

Women in Philosophy: Voices from Scandinavia – An Introduction

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IT IS WELL-KNOWN that the big names in the history of philosophy are those of men. The lack of gender parity in philosophy has garnered serious attention recently, and calls for greater parity – as well as for the end of *manels*, or all-male panels – have gained momentum. It is often repeated that in philosophy the number of women earning PhDs and continuing their research careers in academia are in line with the numbers in mathematics, engineering and physics. This holds true across much of the globe, including Scandinavia. The baseline of comparison being the gender distribution within the humanities, this makes philosophy a statistical outlier within its scientific disciplinary area of reference. There is an abundance of literature on the possible reasons why, starting with implicit assumptions about what a philosopher should look like. This is no attempt to contribute to this literature. Much is also done, by all genders, to promote diversity and alter the state of the art – from scrutinization of textbooks to discipline-wide surveys, from mentoring programmes to recruitment strategy planning, from online syllabus projects to sections in disciplinary organizations, from special conferences to book series projects, from dissertation awards and paper prizes to clarifying research and publication opportunities. The fostering and recognition of quality scholarship by women in the field is one such practice to which this special issue aims to contribute. As an attempt to revert the past trend, we have created this special issue entitled *Women in Philosophy: Voices from Scandinavia*. Its purpose is to highlight and increase the visibility of philosophical scholarship authored by women who are active at universities across Scandinavia.

As editors of this issue, we have chosen eight scholars from a variety of philosophical fields of inquiry, at varying stages of their careers, from different backgrounds, with multiple connections at, and affiliations within, universities and other types of research institutions, in different Scandinavian countries. They also employ diverse styles of analysis and have a wide range of philosophical points of reference. The unifying factor is that all are brilliant scholars contributing with insightful reflection to contemporary philosophy. Fields covered include the history of philosophy, theoretical philosophy, practical philosophy and aesthetics, as well as subfields like ethics, applied ethics, political philosophy, philosophy of

mind, environmental philosophy, neuroethics, philosophy of the emotions and theory of value. Let us present these voices from Scandinavia.

To start off at the very origins of philosophical wonder, the first article in this special issue, written by Pia Campeggiani, deals with ancient philosophy and philosophy of the emotions. Campeggiani has been a EURIAS Junior Fellow at the Swedish Collegium for Advanced Study (SCAS) in Uppsala, Sweden, and has now taken up an assistant professorship in Moral Philosophy at the Department of Philosophy of the University of Bologna, in Italy, after being a researcher at the Institut d'Études Avancées de Paris, in France. In Sweden, Campeggiani directed the project *The Passionate Insight: Moral Emotions in Ancient Greece*, the aim of which was to shed light on the conceptual and phenomenological features of the emotions of pity and sympathy in ancient Greece and to illuminate the connection between pity and other-understanding in order to comprehend the capacity of emotions to stimulate ethical responses. In her contribution to this special issue, "Nec Cogitare sed Racere: The Paradox of Fiction at the Tribunal of Ancient Poetics", Campeggiani deals with the so-called "paradox of fiction" from the viewpoint of ancient poetics. This paradox refers to the experience of emotional reactions when experiencing fiction. By offering a brief sketch of the ancient principles of "likelihood" and "vividness", the author argues that these provide a direct and cognitively realistic answer to the paradox insofar as they account for the neutralization of doxastic features in imaginative acts and ground affective responses to fiction in the phenomenon of "aesthetic immersion", explained in experiential, rather than representational, terms.

Katharina Berndt Rasmussen authored the second article in this special issue. She holds a PhD from Stockholm University and is currently a post-doc researcher at the Institute for Future Studies in Stockholm, Sweden. Interested in moral, political and feminist philosophy, part of her more recent research deals with the topic of discrimination, sexism and racism, where she is concerned with improving our understanding of the role of implicit biases (implicit attitudes and judgements). Questions she focuses on are, for instance, whether actions grounded in implicit biases are instances of discrimination or whether we are morally responsible for our implicit biases. Her contribution to this special issue, entitled "Implicit Bias and Discrimination", analyses the phenomenon of implicit bias discrimination using a theoretical framework, including its moral status, and introduces the relevant distinction between direct and indirect discrimination that in a taxonomic manner will let her distinguish among four different types of discrimination. Berndt Rasmussen also outlines and confronts four possible challenges to her proposal: the metaphysical challenge, the moral insignificance challenge, the causal connection challenge and the challenge from irreducibly collective bias.

The third contribution to this special issue is written by Karin Edvardsson Björnberg. Edvardsson Björnberg received her PhD in philosophy from KTH Royal Institute of Technology. After a two-year post-doc at the London School of Economics, she took up a position as Assistant Professor of Environmental Philosophy at KTH in Sweden where she is now docent and senior lecturer. Her research lies at the crossroads of environmental philosophy and policy analysis, and focuses on issues relating to environmental goal management, regulation and governance of sustainable development. Her article in this special issue, entitled “What, if Anything, is Wrong with Offsetting Nature?”, scrutinizes some of the normative arguments supporting the claim that biodiversity offsetting is a normatively suspect practice and concludes that although none of the arguments definitely invalidate the use of biodiversity offsets, they do provide us with good reasons to proceed with caution when designing and implementing the practice. The arguments deployed are the common ownership argument, the price argument, the non-substitutability argument and the “crowding-out” argument.

The fourth contribution is authored by Kristin Sampson, Professor of Philosophy at the Department of Philosophy at the University of Bergen, in Norway. Sampson’s research interests stretch both back and forth into the history of thought, as she combines attention to the Platonic textual corpus, ancient Greek thinking previous to Plato, going back to Homer and Hesiod, and feminist and contemporary philosophy. Connecting the theme of temporality, which is important in theoretical philosophy, to the issue of the right action, which is central in practical philosophy, Sampson’s work is timely in its philosophical questioning and inquiring beyond our modern understanding of time, i.e., scientifically measured durational time. Her article in this special issue, entitled “Conceptions of Temporality: Reconsidering Time in an Age of Impending Emergency”, contrasts the modern conception of time, shaped by the prevalence of measurability, with the ancient Greek notion of *kairos*, which signifies in terms of adjusting to the circumstances, catching the right moment and paying attention to due measure. Sampson also explores further the conceptual toolkit for thinking about temporality: two notions used by Baltasar Gracián – *festina lente* and *détencion* – suggest how we may be able to enhance the ability to do the right thing at the right moment, a central aspect of any right action.

The next contribution brings us to the crossroads of theoretical philosophy and applied ethics. Kathinka Evers is the fifth contributor to this special issue. She is Professor in Philosophy and senior researcher at the Centre for Research Ethics & Bioethics (CRB) at Uppsala University, Sweden, where she directs the CBR neuroethics research team, and has long been involved in the EU Flagship Human Brain Project. Her research focuses on philosophy of mind, neurophilosophy, bioethics and neuroethics. In particular, she is interested in the neural basis of

consciousness. Her contribution to this special issue, entitled “The Culture-Bound Brain: Epigenetic Proaction Revisited”, outlines some recent progress in neuroscience research, presenting the relation between the cerebral ground and the development of moral dispositions, taking account of the uniqueness of the cerebral identity of each individual. Evers explores the possibilities, risks and benefits that this knowledge may unlock for our ability to shape brain development.

At the crossroads of theoretical philosophy and philosophy of language, we find our sixth contributor to this special issue. Since 2015 Jessica Pepp has been docent at the University of Turku, in Finland. She has been postdoctoral research fellow at the Centre for the Study of Mind in Nature (CSMN) of the University of Oslo, in Norway, and at Umeå University in Sweden. She currently heads the project *New Frontiers of Speech: Philosophy of Language in the Information Age (2020–2022)*, funded by the Swedish Research Council. In her contribution to the special issue, entitled “Dickie on Aboutness-Fixing”, Pepp presents Imogen Dickie’s view of mental intentionality and the objection to Dickie’s approach that consists in claiming that it is circular and thus not a genuine explanation of mental aboutness. She develops a version of this worry in detail and argues that, despite Dickie’s efforts, both in *Fixing Reference* and in subsequent replies to critics, to show that the circular character of the account is virtuous, it remains unclear whether an approach of this kind can deliver the promised answer to the question of what aboutness consists in.

We then turn our attention to the question of moral knowledge, which is at the centre of the contribution by Carla Bagnoli. A long-time affiliate and full Professor at the University of Wisconsin, USA, Bagnoli has been Professorial Fellow at the University of Oslo, before recently taking up the Chair in Theoretical Philosophy at the University of Modena, Italy. Her work in Oslo has focused on ethics, epistemology and moral psychology; she is developing a constructivist model of normativity that highlights the incompleteness and relationality of practical reasons, designed to deal with, e.g., conflicts among sources of normative authority. Her contribution to this special issue, entitled “Practical Knowledge, Equal Standing, and Proper Reliance on Others”, presents the traditional account of moral cognition as a form of cognition that is achieved over time, by sharing a practice, under the guidance and the example of the wise, highlighting our dependence on others in obtaining moral knowledge. No matter how rooted this model may be, Bagnoli identifies one important problem with it, namely that it does not offer protection against arbitrariness and discrimination originating from the authority in question. In contrast, she suggests that to understand the socially distributed nature of practical knowledge, we have to discard the notion of exemplars and reconceive of others as peers having equal normative standing. By doing that, Bagnoli

revisits the conception of autonomy as key to distributed practice knowledge, a notion that demands independence of judgement.

Last but not least, this special issue includes a contribution in the field of analytical aesthetics. Elisabeth Schellekens Dammann has held the Chair of Aesthetics at the Department of Philosophy, Uppsala University since 2014 and is honorary Professor at the Department of Philosophy, University of Durham, in the UK. Her research interests include normativity, the relations between aesthetic, moral and epistemic value, neuroaesthetics and the cognitive value of art. In her contribution to this special issue, entitled “Evaluating Art Morally”, Schellekens Dammann addresses the question of what makes an artwork valuable, by questioning some of the assumptions underlying some standard ways of answering, particularly those referring to the interaction of aesthetic value and moral value. She provides a set of critical reflections on an area of aesthetics that has exploded recently, by outlining the main tenets of the three leading interaction theories, and discussing the meaning of the claim that an artwork has moral value. She highlights the importance of operating with a less ambiguous conception of aesthetic value.