

This article was downloaded by: [University of Haifa Library]

On: 22 October 2012, At: 03:23

Publisher: Routledge

Informa Ltd Registered in England and Wales Registered Number: 1072954
Registered office: Mortimer House, 37-41 Mortimer Street, London W1T 3JH,
UK



International Journal of Philosophical Studies

Publication details, including instructions for authors
and subscription information:

<http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/riph20>

On the Marginalization of Feminist Philosophy

Iddo Landau ^a

^a Haifa University, Israel

Version of record first published: 20 Oct 2010.

To cite this article: Iddo Landau (2010): On the Marginalization of Feminist Philosophy, *International Journal of Philosophical Studies*, 18:4, 551-568

To link to this article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09672559.2010.509404>

PLEASE SCROLL DOWN FOR ARTICLE

Full terms and conditions of use: <http://www.tandfonline.com/page/terms-and-conditions>

This article may be used for research, teaching, and private study purposes. Any substantial or systematic reproduction, redistribution, reselling, loan, sub-licensing, systematic supply, or distribution in any form to anyone is expressly forbidden.

The publisher does not give any warranty express or implied or make any representation that the contents will be complete or accurate or up to date. The accuracy of any instructions, formulae, and drug doses should be independently verified with primary sources. The publisher shall not be liable for any loss, actions, claims, proceedings, demand, or costs or damages whatsoever or howsoever caused arising directly or indirectly in connection with or arising out of the use of this material.

Discussion

On the Marginalization of Feminist Philosophy

Iddo Landau

Many feminist philosophers have criticized the marginalization of feminist philosophy. Michèle Le Doeuff (1991: p. 16) notes that ‘because books by women are all sectioned off under a special heading (by women, about women, for women), half their potential readers are deprived of solid reading matter. ... Must we keep our best works to ourselves? In this way we are turned into a “we”, separatists, against our will.’ Elisabeth Lloyd (1995: p. 193) points out that ‘analyses and distinctions developed through feminist concerns are at least as promising as those tools already in place within mainstream metaphysics and epistemology. ... Nevertheless, the overwhelming majority of philosophers ... manifest no awareness of the availability and applicability of feminist thought’. Sally Haslanger (2000: p. 107) writes that ‘philosophers have been especially keen to discount the relevance of feminist thinking to research outside of normative moral and political theory, and the idea that feminism might have something to contribute to metaphysics is often regarded as ridiculous’. This, she argues, is unfortunate, since feminist theories may be relevant and have much to contribute to general, non-feminist metaphysics, epistemology, and moral and political theory (p. 115). Nancy Tuana (1992: p. xiii) notes that ‘at the same time that feminist theory is being welcomed into the academy, it is being marginalized’, and Susan Moller Okin writes in a section entitled ‘Feminist Scholarship: Still on the Fringes?’ that ‘feminist work is still quite marginalized in the subfield of political theory’ (Okin, 1992: p. 337). She adds that ‘one of the most obvious indicators of this is that many interpretations of political theories still fail to take account of the feminist objections that have been raised about them’ (p. 337). Likewise, Charlotte Witt (2006: p. 539) points out that ‘the integration of feminist work into the philosophical canon has been problematic ... [and] its claim to be truly philosophical has been questioned’. She suggests that various understandings of what philosophy is and who the philosophers are, within the philosophical tradition itself, ‘can help formulate strategies of

integration for feminist philosophy, including feminist history of philosophy'. And Miranda Fricker and Jennifer Hornsby write that

As departments of women's studies and gender studies have grown up in the last twenty years, there has come to be more and more published work falling under the head of feminist philosophy. In our experience as members of philosophy departments, students and teachers of philosophy find it difficult to relate much of this work to their own projects. It needs to be made clearer that – and how – feminist concerns can be brought to bear on philosophy. Then 'pure' philosophers may feel less disconnected from work that they are now perhaps inclined to ignore, and genuine interdisciplinary links may be made between philosophy and other subjects on which feminism has had an impact.

(Fricker and Hornsby, 2000: p. 107)

Similar oral and written criticisms of the marginalization of feminist philosophy are frequently expressed, and they point to a real problem: non-feminist philosophy usually takes no heed of the many discussions, claims, and arguments suggested in feminist philosophy, although many of the latter are relevant to general, non-feminist discussions. There is sufficient literature to indicate that the situation also pertains to other areas of feminist scholarship; however, here I will limit my discussion to feminist philosophy, the area with which I am most familiar.

What are the causes of this marginalization? Like almost all other social and intellectual phenomena, this one too has more than one cause. Okin cites Pateman's explanation that some mainstream philosophers may feel uncomfortable with feminist philosophy because 'feminist arguments call for the redefinitions of the fundamental terms of the debate' (Okin, 1992: p. 338). Another explanation refers to the widespread yet false contention that feminist theory and non-feminist theory are wholly unrelated areas: 'there is still a strong element within male-dominated academia holding that if something – a paper, a book, a course – is about gender, it's "only" about women, and not about politics, and can therefore be readily ignored' (p. 338). Okin observes that when courses on general political theory discuss issues that are considered the domain of feminist political theory, some students complain 'this isn't a women's studies course, it's a political science course ... so why do you talk about women?' (p. 338). A third factor that Pateman and Okin raise involves the issue of power: feminist political theory 'touch[es] on some emotions, interests and privileges' (Pateman, 1987: p. 2, cited in Okin, 1992: p. 339). One of the reasons that feminist theory is marginalized, then, is that 'those in power don't like its messages at all' (Okin, 1992: p. 339). Witt (2006: p. 539) also argues that 'the fact that feminist scholarship has an explicitly political goal (the equality of the

sexes and the end of male oppression) puts it on a collision course with philosophy's traditional self-image as the disinterested search for truth and knowledge'. Other authors point at technical factors that affect this marginalization: as mentioned above, Michèle Le Doeuff (1991: p. 16) argues that the way in which librarians formally catalogue women's studies under one heading and philosophy under another can entrench philosophers' lack of familiarity with feminist philosophy. Yet another factor may have to do with plain sexism: some might still take anything that relates to or is written by women, including feminist philosophy, to be of little scholarly worth, simply because it relates to or is written by women. There are indications that such sexism has been more prevalent than we would like to believe. In a recent discussion of this topic, Sally Haslanger reports outright discrimination she and others have suffered from, as well as cases where women were encouraged to limit themselves only to certain areas of philosophy (2008: pp. 210–12). She also discusses conscious and unconscious biases and schemas that affect decisions on admitting students to graduate programmes and hiring faculty to philosophy departments. Haslanger cautiously hypothesizes about such bias even in peer-reviewed journals and examines the percentage of women on the editorial boards of some top philosophy journals, as well as the percentage of papers written by women in these journals (pp. 215–16, 220–1), although she notes that it is also possible that women may not submit work to these journals in large numbers (p. 216). Haslanger finds the suggestion that women are simply not interested in the fields of philosophy she examines unconvincing, and points out that some peer refereeing is not really 'blind' (pp. 215–16). Only one journal of those she examined follows a procedure whereby the managing editor masks the identity of authors before sending papers on to the editor, who then decides which are to be rejected immediately and which sent out to referees (p. 216).

I believe that all these causes do indeed contribute to the marginalization of feminist philosophy. But I do not think that they are the only ones. In this paper, I would like to consider another factor that, I believe, significantly contributes to the marginalization of feminist philosophy, but remains relatively under-discussed, namely a certain academic separatism that exists in feminist philosophy.¹ By 'academic separatism' I mean the tendency to exclude men and non-feminists partly or completely from feminist professional academic activity. Some (although not all, of course) feminist scholars would prefer that male and non-feminist academics completely refrained from participating in feminist academic work. Some other feminist scholars allow men's participation in feminist work, but only under certain conditions that most mainstream male academics would find hard to accept. This separatist tendency enhances the marginalization of feminist philosophy since it hinders non-feminist men philosophers (who are the majority of mainstream philosophers) from becoming more familiar with feminist philosophy. I suggest, then, that this separatism is in tension with

the wish to reduce or eliminate the prevailing marginalization of feminist philosophy, and that this tension should be acknowledged and discussed more than it has to date.

It is important to note that by ‘non-feminist philosophers’ I am *not* referring to anti-feminist ones; I take non-feminist philosophers to be those who have no strong view on feminism and feminist issues, who have hardly thought about these issues, and who are mainly interested in other issues. They do not identify themselves this way or that, and at present are generally ignorant of feminist philosophical literature. They have no clear idea about feminist philosophy or about the issues with which feminist philosophy deals; they mostly focus on topics that they take to be unrelated to feminism or feminist philosophy, such as philosophy of science, existentialism, philosophy of language, history of philosophy, epistemology, or metaphysics. Feminism – as they understand it – is simply not part of their field.

It should also be stressed that not all feminist philosophers are separatists. One can find in feminist philosophical literature many important and influential statements indicative of participatory propensities (although some of them emphasize the theoretical compatibility between feminist and non-feminist theory more than the practical participation of men and non-feminists in feminist professional academic work). Thus, for example, Genevieve Lloyd (2000: p. 246) argues that ‘there is – and need be – no firm identity to “feminist” history of philosophy’. Jennifer Hornsby proposes that ‘malestream’ philosophy of language can and should be repaired by suggestions put forward by feminist philosophy of language (Hornsby, 2000: p. 101). Lorraine Code (1988: p. 188) emphasizes that although feminist epistemology may reject or problematize much of traditional ‘malestream’ epistemology, ‘it can most fruitfully do so by remaining in dialogue with that tradition’. Similarly, Linda Alcoff and Elizabeth Potter, while acknowledging differences of view on this matter, write that they view such a dialogue as healthy (Alcoff and Potter, 1993: p. 2). Jack Nelson and Lynn Hankinson Nelson (1994: p. 501) point out that nothing in their analysis ‘suggests that “mainstream” philosophers of science should not be both interested in and participate in that ongoing work’, and Sally Haslanger even recommends that feminists should ‘encourage men to teach and write on feminism’ (2008: p. 219). But alongside this participatory disposition, there is also the separatist one. One can find in feminist philosophical discourse various written statements that disapprove of men’s professional, academic involvement in feminist academic work. Thus, for example, Marsha Rockey Schermer (1980: pp. 178–81) argues that the principle of selecting the best-qualified philosopher for a philosophical job calls for choosing women, not men, to teach feminist philosophy courses, and Alison Jaggar (1979: pp. 247–56) argues that it is better for an academic philosophy department not to offer a feminist theory or philosophy course at all than to have one taught by a man.² Sandra Harding (1987: pp. 11–12) welcomes men’s participation in

feminist professional activity, but only in auxiliary functions. The function of men will be to help describe

...areas of masculine behavior and thought to which male researchers have easier and perhaps better access than do women researchers: primarily male settings and ones from which women are systematically excluded, such as board rooms, military settings, or locker rooms. ... I am thinking here of the 'phallic critique' men could provide of friendships between men, or of relationships between fathers and sons, or between male lovers. How do these feel lacking to their participants? How do they contrast with the characteristics of friendships between women, and so forth?

Elsewhere (1991a: p. 109), Harding presents the following instructions to men who want to participate in feminist scholarship: 'advance the understandings produced by women feminists ... teach and write about women's thought, writings, accomplishments ... criticize male colleagues ... move material resources to women and feminists' (see also Harding, 1993: pp. 67–8). Thus, Harding does allow men's participation in feminist academic work, but only if they are feminist, and moreover are willing to restrict their academic activity to rather limited endeavours.

Elaine Showalter, too, allows men to participate in feminist scholarly work, but only if they are feminists whose work abides by certain conditions (Showalter, 1987a).³ She claims that only a few men can do it well since, as already noted by Larry Lipking (whom Showalter cites), only a very few men theorists have the experience of 'never having been empowered to speak' (p. 129); this, however, is the starting point of feminist criticism. Moreover, there is a danger that male theorists may appropriate feminist criticism to the extent of speaking for it, as 'there is more than a hint in some recent critical writing that it's time for men to step in and show the girls how to do it' (p. 119). Male theorists should avoid what she calls 'female impersonification' (p. 126), and should note that 'the way to feminist criticism, for the male theorist, must involve a confrontation with what might be implied by reading as a man and with a questioning or a surrender of paternal privileges' (pp. 126–7).⁴ Showalter critically considers works related to feminism by, among others, Jonathan Culler and Terry Eagleton, and argues that while Culler has succeeded in avoiding female impersonification and some other dangers that beset men's work in feminism, Eagleton's male feminist reading and analysis in his *The Rape of Clarissa* (1982) is highly problematic. Eagleton presents 'phallic feminism [that] seems like another raid on the resources of the feminine in order to modernize male dominance. We are led back to ... the appropriation of the tide of feminist feeling in the interests of patriarchy.' Moreover, 'the effect of Eagleton's text is to silence or marginalize feminist criticism by speaking for it, and to

use feminist language to reinforce the continued dominance of a male literary canon' (p. 129).

Eagleton's response, which he himself describes as appropriating the issues under discussion to his own experience while avoiding other kinds of appropriation (1987: p. 133), recounts somewhat similar dilemmas he had as a young student from a working-class background in Cambridge. He describes how he and other students of that background were suspicious – perhaps with good reason – of students who supported socialism but came from a more affluent background. Eagleton and his friends treated these other students as helpers but at the same time possibly imitators and appropriators, as both allies and 'others', and as thinkers whose arguments should be listened to but also novices who could never really understand what it is like to be from the 'right' class (in this context, the working class). Showalter's reply to Eagleton's response takes his narrative only to exemplify some of her initial claims (1987b: p. 136). She argues that, like many other men in discussions with women, Eagleton too tries to dominate the conversation by changing its grounds, initiating a narrative of his own that interests him and focuses on him. Instead of interacting with her claims and with the topics she introduced, Eagleton seems to ignore them and to develop some topics of his own, perhaps expecting that she will now follow him. Showalter refuses to continue to engage in what she typifies as a one-sided dialogue.

Like Harding, then, Showalter allows men to engage in feminist theory, but only feminist men, and even then only under certain conditions. And she thinks that most men – even feminist ones – will find it difficult to meet the conditions she presents. She argues that most men tend to participate in feminist theory in a way that may be harmful to women and feminism, and treats them with suspicion.

Interestingly, the separatist tendency in feminist theory appears not to be applied to non-feminist *women*, who seem to be invited to participate and comment on feminist philosophy. Thus, arguments that call for the exclusion of men (or non-feminist men) inhibit only certain non-feminist, mainstream philosophers from participating in feminist theory. But since most mainstream, non-feminist philosophers today are men, these arguments inhibit the majority of mainstream philosophers from participating in feminist work.

Claims such as those made by Showalter, Jaggar, Harding, or Schermer are only one indicator of feminist academic separatism. Another has to do with the gender of those on the editorial boards of leading feminist journals. If – following one of Haslanger's arguments mentioned above – one examines the editorial board of the feminist journal *Hypatia*, one finds that there is not a single man among its general editors, managing editors, book review editors, or editorial advisors (altogether about sixty people). An examination of previous issues of the journal reveals that this has also been the case in all its former editorial and advisory boards. Nor has there been

a single man on the editorial and advisory boards of another prominent journal of feminist thought, *Feminist Theory*. Checking the editorial and advisory boards of other, more general feminist journals that deal with a variety of feminist fields but publish also in feminist philosophy or theory, such as *Signs*, *Feminist Review*, or *Feminist Studies* yields similar results, although for some time now there have been some men who are sufficiently qualified for such functions.

Another indicator can be found in the mission statement of *Feminist Theory*, which says that the journal aims ‘to provide a forum for discussion and debate within feminist theory and to foster an interchange of ideas between *feminists* writing from varied political, theoretical, and disciplinary stances’ (my italics), rather than an interchange of ideas between scholars of feminism, or those who work on or are interested in feminist issues. Similarly, the editors write that they intend the journal to be ‘a place where all shades of *feminist* opinion can be aired’ (Griffin et al., 2000: p. 5, my italics). Likewise, the mission statement of the general feminist journal *Feminist Review*, which among other issues also sometimes discusses feminist philosophy, asserts that “‘Feminist Review’ offers space for the development of work often found only in “academic” journals, but is also *committed to a feminist perspective*’ (Feminist Review Collective, 1979: pp. 1–2, my italics). The editors also write that they ‘welcome contributions from any point of view *within feminism*’ (p. 2, my italics), although they recognize that not everything that has to do with women is relevant to feminism. An editorial in *Women Studies International Forum* (another important journal that publishes in a variety of feminist fields, including feminist philosophy) emphasizes the ‘commitment to publishing the work of *feminist* researchers and activists internationally’ (Duchen et al., 1992). There are perhaps good reasons for having feminist and women’s-studies journals that not only discuss feminist issues, but are also committed to discussing these issues from a feminist perspective, and that aim to publish the work of feminist authors. But it should also be acknowledged that, in such journals, works on feminist issues by non-feminist, mainstream scholars are disadvantaged.

It is also interesting to check the actual rate of publications written by men in feminist journals. Between 1997 and 2007 only 9 per cent (46 out of 508) of the articles that came out in *Hypatia* were written by men.⁵ Interestingly, in *Feminist Theory* the percentage of papers written by men is much smaller. Since its first issue in 2000 till 2007 only 6 out of the 170 papers that appeared in *Feminist Theory*, i.e. 3.5 per cent, were written by men.⁶ In *Feminist Review* between 1997 and 2007 19.5 out of 376, i.e. 5.1 per cent of the papers, were written by men.⁷ It is difficult to know what to make of these statistics. As Haslanger notes regarding her statistics on papers published by women in some mainstream journals, the possible paucity of submissions by members of a certain group may play a significant role in the under-representation of that group’s publications. But the significant

differences in the rate of publications by men in the different journals is puzzling. It is unclear why men would submit much more to *Hypatia* than to *Feminist Theory* and *Feminist Review*, and it is plausible that the explanation of the difference has also to do with editorial policy toward papers written by men (which, after some time, may also influence the rate of submissions by male scholars, as they, like almost all academics, are sensitive to their perceived chances of succeeding in publishing their work in specific journals). Perhaps the editorial policy of *Hypatia* is especially hospitable to works by male authors. Or perhaps there is some reluctance to accept work written by men in the other two journals.

It is difficult, then, to draw clear conclusions from these statistics about the rate of men's publications in feminist journals (although in all three journals examined, and especially the latter two, the rate is very low). The other indications presented above, however, are much clearer. The explicit assertions in mission statements of some major feminist academic journals, the complete absence of men from the advisory and editorial boards of important journals, and the unambiguous recommendations made by some central feminist theoreticians about men's professional participation in feminist academic work do suggest that men, and especially non-feminist men, are at a professional disadvantage in this field. On the assumption that many men and non-feminist academics want to have their work published, hope to be academically acknowledged as members of editorial and advisory boards, and in general wish to be accepted and welcomed in the fields they research (all these, of course, are very important in decisions about tenure, promotions, etc.), and on the assumption that many men and non-feminists are sensitive to cues about the likelihood of being published, nominated to professional functions, etc., it would be surprising if many men and non-feminists were indeed to relate in any extensive way to feminist work.

Take, for example, a male mainstream philosopher of science who is considering whether to read and work on Helen Longino's *Science as Social Knowledge* and *The Fate of Knowledge* (Longino, 1990; Longino, 2002), or Sandra Harding's *The Science Question in Feminism* and *Whose Science? Whose Knowledge?* (Harding, 1986; Harding, 1991b). Although he is not an anti-feminist, he is not a feminist either; thus he would discuss aspects of Longino's or Harding's philosophies of science in the same fashion that he might discuss, say, Arthur Fine's or Bas van Fraassen's. In his discussion, he is unlikely to express any commitment to feminist ends and programmes, or write anything supportive of (or hostile to) feminism in general. Like almost all academics, he wants his voice to be heard and his work to be published and discussed. He would also be glad to be able to write in his CV one day that he had sat on the advisory or editorial boards of some journals. But the data above suggest that, all other things being equal, it would be more instrumental for him, from the practical professional point of view, not to invest time and effort on feminist themes, but to resort to others.

If what has been written thus far is correct, then part of the reason why feminist philosophy is marginalized within non-feminist philosophy is that non-feminist philosophers and men are somewhat marginalized in feminist philosophy. Alongside the message – indeed, the demand – that non-feminist philosophy and philosophers should discuss and deal with issues in feminist philosophy, there is a message that they should not. Thus, some men and non-feminists feel that they're damned if they do and damned if they don't. And perhaps more damned if they do. Hence, they prefer not to enter into the area, and not to learn about, and discuss, issues in feminist philosophy of science, political theory, epistemology, etc. Unless they are especially interested in some feminist issue, it is more worth their while, both career-wise and in terms of their opportunity to develop intellectually through mutually encouraging intellectual communication, to choose to deal with issues in other fields. Given that there are many other philosophical fields and issues that do not entail this unease and ambivalence, it would indeed be irrational for them to choose to work on issues in feminist philosophy.

What I have been describing above has much to do also with another, larger phenomenon, namely the institutional and professional pressures in academia and the ways they conflict with favourable dialogic conditions. What has been described above may be only one of several problematic consequences of the professional pressures to publish, be nominated to academic boards and functions, have oneself cited, etc., that have developed in recent decades (and, in the last few years in the UK, have been institutionalized and sharpened through the RAE). The many consequences of these academic pressures merit a detailed, independent discussion that I cannot pursue here, and I will thus consider in the context of this argument such professional pressures as a given. As long as these professional pressures play the important role they do in decisions about hiring, tenure, promotion, and salary (and, in some cases, also in academics' self-esteem), many academics will prefer to avoid or minimize their activity in fields in which they feel they might be at a disadvantage.

Various objections may arise concerning what has been suggested thus far. It may be asked, first, why a male or non-feminist philosopher should be heard or given space in a feminist journal; after all, would work by people who do not deal with, say, aesthetics be welcomed in an aesthetics journal? However, as in the example of the reaction by a philosopher of science to Longino's and Harding's works, I am dealing here with cases where male mainstream philosophers of science, political philosophers, metaphysicians, epistemologists, historians of philosophy, etc., may have interesting things to say about, and are in a position to participate in interesting dialogues on, feminist notions in these areas. Although they are not committed to many feminist suppositions, they may well have interesting things to say about issues that relate both to their field of expertise and to feminism.

It might also be pointed out that what has been described above does not *justify* non-feminists and male philosophers' reluctance to deal with feminist philosophy. Would we condone or justify a philosopher who did not discuss, say, metaphysics because a certain group of metaphysicians indicated that she or he was unwelcome in the field? However, the argument of this paper does not attempt to address the moral dimension of the phenomenon described. This dimension, too, should be discussed, but it is beyond the scope of the present paper. Rather than seeking to determine who is at fault and who is not, I am interested in this paper in calling attention to a phenomenon that affects feminist philosophy, and asking how it should be addressed. Perhaps the men and non-feminists discussed above are at fault, perhaps not. But even if we reach the conclusion that they should approach feminist philosophy more determinedly and more frequently, although they are somewhat unwelcome in the field, it is doubtful that they will do so. It is to this empirical reality that I want to draw attention here.

It may also be argued that philosophers who are sincerely interested in feminist philosophy are unlikely to decide to avoid or ignore it simply because they are not welcome in the field. I agree: a philosopher who is deeply and seriously interested in feminist philosophy is unlikely to be deterred by this inhospitality. But the present paper does not refer to scholars who are deeply and keenly interested in feminism, but, rather, to the vast majority of non-feminist, mainstream scholars who, although generally curious about whatever relates to their field, do not have a special, deep interest in feminist philosophy. It is these political scientists, epistemologists, metaphysicians, etc. who marginalize feminist philosophy by not engaging with it and by not making use of its findings and perspectives. It seems to me that this situation is likely to persist as long as such scholars feel that they are unwelcome in the field, and that it is less emotionally frustrating and more profitable career-wise for them to deal with other issues.

It may also be argued that mainstream philosophers are, and will remain, completely uninterested in feminist philosophy. A typical mainstream philosopher has never been to a feminist conference, never tried to read a feminist paper, and perhaps also never engaged a feminist philosopher in conversation. There is little reason, it might be claimed, to believe that even if feminist academic separatism were to disappear, such a philosopher would even consider doing any of the above. But that seems incorrect. Most philosophers are curious individuals who are interested in and like to – and frequently attempt to – learn more about innovations in neighbouring areas.⁸ Many of them are also keen on finding new topics to write and publish on, and areas of research that border on their expertise are likely to attract them. Their avoidance of feminist discussions that relate to their fields (for example, epistemology, political and ethical theory, philosophy of science) is probably not an indication of uninterest that is likely to continue,

but rather a result of conditions that, if changed, would increase their participation in feminist discussions.

It may also be argued that, in comparison to the misogynistic forces in academia today, the effects of separatist tendencies on feminist philosophy are inconsequential. Hostility toward feminism and feminist philosophy is the main cause of the marginalization of feminist philosophy, and hence, it might be thought, changes in feminist academic separatism would have no significant effect. I believe that this view is incorrect. There are, of course, misogynistic and anti-feminist elements in academia, and they are not to be treated lightly. But today there are also many non-feminist philosophers who are not biased toward feminist work, and who are mostly affected by the separatist ideology and practices mentioned above. Their main reason for not learning more about what feminist philosophy has to offer, and for not working on it and discussing it, is the messages they receive from feminist academics and works, messages indicating that, in many ways, it is preferred that men and non-feminists keep their distance from feminist academic activity.

Note that nothing in what has been presented up to now shows that decreasing or eliminating the marginalization of feminist philosophy should be preferred to academic separatism, or that separatist views and practices in feminist philosophy should not be adopted. It only suggests that separatist inclinations in feminist philosophy are in tension with the wish to reduce or eliminate the prevailing marginalization of feminist philosophy, and that this tension should be acknowledged and discussed more than it has to date. Those who value separatism over non-marginalization may think that the marginalization of feminist philosophy is a price well worth paying. Others, who value non-marginalization over separatism, may not think so. Many would probably try to strike some balance between the two. But I suggest that a clearer and more elaborate discussion than we have witnessed to date about the value of academic separatism, the value of non-marginalization, and the balance between them should develop.

By way of encouraging such a discussion, I want to present, and comment upon, several of the issues that, I think, are likely to arise in it. The list of points I will present here is far from exhaustive, and is intended to serve as no more than a preamble for a discussion that I hope will follow in other works. Moreover, my favouring non-marginalization over separatism strongly colours the following discussion and comments.

One issue relates to the compatibility between feminist and non-feminist philosophy. It might be argued that not all branches of philosophy are compatible with each other. For example, the claim could be made that the methodological presuppositions of postmodernist philosophy (as well as some other types of modern continental philosophy) and those of analytic philosophy differ to such an extent that no fruitful dialogue between them is possible. In some cases, even the purposes of the inquiries differ: some

schools take the primary, and perhaps the sole, purpose of the inquiry to be the determination of truth, while others strongly emphasize also moral and political ends. Some would relate these or other differences also to what have been called Anglo-American and continental philosophies. Similarly, it might be claimed, feminist and non-feminist philosophies are incompatible branches; too many of their presuppositions radically differ from each other. And as they are incompatible, their respective practitioners have very little to discuss with each other.

Like most of the other issues mentioned here, this one too deserves a more elaborate discussion than can be offered in this context. I should mention, however, that I do not think that all these branches of philosophy are indeed so incompatible; there is much that they can contribute to each other, even if merely on the level of a dialogue about their different suppositions. Moreover, differences are frequently less sharp than they may at first appear. For example, many of those who emphasize moral and political ends are also interested in truth, and many of those who take the attainment of truth to be their main goal are also sensitive to moral and political issues. Moreover, both feminist and non-feminist philosophies have many different sub-branches that share many suppositions and, thus, are compatible. Feminist and non-feminist empiricist and analytic philosophy, socialist feminist and socialist non-feminist thought, feminist and non-feminist history of philosophy, feminist and non-feminist postmodernism, etc., do not differ radically in many of their assumptions, and a problem of incompatibility between them does not arise.

Another issue has to do with the possibility that anti-feminists would take advantage of this openness in order to learn more about feminist claims and afterwards to develop and publicize anti-feminist views. But feminist theory is not esoteric; those who wish to learn more about it need only go to the library to read the relevant books and journals. Feminist academic separatism does not prevent those who have strong anti-feminist feelings from approaching feminist texts, or from publishing and dispersing anti-feminist views. Rather, I would argue, feminist academic separatism prevents the many *irresolute* non-feminists and men, those who are *not* determined to learn about and discuss issues in feminist philosophy, from becoming more acquainted with these issues. As the situation stands now, feminist separatism screens out not anti-feminists, but rather the non-feminists and men that it could have familiarized with the subject. The separatist tendencies do not deter feminism's foes, but estrange its potential friends.

Another point, mentioned by Showalter, relates to the possibility that men might engage in what she calls 'female impersonification' and appropriate feminist philosophy as another resource for male dominance. This point, too, requires much more discussion than can be suggested here. In the present context, I would only say that non-feminist male philosophers are less likely to fall into 'female impersonification' than feminist ones, and it is

the former group that I focus on in this paper. Furthermore, I think that the likelihood of such a take-over is overestimated. Because of its subject-matter, feminist philosophy is likely to continue to attract mainly women and feminists. Although reducing the marginalization of feminist philosophy would enable others to learn from it and apply themes currently considered the preserve of feminist philosophy to their own fields, most of those who will work on the topic are likely to remain women and feminists. Moreover, if some discussions by men and non-feminists prove indeed to be problematic, feminists are powerful enough to react and explain, as part of the dialogue, what they think is faulty or misdirected. Perhaps Showalter is right that it would be better if men were to abide by her conditions when discussing feminist philosophy. And I think that she is right in supposing that many men would not. Many men, especially mainstream, non-feminist men, would probably not wish, for example, to acknowledge their gendered social position before discussing some issue in feminist theory. But even if it is the case that a dialogue with men who follow Showalter's recommendations is better than a dialogue with men who do not, there can be significant value also to the latter.

Another argument might suggest that groups that wish to develop new ideas, similarly to individuals who wish to do so, sometimes need to withdraw temporarily and close themselves to criticisms and dialogue for some time, concentrate on their own work, and only at a later stage return to the public scholarly scene, present their work to others, try to convince and influence them, and receive feedback. I agree. But I think that although feminist philosophy will continue to develop, it has already reached this second stage where it can and should show its work to the wider scholarly public, try to affect it, and be ready to expose itself to public debate and discussion. Those who favour academic separatism may also point out, following, for example, Marilyn Frye, that separatism functions, for many non-hegemonic groups, as a necessary means for even beginning to obtain their social and political power. As Frye argues, 'total power is unconditional access; total powerlessness is being unconditionally accessible' (1983: p. 103). In order to gain power and autonomy in an environment dominated by other groups, the disempowered who wish to gain control of themselves must, as the first political act, separate and make themselves inaccessible. Again, I concur. But it may be that the field of feminist philosophy has by now become sufficiently powerful and sure of itself to diminish or end this separateness, and make itself more accessible. I agree with Alison Jaggar and Iris Marion Young (1998: p. 6) that 'prior to the emergence of a distinct tradition in feminist philosophy, feminist philosophers were positioned as isolated voices speaking idiosyncratically from the margins or the periphery. Today, the sophisticated level of development reached by the first two stages or aspects of feminist philosophy means that feminist scholars are now prepared to engage as equals with other philosophers.'⁹

Others might propose that feminist philosophy has nothing to gain from diminishing or relinquishing its separatist characteristics, since it is already open to non-feminist philosophy. After all, feminist philosophers are well versed in non-feminist theory and can take whatever they need from it. Men and non-feminist philosophers who are not familiar with feminist work have much more to gain from ending the marginalization of feminist philosophy. But why should feminist philosophy be interested in changing its approach to benefit non-feminists and men? However, I believe that feminists frequently are (and should be) interested, even if not as a first priority, also in the well being of those who are not women and are not feminist. Moreover, ending (or diminishing) the marginalization of feminist philosophy also serves feminist ends. It is important and helpful for feminism and women if feminist views and approaches reach and influence non-feminists as well as feminists. Elisabeth Lloyd may be overstating the point when she argues that ‘feminists have everything to gain from being included in such “ordinary” scientific debate. This has been, in fact, a primary feminist goal’ (1995: pp. 200–1; but note that Lloyd is discussing here science, not philosophy). But it is in the interests of feminism to make as many people as possible, including men and non-feminists, attentive to feminist issues, to expose them to feminist ideas, and thus to teach them about feminism and make them more sympathetic to and appreciative of the movement and its messages. Academic separatism leads feminism to concentrate its efforts on convincing those who are already convinced, rather than those who are not yet convinced.

Moreover, although feminist philosophers are in general open to developments in non-feminist philosophy, because feminist philosophy is so marginalized many men and non-feminist philosophers who might have worked on issues discussed in feminist philosophy, thus enriching their own work while simultaneously enriching feminist philosophy, do not do so. Thus, feminist philosophy also suffers as a result of this marginalization. The larger the number of active and interested minds that focus on an issue, the more likely it is that the discussion of this issue will be enhanced and developed. I agree with Jaggard and Young (1998: p. 6) that ‘a period of intensive dialogue between feminist philosophers and those whose work is not explicitly informed by feminist perspectives will be valuable for both traditions. Entrenched assumptions on both sides will be opened to new challenges, their adequacy will be tested and they will be enriched by alternative perspectives.’ The marginalization of feminist philosophy does not take its toll only on non-feminist philosophy.

Some feminist epistemological theories also suggest that non-feminists and men should be encouraged to discuss feminist issues. For example, Helen Longino takes inquiry to be more objective the more it allows, and is responsive to, criticism from different points of view (1990: pp. 76, 78, 80; 1993: pp. 112–13; 2002: pp. 129–30, 131–5). She emphasizes criticism

suggested by members of disadvantaged social groups (1990: pp. 78–9; 2002: p. 132), but her account suggests that criticism from all perspectives should be encouraged and treated seriously. Inclusion of, and interactive attention to, diverse and alternative points of view is of paramount importance for Longino. Likewise, Elizabeth Anderson underscores the importance of promoting criticisms and arguments related to a wide variety of viewpoints (1995: pp. 35, 55). And Elisabeth Lloyd argues that encouraging diversity in the background experiences and viewpoints of researchers will yield better scientific knowledge. Such diversity will allow more thorough testing of given theories (1995: pp. 203, 207)

There is also another, general consideration that favours reducing separatism (although I am aware that, like the other points mentioned here, this one too calls for more discussion and needs further work). I believe that generally, unless there are very good reasons to the contrary, people should not be discouraged from attaining any type of knowledge, and that open and unrestricted discussion of any issue, in any field, should not only be allowed but actively encouraged. Open dialogue is almost always helpful, and knowledge should be as public and as accessible as possible.

Of course, much more can be said for and against the points mentioned above, and additional points are likely to be raised. Some may wish to introduce into the discussion various distinctions, such as between non-feminist women, non-feminist men, and feminist men, or between the degrees of non-separatism they wish to endorse in publishing on the one hand and in teaching on the other. This paper intends to be in part an invitation to a more elaborate discussion on the tension between the wish to do away with the marginalization of feminist philosophy and the wish to maintain a certain degree of separatism. I hope that such a discussion will indeed follow.¹⁰

Haifa University, Israel

Notes

- 1 It is probably appropriate for me to mention at this point in the discussion, which deals with intellectual separatism, that I am a man who considers himself a feminist.
- 2 For a response to Jaggar see McNulty, 1979: pp. 93–5.
- 3 Showalter's arguments apply to feminist theory at large, but she makes them in the context of a discussion about men's place in feminist criticism.
- 4 Somewhat similar claims were also made later in relation to other groups. For example, Paul Nesbitt-Larking (2008) and Alison Chrystides (2008) have discussed dialogic conditions between groups in a state of 'deep multiculturalism'. Both Nesbitt-Larking and Chrystides believe that, in such cases, both groups should attend to the power imbalance between the groups and the way it is likely to affect the dialogue, and suggest that members of dominant groups will have to question their purpose and their core values.

- 5 Including introductions, review articles, discussion notes, authors-meet-critics panels, 'musings', etc., but not including anonymous articles and book reviews.
- 6 Not including book reviews. Two papers (in 2002, issue 3(3); 2003, issue 4(3)) were written jointly by a man and a woman, and each was computed as half of a publication by a man.
- 7 Including some poems and artwork, but not including anonymous publications and book reviews. Five papers (in 2000, Vol. 66; 2001, Vol. 67; 2003, Vol. 75; 2004, Vol. 77; 2007, Vol. 85) were written jointly by a man and a woman, and each was computed as half of a publication by a man.
- 8 The explicit or implied critiques of mainstream philosophy that some feminist theory raises are likely to arouse mainstream philosophers' interest even more.
- 9 This view may seem to conflict with the suggestions in Jaggar (1979: pp. 247–56), mentioned above, but the difference in time between the two papers explains this variation. Moreover, in her 1979 paper Jaggar discusses *teaching*, not research.
- 10 I am grateful to Reem Bar and two anonymous referees of the *International Journal of Philosophical Studies* for very helpful comments on earlier drafts of this paper.

References

- Alcoff, Linda and Elizabeth Potter (1993) 'Introduction: When Feminisms Intersect Epistemology', in Linda Alcoff and Elizabeth Potter (eds) *Feminist Epistemologies*, New York: Routledge, 1–14.
- Anderson, Elizabeth (1995) 'Knowledge, Human Interests, and Objectivity in Feminist Epistemology', *Philosophical Topics* 23: 27–58.
- Chrystides, Alison (2008) 'Conditions for Dialogue and Illuminating Inequality in multicultural societies', *Journal of Community and Applied Social Psychology* 18: 375–81.
- Code, Lorraine (1988) 'Experience, Knowledge and Responsibility', in Morwenna Griffiths and Margaret Whitford (eds) *Feminist Perspectives in Philosophy*, London: Macmillan, 187–204.
- Duchen, Claire, Ailbhe Smyth, Pat Mahony, Christine Zmroczek, Robyn Rowland, Sue V. Rosser, Dale Spender, and Renate D. Klein (1992) 'Editorial', *Women Studies International Forum* 15(1): i.
- Eagleton, Terry (1982) *The Rape of Clarissa*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- (1987) 'Response', in Alice Jardine and Paul Smith (eds) *Men in Feminism*, New York: Methuen, 133–35.
- Feminist Review Collective (1979) 'Editorial', *Feminist Review*, 1: 1–3.
- Fricker, Miranda and Jennifer Hornsby (2000) 'Introduction', in Miranda Fricker and Jennifer Hornsby (eds) *The Cambridge Companion to Feminism in Philosophy*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1–9.
- Frye, Marilyn (1983) 'Some Reflections on Separatism and Power', in *The Politics of Reality: Essays in Feminist Theory*, Trumansburg, NY: The Crossing Press, 95–109.
- Griffin, Gabriele, Rosemary Hennessy, Stevi Jackson, and Sasha Roseneil (2000) 'Editorial', *Feminist Theory* 1: 5–9.
- Harding, Sandra (1986) *The Science Question in Feminism*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

- (1987) 'Introduction: Is There a Feminist Method?', in Sandra Harding (ed.) *Feminism and Methodology: Social Science Issues*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1–14.
- (1991a) 'Who Knows? Identities and Feminist Epistemology', in Joan E. Hartman and Ellen Messer-Dawidow (eds) *(En)gendering Knowledge*, Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 100–15.
- (1991b) *Whose Science? Whose Knowledge? Thinking from Women's Lives*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- (1993) 'Rethinking Standpoint Epistemology: What is "Strong Objectivity"?', in Linda Alcoff and Elizabeth Potter (eds) *Feminist Epistemologies*, New York: Routledge, 49–82.
- Haslanger, Sally (2000) 'Feminism in Metaphysics: Negotiating the Natural', in Miranda Fricker and Jennifer Hornsby (eds) *The Cambridge Companion to Feminism in Philosophy*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 107–26.
- (2008) 'Changing the Ideology and Culture of Philosophy: Not by Reason (Alone)', *Hypatia* 23: 210–23.
- Hornsby, Jennifer (2000) 'Feminism in Philosophy of Language: Communicative Speech Acts', in Miranda Fricker and Jennifer Hornsby (eds) *The Cambridge Companion to Feminism in Philosophy*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 87–106.
- Jaggar, Alison M. (1979) 'Male Instructors, Feminists and Women's Studies', *Teaching Philosophy* 2: 247–56.
- Jaggar, Alison M. and Iris Marion Young (1998) 'Introduction', in Alison M. Jaggar and Iris Marion Young (eds) *A Companion to Feminist Philosophy*, Malden, MA: Blackwell, 1–6.
- Le Doeuff, Michèle (1991) *Hipparchia's Choice: An Essay Concerning Women, Philosophy, etc.*, trans. Trista Selous, Oxford: Blackwell.
- Lloyd, Elisabeth A. (1995) 'Feminism as Method: What Scientists Get that Philosophers Don't', *Philosophical Topics* 23: 189–220.
- Lloyd, Genevieve (2000) 'Feminism in History of Philosophy: Approaching the Past', in Miranda Fricker and Jennifer Hornsby (eds) *The Cambridge Companion to Feminism in Philosophy*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 245–63.
- Longino, Helen E. (1990) *Science as Social Knowledge: Values and Objectivity in Scientific Inquiry*, Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- (1993) 'Subjects, Power and Knowledge: Description and Prescription in Feminist Philosophies of Science', in Linda Alcoff and Elizabeth Potter (eds) *Feminist Epistemologies*, New York: Routledge, 101–20.
- (2002) *The Fate of Knowledge*, Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- McNulty, Michael T. (1979) 'Teaching Feminism: A Response to Jaggar', *Teaching Philosophy* 3: 93–5.
- Nelson, Jack and Lynn Hankinson Nelson (1994) 'No Rush to Judgement', *The Monist* 77: 486–508.
- Nesbitt-Larking, Paul (2008) 'Dissolving the Diaspora: Dialogical Practice in the Development of Deep Multiculturalism', *Journal of Community and Applied Social Psychology* 18: 351–62.
- Okin, Susan Moller (1992) *Women in Western Political Thought*, 2nd edn, Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Pateman, Carole (1987) 'Introduction', in Carole Pateman and Elizabeth Gross (eds) *Feminist Challenges: Social and Political Theory*, Boston, MA: Northeastern University Press, 1–12.

- Schermer, Marsha Rockey (1980) 'Comments on Attig's "Why are You, a Man, Teaching this Course on the Philosophy of Feminism?"', *Metaphilosophy* 11: 178–81.
- Showalter, Elaine (1987a) 'Critical Cross-dressing: Male Feminists and the Woman of the Year', in Alice Jardine and Paul Smith (eds) *Men in Feminism*, New York: Methuen, 116–32.
- (1987b) 'Elaine Showalter Replies', in Alice Jardine and Paul Smith (eds) *Men in Feminism*, New York: Methuen, 136.
- Tuana, Nancy (1992) *Woman and the History of Philosophy*, St Paul, MN: Paragon.
- Witt, Charlotte (2006) 'Feminist Interpretations of the Philosophical Canon', *Signs* 31: 537–52.