FROM THE EXCLUSION OF WOMEN TO THE TRANSFORMATION OF PHILOSOPHY: RECLAMATION AND ITS POSSIBILITIES

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Abstract: In the mid-1980s, feminist philosophers began to turn their critical efforts toward reclaiming women in the history of philosophy who had been neglected by traditional histories and canons. There are now scores of resources treating historical women philosophers and reclaiming them for philosophical history. This article explores the four major argumentative strategies that have been used within those reclamation projects. It argues that three of the strategies unwittingly work against the reclamationist end of having women engaged as philosophers. The fourth type, the one that seeks to transform philosophical practice and reconstruct its history, is the only strategy that will result in that engagement because it is the only strategy that pays sufficient attention to the mechanisms by which women have been excluded from philosophy and its history.

Keywords: exclusion of women, history of philosophy, reclamation, women philosophers.

When feminists first turned their attention to the history of philosophy during the revival of feminism in the latter half of the twentieth century, energy was primarily directed toward critiquing the tradition and its canon for widespread misogyny and its exclusion of women. Few projects asked about women's historical involvement in philosophy. Interest in women philosophers intensified in the mid-80s, a trend both exemplified and fueled by the publication in 1987 of the first volume of the four-volume *History of Women Philosophers*, edited by Mary Ellen Waithe.[1] There are now many resources, primary and secondary, on women's writing in the history of philosophy.[2]

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[1] Waithe is often credited by feminist philosophers for making the pioneering contribution to the field of reclamation (McAlister 1994, 192; O'Neill 2005, 188; Warren 2009, xiii; to cite only a few instances). In *Historical Dictionary of Feminist Philosophy*, Catherine Gardner notes that Waithe's volume is "incomparably the best" for information on women in the history of philosophy (Gardner 2006, 240).

[2] In *The Blackwell Guide to Feminist Philosophy*, Eileen O'Neill's introduction to "Justifying the Inclusion of Women in Our Histories of Philosophy: The Case of Marie de Gournay," offers a particularly good overview of these projects (2006, 17–42).

Those resources are what I refer to in this article as the field of recla-
mation. Under the heading of reclamation, I include any work that advo-
cates for reading a historical woman's writing as philosophical, regardless
of the arguments for doing so. The arguments for doing so are, however,
the focus of my analysis in this article. I have identified four major models
of reclamation that have dominated this growing field. The first type,
which I call the enfranchisement model, argues that women have philoso-
phized just like men and belong in its history for that reason; reclamation
seeks to enfranchise women who have been wrongly excluded. The second
type, which I call the alternative history model, claims that women's
philosophical writing is an independent tradition of thinking that we now
need; reclamation offers us an alternative to traditional philosophical
histories. The third model, which I call the corrective model, treats recla-
mation as an endeavor that will make philosophy more philosophical;
reclamation corrects philosophical practice. The fourth and final type,
which I call the transformative model, reclaims women's writing as a force
that will change philosophical history and, thereby, contemporary philo-
sophical practice by enlarging the scope of philosophy; reclamation seeks
to transform philosophical practice.

There are no pure examples of any of these types; thus, I do not seek in
my analysis to make any project fit neatly into one of them. Rather, I show
how these reclamation projects tend toward certain argumentative strat-
egies and the varied ways they are deployed. Perhaps surprisingly, some
reclamation projects have little concern about the exclusion of women
from the history of philosophy or, more surprisingly still, even endorse it.
Others, in contrast, treat the exclusion of women from philosophy as a
failure whose correction will change the nature of philosophy. In other
words, within the field of reclamation, there is a great deal of disagreement
about what the problem of women in the history of philosophy has been
and how it ought to be remedied. By surveying these different strategies, I
illuminate these sometimes competing and sometimes compatible ways of
thinking about women's exclusion.

Yet, while the nature of exclusion is at issue in reclamation, I think that
women's exclusion is, by and large, insufficiently theorized within the field.
In my analysis, I highlight the connection between the reclamation being
enacted and the theory of exclusion that seems to be motivating it,
however submerged that theory is. My goal is to show that reclamation
projects already contain views about exclusion, but that more explicit
reflection on the nature of exclusion is needed within the field. Further,
no argument about women's exclusion can avoid the question of what
women are being excluded from. Also at issue, then, is the nature of
philosophy and its history. It is worth noting that different people using
the same model hold different conceptions of philosophy, but what I show
is that the only model that sufficiently makes a problem of conceptualizing
philosophy is the model of reclamation as transformation. In other words,

I find the most promise for the inclusion of women in philosophy in the work of reclamationists whose encounters with women's philosophical writing cause them to deeply rethink their conception of philosophy and philosophical history. Thus, this descriptive analysis serves a prescriptive argument that reclamation projects must frame the problem of women's exclusion as one that can be redressed only by transforming how we conceive of philosophy and construct its history. We must be changed by our encounter with what has been excluded.

The Enfranchisement Model

In this section, I look at Mary Ellen Waithe's *History of Women Philosophers* and Mary Warnock's *Women Philosophers* as two different examples of reclamation efforts that argue women should be included in the history of philosophy because they already meet established criteria for inclusion. This strategy relies on arguments that women wrote and write philosophy *just like* recognized canonical philosophers. Projects employing this model of reclamation problematically concede the nature of philosophy and the means of constructing its history. That concession risks failing to promote engagement with women's philosophical thinking. Those concessions operate differently in each example. Waithe's advocacy for women's inclusion in philosophical history, for instance, includes the argument that "women were engaged in precisely the same kind of philosophical enterprises that have historically characterized male philosophers" (Waithe 1987, xii). That sentiment sounds like the more general version of Warnock's claim that the women she treats "are (or were) mostly philosophers in the same sort of sense as, all would agree, Hume was a philosopher" (Warnock 1996, xxx). But Waithe also asks: "Might we come to a different understanding of the nature of philosophy itself as a result of an acquaintance with women's thought?" (Waithe 1987, xviii). In this question, we can see Waithe reconsidering whether women really have been involved in precisely the same kind of philosophical enterprise that has historically characterized philosophers who are men. Warnock, by contrast, never puts "the nature of philosophy itself" under such scrutiny. Instead, Warnock finds grounds for dismissing the enterprise of feminist philosophy within her conception of what philosophy is: feminist work fails the criterion of gender neutrality.

Indeed, Waithe's project, in being open to reconceiving philosophy through engagements with women's work, undermines its classification as a model of enfranchisement. Again, however, these classifications are not a way of settling, once and for all, what each of these projects is but rather a way of thinking through the way exclusion is being theorized in them. Waithe and Warnock both deploy arguments for women's inclusion that appeal to already established standards of philosophy. Warnock is certainly at greater pains to define and avow those standards than Waithe,

but they both try to harness some already established conception of what philosophy is to advocate for women's inclusion in its history. Such a move, far from settling what philosophy is, leaves that question unexamined and thereby risks in Waithe's case, and explicitly wields in Warnock's, a conception of philosophy that excludes women.

Waithe

Early in her introduction, Waithe raises methodological issues. She writes:

> I could not presume to undertake the task of re-defining the discipline of philosophy, so I chose a purely *ad hoc* device for identifying philosophical works: use a definition of "philosophy" that has been an accepted definition of philosophy for some identifiable historical period. Unfortunately, this *ad hoc* device, uncontroversial though it may at first seem, begs an important feminist question. If traditional philosophy has always been an essentially male enterprise, by selecting works of women that fit those traditional definitions, am I not merely selecting works by women who "thought like men" or who "did what men did"? Perhaps. Examining the question whether philosophy as we have come to know the discipline, defines essentially masculinist enterprises that necessarily exclude women, is a worthwhile undertaking. But it is far beyond the expertise of this philosopher, and beyond the immediate task of the Project. The women were engaged in precisely the same kind of philosophical enterprises that have historically characterized male philosophers. (Waithe 1987, xii)

Within Waithe's explanation of how she approached the project we can already see at work the idea that reclamation might affect our understanding of philosophical history. Indeed, she introduced the problem in the passage above by noting that the Pythagorean women discussed issues of running a family, a topic not traditionally considered philosophical. Waithe reports that the Phythagorean women did so by applying ethical theory, using the concept of *harmonia* to compare the state and the family, and therefore approached the topic philosophically (Waithe 1987, xi). Thus, her introduction of the problem of determining who counts as a philosopher performs a feminist recasting of what is "properly" philosophical; discussions of child rearing and women's place in society cannot be dismissed *a priori* from the purview of philosophy, even if those have traditionally been dismissed. We must analyze the approach to a topic, Waithe implies, before deciding if philosophy has been done. But the claim she makes in the above passage to be unqualified to determine the extent to which philosophy is a masculine enterprise and the claim that it is outside the task of the history sidesteps further development of the issues involved in reclaiming women's work. In addition, her conclusion in the above passage, that women were involved in the same kind of enterprises as men, is a clear example of reclamation as enfranchisement.

Indeed, Waithe reassures her readers that "the majority of women philosophers' writings do not reflect concern with the nature, status, and rights of women" (Waithe 1987, xii). To illustrate, Waithe writes about Diotima adopting "a masculine perspective" and about the gender-neutral way Hypatia discusses astronomy, and she concludes her survey of topics about which women wrote with this observation: "Indeed, the philosophical topics and theories of the women philosophers are every bit as diverse and interesting as are those which characterize 'traditional' male philosophers" (Waithe 1987, xiii). Women did not spend all their time talking about women, Waithe assures us, and not only did they talk about diverse and interesting things, these were often the same diverse and interesting things with which men like Leibniz were concerned.

Waithe's reflections on materials and methods gives us no further aid in understanding the complexities of legitimizing women's philosophical writing. Waithe reports: "Research about the history of women philosophers has proceeded in several stages: first, creating a compendium of names, nationalities, and dates of birth of women alleged to have been philosophers. Second, confirming or disconfirming the allegations" (Waithe 1987, xiii). At first, it appears that the issue of confirming women as philosophers will lead Waithe to extend the discussion of what is properly philosophical and, in a very interesting way, through attunement to historical period. Her discussion, however, centers on the *materials* that were used to confirm the women as actual philosophers, rather than the means of confirming the actuality.

From the beginnings of the efforts to reclaim women's philosophical work, Waithe's project shows, questions about the relationship between philosophy and feminism were at issue, but how they ought to be negotiated or what the impact of reclamation would be was far from clear. Waithe claims to enfranchise women without ruffling historically determined qualifications. It is apparent, however, that her conception of philosophy and its history have been destabilized by her encounters with women's philosophy. Waithe identifies excellent reasons for rejecting the ad hoc solution of using the historically predominate definitions of philosophy to determine which women deserve the title "philosopher."

Waithe expands those reasons when, at the end of the introduction, she considers three questions that indicate for her that these issues, far from being settled by *A History of Women Philosophers*, were being given initial form. She introduces the questions by writing: "What has struck me as fundamentally serious is the ramification that the contents of these four volumes will have for philosophy itself" (Waithe 1987, xviii). The three questions she asks are: "What *is* the history of philosophy?"; "Have philosophers failed at the most basic task of philosophy—to question one's basic assumptions thereby to discover the truth?"; and "Might we come to a different understanding of the nature of philosophy itself as a

result of an acquaintance with women's thought?" (Waithe 1987, xviii). Thus, while I include Waithe's project as an example of reclamation as enfranchisement, her work, perhaps more importantly, also shows the way reclamation can bring into question philosophical practice and history. While avowing an enfranchisement strategy, Waithe also plants the seeds for transformative reclamation.

Warnock

Mary Warnock's anthology *Women Philosophers* is another project of enfranchisement; unlike Waithe's, however, it is one that seeks to dissuade its readers from considering the impact feminism might have on philosophy. I include it as a project of feminist reclamation advisedly, as Warnock rejects feminism as properly philosophical, but I include it nonetheless because it is often cited as a resource for further reading on women in the history of philosophy, both as a primary source and for her perspective on issues of reclamation.[3] Warnock begins the work with the question of who should be considered a philosopher. In answer, she writes: "First, I think, a writer must be concerned with matters of a high degree of generality, and must be at home among abstract ideas . . . he or she would claim not only to seek the truth, but to seek a truth, or theory, that will explain the particular and detailed and the everyday" (Warnock 1996, xxix–xxx). Warnock uses Hume as her model—someone who never held an academic post, who argued for his views, wrote essays and dialogues, and was in conversation with other thinkers, responding to and refuting their ideas. The women in *Women Philosophers* "are (or were) mostly philosophers in the same sort of sense as, all would agree, Hume was a philosopher" (Warnock 1996, xxx). Warnock, by using Hume as her standard, exemplifies the enfranchisement model of reclaiming women in the history of philosophy.

With that definition in hand, Warnock notes that she had "considerable difficulties" with "what used to be called 'the Women [*sic*] Question.' There is, understandably, an enormous quantity of broadly 'feminist' literature written by women. How much of this should count as philosophy?" (Warnock 1996, xxxiii). She indicates that much of it meets the generality criteria. The paragraph turns bibliographical, reporting on feminist works from the 1980s and 90s "all plausibly purporting to be philosophical" (Warnock 1996, xxxiii). Yet, Warnock thinks that "there tends to be too much unexamined dogma in these writings, too much ill-concealed proselytizing, too little objective analysis, to allow

[3] Warnock's book is cited as an anthology evidencing the participation of women throughout women's history in Deutscher 2000; as a primary source of writing by women philosophers in Broad 2002; on the diversity of women in the history of philosophy in Alanen and Witt 2004; as a source on the exceptions of the entirely male history of philosophy in Landau 2006; as a source for Mary Whiton Calkins in Rogers 2009.

them to qualify for inclusion among philosophical writing proper" (Warnock 1996, xxxiii). The quality of the writing, in other words, is why feminist works have been excluded. Warnock deems feminist writing to be insufficiently critical and to be too biased to be considered properly philosophical.

But Warnock also reverses her initial judgment that the works meet the criteria of generality. She continues:

> Moreover, as we look at these titles and others like them it becomes clear that they fail, after all, the test of generality. For the great subjects of philosophy, the nature of human knowledge, the limits of science, the foundations of morality or aesthetics, the relation between our language and the world, must be concerned with "us" in the sense in which "we" are all human. The truths which philosophers seek must aim to be not merely generally, but objectively, even universally, true. Essentially, they must be gender-indifferent. (Warnock 1996, xxxiii)

With a line drawn between feminism and philosophy, the only feminist Warnock includes is Mary Wollstonecraft.

In this passage, Warnock reveals the overshot optimism of Linda Lopez McAlister's claim in 1989 that "feminism has expanded the bounds of what we have considered to be philosophy both in terms of subject matter and the forms that it may take. There is no longer any denying that women who theorize, e.g., about the rights or liberation of women, whether in the eighteenth century or today, are engaged in a philosophical pursuit" (McAlister 1989, 2). Warnock denies exactly what McAlister says can no longer be denied; women writing on women is anthropology, according to Warnock, not philosophy.

Although Warnock and Waithe both claim the status of philosopher for historical women on the model of traditional conceptions of who is a philosopher, I have shown that the overall tenors of their projects are quite different. Interestingly, both Waithe and Warnock are cited by feminists undertaking diverse projects of reclamation. Warnock's intent may have been to more firmly draw the boundary between philosophy and feminism, but in presenting the writing of women, she has aided feminist efforts in redressing the exclusion of women in the history of philosophy. Warnock's rejection of feminism as properly philosophical lends consistency to her definition of what philosophy is and minimizes the impact reclamation might have on it. Indeed, her view of feminism has led some of her critics to wonder why she wrote a book about women philosophers (see O'Neill 2005; Arnal 1998). Waithe, on the other hand, while tending to make claims for women's inclusion in philosophy based on their similarity to men, also shows her own thinking about philosophy beginning to alter and encourages more thinking about how feminism might change philosophy.

That openness to changing philosophy has the greatest potential for successfully reclaiming women. Including women in a canon that all but denies women's philosophical writing by using the criteria through which that writing has been excluded risks failing to promote engagement with women's work. Warnock is more consistent in her use of the strategy. While Warnock thinks a handful of women who deserve inclusion in the canon have accidentally been neglected, she concludes that the majority of women's writing and *any* feminist writing does not meet philosophy's standards and was properly excluded. That is to say, Warnock largely denies the possibility of reclamation and thereby shows most vividly the inadequacy of the enfranchisement model as a reclamation strategy if the goal is philosophical engagement with women's writing. We might conclude, then, that Waithe's ability to inspire other projects of reclamation and a wider interest in women's philosophical writing owes more to the destabilization of her conception of philosophy caused by her encounters with women thinkers than her decision to include women who were doing exactly what men philosophers were.

The Alternative History Model

In this approach, reclamationists argue that women have established a tradition of thinking independently of men's thinking, and that there are now compelling reasons for us to appeal to this other tradition as a resource. As in the enfranchisement model, the alternative history approach to reclamation problematically concedes the nature of philosophy and how its history has been constructed. This model differs, however, in holding that women's writing is important because it developed independently of the main tradition of philosophy. Andrea Nye, for instance, argues there is an tradition of women thinkers, what she calls "philosophia," outside philosophy that can help us resolve issues with which philosophy can no longer help us make progress. Karen Green, by contrast, identifies an alternative tradition *within* philosophy that can help us with some of the most intractable philosophical problems, especially within political theory. So, as in the enfranchisement model, the alternative history approach to reclamation concedes the nature of philosophy and how its history has been constructed, but the alternative history model holds that women's writing contains resources for us because it has been separate from the main tradition of philosophy. Thus, rather than advocating that women ought to take their rightful place within the philosophical pantheon, Nye and Green argue that women's writing has resources for us as a result of its independence from traditional philosophy.

The problem with this attempt to find alternative traditions is the concessions it makes to traditional conceptions of philosophy. While the concessions are not the same as those in the enfranchisement model— women are valued for how their thinking has *not* been like men's, as

opposed to how it has been precisely like it—the risk remains that we continue undisturbed to conceive of philosophy as men's domain. Philosophy is treated as an independent entity with which feminism interacts. Even Green, who identifies a feminist humanism that has been submerged in the tradition of philosophy, sees this tradition as a competitor with a masculinist humanist tradition. What is not considered in this model, by its structure, is that men and women have shared contexts of thinking and that segregating their histories may obscure more than it reveals.

Nye

Nye's *Philosophia: The Thought of Rosa Luxemburg, Simone Weil, and Hannah Arendt* offers an example of reclamation undertaken to establish an alternative to traditional philosophical history. Nye uses the notion of leavening as a central metaphor, which she first introduces in her epigraph: "The Kingdom of Heaven is like unto the leaven which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal until the whole was leavened. *Matthew 13:33*" (Nye 1994, xi). In her conclusion, she writes: "The redemption of thought is that even in failure, even in lost causes, something is left alive, to be saved, to be used again, in another recipe, with a bit more or less kneading, more care in handling" (Nye 1994, 235). What appears as a rather straightforward use of Christian terms, redemption and saving, takes a provocative turn when the saving is for a new recipe. Thus, redemption and saving are on the model of a sourdough starter and not that of salvation through Christ.

What needs to be leavened, according to Nye, is contemporary existence, and philosophy is no longer a powerful agent. As she puts the point in her conclusion: "What I have tried to show is that if philosophy is just a bit old and stale, and not as nourishing as we might wish, there may be other recipes, other ways of thinking, remembered and conserved, able to enliven the heavy stuff of postmodern existence" (Nye 1994, 234). Nye advocates for remembering and conserving another tradition of thinking, something fresh, a tradition she finds in the work of Luxemburg, Weil, and Arendt.

Nye does not try to present these women as somehow involved in a common project but rather sees their commonality in their differing from the "mainstream philosophical tradition" (Nye 1994, xix). They return to experience, insist on materiality, are open to many disciplines, reject "knowledge as a privileged representation of reality" (Nye 1994, 228), and reject the traditional oppositions of Western philosophy. As Nye writes: "The very thickness and confusion of reality provides new material for this other thought that, like leaven, has its source in material reality and its aim in the preservation and enhancement of human life" (Nye 1994, 235).

Nye even offers us a name for this alternative tradition. Though the term is not thematized, or even indexed, in the book, "philosophia" is in

both the title and the conclusion. Nye asks: "What kind of knowledge or truth could such a philosophia, without the closure of masculine ending, produce?" (Nye 1994, 235). Philosophia is a different tradition, one that relates to philosophy, treats some of its main figures, Descartes, Kant, Marx, to name a few, but does not continue a tradition of abstraction that Nye understands to be *the* continuity of philosophy. Thus, Nye's conception of philosophy appears to remain untroubled by her encounter with women's writing.

Indeed, on closer reading, Nye's conception of "alternative" appears so strong that it is misleading to call her project a reclamation *in the history of philosophy*. She writes: "To ask whether women could have played—would have played if they had been allowed—major roles in this drama is futile. The history of Western ideas has been written by men for male characters; in its narratives women have been occasionally an object of concern but never the agents of change" (Nye 1994, 226). Nye's view is that reclamation of women for philosophy is futile. Nye does not speculate on why philosophy has been a male tradition or what relationship its maleness might have with its failure. Importantly, however, the neglect of these women's thought, she argues, to some extent "made it possible for them to address the deepest of human concerns offstage from the drama of Western philosophy" (Nye 1994, 225). Thus, though she does not explain why these women were neglected, their neglect is related to their ability to offer us an alternative to a failed tradition.

Green

Karen Green, in *The Woman of Reason: Feminism, Humanism, and Political Thought*, wants to reinvigorate the connection between feminism and humanism by arguing that "a careful adherence to the methods of humanism, and a scholarly reappraisal of past feminist humanists, while it shows the inadequacy of masculinist humanisms, offers an alternative viable form of gynocentrism, a feminist humanism" (Green 1995, 3). Like Nye, Green advances her project as an alternative to the dominant tradition. In Green's case, feminism is right in rejecting masculinist humanism, but she urges us to reassess humanism in light of the alternative tradition she traces in the works of Christine de Pisan and Mary Wollstonecraft, among others. Thus Green, unlike Nye, seeks an alternative within philosophical tradition.

Green says of her method: "I have chosen a few of the most notable and influential authors in order to illustrate how at each period developing humanist ideas have had implications for the status of women and political theory which have been partly perceived and then largely ignored" (Green 1995, 6). She indicates in this passage a submerged tradition of thinking about women that she will reconstruct. She excavates that tradition to provide current feminist political theory with a history of

gynocentrism. That is, she is interested in grounding current work in a history that is only now being made accessible. She writes that in her project "it will be argued that out of the philosophical tradition, a distinctive feminine conception of rationality and objectivity that can provide the basis for feminist political theory can be seen to emerge" (Green 1995, 3). Reclaimed history can help us to think of contemporary life differently, she argues, specifically in nonpatriarchal ways (Green 1995, 9).

As part of her project, Green critiques Simone de Beauvoir's work and indicates a way in which a theory of women's exclusion could stymie attempts at reclamation. She writes: "In chapter 7 de Beauvoir's claim that woman has been Other, even for herself, is examined and ultimately rejected, because it undermines the possibility of taking earlier feminists seriously, and leads to the bizarre and rather arrogant view that it is only in the late twentieth century that women have acquired the capacity to judge their own interests" (Green 1995, 7). Here, Green is concerned with how de Beauvoir theorizes the relationship of women to thinking because of that theorization's implications for how we can engage the history of women's thinking. Green contends: "The most fruitful way forward from de Beauvoir's thought is not to attempt to speak from the impossible position of the Other of discourse, but to discover our own feminist subjectivity and reason in the cultural legacy left us in the writings of women" (Green 1995, 8). There is a feminist subjectivity and reason to be discovered, Green contends, and that is why we need to engage women's writing. Thus, Green, like Nye, thinks there is something importantly different in women's work.

Green's reasons for rejecting part of Luce Irigaray's project closely relate to the critique of de Beauvoir. Green writes: "At times it appears as though Irigaray herself is caught up by the image of woman, excluded from the rational order, which is the legacy of patriarchal thought. But accepting that woman is the beyond of reason is accepting that woman is what she is for this patriarchal philosophy: its repressed Other. The very possibility of woman speaking then becomes paradoxical for it can seem that the only position available from which to conceptualize oneself as a subject is the masculine one" (Green 1995, 21). Green resists Irigaray's identification of femininity as the other to representation, just as she resists de Beauvoir's identification of woman as the other to discourse. Rather than discussing these interpretations of de Beauvoir and Irigaray, which are, of course, contestable, I wish to highlight the fact that Green sees possible challenges to her project from de Beauvoir and Irigaray— that their work might make reclamation impossible. Thus, she shows that reclamation also raises issues of how feminism should be conceived. Green's is a humanist conception: "Feminism requires the possibility of speaking of women as an identifiable group with identifiable interests" (Green 1995, 20). Indeed, her first chapter in *The Woman of Reason* is entitled "Against Anti-Humanist Feminism."

Both Nye and Green see a threat to the possibility of reclaiming women's writing in the views of some French feminists; they resist feminists whom they perceive as rejecting logic and reason. Yet their conclusions about philosophy are very different. Nye seeks an alternative to philosophical tradition in the writing of some women, while Green seeks an alternative deposited within philosophy by the writing of some women. Although they both model reclamation in the pursuit of alternative traditions, the meaning of alternative takes very different shape in Nye and Green's projects. In proposing women's writing as an alternative to philosophy, however, they both encourage a view of men's and women's writing as constituting different traditions. Perhaps the women's tradition will save us from the failures of the men's, but that is a limited view of interaction in which women save the day. Lost, potentially, in this model is the sense of shared contexts of thinking, the history of men and women responding to and shaping each other's writing. Perhaps most important for reclamation is the loss of focus on women's exclusion as a problem that has shaped our conceptions of philosophy and has possibly contributed to the staling process of philosophy.

The Corrective Model

In corrective projects, reclamationists argue that including women in the history of philosophy will help philosophy to fulfill its critical aspirations. The corrective model takes to task traditional histories of philosophy for excluding women because in so doing philosophy has failed to be properly philosophical. Insofar as philosophers have failed to question biases against women, it has failed to live up to its role in rousing us out of our complacency. Feminist philosophy is a project of correcting this problem, including through its scrutiny of philosophical history and engagement with historical women's writing.

The promise this model makes is that women's work will make philosophy better. The problem with this model is that it does not consider why philosophy is in need of this correction. If philosophers have had sufficient ideals to prevent or correct their own misogyny, why has feminism been necessary to correct it? Could there be something in how the ideals of philosophy operate that has prevented that critical turn? By relying on philosophy's ideals, corrective models do an excellent job of showing that philosophy has fallen short of its own ideals, but they do not address why.

In her introduction to her edited volume *Philosophy in a Feminist Voice: Critiques and Reconstructions*, Janet Kourany presents feminism as a corrective to philosophy, one that makes philosophy more philosophical. She writes: "Far from functioning as the proverbial gadfly that rouses everyone from complacency on every question, this philosophy tends to ignore women even while it reflects and reinforces or in other

ways perpetuates some of the most deeply entrenched and abusive biases against women in our society" (Kourany 1998, 3). Kourany evokes, of course, one of Socrates's most famous metaphors for philosophical activity. In so doing, she also suggests that philosophy has failed in its social responsibility, and feminism, far from contaminating it with social and/or political matters, calls it to remember the importance of its role in questioning everyone about everything.

Kourany frames her introductory essay with a question for its title: "Philosophy in a Feminist Voice?" She affirms the importance of a feminist voice, but in a way that invites participation by both men and women. She suggests that a feminist voice is a critical one—the voice that raises questions as philosophy is supposed to do. Through the metaphor of voice, she provides an image of philosophy and feminism together (Kourany 1998, 3–4). Both men and women can speak in that voice, and philosophy will be more adequately philosophical when it is so spoken.

Kourany contends that philosophy's history must undergo scrutiny as part of feminism's improvement of philosophy. Included in her *Philosophy in a Feminist Voice* volume is an essay by Eileen O'Neill, which Kourany claims "makes clear, philosophers in the past, especially women philosophers, were at least sometimes engaged in [philosophy in a feminist voice], though most of us are now completely ignorant of their contributions. To profit from their contributions, it is necessary to redo the history of philosophy so as to make them visible" (Kourany 1998, 14). Here again, the image that Kourany gives us is of philosophy and feminism together, a redoing of philosophy's history with feminist voices. Our ignorance of women's historical writing is a failure of philosophy to question everything, and it is one of the ignorances that must be corrected for philosophy to live up to the image Socrates has given us.

Kourany contends that feminism can challenge philosophy to do its job, which will have broader positive effects for society. Although the corrective model is closely related to the next model I discuss, the transformative model, the difference consists in the distinction between making philosophy more what it is and changing what philosophy is. In the corrective version, philosophy is not meeting its own standards or is incomplete. By contrast, in transformative reclamation projects, there is a problem with our conceptions of philosophy that can be redressed through attention to work by women. The corrective model does not make the same sorts of problematic concessions to preexisting notions of philosophy that we see in the enfranchisement and alternative models. Rather, the corrective model allows us to contemplate available conceptions of philosophy and see how incompatible misogyny may be with those conceptions. Yet philosophy required feminism for it to even register, let alone critique, the misogyny that has shaped it throughout its

history. Thus, we can see that prior conceptions may have been capacious enough to include a critique of misogyny and sexism, but capacity alone is not enough. We must also reckon with the processes by which the priorities for critical attention are determined. The corrective model rightly observes that some past ideals of philosophy could include feminist critiques, but the model fails to appreciate why philosophy so often has not.

The Transformative Model

Now to the model that I think has the greatest potential for shaping projects of reclamation that promote philosophical engagement with women's writing. This model has this potential because it investigates norms of philosophical engagement and offers new norms that not only countenance work by women but also highlight its importance. More precisely, this model shows how women's exclusion has shaped prevalent notions of what is considered philosophy and shows how philosophy must be reshaped to redress this exclusion. Here I examine Catherine Gardner's proposal to transform the field of ethics through her engagement with the work of women writers who employed generic forms that have previously been deemed nonphilosophical.

In her introduction to *Rediscovering Women Philosophers*, Gardner writes: "Inspired by Mary Ellen Waithe's four-volume work *A History of Women Philosophers*, I wanted to learn more about our philosophical foremothers; and I wondered what, if anything, their work may have to offer modern theorizing in feminist ethics" (Gardner 2000, 1). When she embarked on her project, Gardner reports, genre quickly became an issue. Some of the forms employed by figures she wanted to analyze were letters, novels, poetry, and allegory. Gardner reflects: "As a philosopher from what is typically called the Anglo-American tradition, I did not have the analytic and conceptual tools immediately at hand to read philosophy in these other forms of writing. I had been trained to read purely for argumentative content and to discuss style and form only if and when they obscured comprehension" (Gardner 2000, 1). Gardner's training made some forms of writing inaccessible to her for philosophical consideration.

Gardner's account substantiates the claim Jane Duran makes in the preface to her *Eight Women Philosophers: Theory, Politics, and Feminism* that "work on women philosophers asks us to retain an open-mindedness about what is constitutive of philosophical thought that is often sadly lacking in professional philosophical circles, while at the same time asking us to be prepared for some surprises insofar as theory is concerned" (Duran 2006, x–xi). Gardner does not, however, choose to remain within her own philosophical circle. Rather, she shows an exemplary open-mindedness. Instead of discounting the authors and works that she was not immediately able to engage, she took stock of her own inability. She

writes: "I realized that if we are to work towards including the work of these philosophers properly, then one thing we must do is to look further into the reasons for the assignment of non-philosophical status to certain forms" (Gardner 2000, 2). In other words, Gardner's inability to encounter certain forms led her to investigate the creation of that inability. In her encounter with women's writing, Gardner realized that the conception of philosophy with which she had been trained and operated was too narrow.

As for why it is women's work that presented her with an opportunity to see the inadequacy of her conception of philosophy, Gardner concedes that limited access to education and publishing opportunities may have contributed to the form in which women wrote, but she is clear "that there is no essential connection here between form and sex" (Gardner 2000, 3). In other words, women's historical work may challenge philosophy because women were excluded from access to formal education in it, as well as opportunities to publish, but these are not revealing, essential facts about the female sex.

While Gardner supports work on the history of women's exclusion from philosophy, her motivation was to discover "what an interpretation of the work of some of these philosophers can offer modern ethical, specifically feminist, theorizing" (Gardner 2000, 3). She argues that putting women's thinking to use contributes to revaluing this past work more forcefully than does arguing for its merit (Gardner 2000, 3). More important, however, than revaluing the work of women was finding out how it could enrich contemporary theory.

Form was, however, a formidable obstacle for Gardner to make such reclamations of the work she was encountering. As she writes, "Despite bringing all my objectivity and critical thinking skills to bear on some of these works, this approach did not allow me to deal with the type of case where the form *is* part of the argument of the work. . . . I began to understand that this classification of some forms as part of the philosophical genre, and the exclusion of others, is not a 'given' or somehow independent of modern conceptions of what moral philosophy is" (Gardner 2000, 4). Thus, Gardner first reconstructs "*how* and *why* certain forms become excluded—and will remain so—on this model of moral philosophy" (Gardner 2000, 4). She sets up her engagements with Catherine Macauley, Christine de Pisan, Mary Wollstonecraft, George Eliot, and Mechthild of Magdeburg by educating her readers about the dominant models of moral philosophy. The chapters on the women thinkers are then guides to how to read their writing, given their choice of form.

Gardner's aim is about more than giving us access to those texts. She also uses her engagement with nonstandard forms to question the dominant model of moral philosophy (Gardner 2000, 10). Her book's subtitle, *Philosophical Genre and the Boundaries of Philosophies*, could be rewritten to read: *Transforming the Boundaries of Philosophy with Attention to Genre*. Gardner's project is as much a critique of philosophical practice as

it is a reclamation of women's work. Indeed, it is a critique of philosophical practice *through* engagement with women's work. In Gardner's hands, then, reclamation makes it possible for us to question the standards by which writing is judged as philosophical and to become readers capable of judging differently.

Transformational projects answer Waithe's question—"Might we come to a different understanding of the nature of philosophy itself as a result of an acquaintance with women's thought?"—with a yes and explore how our understanding can be changed. Indeed, as in Gardner's model, transformational projects expose how philosophy has developed through the exclusion of women's writing and the consequences of those exclusions for our thinking. Transformational projects avoid the hallmark risk, thereby, of the enfranchisement model: that established notions of philosophy will prevent us from seeing the need or the possible benefits of engaging with women's work.

Transformational projects also avoid the potentially obscuring effects of treating women's work as part of an alternative history of thinking. By refusing to concede to any preexisting conception of philosophy merely because it is familiar or traditional, transformational projects allow us to engage with the thinking of both men and women as arising in shared contexts and potentially marked by exclusion. The rich interactions of thinkers, as well as the disabling effects of certain historically predominant conceptions of what philosophy is and who can do it, can emerge using a transformational approach.

Finally, unlike corrective models, transformational models do not leave open the question of why the powerful critical tools of philosophy have not been turned early and often on the problem of misogyny. By taking exclusion as the guide for reclamation and reenvisioning the scope and practice of philosophy, transformational models expose and suggest redress for philosophy's failed aspiration to be a critical practice. Transformational models show that merely correcting the use of our critical tools cannot redress the traditional intractability of women's exclusion. Rather, we must examine why these tools have been employed as they have and use those investigations as a guide for how to proceed differently. The point of reclamation is not, on the transformational model, to do justice to past thinkers or to make our records more accurate. The point is to gain critical insight into how we have come to think as we do and, through that understanding, reevaluate philosophical history and practice.

From Reclamation to Transformation

My review here has meant to show that reclamation has happened in diverse ways: some interrelating and some mutually exclusive. In outlining four models for reclaiming women's writing, I have also meant to show

that there have been recurring, if divergent, argumentative strategies in the field of reclamation. Each project shows that reclamation simultaneously raises questions for philosophy and feminism, not just their relationship, but also how they should be practiced and the extent to which philosophy and feminism are engaged in the same project. These are not issues that the historical texts themselves can decide. These projects show that the writings of historical women can be put to many uses, including making the point, as in the very different cases of Warnock and Nye, that we can largely be complacent about women's exclusion from philosophy. In Warnock's case, exclusion has largely been appropriate, whereas in Nye's case exclusion has been so complete that women's writing constitutes an alternative tradition.

Yet many reclamation projects, including the majority of the projects I discussed above, treat women's historical exclusion from philosophy as an issue related to reclamation. That is, these projects connect *in some way* their engagements with women's work to the lack of women in philosophical history. That connection must be strengthened if reclamation is to bring about its goal of increasing awareness of and engagement with women's philosophical thinking. Indeed, I have shown through my analysis that with reclamation we must do more than theorize exclusion, we must use the understanding gained thereby as a guide to changing philosophical history and practice. Gardner's attention to form is but one approach to creating this change. I suggest that we must see the work of reclamation as necessarily involving the study of exclusion: how it has happened, what it has required, and how it has shaped philosophical practices, institutions, and history. There are, of course, important feminist theorists of exclusion—Luce Irigaray, Genevieve Lloyd, and Michèle Le Doeuff come to mind. Indeed, I think their work offers reclamation crucial resources for undertaking this project. What I suggest is not so much changing what reclamation is but rather acknowledging and developing a part of its work that has thus far been neglected, to the detriment of philosophy and reclamation.

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