

DISLOCATING WOMEN FROM PHILOSOPHY: FIVE STRATEGIES

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ABSTRACT

The paper deals with the feminist critique of the philosophical canon, challenging the fact that there are (almost) no women included in it. In the first part, the author sets up questions helping to open the space for interrogating the current Euro-American philosophical canon, followed by the summary of the development and results of its feminist critique. In the main body of the text, the surveys of the history of philosophy and encyclopedias of philosophy available in the Czech language and used in the Czech universities as textbooks are analyzed with the aim of mapping out the strategies of dislocation of women from philosophy. In the last part, the main reasons for including women in the canon are explored together with some questions accompanying them.

KEY WORDS: feminism, philosophical canon, women-philosophers, strategies of dislocation, the Czech Republic.

RESUMEN

Este artículo trata sobre la crítica feminista al canon filosófico euroamericano, en el cual no figura casi ninguna mujer. La autora plantea cuestiones y presenta asimismo un resumen de los desarrollos y resultados de la crítica feminista al respecto, ofreciendo una visión panorámica de las historias de la filosofía y de las enciclopedias de la misma en lengua checa, obras que se usan como manuales en la docencia universitaria de ese país. La autora analiza las estrategias de deslocalización de las mujeres del canon filosófico en dichas obras y plantea las principales razones por las que se debe llevar a cabo la inclusión de las filósofas en el mismo.

PALABRAS CLAVE: feminismo, canon filosófico, filósofas, estrategias de deslocalización, República Checa.

«WHY ARE THERE NO WOMEN IN THE HISTORY OF PHILOSOPHY?»

As many feminist historians of philosophy state, the philosophical canon taught at European and American universities does not include women philosophers¹. As Witt claimed in 2000, in a 1967 *Encyclopedia of Philosophy* containing information about 900 philosophers, no women were present², and the same said



Waithe about *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy* from 1981³. The process of rethinking the philosophical canon from the feminist point of view and the process of uncovering the forgotten women-philosophers of the past began in the eighties of the twentieth century⁴. Now, after more than three decades of work, an important body of material is available, analyzing the canonical philosophers' notions of woman, and presenting philosophical conceptions created by women from the past. Besides the great project of the Pennsylvania State University called *Re-reading the Canon* directed by Nancy Tuana, consisting of feminist interpretations of the work of many canonical male philosophers (and of some women philosophers too)⁵, several anthologies of the works of women philosophers, especially from the seventeenth century, editions of their original works, as well as a lot of secondary literature have appeared, either in the form of monographs or collections of essays and articles.

¹ For example M.E. WAITHE (ed.), *A History of Women Philosophers*, volume I. Dordrecht, Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1987. A. NYE, *Philosophia: The Thought of Rosa Luxemburg, Simone Weil and Hannah Arendt*. London, Routledge, 1994. L.L. McALISTER (ed.), *Hypatia's Daughters: Fifteen Hundred Years of Women Philosophers*. Bloomington e Indianapolis, Indiana University Press, 1996. T.B. DYKEMAN (ed.), *The Neglected Canon: Nine Women Philosophers. First to the Twentieth Century*. Dordrecht, Boston y Londres, Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1999. C. FREELAND, *Feminism and Canons or, How Feminism Rewrites the History of «Great Men»*. Originally a Lecture at San Jacinto Community College, South Campus, April 11, 1996. Available from <<http://www.uh.edu/%7Ecfreelan/courses/femcan.html>>. C.V. GARDNER, *Women Philosophers. Genre and the Boundaries of Philosophy*. Boulder, Westview Press, 2004. N. TUANA, *The Forgetting of Gender*. Available from <http://www.pdcnet.org/pdf/tnhp_Nancy%20Tuana.pdf> y *Woman and the History of Philosophy*. New York, Paragon Press, 1992. Ch. WITT, «Feminist History of Philosophy», in E.N. ZALTA (ed.), *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. Standord, Center for the Study of Language and Information, 2000, available from <<http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2000/entries/feminism-femhist>>.

² Ch. WITT, *ibidem*.

³ M.E. WAITHE (ed.), *op. cit.*, p. x.

⁴ The paper written by art historian Linda Nochlin in 1973 «Why have there been no great women artists?» (L. NOCHLIN, «Why have there been no great women artists?», en T.B. HESS y E.C. BAKER (eds.), *Art and Sexual Politics: Women's Liberation, Women Artists, and Art History*, New York, Macmillan, 1973, pp. 1-39) was followed in philosophy by the paper written by Gerta Lerner *Why Have There Been So Few Women Philosophers?* (see G. LERNER, «Why have there been so few women philosophers?», in C.T. TOUGAS & S. EBENRECK (eds.), *Presenting Women Philosophers*, Philadelphia, Temple University Press, 2000, pp. 5-14). Many authors claim that in philosophy the feminist reflection began later and the process of inclusion of women still did not reach the level of other disciplines, for example art [see L.L. McALISTER, «Some remarks on exploring the history of women in philosophy». *Hypatia. A Journal of Feminist Philosophy. Special Issue on the History of Women in Philosophy*, vol. 4, núm. 1 (1989), pp. 1-5]. The systematic reflection in this field started in 1981 with the project of M.E. Waithe, *A History of Women Philosophers* (first volume was published in 1987; see M.E. WAITHE (ed.), *A History of Women Philosophers*, volume I, 1987, volume II, 1989, volume III, 1991, volume IV, 1995, Dordrecht, Kluwer Academic Publishers), followed by a special issue of Canadian feminist journal *Resources for Feminist Research* from 1987 [*Resources for Feminist Research. A Special Issue*, vol. 16, n. 1 (1987), LexisNexis Academic] and American philosophical feminist journal *Hypatia* from 1989, *op. cit.*

⁵ So far, 29 books were published. More about the particular volumes in www.psupress.org/books/series/book_SeriesReReading.html.

Recently, we can notice some women being included into the history of philosophy (most frequently Mary Wollstonecraft, Simone deBeauvoir, and Hannah Arendt), a process initiated by feminist research, especially in the USA and Great Britain. In West European countries and in the US, new university courses about female philosophers have been offered at several universities.

However, as documented by O'Neill⁶, an omission of women philosophers from historical surveys was not always the case: in the seventeenth century, women were often included in history of philosophy books, for example in *The History of Philosophy* by Thomas Stanley⁷, popular and widely read by his contemporaries. It is also not by a chance that a book written by G. Menage dealing with women philosophers of Antiquity was published at that time⁸. According to O'Neill, the situation began to change during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries; and by the twentieth century, women philosophers were erased from the history of philosophy entirely. O'Neill indicates several causes of this phenomenon, such as the process of making philosophy a profession and purification of philosophical discourse, the omission of those conceptions which did not «win» in the course of time, and, especially, the attempt to keep male control of the production of ideas after the French Revolution, which brought new ideas about common human nature and natural human rights for liberty and equity.

Thus, the first task of feminist historians of philosophy was to re-discover forgotten women-philosophers, and to enhance our knowledge by finding other philosophizing women. As Conley⁹ suggests, in order to find important women philosophers from the past, we should stop to look for them in the places restricted to women at their lifetime —universities, scientific academies, seminars— and to explore the «feminine» sites —salons, convents— to find different philosophical genres, problems and their solutions there. Tuana claims¹⁰ that this kind of approach can challenge our contemporary notion of the nature and genre of philosophical discourse: for example, is the genre of the philosophical treatise the only appropriate one? Or is a university or academy the only appropriate place for producing philosophy? These questions can even lead to more fundamental ones: What are the criteria for being included in the history of philosophy, and/or to the philosophical canon? What values are hidden behind those criteria? What are the practical consequences of their usage? Who established them? Are they eternal, or changing throughout history? Who shapes historical memory and how is it passed on to

⁶ E. O'NEILL, «Disappearing ink: Early modern women philosophers and their fate in history», en J.KOURANY, *Philosophy in a Feminist Voice: Critiques and Reconstructions*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1998, pp. 17-62.

⁷ T. STANLEY, *A History of Philosophy*. 3 vols., London, 1701 (1st ed. 1687).

⁸ G. MENAGE, *The History of Women Philosophers*. New York, University Press of America, 1984 (1st ed. 1690).

⁹ J.J. CONLEY, *The Suspicion of Virtue. Women Philosophers in Neoclassical France*. Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 2003.

¹⁰ N. TUANA, *op. cit.*

students to be learnt at schools? These questions are beyond the reach of this article; however, simply asking them can help us to think anew about the legitimacy of the «classical» philosophical canon, its seeming stability and unquestioned acceptance.

It is time now to challenge the title of this section: though there are allegedly no women in the history of philosophy, research shows that this is not the case. In the next section, we will provide evidence to support this statement. We can even recall the words of Umberto Eco, who wrote the following: «An old philosophical prudence says that men adhere to a metaphysical way of thinking and women are interested in practical problems». However, he challenges this «sapience» and concludes: «I went through at least three modern philosophical encyclopedias and except for Hypatia, I did not find any further names. Not for the reason that women cannot philosophize. For the reason that male philosophers forgot them after they stole their ideas»¹¹.

1. FEMINIST CRITIQUE OF THE PHILOSOPHICAL CANON

During the development of the feminist critique of the history of philosophy, several conceptions appeared. Cynthia Freeland distinguishes two types of feminist critique of the philosophical canon:

- 1) Moderate revision («add women and stir»), whose aim is to find female philosophers from the past and add them to the canon.
- 2) Radical revision («down with the patriarchy»), which criticizes the norms and values on which the very canon is based, and researches what the omission of female philosophers (or their misplacement) can tell us about the values of philosophy itself¹².

Charlotte Witt sums up the main aims of the feminist approach toward the history of philosophy¹³:

- 1) To focus on the discovery of female philosophers from the past and their introduction or reintroduction into the history of philosophy.
- 2) To analyze the sexism of philosophers: a) their explicit misogynist statements; b) gender associations of their basic philosophical notions (form-father, matter-mother in Aristotle, *et caetera*); c) the whole philosophical canon and its claims to rationality and objectivity as masculine.
- 3) To search for conceptions in the history of philosophy which can be used in feminist philosophy, or interpreted as congenial with its goals.

¹¹ U. ECO, «Aké sú špecifické talenty žien». *SME*, 21. 2. 2004, príloha Fórum.

¹² C. FREELAND, *op. cit.*

¹³ Ch. WITT, *op. cit.*

According to Witt, the aim of all three approaches is to gain support for feminist thinking by revealing the ways in which women were prevented from philosophizing and/or silenced if they chose to work in this field, and thus to defend its existence by pointing to the predecessors of feminism, and to problems which did not simply appear with feminism but have a long history behind them.

Another philosopher, Cornelia Klinger, divides the development of feminist philosophers' confrontation with the «traditional» philosophy into four stages:

- 1) Discovering and making visible the open hate to women in the philosophical tradition, that is, misogyny and sexism in its many representatives. The list of philosophers from the past who supported this kind of argument would be long, including such famous figures as Aristotle, Rousseau, Kant and Hegel.
- 2) Concentration on what is making silent in the philosophy, and uncovering the fact that behind the claim of universality of philosophy there is hidden androcentrism, that is one-sided and non-reflected masculine orientation in asking questions, approaches to and interpretations of human beings and the world.
- 3) Searching for feminine principle in opposition to the masculine one, that is, looking for specificity of women's thinking, writing and philosophizing. Critique of dualistic nature of Western philosophy thinking, applied to the gender problems themselves: critique of sex/gender, nature/culture, personal/public, femaleness/maleness, leading to the idea of their social, cultural, and symbolic constructions¹⁴.

Similarly, Nancy Tuana¹⁵ stresses that it is necessary to reflect principles, values and goals we implicitly use when teaching philosophy. Feminist work concentrates, according to that author, on two main problems in the realm of the history of philosophy. Thus, she:

- 1) Examines why in that canon there are women missing and documents their existence in the past.
- 2) Uncovers the ways in which symbolic philosophical imagination is connected with the categories of feminine/masculine.

Nancy Tuana claims that feminist critique enriches the reflection of the philosophical canon by many further impulses and opens a much wider range of problems: for example, what counts as an appropriate philosophical discourse and an adequate genre of philosophizing, and the question of the sense of philosophical considerations and of teaching the history of philosophy.

¹⁴ C. KLINGER, «Dva kroky vpřed, jeden vzad – a štvrtý ponad ne». *Aspekt*, vol. 1 (1998), pp. 4-9.

¹⁵ N. TUANA, *op. cit.*



According to Lloyd¹⁶, in recent years, after a period of «fighting» with the philosophical tradition, seen as an enemy, many feminists adopt a different strategy: they look for «cooperation» with the «great philosophers» searching for the inspiration in their thoughts. In this case, the variety of feminist interpretations of past philosophers multiplies and we even encounter contradicting interpretations of the same philosopher.

Feminism, of course, is not the only stream of philosophy challenging the construction of the historical memory and the aim of philosophy. Hermeneutics and pragmatism, for example, also argue that there is no «objective» reconstruction of the history of philosophy. According to hermeneutics, the reconstruction is necessarily dependent on the questions we ask regarding our past, the questions that arise from our own situation, interests and values. Gadamer defines history as the fusion of the horizon of the past and the horizon of present. According to pragmatism, philosophy begins in life and its history continues through our dialogue with life. When accepting these ideas, the question of «who» and «why» is writing about the past gains much more importance. There are a few important works asking the questions about the relation of history and philosophy in general¹⁷ and about the construction of the philosophical canon in particular¹⁸. However, it seems that feminist reflection brings about the most radical challenges to the tradition of teaching history of philosophy.

So far, feminist research has produced a wide range of literature which includes historical surveys¹⁹, the works concentrating on the women-philosophers of the 17th century²⁰, or including a selection of women from different historical periods²¹. New editions of the original works written by women-philosophers of the past were prepared and published together with monographs about them²². An-

¹⁶G. LLOYD (ed.), *Feminism and History of Philosophy*. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2002.

¹⁷ For example, R. RORTY, J.B. SCHNEEDWIND & Q. SKINNER (eds.), *Philosophy in History: Essays on the Historiography of Philosophy*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1984.

¹⁸ B. KUKLICK, «Seven thinkers and how they grew: Descartes, Spinoza, Leibnitz, Locke, Berkeley, Hume, Kant», *ibidem*, pp. 125-139.

¹⁹ Besides the four volumes of Waithe, see also M. WARNOCK (ed.), *Women Philosophers*. London, Orion, 1996; L.L. McALISTER (ed.), *op. cit.* 1996; T.B. DYKEMAN (ed.), *op. cit.*

²⁰ For example, M. ATHERTON (ed.), *Women Philosophers of the Early Modern Period*. Indianapolis, Hackett Publishing Co., 1994; J. BROAD, *Women Philosophers of the Seventeenth Century*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2002; J.J. CONLEY, *op. cit.*

²¹ For example, A. NYE, *Feminist Theory and the Philosophies of Man*. London, Routledge, 1988. C.V. GARDNER, *op. cit.*

²² For example M.H. ILSHEY, *A Daughter of the Renaissance: Marie le Jars de Gournay, Her Life and Works*. The Hague, Mouton, 1963. A.P. ROBSON & J.M. ROBSON (eds.), *Sexual Equality: Writings by John Stuart Mill, Harriet Taylor Mill and Helen Taylor*. Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1994. M. DZIELSKA, *Hypatia of Alexandria*. Cambridge (MA), Harvard University Press, 1995. Ch. ZWARG, *Feminist Conversations: Fuller, Emerson, and the Play of Reading*. Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1995. A. NYE, *The Princess and the Philosopher: Letters of Elizabeth of the Palatine to Rene Descartes*. Lanham, Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 1999. M. SIMONS, *Beauvoir and the Second Sex: Feminism, Race, and the Origins of Existentialism*. Lanham, Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 1999. S. HUTTON, *Anne Conway: A Woman Philosopher*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2004.

thologies of papers reflecting the conception of women-philosophers appeared²³. The authors also focused on the views of canonical men-philosophers on woman²⁴ considered either literary (as the views on real women) or as metaphors²⁵. Feminist authors have also shown that these women were not only the pupils of their male teachers, but in some cases they were the silenced authors of the main ideas of the famous male philosophers, as for example, Anne Conway and her influence on Leibnitz's concept of the monad²⁶, Harriet Taylor's influence on J. Stuart Mill²⁷ and Simone de Beauvoir's influence on Jean-Paul Sartre²⁸. The contribution of the feminist research to the history of philosophy can be summed up as follows: feminist research helps to explain the relationship of women and philosophy by:

- 1) Analyses of the historical context of how social and cultural environment created obstacles preventing women from entering the area of philosophy.
- 2) Analyses of the ideological and symbolic description of the nature of woman which created an obstacle to their identification with philosophical activity (the «arguments» concerning women's inferiority in terms of rational capacity, brought about by male philosophers themselves).
- 3) A challenge to the traditional image of philosophy as a universal rational discourse, «equipped» with a set of major problems, located in special places and expressed in an appropriate genre.

However, we can indicate some strategies used in the history of philosophy textbooks, which help to keep philosophizing women out of the historical memory.

²³ For example, C.T. TOUGAS & S. EBENRECK (eds.), *op. cit.*; L. ALANEN & Ch. WITT (eds.), *Feminist Reflections on the History of Philosophy*. Dordrecht, Boston, Londres, Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2004.

²⁴ For example N. TUANA, *The Less Noble Sex. Scientific, Religious, and Philosophical Conceptions of Woman's Nature*. Bloomington & Indianapolis, Indiana University Press, 1993; R. AGONITO (ed.), *History of Ideas on Woman: A Source Book*. New York, G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1997; S. BORDO, *The Flight to Objectivity: Essays on Cartesianism and Culture*. New York, State University of New York Press, 1987; L. ANTONY & Ch. WITT (eds.), *A Mind of One's Own: Feminist Essays on Reason and Objectivity*. Boulder, Westview Press, 1993.

²⁵ For example, M. LE DOEUFF: «Women and Philosophy». *Radical Philosophy*, vol. 17 (1977), pp. 2-11; *Hipparchia's Choice. An Essay Concerning Women, Philosophy, Etc.* Oxford & Cambridge, Blackwell, 1991; *The Philosophical Imaginary*. London, The Athlone Press, 1989, & *The Sex of Knowing*. New York & London, Routledge, 2003. G. LLOYD (ed.), *op. cit.*, 2002; «Maleness, metaphor, and the 'Crisis' of Reason», in D.T. MEYERS (ed.), *Feminist Social Thought: A Reader*, New York y Londres, Routledge, 1997, pp. 287- 301; *The Man of Reason. «Male» and «Female» in Western Philosophy*. Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1984. E.F. KITTAY, «Woman as metaphor», in D.T. MEYERS (ed.), *op. cit.*, pp. 265-285.

²⁶ For example, L.L. MCALISTER (ed.), *op. cit.*, 1996. C. MERCHANT, «The vitalism of Anne Conway: Its impact on Leibniz's concept of the monad». *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, vol 27, n. 3 (1979), pp. 255-270.

²⁷ For example M. Le DOEUFF, *op. cit.*, 2003; G. LLOYD (ed.), *op. cit.*, 2002.

²⁸ For example E. FULLBROOK & K. FULLBROOK, *Simone de Beauvoir and Jean-Paul Sartre: The Remaking of a Twentieth-Century Legend*. Nueva York, Basic Books, 1994. M.A. SIMONS, *op. cit.*



In the next section, we shall present a typology of these strategies derived from the analysis of textbooks used by students of philosophy in the Czech Republic.

2. FIVE STRATEGIES OF DISLOCATION OF WOMEN FROM PHILOSOPHY

We explored several histories of philosophy textbooks and surveys available in the Czech language. Based on exploration of this body of material, we identify five strategies of marginalization of women philosophers used by the authors of the history of philosophy books. All analyzed books were published after 1990, when feminist critical reflections of the philosophical canon and literature about female philosophers of the past had already been available and when feminist philosophy had already established itself as a relevant field of philosophy.

Before we start to exemplify these strategies, we need to say that at Czech universities, according to syllabi of history of philosophy courses and questions for final examinations (available on the websites of Czech universities in October 2005), there are still no female philosophers included in the philosophical canon taught at the Czech Universities. The basic framework of the philosophical canon includes the following male authors: Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, St. Augustine, St Thomas Aquinas, F. Bacon, R. Descartes, J. Locke, D. Hume, J.J. Rousseau, I. Kant, G.F.W. Hegel, A. Schopenhauer, F. Nietzsche, A. Comte, K. Marx, W. James, M. Heidegger and L. Wittgenstein. However, the courses vary in accordance with the level of the course and/or the program, and in accordance with the specialization of the philosophy department and particular teacher. What is more important is the fact that women appear neither in the very specialized courses nor in the courses where their inclusion would be appropriate (postmodernism, philosophy and film, *et caetera*). From the material on the web, it also seems that teachers of the history of philosophy do not explain the views of particular philosophers on gender issues to their students.

The first strategy can be exemplified by the book entitled *Philosophy for Everyone*, written by Richard H. Popkin and Avrum Stroll²⁹. According to the authors' words, they aimed to popularize philosophy to a «non-philosophy audience», but as they admitted the book ultimately «served as textbook for many universities throughout the world». The authors are proud to have received «a large number of letters from students, graduates and teachers, who informed them that this work was the best and the easiest introduction into philosophy... ever to be found». The authors' goal is «to explain fundamental philosophical problems» and to «deal with the new forms in which these problems appear at the end of the twentieth century». When they ask questions such as «What is a philosopher?» and «Who is a philosopher?» calling this figure «he», we can understand *he* as a gender neutral

²⁹ R. POPKIN y A. STROLL, *Filozofie pro každého*. Praga, Ivo Železný, 2000.

term, but the following body of the text documents that the authors meant «he» as male gender identification: we will not find any female philosopher in the text (there is only the name of Patricia Churchland mentioned in the connection with neuro-philosophy without any more information offered). Another example of this category is the textbook *Philosophy (main problems)*³⁰, prepared for Czech university students by the Czech author, university teacher himself, Ivan Blecha. We shall find neither any woman-philosopher nor any problem connected with the category of gender there. In his *Philosophy Reader*³¹, each text of the «great» philosopher is accompanied by the texts of his critics to supply the students with material for discussion. However, he does not include any feminist reflection of the authors and themes criticized by feminists (he includes only one text written by a woman: Sherry Turkley's *Identity in Internet*). Thus, we can call the first strategy *an ignorance of women philosophers and the philosophical relevance of gender*.

The second strategy can be found in the book by Roland Simon-Schaefer: *A Little Philosophy for Berenika. An Easy and Interesting Introduction to Knowledge about Our World, not Only for Young People*³². Here, we analyze not only the text, but also a more sophisticated means of conveying the message. On the cover of the book there is a photograph of a pretty young woman, her face made-up, her head covered by a straw hat, holding a flower up to her nose to smell, with a slightly flirtatious expression in her eyes. However, in the introduction we learn that the author wrote this book for his twelve-year old daughter. The message transmitted by the cover and the title is that of a well-known stereotype: the teacher (one who knows) is a man, and he is imparting his knowledge «presented in such a way that even a child could understand it» to a woman-child (or child-woman?). However, he would pass on to her only «a little» of knowledge because she will probably not be able to understand the «whole» philosophy. Moreover, in the contents of the book, there is no female philosopher mentioned, illustrating the fact that the father-philosopher is not really interested in his daughter's ability to philosophize (since knowing «a little» philosophy would hardly suffice) and her self-image and self-identification with philosophical enterprise. Thus, the second strategy uses *an identification of woman with child* (or someone who is to be taught, but a little)³³.

As a representation of the third strategy we can look at one of the basic textbooks for philosophy students learning the history of philosophy at Czech universities (it is documented by syllabi, where it is included in the corpus of compulsory study literature): *A Short History of Philosophy* by Hans Joachim Störig. This book was published in the Czech Republic many times; we analyze its seventh en-

³⁰ I. BLECH, *Filozofie (základní problémy)*. Olomouc, Nakladatelství Olomouc, 1994.

³¹ I. BLECHA, *Filozofická čítanka*. Olomouc, Nakladatelství Olomouc, 2000.

³² R. SIMON-SCHAEFER, *Trocha filozofie pro Bereniku*. Praga, Ivo Železný, 2000.

³³ This strategy resembles that of J.J. Rousseau who advised the teacher of Sophia to teach her something—but not abstract notions and nothing in deep and thoroughly, as her limited knowledge should only enable her to be the interested listener to her future husband. (see J.J. ROUSSEAU, *Emile, or on Education*. Trans. Allan Bloom. New York, Basic Books, 1979).





hanced edition³⁴. We found that there is no female philosopher included in the canon—that is, among the authors to whom the particular chapters of the book are devoted. However, in the body of the text, there are several women mentioned. Thus, we examined the ways female philosophers are described. For example, the only thing we learn about Hannah Arendt is the fact that she was «the pupil of Heidegger, whom she remembered throughout her whole life with gratitude». The fact that Hannah Arendt was an independent thinker and the author of an important and admirable body of not only political, but also philosophical work, as represented in the three volumes of *The Human Condition*, and three volumes of the unfinished *The Life of Mind*, is concealed. A similar fate is reserved for Elisabeth of Bohemia: we learn from Störig's book that Descartes «wrote his books for her», but we do not learn that Elisabeth was a philosopher herself, who discussed with Descartes his philosophical concept of the body and the soul and indeed challenged it. We also find the relationship between Abelard and Heloise as greatly misrepresented: Störig informs us that Heloise was «beautiful and smart», that Abelard loved her and that he was able to get into her uncle's house as her «home tutor». But we do

³⁴ H.J. STÖRIG, *Malé dějiny filozofie*. 7. rozšířené vydání. Kostelní Vydří, Karmelitánské nakladatelství, 2003.

not learn that Heloise received the kind of education that was uncommon even for men at that time, that she attended Abelard's lectures at the university where they met and fell in love, that she loved Abelard as much as he loved her, if not more, because she was generous enough to sacrifice herself so that he did not lose his fame as a teacher, that she knew Hebrew and Greek, while Abelard did not, and, finally, that she was an equal partner in the philosophical debates that she and Abelard held in their letters³⁵. In the Störig text, there are three other women, but they are only referred to in passing: Hedwig Conrad-Martius as the one who «accepted Husserl's impulses» (while Sartre and Heidegger opposed to them); Ruth Harris as the first to criticize the mass industrial production of animals; and Patricia Churchland as neuro-philosopher. It is interesting to see that the Czech editors were probably aware of the omission of women philosophers because they included the books of Simone de Beauvoir, Julia Kristeva, Simone Weil, and Mary Wollstonecraft, in the list of books available in Czech translations, added at the end, though there is no information about them in Störig's text. Thus, the third strategy presents *women-philosophers as admirers (Hannah Arendt), muses (Elisabeth) or lovers (Heloise)*.

Arno Anzenbacher's *Introduction to Philosophy* can represent an example of the fourth strategy. The book was published twice in the Czech Republic, in 1990 and in 2004³⁶. The second edition is an enriched and re-worked version of the first edition, so we were curious as to the differences between them from the perspective of our research. In the first edition, the only woman mentioned is the theologian Stöll. In the second, Arno Anzenbacher considers the emergence of feminist philosophy, and devotes a special, closing sub-chapter to it (included in the chapter «Human Being») under the title «Excursus: Feminist Philosophy». The text is three pages long, and is derived from Herta Nagl-Docekal's book *Feminist Philosophy*³⁷. However, the authors mentioned in the chapter (L. Irigaray, J. Kristeva, H. Cixous, List) are not included in the name index. To sum up: A. Anzenbacher includes women philosophers, but in their presentation he entirely relies on a book written by someone else (a woman) and by placing the sub-chapter «Excursus» (named as «Appendix») independently from the chapter «Human Being», he separates the problems of human beings from that of gender. Feminist philosophy resembles an appendix, which is simply added, and not included in the body of the text. This strategy moves *feminist philosophy to a special section, separated from the main body of philosophical problems, considered as an addition*.

We were curious to see if there would be any change if the author was a woman, as is the case with Maria Fürst's *Philosophy*, approved as a textbook for secondary schools by the Czech Ministry of Education³⁸. Although M. Fürst men-

³⁵ P. ABELARD and HELOISE, *The Letters of Abelard and Heloise*. M. CLANCHY (ed.), New York, Penguin, 1974.

³⁶ A. ANZENBACHER. *Úvod do filozofie*. Praga, Portál, 2004 (1st ed. 1990).

³⁷ H. NAGL-DOCEKAL, *Feminist Philosophy*. Boulder, Westview, 2004.

³⁸ M. FÜRST, *Filozofie*. Prague, Fortuna, 1994.





tions that the original meaning of the word *philosopher* was «a man, who knows many things» (and she uses the masculine gender for philosophers throughout the text), we can see that there is a small change: she includes Simone de Beauvoir among the existentialists, and moreover, she does not describe her as Sartre's «pupil» or «partner» (as de Beauvoir is notoriously described), but as his collaborator, whose own intellectual endeavors were not concentrated on this man only. On the other hand, Maria Fürst includes a photograph of Sartre and de Beauvoir together, and this photograph is again marked by gender stereotype: Sartre is placed in the foreground, and captured at a moment when he is probably speaking. Simone de Beauvoir is captured standing behind him, looking at Sartre, holding a flower in her hand. The approach of Maria Fürst is marked by ambiguity: she includes Simone de Beauvoir and explicitly describes her as an independent thinker, but she also proves not to be sensitive enough to other means of transferring the message: the picture. This strategy *accepts woman-philosopher, but stresses (implicitly) the fact of the gender of the author* by ascribing her traits traditionally understood as feminine (as «the Other» —in the background, passive, emotional).

These strategies were discovered by analyzing material used at Czech universities, but they can be seen as representative of a wider Euro-American context, as all mentioned books (with the exception of Ivan Blecha's) were translated into the Czech language from English and German (their authors are American, German, and Austrian philosophers)³⁹.

³⁹ It would be interesting to analyse the factors that led to the selection of these books to be translated into the Czech language. However, this aspect is beyond the possibility of the examination.

3. WHY GENDERING THE HISTORY OF PHILOSOPHY?

However, as soon as the canon is questioned on the basis that it does not include any female figures, or criticized for exclusion and marginalizing women philosophers, we are faced with a problem that needs to be solved first: why should women be included? Just because they were/are women? Or because they were/are «the great» thinkers, participating in the development of history of philosophy (but forgotten because of their sex)? Or because they addressed different philosophical problems than their male counterparts? The answers to these questions depend on many other answers to other questions: What is the nature of philosophy? What is the aim of preserving the past? How do we view the nature of gender differences (if at all)? What do we use as criteria of philosophical «greatness»? , et cetera. The answers to these questions vary even among feminist philosophers themselves. We identified at least four reasons for inclusion of women mentioned by feminist philosophers. Inclusion of women is needed because:

- 1) It helps to provide our students with a more appropriate and «true» picture of the history of philosophy and the development of philosophical questions⁴⁰.
- 2) The philosophy created by women, especially moral philosophy, sets up problems which the «traditional» masculinist philosophy is not able to identify, as well as it offers some solutions which can change our contemporary philosophical standpoint⁴¹.
- 3) It helps to understand what the traditional canon excludes and silences⁴².
- 4) It helps to question the traditional understanding of philosophy with the possibility of enriching the dominant model of philosophy⁴³.

However, to ask these questions is the first and a big step toward a reflection on our own philosophical endeavor. Not many historians of philosophy have been able to reach this stage: we can look at many histories of philosophy to document the idea that they take the philosophical canon of «Great» men for granted⁴⁴.

Each of the reasons given above has some questionable aspect. The important issue is to distinguish between women-philosophers and the predecessors of feminist philosophy. This distinction is a hard issue, as there are many standpoints within feminist philosophy itself. The fact that a philosopher was or is of the female sex cannot serve as the main criterion. The problems philosophers focus on are of

⁴⁰ T.B. DYKEMAN (ed.), *op. cit.*

⁴¹ C.V. GARDNER, *op. cit.*

⁴² S. BORDO, *op. cit.*

⁴³ N. TUANA, *op. cit.*, 1992.

⁴⁴ K. JASPERS, *The Great Philosophers*. 4 vols., New York, Harcourt Brace and Company, 1962-1995. B. RUSSELL, *History of Western Philosophy*. London, Routledge, 2004 (1st ed. 1946).

greater importance: if problems concern gender issues, and if the point of view is based on «women's experience» (in the sense of having an inferior status). The notion of «women's experience» is a tricky one. We agree with Tuana⁴⁵ stating that the women philosophers sometimes addressed different philosophical issues, offered different solutions and used different genres than traditional male figures of their time sometimes depending on different women's experience; but only in the sense that our experience and social position influence our selection of the themes, views and ideas, and not in the essential sense of some «natural» or biological gender difference. This strategy, recurring frequently in the course of history, consists of taking seemingly «neutral biological data» or «empirical research» to account for the social dominance of one gender (male) over the other (female), while being unaware of the fact that there is no neutral biological data and that empirical research can prove only that there are differences between the genders, which developed due to different historical, social and cultural conditions (as explained already by J.S. Mill in his *The Subjection of Women* from 1869)⁴⁶. This view enables the possible existence of male feminists (and connects feminism with the problems of race, ethnicity and class). If an author defends the equality of the genders or their differences, or if his/her conception advocates essentialism or constructivism, then this is of lesser importance. Among the predecessors and/or allies of feminist philosophy we can thus include not only men defending the equality of the genders⁴⁷, but also those who explored the limits of rationality and the self-sufficiency of philosophy, and who revealed how words bear the weight of the body and how truth is connected with power (Hume, Nietzsche, Dewey, etc.). Through the interaction of all these criteria, the mosaic of feminist philosophical conceptions is created, multiplied by the fact that feminists share their philosophical categories with different streams of philosophy. Just as in many other areas of thought, a philosopher starts from a previously established framework of concepts, which he or she appropriates (and sometimes overcomes). This is valid for all thinkers; however, it is more often the case that a feminist philosopher is given a label derived from a male predecessor (Freudian, Lacanian, Winnicottian, Marxist, etc.) without revealing to the reader how the particular author changed the nature of her original source by using gender optics, which can produce quite a radical change of framework⁴⁸.

⁴⁵ N. TUANA, *op. cit.*, 1992.

⁴⁶ J.S. MILL, *On Subjection of Women*. New York, Elitron Classic Series, 2006 (1st ed. 1869).

⁴⁷ F. POUILLAIN DE LA BARRE, *The Equality of the Two Sexes*. Lewison, Lampeter & Queenston, Edwin Mellen Press, 1989 (1st ed. 1673); J.S. MILL, *op. cit.*

⁴⁸ It is significant that even in the book dealing with feminist thinkers, we quite often find this practice of labeling (see P. BARŠA, *Panství člověka a touha ženy. Feminismus mezi psychoanalýzou a poststrukturalismem*. Praga, Sociologické nakladatelství, 2003). This Czech author, the only one who wrote a book about feminist philosophy in Czech language, also often uses the strategy of writing about women-philosophers as pupils, students or followers of some man-philosopher.

It seems that although feminist philosophers have been successful in removing many of the «blind spots» in the history of philosophy, challenging many biases against women, and even in addressing some of the «internal» problems concerned with the inclusion of women in the history of philosophy, much more remains to be done. The very existence of the label «feminist philosophy» in this situation, when its counter-weight «masculinist philosophy» does not exist, shows that something is still not right and equal in this field. This label indicates that a woman is still somehow specific, and different from a man, who serves as a «neutral» norm of humanity.

4. CONCLUSIONS

Before we conclude, we need to acknowledge that the material chosen for our research is far from exhaustive. Nevertheless, we consider that our findings represent the current situation in the field adequately. Five strategies look very plainly when stated theoretically but the situation changes radically when they are observed at work. Only then the importance of their addressing and dismantling can be fully comprehended. Concerning the philosophical canon taught at the departments of Philosophy at Czech universities, there is very little to indicate even a «moderate revision» in the Freeland sense: no women are being «added» to the philosophical canon⁴⁹. This demonstrates that in the Czech Republic, the feminist reflection of the history of philosophy is in its beginnings, though feminism is now attracting increasing numbers of professionals from «classical» departments.

On the other hand, feminist philosophy is offered within two Gender Studies programs at Czech universities (Brno and Prague). As Doeuff claims, the necessary condition of knowledge is mutual recognition, understanding, balance, parity and dialogue of equals. In order to reach a mutual recognition and understanding between feminist philosophy and «classical» philosophy and to start a dialogue of equals with the potential of re-working the way the history of philosophy (and philosophy itself) is taught, it would be necessary to overcome the recent separation of feminist and «classical» philosophy. We consider this article to be a potential stimulus for a discussion of the problems in question with the aim of making philosophy a «home» for both women and men.

⁴⁹ The author of this paper offered in the academic years of 2006/2007 and 2007/2008 a course *Gender and Philosophy* for Master level of philosophy students of the Department of Philosophy, Faculty of Arts, Ostrava University, Czech Republic dealing with the views of canonical philosophers on woman. In the academic year 2007/2008, she conducted for the first time a course *Women-Philosophers in European History* aimed also at philosophy students, and she prepared a textbook for them (see Z. KALNICKÁ, *Filozofky v dějinách evropské filozofie*. Ostrava, Filozofická fakulta, 2007).

