limitations posed by this idea. Building off the work of feminists and critical race theorists, I examine the extent to which it may be more apt to say " believing is seeing."

Consider, for instance, that our ability to recognize some feature out in the world depends on our possessing the conceptual resources (concepts, language, and associated criteria) needed for attending to that feature. Feminist scholars, ranging from Patricia Hill Collins to Gaile Pohlhaus, have argued that the conceptual resources we are in possession of depend on facts like our social location. Consequently, people occupying different social locations may be in possession of different conceptual resources altogether. It then follows that those people may notice very different aspects of the world.

This raises an intriguing question – what happens when people of group A possess a concept that people of group B lack? To illustrate, suppose that group A possesses the concept for the color blue, but that group B does not. The fact that group B lacks this concept may inhibit them from seeing blue objects. (In fact, this is a real example to which I will return later in the essay.)

How, if at all, can group A convince group B that the concept "blue" picks out a particular kind of object in the world? In fact, given that group B lacks the concept, and thus can't see blue objects, why should they believe at all the reports of group A? If you need to see something before you're willing to believe that it exists, then group B has no reason at all to accept the concept "blue" or to believe that there are such objects as described by the concept.

My assertion here is that in order to *see* one must first, in some cases, *believe*. I begin with a brief look as to why one might accept the old proverb that opened this essay. I then motivate the claim that believing is seeing. I next consider two potential worries such an account raises. Finally, I consider the relationship between the claim that believing is seeing and our (in)ability to see and understand certain features of the social world.

Which Came First: Seeing or Believing?

The proverb "seeing is believing" captures the scientific notion that belief requires concrete evidence. Given our commitment to this scientific ideal, we tend not to believe in those phenomena for which we lack any concrete, physical evidence. We don't believe in unicorns, for instance, because we've never seen unicorns. The same can be said of any number of other phenomena.

The notion that "seeing is believing" captures an order of relations that is presumed to hold between perceivers and the world. Namely, the idea is that a person perceives some object, and this then leads the perceiver to believe that the object of their perception exists out in the world.

On its face, this notion seems a reasonable one to accept. After all, shouldn't we require evidence before assenting to belief? However, it's possible that our demand to see some feature before we are willing to believe that feature exists may inhibit us from seeing some parts of the world. My aim here is to problematize the order of relations

presumed to hold between perceivers and perception. I suggest that it is sometimes the case that one must believe an object exists in order to then be able to perceive that object.

This idea is developed in the work of feminist scholars and critical race theorists who examine the relationship between conceptual resources, group membership, and knowledge. The idea developed in that body of literature is this: rather than needing to see some phenomenon, x, in order to believe x exists, it may be the case that failing to believe x precludes one from seeing x. Thus, rather than thinking in all cases that seeing is believing, it may sometimes be the case that *believing is seeing.*

Why think that believing is seeing? Well, in some cases, what is required to see x is that one first possesses the concept of x. This is because conceptual resources enable us to attend to features of the world picked out by the concept. In turn, lacking a conceptual resource may mean that we struggle to see the feature of the world picked out by the concept in question. Here it may help to consider an example.

Believing Is Seeing

The notion that believing is seeing may seem an odd one. But a few examples will serve to motivate my claim here. Consider, first, research recently popularized by *Business Insider* and *Science Alert* regarding the Himba tribe in Namibia.

The Himba have many words to capture the distinction between various shades of green; however, they have no word for the color blue. To determine how this would affect their color perception, researchers presented the Himba with two different sets of 12 colored tiles. Each set contained one tile of a different color. Set A contained 11 green tiles, with one tile a slightly different shade of green. Set B contained 11 green tiles and one blue- colored tile. When presented with Set A, the Himba were immediately able to determine which tile was shaded a different color of green. However, when presented with Set B, the Himba took several minutes to determine which tile was the odd one out.

What the case of the Himba illustrates is that one is precluded from seeing some phenomenon in the world if one lacks the conceptual resource for that phenomenon. In the case of the Himba, since they lack the concept for "blue" it appears that they are unable to "see," or recognize blue, in the same way that someone who possessed the concept would.

In turn, one can argue that acquiring a concept enables us to attend to the landscape in a new and unique way, allowing us to see things that were always present but that we failed to notice prior to the development of the concept. Elisabeth Camp, for instance, asserts that "concepts...can organize our perception." To motivate this claim, she turns to the Old Lady/Young Lady illustration (see Figure 19.1).

You may find it very easy to see the young lady in the illustration, and find it nearly impossible to see the Old Lady (or vice versa). But if I tell you that the Young Lady's

FIGURE 19.1 Old lady/young lady.

neck forms the Old Lady's chin; that the former's ribbon is the latter's mouth; that the girl's ear is the elder woman's eye, this creates a shift in your perception that allows you to see the old woman just as easily as you see the young girl.

Concept acquisition functions in much the same way. It directs our attention, it frames our perception, and it enables us to make sense of the world. To some extent, then, what we see is a function of what we believe about the world. The *belief* that the concept "blue" attends to some phenomenon enables you to see what in the world that concept picks out, just as the belief that there is an old lady present in the figure enables you to see the image from a new perspective.

In both cases, there are facts about the world (i.e. the color blue, the old lady in the figure) that we may be unable to "see" without the conceptual apparatus that enables us to understand what it is that we are seeing. This suggests an inversion of the order of relations proposed by the adage that "seeing is believing." Namely, it suggests that, in some cases, it is not perception that enables belief, but belief that enables perception – that is, it may be the case that believing is seeing.

Problems for This Account

Above I suggested that we have reasons to accept the claim that believing is seeing. But one might worry that we believe all sorts of false things. So, suggesting that believing is seeing might lead us to see things that aren't there, or, even worse, it might give us evidence to go on believing and seeing false things. Let us call the first worry *the problem of cognitive penetration* and the second *the problem of bootstrapping.*

Cognitive penetration involves some aspects of cognition (such as one's fears, desires, biases, and so on) penetrating one's perceptual experience such that what one perceives is influenced by these cognitive features. To illustrate this phenomenon, consider Susanna Siegel's example of *Angry Jack.* Imagine that Jill fears that Jack is angry with her. Imagine, too, that Jack is in fact *not* angry with Jill. Yet, when Jill sees Jack, her fear leads her to perceive his neutral expression as one of anger. In this example, Jill's fear penetrates her perceptual experience, which produces a *non- veridical perceptual experience.* That is, rather than perceiving the world as it in fact is, Jill instead perceives the world as she fears it to be.

This may seem an innocuous case, but there are real- world cases that might be explained as being the result of cognitive penetration. Consider, for instance, cases of police brutality with respect to Black men, women, and children. Law enforcement agents may hold implicit biases that Black people are more likely to be violent or dangerous. This belief may lead police officers to see Blacks as holding guns when they are in fact in possession of innocuous objects, like wallets or cell phones.

If taking on the claim that "believing is seeing" makes a problem like cognitive penetration more likely, then that is good reason against accepting the claim. But the

problem of cognitive penetration is but one worry to contend with – the other is the problem of bootstrapping.

Bootstrapping occurs when one presupposes the reliability of one's evidential source (e.g. perception), and then takes the evidence derived from the source (e.g. a perceptual experience) as further confirmation of the source's reliability. Let's return once more to Siegel's example of *Angry Jack*. As before, Jill believes that Jack is angry with her, and this, in turn, leads her to perceive Jack as being angry. Moreover, that she perceives Jack as angry (and generally takes her perception to be reliable) will serve to strengthen her belief that Jack is angry.

What is problematic about these cases, and the reason it raises concerns for the account I'm proposing, is that in ideal situations, perception should serve as a check on belief. We hope that what happens in the case of Jack and Jill is that when Jill sees Jack's neutral face, this will, in turn, lead her to revise her belief such that she will instead come to believe that Jack is not angry with her. Yet, what in fact happens is that her belief distorts her perception, and this, in turn, strengthens her (false) belief. It would seem in such a case that one's prior beliefs result in perception going amiss.

However, the problems of cognitive penetration and bootstrapping are perversions of the order of relations that I am proposing. What I am hoping to show, in suggesting that "believing is seeing," is that accepting the conceptual resources of certain (i.e. socially marginalized) groups leads to *veridical perception.* That is, accepting the notion of "believing is seeing" allows us to see more of the world than we otherwise might.

Applications

I am motivated in my analysis largely by the works of feminist scholars on the topic of epistemic oppression. Kristie Dotson defines epistemic oppression as the unwarranted exclusion of certain epistemic agents from the practices of knowledge production. An *epistemic agent* is any person who has the capacity to acquire knowledge and to share knowledge with others. Generally, the exclusion of certain epistemic agents may happen for reasons related to the social identity of the person in question. Some forms of epistemic oppression, like *hermeneutical injustice*, occur because certain epistemic agents are excluded from meaning-g enerating practices. Others, like *testimonial injustice*, occur because beliefs regarding the unreliability of certain agents lead to their testimony being discounted.

As an illustration of both forms of epistemic oppression, consider the issue of sexual harassment. Miranda Fricker notes that prior to the development of the concept of sexual harassment, women who had experienced this phenomenon had no way to communicate their experience. That is, Fricker writes, the available body of resources left a "lacuna where the name of a distinctive social experience should be." As a result, many women lacked a proper understanding for what we are now easily able to identify as sexual harassment (hermeneutical injustice). Of course, the development of the

concept of sexual harassment solved but one part of the problem. There are schemas and biases that characterize women as untrustworthy, hysterical, or overly sensitive and irrational. As such, even when women report sexual harassment, these biases may lead to their testimony being disbelieved (testimonial injustice).

My focus here, however, is on what Gaile Pohlhaus has called *willful hermeneuti-calignorance* . Willful hermeneutical ignorance occurs when the socially powerful refuse to accept the conceptual resources developed by the socially marginalized to describe their social experiences. This refusal occurs because the socially powerful cannot see (or understand) the phenomenon picked out by the resource, and thereby uses this as a reason not to accept the resource in question. In sum, the socially powerful may suggest that the conceptual resources developed by the socially marginalized "attend to nothing at all, or to make something out of nothing." Ironically, what precludes the socially powerful from seeing the phenomenon is their unwillingness to take on the resource.

Consider, for instance, that someone who possesses the concept of sexual harassment will see an instance of workplace sexual harassment *as* sexual harassment. By contrast, someone who lacks this concept may see the same instance as a case of harmless flirting. Here, what makes the difference in the assessment of the event is whether or not the agent possesses (or lacks) the conceptual resource required to attend to and understand the phenomenon for what it is.

Anyone who denies that the concept of sexual harassment attends to a d istinct phenomenon will be unable to "see," or recognize, an instance of sexual harassment when they encounter it. Moreover, because they never take themselves to encounter instances of sexual harassment, they will be disinclined to accept that the conceptual resource "sexual harassment" picks out a distinct phenomenon. Essentially, our agents end up trapped in a pernicious loop – unwilling to accept the phenomenon because they never see it, and unable to see it because they don't believe the conceptual resource attends to anything at all. In short, they cannot see what they do not believe to exist.

It is in this respect that the notion that "believing is seeing" may be of service. Recall that in the previous section ("Believing is Seeing") I argued that failing to adopt some conceptual resources (e.g. the color blue) may, in turn, facilitate an inability to "see" what is picked out by that conceptual resource (i.e. blue objects). Similarly, failing to believe that the conceptual resource "sexual harassment" picks out anything may lead one to fail to see instances of sexual harassment. But if, as I suggest, it is believing that facilitates seeing, then to address these issues, epistemic agents must adopt an attitude of trust with respect to conceptual resources with which they are unfamiliar. That is, we should act as if the conceptual resource that is under dispute (e.g. sexual harassment) does in fact attend to a distinct phenomenon, in the hopes that accepting this conceptual resource will enable us to see what is picked out by it (i.e. instances of sexual harassment).

Here I have used the example of sexual harassment to motivate my claim. But there are a number of other phenomena to which my analysis could apply. For instance,

Lauren Woomer observes that since many white Americans deny that the concept "police brutality" attends to anything, they instead interpret instances of what might be called police brutality as merely "isolated incidents."' Or, as Saba Fatima notes, when she tries to describe her experience with microaggressions, she is often told she is being irrational or is failing to be objective.

What I suggest these cases share is that the socially powerful deny the conceptual resource needed to describe the event in question, and so they instead search for alternative explanations, explanations which do not adequately or accurately describe the event under discussion. Thus, there are whole parts of the world that certain epistemic agents, who are socially situated in positions of power or privilege, may struggle to see. This failure is not a perceptual one, but a conceptual one. The socially powerful are operating under the guise of the old adage that opened this essay – that seeing is believing. They wait to see sexual harassment, to see police brutality, to see microaggressions, before they are willing to believe that those concepts are doing any work. But they have the order wrong – they will be unable to see these phenomena if they are unwilling to believe that they exist. To see, they must believe.

Conclusion

The claims I make here are not novel, rather, they are the culmination of a body of literature stretching back over several decades. This research has largely been relegated to the margins of philosophy, much if it written at a time when we were, perhaps, not yet ready to understand the magnitude of the work being done.

But as we find ourselves in an increasingly polarized society, we begin to question why it seems to be the case that people can see the world so differently than we do. In this essay, I hope to offer at least one possible answer, one that builds on the work by feminist scholars and critical race theorists that has been set aside for far too long.

We assume that the world will present itself to us as it is. But so much of how we see the world, and how we interpret what we see, depends on the conceptual resources we bring to bear. Those conceptual resources, I have suggested here, are shaped by features like our social location. Just as the Himba may not see the color blue if they lack the concept of "blue," so too is it the case that we may not see sexual harassment (or a host of other social phenomena) if we lack the concepts needed for understanding those phenomena. Rather than waiting to see to believe, my proposal here is that we believe, in the hopes that so doing will allow us to see the world as we could not before.

20. Philosophy Matters for Children, Children Matter for Philosophy

Penelope Voutsina

The motivation for this chapter stems, deeply, from my experience as a teacher who sees children as natural philosophers. After showing an abstract sculpture to groups of 4th-g rade students, they quickly generated a long list of interesting related concepts including: light, peace, shape, materials, which led them to pose the question 'Why does art make us feel peaceful?' Then, all very young children five to eight years old came alive with questions; they seemed to naturally apprehend that this is the way to investigate and understand themselves and the world. Children naturally wonder about philosophical questions and the fact that children are often drawn to philosophical questions shows how philosophy is in some sense a fundamental intellectual tendency.

What are numbers? Where do they come from? How is it possible that they go on forever? How can people hate each other? What do we mean when we say that we are really free and at the same time determined to do something? What is the nature of evil? Are we the same persons through time? What is truth? Is truth preferable to peace? Does power exist without violence? How can we be certain about the reality of the external world? Do you know right now that you are not dreaming? How do we give meaning to our lives when we all know that we are going to die? Who am I? Why am I here? Do dogs have dreams? What is a good life? I feel that the time of my life seems like one daytime. Is that true? How do we relate words to things? Are we here for a reason? Are we a part of a whole story? What is 'what'? At first glance, nothing seems to interconnect these diverse questions that children ask. On closer examination, however, the questions share at least two features.

First, each of these questions that children ask are among the first and basic questions that build a framework for thinking about the self and the world. Second, each of these questions are philosophical *par excellence* and questions like 'what are the limits of human knowledge?', 'what is the ultimate nature of reality?', 'what distinguishes a morally right from morally wrong decision?', 'what does it mean to have a mind?', 'what makes me *me?*', 'to what extent are the choices we make truly free?', which are similar to the questions the children raise, are central in philosophical enquiry as well.

What makes an instance of deliberation philosophical is examining such questions, describing them and then arguing for a particular standpoint by providing a set of reasons that justify one's argument. So, what makes a question philosophical and what characterises enquiry as philosophical is not only the content of a particular question but the approach with which the question is explored. It is often the case that the supposed intractability of a problem is ultimately due not to the nature of the problem as such but to the way the problem is posed. When a question is posed in a different way, however, the problem does not seem as intractable anymore and new questions arise.

Obviously, children do not know as much as adults. They do not know as much about the world and the history of human culture as grownups do. However, that does not make them any less thinkers of big questions and radical ideas. Children use words in many of the same ways that adults do: to respond to questions, to make declarations of ignorance, and to indicate levels of certainty about a proposition. The fact that children have questions means that there is something new, something they should have already understood when they have not. Yet recent findings suggest that children's understanding is more sophisticated than once thought. First, children proceed like a phenomenologist, by analysing what it is to be. Second, they structure their arguments like Kant's transcendental deductions starting with what they know to be the case and then working out what else must be true in order for it to be possible. So once the phenomenological analysis is done they move on to the transcendental deduction of what a system actually needs to have.

Philosophical Education Matters for Children

Usually, most children absorb the message that questions are often not particularly welcome. They learn that having a question means that there is something they should have already grasped but have not. So, children go silent because the education system tells students what they are supposed to think and to say and most adults do not bother with such questions, maybe because they cannot give adequate answers to them. But the ways that schools fail to listen to children's ideas and questions solely because of their age is a form of epistemic injustice.

Yet, although school is considered to be a conservative environment of coming to know the world, in school I meet children that are willing to take risks in the process of acquiring knowledge and in this sense they are philosophers – nothing is taken for granted and nothing is beyond critical evaluation. I believe that one of the most powerful disciplines that could stand by children to help them learn how to ask, and deal with, good, well-s haped and radical questions, is philosophy. As an intellectual practice, it is the best way to c hallenge the meanings of words that we take for granted, or to reject concepts, schemes, stereotypes and theoretical dogmas that everybody else takes as given, or whose rejection most people do not countenance.

One of the most important effects of doing philosophy with young children from four to eight years old is that it turns classrooms into communities of enquiry. Taking children's questions seriously and really listening to what children are asking is a crucial part of helping them develop strong enquiry skills. The classroom community of enquiry can prepare children to think in terms of context and provide them with appropriate thinking skills as well as confidence to think. The more competent a child becomes at framing good questions, the more able she will be to think for herself and to gain a better understanding of what it means to think. Specifically, children come to appreciate the dialectical aspect of thinking, the openness of the process. The focus of the enquiry and of the philosophical dialogue is on the joy of thinking, and the desire to question of the students themselves, rather than on any abstract philosophical concept. In this way, children also come to abandon the expectation that knowledge is about mastery; think of how often concepts, aspects and arguments coming from different standpoints give us reason to say that we have come to see meaning where we had not before, or a deeper meaning than we had thought possible.

If we manage to integrate philosophy within school curricula and if philosophical skills become more absorbed into education, then a climate conducive to the development of critical thinking skills will be fostered. We will thus help children not only to reason and pay attention to the quality of their reasoning but, importantly, to disagree collectively and cooperatively, allowing them to articulate and understand problems and solutions, while also providing them with an alternative to an adversarial approach to disagreement.

Children Matter for Philosophy

Because, as I have already mentioned, in philosophy anything can be challenged and criticised, I think that it should be opened to children. This would not only be important for them since it would give them the opportunity to create new ideas in a constructive way but it would also be important for the discipline of philosophy itself for children can contribute unique insights to philosophy.

The reason, always according to my experience as a teacher, is that children crave to understand the world and ask questions in the way first-g raders do: by breaking down many of the stereotypes, the barriers and the dichotomies they find in the world and by having the desire and will to find their own meaning in the stories of the world. Besides, children as a source of doing philosophy can become a wonderful counterbalance to the inaccessibility and esoteric nature of much academic philosophy that has been served as a difficult discipline accessible only to an intellectual elite. Children's engagement with philosophy may serve to show that philosophy doesn't reside solely in the academy but it belongs to everyone. Even a non-p hilosopher can produce work which is primarily philosophical in nature. So philosophy as a field of creative thinking that invites and welcomes dialogues with children can point us towards a more spacious and embracing

understanding of philosophy itself. In addition, philosophy can become a more diverse and inclusive field of thinking by involving children's inspiration.

The development of feminist theories could reinforce the above suggestion of inclusiveness. Feminist theories stemmed from the recognition that the experiences and perspectives of some groups in society have been systematically ignored or devalued. People belonging to certain minorities or ethnicities, people with disability status, people from lower socio- economic levels, and women, as well as people whose identities cut across these groupings in various ways have traditionally been marginalised and even, one could claim, oppressed. And in many ways, as has duly been noted, traditional ways of thinking support the subordination of women and the neglect or trivialisation of issues particularly affecting women.

Feminist philosophies and many current philosophical movements give value to the concept of inclusiveness partly by emphasising our fallibility, the value of the skill of enquiry and the concept of a non-C artesian self. First, fallibility – here understood as epistemic modesty – in feminist theories, stems from the idea that our beliefs and systems of thought are due to our standpoint, our historical condition. This epistemic modesty is thus the acknowledgment that we all are fallible and that learning and constructing knowledge is always a work in progress. As Lisa in *Harry Stottlemeier's Discovery* states, there is always the possibility that a 'graceful error can correct the cave'. Second, many post- modernists talk about the end of philosophy, but viewing philosophy as a work in progress and not as a set of stable and rigid metaphysical statements, offers a new perspective and a space for deliberation within the discipline. Third, the idea of unmediated knowledge of the world and ourselves is questioned. Knowledge does not come from a knower with a view from nowhere, nor from a self who experiences the world independently of the communities to which it belongs. Ideas and subjects are not distinct from human experience, but, rather, the self is itself relational. Ultimately, experience counts as embodied, knowledge matters as embodied and learning is treated as embodied. The above epistemological positions of fallibility, of seeing philosophy as a work in progress, and of embodied knowledge could incorporate children's capacity for breathing new life into philosophy.

However, although current feminist philosophical approaches have all the prerequisites to be theoretically diverse and inclusive, there is something missing in their request for, and awareness of, inclusiveness and that is children's voices and experiences of the world that are still absent. Indeed, until recently there was little explicit discussion of how the child and childhood have been, and more importantly, should be understood within feminist theory and politics. Of course, the absence of explicitly feminist attention to childhood was understandable given the need to focus on challenging patriarchic practices. However, and unfortunately, as a consequence the identification of women's interests with those of children became of secondary importance.

Today, there seems to be emerging a consensus among philosophers in line with feminist theories that much of philosophy would look very different if children's suppressed experiences, perspectives and voices had been considered.

I conclude with the following review: paraphrasing Monty Python's words, the question is that *apart from physics, psychology, logic and the scientific method, what can philosophy do for us?* I could not find a more accurate response to the above question than Murdoch's key thought that philosophy can do the hard work for us because *the role of philosophy is to relate large impressive illuminating general conceptions to the messing of details of ordinary personal private existence.* But according to the general point of my essay for the above to happen, the role of philosophy in our lives must be extended and enriched through children's voices. As I claim that philosophy matters for children and children matter for philosophy, including children and their experience in philosophy could deepen our ordinary personal experience and extend our conception of thinking. If philosophy became more inclusive than it actually is, then all of us would benefit from philosophical thinking.

21. How Can a (Modern) Greek (Woman) Be a Philosopher?

Fay Zika

When I reply "I'm a philosopher" to the common question "What do you do?" in my home country Greece, the reactions I get range from a gawk to a chuckle. I often chuckle along as I imagine what my interlocutor may have in mind: someone ancient, male, old, bald, bearded, usually in marble. So, if you happen to be a modern Greek (as opposed to an ancient Greek) and a woman, you obviously do not fit the expectations.

Rather than wading through the trials and tribulations arising from this discrepancy, I opt for a positive account of what I do and how I work. I became a philosopher because I had difficulty choosing between too many fascinating things and areas; I was interested as much in the sciences as in the arts, in nature as in artifice, in theory as in practice. Philosophy seemed closest to covering that variety. As Goethe put it in his *Theory of Colours*:

> It cannot be required that the philosopher should be a naturalist, and yet his cooperation in physical researches is as necessary as it is desirable. He needs not an acquaintance with details to do this, but only a clear view of those conclusions where insulated facts meet.

It is at these "interstices" or limits that I work: between appearance and r eality (colour); between the senses (synaesthesia and multimodal concerns in science and art); between kinds (identity and gender); between nature and culture (gardens).

This – working at the limits – also relates to a certain methodology about doing philosophy. According to Wittgenstein, the problem with philosophy is its tendency to generalise. In a similar line of thought, Nietzsche wrote in *Twilight of the Idols*: "All that philosophers have handled for millennia has been conceptual mummies; nothing actual has escaped from their hands alive". How can one avoid a paradigmatic language/ method that fixes its subject in eternity, which transforms complexity and fluidity into fixed prototypes or "conceptual mummies"? I reckoned that it was best to follow Wittgenstein's advice and work by example; that is, rather than assert what philosophy is, to show how one works with specific issues.

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Colour stares us in the eyes as soon as we open them. And yet we live in a s cientific worldview that denies its existence as a property of reality. This is mechanical atomism

from the sixteenth- century scientific revolution, according to which certain "primary", measurable qualities – such as shape, size, motion – belong to physical nature down to its smallest particles or atoms; whereas others are "secondary" in the sense of just being produced in the minds of perceiving subjects, but not belonging to objective reality: these are colours, sounds, smells, tastes, felt textures, that is, qualities that are perceivable through one sense only and, at the time, could not be measured. Colour thus belongs to the eye of the beholder and epitomises the rift between phenomenal experience and atomic reality. This made the ontological status of colour range from subjective to illusory: since in the mind of the beholder, it was subjective; and since it didn't exist in the world, the impression it gave of being "out there" was illusory.

My concern with colour and its dubious ontological status led me in a number of different directions. First, a PhD thesis whose aim was to respond to Wittgenstein's *Remarks on Colour*, which trace the complexity of our colour concepts, in a way that combined phenomenology and the findings of various sciences: physics, psychology, neurophysiology, anthropology, linguistics. The alleged subjective character of colour came to fit the problem of taste which gave rise to Aesthetics as a separate philosophical branch in the eighteenth century: *De gustibus et de coloribus disputandum non est.* If colour, like beauty, lies "in the eye of the beholder", how can we agree on our judgements, how can we find standards or rules that guide our decisions relating to either? And though colour was underrated as a secondary quality in the context of science, it remained the primary concern of visual artists, especially painters whose main medium is colour pigment. One of my main philosophical interests, therefore, was how to make the passage between science and art, an ongoing concern which also marked my move from teaching Philosophy in general at the American College of Greece to teaching Aesthetics and Philosophy of Art at the Athens School of Fine Arts. The course "From Colour Theory to Artistic Practice" was the result of this long -and painstaking- attempt to find ways of bridging that gap.

Science and art combined in another topic which followed – almost n aturally – from an interest in colour: the strange phenomenon known as synaesthesia, whereby the stimulation of one sense gives rise to a simultaneous sensation in another sense (without a corresponding stimulus), the most common case being that between colour and sound, known as "coloured hearing" or "visual music". The motivation came from science as the association of colours with vibrations or waves had a number of implications: it enabled their measurement and scaling according to particular wavelength; this led to the possibility of formalisation for a quality which, until then, was considered secondary, subjective and elusive; the wave nature of both light and sound gave new impetus to the ancient analogy between colour and music, which also pointed to principles of colour harmony (scaling and matching) based on an analogy with musical scales and chords. The possibility of transcending the limits of the senses and establishing a quasi- mystical unity of experience fascinated artists who, on the basis of colour or sound alone (typical examples being Kandinsky on the visual side and Scriabin on the

musical), aspired to the promethean task of unravelling the laws of cosmic harmony and establishing spiritual unity with the universe.

Synaesthesia fitted into a wider project focussing on the senses, drawing on the Greek etymology of the word Aesthetics (*aesthesis* = sense). This led to two research fellowships, one at Princeton on "The Philosophical Implications of Cross-M odal Associations" and one at Columbia on "The Revival of Multimodal Aesthetics". This was also based on interdisciplinarity: psychology, neurophysiology, biochemistry, anthropology – anthropologist David Howes going as far as calling it a "sensorial revolution". Philosophy of Mind picked up on this issue which fascinated philosophers since antiquity: from Aristotle differentiating the five senses by sense-o rgan; to Diderot claiming that all senses come down to one, touch, since all information about the external world enters our body by impacting on its porous surfaces; to present- day reconsideration of the number and limits of the senses, proposing different sensory mechanisms for motion, position, temperature, etc. In relation to art, this resulted in the questioning of the traditional separation of the arts based on distinct senses and the so- called hegemony of vision, leading to a revival of multimodal aesthetics, that is, to aesthetics based on the mixing or merging of the different sense modalities. Going back to the late nineteenth century, integrating various senses was involved in Wagner's view of the opera as a "total art work" or *Gesamtkunstwerk*; and the same applies to the rise of the cinema – starting with a black- and- white picture and "adding on" motion, sound, colour (even experiments with odours).

In a contemporary context, this trend can be illustrated by a variety of art forms and discussions: large- scale multimedia and multimodal installations; immersive experience provided by digital media and virtual reality environments; the multisensory aspects of food. To give an example of my latest research on walking as an artistic practice: walking involves seeing and observing, active in noticing land, sea and sky, as well as colours and forms; hearing the sounds of rustling leaves and gurgling brooks, the chirping of birds, the buzzing of insects, the footsteps and breathing of the walkers, the occasional exclamation or conversation; smelling the earth, the plants, the air; touching the bark of trees, the textures of stone and ground, the softness of petal and leaf; tasting the savour of fruits and herbs, the fresh stream water, even the air. Apart from the "traditional" five senses, walking involves a number of other senses which are currently under study, such as kinaesthesia (the sense of movement and rhythm), proprioception (the sense of position), balance, temperature, etc. It is in this sense that walking, as an artistic practice, can be considered as an immersive, performative, participatory and interactive practice involving the whole body and the senses.

So, the possibility of plasticity and transcending the limits between senses afforded by synaesthesia, on the one hand, and sensory integration or combining the senses (including new ones) provided by multisensory practices, on the other, suggest new creative ways in which our senses may interact and enhance our experience of the world, as well as elucidate artistic creativity and aesthetic appreciation.

Transcending the limits was at issue with another discussion, that of identity and the possibility of flexible rather than fixed criteria. Going back to Locke's discussion of "Identity and Difference" in his *Essay on Human Understanding*, where a human being is defined partly as an organic body and partly as a person based on criteria of consciousness and memory, I was intrigued by the mentalistic emphasis of this criterion, but also by the essentialist, fixed aspect of criteria for different kinds. By a strange coincidence, Wittgenstein's difficulties with the identity criteria for our colour concepts pointed in the direction of difference. In *Remarks on Colour*, he uses some cases of visual impairment – from the colour blind to the totally blind – to discuss our possibilities to understand difference: "we speak of colour- blindness and call it a defect. But there could easily be several differing abilities, none of which is clearly inferior to others". What Wittgenstein seems to be asserting is that certain deviations from the norm are within our possibilities, even though we can only talk about them and try to understand them "from within our concepts". But this only makes our experience wider and richer, enabling us to apprehend and appreciate difference, extending the limits of our perception and understanding to new bounds.

The questioning of fixed identity criteria and the possibility of an ongoing change of *personae* so that no actual self is determined – no self remains metaphysically stable behind the flux but only a series of metamorphoses or transfigurations- has been one of the central areas of interest for both contemporary feminist theory and artistic practice. Moving away from the Cartesian or Lockean criterion of personal identity relating to consciousness, away from the unified essentialist subject of traditional metaphysics, feminist theory has emphasised the body as a "project" in flux, reshaping its surface and features, redetermining personal – (and gender) i dentity, turning the self into something fragmentary, unstable, incomplete, in flux, in the making. In philosophy and social theory, thinkers like Donna Haraway and Judith Butler have pointed to different aspects of this instability. Haraway maintains that the most r adical way to reconsider human and gender identity today is by incorporating in our discussion new kinds of being that transgress the usual norms, specifically cyborgs, cybernetic organisms which reset the limits between animal and machine, pointing to "a joint kinship not afraid of permanently partial identities and contradictory standpoints". Butler grants the agent – female or male – the possibility of determining and changing his/her own gender by intervening on the surface of the body as "the inscribed surface of events", the surface, scene or canvas of cultural inscription; the body becomes a "variable boundary" and gender is performative, a set of acts that determine an identity tenuously constituted in time. In this context, various artists have been experimenting with what I have termed prosthetic art. To give two examples: Stelarc has been adding mostly mechanical devices or parts to his body, enhancing its powers, as in the case of a third arm in the work "Evolution"; and Orlan, in an ongoing work entitled "The Reincarnation of Saint Orlan", has been inscribing her own face and body via plastic surgery, adding features symbolic of standards of female beauty in different eras, turning her body into a critical canvas of expectations of femininity.

The issues related to identity – and the limits between so- called natural and acquired characteristics – led me in an unexpectedly different direction: gardens as an interface between nature and culture. This was partly inspired by Francis Bacon's gardening metaphor for the relationship between (human) nature and custom or education in his essay "Of nature in men": a man's nature runs to either herbs or weeds; so let us water the one and destroy the other. The concept and practice of a garden has its roots in the East, mainly in ancient Persia. Even our term for paradise derives from the Persian word *pairi-daeza* which means an enclosed space. Therefore, from its very origins, the garden is associated with a limit, a wall or a fence, even if only virtual, a limit which distinguishes it from the outer world, creating conditions of intimacy and protection, a microcosm within which life can thrive, finitude and death can be investigated (since its materials tend to be perishable), the relation between humans and nature can be examined, the distinction between private and public space set and challenged. The garden also relates to the rise of Aesthetics in the eighteenth century as a discipline at first more concerned with nature than with art; one of Immanuel Kant's moves was to bridge that gap by including landscape gardening in the fine arts as "the beautiful arrangement of nature's products". So, once again, having as a starting point a concern for nature in general, human nature in particular and the limits between nature and culture, I was led to consider the garden as an art form, which also fitted my research on multisensory aesthetics, incorporating many of the elements of sensory integration we saw above in relation to walking.

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I have occasionally referred to but without emphasising something very important: teaching philosophy. This has been done on purpose, in order to avoid giving that as the obvious and easy answer to the FAQ "What do you do?" In other words, the easy way to answer that question is "I teach philosophy". But that is not what I want to have to do. So, I've tried to give emphasis to how I think and work as a philosopher; to how I can answer the question by saying "I am a philosopher" rather than "I teach philosophy", especially in the context of being Greek and having to contend with a glorious philosophical past. Teaching, however, is an integral part of being a philosopher. But I believe this applies to any discipline: teaching involves research, interaction, transmission, feedback. It is what keeps any branch of knowledge alive and at cutting edge. It is where you learn most, both in trying to convey the difficult notions at hand and in the feedback you get from whoever is attending to what you are saying. Working with artists at my present post is one of the most creative parts of my work – and, I would like to think, of theirs. For it means working at the interstices between our disciplines, discovering together new ways of bridging gaps and moving on.

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