Volume 7 Issue 2 2020

Symposion

Theoretical and Applied Inquiries in Philosophy and Social Sciences

Romanian Academy, Iasi Branch
„Gheorghe Zane" Institute for Economic and Social Research
ISSN: 1584-174X EISSN: 2392-6260

Contact address: Institutul de Cercetări Economice și Sociale „Gh. Zane", Iași, str. T. Codrescu, nr.2, cod 700481, Romania. Phone/Fax: 004 0332 408922. Email: symposion.journal@yahoo.com. www.symposion.acadiasi.ro.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

RESEARCH ARTICLES

SPECIAL ISSUE
DIVERSITY IN PHILOSOPHY

Diversity in Philosophy: Editors' Introduction[1]

Helen Beebee, Anne-Marie McCallion

For the past twenty years the lack of diversity in professional philosophy has come under increasing scrutiny. Reports that demonstrate the lack of women's and BAME representation in the field, alongside high-profile sexual harassment scandals involving prominent philosophers and articles in mainstream news outlets that have drawn attention to the hostile climate of professional philosophy, have fuelled growing public and academic attention to the discipline's 'chilly climate'. Perhaps due in part to concurrent high-profile feminist resistance surrounding sexist professional climates, the question of why women in particular are so underrepresented in the discipline has attracted the majority of public and academic scrutiny.

This issue, whilst being of great importance, has thus far largely – with a few notable exceptions – been highlighted in the absence of deeper intersectional questions and concerns surrounding how systemic injustices have structured and sustained the academy as an institution. As a result, the subject of professional philosophy's lack of diversity has seldom been connected to the broader history which has embedded institutionalised racism and sexism into the academy and is foundationally responsible for provoking the issues we witness in professional philosophy today. While the focus of this collection is on academic philosophy, we aim to help situate ongoing debates surrounding diversity in the field within the broader framework of these kinds of deeper concerns.

The recent student-led movements in the UK such as 'Rhodes Must Fall' in Oxford and 'Why is My Curriculum White?' – which began in UCL and then spread throughout the country – have drawn attention to the pervasive Eurocentrism throughout the humanities and social sciences. They have shed light on how this Eurocentrism is inseparable from the imperialist and colonialist past of Britain, and how this past is interwoven into the fabric of

[1] We would like to thank all of the contributors to this volume – Hannah M. Altorf, Derek Anderson, Yasemin J. Erden, Simon Fokt, Nic R. Jones, Ian James Kidd, Cecilea Mun, Karoline Reinhardt, Zahra Thani – for their wonderful papers and their generous-spirited engagement with us in the process of bringing the volume to publication. We would also like to thank Rianna Walcott for giving up her time and for allowing us to bring her powerful – and sometimes discomfiting – voice to this volume. Finally, we thank Catalina-Daniela Raducu and everyone at *Symposion* for the opportunity to publish these papers in an open-access venue – and Catalina in particular for her enthusiasm and her patience.

British academia. These movements have evolved the discussion of liberal ideals such as 'inclusion' and 'representation' in academia by making room for an interrogation of the deeper and more crucial issues of structural racism and systemic inequalities. This, in turn, has enabled a more holistic critique of the institutions that are responsible for producing and disseminating knowledge.

A crucial contribution that this evolution has made to the discussion surrounding 'representation' in the academy has been its expansion of the remit of possibilities regarding what can be questioned. In recent years – no doubt at least in part because of the student-led movements mentioned above – we have witnessed the dominant critiques of the academy increasingly shift in popular consciousness from the domain of who is doing the teaching and who is being taught (staff/student representation) towards the question of *what* is being taught.

****

Part of our aim is to bring these two questions – who is teaching and who is being taught – into dialogue with the question of *what* is being taught, and to direct these three strands of critical evaluation directly onto the discipline of philosophy. But the articles in this collection also move from the question of what is being *taught* to the broader – but obviously related – question of what philosophy *is*. At points within the collection, further vital metaphilosophical questions are raised that have a direct bearing on the discipline of philosophy as a whole: what are the defining practices that demarcate philosophy as a distinctive body of human knowledge? How do the defining practices of philosophy relate to the racist, sexist past (and present) of the discipline? Is there a way of amending these practices to make the discipline more representative of marginalised groups?

In their paper "Third-Order Epistemic Exclusion", Zahra Thani and Derek Anderson succeed in broaching all the three aspects of the aforementioned evaluative critique. They discuss how and why metaphilosophical norms – and traditional approaches to curriculum construction – alienate students from marginalised groups. By exploring the situated perspectives of a lecturer and an undergraduate student, Thani and Anderson present an insightful appraisal of the seemingly value-neutral pedagogical norms in philosophy that so often go unnoticed.

Building on the evaluation of pedagogical practices in philosophy, Ian James Kidd's "Trade-offs, Backfires and Curriculum Diversification" explores the theme of curricular diversification by considering how the aim of an appropriately diversified curriculum necessarily raises certain tensions and *can* raise further tensions. Kidd draws attention to how the process of diversifying curricula results in difficult trade-offs being made between certain central topics and thinkers; he further brings to light how it can – if done incorrectly – also

result in students having an inaccurate perception of the central aims of philosophy.

Kidd's paper shines a necessary spotlight on the difficulties that surround the kinds of curricular diversification for which many student activists have been campaigning – a topic that is taken up from the perspective of a student activist in an interview with Rianna Walcott, the co-founder of *Project Myopia*: a student-led initiative to decolonise university curricula. Walcott discusses the intricacies of recent student activism, the distinction between 'diversity' and 'decolonisation', and how each has distinct normative implications for university curricula. Walcott outlines the tensions surrounding each of these concepts and succeeds in simplifying highly complex issues and debates without distorting or burying their depth.

"Between Ambiguity and Identity" further investigates the meaning of 'diversity' by problematising its popular identity-based conception. Karoline Reinhardt attempts to provide a grounded philosophical account of 'diversity' by investigating the tensions that arise between identity-based categories and the messy intricacies of human life and experience, which entail, Reinhardt argues, a natural degree of ambiguity that is overlooked when diversity is conceived and measured in terms of 'ticking boxes'. "Categorical Imperfections: Marginalisation and Scholarship Indexing Systems" brings the subject of diversity directly to bear on the discipline of philosophy by analysing how hegemonic Eurocentric norms within the tradition have directly impacted upon indexing systems. Simon Fokt shows how *PhilPapers* – an essential tool for philosophical research that many would suppose was obviously value-neutral – plays a crucial role in reproducing the pervasive discriminatory assumptions and norms within the profession. By analysing the systems of classification used on *PhilPapers*, Fokt demonstrates how the tools for research – a place that is generally overlooked when it comes to discussions of diversity – can themselves contribute to the the perpetuation of inequalities within philosophy. In a similar vein, "Philosophy for Everyone: Considerations on the Lack of Diversity in Academic Philosophy" brings to light how certain methodological norms and popular assumptions – taken for granted by many – function as a means of keeping diverse practitioners out of the discipline. Nic R. Jones considers how the traditional adversarial style of philosophy and excessive boundary policing of what constitutes 'real' philosophy work together to ensure a hostile climate for diverse practitioners.

Both Jones and Fokt demonstrate the importance of taking a more holistic approach to critiquing philosophy's lack of diversity by bringing into view related but often overlooked aspects of the issue. Insofar as there is a serious ambition to make philosophy a more accessible discipline, it is vital that the ongoing discussions surrounding the issue do not focus exclusively on local, individualistic solutions. Any approach to addressing philosophy's lack of diversity must incorporate a re-evaluation of all that is taken for granted. In our paper, "In Defence of Different Voices", we take on Louise Antony's widely-cited

distinction between 'Perfect Storm' and 'Different Voices' models for explaining the underrepresentation of women in philosophy. We argue for a reorientation of the Different Voices model, which draws on metaphilosophical feminist critiques of the defining norms within the discipline, and argue – *contra* Antony – that this model provides a potentially powerful explanatory model that merits significant further exploration.

Yasemin J. Erden and Hannah M. Altorf's paper, "Difficult Women in Philosophy: Reflections from the Margin", explores a very closely related issue by addressing how the philosophical conception of 'objectivity' functions as a means of keeping diverse practitioners out of the discipline. Erden and Altorf discuss what it is like to be a philosopher on the 'margins' by reflecting on their own experience of having a course they designed and taught closed down by their university. Erden and Altorf bring to light the negative impact that university league tables can have on less 'traditional' courses and how these kinds of systems of evaluation disproportionately disadvantage the marginalised.

Cecilea Mun's paper, "The Many Harms of SETs in Higher Education", also argues that evaluative metrics of teaching success – in this case, student evaluations of teaching – disproportionately affects marginalised teaching staff. However, Mun argues that the harms caused by SETs are not restricted to academic staff, and draws attention to the manner in which SETs also harm underprivileged students through undermining the pedagogical methods that should be equipping them to deal with life and work outside the academy.

Our hope in presenting these papers together is that readers will witness the interconnections between each of these seemingly distinct aspects of the issue, and that they will, collectively, encourage a more holistic approach to understanding and tackling philosophy's lack of diversity.

Third-Order Epistemic Exclusion in Professional Philosophy[1]

Zahra Thani & Derek Anderson

Abstract: Third-order exclusion is a form of epistemic oppression in which the epistemic lifeway of a dominant group disrupts the epistemic agency of members of marginalized groups. In this paper we apply situated perspectives in order to argue that philosophy as a discipline imposes third-order exclusions on members of marginalized groups who are interested in participating in philosophy. We examine a number of specific aspects of the epistemic lifeway embodied by academic philosophy and show how this produces inaccessibility to the discipline. In addition to critiquing the discipline and its methods we also use this discussion to elaborate on third-order exclusion itself. We conclude by proposing an intersectional pedagogy as a step toward creating a more accessible discipline.

Keywords: epistemic oppression, intersectionality, pedagogy, lived experience, epistemology, metaphilosophy.

1. Introduction

Haslanger (2008) writes, "It is very hard to find a place in philosophy that isn't actively hostile to women and minorities, or at least that assumes that a successful philosopher should look and act like a (traditional, white) man." Beyond doubt to philosophers belonging to non-dominant identities, which make up a starkly small portion of professional philosophy, the way in which philosophy functions is exclusionary. Professional philosophy trains people to participate in a shared epistemic life. However, access to that life is limited by an individual's willingness and ability to adopt certain norms and procedures. There is active, pernicious ignorance in professional philosophy that obscures how these norms and procedures cause epistemic harms and oppression and specifically about how these norms limit access to participation in the discipline itself. Here we argue that academic philosophy's *epistemic lifeway* produces what Dotson (2014) calls third-order epistemic exclusion. We take this thesis to contribute to the explanation for the lack of diversity in academic philosophy, which has been addressed by a number of theorists (Haslanger 2008, Antony 2012, Dotson 2013, Leslie et al. 2015).

We begin in section 2 with an exposition of Dotson's concept of third-order epistemic exclusion and its connection to epistemic lifeways. Then, in

[1] We would like to thank the Undergraduate Research Opportunities Program at Boston University for financially supporting this project.

sections 3 through 10, we discuss aspects of academic philosophy's epistemic lifeway and identify ways in which it produces third-order exclusion. The concluding section 11 argues that resistance to change regarding the problems identified in the body of the paper is itself evidence that the epistemic oppression inflicted by philosophy's epistemic lifeway is of the third-order variety – it stems from the fact that the philosophical way of life developed by dominant epistemic agents resists being changed into something more accessible to members of marginalized groups. Here we also briefly suggest that a sweeping incorporation of intersectional theory into philosophy pedagogy could be an important step forward in solving the problem.

We approach the topic of this paper from a situated perspective. At the time of writing, one of us is an undergraduate cis woman of color and one is a cis white male lecturer with a PhD in philosophy. At points in the text where lived experience seems relevant, we will be more or less explicit about who is speaking, as in the following two paragraphs. (The shift in speaker is also often indicated by articulating a situated perspective, i.e. of teacher or student.)

Dr. Anderson was my professor, and now functions as my research mentor. Dr. Anderson's class was the first philosophy class I took where people who are not in the traditional philosophical canon were cited. Though I was already interested in philosophy, this illuminated for me that the discipline, under certain pedagogical conditions, had the prospect of being inclusive, and potentially even accessible. Conversations about non-traditional philosophers in office hours in addition to both frustration with and passion for the discipline eventually lead to the creation of this paper.

As a full-time lecturer employed primarily in teaching introductory-level courses, I've been concerned to create inclusive classrooms that center and engage with marginalized perspectives that were largely (if not entirely) left out of my philosophical training. The guiding idea has been: teach to students of diverse social identities rather than teaching to the 'generic rational agents' in the room, since teaching to generic rational agents really means teaching to the financially secure able-bodied straight cis white men in the class (Scheman 1995). Zahra and I are engaged in an ongoing conversation about how the discipline of philosophy seems to be intrinsically configured to exclude a multitude of diverse identities. Our project is aimed at articulating how this exclusion works and thinking about how to change the discipline to make it more accessible.

We take situated knowledge to be of special importance when investigating the norms that limit the accessibility of professional philosophy, because those norms are more obvious to those who are marginalized by them but their significance is difficult to recognize for those whom they enfranchise. This paper functions as a practical exercise in changing the epistemic lifeway of philosophy. Our situated perspectives are a crucial epistemic resource, illuminating distinct experiences that manifest relationally in academic

philosophy: student and teacher, woman of color and white man, working to create a more accessible philosophy classroom. Each of us brings an important part of the puzzle to the table. We believe our combined perceptions and experiences of the field allow for a more accurate, encompassing understanding of the field (though we recognize that our experiences are not all-encompassing and our position within the institution demonstrates an inherent privilege).

We conceive of situated knowledge along the lines proposed by Collins (2002) and thus take every situated perspective to be limited. We want to acknowledge that our perspectives leave many others out; collectively and individually we have privilege that allows us to write this and engage in this topic, and that means our reflections on what makes philosophy accessible or inaccessible are limited. Neither of us has experienced being totally excluded from philosophy. We also are deeply committed to Collins's view that meaningful transmission of knowledge across different situated perspectives requires political engagement in shared struggle. Our shared political project in this case is the overhaul of philosophy's epistemic lifeway in order to improve accessibility in the discipline for those who are less dominantly situated.

2. Epistemic lifeways and third-order epistemic exclusion

Dotson (2014) introduces the idea of *epistemic lifeways*. Epistemic lifeways are amalgamations of many aspects of life pertaining to our ability to know, including thought processes, behaviors, goals, habits, routines, conceptions of reality, conceptions of authority, our ways of interacting with one another, our ways of acting within institutions, our decisions about who to trust and what claims to accept, and many more. The concept is meant to capture a very wide range of features of epistemic life in an open-ended way. The idea that there is a plurality of epistemic lifeways is meant to indicate that different epistemic agents or perhaps different groups conduct their epistemic lives in substantively different ways, and also to highlight the possibility of living different kinds of epistemic life.

We see philosophy departments as training undergraduates to participate in a certain kind of epistemic lifeway. This epistemic lifeway has been developed over the history of the discipline. In some ways it is explicitly specified and defended by the content of the discipline itself, which tells students what it means to be rational, what knowledge and justification are, how to construct an argument, how to construct a counterexample, and so on. But philosophical training also initiates us into many unstated practices: how to talk, how to argue, how to write in a philosophical voice, what topics are appropriate in philosophical discourse. It models what a real philosopher looks like, both figuratively and literally.

Epistemic lifeways give credibility to testimony, determining who is allowed to give testimony and whether that testimony is expert. They also influence behavior and culture in regards to teaching and learning. What gets

taught, how it gets taught, and what an appropriate interaction in a classroom looks like all fall under their scope. They condition our ideas about what is common sense and what is intuitive. Judgments about thought experiments might be conditioned by epistemic lifeways as well.

Epistemic lifeways are necessary for knowledge production and are therefore inherently useful. We simply cannot get by without one. But indispensable as they are, they also can and do inflict epistemic oppression. Dotson (2014) characterizes epistemic oppression as a persistent unwarranted infringement on the epistemic agency of knowers that hinders their contribution to knowledge production. Epistemic agency is the ability to utilize persuasively shared epistemic resources within a given community of knowers in order to participate in knowledge production and, if required, to affect the revision of those same resources or the introduction of new ones. Theories of epistemic oppression begin with analyses of the conditions for the production, distribution, and attribution of knowledge and focus on the ways in which these conditions create and reproduce systematic patterns of advantage and disadvantage with regard to epistemic agency. Our project is a description of the ways that epistemic norms operating within professional philosophy are inherently exclusionary and function as barriers against attempts to diversify the field; hence our project falls within Dotson's program.[2]

Dotson (2014) distinguishes three forms of epistemic oppression which are hierarchically ordered: first-order exclusion, second-order exclusion, and third-order exclusion. Our focus is on third-order exclusion, but let's briefly review first- and second-order. First-order exclusion happens when marginalized groups are denied equal participation in currently existing epistemic practices; for example, when a person of a marginalized identity is ascribed less credibility than a person of a dominant identity. Fricker's (2007) concept of testimonial injustice counts as an example of first-order exclusion. Second-order exclusion involves being restricted in the ability to participate in the creation and distribution of new epistemic resources, such as new terminology or new concepts. Fricker's (2007) hermeneutical injustice exemplifies this type of exclusion, as does Pohlhaus's (2012) concept of willful hermeneutical ignorance.

Third-order exclusion goes beyond marginalization with respect to the distribution or creation of epistemic resources. Third-order exclusion occurs when the epistemic lifeway adopted and supported by a dominant group or culture undermines or limits the epistemic agency of a marginalized group.

[2] We want to emphasize that we also think there is a lot to love about philosophy. It's not wholly bad or corrupt. Our aim is to make it more accessible because we think it's a good thing to be able to participate in the world of philosophy. We are optimistic in thinking that the exclusionary norms can be changed and that the field can become more inclusive. We also want to acknowledge that there are many people working and making great progress towards this goal.

Dominant epistemic lifeways are created and reinforced within cultures maintained and controlled by dominant epistemic agents. They impose limits on marginalized epistemic agents, specifically by rendering certain important forms of knowledge as not-knowledge, by undermining, discrediting, outlawing, or destabilizing alternative epistemic lifeways that serve marginalized groups. They set up what it is to know in a way that inherently functions to exclude marginalized people from being full fledged epistemic agents, and they restrict the knowledge such people care about and depend on from counting as knowledge. Our approach to applying the concept of third-order exclusion to the issue of accessibility in philosophy is to identify features of the dominant epistemic lifeway inculturated within the sphere of academic philosophy and articulate ways in which this dominant epistemic lifeway functions to oppress, marginalize, discredit, debilitate, and exclude.

Addressing third-order exclusion requires overcoming what Dotson calls the 'resilience of epistemological systems.' Epistemic lifeways resist being changed or reconfigured. Resisting third-order oppression means overcoming the resilience of the epistemic lifeways of dominant groups. Epistemological resilience arises from the fact that epistemological systems are self-maintaining. Our systems for interpreting reality naturally resist being overturned or destroyed by new inputs. Dotson points out that epistemological systems are resilient for good reason. Our ability to be successful epistemic agents requires us to have some backbone; we can't throw out our whole way of approaching reality with each new argument or piece of evidence we encounter. Nevertheless, sometimes an epistemic lifeway must be shaken up or overturned.

Dominant epistemological systems do not yield easily to the efforts of marginalized epistemic agents. Dominant agents are not likely to change their epistemic lifeways in response to complaints of exclusion from marginalized agents. We perceive this situation to be abundantly present in the domain of academic philosophy. Philosophy as a dominant epistemic lifeway maintains its exclusionary nature through epistemic resilience. This is an inherently harmful phenomenon for the marginalized agent, but also provides insight into what must change. It is through encountering the resilience of philosophy's epistemic lifeway that we are best able to perceive its contours and push back against them.

The next eight sections present case studies of certain aspects of philosophy that produce third-order epistemic exclusion. Our aim is to both explain the sense in which academic philosophy trains its students in a particular epistemic lifeway and to explore the ways in which this epistemic lifeway promotes third-order epistemic exclusion for aspiring philosophers who are less dominantly situated. Our survey is by no means exhaustive. We present only a handful of illustrations. They are hints at a bigger picture.

3. Acting like a philosopher

The discipline of philosophy trains individuals to act like a philosopher, to perform the role of philosopher. This performance is difficult to describe in words but familiar for those who hang out with professional philosophers (think of friends or significant others at an event full of philosophers). It is also palpable for the person who is or is training to be a philosopher. We learn to fit in with crowds of philosophers; we start to notice when someone intentionally or unintentionally breaks a norm associated with being a good philosopher. It's a way of thinking, acting, of dealing with people, arguments, and ideas.

When learning philosophy as an undergraduate, it becomes evident that professors will often place you in one of two categories: philosopher, or not philosopher. While this is not the same in every class, it is evident, through interactions with a given professor, which category one falls into. The "you get it or you don't mentality" is present despite the role a professor holds in teaching or explanation. It is almost the case that professors will suggest that a student is not meant to be a part of the discipline, as though there is something inherent in the mind of a philosopher which cannot be learned, but is instead natural.[3] Insofar as this is part of the dominant epistemic lifeway present in philosophy, it is inherently harmful to minorities in the discipline.

Students who excel in 100-level philosophy courses, who are seen as having the right stuff, typically become actively initiated in the epistemic lifeway. These students are often guided with special attention to become more like a professional philosopher through that first course. Those who major in philosophy, who take higher level courses, become more adept. Those who go on to graduate school are even more specialized. They are now recognizably different from 'the folk.' Philosophy graduate students speak and act with a certain rigorous affectation. They say things like "That is false" (practically no one but a philosopher will ever utter this phrase in ordinary conversation) and they say things like "Let's suppose that everything supervenes on the physical..." They are always scrutinizing assertions, generating counterexamples, formulating thought experiments in seminars and at social gatherings.

The philosophy graduate student also becomes indoctrinated in the need to adopt a logically coherent *view* of the world, with the expectation that one's view should provide answers to every question that could be raised for it, and to understand all the propositions her view commits her to accepting. She may be called on to defend her commitments at any time of day from whatever philosopher might approach her having dreamt up some counterexample to her thesis. These ways of behaving and of organizing one's cognitive activities are both gateways to further advancement into the professional field and aspects of the basic epistemological virtues of the well-trained analytic philosopher, according to the well-trained analytic philosopher.

[3] See Leslie et al (2015) for empirical data supporting the ubiquity of this lived experience.

No two people live in exactly the same way, of course.[4] The point is there is a tangible and recognizable quality that philosophy programs seek to instill in their students. It is simultaneously a form of professionalization and a form of training for life as a knower. The echelons of professional philosophy regard this training as objectively valuable and objectively correct—correct in the sense that if one wants to live as an objectively rational person, then one should think and act as a well-trained philosopher does. These ideals trickle down even to our 100-level introductory courses. From day one we aim to train our undergraduates to live, epistemically, like philosophers. Or at least this is the prescribed program, the expectation handed down to lecturers and professors and conveyed to undergrads by the community at large.

As someone with a PhD in philosophy, and as a white male, I find myself struggling with these lessons infused into me through my training. Part of my work, which I see as continuous with the work of creating a more inclusive classroom, is the work of challenging these assumptions about philosophical ability that have been drilled into me. It's hard to express but I find that these assumptions are closely tied with the way one is supposed to act in order to be a good philosopher. One is supposed to exude philosopher-i-ness: cool, rational, smartest-guy-in-the-room (and I do believe 'guy' is appropriate here!). The work of creating a more inclusive pedagogical space, for anyone who has been trained to think and act this way, is partly a matter of inner transformation, in order to stop portraying this and enculturating it as a good ideal toward which students should progress. The bad formations transmitted from previous generations of philosophers need to be identified and undone so they are not passed on to the next generation of philosophy students.

But, we must add, we perceive these implicit presumptions about what philosophical ability *is* to be closely tied with patriarchal and white supremacist ideals. The philosopher's way of being and acting comes out of a culture and place in history. It's an affectation which was cultivated in a culture that promotes patriarchal and white supremacist power structures, a culture which makes it impolite and uncomfortable to recognize power differentials and structural hierarchies but which nevertheless ruthlessly implements them. So, challenging the exclusionary aspects of philosophy's epistemic lifeway cannot be disentangled from challenging patriarchy and white supremacy.

4. The Canon: Legacy of White Dudes

Undergraduate philosophy courses offer a lot of insight into who is regarded as important in the field. The scholars traditionally cited in a modern philosophy

[4] Writing and saying "of course" all the time is also, of course, part of the philosopher's epistemic lifeway. It signals that the interlocutor should accept the statement under consideration without argument, implying that they are in some sense 'out of the conversation' if the statement is not accepted.

class, for example, ultimately will overwhelmingly center cisgender white men. An example of this occurred in my undergraduate history of modern philosophy class, in which the texts read came from the following authors: Descartes, Locke, Leibniz, Spinoza, Hume, Kant, Malbranche, and Conway. The sole (white) woman discussed, Conway, was for a mere single class period, unlike many of the others. Reading Conway was shocking for the class because reading a woman's writing seemed odd for a class on modern philosophy. This was deemed as a progressive move for the instructor. While this class is specific to one specific undergraduate experience, it's widely recognized that typical undergraduate philosophy courses follow the canon of white male philosophers.

Utilizing a syllabus for a course with only cis white men suggests that there were no valuable woman of color (for example) who contributed to the field. Because of this practice, my undergraduate understanding of modern philosophy has a deficit. Outside research is required in order to find diverse voices (for example, women of color). Further, while I (privileged to have an undergraduate education at an elite university) might have the resources and time to seek such knowledge, not all those who might consider entering the field do. Despite my relative privilege, time constraints and other commitments have made it so that I still could not name a woman of color from the period of early modern philosophy.

As a student in the philosophy department, it is expected that you have prior knowledge when attending many philosophy classes. Being able to cite authors during class discussion that were not part of the reading is deemed as virtuous. The professor doesn't even need to give an overt sign of approval. Merely letting the citation go unremarked is enough to give a class the impression that they should already know about the reference.[5] It was not until my last semester of college that a professor formally stated that students citing outside texts or concepts should be ready to explain them and their relevance to the class, so that others in the class who were not familiar with the new material could also participate in the discussion. In order to have equitable engagement, it is crucial that all students understand textual references that come from outside the classroom. If a student brings up a reference without explaining it in a way that other students can benefit from, then that student is monopolizing the moment for their own gain—appearing virtuous—and excluding others from the conversation. Most philosophy classes I've taken have not regarded this as problematic. However, experiencing discussions where a student brings up an author that many students have not read does not create a productive space of discussion. The burden is placed on students who might not feel comfortable asking for an explanation of a text deemed common knowledge in the discipline.

But note that this practice typically only takes this course when the students are citing the white male canon. Authors from outside that canon would

[5] Thank you to the editors of this volume for pointing out this aspect of the phenomenon!

be scrutinized or dismissed as often as not; certainly, citing Audre Lorde in class does not function to portray a student as a budding philosophical genius, whereas citing the views of Wittgenstein or Kripke might.

Professors must meet certain expectations for pedagogy. A history of modern philosophy class without the mention of figures such as Descartes, Hume, Hobbes, Locke, and Kant would be deemed inadequate. Professors are expected to teach certain canonical texts, but this role extends beyond mere syllabus construction. Making students become good, 'rational,' reasoners is also a task given to professors. Assigned term papers must follow a very rigid, philosophical format, answering a question and making an argument about the given the relevant figures.

As a lecturer in the philosophy department, it is my job to produce students who know certain things. I mostly teach 100-level courses. There is absolute pressure to make sure that students coming out of my Introduction to Ethics know who Kant is and can explain the difference between consequentialism and deontology. That is non-negotiable. Students who pass my Reason & Argumentation class should know what a deductively valid argument is. They should know what an ad hominem fallacy is. Moreover, if I've done my job well (according to prevailing pedagogical expectations) the students should care about whether an argument is deductively valid and they should stop committing ad hominem fallacies. These are some of the building blocks of the analytic philosopher's epistemic lifeway. Hence, teaching the canon is a cornerstone of inculcating the traditional epistemic lifeway.

The practice of requiring certain texts and authors is not inherently bad. However, these canonical texts are centered as the most important aspect of the concept being taught. This conveys the idea that all major discoveries and breakthroughs have been achieved by white men. That's false. Anyone coming into the discipline should be told that it's false, and that the whiteness and maleness of the canon is not due to the inherent genius of its authors but rather due to the exclusion of the many great thinkers who belonged to marginalized identities. The tools of the philosophical trade must also be scrutinized for their effect on accessibility. Often, these tools serve the function of directing philosophical inquiry to a particular kind of analysis, one that eschews social and political factors altogether in most cases.

Incorporating alternative material is difficult. Often proactive philosophers striving to diversify the discipline will struggle to work in feminist philosophy or intersectional critical race theory into the syllabus we're expected to teach. But centering alternative material, i.e. organizing the class around philosophy that is not part of the canon, risks delegitimizing the class altogether. Imagine teaching an epistemology course at the undergraduate level that does not address Gettier and the ensuing literature, but instead focused primarily on standpoint theory and epistemic injustice. Such a course would risk censure from a typical philosophy department (or maybe even the academic institution),

something like: this class does not satisfy the key learning objectives listed in the course catalogue for this course; students are not getting an adequate education in epistemology.

5. Racist philosophers

When taking philosophy classes, authors such as Kant and Heidegger are often discussed with little or no mention of their racist attitudes and ideas. I recall one class in which Heidegger was read and the merits of his arguments were discussed at length amongst the class. After this conversation had occurred for a substantive amount of time, the professor chose to enlighten the students about Heidegger's affiliation with the nazi party. Students in the class, some of whom had family members who survived the holocaust, were visibly upset. Students questioned why they had not been told this before reading such a controversial figure. Moreover, students wondered, how can an individual whose worldview is inherently incorrect make arguments about being? These questions are antithetical to a traditional philosophy class. Usually, the background of a person, other than maybe some dates, is run through quickly, if at all, with little discussion on how their ideologies might affect the quality of their philosophical inquiry. But we are told, and told to teach, again and again that we should not consider the author's moral shortcomings as part of any analysis of their ideas; so, the racism of philosophy's most influential thinkers is beside the point, or so we are told to accept.

Philosophy as a practice attempts to train the philosopher to ignore the socially situated position of other philosophers. In this way, philosophy whitewashes. Students are taught to think and write in a way that is absent from experience, ignoring notes in the text which blatantly suppose the inferiority of non-white races. This is standardized, as any such aspect is presented again and again to have no relevance to the argument at hand. Even more detrimental, any 'valid' argument is given some form of credibility for its logical structure. It is my duty as an undergraduate in philosophy to ignore Kant's racist anthropology, and instead only speak on the premises of his arguments. To assume that a philosopher's racist ideology is even remotely connected with his argument is an ad hominem fallacy.

This issue also connects with the question of teaching the canon raised in the previous section. As an instructor teaching Kant's deontology in Introduction to Ethics, I always mention Kant's racist anthropology (Eze 1997). Inevitably I find some students of color (and sometimes white students) asking me at some point, but why are we even reading this racist? I think this is a very important question for an undergraduate to ask. This approach contrasts with one, which is advocated by well-meaning colleagues, according to which we should not emphasize Kant's racism because it will cause students to dismiss him out of hand and thereby miss out on his important contributions. Implicit in this approach is (a) that Kant's racism is not implicated in his important

philosophical work and (b) to bring considerations of Kant's own personal moral failings to bear on his philosophy is to commit a version of the ad hominem fallacy. I think it's important to recognize that this way of thinking functions to portray the racism of our canonical philosopher heroes as irrelevant to their work and thereby justifies teaching that work in a way that avoids any confrontation with the cultural baggage that comes with the white male canon. Creating a more accessible classroom requires explicitly addressing the historical setting in which our most central texts were created, including their connections with prevailing political views of the time, especially when those views were explicitly endorsed by the author.

6. Casual uses of violence as illustration

Philosophy often utilizes unnecessarily graphic examples. One moment comes to mind in a *Philosophy of Art* class in which we were discussing a famous case of art vandalization. A student in the class likened the vandalization to rape. This analogy trivalizes rape and sensationalizes the vandalization. It makes use of the imagery of rape to make a point about something other than rape, without any interest or concern for considering rape itself. It draws on the suffering and the appropriate moral condemnation of an element of systemic oppression against women and applies it to an example that has none of those features, but these disanalogies are ignored in the rhetorical use of the analogy itself. The analogy only succeeds because these disanalogies are ignored, i.e. because the profound harm of sexual violence is ignored. For these reasons this use of the analogy is disrespectful and harmful. It might also very well be triggering to some in the class. It's not a suitable analogy. But these reasons for which it is not suitable are not immediately recognized within the context of a philosophy class. In the traditional epistemic lifeway, participating in philosophy class means people get to say whatever they like as long as the argument sounds cogent to the white male ear. It is epistemically virtuous to make commentary in the classroom, regardless of how that commentary may affect others.

After I started teaching, I began noticing how much the philosophical discourse is saturated with violent content. Take for example the first chapter of Sam Harris's book *Free Will*. This seemed like an ideal introductory text when I began designing my first ever intro class. But the first chapter describes in gruesome detail a horrible crime that really happened (Harris 2012). The rhetorical effect is supposed to be: we need to have a theory of free will or else we must say that the perpetrators were blameless for this horrible crime. But is it necessary to make students contemplate a horribly disturbing crime in order for them to think clearly about free will? What are the pedagogical benefits of subjecting them to such material?

One could argue we have a duty as teachers to avoid introducing such violent material when less disturbing thought experiments can make the same point. Yet many professional philosophers will affirm that such violent intuition

pumps are necessary and important. They will maintain, consequently, that doing philosophy well requires having a thick skin and subduing basic emotions. This is another aspect of the epistemic lifeway that philosophers are trained to participate in. Set your emotions aside and read the horribly violent intuition pumps. Make up your own horribly violent intuition pumps and share them in class. Anyone who is disturbed or upset by this practice is simply unable to control their emotions, thus not fully rational and a subpar philosopher.

Relatedly, we find many examples that connect with themes of oppression but do not address or analyze the oppression involved. For example, in a famous counterexample to utilitarianism (appearing in introductory textbooks), McCloskey (1957) constructs a thought experiment wherein "a sheriff [is] faced with the choice either of framing a Negro for a rape that had aroused hostility to the Negroes (a particular Negro generally being believed to be guilty but whom the sheriff knows not to be guilty) – and thus preventing serious anti-Negro riots which would probably lead to some loss of life and increased hatred of each other by whites and Negroes – or of hunting for the guilty person and thereby allowing the anti-Negro riots to occur." The purported upshot of the thought experiment is that utilitarianism recommends framing an innocent person. Regardless of whether this provides an effective objection to utilitarianism, our point here is that such a flagrantly racially charged example is presented in McCloskey's essay without any analysis of racism. There is no discussion of systematic racialized violence in the form of angry white mobs or of the controlling image (Collins 2002) of Black man as rapist. Moreover, the use of the word "negro" is problematic (we even debated including it here) because the use of this word by a white man in the 1950s is connected with jim crow era oppression. I would hazard a guess that many white male professors who have taught this example have not paused to consider these things in classroom discussion, either.

Why is such a complex example of racialized violence chosen, only then to ignore all the complexities of the case and its connections to systemic oppression? The thought experiment objectifies racialized violence to make a point about justice in general while being unwilling to actually engage in a sustained analysis of racism. Similar concerns can be raised for countless other examples, including familiar appeals to slavery and the holocaust to support intuitions of moral realism. The casual use of such examples is drilled into philosophy students from the very beginning. Our fluency with such examples and the norm of ignoring their implications for the social fabric is an aspect of our epistemic lifeway that causes third-order exclusion. As long as philosophical pedagogy condones uncritical and objectifying uses of examples drawn from the history of oppression without enforcing a norm of deeply analyzing the structures of oppression in connection with those examples, it will continue to be pedagogy aimed at educating those who do not face such oppression.

7. Safe spaces and content warnings

As an undergraduate in a college environment, there is a lot of talk on how to make classrooms places in which discourse can be shared and created in an open and safe environment.[6] Many professors in other disciplines will utilize content warnings in class when discussing issues (such as sexual violence), that can be triggering to some individuals. Generally speaking, philosophy laughs at safe spaces (although there are certainly exceptions!). While philosophers are not necessarily shunned for using or requesting content warnings and implementing safe spaces, the idea that a department should make such things central to their pedagogy would surely meet strong resistance.

We think this resistance is deeply connected with philosophy's epistemic lifeway. Philosophers are trained to disregard emotion and personal concern as irrelevant, especially with issues that are sensitively connected with social justice. The way in which philosophy centers figures such as Kant, despite blatantly racist ideologies, suggests the inferiority of students of color. Why should the ideas of individuals who have done so much wrong be held so highly? Yet this thought is not taken seriously, nor is there any forethought or concern with teaching students of color the work of racists without warning or comment, precisely because philosophers are well-rehearsed in ignoring such details and separating the content they engage with from any historical contingencies in which the content arose.

Likewise, the ideal philosopher is supposed to have no emotion at all when confronting racist or sexist ideas. If such emotions do arise, the best thing to do is practice setting them aside. A philosophy professor deeply enmeshed in this epistemic lifeway might even think it would be helpful to have students of color defend racist ideas, just to help them practice setting their emotions aside. Such a philosopher surely sees no use for content warnings or safe spaces, which could only function to safeguard emotional fragility and prevent students from developing the iron skin required to face the facts and make the strongest possible arguments.

By the same token, students' arguments are valid if they follow a specific form, regardless of their content. An argument can be valid even if it conveys harmful ideas. If no one can poke holes in the argument, then its conclusion stands. If the conclusion strikes people of color as racist and upsetting, well they can either live with that or engage in the iron-clad, emotionless battle of logic required to refute the problematic conclusion. To restrict such arguments with the goal of providing a safe space is seen as refusing to engage in truth-seeking, to flee from 'our' responsibility to seek the truth regardless of where it may lead, and 'our' responsibility to disabuse those with racist or sexist ideas through sound and cogent arguments.

[6] For extensive discussions of safe space policies, see Rom (1998), Holly & Steiner (2005), and Palfrey (2017).

In these ways, philosophy's epistemic lifeway is antithetical to many practices that are designed to keep marginalized students safe and engaged on equal epistemic footing with their more dominantly situated classmates. Safe spaces are made for marginalized students, who have much more at stake when classrooms become unsafe. Dominant students who think marginalized students should just toughen up fail to recognize the trauma connected with things like racism and sexual assualt. Pushing back against the dominant epistemic lifeway therefore means finding ways to shift norms around safe spaces and content warnings.

8. A priori methodology

Philosophers often draw conclusions on the basis of a priori reasoning. The practice is so common that a priori reasoning is often treated as coextensive with doing philosophy. Philosophers adopt apriorism as methodology insofar as the use of a priori justification is normatively accepted as a staple of philosophical practice and as an important source of philosophical knowledge. While apriorism is hardly ubiquitous – there have been many dissenting empiricist positions over the centuries – it is certainly a hallmark of philosophy as a discipline. Students are sure to encounter its influence in every philosophy course they take.

We claim that apriorism as methodology contributes to third-order epistemic exclusion within academic philosophy. Reliance on a priori methods reinforces the epistemic authority of dominant agents and diminishes the epistemological significance of lived experience of members of marginalized groups. This is especially noticeable when dominant agents make a priori arguments about issues connected with social identities and social justice, but the effect is present in all fields of philosophical inquiry. Here we delve into just a few of the ways that we see apriorism contributing to exclusion.

A priori methodology drives and is driven by the ideal promoted within our discipline that we can arrive at universally valid conclusions on the basis of individual thought and reflection. This ideal seems to go hand in hand with the dismissal of lived experience. If the lived experiences of marginalized groups were somehow necessary for a priori philosophical knowledge (of ethics, or metaphysics, or anything) then such philosophical knowledge would not be universally accessible, and this in turn would seem to threaten the universal validity of a priori reasoning and the scope of the conclusions drawn. It would also render many traditional philosophical procedures dubious. For example, the practice of sitting around in a seminar room filled with mostly white and/or male graduate students talking about philosophy comes to be seen as insular and narrow, once diversity of lived experience is treated as of epistemic importance.

Certain complex issues might be raised here having to do with specific details of a priori knowledge acquisition. One such issue concerns enabling experiences. It is often conceded that the possibility of obtaining a priori

knowledge of some proposition P can depend on having had certain experiences, specifically if possessing the concepts necessary for contemplating P requires having had certain experiences. In such cases, enabling experiences are necessary for a priori reflection. For example, perhaps knowing that green is a color requires having had an experience of green in order to grasp the concept of being green. Likewise, it might be that knowing truths about racism or sexism requires having had certain life experiences in order to have those concepts, or at least requires extending conceptual credibility to someone who has grasped those concepts. We think, when understood along these lines, a priori knowledge can be an important part of philosophical theorizing within an inclusive environment. But standard philosophical practice regularly ignores or denies any role for lived experience in theorizing, especially with issues seen as 'deep and fundamental,' which are typically conceived as utterly disconnected from social or political life.

A priori justification is also often taken to be defeasible. What is justified after *some* a priori thinking might be shown later to be unjustified after *further* a priori thinking. So, by standard a priori methodology, a white male philosopher with no experience of racism or sexism could be a priori justified in reaching certain conclusions, e.g. that it is possible to be racist and sexist to white men. Indeed, many white men have seemingly reached this conclusion by a priori reasoning. Even if such reasoning can be defeated by further considerations, prevailing epistemic norms support the assessment that these white men have defeasible a priori justification for their own homebrewed theories of racism and sexism.

This presents a deep obstacle for women and people of color to access the discipline of philosophy. The systematic reliance on and endorsement of a priori justification bestows epistemic power (Dotson 2018) on dominant agents to reach their own conclusions about issues of justice and equality without consulting the lived experiences of those who experience systemic injustice and oppression. Here epistemic power refers to the ability to ignore input from less powerful epistemic agents, even when confronted directly with such input.

A defender of apriorism might protest as follows. We've conceded that a priori judgments can be overturned by further a priori thinking. So, all that's required is for marginalized agents to contest the a priori judgments of dominant agents with further good reasoning, to convince the dominant agents to rescind whatever wrong-headed view they've thought up. Such a response, however, fails to take seriously how epistemic power works in philosophical exchanges. If many members of a dominant group claim to know a priori that P or take themselves to have an a priori argument for P, then lived experiences that weigh against P can often be 'legitimately' dismissed on the strength of considerations in favor of P. After all, the considerations are mutually accepted among many dominant agents who support and encourage one another's judgment. Even if lived experience is given some credibility, it may still be ignored pending an

'adequate' response to the a priori argument for P. For the dominant agent, claiming to know something a priori is like seizing the high ground, especially when other members of the dominant faction vocally support the a priori warrant. We think pushing back against this kind of scenario requires seriously reconsidering the role that a priori judgements are legitimated to play within philosophical discourse.

9. Rationality

Rationality is a standard of excellence among philosophers. It is commonly interpreted as believing and acting in accord with reason. Perhaps the two most characteristic features of the term "rationality" are (i) it expresses a central and potent evaluative concept within philosophical discourse, applied to arguments, beliefs, and people themselves, and (ii) uses of the term are extremely variegated and contested among philosophers, so much so that there is no widely accepted theory of rationality; often differences in use are bound up with different theoretical conceptions of justification and other epistemological virtues. What we have then is a term that carries a lot of weight and authority, which can be used to silence and censure people and arguments that are deemed "irrational," but which has no widely accepted definition or theoretical explanation.

Nevertheless, some characteristic features of rationality are widely recognized and function to guide usage of the term within the epistemic lifeways of philosophy. Rationality requires (a) being internally consistent, (b) obeying some set of inference rules (which tends to vary from theory to theory), and (c) thinking and acting so as to make good decisions and arrive at true beliefs.[7] Each of these features potentially functions to exclude persons of marginalized social identities from full participation in philosophical discourse, insofar as they can be deployed from the 'high ground' to dismiss ideas and thought processes that are deemed to fall short of the murky ideal. It's not that these features should be dispelled from the philosophical imagination, but their use to delegitimate ideas and thought processes must be taken in the context of prevailing power relations within classrooms and discourses in order for an appropriately sensitive recognition of how they might be used to exclude.

Moreover, rationality has traditionally been reserved for white European men, and so uses of the word carry a historical connotation that excludes women and people of color. The term "rationality" suggests a form of exclusivity that only 'true philosophers' rightfully partake in. Women and people of color have not traditionally been welcome in this upper echelon of academic society. Hence the language of rationality has been coded historically to marginalize non-dominant groups. It is clearly present in white patriarchal ideology. Black women are marked as too angry; white women are regarded as hysterical; all women are seen as tending toward emotionality and consequently an inability to

[7] These characteristics of rationality are catalogued by Wedgewood (1999).

think clearly. As Antony (1995) points out, this does not mean we should necessarily reject the concept of rationality altogether; instead we might be concerned to argue that women and people of color are fully rational. Our point here is only that the concept of rationality has historically been used to exclude and carries a strong potential to continue excluding for the foreseeable future.

Rationality has also been used as the demarcating feature that justifies white supremacy. During the historical development of the concept of rationality (in Europe) rationality was seen, especially by Kant, as a kind of evolutionary destination[8] toward which humanity was progressing (Eze 1997, Mills 2014). White people, of course, were accorded the place of pride at the vanguard of this advancement of human consciousness toward more perfect rationality, while Indigenous peoples were seen as lagging behind, either permanently stagnated or in need of white assistance to gain ground. This is the fundamental aspect in which Indigenous peoples are rendered primitive as compared to whites. Further, as Aristotle argued, rationality is the distinguishing feature of humanity, and widely seen as such. Animals are the irrational brutes. Then, insofar as women and Indigenous peoples are construed as inherently less rational than white men, those groups are represented as closer to animals – more in tune with nature, perhaps, but less apt for rational thought. All of these ideological connections are present within the classroom, where norms of rationality are explicitly and implicitly communicated; the ties to oppressive social heirarchies are felt by those who are marginalized but hardly ever acknowledged by those in power.

What are the norms that philosophy's interest in rationality imposes? Make rational arguments. Don't make irrational arguments. Don't let emotions dictate your beliefs. Do not be emotionally or personally connected to your beliefs or explanations of things, for personal interest and emotion cannot inform; they can only detract from clear understanding.[9] Personal experience can provide evidence, but only insofar as that evidence could be appreciated by everyone. If your own experience has some evidence in it, then that evidence must be equally appreciable by everyone, even those who have had very different experiences.

In light of these norms, teaching feminist epistemology and other epistemologies of resistance can be seen as running counter to the learning objectives of undergraduate philosophy. Teaching students that situatedness matters, that emotionality is not incompatible with rationality, that lived experience is relevant – these lessons conflict with the overarching narrative that students receive in other philosophy classes. Hence there is resistance to centering resistant epistemologies.

[8] ...as if evolution has a destination...

[9] These ideas are forcefully developed in the feminist epistemology literature. See, for some examples, Scheman (1995), Code (2012) and Collins (2002).

As a teacher, there is pressure to offset the presentation of counter-hegemonic ideas by presenting the traditional conception of rationality and its attendant norms as a fully legitimate alternative to the epistemologies of resistance. Often we teach the classical canon, then teach feminist critique as a potential response. This pedagogical approach has the effect of first legitimating the classical conception, then criticizing it. A more radical approach would be to begin by teaching feminist epistemology as if it were the received view, then presenting the traditional conception in the course of critiquing it as an ideological bulwark of patriarchy and white supremacy. But such an approach certainly risks delegitimation of the course itself, as more conservative or classically liberal students and colleagues would likely see such course content as ideologically loaded, biased, and ultimately inappropriate given the prevailing traditional epistemic norms.

We see here again how the epistemic lifeway of philosophy manifests its epistemological resilience. An attempt to push back against the traditional exclusionary way we understand rationality and its attendant norms clashes with the norms themselves, which renders the attempt to push back against them as itself problematically irrational. In the case considered above, the attempt to teach resistant critiques of traditional conceptions of rationality is rendered as politically motivated; hence, it appears as problematically irrational.

10. Socratic method

The philosophical hero Socrates challenged assumptions relentlessly until he was put to death by those who did not want to answer his questions. Asking questions has been the hallmark of philosophy. Inquiring into everything and leaving no stone unturned, philosophers cannot be barred from pursuing any inquiry. Performing traditional philosophy requires accepting that all questions are open questions. On the flip side, a philosopher is expected to explain and defend her views whenever she is questioned by another philosopher. Socrates teaches that no belief is sacrosanct. One can always appropriately be called on to defend any belief, and it is always inappropriate to refuse to explain and defend that belief.

This practice leads to difficulties for marginalized persons who wish to participate in academic philosophy. The open question methodology entails that the experiences of marginalized persons and their understanding of their own oppression can be called into question. Even their existence qua their identity can be called into question.

Consider the question: “Are trans women really women?” According to widespread and familiar norms of philosophical discourse, raising such a question is always legitimate.[10] Philosophy teachers should allow or even encourage discussion of such a question. But such conversations are not neutral,

[10] See Bettcher (2019) for discussion.

abstract inquiries. While they can be conducted as a mere academic exercise among a crowd of cis philosophers, discussing the question of whether trans women are really women inflicts heavy burdens on trans students and trans faculty. By raising the question as if it were an open question, the questioner shifts the conversational context so that the truth of the proposition that trans women are women can't be taken for granted.[11] Further, the norm that philosophers must defend and explain their beliefs entails that trans women philosophers can be called on (at any time, at any location, by any philosopher) to defend the legitimacy of their gender.

Thus, the socratic norm functions as a barrier to equal participation of trans women within the community. In similar ways, the open question norm allows the existence and extent of sexism, racism, classism, and homophobia to be called into question without provocation or warning. All that is required is mere curiosity, or even feigned curiosity. This curiosity can involve asking for conceptual arguments or empirical data to back up the claims made by marginalized agents about their experiences of oppression. The norms of philosophical discourse demand that 'adequate reason' be provided for anything a person believes, and a philosopher may be called on at any time to provide a defense of her beliefs. Predictably, treating lived experiences of oppression as open to doubt and re-interpretation by members of dominant groups who don't experience those oppressions will function to alienate and disempower members of marginalized groups who are interested in academic philosophy.

11. Conclusion

In sections 3-10, we examined a number of aspects of the epistemic life of an academic philosopher, identifying various ways in which these aspects produce third-order exclusion. We remarked at the outset that third-order exclusion is somewhat difficult to characterize due to its abstract nature. We hope that through our presentation of these case studies we have provided some practical examples of third-order exclusion in action. We have also implicitly suggested a number of ways of remedying the situation, viz. by addressing and changing the problematic aspects of philosophy's epistemic lifeway adduced above. These problems are very hard to address though, because philosophical training teaches its practitioners to see them as non-problems and to see solutions to the problems as inappropriate, irrational, unwarranted, biased, censorious – the list could go on and on, enumerating the ways in which philosophers will defend the

[11] To be clear, this question is not one that should even be asked. Asking it is an attack on trans people. Questioning gender is a way of denying somebody's gender, of dehumanizing them. It denies their gender in the sense that, by calling their gender into question, it denies their authority to say what their gender is and thereby dehumanizes them and delegitimates their experience. In a certain sense, we think the question itself is invalid – it's harmful and not even a meaningful question to ask – although saying exactly what this means and defending it is beyond the scope of this paper.

status quo by appeal to the very epistemic lifeway we seek to change. Indeed, this is what makes the problem one of third-order exclusion.

Specifically, the resistance to change that an oppressive epistemological system exhibits is evidence that we are dealing with third-order exclusion. Where we find an epistemic lifeway that promotes problematic exclusion and epistemic oppression, and where it is the lifeway itself and its resistance to change that produces the exclusion and oppression, that is where we find third-order exclusion. Hence, identifying ways in which philosophers are likely to push back against initiatives to change the way we teach and practice philosophy in order to make it more accessible, where those ways of resisting change are generated within philosophy's self-reflective epistemology, provide examples of the epistemological resilience of philosophy's epistemic lifeway. As such, they serve to further illustrate the sense in which academic philosophy inflicts third-order exclusion.

We want to create a new epistemic lifeway that makes philosophy more accessible. To achieve this goal, it is imperative that we make some major changes in the way we conduct ourselves as philosophers, both in teaching and in our communal practices. We do not have the space here to provide an in-depth plan of action – here our goal was only to theorize the sense in which academic philosophy produces a distinctive epistemic lifeway that generates third-order exclusion. But we want to conclude with a very brief outline of a suggestion for producing a better future.

Our suggestion put simply is to teach intersectionality in every philosophy class. Intersectionality theory should be incorporated into every philosophy course in one way or another using source texts and drawing connections to whatever canonical material is covered.

The purpose is to bring philosophy into conversation with discussions of intersecting oppressions and marginalized identities. We believe that texts written by such luminaries as Lorde (2012), Crenshaw (2022), Collins (2002), Roberts (1999), and hooks (2000) provide a wealth of topics in ethics, epistemology, philosophy of language, philosophy of mind, and metaphysics, as well as in a very wide range of philosophy's sub-disciplines including feminist philosophy, philosophy of race and gender, philosophy of science, philosophy of law, aesthetics, philosophy of history, and many others.

The challenge is to bring the content of philosophy as traditionally understood into conversation with such intersectional texts. The fact that there is very often no straightforward way of doing this is the result of philosophy's disconnect from the lives of non-dominant identities. Nevertheless, we think it is a challenge that must be taken up whole-heartedly if philosophy is to be transformed into a more accessible discipline for members of marginalized groups.

Again, we recognize that there will be strong resistance to such a program. Many philosophers would vehemently protest any such requirement and would

find plenty of justification and support in their protest from within the discipline – both the content of the discipline and its practitioners. But this is more evidence of the fact that philosophy produces third-order exclusion. The very content and organization of the discipline produces resistance to engaging with the interests and struggles of marginalized groups. Overcoming the epistemic resilience that (for the most part) keeps intersectionality out of philosophy classrooms is daunting; here is not the place to develop an elaborate plan of action, as our goal has been the modest one of articulating and arguing for the thesis that philosophy produces third-order exclusion. Nevertheless, we have high hopes that philosophy as a discipline can incorporate intersectionality in a comprehensive way, as many other departments in the humanities have done.

We have laid out our conception of philosophy's epistemic lifeway as a source of third-order exclusion. We have illustrated what this means by providing examples of how epistemic norms enforced by traditional philosophical thought and pedagogy inflict third-order exclusions on marginalized groups. We believe steps can be taken to radically transform the discipline, bringing it closer in line with other humanities which are more focused on issues of oppression and injustice. Philosophy provides its own self-contained justifications for preventing its own transformation into a field that would be more accessible to members of marginalized groups. This is the nature of third-order exclusion. Overcoming this resilience is obviously a tremendous task and one that we believe deserves a lot of attention.

Bibliography

Antony, Louise. 1995. "Comment on Naomi Scheman." *Metaphilosophy* 26 (3): 191-8.

———. 2012. "Different Voices or Perfect Storm: Why Are There So Few Women in Philosophy?" *Journal of Social Philosophy* 43 (3): 227-55.

Bettcher, Talia Mae. 2019. "What Is Trans Philosophy?" *Hypatia* 34 (4): 644-67.

Crenshaw, Kimberlé. 2022. *On Intersectionality: Essential Writings*. New York: New Press.

Code, Lorraine. 2012. "Taking Subjectivity into Account." In *Education, Culture and Epistemological Diversity,* ed. Claudia Ruitenberg, D.C. Phillips, 85-100 Dordrecht: Springer.

Collins, Patricia Hill. 2002. *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment*. New York and London: Routledge.

Dotson, Kristie. 2012. "A Cautionary Tale: On Limiting Epistemic Oppression." *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies* 33 (1): 24-47.

———. 2013. "How Is This Paper Philosophy?" *Comparative Philosophy* 3 (1): 3-29.

———. 2014. "Conceptualizing Epistemic Oppression." *Social Epistemology 28* (2): 115-38.

———. 2018. “Accumulating Epistemic Power: A Problem with Epistemology.” *Philosophical Topics* 46 (1): 129-54.

Eze, Emmanuel Chukwudi. 1997. “The Color of Reason: The Idea of ‘Race’ in Kant’s Anthropology.” In *Postcolonial African Philosophy: A Critical Reader*, ed. Emmanuel Chukwudi Eze, 103-40. Cambridge: Wiley-Blackwell.

Fricker, Miranda. *Epistemic Injustice: Power and the Ethics of Knowing*. Oxford University Press, 2007.

Harris, Sam. 2012. *Free Will*. New York, New York: Simon and Schuster.

Haslanger, Sally. 2008. “Changing the Ideology and Culture of Philosophy: Not by Reason (Alone).” *Hypatia* 23 (2): 210-23.

Holley, Lynn C., & Sue Steiner. 2005. “Safe Space: Student Perspectives on Classroom Environment.” *Journal of Social Work Education* 41 (1): 49-64.

hooks, bell. 2000. *Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center*. London: Pluto Press.

Leslie, S. J., Cimpian, A., Meyer, M., & Freeland, E. 2015. “Expectations of Brilliance Underlie Gender Distributions Across Academic Disciplines.” *Science 347* (6219): 262-65.

Lorde, Audre. 2012. *Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches*. Crossing Press.

McCloskey, H. J. 1957. “An Examination of Restricted Utilitarianism.” *The Philosophical Review*: 466-85.

Mills, Charles W. 2014. *The Racial Contract*. Cornell University Press.

Palfrey, John. 2017. *Safe Spaces, Brave Spaces: Diversity and Free Expression in Education*. MIT Press.

Pohlhaus Jr, Gail. 2012. “Relational Knowing and Epistemic Injustice: Toward a Theory of Willful Hermeneutical Ignorance.” *Hypatia*, *27* (4): 715-35.

Roberts, Dorothy E. 1999. *Killing the Black Body: Race, Reproduction, and the Meaning of Liberty*. New York: Vintage Books.

Rom, Robert Boost. 1998. “'Safe spaces': Reflections on an Educational Metaphor.” *Journal of Curriculum Studies* 30 (4): 397-408.

Scheman, Naomi. 19995. “Feminist Epistemology.” *Metaphilosophy*, *26* (3): 177-90.

Wedgwood, Ralph. 1999. “The A Priori Rules of Rationality.” *Philosophical and Phenomenological Research* 59(1): 113-31.

An Interview with Rianna Walcott

Anne-Marie McCallion

Abstract: This is an interview with Rianna Walcott, the co-founder of *Project Myopia* – a student-led initiative to decolonise university curricula. The discussion explores the difference between 'diversity' and 'decolonisation': how these two concepts relate to and contradict one another. Walcott outlines some of the recent student efforts to 'decolonise' the university and we discuss the extent to which this represents a paradoxical ambition, as well as the limitations of attempting to change the university from the *inside.* Walcott also explores the significance of some practical measures which can be – or have been – put into place when attempting to diversify or decolonise curricula, and we close by discussing the significance of Philosophy in particular with respect to decolonising efforts, and the steps which need to be taken in order to begin the process of 'decolonising' philosophy.

Keywords: diversity, decolonisation, teaching, curricula, activism, students.

Introduction

Rianna Walcott is the co-founder of *Project Myopia* – a student-led initiative to decolonise university curricula. Project Myopia gathers curriculum suggestions which have been crowdsourced from students. Students gather and present their suggestions within a semi-academic essay, which details the significance of their suggested work to their personal experience and why they believe it would make a worthy addition to their curriculum. The suggestions contained within the Project Myopia website site cover a range of formats: visual, literary, cinematic, musical, etc. Project Myopia primarily aims to address the distinctive lack of works written or created by LGBTQ people, women, non-binary people, differently abled people or people of colour contained on syllabuses. Whilst it would have been possible to approach these issues in a way which may have been more palatable to a wider academic audience, I felt it was more important to capture the first-person perspective of an activist who has worked on the ground to bring these issues to wider public attention. With this in mind, I suggest that the following discussion is read not as an attempt to produce a systematic defence of these recent student-led efforts, but instead as a means of providing a deeper insight into some of the experiences of university education that have motivated student activism in this area and what it aims to achieve – as well as some of the theoretical and practical tensions that have arisen in the course of carrying out these ambitions. With the exception of a few minor editorial cuts in order to avoid repetition, etc., what follows is a verbatim transcription – an uncensored portrayal of our discussion.

© Symposion, 7, 2 (2020): 139-148

1. Can you start by telling us a bit about yourself and what *Project Myopia* is?

I am a PhD student at King's College London and I research race and social media. In particular I look at how black people use social networks and how we represent blackness in those spaces: how we represent ourselves and the linguistic or syntactical definers of race – discourse analysis, etc. I am also a teaching assistant in the Digital Humanities Department here at King's and my undergrad and masters were both in English lit at Edinburgh. While I was there, along with my co-founder of Project Myopia, we both noticed that going through the English literature undergrad we felt that it was inadequate and incomplete. We felt that there was a real problem with the fact that, depending on which courses you had chosen, you could get to the end having barely touched any work by POC or queer people – there was a real way in which all of the 'diverse' offerings were pigeon-holed in the last year of honours. So you could choose maybe one course on queering the canon or one course on Afro-American literature. And that was it. And if you chose not to take that one course you could quite easily finish your degree without touching that huge part of the canon.

So, we were trying to challenge what the canon actually is. Even though universities and a lot of other places ostensibly do not subscribe to the idea of a 'canon', in actual fact when we're creating curricula for undergrads you've got to kind of take a holistic look at course and say: well, what is the reason it's unimportant for them to read a black theorist before their final year? What – they can't 'handle' it before they're 21? It's quite strange. So we basically wanted to devote some resources to amending that kind of problem. We then secured some funding from an IIG grant and we set up a website and some social media platforms and we asked students to write us essays on what they wished had been on their curriculums. The only caveat was that whatever they recommended had to be by a scholar or a person who was from a marginalised background. We had people recommending things far and wide: albums that are great examples of post-colonialism; we had people saying "oh you should put *Chewing Gum* on film and TV courses"; all sorts of things, not just things that are considered to be narrowly academic.

It was really wonderful, and we have since been striving to expand our disciplinary reach – because it's a project that lends itself more towards the arts and humanities than it does to STEM [science, technology, engineering and medicine] and me and Toby were both from English lit and we're aware that our frame of reference is quite narrow, and we've since been working to ensure that there is a true interdisciplinary offering there. So we've had interviews with senior doctors of at UCL and they were interviewed about the racist history of certain medicine. We had someone from economics write us a piece about feminism and Adam Smith. And then more recently, if we're thinking about a decolonised curriculum. Before we started thinking about the difference between diversity and decolonisation, we were just thinking: what would we have wanted more of? What did we need to see? As students what did we need in

that space we were existing in? Alongside all that, for the last year or two I have been running workshops for graduate teaching assistants, thinking about how to make that classroom, that space, as liberated as possible: as free as possible from micro-aggressions; a safe and productive environment to learn in. We're aware of BAME attainment gaps, so we've got to think about not just what is being taught but also how it's being taught and who is in the room when it's being taught. And how can we make sure that that space is hospitable for scholars who are already marginalised.

2. With that in mind, can you say a little bit about how GTAs can make sure that the classroom is a space in which all students can develop themselves equally?

Well, I think part of it is about the kind of classroom environment you foster. I can speak from my experience of being a student: there are some people who believe that the university – in their sort of conflation of free speech with the 'offensive as you can be speech' – they tend to conflate, or say that the classroom is not a political space. Whereas I say the complete opposite space. I say that the classroom is the *most* political space, I say bring your politics here, don't leave it at the door. And to say that the classroom is an apolitical space sort of assumes that you are the *neutral.* Only a cis-het white man can say that something is not political because they're the only ones that can supersede identity and speak as if we're all like floating atoms and talk about things in a purely theoretical way. So philosophy, for instance: one of our questions in the workshop is based on an experience that a student actually had. It is about Heidegger, the notorious antisemite, and how a tutor didn't know that Heidegger was actually an antisemite and then a student brings it up and the tutor goes, well its not really relevant to this lesson, so we're going to park it. And it's about saying: well, what does that do to your classroom? That choice that you've made to say, well, we're going to leave that at the door, what have you then communicated about the way your classroom works? What have you communicated about how academia as a whole works? Because who gets to supersede those things? Who gets to be the David Humes and Heideggers? They only get to be there, to occupy that space, *because* they're straight white men, and we don't think about all the people whose contributions to philosophy have been completely ignored. And they just get to be, you know, we're all just like, 'oh the Enlightenment blah blah blah'… . So, it's all political – right?

3. How do you respond to those people who simply say that these kinds of changes are impractical? Who say that if we took all the philosophers off the syllabus who held problematic views there would be no canonical figures left to teach, no time to contextualise them, etc.?

[Laughs] Well, it tells you what they hope to espouse doesn't it. It tells you who they expect to have in their classrooms. You know, they establish these so-called 'global cultures' and pretend like "oh we're a university, we're really global", and then they do something like this: they tell people who is and is not welcome. I often use the example of David Hume. When he's writing during the Enlightenment about Man, at this point when he's writing he literally doesn't think I'm a human! So how can I talk about his philosophy as being any kind of universal enquiry into anything when *I know* that he doesn't think I'm a real person. All this stuff that he's supposedly speaking about with respect to humanity, he's not talking about me – because he doesn't think I'm real! So how can I engage with that? *Who* can engage with that? I think I'm just clear with these people. I say that if they want to do that – and say that this kind of stuff is irrelevant – then they are actually already asking students to make a choice, its just that they don't think they are. Asking students to put these things aside is a choice: that's an academic choice that you're making! So if I choose to write about Hume as though he was talking about me, I've chosen to ignore something very fundamental to the whole way that Hume thought. Something that is not accurate. If you don't teach it, you're asking people to rewrite history in this cycle of immortalising these people, as they were *not*. You're asking us to ignore stuff. You are denying us the fullness and richness of an actual academic education.

I think this is one of the central problems with regard to decolonisation: people's imaginations are simply not radical enough. I just think, look, if you simply cannot imagine teaching anything different, then you have no business teaching! You can't look at these mistakes and think "oh, maybe we should do this differently for the next generation?". Then what's the point? What are you doing in academia? F**k off, go do something else. This is it: go! You have to think about undergraduates as the next scholars and you're teaching them things that they then have to unlearn in order to do good work. They're going to have to go through this whole process of unlearning all the nonsense so why not just do it correctly from the get-go? If you think that talking about Hume's politics is too time-consuming and you won't have enough time to get through his philosophy, then maybe you need to narrow your focus a bit, maybe you need to just cover less people. Maybe you need to spend a whole semester on why Hume was such a prick. Let's think options here! I think people are too tied up in traditional course structures, thinking that we need to have three lectures a week and we need to go through three philosophers in a month and … But I mean, if you don't have time, then well …

This is the thing as well, I've noticed that there are certain figures that you do over and over again throughout the course of your academic education and every time you do them you learn a little bit more and then a little bit more. I remember when I did Thomas Carlyle at the start of my undergrad, and then I did him again during my masters and found out that the man was a huge racist. We did him again but in a completely different context. We studied him first as a

Scottish poet, you know, we read some nice epic poetry, and then came back to him in year five – when I was taking this black Atlantic fiction course – and learnt about him as a notorious racist. He literally has a big old paper titled Occasional Discourses on the [N-word] Question, and I'm like, so you had me writing about him all lah-di-dah Edinburgh, and then five years later I have to have this huge betrayal and if I hadn't taken this *masters* course I never would have known about this! So what does that say about the completeness of my education? What does that say about what we do and do not find important? Because to a lot of us race is a very important area of study. By saying actually this isn't relevant right now, actually they're saying, they don't give a f**k about race.

4. I think this brings us on really nicely to one of the central questions I wanted to ask you about: what do you think the difference is between decolonisation and diversity?

At this point they're both meaningless buzzwords. But I want to talk about them as *I* think they are. I mentioned earlier that before I started thinking about these kinds of theoretical questions, I just wanted to make academia a bit better for people like me, and also for me. I wanted to see people who looked like me, I wanted to hear from people who were like me, and I wanted to get a stable and secure job. So that's it: that's all I wanted, initially. Now whether or not that's about diversity or decolonisation, those are always my core wants and needs – without dressing it up any further. But when we talk about diversity, I think the reason why it sounds and feels a little hollow – and I think the reason why people are now incorrectly leaping on to the term 'decolonisation' – is that it's all about simply having more options but that doesn't actually mean that there's been any fundamental change to the structures made at all. So, for instance, there might be more black undergrads, but the attainment gap will still be strong. So even if you came in with the same A levels as a fellow white person, they're still more likely to get a first than you are, as a black person. Simply having more black people doesn't change that fact; what does change that is actually changing the environment of the university. So diversity is: more of us. Decolonisation is actually unravelling some of the harmful colonial practices that underpin the Eurocentric western education system in the first place. So, another way of putting it is, when they were tearing down statues of David Hume in Edinburgh, diversity would have just been putting up more statues of black people around them. Decolonisation is tearing it down, right? Not just putting up more ones.

5. How do you think they would play out as separate concepts with respect to the curriculum?

Yeah, I'm often quite hesitant about describing what we do at Project Myopia because of this tension. Sometimes I do think that we are verging more towards 'diversifying' the curriculum because we're simply offering more things rather

than asking for… but that's not *just* what we're doing. So, with respect to both I would say that we diversify our curriculums by offering more opportunity to study marginalised scholars, and we speak about decolonising our curriculums by asking people about what is *already* there. Asking people to read things in new lights, to challenge what they are being taught, to challenge the structures of the ways they are being taught. It's not about offering more options so that you can have more options of things that fit within the status quo; it's about changing that status quo.

6. How do the modes of praxis differ between the two, for someone advocating diversity versus someone advocating decolonisation?

I would honestly say that most people don't know about the difference or don't care about the difference. I mean, I feel like black people in the diversity and decolonisation business are often grappling with this concept because it does often feel like something that is impossible. How do you decolonise the institution – the site of colonialism and imperialism? Is it even a possibility? That's why I sort of wanted to dumb it right down to making university a place I can exist in. Whether I should or shouldn't bother is a totally different question. If the answer is that I shouldn't have bothered, then … that's just too much [laughs]. It's a very complicated question. And I wonder if it's even a question that even has that much value in asking, because we ask it and: then what? Am I going to stop? It's unlikely… Melz, the founder of the Free Black University, started with 'why is my curriculum white?' in Leeds and it was very much about working inside the institution, a decolonisation movement again, but it was about revealing a lot of the wrongs that people on the curriculum had committed. You know, talking about revitalising the curriculum – and it actually led to the creation of one of the first Black British History courses. That's a decolonisation movement that works within the institution.

Since then, I know Melz has been dissatisfied with some of that so has started the Free Black Uni, an organisation that really tries to create from scratch a decolonised institution. Thinking about what it means to be a university, what it means to be a provider of knowledge: creating their own journal, their own space. I know looking at something like that the question on the tip of everyone's tongue is: how do you do that without reinventing the wheel? How do you do that in a way that really reflects a decolonised institution? Like, how do you actually do that? It's not something anyone has done yet. I do have faith that Melz's Free Black Uni will be different. But people are thinking about what makes that different to an HBCU [historically Black college/university]. Like, an HBCU is a perfect example of something that probably thought it was going to be different but then just became the same sh*t with black paint. So, when you embark on this kind of thing you do have to think very carefully about how it's going to be done.

7. Do you think the phrase 'decolonising the university' is simply a paradox?

Yes, I do think it's a paradox. And I think we should use a different phrase. I know a lot of people get very upset about using the phrase incorrectly because we're not necessarily using the term in the way, say, Fannon was using it so I do think maybe we should use a different phrase. I think there are many useful things we can do, I don't know if that's the be-all. One of the things I've decided about my life is that I will not live it all in theory. I think it's much easier in this culture to just say "well no, you can't do it". For me, I'd much rather do *something* or feel like I was doing something than just say "well it can't be done" and then do nothing. So, it's about what you derive joy from and for me this is it. I also think that we can talk all we want about … we can dream and imagine this better institution but by chipping away at it we aren't saying that we can't also burn it down? So, for me, you know saying that I'm anti-capitalist doesn't stop me from paying my rent every month. I still have to exist under this system, right? I feel the same way about decolonisation initiatives, so I understand that the kind of work that we do is probably not what was intended when we started theorising about decoloniality. But what am I going to do? Should I just keep studying *The Great Gatsby* four times and calling that a degree? What should I do? Especially if we've been so embarrassing for the institutions that they're willing to throw money and attention our way. We'd be foolish not to capitalise on that.

8. Can you tell us a bit more about the student activism that has gone on surrounding decolonising the university? What have students actually been asking for?

Well I can only really speak for my experience and the other activists I've known. I think this is really condensing it down – but I guess I would still like to condense it down – to what we're learning, who is learning it, and who is teaching it. That to me seems to be three very important strands of what students are asking for. I guess though, everything is on the table, if you're thinking about activism – students were also campaigning for fair pay, pensions, lowered accommodation fees. You know, everything is up for grabs. I guess one thing that is really important for me is looking to change the culture in academia surrounding mental health. The university shouldn't be something that you go through and come out the other side with your mental health in shreds. There are some very deep changes that the university needs to go through to be less of a source of trauma … and you'll always find students heading these things; by the time you're an academic you sort of get sucked into the machine of doing way too much work and way more work than you're actually paid for. And anything you *can* do is only being done in your free time. Lord knows those things are only being undertaken by the already overwhelmed and underpaid BME academics. So, I would say most of the organising that goes on is student-organised.

I think the demands are pretty clear. We just want things to be better [laughs]. Stop doing so much bad sh*t! And I think there's a similar question that people raise when they hear about the curriculum stuff, like, "what do we do instead of all this bad sh*t?" And that's actually why we created Project Myopia because we wanted to come away from that question. We were really fed up of asking for change and getting nothing. I think that's something a lot of movements do lack: tangible outcomes. It can be less fulfilling than reimaging a whole university and being really idealistic about stuff. Sometimes, though, there's just something very satisfying about someone asking you "oh well what *will* I replace T.S. Elliot with?" and then just being able to go "well have you looked here? Because this person would fit on your course". That was the real starting point of Project Myopia, we just wanted to stop all the talking and start something, so that there was no longer any excuse. Now it's like: well now why can't you do it? We've just crowd-sourced all this stuff from students – now what?

9. You mentioned something very interesting earlier about the watering down of 'decolonisation' to mean something akin to a form of Liberal tokenism, and I was wondering, do you think there's a place for reclaiming the term or do you think we would be better just to scrap it completely?

Well, I think the tension of using decoloniality in the way that it is being used, where it becomes so insulting, is when universities say they're doing it, because it comes from a Black radical tradition. It's sort of like calling yourself an 'ally'. You know, whether or not you *are* one is irrelevant: I hate you [laughs]. It's just not something you get to call *yourself.* I think for me, the absolute anathema for me, is when an institution says they're decolonising – that disgusts me. An institution can't decolonise itself! It's supposed to be dragged kicking and screaming. For an institution to truly decolonise itself they would have to hit the self-destruct button and they're not doing that, they're offering us pennies. And that's when it becomes offensive – embarrassing, even. It becomes embarrassing to be allied with that. I guess for the sake of my own sense of shame I would prefer if people were to use a different word. If people are doing just diversity measures, just use 'diversity' and then we can critique it if we want. You only get to call it decolonisation if there's a real culture change, a real huge change to what you're doing. Unless you're an elite university that's giving out free education or making your sh*t truly accessible to the masses. Unless you can honestly say that you're no longer reinscribing class systems, racialised inequalities, gender inequalities – which no one can honestly say they're not doing. So don't use it.

10. Do you think philosophy has a particular role to play in terms of 'decolonising' the academy?

Well… I'm not a philosopher [laughs] so I'll be careful about what I say here. One of the things I would like to say is that with philosophy being one of those very 'pure' degrees, people still have respect for the – very serious – philosophy degrees. I think it's an area that is very accessible to a particular brand of white man, I think the tendency to reinscribe colonial tendencies is much easier to do in philosophy than it is in other fields. I think of the disciplines that really need to change and the real big players are philosophy, psychology, and English. Those are the real 'bad boys' that *a lot* that needs to be changed in. That is the trend with 'pure' disciplines. I guess because you're looking so much at epistemologies and schools of thought, philosophers just retain this God-like status where more than anyone else you can't challenge them. It's the same when people talk about Shakespeare: there's this reaction of "how *dare* you suggest we take Shakespeare off the syllabus?". Which I have never said but people keep accusing me of [laughs]. It is not something you can suggest: you ruin your whole cause [laughs]. Look you're better off just not talking about Shakespeare. I feel like people feel very similarly about certain philosophers, you know, to even *imagine* having a philosophy course that doesn't include Kant is just so far out of the realm of possibility. Philosophy's one of those fields where the imagination is a lot more necessary than in other fields.

So my field, for instance, digital humanities, it's still relatively young – this is by no means to say that there aren't any problems because there are a lot of problems – but everyone writing in the field now has only been writing in it since the 80's. So all the big names are still alive and therefore challengeable. It's not the same as talking about old-beardy-what's-his-face because those guys are untouchable. They're saints. And that's something that I think is prevalent in philosophy and I just want to say, well, you lot need to get over that [laughs] and start actually looking at some other people, from other parts of the world. I think the narrowness of what we care about and Eurocentricity and our cultural thought systems are so glaring in areas in philosophy, and if you're not able to be reflexive about that then you're just never going to get anywhere. So, I suppose that's what I'd have to say about philosophy in *particular*. Self-reflexivity is so important. Anthropology is a good example of a discipline that has managed this well because it started out being the *most* colonial thing you could possibly do [laughs]. Literally going to other parts of the world, observing them, and commentating on how "it's not like the way we do it". Philosophy really needs to do stuff like that. Really take a look at its origins and where it's ended up, and just say: it's time to imagine more.

11. Any final words or things you would like us to alert people to?

Well, *Project Myopia* will be hiring people again at the end of the summer and we're looking to expand. We're also looking for people to write articles on issues related to this discussion. Also, keep an eye out for updates. There will also be a symposium held during Semester 2 which brings together activists from all the different strands of the decolonising movements. I hope this will also function as a networking event which brings together people from a breadth of different universities and institutions.

In Defence of Different Voices

Helen Beebee, Anne-Marie McCallion

Abstract: Louise Antony draws a now well-known distinction between two explanatory models for researching and addressing the issue of women's underrepresentation in philosophy – the 'Different Voices' (DV) and 'Perfect Storm' (PS) models – and argues that, in view of PS's considerably higher social value, DV should be abandoned. We argue that Antony misunderstands the feminist framework that she takes to underpin DV, and we reconceptualise DV in a way that aligns with a proper understanding of the metaphilosophical framework that underpins it. On the basis of that reconceptualisation – together with the rejection of her claim that DV posits 'cognitive' differences between women and men – we argue that Antony's negative assessment of DV's social value is mistaken. And, we argue, this conclusion does not depend on *endorsing* the relevant feminist metaphilosophical framework. Whatever our metaphilosophical commitments, then, we should all agree that DV research should be actively pursued rather than abandoned.

Keywords: feminism, metaphilosophy, women, diversity.

1. Introduction

Louise Antony's paper "Different Voices or Perfect Storm: Why Are There So Few Women in Philosophy?" (2012) distinguishes between two distinct broad explanatory models for researching and addressing the issue of women's underrepresentation in philosophy, which she terms the 'Different Voices' model (henceforth DV) and the 'Perfect Storm' model (PS). She argues that "we ought to commit ourselves to the Perfect Storm model and that we ought to abandon the Different Voices model" (2012, 232) on the grounds that "the social value of research guided by the Perfect Storm will be considerably higher than that entailed by the Different Voices model" (2012, 232).

Our aim in this paper is partly critical and partly constructive. The critical aim is to show that Antony's claim that PS research has a "considerably higher" social value than does DV research is mistaken. A major source of the mistake, we shall argue, is her misconception of the nature and aims of DV. The constructive aim is to show that a new conception of DV – one that is firmly rooted in the actual position of (as Antony puts it) "feminist philosophers who have argued, over the past three decades or so, that philosophy as it is practiced is 'gendered'" (2012, 228) – has the potential to deliver a research programme aimed at explaining and ameliorating the underrepresentation of women that easily musters sufficient social value to merit further investigation.

Our main disagreement with Antony, then, concerns the theoretical underpinnings of DV. While Antony takes DV to be rooted in a particular strand

© Symposion, 7, 2 (2020): 149-177

of feminist philosophy, her argument for DV's lack of social value reveals a conception of DV that departs significantly from the agenda that those feminist philosophers were (and are) pursuing. In particular she takes DV to be underpinned by empirical claims about 'cognitive' differences between women and men, and she takes those claims to be both lacking in confirmation and politically risky ones to make – risky because they are apt to be misread as claims about differences in 'natural', 'immutable' or 'essential' properties and for this and other reasons misused to serve conservative or reactionary agendas. Our alternative conception is, we think, truer to the feminist roots to which Antony refers. Thus conceived, DV's theoretical underpinnings are provided by a broadly feminist metaphilosophical view: a view about what philosophy *should* be – and, in particular, a view about which 'voices' should be counted as legitimate and properly philosophical rather than at best peripheral or, at worst, not philosophy at all. This conception of DV's theoretical framework delivers an explanatory model for women's underrepresentation that is not rooted in dubious or politically risky empirical claims about 'cognitive' differences between women and men, and hence is a model to which Antony's negative assessment of DV's social value does not apply.

Lest any readers who are disinclined to accept the theoretical framework just described are tempted to stop reading at this point, we stress that our argument for our positive assessment of DV's social value does not presuppose *endorsement* of that theoretical framework. It merely requires the kind of broad-minded tolerance that philosophers are generally good at extending to philosophical positions or perspectives that they do not share, or even take themselves to have good reasons to reject. One might – and philosophers typically do – take, say, modal realism or pragmatism or consequentialism to be wholly misconceived, and yet happily respect, regard as entirely legitimate, and even encourage work in that area. Assuming our arguments hold up, agreement with our positive assessment of DV's social value merely requires the same kind of tolerant attitude towards the theoretical framework that underpins it.

The paper proceeds as follows. In §2 we sketch the way in which Antony conceives the PS and DV models. We also introduce four dimensions along which one might measure the social value of a research programme – *likelihood, R&D costs, practical applications,* and *political risk* – and explain why Antony takes PS to outperform DV on all four measures. In §3 we explain why Antony's own conception of DV is incoherent. We articulate what we take to be the proper theoretical foundations of DV – which we'll call 'DV-Meta' – and explain how those foundations differ from the basis in empirical claims about 'cognitive' differences between men and women that Antony takes to be distinctive of DV. In §4, we turn from metaphilosophy to explanatory models, that is, from DV-Meta to DV (thus reconceived) itself, and give a flavour of the kinds of specific explanations for the underrepresentation of women in philosophy that DV-Meta suggests. In §§5-7, we reconsider how DV fares in comparison to PS when it

comes to *likelihood* (§5), *R&D costs* and *practical applications* (§6) and *political risk* (§7). In §8, we sum up and return briefly to the issue of tolerance mentioned above.

Our conclusion when it comes to social value is pretty modest; we do not claim to show that the social value of DV is higher than – or even, as things currently stand, as high as – that of PS. We merely claim that it is sufficiently high that, *pace* Antony, it should be actively pursued rather than abandoned. In fact – though we lack the space to cash this out – someone who actively *endorses* DV-Meta will take herself to have good reason to think that the social value of DV is considerably higher than that of PS. But, since our main aim is to persuade those who *don't* endorse DV-Meta, we shall maintain neutral on that front throughout.

2. Perfect storms, different voices, and the social value of research programmes

We begin by seeing how Antony defines the two rival explanatory models, starting with DV. In the context of discussing Wesley Buckwalter and Stephen Stich's claim that there are differences in intuitions between female and male students when it comes to some standard thought experiments (2014), Antony says:

> ... let me call the kind of model that Buckwalter and Stich are proposing the 'Different Voices' model. Buckwalter and Stich are not the first theorists to offer a Different Voices explanation for the skewed gender balance in philosophy. They join company with quite a few feminist philosophers who have argued, over the past three decades or so, that philosophy as it is practiced is 'gendered,' embodying or reflecting a distinctively male perspective. This male perspective has been held to manifest itself in a number of ways—in distinctively philosophical rhetoric or methodology, in philosophers' choice of problems to study, or in the range of thought and experience on which philosophers rely. These feminist philosophers, like B&S, presume that the features of philosophy that (on their view) make it alien to women are features that were detrimental to the practice of philosophy itself, so that it is the discipline that needs changing, not the women. (2012, 228)

According to Antony, DV posits "substantive intrinsic differences" between men and women (2012, 231). By contrast:

> The Perfect Storm model ... seeks to explain women's low representation within philosophy as a kind of interaction effect among familiar kinds of sex discrimination that are operative throughout society, but that take on particular forms and force as they converge within the academic institution of philosophy. (212, 231)

The root of PS lies in Virginia Valian's (1999) claim that there is a conflict "between gender schematic norms of femininity, on the one hand, and characteristics held to be necessary for success in academia, on the other, [which] can result in women's work being neglected or undervalued, with predictable

consequences for women's careers" (Antony 2012, 231-2). The basic cognitive mechanism at work here is implicit bias. As Valian puts it, "the gender schemas that we all share result in our overrating men and underrating women in professional settings, only in small, barely visible ways: those small disparities accumulate over time to provide men with more advantages than women" (2005, 198). Antony adds to this account the idea that philosophy constitutes a 'perfect storm', in that there are many and various ways in which gender schemas can converge and interact with, and be intensified by, other factors that are peculiar to philosophy – or at least more prevalent in philosophy than in other disciplines.

Antony's overall claim is that "we ought to commit ourselves to the Perfect Storm model and that we ought to abandon the Different Voices model" (2012, 232). But her claim about what we "ought to commit ourselves to" is – she is careful to explain – not merely a matter of which of the explanatory models is more likely to be true; she has in mind something more like a commitment to a research programme, where whether or not a programme merits being pursued is to be determined on the basis of its relative "social value" (2012, 240). We think it is helpful to think of Antony's reasons for thinking that the social value of PS is significantly higher than that of DV as falling into four categories: *likelihood*, *research and development (R&D) costs, practical applications,* and *political risk.*

Imagine, by way of an analogy, two rival potential research programmes, R1 and R2, aimed at finding a cure for some contagious disease D. The government has a fixed amount of money to invest in one or other of the programmes. The most obvious first question to ask – the *likelihood* question – is: given the current evidential situation, which programme is more likely to succeed in discovering the true cause of the disease and hence – in principle – a possible cure for it? Obviously if the assumption about the cause of D that R1 is presupposing is more likely to be true than R2's rival assumption then, other things being equal, investing in R1 would have much greater social value.

Other things are rarely equal, however. Another question concerns *R&D costs*. Suppose that the R&D phase of R1 would be much cheaper than R2, saving the government money that they could spend on other socially valuable initiatives. On the other hand, suppose also that according to R1's assumption about the cause of D, the only possible cure would be hugely expensive to mass-produce and therefore very likely to benefit a tiny minority of the people who have or are likely to get D – so R1 fares badly when it comes to *practical applications* – whereas, according to R2's assumption, the cure would be much cheaper and therefore benefit vastly more people. Clearly *R&D costs* and *practical applications* are both relevant considerations in assessing the respective overall predicted social values of R1 and R2.

Finally, we have *political risk*. Suppose that D afflicts only women, and that preliminary research by R1 indicates that the only way to cure it would be via posthumous organ donation by men. Suppose further that the political climate is one in which misogyny is on the rise, and developing and producing such a cure

would be likely to provoke a huge backlash – for example, it would be likely to lead to large numbers of men ripping up their donor cards – which would have knock-on effects for other illnesses whose cures rely on organ donation. Some of them would inevitably video themselves doing so while having a misogynist rant ("now the evil feminists want to harvest our organs!") and uploading them to YouTube, where they would, equally inevitably, be very widely watched and shared by incels, MGTOWs, and other misogynist online 'communities'. That would further stoke the fires of misogyny and would therefore be bad for women in general – and especially bad for women with D, who would, with sad inevitability, become targets for misogynist abuse and death threats on social media, have to run the gamut of protestors on their way to treatment centres, and so on. Again, that – alongside the opposite consideration of the injustice done to women with being D being denied a potential cure because of high societal levels of misogyny – would be highly relevant to an all-things-considered judgement about the respective overall predicted social values of R1 and R2.

So much for the analogy; let's get back to Antony's claim that the social value of PS is higher than that of DV, and hence that "we ought to commit ourselves to the Perfect Storm model and... we ought to abandon the Different Voices model". Antony's claim is that PS beats DV on all four of the dimensions just described. PS wins when it comes to *likelihood* ("[t]he preliminary data are equivocal; there is no strong reason to believe that the [DV] research will bear fruit" (250)), *R&D costs* (DV research would be "difficult to design and implement" (250)), and *practical applications* (it is "not at all clear what interventions would make any difference if the Different Voices model turned out to be correct" (251)). Finally, there is *political risk*: claims of gender differences are "apt to be misinterpreted in ways that prove detrimental to women – ways that encourage essentialist and biological determinist thinking" (251). If Antony is right, it follows that PS has greater social value overall than DV. We'll argue that this view is mistaken – or at any rate she significantly overstates the relative social value of PS compared to DV.

Of course, even if Antony *is* right about relative social values, her claim that we "ought to abandon" DV does not follow. It only follows if either (a) we are forced to put all our eggs in one basket – which we are not – or (b) DV doesn't merely fare worse than PS but is, all things considered, socially *dis*valuable. (b) may indeed by Antony's view; in particular, she may think that the political risk associated with DV is sufficiently serious that pursuing it as a research programme would be actively harmful rather than merely a suboptimal use of limited resources. (We'll argue in §7 that she is wrong about that.) In fact, however, it is unclear that this *is* her view. After all, she herself says that her "hope, really, is to raise the salience of the Perfect Storm alternative in hopes of generating some tangible support for the research program it suggests" (232) – which suggests that her real aim is merely to encourage PS research rather than

to establish that DV research is actively harmful and hence should immediately cease.

Nonetheless, even if Antony's call to abandon DV research was intended to be read merely as a hyperbolic way of encouraging PS research, we are concerned that it is, in fact, being taken at face value by those engaged in researching the underrepresentation of women in philosophy and hence may in fact have had the effect of stifling DV research before it has even seriously begun. (We return to this issue briefly in §8.) We find the possibility that Antony's paper has, perhaps unwittingly, led to the marginalisation of DV research into women's underrepresentation not only ironic – given DV's roots in the concern that 'different voices' have been excluded from *philosophical* discourse – but also alarming. Antony's hope was to generate support for PS; ours is to generate support for DV. We do not, however, recommend that PS research be abandoned. We are merely deeply sceptical that PS-based interventions on their own will come even close to solving the underrepresentation problem.

3. Different Voices and feminist metaphilosophy

In this section we take the first step in our argument that Antony is mistaken about the relative social value of PS and DV. We argue that she mischaracterises both the nature of the claims and the aims of the work of "feminist philosophers who have argued, over the past three decades or so, that philosophy as it is practiced is 'gendered,' embodying or reflecting a distinctively male perspective".

As we saw in §2, Antony's conception of DV aligns this feminist literature with Buckwalter and Stich's 2014 paper, which claims empirical support for the idea that there are differences between male and female students when it comes to intuitions concerning a range of thought experiments. This alignment, we shall argue, is misguided. While it is true that both Buckwalter & Stich's paper and the feminist tradition that Antony mentions take philosophy to embody or reflect "a distinctively male perspective" in some way, the theoretical underpinnings of explanations for women's underrepresentation that stem from that feminist tradition are radically at odds with those presupposed by Buckwalter and Stich. Our aim in this section is to articulate that difference in theoretical underpinnings.

The upshot of the alignment just mentioned is that the 'DV model', as Antony understands it, lacks the kind of unified theoretical outlook that *any* coherent research programme – the kind of entity whose social value it makes sense to try to assess – must have. This being so, the *coherent* research programme whose social value we *should* be trying to assess in comparison with PS is the one that arises from the feminist tradition that Antony – mistakenly, we shall argue – aligns with Buckwalter and Stich's paper. We'll call *that* research programme 'DV'. (Our choice of terminology may seem unnecessarily confusing since we mean something different to what Antony means; however, we think of it as the best satisfier of Antony's term, given that her own use of the term 'DV'

fails to pick out a coherent research programme at all.) We'll proceed in reverse order, first explaining roughly what the relevant feminist tradition looks like and how Antony mischaracterises it, and then explaining on that basis why a research programme that attempts to incorporate both that tradition and Buckwalter and Stich's work would be internally incoherent.

Our starting point is the thought that, in conceiving DV as an explanatory model from the get-go – where the phenomenon to be explained is the underrepresentation of women in philosophy and the explanation is to be found in 'intrinsic' differences between women and men – Antony glosses over the deep theoretical differences between the perspectives of Buckwalter and Stich on the one hand and the strand of feminist philosophy she cites on the other. As we shall explain, that strand of feminist philosophy is not, and never was, intended as an explanatory model for women's underrepresentation in philosophy. Instead, it enshrines a *metaphilosophical* assessment of the norms, practices and assumptions that guide philosophical research and scaffold the tradition. In some cases, feminist philosophers have opposed certain practices and assumptions on the grounds that they marginalise women's voices, and in other cases they have simply questioned the impact of stereotypically masculine traits on the formation of these norms and practices. Many feminist philosophers have also made normative claims about the proper content of philosophy – including its methods of enquiry, given that questions about what philosophy is and should be are at least in part questions about which methods it does and should accommodate. And feminist projects in philosophy have traditionally attempted to do philosophy in that way, shorn of its narrow – and, according to feminist philosophers, masculine or patriarchal – assumptions about what philosophy should be.

That said, our overall concern in this paper *is* with explanatory models: we share Antony's aim of articulating and assessing the prospects for rival views concerning the reasons for the underrepresentation of women in philosophy. This being so – one might object – in claiming that the work of the feminist philosophers Antony cites should not be conceived as offering an explanatory model in the first place, surely we are in effect taking that work off the table all together when it comes to articulating and assessing explanatory models, rather than (as we claim we will be doing) offering a reconceptualisation of DV. Our response at this stage is: bear with us. In order to get our reconceptualised version of DV – *qua* explanatory model – up and running, and therefore to assess its social value, we have to get straight on the theoretical framework that underpins it. That is our project in this section. Only then can we see what the relevant explanatory model might look like – a task we'll come back to in the next section. In an attempt to make this clearer, we'll distinguish between 'DV-Meta' – the metaphilosophical view just mentioned – and DV itself, the explanatory model to which DV-Meta lends itself.

Our present aim, then, is to spell out – in broad terms – what we just called 'DV-Meta'. We'll proceed by example, starting with Janice Moulton's piece (1983) on what she calls the "adversary method" and Antony's appraisal of it. According to Antony, "Janice Moulton argued … that philosophy's 'adversarial method' was off-putting to women" (2012, 229); "Her view presumed that women, as a group, were uncomfortable with a contentious style of interaction" (2012, 238). In fact, nowhere in her paper does Moulton suggest that the adversarial method – or the kind of aggressive behaviour she suggests that it encourages – is "off-putting to women" or something that they are not "comfortable with". Indeed, the only claim she makes in this general ballpark is precisely the one that Antony makes in connection with PS – that, thanks to gender stereotypes, women are disadvantaged merely by virtue of their gender: when a woman displays aggressive behaviour "it may be considered all the more unpleasant because it seems unnatural" (Moulton 1983, 150; cf. Antony 2012, 239).

The point of Moulton's paper is instead to challenge what we may think of as a liberal feminist position, according to which women can and should be as adversarial as we stereotypically think men are if they want to be successful in an arena where adversarial behaviour is the norm. As she says in her introduction: "Some feminists dismiss the sex distinction that views aggression in a female as a negative quality and then encourage females to behave aggressively in order to further their careers. I am going to, instead, question the assumption that aggression deserves association with more positive qualities" (1983, 150).

She does not do so on the basis of the claim that women are, in fact, typically less disposed towards adversarial or aggressive behaviour than men, or indeed on the basis of any claims about women's intrinsic features. Instead, her main focus is on what she calls the "Adversary Paradigm", according to which "the philosophic enterprise is seen as an unimpassioned debate between *adversaries* who try to defend their own views against counterexamples and produce counterexamples to opposing views", and "it is assumed that the best way of presenting work in philosophy is to address it to an imagined opponent and muster all the evidence one can to support it" (153). And – connecting the Adversary Paradigm to aggression – she says that the paradigm, "perhaps tricked by the conflation of aggression and competence, incorporates aggression into its methodology" (151).

Moulton argues that the Adversary Paradigm has had an unhealthy effect on philosophical progress: historical figures "who cannot be recast into an adversarial mold are likely to be ignored" (155); in ethics "it has been assumed that there must be a single supreme moral principle" (157); and, more generally, philosophy "presents a distorted picture about what sorts of positions are worthy of attention, giving undue attention and publicity to positions merely because they are those of a hypothetical adversary's and possibly ignoring positions which make more valuable or interesting claims" (158). What makes

this a claim that belongs to the DV-Meta tradition, as opposed to the liberal feminist position that Moulton is criticising, is not that it appeals to any difference in intrinsic features between men and women. Rather, it is the fact that – unlike the liberal feminist position, which takes the status quo when it comes to philosophical method to enshrine gender-neutral norms, and claims that women are hindered by social forces from playing the game on a level playing field with men – Moulton takes the status quo itself to be gendered: it elevates stereotypically male traits and norms to a universalised standard rather than questioning whether those traits and norms are valuable ones to have adopted in the first place.

More generally, it is this rejection of the unquestioned universalisation of stereotypically male traits and norms within the philosophical arena that we take to be distinctive of the strand of feminist metaphilosophy that we're calling 'DV-Meta'. And it is this rejection – rather than an appeal to differences in intrinsic features between women and men – that is meant by feminist theorists when they claim that philosophy is 'gendered'.

We now turn to Carol Gilligan. Antony takes the term 'different voices' from Gilligan's seminal work *In a Different Voice* (1982), where, according to Antony, she elaborated an account of moral psychology which established a gendered division in moral reasoning, and defended women's preferred mode of moral reasoning against sexist claims of inferiority. We believe that this assumption, although by no means confined to Antony, constitutes both a simplification and a misrepresentation of Gilligan's work. Gilligan's primary aim was to criticise the dominance of a certain paradigm within moral psychology. This paradigm enshrines a "conception of morality as justice", focussing on "rights and rules" (73) and centring on abstract universalisable principles, as opposed to a conception of "the moral problem as a problem of care and responsibility in relationships" (73) that stresses the importance of social context in moral decision-making. As Gilligan states in the introduction to *In a Different Voice*:

> The different voice I describe is characterized not by gender but theme. Its association with women is an empirical observation, and it is primarily through women's voices that I trace its development. But this association is not absolute, and the contrasts between male and female voices are presented here to highlight a distinction between two modes of thought and to focus a problem of interpretation rather than to represent a generalization about either sex. (1982, 2)

We take Gilligan's point here to be a broadly metaphilosophical claim – or, perhaps better, a metapsychological claim that can be, and has been, put to the service of feminist metaphilosophy.

The metapsychological claim is, roughly, that the a "mode of thought" that takes moral problems and decisions to be resolved by considering the moral demands of "care and responsibility in relationships" is, in fact, a legitimate,

potentially sophisticated and fully mature way to think about moral problems – and not, as was assumed by the dominant paradigm, a mere phase in moral development that one passes through on the way to a fully developed, mature conception of "morality as justice". The corresponding meta*philosophical* claim is roughly that we should not assume that the aim of an ethical theory is to uncover universal principles – Kantian categorical imperatives, the greatest happiness principle, or whatever – that apply in all possible situations and abstract away from the messy, localised social relations of care and responsibility in which actual human beings stand to one another; instead we should take those relations as our starting point for ethical theorising. The view constitutes a *feminist* position – of the kind that falls within the DV-Meta tradition – because the marginalisation of the latter view is of a piece with the general tendency to regard abstract reasoning concerning universal principles – stereotypically the preserve of men – as *better.* Gilligan's aim – as with the other feminist theorists Antony cites, including Moulton – was to question this and, in doing so, to expose it as a gendered *assumption* rather than a necessary feature of 'good' moral reasoning or theory construction. In other words, it was to trouble the universalised elevation of abstract reasoning – when compared with relational or situational considerations – by revealing it as something that can and should be questioned.

In claiming that Gilligan's work should be conceived as (or as closely related to) metaphilosophy, we are not claiming that she was uninterested in empirical questions. On the contrary: she was centrally concerned to respond to empirical research conducted by Lawrence Kohlberg, who claimed that there was a slower rate of moral maturation in girls – who, he claimed, tend to overemphasise situational details in moral decision-making. And she herself conducted empirical research in the form of in-depth interviews, the content and analysis of which permeate *In a Different Voice*, where she did indeed observe gender differences (see also Gilligan and Attanucci 1988). This being so, it is easy to see how one might interpret her work – as Antony does – as being primarily concerned to argue that women's modes of thought should not (*contra* Kohlberg) be thought to be inferior or under-developed on the basis of (allegedly) empirically verified differences between men's and women's moral thinking.

Nonetheless, as we say, we think Gilligan's work is *not* best interpreted in this way. For example, her aim in conducting her own interviews with women in *A Different Voice* was clearly to use them as a means of further understanding the 'different voice' – the mode of moral reasoning that incorporates social context into moral decision-making and stands in stark contrast to the paradigm of universalist moral philosophy. And then, as we saw above, there is her insistence from the outset that "the contrasts between male and female voices are presented here to highlight a distinction between two modes of thought and to focus a problem of interpretation rather than to represent a generalization about either sex". As she later clarified in a 2012 interview:

> If I wanted to write about women specifically, I would have called it 'In a Woman's Voice'. I didn't ... (Gilligan 2012)

The other feminist theorists that Antony cites as belonging to the DV, such as Naomi Scheman, Lorraine Code and Jennifer Hornsby, have all been engaged in a very similar form of metaphilosophical criticism. That is, they have sought to critique the hierarchy of reason which places appeals to universal principles over and above situational, relational and context-dependent considerations. Indeed, this is also a part of Moulton's charge against the Adversary Paradigm: the practice of pitting two (real or imagined) 'opponents' against each other, in requiring that one party make *universal* claims whilst the other attempts to disprove these claims by finding counter-examples, "presents a distorted picture about what sorts of positions are worthy of attention" (Moulton 1983, 158).

The aforementioned feminist theorists, then, have argued in diverse ways – throughout a variety of philosophical subdisciplines – that appeals to atemporal universal patterns or principles in theory-construction do not reflect an apolitical unbiased exercise of reason, but are instead politically problematic precisely because they mask the intrinsic relevance of structural and historical injustice to many important theoretical questions. They thereby take a positive normative stance towards approaches to philosophical questions that dismiss structural and historical details as irrelevant: such approaches come to be seen as approaches that philosophy not only does but *ought* to adopt to those questions. What DV-Meta theorists are attempting to undermine are the forms of thought that presuppose abstraction from surrounding social and material context as the optimal terrain for philosophical insight – a presumption that can be identified in various incarnations throughout philosophical discourse and methodology globally, but pervasively within the analytic tradition. According to DV-Meta, it is in the interest of women – as well as every other subjugated class – to dismantle attempts to construct theories or knowledge that attempt to render invisible the relevance of social, relational and historical facts; and *this* is the basic metaphilosophical feminist point.

With this in mind, let's return to Antony's own conception of DV, and in particular to her inclusion of Buckwalter and Stich's 2014 paper within that broad research programme. The reason for that inclusion, we think, is that Antony has conflated feminist metaphilosophical enquiry – what we have been calling 'DV-Meta' – with an attempt to directly explain women's underrepresentation in philosophy by appealing to women's 'cognition', when in fact the relevant feminist philosophers are engaged in feminist critiques of, and developing alternatives to, the dominant philosophical paradigm.

Buckwalter and Stich, by contrast, *do* hypothesise that (alleged) differences between individual men's and women's cognition – specifically, judgements or 'intuitions' about a range of standard philosophical thought experiments – may contribute to explaining the high attrition rate of women undergraduates (2014, 307). This bears no connection to DV-Meta. On the

contrary: the kinds of thought experiment that Buckwalter and Stich consider mostly fall squarely within debates that are a part of the dominant philosophical paradigm that is the target of DV-Meta: Twin Earth cases, Gettier cases, and so on. The point here is not so much about the subject-matter of the thought experiments, but the role that thought experiments are overwhelmingly taken to play within those debates:

> When a philosopher invokes a philosophical intuition in a philosophical argument, the intuition (or, more accurately, the propositional content of the intuition) is typically being used as *evidence*. Philosophers rarely argue that the propositional content of an intuition they are invoking is true. Rather, they take the propositional content of the intuition to be *obvious*, and they use the proposition as a premise in the argument they are constructing. (Buckwalter and Stich 2014, 332)

(Very often – though not always – intuitions play the role of counter-examples. We all know how this goes. You come up with a definition of knowledge; I sock you with the Gettier case. You revise your definition; I sock you with a revised Gettier case. And so on.)

This is the framework within which Buckwalter and Stich develop their claim that there may be a 'selection effect' that puts female undergraduates off philosophy:

> it is plausible to suppose that some women facing this predicament will be puzzled or confused or uncomfortable or angry or just plain bored. Some women may become convinced that they aren't any good at philosophy, since they do not have the intuitions that their professors and their male classmates insist are correct. If the experience engenders one or more of these alienating effects, a female student may be less likely to take another philosophy course than a male classmate. (2014, 333)

And if this general line of thought is correct, "as students in philosophy courses are repeatedly exposed to the practice of using intuitions as evidence, we should expect to find enrolments of women dropping off" (*ibid.*).

Buckwalter and Stich do therefore claim that the "practice of using intuitions as evidence" is potentially problematic; but – at least for the purposes of their paper – it is taken to be problematic *only* because it may cause women to drop out of philosophy; they are not concerned to uncover any *metaphilosophical* concerns with that practice. It is this that sets their paper not only apart from, but in opposition to, DV-Meta. As Gaile Pohlhaus puts it:

> Here, then, is where Antony is wrong to align Buckwalter and Stich not only with Gilligan, but also with philosophers such as Lorraine Code, Linda Alcoff, Iris Young, and Alison Jaggar. These philosophers do not advocate eliminating from philosophy all claims found to be obvious to some but not others, nor do they claim that women have innate intuitions that make them different from men. On the contrary, they argue that differences in social location might make some things appear more obvious to women, but that these things can be made more obvious to men, and they ought to be made more obvious to all

> philosophers. Moreover, they engage in the difficult task of developing concepts for making what is not yet obvious to some more so, and they demonstrate how philosophical thinking that begins from a different set of concerns can bring into focus whole aspects of the world previously unnoticed or disregarded by philosophers. This kind of work can be seen as enriching our epistemic, moral, and political lives generally speaking, by expanding philosophical attention to more aspects of the world. (Pohlhaus 2015, 15)

Antony's alignment of Buckwalter and Stich's work on gender differences in philosophical intuitions is thus antithetical to the broad feminist metaphilosophical framework that the feminist authors she cites have defended and developed. This being so, DV as Antony conceives it fails to constitute a coherent research programme, since it fails to be underpinned by a coherent theoretical framework. We shall therefore, from this point on, take 'DV' to refer to a (currently largely merely hypothetical) research programme that *is* underpinned by a coherent theoretical framework, namely DV-Meta.

4. DV as an explanatory model

Though the aforementioned DV-Meta theorists do not in fact deploy that framework as an explanation for women's underrepresentation in philosophy, in this section we will sketch an outline of what it would look like if DV-Meta *were* to be deployed as the basis for an explanatory model for women's underrepresentation in philosophy. That is, we shall move from DV-Meta to a basic articulation of DV itself, where DV is conceived as a broad research programme – underpinned by DV-Meta – aimed at both explaining and practically addressing the underrepresentation problem. This will provide a new basis for assessment of the social value of DV, to which we'll turn to in subsequent sections.

The basic claim of DV-Meta is that, in very many respects, philosophy as it is actually practised rules out the possibility of examining the broader epistemic impact of structural injustices by obscuring them from the domain of relevance to central philosophical questions. It is this practice that is by and large responsible for the distinction, which several feminist philosophers have pointed out and criticised, between that which *is* and that which is *not* philosophy (Jenkins 2014) – a distinction which holds that 'real' philosophy transcends social arrangements, injustices, and historical contingencies. In light of such a distinction, then, feminist philosophy, queer theory, critical race theory (to name a few) are domains of enquiry which do not constitute 'real' philosophy precisely because their supposed foundational assumption – that history and structural injustices have a direct bearing on philosophical questions – is at odds with the practice of philosophy and with central disciplinary assumptions. 'Different voices' are not heard – or at any rate, are not heard as 'proper' philosophy, or indeed as philosophy at all.

In line with the spirit of Antony's approach, we conceive both DV and PS as broad research programmes (though, as will become clear, DV is currently more of a potential research programme than an actual one). The socio-cognitive theoretical framework that underpins PS (see §2 above) is, roughly, Valian's work on gender schemas, which lead to implicit biases against women in professions where traits that are generally deemed valuable or important are more closely associated with men than with women. PS supplements this model with the idea that "either a unique set of biasing factors converge [in philosophy], or else philosophy intensifies the impact particular factors have on women's academic lives" (Antony 2012, 232). Thus conceived, PS constitutes a broad research programme, with many potential avenues of empirical investigation opened up by different hypotheses concerning what the various biasing factors are, how and in what settings they are manifested (class discussion, the wording and length of letters of reference, judgements about teaching competence or research quality, and so on), and how they interact with each other; and, correspondingly, many potential interventions that might serve to improve the situation. DV should be conceived as following the same basic recipe:

> (1) Start with a broad theoretical framework (namely DV-Meta)
>
> (2) Formulate empirically testable hypotheses concerning why the relevant features of academic philosophy might contribute to the underrepresentation of women
>
> (3) Test the hypotheses
>
> (4) Formulate, test and implement potential interventions.

There are very many ways in which one might deploy the resources of DV-Meta in pursuit of (2) – that is, the formulation of specific, testable hypotheses that would, if true, (partially) explain the underrepresentation of women in philosophy. We shall propose a couple of sample hypotheses shortly, but first we want to give two anecdotal examples that give a flavour for the kinds of ways in which dominant conceptions of how philosophy ought to be done – or what the remit of 'proper' philosophy is – might in principle affect the representation of women within the profession.

First, here is Kristie Dotson, in the course of criticising Graham Priest's conception of "philosophy as critique" (Priest 2006, 200):

> What if the positions arising out of criticism of current theories lie so far afield from or are so alien to my own inquiries, as a black feminist, that to engage them would be a complete waste of time? I cannot tell you how many times I asked myself that question in graduate school. (Dotson. 2011, 406)

We can extrapolate from Dotson's quote the working hypothesis that at least *some* women leave the profession because they do not identify with the predominant concerns, interests, and pursuits in mainstream philosophy – that is, for reasons that align with DV. To illuminate this further, here is one of us

(McCallion) explaining the disenchantment she felt as an undergraduate when expected, as undergraduates typically are, to find her way into the philosophy of mind through exposure, in the very first lecture, to the *cogito*:

> The notion that the 'body' was separate from the 'mind' and that this was by and large supposed to be self-evident just did not sit well with me. I simply never felt that I understood this idea. I always, somehow, felt that there must have been something I was missing, something I was failing to grasp that rendered this idea so intuitive to seemingly everyone else. As a woman, as a mixed-race woman, so much of what I experienced in the world arose as a result of the labels others imposed on my body: their judgements about my appearance, their uninvited unprovoked guesses about where I was 'actually' from. I never viewed the things I thought or did as entirely separate from these experiences. My subjective experiences were not safe 'inside' from all the 'outside' hostility, violence, sexualisation or racist sexist pseudo-flattery. My thoughts and inner world were not independently blossoming as my body was compressed and repressed.
>
> I was convinced this must have been just me though. I had been repeatedly implicitly and explicitly told that my experiences of these things and the questions I had which resulted from these experiences were irrelevant. A central part of my philosophical education was to learn that it did not matter how I lived or actually how anyone lived – no matter how exploited or marginalised – the concerns I had about central philosophical questions were not seen as philosophical concerns. I had to learn that my philosophy tutorials were not the place to voice these concerns because they were simply not relevant to the discussion at hand. The reason they seemed to be relevant to me, as I thought at the time, was simply because I was not a very good philosopher. Good philosophers did not object to self-evident ideas like the mind-body dichotomy – especially not on the grounds of something as trivial as lived experience. Good philosophers questioned the right stuff and I was clearly questioning all the wrong stuff.

On the assumption that the experience just described is not wildly idiosyncratic, we hypothesise that the lesson that many students are taking away is that such considerations are not 'philosophical' or academically rigorous. We believe this message, and the impact it has on students, should play a central role in DV as an explanatory model for women's underrepresentation: women's social location may create a tension between some central philosophical ideas and practices and their lived experiences and inclinations.

This is not, of course, the same thing as saying that all women feel this way about all philosophical ideas they encounter as undergraduates – indeed, one of us (Beebee) didn't – nor is it to say that *only* women feel this way. It is merely to suggest that an individual's social location will have some bearing on what they are inclined to pursue or not pursue, and more broadly the way they see and navigate the world. For all our disagreements, every feminist would agree that women are united by their marginalised status, and this status brings with it a set of lived experiences which in turn impact upon the way women view and

navigate within the world. Though feminists radically diverge on what they think these lived experiences are and the impact of these experiences on women's worldview, this is the very minimal feminist commitment. Similarly, we do not think it controversial to claim that someone's lived experience – the ideas they are exposed to and the problems they encounter – will influence the kind of philosophy they are inclined to pursue and the kinds of ideas they are likely to gravitate toward. These two claims – that women are united by their social location, and that our social location has an impact on the kinds of ideas we are likely to endorse or find interesting or worthwhile – are all that is required to entertain DV as a promising explanatory model for women's underrepresentation in philosophy.

To give a more concrete flavour for the kinds of – we think promising – explanatory hypotheses that might fall within DV, here are two: (i) women leave philosophy because the types of questions they want to ask and the kinds of ideas they want to pursue are dismissed, and (ii) women leave philosophy because they consciously object to the privileging of supposedly 'real' philosophy over subjects like feminist theory. (Again, the obvious caveat: not *all* women, and not *exclusively* women. The claim is merely that, as a matter of statistical fact, (i) and (ii) apply *more* to women than to men. Also, the claim is not that (i) and/or (ii) constitute the *only* reasons why women leave philosophy; nor, more generally, that *all* such reasons fall within the DV model rather than the PS model.)

In view of DV-Meta, the question of the overall shape that potential interventions ((4) above) might take is straightforward: DV-Meta enshrines a pretty developed view about what philosophy *ought* to be; so, pending some evidence in favour of explanatory hypotheses such as those just mentioned – an issue to which we turn in §5 – potential interventions would, broadly speaking, aim at making philosophy more like *that*. We'll have more to say about this in §6 below.

With the basic shape of DV – conceived as we think it ought to be conceived – in place, in the next three sections we'll return to the dimensions of social value with which we began, in order to reassess DV's prospects. Before doing so, however, we want to make an important point about what is required, in terms of metaphilosophical commitments, in order to conceive DV as a viable explanatory model for women's underrepresentation in philosophy. One might be tempted to think that, since DV is underpinned by a distinctive metaphilosophical claim about what philosophy ought to be, one needs to endorse that metaphilosophical claim in order for DV to constitute a legitimate research programme by one's own lights. We think this would be a mistake. One does, of course, need to consider DV-Meta to be a *legitimate* metaphilosophical perspective; but that's a different matter to *endorsing* it. Philosophers are generally pretty good at maintaining this distinction when it comes to philosophical disagreements. Generally, we're entirely capable of regarding, say,

utilitarianism or modal realism or dualism as wholly mistaken – and indeed regarding whole approaches to philosophical issues (virtue ethics, say, or pragmatism, or revisionary metaphysics) as misconceived – yet nonetheless *also* regarding them as entirely legitimate and worthwhile positions or broad philosophical approaches to defend and develop.

We see no reason why someone who is sceptical about, or even flat-out disagrees with, DV-Meta should not adopt that same conciliatory attitude towards it. There is, after all, a great deal of relevant feminist literature that attempts to justify DV-Meta. Moreover, the conception of what philosophy should be which DV-Meta is opposed is a conception of philosophy that has historically been, and continues to be, mostly merely tacitly *assumed* to be correct. Indeed, part of the point of DV-Meta is to challenge the idea that the historical dominance of the latter conception of philosophy is grounds for thinking that it's the *right* conception. We therefore take it that DV-Meta merits – at the very least – the status of *legitimacy* in the sense just described.

5. Likelihood

As we explained in §3, the theoretical underpinnings of DV – as enshrined in the broad feminist approach we've been calling DV-Meta – are not rooted in empirical claims about differences between men and women. Instead, DV-Meta is a broadly normative view about how philosophy *ought* to be done in the light of the kinds of feminist metaphilosophical critiques we discussed in §3; as such, empirical confirmation or disconfirmation is not on the cards. Nonetheless, *qua* explanatory model DV itself *does* enshrine claims that are susceptible to empirical confirmation or disconfirmation, since the relevant explanatory hypotheses are empirical claims about the underlying causes of human behaviour. Our task in this section is to argue that Antony's pessimistic assessment of DV's likelihood, which she sums up as follows, is unwarranted:

> I trust that no one now takes seriously such causal and empirically ungrounded claims as Kant's assertion that women are "scarcely capable of principle". But better motivated and more specific claims about gender differences in cognition have fared no better. (2012, 243)

She then goes on to discuss empirical results that cast doubt on – for example – the Kohlberg results that Gilligan uses as her starting point, and Buckwalter and Stich's findings concerning differences between men and women when it comes to standard philosophical thought experiments (243-50).

Given that we've already excluded Buckwalter and Stich from DV, we can immediately discount Antony's concerns about their empirical claims. Our more general criticism of her pessimistic take on the epistemic standing of DV is her assumption that DV relies on claims about "gender differences in cognition":

> ... claims about different cognitive style between men and women simply failed to pan out. In their review of existing literature on 'women's ways of knowing,'

> Mary Brabeck and Ann Larned identified serious methodological problems in the few studies that claimed to find gender differences in cognition generally, and cited many other studies that ought to have found such differences if they exist, but did not. (2012, 244)

Our claim is that DV does not – or at least need not – rely on gender differences in *cognition* at all. We argued in §3 that the strand of feminist philosophy that underpins DV – DV-Meta – does not make claims about gender differences in cognition; that argument, however, does not straightforwardly transpose to DV itself. After all, we claimed that Antony's fundamental error in understanding the theoretical underpinnings of DV was that of taking the relevant strand of feminist philosophy to be an explanatory model, as opposed to metaphilosophy where empirical claims about intrinsic differences between women and men are not in play. But now, having shifted the focus away from DV-Meta and back to DV itself, the question of gender differences re-emerges. For example, while – we argued – Antony is mistaken in thinking that Moulton herself makes empirical claims about differences in dispositions towards or tolerance of aggression, if one were to claim that women leave philosophy because of the aggressive argumentation styles prevalent in the seminar room, that *would* be a claim about gender differences, and so the question of whether they are 'cognitive' or not is on back the table.

We'll take as our working example the ethics of care – a recent tradition in ethics that is rooted in feminism and has obvious affinities with Gilligan's work. In the 2013 preface to the second edition of her book, *Caring: A Relational Approach to Ethics and Moral Education*, Nel Noddings comments on its former subtitle – which used the word "feminine" rather than "relational" – as follows:

> Hardly anyone has reacted positively to the word *feminine* here. In using it, I wanted to acknowledge the roots of caring in women's experience ... the connotations of "feminine" are off-putting and do not capture what I intended to convey. *Relational* is a better word. Virtually all care theorists make the relation more fundamental than the individual. Virginia Held comments: "The ethics of care ... conceptualizes persons as deeply affected by, and involved in, relations with others; to many care theorists persons are at least partly constituted by their social ties. The ethics of care ... does not assume that relations relevant for morality have been entered into voluntarily by free and equal individuals as do dominant moral theories" (Held 2006, 46). (Noddings 2013, p.xiii)

Recall our sample explanatory hypotheses that women leave philosophy because (i) the types of questions they want to ask and the kinds of ideas they want to pursue are dismissed, and (ii) they consciously object to the privileging of 'real' philosophy over subjects like feminist theory. Starting with (i): the relevant empirical claims in the context of the ethics of care are, first, that women who are interested in moral philosophy are, on average, more inclined than men towards working on moral theory from an ethics-of-care perspective rather than (say) a deontological or consequentialist perspective; and, second,

that the former approach is one that has been marginalised: routinely ignored in undergraduate syllabi, harder to publish in top journals, regarded less favourably on appointment and promotion panels, or whatever. The latter claim obviously does not appeal to any cognitive differences between women and men. While it is perhaps slightly less obvious, nor does the former. The fact that, for broadly socio-political reasons, caring roles have historically been – and continue to be – more central to women's lives than to men's, and that men have been socialised to disguise or downplay the importance of relationships to their lives, would suffice to explain why women might (on average) take more of an interest in the ethics of care than men (on average) do. The explanandum here is, of course, an *empirical* claim; but it is no way undermined by – for example – evidence from psychology that there are no relevant *cognitive* differences between men and women. (We return to the issue of cognitive differences in §7.)

In the previous section we presented a couple of pieces of anecdotal evidence for DV. While cursory inspection of relevant recent literature reveals a host of similar examples, anecdotal evidence on its own does not, of course, count as strong confirmation of DV. Before examining the more robust kinds of evidence that might in principle confirm DV in particular, we'll briefly discuss some of the empirical studies that *have* been carried out with the aim of explaining women's underrepresentation in philosophy. This is still a very young area of investigation, but there is a growing literature based on such studies.

One striking feature of the vast majority of the studies – which overwhelmingly have undergraduate students as their subjects – is that the explanations that have been tested fall squarely within the PS model. Dougherty, Baron and Miller (2015) provide a useful taxonomy of existing explanatory hypotheses concerning the steep decline in the proportion of women between introductory philosophy courses and philosophy honours (majors), which they divide into five broad categories: *course content hypotheses, teaching method hypotheses* (e.g. implicit bias and Buckwalter-and-Stich-style hypotheses concerning gender differences in philosophical intuitions)*, hostile atmosphere hypotheses* (e.g. discrimination and sexual harassment)*, internalised stereotypes/gender schema hypotheses* (e.g. stereotype threat)*,* and the *impractical subject hypothesis*. Of these, nomenclature alone should make it fairly obvious that only members of the first category – *course content hypotheses* – might in principle count as DV-based hypotheses. In fact, of the two specific hypotheses that Dougherty *et al* mention in connection with this category – the 'role model hypothesis' and the 'subject matter hypothesis' – only the latter might in principle fall within the DV model. And, when it comes to Dougherty *et al*'s survey of the existing evidence for the various hypotheses (2015, §4), *none* of that evidence relates to the subject matter hypothesis.

Morgan Thompson (2017) similarly offers a broad categorisation of existing explanatory hypotheses: discrimination; gender differences in abilities; gendered schemas; stereotype threat and implicit bias; ability beliefs; and

academic belonging, comfort, and confidence. All of these fall squarely within the PS model – as do Thompson's recommendations for future research.

When it comes to their overall assessment of the existing evidence for and against (some of) the various hypotheses, Dougherty *et al*'s basic conclusion is that most of the evidence – that is, evidence concerning PS-based explanations – is, as things currently stand, somewhat weak and/or mixed. We think a fair summary of the results so far is that *some* specific explanatory hypotheses arising from the PS model have garnered some weak empirical support, though in many cases such hypotheses have been tested and failed to be confirmed. (We do not mean to suggest that there is only weak evidence for the existence of such phenomena as implicit bias and stereotype threat – or indeed outright discrimination or sexual harassment – or that there is only weak evidence that such phenomena are prevalent in philosophy. We only mean that there is, by and large, at best only weak confirmatory evidence for hypotheses according to which those phenomena explain why women drop out of philosophy between introductory and major/honours-level courses.) In a nutshell: there is *some prima facie* evidence that *some* PS-based explanatory hypotheses are true.

When it comes to DV, however, we haven't really progressed beyond anecdote. That's hardly a resounding endorsement of DV's empirical credentials, obviously; on the other hand, nor is it grounds for pessimism. There are no *a priori* or empirical reasons to think that DV-based explanatory hypotheses are all false. What is striking, however, is that the amount of research so far devoted to exploring the empirical standing of DV and PS respectively is *hugely* unbalanced in favour of PS. As we mentioned in §2, it's hard not to notice the irony of what, in practice, amounts to the marginalisation of DV within the discourse concerning the underrepresentation of women in philosophy, given the fact that DV is itself firmly rooted in the concern that 'different voices' have been excluded from *philosophical* discourse.

6. R&D costs and practical applications

Why has research aimed at assessing the likelihood of DV been so lacking, while in the last handful of years there has been a minor explosion of research on PS? Well – and this brings us onto the second dimension of social value introduced in §2, *R&D costs* – here is one practical reason (which of course does not rule out the possibility that there are other, non-competing reasons as well): DV research is, as things currently stand, likely to be more *costly* than PS research. Here we agree with Antony when she says that DV research would be "difficult to design and implement" (2012, 250) – though her target is specifically research into gender differences in philosophical intuitions, which, as we argued earlier, is not DV research, properly conceived.

Why might DV research be more costly than PS research? Well, consider the dominant method for PS research: undergraduate surveys. For example, Baron, Dougherty and Miller (2015) tested a range of explanatory hypotheses,

falling broadly within the PS model, by surveying undergraduate students at the beginning and end of a first-year course. Similarly, Thompson, Adleberg, Sims and Nahmias (2016) – who explicitly deploy PS as their theoretical framework – conducted a 'climate survey' amongst a large number of undergraduates towards the end of their Introduction to Philosophy course. Any such survey aimed at uncovering evidence for or against *DV*-based explanatory hypotheses would have to look for gender effects of studying the kind of philosophy that DV-Meta recommends compared with the 'mainstream' philosophy to which DV-Meta stands opposed. Given the *de facto* nature of the vast majority of introductory philosophy courses and introductory readers and textbooks, that in itself severely limits the potential for conducting such surveys: one would have to conduct a survey, then change the entire curriculum, re-run the survey, and compare the results. This would not only be very costly when it comes to the investment of staff time, but would also be likely, in many departments, to be met with scepticism on the grounds that it would, in effect, be treating students as guinea pigs without any prior reason to think that any of them will actually benefit as a result.

In any case, it is unclear that quantitative survey methods would be appropriate for uncovering the kinds of disenchantment we anecdotally described in §4. Quantitative data that, for example, correlates answers concerning various aspects of undergraduates' experiences on their course with answers concerning their enthusiasm for further study is not likely to get to the heart of *why* they drop out – at least if they drop out for DV-related reasons. What is required is data that provides insight into the thought processes of women who choose to leave, as well as those who choose to stay. This data then needs to be used as a starting point for a reflexive critical engagement with, for example, substantial changes to undergraduate curricula. The kind of data we have in mind would necessarily be qualitative in nature; only qualitative data taken from, for example, semi-structured interviews or focus groups can provide the level of insight necessary to draw generalisable conclusions regarding the likelihood of DV-based explanatory hypotheses.

The most direct approach would, of course, be simply to ask women why they are choosing to leave philosophy (if they are) or why they are choosing to stay (if they are). An attempt to implement this approach would face a multitude of methodological complications, and we acknowledge that any appropriate qualitative research strategy would have to account for these complications in both design and interpretation of data. In particular, as demonstrated in §4 by McCallion's account of her own experience, it is entirely possible for an individual – especially an undergraduate who may lack the broad philosophical knowledge and conceptual tools to fully understand their own predicament – to misconstrue their own reasons for disenchantment with the discipline; difficulties with apt expression, too, are likely to come into play when discussing such sensitive topics. As with all qualitative research, the understanding that

people do not always mean what they say, and they do not always say what they mean, is vital. An appropriately trained researcher, who is able to account for these complications, will be a necessity for the appropriate collection and rigorous interpretation of such data. Our conclusion at this point is that, when it comes to *R&D costs*, DV probably does fare less well than PS.

The same is probably true when it comes to *practical applications*. By and large, the practical applications that flow from explanatory hypotheses within the PS model are very familiar, and are increasingly being implemented in philosophy departments: more women on reading lists and pictures of women in corridors and on websites, implicit bias training, encouraging a less hostile atmosphere in seminars, having clear policies on harassment (and actually implementing them), abolishing the use or reducing the importance of student evaluation surveys in hiring and promotion decisions, placing less importance on letters of recommendation, and so on.

On the DV side, practical applications might involve, for example, teaching epistemology or ethics or philosophy of science in a way that brings 'different voices' to the table as a fully integrated part of an undergraduate course rather than as a bolt-on at the end or not at all (Dea 2017); concerted attempts by editors of generalist journals to encourage and publish work in those areas; conscious efforts to ensure that publication in feminist philosophy journals is treated on a par with publication in other specialist journals in hiring and promotion decisions; and so on. Given the continuing *de facto* marginalisation of 'different voices', however, none of those applications are straightforward. The current environment means that broad curriculum changes may be resisted on principle by departments or by individual teachers – and even for those who are not resistant in principle, making those changes is a lot of work. More generally, widespread hostility to – or simply ignorance of – philosophy 'in a different voice' acts as a powerful impediment to efforts to establish it as of equal value to 'mainstream' philosophy in decision-making by journal editors and hiring panels.

That said, the situation is not, we think, even close to being as dire as it is portrayed by Antony when she says:

> It's not at all clear what interventions would make any difference if the Different Voices model turned out to be correct. As medical ethicists and practitioners have long observed, it is useless or worse – potentially psychologically or physically harmful – to test for conditions for which there is no treatment. (2012, 251)

Again, her explicit target here is intervention based on research on gender differences in philosophical intuitions – which, as we've already said, does not in fact belong within the DV model. There *is* a treatment when it comes to DV. It is doubtless a medicine that many philosophers will find unpleasant or even unpalatable. But if we really, genuinely care about curing the illness, and *if* evidence comes to light that the treatment works, the rational response is to take the medicine – bitter though it may be to some palates.

7. Political risk

Political risk is the trickiest dimension of social value to navigate. Antony goes to some lengths to cash out the potential risks of DV research, which she summarises as follows:

> There are dangers associated with claiming the existence of gender differences. Such claims are too readily accepted – evidence in their favor conform[s] to essentialist thinking about gender, and to specific stereotypes about gender, and so may be accepted because of confirmation bias rather than a dispassionate examination of the evidence. Claims of gender difference, because of the generic interpretation likely to be triggered by the invocation of gender categories, are highly resistant to counterevidence, if such emerges. Such claims, finally, are apt to be misinterpreted in ways that prove detrimental to women – ways that encourage essentialist and biological determinist thinking. (2012, 250-1)

The nub of the problem, Antony thinks, is that DV is committed to the "presumption that women (typically) share, for whatever reason, some particular intrinsic property" (230), whereas PS does not "posit substantive intrinsic differences between men and women in order to explain the demographics in philosophy" (231). Positing such differences is, she thinks, risky – "such claims have, as a matter of fact, almost always served conservative or reactionary purposes; most often they have been used to rationalize discrimination or to justify inaction about it" (241) – and it is very hard to mitigate the risk because it is all too easy to misinterpret claims of gender difference as "natural" and (therefore) "immutable" (*ibid.*). The worry, then, is that while DV does not itself imply that such differences are natural or immutable – obviously not, since the whole point is that they are a result of contingent social and political forces – it *does*, and indeed *must,* regard them as 'intrinsic', and so is apt to be misinterpreted and misused to serve reactionary agendas.

Let's start by interrogating the idea that DV necessarily posits "substantive intrinsic differences between men and women" – aside, that is, from those differences that "fundamentally support the classification of an individual as a man or as a woman" (253, n.20). Antony is explicitly deploying a permissive conception of 'intrinsic' here:

> I am not using 'intrinsic' as a synonym for 'innate,' 'biological,' or 'natural,' and I do not take the term to imply 'necessary' or 'essential.' I use the term 'intrinsic' in the sense current in contemporary analytical metaphysics, according to which a property is intrinsic if and only if it supervenes entirely on the state of the individual to whom the property is being ascribed. The causal etiology of the property does not matter, according to my usage, and so it does not matter whether the individual possesses the property 'by nature', or because of interactions with the physical or social environment ... I assume that dispositional properties can be, and typically are, *intrinsic*. (229-30)

Why does Antony think that DV is committed to positing intrinsic differences between men and women, while PS is not? The general idea, we take it, is that while both PS and DV seek to *explain* behavioural differences between men and women (since the target phenomenon is the underrepresentation of women) – and while those differences may themselves be manifestations of different intrinsic dispositions – the *explanations* offered by the PS model depend only on those intrinsic differences that "fundamentally support the classification of an individual as a man or as a woman". If a woman's CV is assessed more negatively than that of an equally qualified man, for example, that is merely because she is a woman and he is a man: it is not due to some *further* (intrinsic) difference between them. Similarly, if a woman suffers stereotype threat in a given environment and a man does not, the only difference between them that we need to posit is the brute gender difference. And so on. By contrast, DV-based explanations must posit *additional* intrinsic differences between men and women.

Is it true, as Antony claims, that DV-based explanations must do that – and, if so, does that entail the political risk described above? We think it *is* true, but that Antony misidentifies the reason. And this, in turn, undermines her claim about political risk.

Starting with the first question: despite her permissive conception of intrinsicality, in her discussion of DV Antony in fact focuses on differences in *cognition*. As we saw in §5, her pessimistic assessment of the likelihood of DV is rooted in the lack of evidence for empirical claims about gender differences in "cognition" or "cognitive styles" (243-4). In fact, however – as we pointed out in §5 – DV is not committed to any differences in *cognition* between men and women. For example, the fact that the kinds of questions that (some) women want to pursue are marginalised, and the fact that (some) women consciously object to the privileging of 'real' philosophy over (e.g.) feminist theory are indeed facts about their intrinsic features which do not "support their classification as women" – Antony is right about that. But they are facts about their beliefs, desires, preferences, conscious objections and so on, and are therefore not *cognitive* differences. (Admittedly with a sufficiently broad understanding of 'cognition', we might class them as 'cognitive' differences. But in this context we would want to resist doing that, for the kinds of reason that Antony gives for steering clear of claims about intrinsic differences more generally. We return to this below.) Moreover, they are – as Antony says – intrinsic differences that do not "fundamentally support the classification of an individual as a man or as a woman", since they are effects rather than causes of such classification as women: it is that very classification, and its effects on women's lived experiences, that brings about those beliefs, desires and so on. So we agree with Antony that the differences posited by DV-based explanations are intrinsic, though we deny that they are cognitive.

Turning to the second question: is the positing of *those* kinds of intrinsic differences – differences in preferences, desires, conscious objections, and so on – apt to be misinterpreted as essentialist or 'natural' or 'immutable', and hence to further entrench reactionary agendas? It is, we think, considerably less prone to such misinterpretation than are claims concerning 'cognitive' differences between men and women, given that 'cognitive' differences are apt to be read as differences in brains, which in turn apt to "encourage essentialist and biological determinist thinking" (251): they are highly susceptible to be read as differences that are hard-wired (Fine 2010). (So whatever one thinks 'cognitive' means, this in itself constitutes a political reason not to count differences in preferences and so on as 'cognitive' in this context.) Mere statistical differences between men and women when it comes to desires, preferences and so on are commonplace, and we are – at least often, though doubtless not always – reasonably good at resisting the inference from the existence of such differences to the claim that they are innate or immutable. No philosopher (we hope) thinks that hard-wiring explains why women statistically prefer Biden to Trump, or prefer to do other things on a Saturday afternoon than go to the football, or prefer wine to beer. So it is unclear why there should be a specific problem with preferences when it comes to philosophy. And still less so – obviously – when it comes to conscious objection.

It would be naïve, however, to suggest that there is no risk at all here. Indeed, one of the authors of this paper (Beebee) did, in her younger days, think that feminist philosophy (about which she knew virtually nothing) was signed up to the idea that women just aren't congenitally suited to, say, logic or analytic metaphysics – an idea to which she took great exception. Our firm hope, however, is that philosophers are generally clever enough to recognise, at least if they are open to persuasion and are given the opportunity to *be* persuaded, that that's just a mistake. For example, consider the inference from gender differences when it comes to finding the ethics of care a less alien framework for thinking about moral philosophy than (say) deontology or utilitarianism – again, if there *are* such differences – to the conclusion that women are more 'naturally' suited to caregiving than men are. To put it bluntly, that would be a crass mistake. Philosophers are of course not immune to crass mistakes, but they do generally want to avoid them. It therefore behoves us – all of us, and not just feminist philosophers – to point that mistake out when we see it; and it behoves us all, more generally, to call out lazy and ill-informed inferences from claims about gender differences to claims to the effect that those differences are innate or natural or immutable. And we can also, of course, take steps to minimise the risk of misinterpretation – as Noddings came to appreciate when she was criticised for using the word "feminine" in the subtitle of her book (see §5 above).

It is also worth noting that PS is not completely risk-free either. One of us can report the following: the response of several members of the senior management of a university that we shall not name here, having undergone their

mandatory implicit bias training, can be summed up as "Oh, well, that's it then: it's all unconscious, there's nothing we can do about it" – the exact opposite of the message that the trainer was attempting to convey. Similarly – and again the evidence here is merely anecdotal – the fact that women in philosophy are placed in stereotype-threat situations vastly more often than men are has been misread as the claim that women are inherently (naturally, immutably) more *susceptible* to stereotype threat than men are – delicate flowers that we are.

("Surely", one might object, "no *philosopher* would commit such a crass and ignorant error". Well, perhaps not – but then we should expect the same when it comes to the inference from 'gender difference' to 'natural and immutable gender difference'. Since we are in the business here of getting our own house in order here, the conservative and reactionary agendas that Antony is concerned about are, presumably, the conservative and reactionary agendas of *philosophers*.)

Our assessment, then, is that Antony significantly overstates the political risks associated with DV as opposed to PS. And – to be clear – that assessment does not depend on *endorsing* DV-Meta. It merely depends on a proper understanding of the kinds of claims about 'gender differences' that DV actually needs to invoke in order to explain women's underrepresentation.

8. Conclusion

Our aims in this paper have been, first, to reconceive DV, so that it is underpinned by the metaphilosophical agenda pursued by the strand of feminist philosophy in which Antony locates its roots rather than by brute appeals to alleged 'cognitive' differences between men and women; and, second, to reassess the 'social value' of DV – thus conceived – along the various dimensions we identified in §2. Our overall conclusion is that Antony very significantly overstates the differences in social value between PS and DV.

When it comes to *likelihood*, serious empirical testing of DV has barely got off the ground – but there are no *a priori* grounds to think that the results of such testing would not confirm some DV-based explanatory hypotheses. By contrast, as we said in §5, there has been some empirical testing of PS and some (but by no means all) specific explanatory hypotheses arising from the PS model have garnered some weak empirical support. So perhaps PS is ahead on points as things currently stand – but only because, to our knowledge, no significant testing of DV hypotheses has actually been carried out yet. When it comes to *R&D costs* and *practical applications*, we grant that the potential costs of DV are probably higher, given that the kinds of change in disciplinary practices that would be required – both to test some DV-based hypotheses and to implement the changes that would recommend themselves were those hypotheses to be confirmed – would, in general, be difficult and time-consuming, and may be actively resisted by those who have an interest in maintaining the *status quo*. Finally, when it comes to *political risk*, Antony overstates the risks of DV –

significantly, we think – and understates the risks of PS. So perhaps PS is in the lead – but not by a huge distance, and certainly nowhere near far enough ahead to justify abandoning DV.

We want to stress again that the above constitutes an assessment of the relative social value of DV *from a neutral perspective*. That is, it is not an assessment that presupposes that the theoretical underpinning of DV – in the form of DV-Meta – is *correct.* Of course, if there are unassailable reasons to think that the theoretical framework of a research programme is completely mistaken, that in itself would be a good reason to think that the social value of that programme is negative, and that it should therefore be abandoned. Our assessment of the social value of DV requires only the assumption that there are no such unassailable reasons. There is undoubtedly widespread resistance to, and indeed outright hostility towards, DV-Meta within the philosophical community. We deny, however, that such resistance and hostility is grounded in unassailable *reasons* to think that DV-Meta is completely mistaken.

Why 'unassailable'? Wouldn't *good* reasons suffice? No. Or at any rate, not if one accepts – and, as we have already suggested, we think pretty much all philosophers *do* accept – that in general taking oneself to have good reasons to deny a particular philosophical or metaphilosophical view is not a sufficient reason for thinking that that view should be taken off the table all together: that it should not be taught, that philosophers should be discouraged from attempting to articulate, motivate or defend it, and so on. There is no *epistemic* reason not to regard DV-Meta with the same attitude of tolerance that philosophers generally extend towards philosophical positions that they take themselves to have good reasons to deny. This being so, *even by the lights of someone who takes themselves to have good reasons to reject DV-Meta,* the abandonment of DV research would *only* be legitimate if DV itself has social *dis*value or if its overall social value is so *hugely* outweighed by the social value of PS that *all* available resources should be devoted to PS rather than DV.

Abandonment is of course precisely what Antony recommends. We suspect that that recommendation – whether sincerely meant or not – has already been taken up and is starting to affect research into the underrepresentation of women in philosophy. As we noted in §5, the main undergraduate studies (Baron *et al* 2015; Thompson *et al* 2016) almost exclusively focus on explanatory hypotheses that fall within the PS model – explicitly so in the case of Thompson *et al*. Of course, it's possible that this is merely a reflection of the difficulty of garnering evidence concerning DV-based hypotheses via the most cost-effective methodology available (see §6 above). It is nonetheless striking that there is no discussion of DV-based hypotheses as legitimate potential alternatives to the ones the authors focus on – a fact that would be nicely explained by endorsement of Antony's view but is otherwise somewhat puzzling.

Antony summarises the view to which she is opposed as follows:

> Which model should we prefer: Different Voices or Perfect Storm? It might be argued that there is no need to choose. The two models are not incompatible; they might each direct us toward different but equally necessary pieces of a complicated puzzle ... It also might be argued that we should not choose, given the current state of the evidence ... Why not, then, let a hundred flowers bloom? Let proponents of each model develop it as far as it will go; we'll just see how things pan out. (2012, 232)

We hope to have shown that this is, after all, the appropriate attitude to take.

Bibliography

Antony, Louise. 2012. "Different Voices or Perfect Storm: Why Are There So Few Women in Philosophy?" *Journal of Social Philosophy* 43: 227-55.

Baron, Sam, Tom Dougherty and Kristie Miller. 2015. "Why is There Female Under-representation Among Philosophy Majors?" *Ergo* 2(14): 329-65. https://doi.org/10.3998/ergo.12405314.0002.014

Dougherty, Tom, Sam Baron and Kristie Miller. 2015. "Female Under-representation Among Philosophy Majors: A Map of the Hypotheses and a Survey of the Evidence". *Feminist Philosophy Quarterly* 1(1). https://doi.org/10.5206/fpq/2015.1.4

Buckwalter, Wesley and Stephen Stich. 2014. "Gender and Philosophical Intuition", in *Experimental Philosophy*, vol. 2, edited by J. Knobe and S. Nichols. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 307-46.

Dea, Shannon. 2017. "Deep Pluralism and Intentional Course Design: Diversity From the Ground Up". *Revista di estetica* 64: 66-82.

Dotson, Kristie. 2011. "Concrete Flowers; Contemplating the Profession of Philosophy". *Hypatia* 26(2): 403-9.

Fine, Cordelia. 2010. *Delusions of Gender: The Real Science Behind Sex Differences.* London: Icon Books.

Gilligan, Carol. 1982. *In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

———. 2012. *Big Think:* Interview with Carol Gilligan. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2W_9MozRoKE&ab_channel=BigThink

Gilligan, Carol and Jane Attanucci. 1988. "Two Moral Orientations: Gender Differences and Similarities". *Merrill-Palmer Quarterly* 34(3): 223-37.

Held, Virginia. 2006. *The Ethics of Care: Personal, Political, and Global.* New York: Oxford University Press.

Jenkins, Katharine. 2014. "'That's Not Philosophy': Feminism, Academia and the Double Bind". *Journal of Gender Studies* 23(3): 262-74.

Moulton, Janice. 1983. "A Paradigm of Philosophy: The Adversary Method", in *Discovering Reality*, edited by Sandra Harding and Merrill B. Hintikka, Synthese Library, vol. 161, 149-64. Dordrecht: Springer.

Noddings, Nel. 2013. *Caring: A Relational Approach to Ethics and Moral Education.* Berkeley: University of California Press.

Pohlhaus, Gaile. 2015. "Different Voices, Perfect Storms, and Asking Grandma What She Thinks: Situating Experimental Philosophy in Relation to Feminist Philosophy". *Feminist Philosophy Quarterly* 1(1). https://doi.org/10.5206/fpq/2015.1.3

Priest, Graham. 2006. "What Is Philosophy?". *Philosophy* 81: 189-206.

Thompson, Morgan. 2017. "Explanations of the Gender Gap in Philosophy". *Philosophy Compass* 12(3). https://doi.org/10.1111/phc3.12406

———. Toni Adleberg, Sam Sims and Eddie Nahmias. 2016. "Why Do Women Leave Philosophy? Surveying Students at the Introductory Level". *Philosophers' Imprint* 16(6): 1-36. http://hdl.handle.net/2027/spo.3521354.0016.006

Valian, Virginia. 1999. *Why So Slow? The Advancement of Women.* Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

———. 2005. "Beyond Gender Schemas: Improving the Advancement of Women in Academia". *Hypatia* 20(3): 198-213.

Trade-offs, Backfires, and Curricular Diversification[1]

Ian James Kidd

Abstract: This paper presents two challenges faced by many initiatives that try to diversify undergraduate philosophy curricula, both intellectually and demographically. Trade-offs involve making difficult decisions to prioritise some values over others (like gender diversity over cultural diversity). Backfires involve unintended consequences contrary to the aims and values of diversity initiatives, including ones that compromise more general philosophical values. I discuss two specific backfire risks, involving the critical and political dimensions of teaching philosophy. Some general practical advice is offered along the way.

Keywords: curricula, diversity, philosophy, teaching.

1. Introduction

Contemporary debates about diversity and inclusion in academic philosophy tend to include debates about undergraduate curricula. Many departments accept the need to diversify their curricula – topically, methodologically, and into currently neglected historical periods and cultures. Such acceptance might reflect a general concern for periodic refreshment, to rotate texts or keep up to date with the scholarship. Sometimes, though, the motivations are more highly charged. Consider the influential *New York Times* article by Jay L. Garfield and Bryan van Norden, distinguished scholars of Buddhist and Chinese philosophy, respectively, entitled "If philosophy won't diversify, let's call it what it really is" (Garfield and van Norden 2016). The article criticised the enduring Eurocentrism of many philosophical curricula, expressed in their provocative proposal that "any department that regularly offers courses only on Western philosophy should rename itself 'Department of European and American Philosophy'". Online debate naturally ensued with the usual proportion of thoughtful debate and reactive screed, prompting van Norden to offer a fuller set of arguments – moral, intellectual, pedagogical – in his book, *Taking Back Philosophy: A Multicultural Manifesto* (van Norden 2017).

These curricular debates reliably feature both ardent admirers and concerned critics, and my aim is to raise two sets of concerns about some recent efforts to diversify philosophy undergraduate philosophy curricula. These are

[1] I am grateful for discussion with the audience at the first Joint Stirling-St Andrews Minorities and Philosophy workshop at the University of St Andrews and the insightful comments of Andrew Fisher, Simon Fokt, and the Editors, Helen Beebee and Annie McCallion.

trade-offs and *backfires*, each illustrated by an example from my home department at the University of Nottingham. I should add at the start that I am on the side of the angels in wanting to increase the intellectual and demographic diversity of philosophy curricula. I currently teach courses on the classical Chinese tradition and the philosophy of illness, alongside guest lectures on African and Buddhist philosophy. I'm also unimpressed with the low bars for diversity some departments set themselves. A handful of lectures on Buddhism tucked in at the end of a Philosophy of Religion course doesn't suffice for coverage of the Indian philosophical tradition. During my own undergraduate years, not a single lecture was devoted to Chinese or Japanese philosophy and there was no mention of even the existence of the philosophical traditions of Africa and the Americas. Granted, many factors – historical, institutional, professional – conspire to make inclusion of those traditions difficult. Curricular diversification requires the things most of us lack – time, energy, budget, staffing. Indeed, some departments can only dream of having discussions about whether their next hire should be an early modernist or a scholar of classical Chinese philosophy. Many departments are struggling to survive, let alone diversify, which is one reason not to be overly pious about abnegating instrumental justifications for adding modules in the Asian traditions. I take it as axiomatic that academic philosophers and their allies should work together to try to ensure the survival of our enterprise in these financially, politically, and ideologically difficult times. Curricular diversification can be a part of those efforts at the pragmatic level, but, as van Norden argues, the sorts of concerns and interests raised key into much deeper questions about the nature and value of philosophy:

> The thesis of this book is not that mainstream Anglo-European philosophy is bad and all other philosophy is good. There are people who succumb to this sort of cultural Manicheanism, but I am not one of them. This book is about broadening philosophy by tearing down barriers, not about building new ones. (van Norden 2017: 159)

I agree with this position, which we might call *additive pluralism*. We should aim to add new content, rather than simply swap one pattern of exclusion for another. I hope for a future time when undergrads discuss Kǒngzǐ and the Buddha as naturally as they do Aristotle and Descartes. But I also think that being a true friend of curricular diversification means being proactively honest and constructively critical of the dangers and risks inherent in some of the motivations and practical proposals associated with it. Anything that can be done can be done badly and curricular diversification projects often generate the problems I call trade-offs and backfires.

What follows is therefore intended in a spirit of critical allegiance to diversification efforts. By recognising certain risks in advance, we are better placed to deal with them. Forewarned is forearmed. Such procedural cautiousness has several merits, but there is also a more strategic reason for it in this context. Anyone with experience of 'diversity work' knows that many

colleagues are resistant to it, for various invidious reasons and in invidious ways (Kidd 2017). Resisters often seize on any stumbles and unclarities as excuses to call for complete stoppage of work, meaning that we must take more than the usual degree of care to manage the trade-offs and potential backfires of any proposed curricular diversification efforts.

Before that, though, we should distinguish two senses of curricular diversification, the *intellectual* and the *demographic*. Intellectual diversification refers to addition of topics, styles of philosophising, disciplines and traditions currently absent or underrepresented within the curriculum. I presume most curricula include, *inter alia*, Plato and Aristotle, the early modern 'Big Six', and modules in ethics, epistemology, and philosophy of science, plus courses in logic. Fewer likely include, *inter alia*, Zhuāngzǐ and Mòzǐ, Renaissance philosophy, phenomenology, and the Afro-Caribbean and Mesoamerican traditions (Henry 2000, MacLeod 2019). But there is also demographic diversity, the new or further inclusion of philosophers from marginalised or subordinated communities and groups – philosophers of colour, LGBTQ+ philosophers, philosophers with disabilities, philosophers culturally or institutionally located outside the Euro-American world, philosophers typically classified in some other role, like social activists or writers (think of, say, W.E.B. DuBois or Audre Lorde). Such diversification matters because there is considerable contingency in the ways that philosophy can be organised and pursued. Obliviousness to this fact can mean we fail to see certain philosophically pertinent figures because we were not looking for them. Moreover, many of the professional and institutional structures of modern academic philosophy tends to lock out certain social groups. Such systemic biases and prejudices that being constantly reinscribed in our disciplinary demographics (de Cruz 2018).

Crucially, the relationship of intellectual and democratic diversities is complicated. In some happy cases, we get two for the price of once, since some areas and disciplines tend to be predominantly populated by the members of currently marginalised social groups – think of black feminist epistemology or philosophy of disability (Collins 1990, Toombs 1993). Sometimes, though, we have to work harder. Some intellectually marginalised areas tend to be dominated by demographically dominant groups. So, we should not invest hope in 'buy-one-get-one-free' shortcuts to curricular diversify. In these cases, we need to work on both fronts. We must also be alert to the risks of suggesting that some topics are usually or even exclusively populated by the members of certain social groups – that, say, only women can or should teach and research feminist ethics. All this underscores the strategic importance of procedural cautiousness – exercising more than the usual amounts of care and critical thoughtfulness about the aims and methods of our diversification initiatives.

2. Trade-offs

The first risk of curricular diversification are trade-offs, defined as situational decisions where an increase of one quality or feature can come at the cost of a decrease in some other quality or feature. Such decisions arise when we are forced to choose between things that cannot be simultaneously enhanced. I think efforts to promote some forms of diversity can often require us to either lose or leave unimproved some other form of diversity, like being forced to choose between enhancing the intellectual or the demographic diversity of a curriculum. Trade-offs force us to ask difficult questions about the relative priority of our philosophical, pedagogical, and professional values and goals. Answers to those questions often reflect our different roles – as module convenor, as advocate of Asian philosophies, as principled champion of the canon, as Departmental Director of Teaching. Moreover, these roles often pull in different directions, as when the desire to include more 'non-traditional' figures conflicts with a principled desire to represent figures from the established canon.

The upshot is that diversifiers need to attend to (a) the types of diversity they want to promote, (b) the degrees of priority they want to give to those types, (c) their interests and goals as teachers, colleagues, and philosophers, and (d) whether diversification is measured at a modular or curricular level. Obviously, this all requires delicate, thoughtful handling of complex issues – modular coherence; integrity of the curriculum; educational needs of students relative to their abilities, preferences and interests; metaphilosophical debates about the essential character of philosophy and more besides. To see all this more clearly, consider a case study from my own department.

History of Philosophy: From Ancient to Modern is an optional, first-year module at the University of Nottingham which usually attracts around one hundred students. It aims to offer an historical introduction to selected episodes, figures, and periods from the world's philosophical traditions. It runs for ten weeks and involves three hours of lectures per week, taught by a rotating team of faculty, sometimes supported by postgraduates (or graduate teaching assistants) who lead seminars sometimes occasionally lecture, too. The module content has several constraints. It must be accessible to first-year undergraduates, only some of whom will have studied philosophy before; it must roughly span the history of philosophy from the respective ancient periods up to the 20th century; there should be minimal overlap with other first-year modules. Further constraints are set by the course textbook, David E. Cooper's *World Philosophies: An Historical Introduction*, chosen for its readability and cultural diversity. It explores the main thinkers, debates, and movements of the Western, Islamic, Jewish, Indian, Chinese, Japanese, and Afro-Caribbean traditions (Cooper 2002).

HPAM aims to be diverse in three ways. *Historically*, it should cover diverse historical periods with a general expectation that the last topic should be taken from the 20th century. *Culturally*, it should span at least the Western,

Indian, and Chinese traditions, acknowledging the complications of those terms, with a strong expectation of including other traditions – in recent years, sections were dedicated to Islamic and Afro-Caribbean philosophies. Sometimes a cultural tradition would only be visited once, meaning that the Chinese tradition, say, might be represented by the single figure of Kǒngzı. *Topically*, it should range across different areas and topics – ancient Greek conceptions of the good life, say, then the nature of religious faith, in Islamic philosophy, then early modern conceptions of science, and so on. Sometimes, these topics start to weave together in a way that, done well, gives a sense of the dialectical rhythms of the historical enterprise of philosophy. Understanding patterns of fusion and resistance is integral to an historical understanding of philosophy of the sort which can begin with modules of this sort.

An obvious problem is that, even with these multiple constraints, the module faces an acute embarrassment of riches. Too many topics, too little space. In the spring 2019 semester, the module began with early Buddhist and classical Chinese philosophy then segued into Zen, before turning – in week four – to the Presocratics then to medieval Christian philosophy. An entire week was devoted to Hume - the only figure enjoying a dedicated 'slot' – before moving onto Afro-Caribbean discussions of *Negritude* and *Africanité*, early analytic philosophy, Sartre and de Beauvoir, before ending in 20th environmental philosophy. With this line-up, HPSM achieved diversity on three fronts. *Culturally*, students encountered philosophies from many countries and regions – India, China, Japan, Europe, Africa, the Caribbean. *Demographically*, the module introduced white philosophers and philosophers of colour from four continents. *Topically*, the module included 'usual suspects', like Heraclitus and Hume, alongside those rarely featuring in introductory modules, like Iris Murdoch or Frantz Fanon.

I also included periodic discussions of critical issues in historiography of philosophy, a sort of self-reflectiveness appropriate to a module motivated by diversification concerns. The readings included van Norden's *Taking Back Philosophy*, for instance, as well as discussion of Genevieve Lloyd's classic *Man of Reason* and Peter K.J. Park's *Africa, Asia, and the History of Philosophy* (Lloyd 1984, Park 2013). Sometimes, these were used to explain curricular choices, sometimes to make methodological points about critical study of history of philosophy. These points mattered, since some students found that the course challenged preconceptions about the nature and history of philosophy – ones many of them evidently acquired from exposure to a resolutely Eurocentric secondary school philosophy curriculum. Happily, many of them also realised the richness of the course after comparing notes with friends taking less diverse introductory courses in history of philosophy at other UK departments.

Unfortunately, the specific sorts of diversification achieved by HPAM came at the cost of various problematic omissions. First, it omitted very many important 'big names', like Plato and Kant. Partly we justified this by noting some students often knew a little about them, and that they did appear elsewhere in

the curriculum. Similarly, several important periods and movements were missing, such as the Renaissance or German Idealism. Second, it was clearly historically imbalanced – three weeks in the ancient periods of India, Greece, and China, then four weeks devoted to the last hundred and fifty years. Moreover, aside from Hume and Zen, little was said about the period from the C5th BCE to the C19th CE. Third, the course was poorly representative of women, who only figured at the end, in existentialism and environmental philosophies. (By contrast, an earlier iteration of this course – History of Western Philosophy – devoted a fifth of its ten weeks to women, albeit all white Europeans).

HPAM therefore illustrates a difficult series of trade-offs between forms of intellectual and demographic diversification. It achieved forms of cultural and demographic diversity only at the cost of sacrificing forms of intellectual and gender diversity. For instance, incorporating the Indian, Chinese, and Japanese traditions meant greater inclusion of male philosophers – the Buddha, Kǒngzı, and Zen masters like Dōgen. At this point, we should ask if diversity ought to be measured at a module or curricular level. Our first-years encountered very few women philosophers in HPAM, but that imbalance was repaired by another of our popular first-year modules, *Gender, Justice, and Society*. (In practice, most of our students take both HPAM and GJS, since the number of options is only a little larger than the number of modules). Therefore there's a big difference when we look at the level of the first-year curriculum, rather than at individual modules—a fact with implications for debates about which modules, if any, should be compulsorised for all students. The need for trade-offs should be taken into account when we think about the content, number, and compulsory or optional status of modules in relation to one another. This includes attending to formal and informal constraints on student choices, such as module caps, prerequisites, assessment styles, the costs of textbooks, and so on.

Curricular trade-offs will always be complicated and often arouse deeply contested issues, since they involve contrasts between the marvellous diversity of the philosophical enterprise and the multiple constraints of time, resources, curricular space, staff teaching competence, and much else. How, then, should we handle trade-offs? Well, there are no general solutions; so much depends on the particularities of a departments' curriculum, staffing, and resources. Moreover, trade-offs turn on people's metaphilosophical convictions—about which subjects *matter*, about which traditions should be honoured as *compulsory*, about what sorts of styles or methods of philosophising are *serious*, and so on. Our curricular decisions are symbolically charged and so what's needed is acknowledgement of values, assumptions, and convictions that are often left lurking in the background and which manifest. Once that's achieved, we're better placed to have debates about the curriculum. Should it, for instance, be set up to make sure students complete their first year having studied philosophers from outside the Western tradition? After all, one can only really start trading once one has a sense of what one *values*.

3. Backfires

A backfire is a consequence of an action or policy which is unintended and undesired, and especially those contrary to the intended and desired outcomes. Any action or policy can risk backfiring, since there is always *some* element of uncertainty in the connection of intentions and outcomes. I worry that curricular diversification efforts sometimes run backfire risks in at least two ways. One concerns cases where everyone agrees an outcome was unintended; the second concerns cases of genuine disagreement about the desirability of the outcomes. These second sorts of cases are probably the most difficult to resolve.

My case study for backfire risks is an optional, first-year module at Nottingham, titled *Philosophy in the Contemporary World*, which attracts about two hundred students. It usually runs in the first semester and extremely popular, meaning it helps shape how many students conceptualise philosophy as a subject. It explores a rotating set of philosophical issues rooted in contemporary, 'applied' topics. There are three hours of lectures per week and a fortnightly one-hour seminar, usually led by a teaching assistant. It grew from a desire among staff for a flexible applied philosophy module, broader in scope than applied ethics, and encouraged by a perceived interest among many students for such a module. Instead of being 'theory-first', this new module should be topic-based, starting with some contemporary phenomenon – like moral obligations to refugees – then working out into the relevant philosophical theories and ways of thinking.

Since PCW is team-taught, the specific topics will depend on staff interests, expertise, and availability. There is no expectation for all departmental staff to contribute, nor that the contributors teach the same topic each time. Some explore favourite themes; others react to events in the world that capture their interest or concern; others explore issues that don't fit naturally into other modules. The topical structure means PCW lacks a systematic, narrative structure, although, where possible, certain topics are clustered together.

In the 2018-19 academic year, we taught the following topics:

- liberal education
- implicit bias
- chilly climates and stereotype threat
- the moral problems of classism
- the removal of statues and renaming of buildings
- veganism and carnism
- representations of religion in contemporary media and politics
- punishment and the law
- cultural appropriation

- social identity
- media ethics
- intersex rights
- artificial intelligence and jobs
- conspiracy theories
- sexbots
- freedom of speech
- moral obligations to refugees and asylum seekers
- the ethics of privacy

In later years, other topics were added – anti-natalism, 'safe space' policies in education, truthfulness and 'bullshit' in political culture, and philosophy of mental health, for instance.

Unsurprisingly, the module proved proven popular with students and staff, not least for its illustrations of how philosophising connects to 'practical' issues, many of them familiar to many of our students. But this sets up my worries that the module is at risk of (a) failing to foster in students a properly critical attitude toward many of their pre-existing assumptions and convictions while also (b) manifesting an inappropriately partisan politicised conception of philosophy. Obviously, describing these at *risks* is contentious. Not all philosophers agree that these outcomes are problematic – indeed, many enthusiastically endorse them. Against the first worry, some argue that it is perfectly legitimate to aim to fortify students' convictions even if that means suspending the imperative to criticality – better fortify those convictions, rather than risk dissolving them in the universal acid of critical philosophical scrutiny. Against the second worry, some argue that education unavoidably encodes political values; if so, then better to be upfront, rather than flapping about with naïve, untenable attempts at neutrality.

I will take each of the backfire risks in turn, albeit with the proviso that I am unsure about them both. My position is one of lingering disquiet, sustained by a sense of unease, stirred by certain remarks voiced by students, some of them quoted below. If the worries are actually overstated, that's a welcome conclusion, although I fear there is something to them. After all, these backfire risks turn on substantial and contested philosophical and political convictions about the aims and nature of philosophy and education. Let's take the two backfire risks each in turn.

Backfire one: failures to cultivate criticality

The first backfire risk is that a module like PCW might failing to encourage in many students an attitude of uncritical affirmation regarding their convictions, rather than one of reflective criticality. Several features of the course can encourage this risk – the selection of topics, the stances taken on them, their politically charged character, and the fact that lecturers can be open about their own commitments. In itself, that last feature can be acceptable, although is able be become problematic under certain conditions: presenting those who hold rival views are morally problematic, for instance, through the use of highly charged or coercive language. (When I give my lecture on carnism, for instance, I avoid terms like 'evil' and 'barbarity', since those create a polarising atmosphere of highly charged moral tension). Of course, not all the topics incur these sorts of risks, but many do.

Stated schematically, the worry is that the module risks cultivating in students a set of bad epistemic attitudes that are inconsistent with some of the basic functions of philosophical education. PCW is at risk of doing this because it is too easily perceived as promoting a 'Right on!' conception of philosophy, one that reiterates and affirms a discernible range of particular moral, social, and political convictions. While such affirmations may be welcome for those of the students who endorse those attitudes, the risk is that they come at the cost of other basic functions of a philosophical education. Obviously, we are back in metaphilosophical territory. I see at least three basic functions of a philosophical education, none of which strike me as at all idiosyncratic (Kidd 2012). First, to motivate and enable people to critically challenge, rather than simply echo and affirm, inherited attitudes and convictions, at least the substantive ones which pertain to the ways we conceive of and comport ourselves within the world. 'Challenge' need not mean 'overturn' or 'reject', of course, since achieving a critical relationship with our convictions can enable deeper and more robust commitments to them. Second, to motivate and enable people to engage – fairly, systematically, sympathetically – with alternatives and rivals to their own convictions. Obviously, this is closely related to the first aim, since strong convictions are often sustained because of an ignorance or underappreciation of alternatives. The reflective capacity to engage appropriately with alternatives is thus essential if we are to judiciously manage our commitments, confidence, certainties, and uncertainties. A third basic function of a philosophical education is to challenge the natural tendencies of so many of us to certain epistemic vices and failings – complacency, dogmatism, groupthink, and intellectual laziness and other attitudes and tendencies that corrupt our thinking. In many traditions, one of the primary purposes of philosophical practice was to overcome such failings, whether as a good in itself or as a means to attaining certain further goods, like autonomy or wisdom. I'd hope that these basic functions, at least in these general forms, would be endorsed by most, if not all those engaged in teaching philosophy.

My worry is that a module like PCW can be at risk of abnegating these basic functions, although the severity of that risk is contingent on several factors that a good educator is able to control – most obviously, the ways that the course content is taught, the ways that seminar discussions are managed, the careful inclusion of a readings representing diverse perspectives and so on. But taking such measures means taking seriously the backfire risk of failing to foster a proper criticality – and, at a more fundamental level, accepting that *as* a risk to be avoided. Consider two ways of putting that worry.

(1) When a module consistently tends to affirm as right or correct a students' existing attitudes, beliefs, and convictions, there is a risk that they come to see philosophy as being too *easy*. The module increasingly seems to merely mirror much of their existing stance on the world, such that philosophy reduces itself to a cheerleading role. Perhaps a student's prior convictions are, as it happens, typically defensible and internally coherent and so on. But the worry is that they start to internalise an unacceptably narrow conception of philosophy as an enterprise of affirmation, not also one of critical interrogation. During my lecture on carnism and veganism, I open by announcing that I am, morally speaking, 'on the side' of animals, then by critically rejecting the concept of animal rights. Students who earnestly share my concerns about violence against and exploitation of animals had uncritically taken it as *obvious* that we should articulate those concerns in the language of animal rights. When challenged, however, few could really offer reasons in defence of the animal rights concept, nor really argue against alternative approaches. The students had supposed – uncritically and without engagement or awareness of alternatives – that 'being on the side the animals' *necessarily* meant respecting their rights. In this case, the students came to see that philosophising about animal ethics will be more difficult than just appealing to their rights. More importantly, they grasped the need to work harder – or at least, harder than they had been used to – to retool their convictions.

In this case, the backfire risk of failing to cultivate criticality was avoided, although not inevitably. I'd been struck in earlier years by the natural default to a language of 'animal rights' and so resolved to challenge that tendency, rather than leave it in place, however much it did put students on what I regard as the side of the angels. But one could imagine a teacher prone to suppose that it does not *matter* really what moral frameworks students use, so long as the conclusions they reach are the desired ones – that eating animals is morally wrong, say. Such a teacher rejects the insistence that convictions ought to be critically tested, thus rejects talk of fostering uncritical commitment as a *risk*.

(2) When a module engages with topics about which one has existing convictions, one should promote in the students capacities for critical self-reflection, including those for fair-minded, reflective engagement with rival and alternative positions and their advocates. Otherwise, an invidious tendency can develop of dismissing or scoffing at those rival theories and theorists, rather

than doing the philosophical work of understanding and engaging with them. Charity, fairmindedness, and other virtues should be in play—but students may be less likely to want to exercise them if they are beholden to a sense that certain positions are 'obviously absurd', or otherwise undeserving of careful engagement. Such attitudes of default dismissals should be causes for concern, since otherwise they fester into epistemic failings such as dogmatism. Such vices can be powerfully nourished by certain tendencies and temptations that are built into modules, like PCW, devoted to highly charged moral, social, and political issues. Consider, for instance, the temptations to nod along to those one regards as speaking out those morally charged truths; to want to disdain those arguing for 'the other side' of some position that one regards as 'obviously compelling'; the desire to wave through claims that one implicitly knows would require a lot of hard work to defend if scrutinised. If such temptations are not checked, they can mutate into a range of the epistemic vices and failings, that ought to be ameliorated by a philosophical education – this being the first type of backfire risk.

Backfire two: partisan politicisation

The second backfire risk is that a module like PCW can risk promoting a tangibly politicised conception of philosophy – one aligned with a set of, *inter alia*, progressive, anti-conservative, left-wing values and convictions. Given the usual list of topics – moral obligations to refugees, intersex rights, classism – it was unsurprising to overhear one student describe the module as "The Philosophy of Whatever's in Today's *Guardian*", a left-wing British newspaper. Granted, selection of such topics cannot by itself be indicative of commitment to left-wing values, since one could use classes on those topics in order to question or reject them. Nor does a decision by staff to teach those topics indicate that they have any particular view on them; some of us use the module precisely because we lack strong or settled views on certain topics and like to use our teaching to work out what we think. Some staff, of course, do have strong views which they report in their lectures.

A backfire risk arises, though, if the combination and alignment of topics selected and stances taken starts to encourage students to perceive or infer an implicit normative political orientation to the module. In that case, the risk is that the module itself is taken to involve an implicit political test – an assumption that, if left unchecked, can start to feed a perception of philosophy itself as necessarily committed to certain political values. In the case of PCW, this latter risk seems to be acute since, for many students, it is their first exposure to philosophy and so can powerfully shape their conceptions of the subject (only about half of our students have studied philosophy at school). Attributing a political character to philosophy in this way is a risk – a danger to be navigated – for at least two reasons. First, not all students are likely to subscribe to progressive left-wing values. Some students arrive with strong political views,

some with messily unstable views, yet to be worked out, while others are politically naïve. In some cases, these natural variations are obscured by homogenising talk of 'the students', and in other cases, substantive clams about students' political tendencies are based on little or no good evidence – biased sample sizes, generalising from single modules. (I once met a logician, who taught only elective advanced classes in logic, who expressed puzzlement at claims that many students dislike logic, since, in his experience, all students were very into logic).

A second reason to resisting attributing a strong political character to modules is that it can increase the risk of jeopardising the fairmindedness, representativeness, and principled commitment to intellectual balance constitutive of our role as teachers. In its strongest form, the risk is that pedagogy devolves into overt propagandising and proselytising, an activity that aims to impose upon students certain political orientations. Many of the most effective ways of persuasion entail the wilful abnegation, if not abandonment, of virtues like fairmindedness, since there are forms of illicit pleasure in florid derogation of rivals and muscularly moralising condemnations of alternative positions. Education always involve actively balancing different commitments – to inform, to inspire, to challenge, to encourage, and so on – but achievement of that balance becomes evermore difficult if one submits to the temptation to propagandise, especially if such submissions consistently converts students in the ways one desires.

Such concerns turn on complex claims about philosophical pedagogy, and many will resist my sense of them as concerns, especially in these politically contested times. Actually, I sometimes feel the force of the Machiavellian conviction that, under problematic conditions, one must adopt more pragmatic attitudes – *Realpolitik* in the classroom. Moreover, I can also sympathise with those who interpret 'critical balance' in terms of offering salutary correctives to entrenched, culturally dominant ideas and convictions. I am also sympathetic to the hope that a good teacher can often successfully balance procedurally fair-minded presentations of positions rival to their own convictions more critical, partisan stances. Hence this backfire risk is perhaps more conditional – more dependent on contingent conditions – than the other.

4. Thinking about backfires

Gathering these points together, my worries is that modules like PCW can tend to promote a 'Right on!' conception of philosophy which comes at the cost of its critical functions and also of promoting a problematically politicised conception of the philosophy. A philosophy teacher will struggle to maintain the functions of Cheerleader and Critic, especially when they have a vested interest in the political conversion of their students. What is at risk is realisation of the basic functions of a philosophical education – to foster a critical stance on one's convictions, to enable fair-minded engagement with alternative positions and

their advocates, and timely correction of common tendencies to epistemic vices and failings. Such risks can be mitigated; backfires can be avoided with forethought, critical reflection, careful teaching, careful design of the wider curriculum and a willingness to confess and debate one's own metaphilosophical commitments. What's crucial, though, is that students acquire a properly expansive sense of the complexity and heterogeneity of the philosophical enterprise. A student who internalises a sense that philosophy is identical with radical social activism has acquired an inaccurate and myopic vision of the subject – one that formed without serious engagement with the Buddha, Zhuāngzǐ, Montaigne, Burke, and Oakeshott, for instance.

A unifying theme of my discussions of the trade-offs and backfires is the concern that students ought to be initiated into a properly truthful understanding of the complexity and heterogeneity of philosophy. Philosophy across its history and traditions has been conceived and practiced in a startling variety of ways – 'therapy for the soul', the means of release from 'the wheel of suffering', underlabourer for the sciences, conceptual engineering, an engine of social change and more besides. An informed sense of this heterogeneity guards our students and ourselves against distorting myopia and misperceptions, consistent with a sort of virtuous truthfulness about the philosophical enterprise in which we participate (Cooper 2008). This is one of the deep motivations for *History of Philosophy: Ancient to Modern*, whose expansively inclusive presentation of philosophy counteracts narrower visions by inducting students into the diversity of the intellectual and imaginative inheritance afforded by the worlds traditions – a vision of education eloquently defended by Michael Oakeshott (1989). What is needed for such initiation is an expansive sense of the richness of that inheritance, an alertness to those tendencies to an occluding myopia and partisan narrowness, and, of course, curricula that are enable all of this. At least in my experience, much teaching of philosophy, especially with first-years, involves myth-busting – not all philosophers were Platonists, not all were religious, not all were cold 'rationalists' hostile to emotion, not all supposed that critical argumentation was the sole or most effective strategy for moral persuasion – and so on.

My purpose in presenting these backfire risks is to enable us to navigate them in ways that minimise the chances of spoiling our diversification work, while also hopefully helping us to have the necessary complicated metaphilosophical conversations. Whether those backfire risks are relevant to oneself will depend on lots of local factors, not least the character of the student cohort currently sitting in one's classrooms. What one should ask is whether the risks are real or apparent, serious or secondary, and whether the potential harms of a backfire are worth the costs of intervention. If one is lucky, no such backfire risks obtain. If they do, then one has work to do.

5. Conclusions

This paper presented two kinds of challenge likely to be faced by those attempting intellectual and demographic diversification of philosophy curricula – *trade-offs* and *backfires*. One reason to take them seriously is that diversification initiatives often face resistance from aggressive critics and stubborn sceptics, meaning we need to take special care when proceeding. I close with three pieces of practical advice. To start with, we need properly informed understanding of the attitudes and convictions of current generations of students – otherwise, it will be very tough to assess trade-offs and backfire risks. Second, we need more research about how our students experience and respond to diversified curricula, rather than relying on our untutored assumptions about what topics will seem salient. Students are not a homogenous group, thus we should be sceptical of confident assertions that, for instance, they prefer socially engaged, culturally diverse curricula over what is 'abstract', canonical, and traditional. (Anyway, those sorts of distinctions are crude – much contemporary philosophy of race involves complicated highly abstract claims about the metaphysics of race, while 'cool' Asian philosophical schools often surprise students with their calls for respecting tradition and politeness – see Olberding 2019).

A final piece of practical advice is to involve students in normative metaphilosophical debates about the aims, nature, and practice of philosophy. Some people tend to pull a face, sneering at what they see as narcissistic philosophical navel-gazing. But this is a silly attitude – critical reflection on aims and methods is integral to any systematic rational enterprise, not least the term 'philosophy' encompasses so many diverse activities and aspirations. We ought to engage students in these debates, since they are bound to *have* metaphilosophical beliefs. The more open and engaged we are about these issues, the easier it might be to manage the trade-offs and backfires that will increasingly emerge as our curricula continue to diversify.

References

Collins, Patricia Hill. 1990. *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness and the Politics of Empowerment*. Boston: Hyman.

Cooper, David E. 2002. *World Philosophies: An Historical Introduction*, 2nd ed. Oxford: Blackwell.

Cooper, David E. 2008. "Teaching and Truthfulness." *Studies in Philosophy and Education* 27: 79–87.

De Cruz, Helen. 2018. "Prestige Bias: An Obstacle to a Just Academic Philosophy." *Ergo: An Open Access Journal of Philosophy* 5(10): 259-287.

Garfield, Jay and Bryan van Norden. 2016. "If philosophy won't diversify, let's call it what it really is." *The Stone* column, *New York Times*, 11 May.

Henry, Paget. 2000. *Caliban's Reason: Introducing Afro-Caribbean Philosophy.* New York: Routledge.

Kidd, Ian James. 2012. "Humane Philosophy and the Question of Progress." *Ratio* XXV, no. 3: 277-290.

Kidd, Ian James. 2017. "Resisters, Diversity in Philosophy, and the Demographic Problem." *Rivista di estetica* 64: 119-134.

Lloyd, Genevieve. 1984. *The Man of* Reason*: 'Male' and 'Female' in Western Philosophy*. London: Methuen.

MacLeod, Alexus. 2019. *Philosophy of the Ancient Maya: Lords of Time*. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books.

Oakeshott, Michael. 1989. "The Voice of Liberal Learning," in *Michael Oakeshott on Education*, edited by Timothy Fuller, 63-94. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Olberding, Amy. 2019. *The Wrong of Rudeness: Learning Modern Civility from Ancient Chinese Philosophy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Park, Peter K.J. 2013. *Africa, Asia, and the History of Philosophy*: *Racism in the Formation of the Philosophical Canon, 1780–1830*. New York: State University of New York Press.

Toombs, S. Kay. 1993. *The Meaning of Illness: A Phenomenological Account of the Different Perspectives of Physician and Patient*. Amsterdam: Kluwer.

van Norden, Bryan. 2017. *Taking Back Philosophy: A Multicultural Manifesto*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Philosophy for Everyone: Considerations on the Lack of Diversity in Academic Philosophy[1]

Nic R. Jones

Abstract: The lack of diversity in academic philosophy has been well documented. This paper examines the reasons for this issue, identifying two intertwining norms within philosophy which contribute to it: the assertion that the Adversary Method is the primary mode of argumentation and the excessive boundary policing surrounding what constitutes "real" philosophy. These norms reinforce each other, creating a space where diverse practitioners must defend their work as philosophy before it can be engaged with philosophically. Therefore, if we are to address the diversity issue, these norms must change. I advocate for the community of philosophical inquiry to serve as a new standard of practice, as it requires a simultaneous reimagining of both norms, thereby addressing the issues that arise from the two elements working in tandem. With its emphasis on epistemic openness and constructive collaboration, and a broader definition of philosophy which conceptualizes it as a method of questioning/analyzing rather than a particular subject matter, I posit that its implementation would facilitate a more welcoming climate for diverse practitioners. While these changes are unlikely to solve the diversity problem "once and for all," I argue that they would significantly help to improve it.

Keywords: professional philosophy, diversity, adversary method, community of philosophical inquiry, epistemic openness.

Introduction

Philosophy has a diversity problem. Whether we look at the range of social identities represented by practitioners of philosophy or the range of subfields represented in the canon of philosophy, the lack of diversity is apparent. Given the academy's history, it isn't surprising that the *historical* canon is constituted overwhelmingly by white men. However, the problem is more significant given the *present* composition of the field. While many fields have diversified, philosophy lags behind. For example, women received only 29% of PhDs in philosophy between 2009-2014, as compared to 51% in humanities as a whole

[1] I would like to thank Sara Goering, Paul Tubig, and D. Stone Addington for providing substantial comments on various drafts of this paper. I would also like to thank Jana Mohr Lone for introducing me to P4C and the CPI, the audience at the 2019 Otherwise Than Philosophy Conference at Gonzaga University for providing feedback on an early version of the paper, the anonymous reviewers whose comments helped improve and clarify this manuscript, and Maureen Linker for inspiring me to pursue feminist philosophy.

(Schwitzgebel and Jennings 2017). What's more, the proportion of women in philosophy reliably decreases across academic standing (i.e., introductory courses, majors, graduate, faculty) suggesting significant barriers to women's advancement in the field (Praxton, Figdor, and Tiberius 2012). People of color fair much worse. For example, in 2014, only 7.9% of all philosophy doctorates were awarded to traditionally underrepresented racial/ethnic minorities, as compared to 31% for women (Humanities Indicators). Black people represent a particularly small percentage. While 13% of Americans identify as black or African American, only 2% of PhDs in philosophy are awarded to black individuals (as compared to 7% across disciplines) and less than 0.5% of authors published in the most prominent philosophy journals are black (Cherry and Schwitzgebel 2016). At the time of Botts et al.'s (2014) survey, completed in May 2013, only 55 black women were identified in philosophy in the United States, a number unlikely to have risen much since, given the slow rate of racial diversification within the field (Shorter-Bourhanou 2017).

It isn't just diverse practitioners either. Non-traditional subdisciplines of philosophy (e.g., critical race theory, feminist philosophy) are widely under-valued, treated as less prestigious than their more traditional counterparts. As Gordon (2019) puts it, "At many philosophy conferences, 'the good old boys' point toward feminist and African American philosophers disdainfully with, 'They are not philosophers … they're *sociologists*'" (sec. 2, para. 1). Indeed, philosophers from marginalized social groups are more likely to work in non-traditional subdisciplines (Alcoff 2013). Cherry and Schwitzgebel (2016) describe it as "a double whammy. Before one writes or opens one's mouth, cultural biases favor white men over others. After the words come out, cultural biases favor a certain style" (para. 15). For example, the top areas of specialization for black philosophers in the U.S. are Africana, Race, Social and Political, Ethics, and Continental and, for black women philosophers specifically, Race, Social and Political, Ethics, Continental, and Feminism (Botts et al. 2014).

While there are indeed differences across the range of philosophers mentioned above, following Dotson (2012) I refer to them collectively as 'diverse practitioners of philosophy.'[2] This is not meant to conflate the varied experiences of people who fall into the range of diverse social identities and philosophical approaches; of course, intersecting identities and philosophical practices will create a range of experiences. However, by adopting such a term, we can examine the experiences shared by many diverse practitioners.

While a number of issues may contribute to this "chilly climate" for diverse practitioners, in this paper I identify two intertwining norms of practice in

[2] This term is meant to "refer to notoriously under-represented populations within western, academic philosophy. As a result, my use of 'diversity' here is meant to include not only racial, ethnic, gendered, sexual, and ability diversity, but to also include diverse approaches to philosophy, Eastern, applied, engaged, fieldwork, field, public, experimental, literary approaches, etc." (Dotson 2012, 5).

academic philosophy which I argue are particularly problematic if we wish to make the field more welcoming to them: the Adversary Method and the strict boundary policing of what is and is not taken to be philosophy. While these two norms have been well-documented within the field and have been considered separately, by examining them as a mutually reinforcing pair, we can better understand how the interaction creates a particularly hostile environment for diverse practitioners. In response, I propose an alternative to the standard practices, building on the approach of the Community of Philosophical Inquiry (CPI) adopted from Philosophy for Children (P4C) programs (Lone & Burroughs, 2016). If we wish to find practical ways to mitigate the diversity issue in academic philosophy, a fundamental shift in the norms of the field is essential. I argue that the CPI model is particularly well-equipped to fill this role by simultaneously questioning and reimagining both norms in tandem.

The Norms of Academic Philosophy

While there is no singular way to practice philosophy, there are undoubtedly norms of practice that dictate acceptable methods and content within the English-speaking world. I start with the standard method – the Adversary Method – and then turn to the standard content, looking at how boundaries are policed. After considering each norm in turn, I then examine how they mutually reinforce each other, negatively impacting diverse practitioners.

Method

The predominant mode of argumentation expected of academic philosophers has been termed the Adversary Method by Janice Moulton ([1983] 1996). She explains that "the philosophic enterprise is seen as an unimpassioned debate between *adversaries* who try to defend their own views against counterexamples and produce counterexamples to opposing views" (14). The use of this method is often likened to war, where opposing sides do battle, attempting to tear down their opponent's argument. The argument left standing at the end of this trial-by-fire "wins." In this way, "it is assumed that the only, or at any rate, the best, way of evaluating work in philosophy is to subject it to the strongest or most extreme opposition. And it is assumed that the best way of presenting work in philosophy is to address it to an imagined opponent and muster all the evidence one can to support it" (14).

Argumentation theorists often mirror this language. For example, Bettinghaus (1966) states that "[a]rgumentation is unique in its implication of controversy. It is difficult to imagine an argumentative speech in which there is no suggestion of an opposing side or, perhaps, of opposing speakers" (145). Still, Stevens and Cohen (2019) note the dangers of this argumentation style: "too much of it can turn a largely cooperative deliberation into a competitive negotiation, which in turn can spiral out of control into a no-holds-barred

quarrel!" (1). While this argumentation style isn't unique to philosophy, Moulton ([1983] 1996) is not the only one to note its particular hold on the field. Both proponents and detractors of the Adversary Method have recognized its prominence in philosophy (e.g., Garry 1995; Govier 1999; Aikin 2011; Dotson 2011; Hundleby 2013).

These facts alone do not necessarily mean that its use is problematic. It is oftentimes thought to be the best way to ascertain the truth. Yet as Moulton ([1983] 1996) holds, counterexample reasoning, a hallmark of the Adversary Method, is simply "not a good way to reach conclusions about complex issues" (21). It demonstrates that a particular argument in favor of some position is inadequate but does not help us reach any conclusion with our interlocutors. If the aim is to destroy the other's argument rather than build understanding, then other types of reasoning, which may be just as or more valuable in certain contexts, get left out.

Dotson (2011) echoes Moulton's worry, stating that "if the adversarial method becomes privileged as 'the' way to conduct oneself philosophically, such privileging renders other forms of philosophical engagement inherently 'unphilosophical'" (404). This approach neglects (1) people who may be uncomfortable adopting a more combative style of reasoning and (2) other philosophical traditions that place more emphasis on collaborative reasoning, painting them as inherently less philosophical.

The claim that the Adversary Method is more suited for men, and particularly white men, on account of their socialization and the limiting gender norms of politeness placed on women has been argued for by many (e.g., Moulton [1983] 1996; Burrow 2010; Hundleby 2013). Moeller (1997) describes her struggle to adapt to the highly adversarial environment of her graduate program, summarizing it succinctly and humorously: "At graduate school, I was enrolled in seminars in which men often outnumbered women three to one. The style of philosophy was often ruthlessly combative. Some women in the department came to describe the dominant discussion style as 'penis-waving'" (128). Continuing, she describes the feelings elicited in such spaces where the Adversarial Method was clearly the norm: "During graduate philosophy seminars, I often went into extreme panics, as discomfort with narrow intellectualist arguments in seminars gave way to feelings of danger at my visceral experience of male domination. The seminars may have been on philosophical topics, but the mode of argument felt like verbal, sexist violence" (128). Similar experiences have been widely shared by women in philosophy at a broad range of institutions (e.g., see Alcoff 2003).

Content

As noted, 'philosophy' is often taken to be, specifically, traditional Western philosophy. Having one's work accused of not being "real" philosophy is a common experience shared by diverse practitioners. Dotson (2012) notes the

experience of being asked the question 'How is this paper philosophy?' upon presenting her work. As she explains, being asked this question is "undoubtedly a slight, whether the question-asker sees it that way or not. It is both a charge and a challenge" (8). It indirectly asserts that the paper is not believed to be philosophy, demanding the author to defend their paper as such before it be taken seriously. Syl Ko (Ko and Ko 2019) also notes this type of boundary policing in writing about her experiences as a philosophy graduate student:

> [T]here's been a general failure to investigate the walls separating one discipline or field from another – and the same with subfields – and how this plays into keeping things as they are. I came up against these disciplinary walls so many times when I was trying to plan out my dissertation research. I can appeal to *this* writer or tradition, but not *that* one because, technically, that one isn't 'real' philosophy … it's 'only' cultural studies or history or something like that. If you try to push against this, now you're infecting the methodology so *clearly* you don't quite 'get' it yet! (53)

Similarly, Jenkins (2014) recounts an experience she had in grad school after explaining her work on the metaphysics of gender categories to a peer: "[H]e confidently told me, 'That's not philosophy' – adding (presumably for good measure) that neither was it 'interesting'" (262). She explains that "[f]eminist philosophy may be viewed as suspiciously close to sociology, politics or cultural criticism. I suspect that this marginalisation is the main factor in dismissive attitudes of the kind expressed by the graduate student who told me that my work…is 'not philosophy'" (264).

Even in instances where there may *appear* to be some uptake to diverse work, it is not always very robust. For example, Anika Mann (Allen et al. 2008) writes:

> My struggle has been trying to figure out ways to bring my blackness and my femaleness together with philosophy and to find acceptance of such philosophical worth within the academy. I think that most departments, to be honest, give lip service to this kind of acceptance. 'Yes, we'd love to have someone come here to do African American philosophy. We'd love someone to come and do feminist philosophy and try to bridge these gaps.' But when you actually come and say, 'OK, this is what I'm going to do,' then you get, 'What philosophy do you *really* do?'… The implication becomes, 'What within the *mainstream* Western canon can you really do?' (172-3)

This is not to say that philosophy departments which genuinely value these types of philosophy don't exist, only that they seem to be rare. Gines (2011) speaks to the difference working in such a department makes, describing her experience of being in a space that encouraged her to "examine philosophy through the lenses of race, gender, class, and sexual orientation while also being prepared to interrogate these very categories and concepts with the theoretical tools available to philosophy" as "affirming and transformative" (429-430).

Moeller (1997), however, points to an issue specific to analytic philosophy:

> When we new graduate students discussed our interests, I talked about feminism and rethinking of ethics. One graduate student after another asked incredulously why I had come to philosophy to study *that*. One older student made a sweeping judgment that he did not care for any of the work I liked, since he cared about 'clarity and rigor.' I would later learn that insistence upon 'clarity and rigor,' the slogan of standards in analytic philosophy, can be used to belittle and discredit anything which a traditional philosopher does not understand or does not want to understand. (128)

Gines (2011) attributes the fact that her graduate philosophy department "took seriously the value of race and gender diversity among graduate students and faculty beyond mere lip service and tokenism" to it being "pluralistic in the sense that it offered training in both the analytic and continental philosophy traditions" (430). This may be due to phenomenology, perceived as a distinctly continental branch of philosophy, being the birthplace of certain fundamental concepts to feminist philosophies and philosophies of race, such as embodied experience. For example, Marcano (Allen et al. 2008) attributes the relative acceptance of her work on race with working within the continental tradition: "Society for Phenomenology and Existential Philosophy (SPEP) is the place where I can do stuff on race and it's also the place where I have felt significantly more comfortable in thinking about black feminism and philosophy's role. It hasn't been at the APA" (188).

While diverse forms of philosophical work do have specialized journals and conferences, they are still marginalized. Smaller, specialized journals often have lower impact factors and are often simply not taken as seriously, even in cases where they may be just as competitive as more mainstream journals. Cudd (2002) explains: "While there is a feminist journal of philosophy, *Hypatia*, it is still difficult to get one's male colleagues to accept it as equally valuable as, say, *Philosophical Studies*, which has about the same reported acceptance rate" (13). Yet higher impact, mainstream journals often do not accept what they may consider to be "specialized" work, leaving specialized philosophy journals and journals in other fields to be the only options: "The virtual absence of feminist philosophy in [high-ranking journals] stands in stark contrast to the acceptance of feminist work in other humanities and social sciences" (Haslanger 2008, 216).

Consequences for Diverse Practitioners

Dotson (2012), drawing from her experience as a black woman in philosophy, states "philosophy is *seen* as a 'white man's game' and I am often made to feel a sense of incongruence as a result of that impression" (4). This "sense of incongruence" can, and does, come from both direct and indirect forms of gatekeeping against diverse practitioners. Gines (2011) describes being asked why she chose to go into philosophy, answering both regarding her passion for philosophy and her desire to change the "dismal numbers of Black women philosophers" (433).

> Upon hearing this, the interviewer was surprised that I would go into such a white-male-dominated discipline rather than running in the opposite direction… I am often annoyed by this reaction to my being a philosopher. I wonder, 'Why wouldn't I (or *shouldn't* I) because of (or in spite of) my embodied existence – that is, my embodiment as a Black woman – be interested in philosophical reasoning and fields of inquiry?' I think to myself, 'Who gave white men ownership of philosophical discourse?' (433)

Similarly, Bell (2002) reflects on her experiences on hiring committees over her 40 years as an academic philosopher:

> I have seen women and minority men with superb qualifications culled out of searches, some quite recent ones, owing to the vocal and mean-spirited opposition of a few colleagues… [They] assur[ed] me that they are indeed open, even anxious, to hire a woman or a minority man – if *only* one who was good enough would present herself or himself since, as they have actually and quite earnestly said, all they really want is to hire 'the best man for the job.' Then they lead the charge to hire yet another White man… I leave angry and amazed at the often incredible ways that those allegedly much prized standards shift from candidate to candidate and from search to search. (251-2)

This is not to suggest that those described by Bell and others like them are doing this from a place of overt racism or sexism. She notes that they respond to such accusations "with protestations of great indignation at being so misunderstood and even falsely accused" (251). Rather, this account highlights the insidious ways in which unconscious biases can influence decisions about who is allowed to work in the field.[3]

For those diverse practitioners that do get hired, going up for tenure produces similar experiences. As Cudd (2002) explains:

> For example, a woman is denied tenure on the grounds that her work is not 'high quality' or not 'philosophical,' as judged by the perceived quality and titles of the journals she publishes in. It turns out that journals that her colleagues count as top quality philosophical journals turn down (as insufficiently philosophical), without review by referees, any article that considers gender to be a significant category of philosophical analysis. But the journals that she does publish in are considered 'non-mainstream' in the profession (e.g., they have 'feminist' in their titles or subtitles). (10)

Additionally, Superson (2002) explains that "[t]hose who work in feminism often are not credited or even docked for not publishing in such journals even if their [reviewers] have not done so. Even when their work is published in 'top tier' journals, reprinted in anthologies, and meets other standards of professional excellence… a biased department can discredit it" (103). Jenkins (2014) recognizes the double bind in which this places feminist philosophers: One can either adopt the status quo, sacrificing the value they put in feminist philosophy but maintaining the resources needed to work in the field,

[3] For further analysis of implicit bias in philosophy, see Brownstein and Saul (2016).

or one can pursue the research which they value, challenging the status quo, with the risk of being pushed out of the field in these ways. While the authors cited here are largely focused on feminist philosophers, this can just as easily apply to any diverse practitioner. For those whose work is outside the mainstream, the same issues of publication and recognition apply.

While more traditional, Western practitioners of philosophy can also be asked to explain why their work is philosophy, the effects of being asked "how is this philosophy?" can differ depending on whether one already perceives oneself to be a member of the philosophical community. A white man who works on logic and inference through complex mathematical modeling may experience the question as an annoyance or evidence of a grumpy question-asker.[4] However, for a diverse practitioner of philosophy, it may be experienced as a personal attack. Still, this experience may be wider than one would expect. Reflecting on the response she received after publishing "How Is This Paper Philosophy?", Dotson (2019) writes:

> The most shocking thing made evident by [this] uptake … is just how *many* people feel out of step with philosophico-orthodoxy. Even the most successful among us, Graham Priest and other 'big name' feminist philosophers … are at varying times made to feel 'put out' if they do not toe a certain line. These people – these 'big-name' full professors – feel like they are diverse practitioners. When even the most successful among us feel alienated, then there is a serious problem with our professional culture. (10)

As such, not even success in the field necessarily guards diverse practitioners from the effects of the boundary policing and gatekeeping that are so prevalent.

Faced with either leaving the field and starting a new career or continuing in a field which is hostile toward them, even highly successful diverse practitioners often question whether they've made the right choice in staying in academic philosophy. Haslanger (2008) describes struggling over whether she should quit philosophy and give up tenure: "In spite of my deep love for philosophy, it just didn't seem worth it" (210). Syl Ko describes a similar experience she had as a graduate student, only a year away from receiving her Ph.D. (Ko and Ko 2019). Unlike Haslanger, she decided that staying in academic philosophy wasn't worth it. Dotson (2019) summarizes this widely shared feeling:

> I remember the day when it all became crystal clear that I should quit academic philosophy. The day I realized that (i) the negative judgments, (ii) the snarling disregard for my ideas and projects as 'philosophically uninteresting,' and (iii) the general sense of not being welcome would characterize my professional life. I may have turned to my officemate … and said, 'I think I made a mistake.' I am sure it was probably a run-of-the-mill day for her. After all, I said something like that every day, which may be a common feature of the graduate careers of most

[4] Thank you to Conor Mayo-Wilson for providing this example.

> diverse practitioners in professional philosophy. On that particular day, and every day since, I really meant it. (5)

As Haslanger (2008) puts it, "I don't think we need to scratch our heads and wonder what on earth is going on that keeps women out of philosophy… [M]ost women and minorities who are sufficiently qualified to get into graduate school in philosophy have choices. They don't have to put up with this mistreatment" (211-12).

Dotson (2012) diagnoses these issues of boundary policing and gatekeeping as stemming from the culture of justification endemic to the Adversary Method, arguing that there is "a heightened value placed upon processes of legitimation, or identifying congruence between accepted patterns and standards with one's own belief, project, and/or processing, for the sake of positive status" (7). Diverse practitioners are then required to defend their work *as* philosophy before the argument presented is even considered. Jenkins (2014) explains this extra hurdle, using feminist philosophy as an example:

> [U]nlike a mainstream scholar, a feminist researcher will … have to begin her argument from a more basic starting point, rather than simply picking up a well-defined issue and moving it forward … Even if the works in question have already been criticised by other feminists, these criticisms may need to be rehearsed again for the benefit of those … who are less familiar with feminist scholarship. (266)

In this way, philosophical approaches that deviate from the "accepted patterns and standards" require this extra step to be legitimized as philosophy – a step which mainstream philosophers need not consider – further increasing hostility toward diverse practitioners.

Mutually Reinforcing Norms

It is not just that diverse practitioners are doubly disadvantaged, working against the hostile environment created by the Adversary Method while facing the boundary policing against the areas in which marginalized groups are empirically more likely to work. Rather, the takeaway here is that the Adversary Method is employed as a means of enforcing the stringent boundaries that are already in place. A diverse practitioner must defend their work as philosophy *using* the Adversary Method to even be let in the room.

The Adversary Method itself is often written into the very definition of "philosophy." Ragland and Heidt (2001), editors of the anthology *What Is Philosophy?*, state in the introduction that there seems to be a consensus among the contributing authors that philosophy aims at "relentless, comprehensive examination and criticism of concepts and inferences" (4). Given the *relentlessness* of this criticism, we are left with a rather combative picture of philosophy, in which criticism is launched for the sake of criticism, a feature very much in line with the Adversary Method. Priest (2006) provides a somewhat

more nuanced account. He writes, "philosophy is precisely that intellectual inquiry in which *anything* is open to critical challenge and scrutiny" (202). While this doesn't seem particularly different from Ragland and Heidt's definition, he adds, "This may make it sound terribly negative, as though all that philosophers try to do is knock things down. That's not a terribly attractive picture. Neither is it an accurate one" (203). Priest goes on to portray it as "a highly *constructive* enterprise" that is "responsible for creating many new ideas, systems of thought, [and] pictures of the world and its features" (203). Yet Priest doesn't step too far from the combative picture of philosophy. For him, philosophy is ultimately defined by its "unbridled criticism" (207).

Given these definitional boundaries, we cannot simply aim to resist the Adversary Method without also rethinking our conception of what philosophy is and its proper scope. Responding to Priest's (2006) definition and the culture of justification she identifies in contemporary academic philosophy, Dotson (2012) proposes a shift to a culture of praxis. This alternative has two components:

> 1) Value placed on seeking issues and circumstances pertinent to our living, where one maintains a healthy appreciation for the differing issues that will emerge as pertinent among different populations and
>
> 2) Recognition and encouragement of multiple canons and multiple ways of understanding disciplinary validation. (17)

Each component responds to one of the norms I have identified above: method and content, respectively. Within Dotson's culture of praxis, the emphasis of philosophy is more on seeking understanding, rather than critiquing an opponent, yet this cannot take place without simultaneously questioning and widening the boarders of what counts as "real" philosophy. Given the intertwining nature of these two components, we cannot rely on an intervention which fails to recognize their mutually reinforcing character.

An Alternative Model

In this section, I propose an alternative model intended to help make the field more welcoming to present and future diverse practitioners. The proposed model, the community of philosophical inquiry (CPI), emphasizes an openness to recognizing alternative views and a more collaborative practice. In the first section, I explicate what this method of philosophy entails and offer Lugones's (1987) concept of playful "world"-traveling to frame how we might transition into the type of mindset required for a successful CPI. I then consider how we may widen our notion of what counts as "real" philosophy to mitigate the boundary policing that many diverse practitioners face, proposing a definition of philosophy which positions it as a method of questioning rather than a specified subject area. In the final subsection, I discuss how the CPI model addresses not only the issues of method and content, but the issues that arise from their

interaction, and how employing something like it might work to mitigate the diversity problem.

Method

In a community of inquiry, philosophical or otherwise, members of the community work together to "examine a problematic concept or situation, following the inquiry where it leads, consistent with logic and critical reasoning" (Lone and Burroughs 2016, 53). While disagreement can and often does arise, the community of inquiry does not pit one view against another; rather, members of the community co-construct ideas, work together to consider support for what they each believe, and help each other identify their assumptions. It is a collaborative effort rather than a battle to see who is right. This model, adapted to a community of *philosophical* inquiry, is frequently used in Philosophy for Children (P4C) programs.

The "rules" of the CPI fall primarily around modes of interaction. The CPI aims to create a space of "epistemological modesty" where it is acknowledged that all members of the community can be wrong, including the facilitator in P4C sessions. Groups are given some leeway to determine their own questions for discussion, and an open sharing of thoughts about the chosen topic is encouraged, without the prioritization of one person's thoughts over another's. While sound reasoning is still valued and others' views can be challenged, interactions between members of the community do not mirror the Adversary Method. "Counterarguments" and critique aren't unrelentingly aimed at finding and criticizing faults, but at examining what can be improved upon. As such, an attitude focused on "winning" is discouraged, replaced by one of collective synthesis. The goal is not to come to one settled answer, but instead to work towards understanding the topic at hand, considering and reconsidering one's own view and the views of others collaboratively.[5]

The concept of epistemic openness is of particular importance to this process and the CPI. As Lone (2018) defines it, epistemic openness entails "a willingness to entertain unfamiliar (and sometimes uncomfortable and perhaps seemingly strange) possibilities" (58). We must be comfortable with uncertainty and willing to change our minds if presented with the appropriate evidence, including, I will suggest in the next section, when it comes to what counts as philosophy.

In her work on feminist epistemology and ontology, María Lugones (1987) presents a concept which we may apply here to aid in attaining greater epistemic openness: playful "world"-traveling. While Lugones does not provide a precise definition for what she means by a "world," her descriptions give a sense of something like a community with behavior and value norms. One "travels"

[5] This aim has received philosophical support outside of P4C theory as well (e.g., Midgley 2018).

between worlds when one enters the sphere of another world or community, adopting the norms of that world as part of their existence there.

We can travel between worlds either in an agonistically playful way (which Lugones ultimately characterizes as unplayful) or a lovingly playful way. She describes the agonistic sense as:

> …one in which *competence* is supreme. You'd better know the rules of the game. In agonistic play there is risk, there is *uncertainty*, but the uncertainty is about who is going to win and who is going to lose. There are rules that inspire hostility… [T]he person who is a participant in the game has a *fixed conception of him or herself*… [T]he players are imbued with *self-importance* in agonistic play since they are so keen on winning given their own merits, their very own competence… The agonistic traveler is a conqueror, an imperialist. (15, emphasis original)

This is not to suggest that competence is unimportant; rather, what is often wrongly taken to be of highest importance is *demonstrating* one's competence, and specifically doing so in a way that matches the dominant world's conception of competence. Lugones further describes this type of play as the "western man's construction of playfulness" (16), and it shares many similarities with the standard method of Western philosophy. As with the Adversary Method, it is a method of competition, focused on "winning," where one must defend their competence against the attacks of one's competitor.

However, if we compare this to loving playfulness, we see that this is not the only possible method of either world-traveling or philosophy. To illustrate, Lugones imagines two people making a game of breaking rocks apart to see the colorful parts within. It's not a competition, but a playful, shared activity:

> The playfulness that gives meaning to our activity includes uncertainty, but in this case the uncertainty is an *openness to surprise*… We are not self-important, we are not fixed in particular constructions of ourselves, which is part of saying that we are *open to self-construction*. We may not have rules, and when we do have rules, there are no rules that are to us sacred. We are not worried about competence. We are not wedded to a particular way of doing things. While playful we have not abandoned ourselves to, nor are we stuck in, any particular "world." We *are there creatively*. We are not passive. (16-17, emphasis original)

In a sense, this type of playfulness inherently includes epistemic openness, and we can imagine such playfulness in an exchange, not just between children playing with rocks,[6] but between two academic philosophers as well. Picture two philosophers at a conference discussing a given philosophical topic. Whether their views on the topic align does not matter for this type of play, but for the sake of illustration, let's assume they disagree. Perhaps they are used to different argumentation methods, perhaps one has been instructed in the analytic

[6] Lugones does not specify that the two people in the example are children – in fact, she identifies one of them as herself – but many readers may assume this to be the case upon encountering the example.

tradition and the other in continental, or perhaps one is from a more traditional branch of philosophy and the other is from a marginalized subdiscipline. Regardless, they are both willing to ask the other questions about their view, not primarily with the aim of finding weak points in their argument, but to better understand where the other is coming from and to think about multiple ways of arguing for each person's view. Neither holds staunchly to their own views; they willingly participate in this type of world-traveling, to try out new possibilities, to be wrong, to learn from and with the other. They are not concerned with proving their position to be the correct one or even coming to one settled answer but with exploring the topic together, collaboratively learning. In this way, by practicing playful world-traveling, we can learn to be more epistemically open and thus better able to participate in the reasoning together of the CPI.

The CPI allows for a range of diverse views to be considered without the threat of boundary policing or hostile attacks. Yet adopting the CPI doesn't simply mean "playing nice" with one another. While treating each other with kindness is important, the primary focus is a commitment to reasoning together as opposed to reasoning against one another. As such, it is also a commitment to making space for and welcoming views unlike one's own. It's a space of "radical openness," as hooks (1989) may call it. Her work identifies the margins as "much more than a site of deprivation…it is also the side of radical possibility… It offers to one the possibility of radical perspective from which to see and create, to imagine alternatives, new worlds" (20). In making room for diverse practitioners and not just allowing but encouraging a greater variety of ideas in the conversation, the CPI brings this sense of radical openness to philosophy.

Content

We have seen how the boundary policing of "real" philosophy works to exclude diverse practitioners. Such a limited conception is problematic, but some limit is needed. *Everything* cannot count as philosophy. The question now becomes: How might we think about the limits of philosophy?

P4C theorists generally define philosophy by its process of inquiry and asking questions. Lone and Burroughs (2016) write, "For philosophers, questions – and the relationships between various questions – are the bedrock of the discipline. In order to articulate a philosophical problem, analyze an argument, or understand an alternative view, we have to be able to formulate clear and relevant questions" (20). While questioning can be done combatively (e.g., to search for flaws in the other's argument), what is meant here is the type of questioning which might be part of Dotson's (2012) culture of praxis. For example, questioning might arise out of curiosity toward something one hasn't considered yet, to better understand our interlocutor's position, or slowing down to fully attend to the complexity of an issue. As such, this conception of philosophy places significant emphasis on the constructive element of philosophy. As seen in our initial discussion of the CPI, characterizing philosophy

in this positive/constructive way does not foreclose the possibility of critique. Rather, critique is posed in a constructive and collaborative, rather than destructive, way that helps the other build their theory.

Here, the emphasis is not on the topics discussed within philosophy; it is on what it means to *do* philosophy, to *philosophize*. Philosophy is the way in which we approach a topic, not the topic itself. However, we still need some limit. Just as *everything* cannot count as philosophy, *all types of questioning* cannot count as philosophy. Some questions aim for scientific or factual answers; some explore the significance or meaning of the object of inquiry, while others dig into under-explored assumptions. To help explore where the boundary may lie, let's take a question that often arises in P4C sessions: "Why is the sky blue?"

Despite this being a simple question, it can be asked in several different ways. Initially, it may seem to be a question of physics, where we may appeal to the wavelengths of different colors of light and how certain wavelengths are reflected or absorbed. It may be a biological question regarding how the eye works so that we may see the blueness of the sky. Or it might be a philosophical question, taken either epistemologically to mean "How do we/Can we know that the sky is blue?" or phenomenologically to mean "What is my embodied experience of the sky's blueness, and what significance does it have?" Albeit, some of these may be better phrased than simply "Why is the sky blue?"; nonetheless, each questions the meaning of the sky's blueness in some way.

What is the difference between the scientific and philosophical meanings of this question? To help delineate this distinction, we might look to Bertrand Russell's ([1912] 2001) *The Problems of Philosophy*. The distinction, he says, lies in how we may answer the question:

> [T]he answers suggested by philosophy are none of them demonstrably true… [I]t is part of the business of philosophy to continue the consideration of such questions, to make us aware of their importance, to examine all the approaches to them, and to keep alive that speculative interest in the universe which is apt to be killed by confining ourselves to definitely ascertainable knowledge. (83)

Contrarily, the sciences ask "those questions which are already capable of definite answers" (83).

This provides us with a baseline for distinguishing philosophical from other types of questions, but what might it mean to ask a question *philosophically*? Here again, I turn to Russell:

> Philosophy, though unable to tell us with certainty what is the true answer to the doubts which it raises, is able to suggest many possibilities which *enlarge our thoughts and free them from the tyranny of custom*. Thus, while diminishing our feeling of certainty as to what things are, it greatly increases our knowledge as to what they may be; *it removes the somewhat arrogant dogmatism of those who have never travelled into the region of liberating doubt, and it keeps alive our sense of wonder by showing familiar things in an unfamiliar aspect*. (83-4, emphasis added)

If, then, we wish philosophy to free us from "the tyranny of custom," we must approach our questioning with a sense of "liberating doubt" rather than "arrogant dogmatism," a sentiment very much in line with the CPI's epistemic openness. If we do not, we risk limiting philosophy by its own dogmatic norms, perpetuating the excessive boundary policing and gatekeeping that has come to dominate the field. This is what is meant by the *type* of questioning. If the question is asked in this open philosophical spirit, it counts as a philosophical question and, therefore, as a matter that is appropriately investigated by the field of philosophy.[7]

Benefits for Diverse Practitioners

What makes the CPI, as it is employed in P4C, a particularly useful model in addressing the issues associated with the current norms is that we, in a sense, must work from the ground up. Children in the P4C classroom rarely have much, if any, formal experience with philosophy prior to their experiences with P4C. This puts the P4C facilitator in a unique position where questions of content (i.e., what makes something properly philosophical) and method (i.e., how the discussion should be conducted) need to be considered in tandem, rather than treating them as two separate elements. With the Adversary Method and boundary policing intertwined and mutually reinforcing, our intervention must simultaneously address both in a way analogous to the CPI.

If academic philosophy becomes a place of greater epistemic openness, the climate should become much less hostile towards diverse practitioners. Perhaps the most obvious way in which this would help would be in mitigating the adversarial nature of the field. As Superson (2002) writes:

> Professional philosophers tend to be identified with their own work, as it is often inspired by events in their lives or reflects a lifelong quest for answers to questions that interest them. When one's work comes under an onslaught of unfair criticisms, especially ones that amount to a gender-based attack, one feels as if one's very self, in addition to one's livelihood and well-being, is threatened. (108)

The CPI model welcomes diverse perspectives as a way to "play" in a broader set of worlds and to start to understand a broader range of views.

By focusing less on the content boundaries of philosophy, we allow a greater breadth of questions to be analyzed by the field. With the CPI's emphasis on epistemic openness and philosophical questioning, topics or approaches that may otherwise be left out (e.g., applied philosophy, non-Western philosophy, *both* analytic and continental philosophy) become welcome. Philosophy no longer implicitly means 'Western philosophy,' but anything approached

[7] I do not pretend to have definitively answered what it means for a question to be asked 'philosophically,' but for the sake of brevity, I will leave my proposed boundary for philosophy with these considerations from Russell.

philosophically, including those areas that have often been excluded (e.g., critical race theory, Eastern philosophy, applied philosophy), and diverse practitioners need not "prove" themselves worthy just to have a seat at the table.

Dotson (2012) states that the question isn't "whether black women are good enough to do philosophy. Of course, we are. But we doubt whether the environment provided by professional philosophy is good enough for us" (4). Diverse practitioners should not have to feel as though they must defend their right to be in the field or question whether the field can allow them to thrive. By building from a model that addresses both the method and content norms in unison, it is my hope that the CPI's benefits will help to make the field more welcoming to diverse practitioners.[8]

Further Clarifications on the CPI

One still may worry that the CPI might simply create a veneer of inclusion rather than creating a space of true inclusion. Here, I wish to expound on two features of the CPI to help clarify it as the latter. First, I discuss an issue raised by Tempest Henning (2018) that non-adversarial approaches cater to white women and ignore the communication styles of black women, positioning them as adversarial. Briefly stated, while I do not argue against Henning's claim regarding non-adversarial feminist argumentation models (NAFAM) in general, I wish to distinguish my approach from other NAFAM in that it leaves room for a variety of communication styles, including ones that may seem adversarial to outsiders of a given CPI. Second, one may wonder how to approach those who do not abide by the rules of engagement of the CPI. Undoubtedly, some participants would still be bigoted, condescending, or simply not epistemically open, and they might create damage within a community if their words are not restrained in some way. I discuss what we may wish to do in those cases.

Henning (2018) raises concerns regarding what she calls "non-adversarial feminist argumentation model[s] (NAFAM)" (197). As she describes them, the majority of NAFAM wish to restrict argumentation to an entirely non-adversarial model, which does not leave room for African American women whose linguistic practices can include what is perceived as "lewd or indecorous language, signifying, culturally toned diminutives …, simultaneous speech, and talking with attitude" (203). Since many of these linguistic practices are perceived as "unprofessional, ill educated, and hostile" (203) by the dominant culture, NAFAM do not leave space for them in the conversation. If these speech patterns were intended to be hostile, we may well have reason to discourage them, but Henning notes that "within our community, these practices do not usually carry the negative connotation that they hold within dominant culture" (204). Instead, it is

[8] Admittedly, this paints a rather rosy picture. Many systematic and individual changes would need to occur to reach this point. For recommendations for action, see Haslanger (2008), hooks (1994), Kidd (2017), Kings (2019), and Shorter-Bourhanou (2017).

seen as "a sign of confidence, knowledge, authority, and even as a means of resistance [against the dominant culture]. Usually, it is deemed as impolite [only] if it is incorrectly deployed, done with strangers outside of the community, or excessive for no reason" (204).

Henning writes, "One person's harmful argumentative practice is another's form of 'tough-love,' assertiveness, or act of resistance" (205). Context here is key. It matters from whom it's coming and towards whom it's directed. From an outside perspective, seemingly adversarial practices, such as interrupting one's interlocuter, may in some contexts actually be "affiliative and cooperative" (206). Henning uses the following example to illustrate this point:

> A Black woman might be arguing with a friend about x, and while making her points the friend can 'interrupt' the speaker with expressions such as 'uhm,' 'uh-huh,' 'I hear you,' 'girl,' 'bitch,' or a plethora of other responses… The interruption can function as affirmation that the listener is indeed listening. Being entirely silent while a speaker is speaking, within many AAWSC [African American women's speech communities] practices actually has the opposite effect as what the NAFAM purports… To not partake in this call-and-response model is seen as not partaking in the dialogue or not listening – and for us that's just rude. (206)

Henning clearly argues that to take certain actions or phrases as inherently adversarial leaves certain communities out. To make the CPI welcoming to all, we need to guard against this sort of mentality. How might we do this? Henning suggests that "[e]ducation regarding the various cultural practices of politeness has the potential to not render AAWSC as hostile when our speech practices are enacted (by us) within arguments or debates" (207-208). In addition, I would like to add that we should ask for clarification in cases where we haven't been educated or are unsure. This may seem like an obvious suggestion, but when we are met with what we perceive as adversariality, it is easy to become defensive and adopt an adversarial mindset ourselves. A simple clarificatory question about the intended meaning of a person's statement has the potential to head off this type of escalation and should feel very much at home in the question-centered CPI.

One's next question might be whether my proposed model is a NAFAM. It is certainly non-adversarial in nature and has been influenced by feminist philosophy. However, I do not see it as a NAFAM in the way that Henning describes. I will not dispute Henning's definition, as many non-adversarial feminist approaches do follow her description. Yet the CPI leaves open the possibility that what counts as respectful philosophical dialogue may differ between different philosophical "communities." If, in a particular instance, one's current "community" is a small group of friends, respectful dialogue may look different than if the present community is comprised of fellow academics attending a conference.

The difference between these two cases is in how these norms were constructed. In the case of the group of friends, a mutual construction of norms is

more likely given that each member of the community knows the others well. Each community member understands that, what may appear as hostile adversariality to an outsider, is meant to be cooperative and respectful. This is significantly less likely, if possible at all, when the community in question is large, diverse, and most community members don't know each other, such as at a conference. A short-term community of audience members typically will not all know each other well enough in the limited time of the conference for such norms of engagement to be truly co-constructed. The risk, here, is that members of the community from dominant social groups will simply assert their norms of communication, leaving marginalized members feeling unwelcome in the same way that Henning suggests. However, this is something we can guard against.

The co-construction of a CPI undoubtedly requires a give and take on all sides, but as Bierria (2014) notes, there may need to be a little more "give" from those with privilege. As Bierria explains, two agents of the same social group "acknowledg[e] one another's intentions via a mutually constructed background of meaning," and due to this shared background meaning, cases of misunderstanding are "often addressed through correctives such as clarification from the agent, increased imagination from the observer, or a third party's explanatory intervention" (131). However, between agents of different social groups, this shared background meaning may be absent. This is particularly problematic when a disenfranchised agent is misunderstood by an enfranchised one. Because the shared background meanings of enfranchised agents are already given institutional backup, supporting their mistaken reading of the disenfranchised agent's actions, they are less likely to engage in the types of corrective processes that often occur between agents who share background meanings. Even if the disenfranchised agent attempts to clarify, "her explanation does not benefit from the kind of productive self-doubt from others needed to realistically challenge or correct others" (Bierria 132). If we are to make the field more welcoming to diverse practitioners, those with privilege must make the effort to break of the habit of this active ignorance, consciously adopting a stance of "productive self-doubt."

Of course, even if the CPI were widely adopted within the field, there would undoubtedly be individual actors who would choose not to make this effort and continue to be bigoted, overly aggressive, and/or simply rude. What do we do with these "bullies"? I believe the first step should be confirming that they are actually bullies. For example, suppose A says X, which is bigoted in some way. B, as a member of their philosophical community, can respond in a number of ways. Here, we'll consider three possible responses: (1) B assumes A said X with bigoted intent and responds adversarially, shutting A down; (2) B takes a pause in the discussion of the topic at hand to ask A why they believe X; (3) B

assumes A didn't actually mean X, simply continuing the conversation.[9] Option 3 immediately seems ineffective if we wish to maintain a space of radical openness; we need some set of rules for respectful engagement so that all members feel respected and safe. Even if A didn't actually mean X, it doesn't mean that A should be free to say it.

For many, option 1 may seem more natural, especially if X refers to a social group to which B or someone close to B belongs, and I do not want to discount the anger and fear that can arise from hearing another use bigoted language. However, if we are to maintain a space of radical openness, option 2 is likely to be more helpful under the CPI model. This is *not* because we wish to be open to bigotry, but because we wish to recognize that A may be ignorant of how X is bigoted. If A is ignorant, option 2 both gives them a chance to be educated, so as not to say X again in the future, and to explain what they really meant. This method of "calling in" (as opposed to calling out A in option 1)[10] is in line with the epistemic modesty required for the CPI – a recognition that we are all fallible and hold views that could be mistaken – thereby helping to build a space of openness.

Sadly, it is possible that option 2 reveals that A understood the implications of X and said it intentionally. At this point, some may feel that meeting these hostile actors in an adversarial manner is required, arguing that the bigoted view is incorrect. Others may be uncomfortable with this tactic and feel that they need to remove themselves from the conversation. Because B needs to make their individual decision based on what they feel comfortable doing, I don't believe there can be one singular way to proceed from here. Nonetheless, it is clear this is not something which can be allowed if we are to maintain a safe intellectual space of radical openness.[11]

Conclusion

Bell (2002) writes: "My sadness comes from my recognition that my own discipline seems one of the most recalcitrant to change. I'll never understand why philosophy, the proud discipline of Socrates and the examined life, attracts

[9] The suggested handling of this scenario is meant to represent an ideal case (i.e., one in which B has the mental and emotional energy to engage A and feels safe doing so). In non-ideal cases, individuals may not feel comfortable responding in the suggested way for a variety of reasons. For example, B may choose to simply continue the conversation if they feel unsafe broaching the subject further. B's outward behavior looks like option 3; here, however, B might assume that A truly did mean X because it may be safer to assume this to be the case and avoid potential confrontation than to assume the opposite and risk potential harm. This response, however, is still different than assuming that A didn't intend X in a bigoted way and is, therefore, not worth bringing up (i.e., Option 3).

[10] See Ferguson (2015) for further discussion on the differences between "calling in" and "calling out."

[11] For further considerations on the importance of and what contributes to intellectually safe spaces, see Schrader (2004).

such a large number of mean-spirited individuals who are so reluctant to examine their own prejudices, so fearful of change, and so determined to narrow the province of philosophy" (256). This does not have to be the case.

Philosophy is one of the last fields in the humanities to diversify, and it's no wonder. While these issues are not unique to philosophy, as we have seen, the current emphasis on the Adversary Method and the excessive boundary policing of "real" philosophy has left the field hostile to diverse practitioners. Yet things do not have to stay this way. The CPI provides an approach that can help expand our methodology beyond the simply combative, and in conceiving of philosophy as primarily a method of questioning and analysis, we can move away from these gatekeeping practices. By emphasizing the co-creation of respectful community norms, we can create spaces of radical openness within the discipline in the hopes of making academic philosophy more hospitable. As philosophers, so inclined to devote ourselves to theory, we must keep in mind that these concepts are not *just* things of theory—they are things of *action* as well. If we wish to mitigate the lack of diversity in our field, we must take action lest we make ourselves complicit in the problem we wish to solve.

References

Aikin, Scott. 2011. "A Defense of War and Sport Metaphors in Argument." *Philosophy & Rhetoric* 44(3): 250-72. https://www.jtor.org/stable/10.5325/philrhet.44.3.0250.

Alcoff, Linda Martín, ed. 2003. *Singing in the Fire: Stories of Women in Philosophy*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.

Alcoff, Linda Martín. 2013. "Philosophy's Civil Wars." *Proceedings and Addresses of the American Philosophical Association* 87: 16-43. www.jstor.org/stable/43661445.

Allen, Anita, Anika Mann, Donna Marcano, Michele Moody-Adams, and Jacqueline Scott. 2008. "Black Women in/on the Profession of Philosophy." *Hypatia* 23(2): 160-89. https://www.jstor.org/stable/25483181.

Bell, Ann E. 2002. "Women in Philosophy: A Forty-Year Perspective on Academic Backlash." In *Theorizing Backlash: Philosophical Reflections on the Resistance to Feminism*, edited by Anita M. Superson and Ann E. Cudd, 3-16. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc.

Bettinghaus, Erwin Paul. 1966. "Structure and Argument." In *Perspectives on Argumentation*, edited by Gerald R. Miller and Thomas R. Nilsen, 130-55. Chicago: Scott, Foresman and Company.

Bierria, Alisa. 2014. "Missing in Action: Violence, Power, and Discerning Agency." *Hypatia* 29(1): 129-45. www.jstor.org/stable/24541957.

Botts, Tina Fernandes, Liam Kofi Bright, Myisha Cherry, Guntur Mallarangeng, and Quayshawn Spencer. 2014. "What Is the State of Blacks in Philosophy?" *Critical Philosophy of Race* 2(2): 224-42. https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.5325/critphilrace.2.2.0224.

Brownstein, Micheal, and Jennifer Saul, eds. 2016. *Implicit Bias and Philosophy*. 2 vols. New York: Oxford University Press.

Burrow, Sylvia. 2010. "Verbal Sparring and Apologetic Points: Politeness in Gendered Argumentation Contexts." *Informal Logic* 30(3): 235-62. https://doi.org/10.22329/il.v30i3.3033.

Cherry, Myisha, and Eric Schwitzgebel. 2016. "Like the Oscars, #PhilosophySoWhite." *Los Angeles Times*, March 4, 2016. https://www.latimes.com/opinion/op-ed/la-oe-0306-schwitzgebel-cherry-philosophy-so-white-20160306-story.html.

Cudd, Ann E. 2002. "Analyzing Backlash to Progressive Social Movements." In *Theorizing Backlash: Philosophical Reflections on the Resistance to Feminism*, edited by Anita M. Superson and Ann E. Cudd, 3-16. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc.

Dotson, Kristie. 2011. "Concrete Flowers: Contemplating the Profession of Philosophy." *Hypatia* 26(2): 403-9. https://www.jstor.org/stable/23016554.

Dotson, Kristie. 2012. "How Is This Paper Philosophy?" *Comparative Philosophy* 3(1): 3-29. https://doi.org/10.31979/2151-6014(2012).030105.

Dotson, Kristie. 2019. "On the Costs of Socially Relevant Philosophy Papers: A Reflection." *Journal of Social Philosophy* 50(1): 1-19. https://doi.org/10.1111/josp.12297.

Ferguson, Sian. 2015. "Calling In: A Quick Guide of When and How." *Everyday Feminism*, January 17, 2015. https://everydayfeminism.com/2015/01/guide-to-calling-in/.

Garry, Ann. 1995. "A Minimally Decent Philosophical Method? Analytic Philosophy and Feminism." *Hypatia* 10(3): 7-30. https://www.jstor.org/stable/3810235.

Gines, Kathryn T. 2011. "Being a Black Woman Philosopher: Reflections on Founding the Collegium of Black Women Philosophers." *Hypatia* 26(2): 429-37. https://www.jstor.org/stable/23016557.

Gordon, Lewis. 2019. "Philosophical Methodologies of Critical Race Theory." *Blog of the APA*, August 20, 2019. https://blog.apaonline.org/2019/08/20/philosophical-methodologies-of-critical-race-theory/.

Govier, Trudy. 1999. *The Philosophy of Argument*. Newport News: Vale Press.

Haslanger, Sally. 2008. "Changing the Ideology and Culture of Philosophy: Not by Reason (Alone)." *Hypatia* 23(2): 210-23. https://www.jstor.org/stable/25483187.

Henning, Tempest. 2018. "Bringing Wreck." *Symposion* 5(2): 197-211. https://doi.org/10.5840/symposion20185216

hooks, bell. 1989. "Choosing the Margin as a Space of Radical Openness." *Framework: The Journal of Cinema and Media* (36): 15-23. https://www.jstor.org/stable/44111660.

hooks, bell. 1994. *Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom*. New York: Routledge.

Humanities Indicators. 2016. *Racial/Ethnic Distribution of Degrees in Philosophy*. Distributed by the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. https://www.humanitiesindicators.org/content/indicatorDoc.aspx?d=266&hl=philosophy&m=0.

Hundleby, Catherine. 2013. "Aggression, Politeness, and Abstract Adversaries." *Informal Logic* 33(2): 238-62. https://doi.org/10.22329/il.v33i2.3895.

Jenkins, Katharine. 2014. "'That's Not Philosophy': Feminism, Academia and the Double Bind." *Journal of Gender Studies* 23(3): 262-74. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09589236.2014.909720.

Kidd, Ian James. 2017. "Resisters, Diversity in Philosophy, and the Demographic Problem." *Rivista di Estetica* 64: 118-33. https://doi.org/10.4000/estetica.2071.

Kings, A. E. 2019. "Philosophy's Diversity Problem: Understanding the Underrepresentation of Women and Minorities in Philosophy." *Metaphilosophy* 50(3): 212-30. https://doi.org/10.1111/meta.12358.

Ko, Aph, and Syl Ko. 2019. "Un-Disciplined: A Conversation Between Two Sisters Who Left Graduate School." In *Counternarratives from Women of Color Academics: Bravery, Vulnerability, and Resistance*, edited by Manya Whitaker and Eric Anthony Grollman, 51-7. New York: Routledge.

Lone, Jana Mohr. 2018. "Philosophical Thinking in Childhood." In *The Routledge Handbook of the Philosophy of Childhood and Children*, edited by Anca Gheaus, Gideon Calder, and Jurgen De Wispelaere, 53-63. New York: Routledge.

Lone, Jana Mohr, and Michael D. Burroughs. 2016. *Philosophy in Education: Questioning and Dialogue in Schools.* London: Rowman & Littlefield.

Lugones, María. 1987. "Playfulness, 'World'-Traveling, and Loving Perception." *Hypatia* 2(2): 3-19. https://www.jstor.org/stable/3810013.

Midgley, Mary. 2018. *What Is Philosophy For?* London: Bloomsbury Academic.

Moeller, Carol J. 1997. "Transforming 'The Master's Tools': Teaching and Studying Philosophy in Graduate School." In *Lesbians in Academia: Degrees of Freedom*, edited by Beth Mintz and Esther Rothblum, 126-33. New York: Routledge.

Moulton, Janice. (1983) 1996. "A Paradigm of Philosophy: The Adversary Method." In *Women, Knowledge, and Reality: Explorations in Feminist Philosophy*, edited by Ann Garry and Marilyn Pearsall, 11-25. Reprint, New York: Routledge.

Priest, Graham. 2006. "What Is Philosophy?" *Philosophy* 81(316): 189-207. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0031819106316026.

Ragland, C. P., and Sarah Heidt. 2001. "Introduction: The Act of Philosophizing." In *What Is Philosophy*, edited by C. P. Ragland and Sarah Heidt, 1-24. London: Yale University Press.

Russell, Bertrand. (1912) 2001. *The Problems of Philosophy*. Reprint, New York: Oxford University Press.

Schrader, Dawn E. 2004. "Intellectual Safety, Moral Atmosphere, and Epistemology in College Classrooms." *Journal of Adult Development* 11: 87-101. https://doi.org/10.1023/B:JADE.0000024542.67919.55.

Schwitzgebel, Eric, and Carolyn Dicey Jennings. 2017. "Women in Philosophy: Quantitative Analyses of Specialization, Prevalence, Visibility, and Generational Change." *Public Affairs Quarterly* 31(2): 83-105. https://faculty.ucr.edu/~eschwitz/SchwitzAbs/WomenInPhil.htm.

Shorter-Bourhanou, Jameliah. 2017. "Legitimizing Blacks in Philosophy." *Journal of World Philosophies* 2(2): 27-36. https://scholarworks.iu.edu/iupjournals/index.php/jwp/article/view/1258.

Stevens, Katharina, and Daniel Cohen. 2019. "The Attraction of the Ideal Has No Traction on the Real: On Adversariality and Roles in Argument." *Argumentation and Advocacy* 55(1): 1-23. https://doi.org/10.1080/10511431.2018.1504584.

Superson, Anita M. 2002. "Welcome to the Boys' Club: Male Socialization and the Backlash against Feminism in Tenure Decisions." In *Theorizing Backlash: Philosophical Reflections on the Resistance to Feminism*, edited by Anita M. Superson and Ann E. Cudd, 89-117. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc.

Categorical Imperfections: Marginalisation and Scholarship Indexing Systems[1]

Simon Fokt

Abstract: The indexing systems used to systematise our knowledge about a domain tend to have an evaluative character: they represent some things as more important, general, complex, or central than others. They are also imperfect and can misrepresent something as more or less important, etc., than it really is. Such distortions mostly result from mistakes made due to lack of time or resources. In some cases they follow systematic patterns which can reveal the implicit judgements and values shared within a community who maintains and uses an index. I focus on the example of PhilPapers, the largest database of philosophy texts available, to show how the arrangement of categories and the way items are assigned to them, can effectively marginalise certain topics, authors, and entire traditions. I draw attention to such issues as: ordering, size and depth of categories, the use of miscellaneous categories, localising indexes in category names, and assigning items to some but not other categories. I suggest that such structuring of the index can have an impact on users, normalising marginalisation and contributing to the perpetuation of inequalities. I conclude by offering some suggestions for improvement which might help our databases flourish and become even more useful.

Keywords: Indexing systems, systematisation of knowledge, metaphilosophy, misrepresentation, equality, PhilPapers.

1. Introduction

The lines of under-representation in the Anglophone academic philosophy seem to fall on several planes, including:

1. **Traditions and Perspectives.** Some philosophical traditions and perspectives seem to be less represented than others. They tend to disproportionately include perspectives not central to the cultural experience of groups traditionally dominating Anglophone academic philosophy. This tends to be exhibited in low numbers of articles written from or discussing such perspectives being published in high-ranking journals (Olberding 2016), in relatively low numbers of courses taught from and about such perspectives, and in patterns of tokenism and exotification (e.g. including a token lecture on a Buddhist approach in a philosophy of science course) (Norden 2017).

2. **Topics.** Some topics tend to be seen as less prestigious than others, or as less 'central' to philosophy (whatever this means). They tend to

[1] I would like to thank Stephanie Farley, Björn Freter, and Ian James Kidd, as well as the journal editors and reviewers for helpful comments on the drafts of this paper. I have contacted the General Editors of PhilPapers for comments, but received no reply.

disproportionately include those in some way related to issues affecting members of under-represented groups (e.g. philosophy of race, feminist philosophy)[2], or ones where a higher proportion of authors are from under-represented groups (e.g. aesthetics, applied ethics). This tends to be exhibited in the low numbers of articles on those topics being published in prestigious journals (De Cruz 2018; Wilhelm, Lynn, and Hassoun 2018), fewer jobs with AOS in those areas being advertised and fewer people working on those issues finding employment (Botts et al. 2014), or in token classes on such topics which tend to be added at the end of a lecture series.

3. **People.** There are entire social groups which are under-represented, often identified by such protected characteristics as race and gender. This tends to be exhibited in lower rates of employment (Beebee and Saul 2011; National Center for Education Statistics 2009; Botts et al. 2014; Conklin, Artamonova, and Hassoun 2019), of publications (Bright 2016; Schwitzgebel 2015b; 2015a; Wilhelm, Lynn, and Hassoun 2018; Haslanger 2008; Healy 2015; Guerrero 2015), of citations (Schwitzgebel 2014; Healy 2015; Schwitzgebel and Jennings 2016), of invitations (Kidd and Duncombe 2019) experienced by the members of such groups.

A number of likely causes of under-representation have been identified. Some of them might be easy to spot and measure, others are more complex. A likely example of the latter kind has to do with the background social and metaphilosophical beliefs and attitudes commonly shared within the philosophical community, the ways people tend to think about the discipline, the things that are commonly accepted as normal, as important, as valuable. In this paper, I hope to shed some light on them by examining the way in which philosophers systematise and index their discipline, and categorise particular works to fit into the system.

2. Indexing practices

Subject indexing is a 'communicative practice' (Rafferty and Hidderley 2007, 398) which uses discoverability and subject representation (Bates and Rowley 2011) to carry implicit judgements about the relative importance, generality, and complexity of the subjects it includes. This is typically intentional and justified: an index would typically ensure that parent categories are more general than their sub-categories, more complex categories have more sub-divisions, etc. If done well, such structuring is extremely useful, providing people with a clear overview of the relations between the elements within the system and allowing easier navigation.

But naturally, any indexing system is a conventional representation of reality and will necessarily distort it. For example, the parent-child category

[2] Naturally, many less prestigious topics have nothing to do with issues affecting members of under-represented groups, e.g. environmental philosophy or philosophy of education. The claim is not that most less prestigious topics are related to such issues, but that most topics covering such issues are less prestigious.

system, an Aristotelian invention, might fail to adequately represent situations where (topics covered in) a child category are related to multiple parent categories, or similar to children of other parent categories.

Given such limitations and its evaluative function, an indexing system can also mistakenly represent particular categories as less general, complex, or important than they really are. This can be particularly problematic if it turns out that categories so misrepresented are those which contain content already marginalised in ways identified above: created by members of marginalised groups, covering marginalised topics, or offering a view from marginalised perspectives. Studying examples of such misrepresentations within an index can give us an opportunity to understand potentially problematic attitudes existing within the community which creates and uses it, and the mechanisms by which they are perpetuated.

To illustrate, let us assume that the work of Plato and Confucius is in fact comparably important and complex. An index would misrepresent this if it listed a category titled *Confucius* below a category titled *Plato* in an otherwise alphabetical grouping, or if *Plato* was further subdivided into twenty sub-categories covering detailed aspects of Plato's philosophy but *Confucius* was not, or if *Plato* was featured prominently high up the category tree but *Confucius* appeared significantly lower or within a Miscellaneous section. In the Western philosophy-world context where Chinese philosophy tends to be marginalised, this would be problematic and potentially revealing of biased attitudes in the community which creates and uses such an index.

This type of marginalisation has been widely discussed in the context of public libraries (Bates and Rowley 2011). For the purpose of this article, I will be focusing on the example of PhilPapers, a widely used online database of philosophy texts. This is by no means because I think that this project is particularly problematic. Instead, it is because PhilPapers is both very popular and largely created and managed by members of the philosophical community.[3] Unlike 'monologic' projects such as edited encyclopaedias or managed collections where the communicative practice of indexing mostly involves the editors communicating to their audience, the shape and structure of PhilPapers is 'dialogic': the resource is co-designed by the members of the community who add and categorise entries (Rafferty and Hidderley 2007, 398). This gives us a peek into the community itself and into what is commonly accepted within it. It is a sort of litmus test for how philosophers think about philosophy.

In this paper, I will show that there are ways in which the PhilPapers' indexing system marginalises content along the three distinguished lines:

[3] The notion 'philosophical community' is intentionally vague and covers very diverse groups of people. In practice, some of those groups are more powerful and priviledged, and play a greater role in shaping the mainstream culture of the community which PhilPapers reflects. My critique might thus apply differently to different groups and people, and I leave it to the readers to place themselves on this spectrum.

traditions, topics, and people. I argue that this is a symptom of social and metaphilosophical biases entrenched within the philosophical community, and that any index displaying similar tendencies effectively plays a role in the perpetuation of those biases.

As with many other cases of marginalisation, this is unlikely to be intentional; instead, it likely reflects limitations following from lack of resources, reliance on volunteer editors, or lack of time. Thus the focus of my critique is to help identify issues and offer solutions which might help PhilPapers improve and become even more successful.

3. PhilPapers: a success story

PhilPapers is the largest and most comprehensive database of philosophical works, including 2,436,367 research books and articles.[4] It was established in 2009 by David Bourget and David Chalmers, both based in Australia at the time and both serving as general editors until now. It is maintained by the Centre for Digital Philosophy at the University of Western Ontario and receives funding from a number of institutions based in Australia, UK and US. On its main webpage, PhilPapers is described as:

> a comprehensive index and bibliography of philosophy maintained by the community of philosophers. We monitor all sources of research content in philosophy, including journals, books, open access archives, and personal pages maintained by academics.

There are several features of the project which are important in the present context:

(1) PhilPapers is largely run by members of the philosophical community, with nearly 800 volunteer editors taking care of particular categories;

(2) It is widely used, with 338,500 registered users and up to 1,000,000 visits per month (according to an estimate by SimilarWeb.com, accessed 16/03/2020);

(3) It tends to grow organically, with content largely crowd-sourced through a public contribution system available to anyone who registers on the site; professional philosophers are the source of the majority of the content on PhilPapers, and they are the ones typically assigning works to categories, with moderation from volunteer editors;

(4) Its category structure has been in place in a largely unchanged form since 2009.

The PhilPapers category system has proven very successful and popular. It is recommended widely by institutions and individuals alike, described as 'of

[4] All references to PhilPapers, its content, category tree structure, numbers of items in each category, categorisation of specific items, etc., are drawn from www.philpapers.org and are accurate as of the time of writing, March 2020.

great value for instructors designing philosophy courses, or for students and researchers selecting material for a reading group or research project' (Bzovy and Ryman 2013), and 'providing a much more precise method for categorizing a particular item' (University of Illinois Library 2020). It informs the category system used by Wikipedia – the WikiProject Philosophy members who edit its philosophy pages described the PhilPapers system as 'valuable, reliable, and credible' (Wikipedia 2014). It is the basis of the Diversity Reading List category tree (www.diversityreadinglist.org). It has been used as a way to identify the areas of philosophical specialisation in academic studies, including ones aiming to establish the views of academic philosophers (Bourget and Chalmers 2014), or investigating gender balance in different areas of philosophy (Schwitzgebel and Jennings 2016). There are even graphical representations of it (Lageard 2016), and its success can be seen in the fact that category editors tend to announce their role on their websites and in their CVs, clearly proud of their work and presenting it as a source of prestige and status.

Conversely, there is very little published criticism of the category system (one example might be: Tremain 2019) and its longevity suggest that it is perceived as broadly adequate. The site has a forum dedicated to The Categorization Project, but this forum contains no serious critiques or discussions related to equality issues (one exception will be mentioned below). All this suggests that the structure of the index is accepted as broadly adequate by the philosophical community.

Overall, the success of PhilPapers and its category system is immense and well-deserved. It has helped countless people in finding and sharing a great variety of high quality work, and offered scholars a great way for making their own work more accessible.

However, with this success comes a need for additional scrutiny, as the better, the more popular and the more commonly used a system is, the more likely it is to become transparent, and the higher the danger of reification where people might mistake the way it represents its domain for the way this domain actually is. Consider the success of Google as an analogy. Its search results are commonly taken to accurately represent not only the content of a domain, a.k.a. 'if it's not on Google, it doesn't exist', but also the relative importance of items within a domain, a.k.a. 'if it doesn't come up on the first page, it's not important' (see e.g. Pan 2007). It is not inconceivable that philosophy-specific resources such as PhilPapers (likely alongside the *Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy* and others) can hold similar position within the discipline, and be subject to similar problems.

PhilPapers is thus not only a litmus test showing us the implicit views commonly held within the philosophical community – it can also have the power to shape those views. Scrutinising it can help us support it in ensuring that this power does not serve to unwittingly reinforce harmful biases.

4. Categorical representation

The PhilPapers indexing system takes shape of a nested category tree, with top-level categories divided into sub-categories, which are themselves divided into sub-sub-categories, and so on. I will focus on the following ways in which the structure of such an indexing system can embed implicit value judgements about the elements of that system:

(1) The ordering of same-level categories can imply the relative importance of those categories, with those listed first being most important, and the following being less important the closer they are to the end of the list.

(2) The levels at which categories appear can imply their relative importance and generality, with top-level categories being seen as the most important and general, first level sub-categories as less so, and so on.

(3) The number of sub-categories a category has can imply its importance and complexity, with categories with more sub-divisions likely seen as more important and complex.

(4) The name of a category can suggest whether it is universal or specific, with the presence of localising or contextualising qualifiers suggesting specificity and lack thereof suggesting generality.

(5) Placing an item in 'Miscellaneous' or 'Other' categories can imply its lack of importance or centrality to the issues covered within the parent category.

(6) Applying specific categories to an item can not only signal that this item belongs to those categories, but also that it does not belong to other, potentially more important, complex or general categories.

When working properly, an indexing system should cogently identify the relations between its categories, and the implicit value judgements it passes should be accurate: for example, a category represented as more complex should in fact be more complex, and one represented as marginal should in fact be marginal. Such a system is extremely valuable in systematising the discipline and helping people gain a clearer view of the field.

However, in some cases a system might identify and represent things incorrectly, unfairly implying in one or more of the ways identified that a given area or category is more or less important, central, etc. than it is. For the purpose of this article, I will refer to categories which are represented to be less important, central, etc. than they really are or should be, as 'marginalised categories.' In what follows, I will show that there is a problematic convergence between marginalised categories and the lines of under-representation I identified in the Introduction.

5. Analysis

5.1 The ordering of same-level categories

The great majority of categories in PhilPapers index are ordered alphabetically or chronologically. This approach is impartial and passes no implicit judgements about the relative importance of the categories, as those appearing closer to the beginning are clearly not more important, they just start with a certain letter or date. Another value-neutral way of ordering might be by size: the number of items within each category. PhilPapers top-level categories are listed as follows (size in brackets):

(1) Metaphysics and Epistemology (362,634)

(2) Value Theory (568,614)

(3) Science, Logic, and Mathematics (435,505)

(4) History of Western Philosophy (365,132)

(5) Philosophical Traditions (264,131)

(6) Philosophy, Misc (5,200)

(7) Other Academic Areas (68,507)

The top-level categories are not ordered alphabetically. Neither are they ordered by size. This suggests that the ordering follows some other method, and might betray value judgements behind it.

It seems likely that this is the case here, as the *Metaphysics and Epistemology* category, covering areas commonly seen as the 'core' of the discipline, is listed first, despite the fact that alphabetically it should appear second, and it is fourth by size. Indeed, the ordering of the categories seems to reflect a tacit acceptance commonly shared within the philosophical community on what is the 'core' of the discipline, with less 'central' areas appearing lower down the list. It is, for example, consistent with the coverage of those areas in high-ranking philosophy journals, or polls on 'what areas are most important for a strong PhD program' (Leiter 2016).

However, while representative of how those areas have been seen in modern Anglophone philosophy-world, the claims about centrality are difficult to justify and have been subject to well-reasoned criticism (see e.g. Barnes 2015). So it is unclear why the top categories should be so structured, instead of following the value-neutral approach of all remaining categories and be structured alphabetically or by size.

It is, however, more clear why the top categories should *not* be so structured. This ordering seems problematic in at least two ways: firstly, the areas it identifies as more central tend to be those with lower representation of scholars from under-represented groups (see e.g. Lageard 2016); secondly, the low position of the Philosophical Traditions category which tends to include a

large number of under-represented topics and traditions, suggests its low importance.

To see how this issue can manifest itself in practice, consider the example of the abovementioned survey of philosophers' views (Bourget, Chalmers 2014). In it, participants were asked their views on 'thirty central philosophical questions.' The paper does not specify how this particular set of questions was selected, or point to any impartial method of determining which questions should count as 'central.' Perhaps unsurprisingly then, twenty of the thirty questions are about issues covered in the category *Metaphysics and Epistemology*, seven in *Value Theory*, and three have to do with *Science, Logic, and Mathematics*. Not a single one had to do with *History of Western Philosophy* or any topics related to non-Western thought covered under *Philosophical Traditions*. None of the relatively small number of questions in *Value Theory* engaged with feminist philosophy, questions of race and justice, or any applied issue at all. This suggests that none of those issues are (seen as) central. As a result, we now know what philosophers think about such detailed issues as the Newcomb's Problem, covered by a sub-sub-sub-sub-category of *Metaphysics and Epistemology*, but not what they think about any of the significantly more general issues in *Philosophy of Gender, Race, and Sexuality*, or *Asian Philosophy* – sub-categories of *Value Theory* and *Philosophical Traditions* respectively.

All this suggests that the ordering of categories is a symptom of problematic implicit judgements about the discipline, and serves to entrench them as members of the community are led to believe that even very specific issues in metaphysics and epistemology are more worth knowing than much more general ones in, say, Asian philosophy.

5.2 How big is your category?

There are a number of categories which one could reasonably expect to be symmetrical with respect to size and richness of detail exhibited in the number of their sub-categories. This is most clearly seen in historical or geographical categories. For example, one would expect that category A which covers the work of a prominent philosopher A and contains 1000 items, would be structured with a similar degree of complexity as category B which covers the work of an equally prominent philosopher B and also contains 1000 items.

This is not always the case on PhilPapers. While the symmetries hold for the most part, there are some exceptions. For example, the *17th/ 18th Century Philosophy* category within *History of Western Philosophy* is home to three nation-themed sub-categories covering British, French, and German philosophy. The largest, *17th/ 18th Century German Philosophy*, contains 37,007 entries and is divided into a total of 170 sub-categories going down up to five levels. *17th/ 18th Century British Philosophy* contains 32,837 entries and has a total of 253 sub-categories also going down up to five levels. *17th/ 18th Century French*

Philosophy has 9,081 entries, and a total of 13 sub-categories going down only one level.

This seems rather unsymmetrical – even with fewer entries, French philosophy seems surprisingly poor in sub-divisions. This is particularly surprising as neither the area devoted to Descartes (4,269 entries) nor the one covering Rousseau (1,956) have a single sub-category. Meanwhile, Locke (4,453) and Berkeley (2,464) have been given 75 and 41 sub-categories respectively.

Things get complicated further as we step beyond Western Philosophy. Histories of philosophy in other traditions are not given top-level categories at all. They appear further down the *Philosophical Traditions*, but their periodization is unclear and not symmetrical. There are no such categories as *17th/18th Century Chinese* or *Indian* or *Islamic Philosophy*. While one could justifiably argue that meaningful lines of division in other traditions might fall in other places, it is unclear that those lines are identified by the index with similar attention to detail as they are in the case of Western Philosophy. Instead, the respective traditions are sometimes divided historically (e.g. *19th* and *20th Century Japanese Philosophy*), sometimes by topic (e.g. *Indian Logic*), other times by school of thought (e.g. *Chinese Neo-Confucianism*). Thus while the *17th/18th Century French Philosophy* category seemed poor in comparison with its British and German counterparts, the equivalent categories for Chinese, Indian, and other traditions are even poorer, to the point of non-existence.

This relative richness of categories gives us further insight into the likely implicit views on the relative importance and complexity of those categories, shared within the Anglophone philosophical community. The historical examples discussed fall neatly into two types: the precursors of modern Anglophone analytic philosophy, and everything else. The category structure of PhilPapers seems to indicate that the former are significantly more important and complex than the latter. In other words, the indexing system effectively marginalises the latter categories and those areas of research.

Outside of history of philosophy the problem manifests by broadly following the implicit judgements about centrality of various topics identified in the previous section. Pretty much any category in *Metaphysics* has more subsections than a category holding more entries in *Applied Ethics* or *Philosophy of Social Science*. Compare for example *Interlevel Metaphysics* (2,089 entries and 44 sub-categories two levels deep) with *Professional Ethics* (10,716 entries and 7 sub-categories one level deep) or *Philosophy of Education* (28,259 entries and 12 categories two levels deep). Another striking example is found in *Normative Ethics*, where *Consequentialism* has half the number of entries *Feminist Ethics has* (2,393 and 5,746 respectively), yet it has 27 sub-categories going down two levels, while *Feminist Ethics* has none. This treatment seems to indicate that issues traditionally perceived as central to Anglophone analytic philosophy are more important and complex than everything else.

Naturally, a great deal of the differences in how rich or deep particular categories are, can be ascribed to the organic way in which PhilPapers develops and such contingent issues as the availability of volunteer editors in a given area, their interest in expanding their sections, etc. Indeed, one can find multiple examples of categories covering philosophers who are part of the modern analytic tradition but have few or no sub-categories (examples include Wittgenstein, Russell or Quine). However, these exceptions are relatively few and overall the regularity with which the described asymmetries are found suggests that this is not the whole story.

5.3 How deep is your category?

There are a number of categories which one could reasonably expect to be symmetrical with respect to where they are placed in the category tree. Again, this is probably most natural to expect in the case of categories which have to do with historical figures and traditions. In order to find a key philosopher representative of a given historical period, one needs to typically travel three levels down. For example, we find Kant under *History of Western Philosophy → 17th/18th Century Philosophy → 17th/18th Century German Philosophy → Immanuel Kant*. This holds for every figure in the Western tradition. However, to find a key philosopher representative of a given historical period in any other tradition, one needs to travel five levels down. For example, we find Confucius under *Philosophical Traditions → Asian Philosophy → Chinese Philosophy → Classical Chinese Philosophy → Classical Confucianism → Confucius*.

More broadly, most of the philosophical traditions covered on PhilPapers branch out at the second or third level down the category tree, for example *Philosophical Traditions → Asian Philosophy → Chinese Philosophy*. It is at this level that we find categories which divide the tradition alongside historical or thematic lines. The only exception is the Anglophone analytic tradition, which doesn't have its own defining branch. Instead, it starts from a tacit level zero, with the top-level categories dividing it similarly alongside historical or thematic lines.

This way of presenting the content can effectively marginalise some categories and areas by suggesting that they are less general or less important, and in practice potentially harder to find for people using the index. One needs to search longer and deeper to find Confucius than to find Kant, and likewise one needs to search deeper to find *Chinese Philosophy: Metaphysics and Epistemology*, (five levels down) than to find *[Western Philosophy:] Metaphysics and Epistemology* (top level). These categories are represented as, literally, not on the same level.

5.4 Qualifiers and lack thereof

While the above point might not seem as pressing, it points to a more worrying issue: the Anglophone analytic tradition is not explicitly placed in a named category, but the thematic categories within the Chinese tradition are prefaced with 'Chinese Philosophy:'. Such a convention effectively presents the Anglophone analytic tradition as just philosophy, universal and devoid of any geographical or cultural background, while the other traditions are presented as somehow tied to their place or culture of origin (see e.g. Park 2013).

Doing so not only falsely presents it as universal and devoid of the context which shaped it, but also effectively marginalises the other traditions. It contributes to the problem described above: the Anglophone analytic tradition, the one without a qualifier and with all categories appearing at least two levels above parallel tradition-specific categories, is thus presented as more general, as the norm, while the other traditions seem like special cases, alternative approaches. They are not equal, not on the same level.

5.5 Miscellaneous

One can learn a lot about an indexing system by looking at what it labels as 'misc'. Collins English Dictionary states:

> A miscellaneous group consists of many different kinds of things or people that are difficult to put into a particular category.
>
> *... a hoard of miscellaneous junk.*
>
> *... miscellaneous items that don't fall into any group.*

Note that the explanation and the examples have slightly different imports here. As per the explanation, miscellaneous sections in indexes tend to contain an unstructured mix of 'everything else' – all things that are not easily classified elsewhere, not common enough to have their own category. But there is more to it – as the Collins' example suggests, 'Miscellaneous' tends to have a slightly negative valence: it describes the leftovers, the misfits, the 'junk.'

On PhilPapers, there are a number of categories labelled 'miscellaneous', typically placed within broader categories divided into topics. For example, *Epistemology* holds topic categories such as *Epistemological States and Properties* or *Knowledge*, as well as the category *Epistemology, Miscellaneous.* This and other miscellaneous sections are presumably intended to hold content which is not easily classified under any of the topic categories. This and some other miscellaneous categories have sub-categories of their own, and those tend to be the most interesting to analyse.

The following second level categories contain a sub-category covering the feminist approaches to the area (e.g. Feminist Epistemology): Epistemology, Philosophy of Language, Philosophy of Religion, Normative Ethics, Philosophy of Gender, Race, and Sexuality, and General Philosophy of Science. In all except

Philosophy of Gender, Race, and Sexuality, the feminist approach categories are in the respective Miscellaneous sections. While they tend to have fewer items than most categories other than the Miscellaneous, this is not always the case: Feminist Ethics which lives under Normative Ethics, Miscellaneous, has 5,740 entries, more than six out of seven of the non-Miscellaneous categories.

Likely due to the organic development of PhilPapers, many first level categories do not contain sub-categories covering the feminist approaches; instead, *Feminist Aesthetics*, *Feminist Metaphysics*, etc., are listed under *Philosophy of Gender, Race, and Sexuality* → *Feminist Approaches to Philosophy*. This has been raised by several people as a potential issue on the PhilPapers forum in 2009/10, with the suggestion that (1) some users had problems finding the categories and considered their placement counterintuitive, and (2) it is not clear this categorisation is correct as it is not clear that, say, feminist metaphysics need be a special case of, or indeed have anything to do with gender, race, and sexuality (Crasnow 2009).

Placing categories covering feminist approaches to philosophical topics in the *Miscellaneous* sections can marginalise them by suggesting that they are not common or important enough to appear in the main category tree, or worse – that they are the 'junk' in the topic. Naturally, few philosophers would explicitly hold that feminist philosophy is junk. However, their explicit views need not be correlated with their behaviour, as they browse the index rarely looking into any miscellaneous section quite like they would rarely look at a pile of junk. In the context of an indexing system, it is not unreasonable to presume that Miscellaneous categories will not be as commonly visited by users searching for content as the other categories, which in practice might mean that feminist work will not be found as easily or as often as other work. This seems in line with some more general worries about the precarious place of feminist philosophy in the profession:

> The effects of institutional marginalization and encapsulation is that feminist philosophy can be made unrecognized, unrewarding, unattractive, and unhelpful to one's career prospects to the point where it, or the people who do it, can be made to go away. […] Feminist work can be ignored without being examined. *(Walker 2005, 162)*

It is certainly easier to ignore something without examining it, if it is tucked away in a 'Misc' drawer.

5.6 Crypto-Miscellaneous

Another facet of this issue relates to sections which are not explicitly labelled 'Miscellaneous', but effectively play a similar role: they 'consists of many different kinds of things' which are joint not by any positive feature they share, but by a negative one: not being part of the other categories. In PhilPapers, the most likely candidate for a crypto-Miscellaneous category, is the *Philosophical Traditions*.

The main sub-division of *Philosophical Traditions* is geographic, covering Asian, African, American, European, and continental traditions. The only thing that unites them all, is the fact that they are not part of the Western analytic tradition. As mentioned above, the category tree presents the Western analytic tradition as the one without a prefix, without a qualifier – it is just philosophy.

The 'miscellaneousness' of the category is further visible in how it is structured. The geographic division does not seem meaningful: one tradition might span multiple continents (e.g. Islamic) and one continent can be home to multiple distinct traditions (e.g. Indian and Chinese). Further, while the tacit *Western Analytic Philosophy* over-category is clearly divided into historical and thematic areas which are systematic and largely exhaustive, such attention to detail is largely absent in the *Traditions*. Instead, each tradition is divided into a much less systematically structured mix of historical and thematic categories which are not similarly exhaustive. And after all, 'miscellaneous' comes from latin *miscellus*: 'mixed.'

If this analysis is true, then the community which creates, maintains and uses the index, effectively labels everything except the Western *analytic* philosophy as 'miscellaneous': misfits, probably less important, not worthy of a detailed treatment, potentially even 'junk'. Categories covering whole philosophical traditions are thus effectively marginalised. This can be seen as displaying what Freter suggests is an attitude of historically rooted disregard and contempt for non-Western thought, and even contributing to what Lebakeng calls 'colonial epistemicide' (Lebakeng 2004; Freter 2018; cf. Park 2013; van Norden 2017), as well as a general disdain for continental philosophy not uncommon in analytic departments.[5]

Naturally, there are good historical reasons why this approach in constructing the category tree was taken: PhilPapers is a project hosted at a Western department specialising in the analytic tradition, funded by Western institutions, and aimed at an audience whose main interests are in Western analytic philosophy. The reader might now be justified in pausing to suggest that perhaps the issues identified above are not problematic, because of the context in which PhilPapers is created and received.

But if this is the case, then, to draw on Garfield and Norden's 'If Philosophy Won't Diversify, Let's Call It What It Really Is' (2016), perhaps the project should be more aptly named AngloAnalyticPhilPapers. Or perhaps it should be more open about its background and the demographic it caters to. Yet as it stands, in no place does PhilPapers website state that the project's main focus is on the

[5] It is instructive to compare the content placed in the (crypto-)miscellaneous sections with content highlighted by independent projects aiming to promote marginalised areas in philosophy. The Pluralist's Guide to Philosophy, for example, lists the following categories in its programme recommendations: *Africana Philosophy, American Philosophy, Continental Philosophy, Critical Philosophy of Race and Ethnicity, Feminist Philosophy, LGBT Studies, Latin American and Latino/a Philosophy* (Alcoff et al., 2020). The lists seem nearly co-extensive.

Anglophone analytic tradition. Instead, the *About* page states that PhilPapers is 'a comprehensive index of the research literature *in philosophy*' offering 'a comprehensive structured bibliography *of philosophy*' and monitoring 'all sources of research content *in philosophy*' (all emphases mine). And while the editors are making serious and laudable efforts to increase the amount of content in other traditions and languages, the issue is not only in the lack of content – it is in how this content is structured and presented using the category tree.

5.7 Excluding by including

As the *Western Analytic Tradition* over-category remains tacit on the site, it is natural for people to treat any categories not explicitly labelled as belonging to a tradition as universal. Thus one would expect that under *Normative Ethics* one would find texts discussing what is right and wrong irrespective if they were written from the analytic, Chinese, or Afro-American perspective. However, this is not always the case. To illustrate this, consider Yang Guorong's *Morality and Human Existence: From the Perspective of Moral Metaphysics* (2012) as an example. Gourong begins:

> Although morality and ethics are often seen as synonyms, some philosophers have endowed these terms with different connotations. For example, in his late ethical work *The Metaphysics of Morals*, Kant distinguished the two parts of the metaphysics of morals: the doctrine of right and the doctrine of virtue. While the latter concerns ethics, the former touches on legal relationships and falls roughly under the categories of the philosophy of law or the metaphysical domain of law. Here, morality seems to cover a domain that is more vast, ruling over both ethics and philosophy of law. *(Guorong 2012, 27)*

Gourong moves on to discuss Spinoza, Hegel and Williams, trying to find connections between their thought and that present in the Confucian tradition, discussing the notions of duty, moral agency, moral cognition, etc.

This paper is classified on PhilPapers under *Chinese Philosophy* and *Chinese Philosophy: Ethics*, found within the *Philosophical Traditions* top category. What it is not classified under, is any relevant category in *Meta-Ethics* or *Normative Ethics* under *Value Theory* top category.

Similarly, Victoria S. Harrison's *Feminist philosophy of religion and the problem of epistemic privilege* (2007), is classified solely under *Feminist Epistemology* (in the miscellaneous section of *Epistemology*) – it is not classified under any other sub-category of *Epistemology* or *Philosophy of Religion*.

There are multiple similar examples of works which present a non-Western or a feminist perspective on a topic X, which are not classified under the main category covering X, but instead are found under *Feminist X* or *Chinese X*. Assuming that the non-tradition-specific categories are meant to be universal rather than Western, analytic and non-feminist, every single item categorised as *Feminist* or *Chinese X,* should also be classified as just *X*. Indeed, including an item

in the tradition-specific category but not including it in the general category, effectively excludes it: although the content is available in the index, it will not be found by anyone browsing the general category. Thus although we have good reasons to believe that many Western analytic philosophers interested in topics such as virtue or the moral significance of family could benefit from engaging with, say, Confucian ethics (Olberding 2015), the tools we use to help them find scholarship to engage with make it less likely that they will. In practice, such content is marginalised.

The combination of several of the abovementioned issues can further lead to exotification and tokenism. The index presents users with two options: the general and the indexed one. This might lead some users to go to a higher-level, non-prefixed, non-miscellaneous category to find the general, central and important content, or go to the feminist or tradition-indexed version of the same category to find some 'diversity baubles'[6]: inconsequential adornments that can be used to make a paper look more diverse, or to include in the last week of teaching. Naturally, this is not to say that such categories cannot be used in better ways – but it seems that this sort of problematic use might be unwittingly facilitated if users will not find a large portion of the 'exotic' content unless they are looking for it, as it does not appear in the general categories.

6. Symptom and cause

The selected issues found in the most popular Anglophone database of philosophy works, are closely related to broader problems of lack of equality and diversity still prevalent in Anglophone academic philosophy. This should not be surprising. In fact, it merely confirms the supposition that projects such as PhilPapers – managed, edited and created by members of the community – are a good litmus test indicating the state of that community. On one hand, this can be seen in the way the resource is created, with people structuring the category tree and adding items to categories in the ways described.

But on the other hand, and perhaps much more tellingly, this can be seen in the way the resource is used, which is: without much reflection given to the issues I identified. Seeing that there is virtually no written criticism of the existing state of affairs, this might indicate that: (1) members of the community explicitly think that the issues identified are not a problem; (2) they do not notice them because they implicitly think those issues are not a problem; (3) they do not notice them because they have become so normal as to be invisible, (4) they do notice them, but do not care enough to try and influence a change; (5) they do notice them, want to influence a change, but do not feel they have the power to do so. Naturally, neither of those possibilities is welcome.

But the issues identified are not only a symptom of underlying cultural problems. A structured index can also shape the implicit views of a community of

[6] I borrow the term from Ian Kidd who used it in personal communication.

users by implying what is the relative importance, generality, centrality, and value of the things it categorises. In the above analysis, I presented a selection of ways in which this can happen, showing how items and categories can be effectively marginalised and exotified, leading to the reproduction of problematic power structures similar to that identified in traditional libraries (Bates and Rowley 2011). This can lead to further entrenchment of the existing discrimination on the three lines identified in the introduction to this paper:

(1) **Traditions and Perspectives.** All world philosophical traditions except the Western analytic tradition are grouped in the crypto-miscellaneous category *Philosophical Traditions*, which appears towards the end of the non-alphabetical list of top-level categories, is not divided in a careful or meaningful way, and its specific topics are found lower down the category tree and given tradition-specific indexes which distinguish them from un-indexed (and thus presumably universal) categories where Western analytic scholarship is found. Similarly, feminist perspectives tend to appear in miscellaneous sections, with similar indexes distinguishing them from un-indexed scholarship. In practice, such an approach can lead to the marginalisation and exotification of traditions and perspectives which are already marginalised and exotified.

(2) **Topics.** The ordering of top-level categories suggests a gradation of importance of philosophical topics, with those more abstract and more dominated by white male authors appearing closer to the top. Categories devoted to times, figures and topics more relevant to the Western analytic tradition tend to appear higher up the tree, have more sub-categories, and lack tradition-specific indexes. Scholarship discussing other times, figures and topics is listed under (crypto-)miscellaneous or tradition-specific categories and often not found in the general, un-indexed, categories. This approach can imply that some already marginalised topics are in fact less important, less central, less valuable, and mainly useful in exotic contexts.

(3) **People.** Authors from marginalised groups are more likely to engage in research on topics and in traditions which are marginalised by the indexing system (see e.g. Botts et al. 2014). Hidden in categories which are presented as less important, less central, less valuable, their work might be less often read, less often cited, less often remembered. Listed in the mixed bag of 'miscellaneous' topics, it might imply the authors lack intellectual coherence, are random, unfocused. All this in turn can lead to missed professional opportunities, difficulties in building a strong reputation, and ultimately diminished chances for entering into and advancing through the professional pathways of academic philosophy.

7. Recommendations

Fortunately, many of the worries presented above can be addressed through a careful, judicious redesign of an indexing system. I have made some attempts at doing so in adjusting the PhilPapers category system for the needs of the Diversity Reading List. Naturally, such changes can be difficult, time consuming and resource intensive, and should not be expected overnight. But I hope that the

following recommendations might offer a good starting point to address the problem on a wider scale.

(1) Adopt a less value-laden convention for ordering same level categories. This might be alphabetical, chronological, by size, or in any other order that does not imply that categories listed earlier are more important.

(2) Make efforts to ensure that categories of similar size, complexity or generality are divided into a similar number of sub-categories, to avoid inaccurately implying that some are more important than others.

(3) Make efforts to ensure that categories of similar generality or covering similar ground are listed at a similar level, to avoid implying that those listed deeper down the tree are less general or important.

(4) Avoid implying that the Western analytic tradition is universal or context-less, by either adding tradition-indexes to categories covering works written in that tradition, removing them from categories covering works in other traditions, or stating explicitly that the index covers scholarship focused on this tradition.

(5) Re-evaluate the use of Miscellaneous sections to avoid including categories covering otherwise marginalised subjects, or creating crypto-Miscellaneous sections.

(6) Ensure that content categorised in a tradition-specific category is also included in the parallel general category, to ensure that it can be easily found by people browsing the general category.

In lieu of a conclusion, let me clarify the 'who' and what' of the issues discussed. I used the example of PhilPapers to make a general point about how indexing systems can allow us to inspect existing biases and inequalities present within a community and how they can unintentionally serve to perpetuate those biases and inequalities. But this is only an example. I do not think that PhilPapers is particularly problematic and similar or worse faults could easily be found with a number of other resources. In fact, the editors have made multiple attempts at making it value-neutral and have been using their limited resources to increase its diversity.

I have chosen it, because those efforts were made yet the problems still exist. I have chosen it, because PhilPapers' popularity means its impact is particularly visible. But mostly I have chosen it because of its community-based development model. The philosophical community – hundreds of volunteer editors and thousands of users – engages with it every day, adding content, moderating, browsing, yet it is as if the issues I identified were invisible. We gloss over them every day without a second thought, effectively perpetuating them. We explicitly hold that, naturally, unjust marginalisation of certain topics and areas of research is wrong and should stop – yet when we engage with resources where this marginalisation takes place, we do not notice and behave as if all was as it should be. As such, this example offers support for the view that the way to improving the discipline does not (only) lead through removing some

'bad apples', offering a few more 'diverse' courses, and balancing conference panels. It leads through a major cultural shift revising our implicit and often unrecognised beliefs on what and who is important, valuable and worth paying attention to in our discipline.

References

Bates, Jo, and Jennifer Rowley. 2011. "Social Reproduction and Exclusion in Subject Indexing: A Comparison of Public Library OPACs and LibraryThing Folksonomy." *Journal of Documentation* 67 (3): 431–48. https://doi.org/10.1108/00220411111124532.

Beebee, Helen, and Jennifer Saul. 2011. "Women in Philosophy in the UK - A Report by the British Philosophical Association and the Society for Women in Philosophy UK."

Botts, Tina Fernandes, Liam Kofi Bright, Myisha Cherry, and Guntur Mallarangeng. 2014. "What Is the State of Blacks in Philosophy ?" *Critical Philosophy of Race* 2 (2): 224–42.

Bourget, David, and David J. Chalmers. 2014. "What Do Philosophers Believe?" *Philosophical Studies* 170 (3): 465–500. https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780190618698.001.0001.

Bright, Liam Kofi. 2016. "Publications By Black Authors in Leiter Top 15 Journals 2003-2012." The Splintered Mind. 2016. https://schwitzsplinters.blogspot.com/2016/01/publications-by-black-authors-in-leiter.html.

Bzovy, Justin, and Emma Ryman. 2013. "Driven by User Input and Discipline-Specific Aims, PhilPapers Combines Access with Engagement." *London School of Economics Blog*, October 2013. https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/impactofsocialsciences/2013/10/24/philpapers-from-categorisation-to-archive-to-engagement/.

Conklin, Sherri Lynn, Irina Artamonova, and Nicole Hassoun. 2019. "The State of the Discipline : New Data on Women Faculty in Philosophy." *Ergo* 6 (30): 841–68.

Crasnow, Sharon. 2009. "Feminist Philosophy?" PhilPapers. 2009. https://philpapers.org/bbs/thread.pl?tId=134#p3119.

Cruz, Helen De. 2018. "Prestige Bias: An Obstacle to a Just Academic Philosophy." *Ergo, an Open Access Journal of Philosophy* 5 (20200313): 259–88. https://doi.org/10.3998/ergo.12405314.0005.010.

Freter, Björn. 2018. "White Supremacy in Eurocentric Epistemologies: On the West's Responsibility for Its Philosophical Heritage." *Synthesis Philosophica* 33 (1): 237–49. https://doi.org/10.21464/sp33115.

Garfield, Jay L, and Bryan W Van Norden. 2016. "If Philosophy Won't Diversify, Let's Call It What It Really Is." *The New York Times*, May 2016.

Guerrero, Alex. 2015. "Journals and Diversity." *Discrimination and Disadvantage (Blog)*, 2015. https://philosophycommons.typepad.com/disability_and_disadvanta/2015/05/journals-and-diversity.html.

Guorong, Yang. 2012. "Morality and Human Existence: From the Perspective of Moral Metaphysics." *Contemporary Chinese Thought* 43 (4): 27–50. https://doi.org/10.2753/CSP1097-1467430402.

Harrison, Victoria S. 2007. "Feminist Philosophy of Religion and the Problem of Epistemic Priviledge." *The Heytrop Journal* 48 (5): 685–96. https://doi.org/10.5860/choice.45-4297.

Haslanger, Sally. 2008. "Changing the Ideology and Culture of Philosophy: Not by Reason (Alone)." *Hypatia* 23 (2): 210–23.

Healy, Kieran. 2015. "Gender and Citation in Four General-Interest Philosophy Journals, 1993–2013." *Kieran Healy: Blog*, 2015. https://kieranhealy.org/blog/archives/2015/02/25/gender-and-citation-in-four-general-interest-philosophy-journals-1993-2013/.

Kidd, Ian James, and Matthew Duncombe. 2019. "Who Shall We Invite? Improving Department Research Seminar Invitation Practices." *The Blog of the American Philosophical Association*, 2019. https://blog.apaonline.org/2019/05/23/who-shall-we-invite-improving-department-research-seminar-invitation-practices/.

Lageard, Valentin. 2016. "A Map of the Taxonomy of Philosophy." via Daily Nous. http://dailynous.com/2016/06/28/a-taxonomic-map-of-philosophy/.

Lebakeng, Teboho J. 2004. "Discourse on Colonial Epistemicide and Contemporary Attempts to Re- Affirm Indigenous Knowledge Systems , with Particular Reference to South." *Caribbean Journal of Philosophy* 3 (1): 1–12.

National Center for Education Statistics. 2009. "Digest of Education Statistics: 2009." https://doi.org/10.16194/j.cnki.31-1059/g4.2011.07.016.

Norden, Bryan W. van. 2017. *Taking Back Philosophy. A Multicultural Manifesto*. Columbia University Press. https://doi.org/10.7312/van-18436.

Norden, Bryan W. Van. 2017. *Taking Back Philosophy: A Multicultural Manifesto*. Columbia University Press. https://doi.org/10.5840/tpm20188161.

Olberding, Amy. 2015. "It'S Not Them, It'S You: A Case Study Concerning the Exclusion of Non-Western Philosophy." *Comparative Philosophy: An International Journal of Constructive Engagement of Distinct Approaches toward World Philosophy* 6 (2): 14–34. https://doi.org/10.31979/2151-6014(2015).060205.

———. 2016. "Chinese Philosophy and Wider Philosophical Discourse: Including Chinese Philosophy in General Audience Philosophy Journals." *APA Newsletter on Asian and Asian-American Philosophers and Philosophies* 13 (1): 2–9.

Pan, Bing. 2007. "In Google We Trust : Users ' Decisions on Rank , Position , and Relevance." *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication* 12: 801–23. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1083-6101.2007.00351.x.

Park, Peter K. J. 2013. *Africa, Asia, and History of Philosophy: Racism in the Formation of the Philosophical Canon, 1780–1830*. Albany: State University

of New York Press.

Rafferty, Pauline, and Rob Hidderley. 2007. "Flickr and Democratic Indexing: Dialogic Approaches to Indexing." *Aslib Proceedings: New Information Perspectives* 59 (4–5): 397–410. https://doi.org/10.1108/00012530710817591.

Schwitzgebel, Eric. 2014. "Citation of Women and Ethnic Minorities in the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy." The Splintered Mind. 2014. https://schwitzsplinters.blogspot.com/2014/08/citation-of-women-and-ethnic-minorities.html.

———. 2015a. "How Prominently Is Women's Philosophical Work Discussed? One Empirical Measure." 2The Splintered Mind. 2015. https://schwitzsplinters.blogspot.com/2015/12/how-prominently-is-womens-philosophical.html.

———. 2015b. "Only 13% of Authors in Five Leading Philosophy Journals Are Women." The Splintered Mind. 2015. https://schwitzsplinters.blogspot.com/2015/12/only-13-of-authors-in-five-leading.html.

Schwitzgebel, Eric, and Carolyn Dicey Jennings. 2016. "Women in Philosophy: Quantitative Analyses of Specialization, Prevalence, Visibility, and Generational Change." *Public Affairs Quarterly* 31 (2): 83–105.

Tremain, Shelley l. 2019. "Feminist Philosophy of Disability: A Genealogical Intervention." *The Southern Journal of Philosophy* 57 (1): 132–58. https://doi.org/10.1111/sjp.12312.

University of Illinois Library. 2020. "Philosophy: Library Resource Guide." 2020. https://guides.library.illinois.edu/c.php?g=347395&p=2339791.

Walker, Margaret Urban. 2005. "Diotima's Ghost: The Uncertain Place of Feminist Philosophy in Professional Philosophy." *Hypatia: A Journal of Feminist Philosophy* 20 (3): 153–64. https://doi.org/10.2979/hyp.2005.20.3.153.

Wikipedia. 2014. "Wikipedia Talk:Categorization/Archive 15." 2014. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia_talk:Categorization/Archive_15.

Wilhelm, Isaac, Sherri Lynn, and Nicole Hassoun. 2018. "New Data on the Representation of Women in Philosophy Journals: 2004–2015." *Philosophical Studies* 175 (6): 1441–64. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11098-017-0919-0.

Difficult Women in Philosophy: Reflections from the Margin[1]

Yasemin J. Erden, Hannah M. Altorf

Abstract: In this paper we connect diversity with being on the margins of philosophy. We do this by reflecting on the programme that we, as diverse philosophers, designed and taught in a small university. Recently, the programme was closed. We examine some of the circumstances for the closure, in particular the impact of league tables. We argue that an idea (or ideal?) of objectivity, as a method in both science and philosophy, plays a role in establishing and maintaining the outsider status of the philosopher at the margins of the discipline. As a counterpoint to objectivity, we offer concrete examples of our experiences to illustrate what it is like to be at the margins of philosophy. We end with an examination of topics that are common to academics, i.e. issues of time and resources, that are compounded at the margins. Our paper seeks to show what is lost by the closure of our programme, and what philosophy loses when marginalised philosophers are silenced and/or excluded from key academic discourse. We argue that the particular contribution of the philosopher at the margin offers an important and irreplaceable contribution to discourses on the identity of philosophy and on the value of diversity.

Keywords: diversity, margin, objectivity, merit, science, philosophy.

1. By means of introduction, where we are now

We started working on this paper in the same week in which we taught the last classes of the small philosophy programme in which we worked for more than ten years. After this week, all that is left is marking essays and dissertations, then graduation. There may still be a few students and final assessments of course, but all the usual work for a degree will have ended in a month.

It has been painful to witness the end of a programme in which we invested so much of our energy and creativity, a programme that was praised by students and external examiners, that featured innovative modules and

[1] The authors would like to acknowledge all the friends and colleagues, both in- and outside the academy, who gave their time, energy and support during the period we describe above and since. The list includes all those who supported important initiatives by The British Philosophical Association (BPA), and the University and College Union (UCU), each of which worked hard to defend our programme. We also want to thank the students and alumni who campaigned against the closure. We were moved by your commitment and care for the programme, for the wellbeing of affected staff, and for each other. Finally, we want to thank the guest editors of this issue for their sensitivity and support in bringing this paper to publication.

assessments, that defied being classified as either European or analytic, that was for the larger part run by two women, neither of whom identify as 'White British', at a university that is in the lower parts of the league table. It has been painful too for our current students and even for graduates from years ago, who have experienced the closure as a personal slight on important and formative years of their lives.

To be a small department at a little-known university comes with difficulties, but also with blessings. It allows us to know each of our students by name. In a time when more students are suffering from mental health issues, it can help them to know that their lecturers also know them. For us, it has been gratifying to witness the development of new students into mature, critical thinkers. We have offered students the opportunity to not just learn about philosophers' arguments, but also to find their own and to apply their philosophical skills, be it in dialogues, in ethical reviews of scientific proposals or in creative pieces. On top of that, we even managed to do some research ourselves.

Our approach to teaching and doing philosophy has developed in response to a diverse student body. For that reason, we have been careful not to relegate diverse voices to the last classes of modules, but instead let it inform our modules from the very start. An important inspiration has also been our activities as public philosophers and especially a practice of Socratic dialogue (cf. Altorf 2019). Philosophy we recognise to be about "understanding this deeply puzzling world", as Mary Midgley (2013) once put it. It is to find one's own position, to know where you stand and to assess your reasons. This is not easy. It is not easy to find your voice, rather than to express a general opinion or to demonstrate book learning (cp. Jantzen 1998, 1). It is also not easy to know where you stand exactly in a situation that is concrete rather than abstract or imaginary. This asks for careful perception and imagination and it makes you vulnerable (cf. Bolten 2003, 39; Altorf 2019, 5-7, 8). It is difficult especially for people in the margin, because there may not be a vocabulary yet to describe where they stand. Thus, in our philosophy programme we tried to create a community in which mostly first-generation students were introduced to philosophical ideas and philosophy's history, without losing themselves in clever puzzles.

The experience of the last few years in particular has shown us the necessity of this kind of programme, as well as the sheer impossibility of maintaining it. Our article reflects on what it is like to work in institutions with fewer resources and limited time for research. We are in particular concerned with apparently objective measurements which limit the space for the concrete individual and diverse people. We recognise such measurements in league tables and in modelling philosophy on science. As a wry reflection of the years in which we ran the programme, we find that again, in this article, our focus is on the impossibility more than the necessity of running such a programme, even when

we appreciate that it was our situation in the margin that made it possible to develop such a distinctive programme.

The argument proceeds as follows. In §2, we reflect on an important factor for the closure of the programme, its position in the league tables. In the United Kingdom, universities are ranked every year in league tables, which are published online and in newspapers, like *The Guardian* and *The Times*. These tables are primarily aimed at prospective students and take into account a number of criteria, such as student satisfaction and spend per student. We argue that the current league tables are most of all indicators of existing privileges and inadequate for their purpose. Moreover, they can be harmful, in particular for plural positions and marginal programmes. In §3 we move from the example of apparent objectivity in league tables to considering the role of objectivity in philosophy. Again, we argue that the objectivity is apparent. §4 offers examples from our experience of working in a small department, as means to challenge any apparent claim of objectivity. Finally, §5 examines common issues of time and resources. In all this we seek to bring to the fore the experience of being at the margins. In so doing we hope to show why our particular contribution, as philosophers in the margin, can offer a valuable, irreplaceable contribution to the discourse on the identity of philosophy and on the value of diversity.

Before we continue, we should perhaps explain that using 'we' does not imply that we agree on everything. We have to add this disclaimer, for too often it has been assumed that we are of the same opinion, or even that our views are interchangeable – perhaps not unlike the one minority person on a panel who is supposed to speak for their entire community. The 'we' used in this article comes from long conversations, and disagreements remain. In this article we identify as philosophers in the margin and we understand the margin as a place for creativity, as well as a strain (cf. bell hooks 1991). Working in a small university can come with room for innovation, but also less time and support and the added pressure of constantly having to defend the existence of a philosophy programme (see also §4 and §5). Yet, even though we identify here as philosophers in the margin, we also recognise our respective privileges. This complexity fits with Kimberlé Crenshaw's (1989, 139) intersectionalist account, which offers a way to recognise that "categories of experience and analysis" cannot be treated as mutually exclusive. Crenshaw notes that the intersectional experience is greater than the sum of any one specific category on its own. Negotiating these complex categories, with associated similarities and differences between us, has come from the conversations we cite above, as well as from the acknowledgment of the need for solidarity. Our 'we' is located in shared spaces that we found, that we created, and that we carefully nurtured.

2. The curse of league tables, or the beginning of the end

We locate the beginning of the end of our philosophy programme with management's increasing concern with league tables. During one academic year,

we were repeatedly urged to explain the programme's low place in the league tables. We wrote a 6-page response, that included a short executive summary for busy managers. In the end, we were never given a chance to discuss it, as all the meetings inviting us to do so were cancelled. A year later the programme's closure was announced, because of 'numbers', though which numbers was not specified.

With the growing importance of league tables, it has become obvious that they come with many difficulties (see for instance Christie 2016; Goldstein and Spiegelhalter 1996; Barnett and Moher 2019). As it is neither possible nor desirable to discuss all those here, we focus on a few of the difficulties that affected us in particular. We aim to show that in their current form league tables promise objective criteria for quality, but in practice are means for disempowering both students and academics.

First, it is not certain what league tables measure exactly and it is highly questionable that what is being measured can be reduced to a single score. It is, for instance, not clear what student satisfaction means or even whether it is desirable. It may not even be an indication of learning (see especially Bailey 2017, 885; cf. Collini 2010). Yet, even if the different elements are clear and worth considering, the league tables fail by reducing a multidimensional reality to one dimension. Factors like student satisfaction or finding a graduate job are brought together in a single number. The makers of the table have made a decision about the relative importance of each factor. This means that a student whose preferences differ from the creators may end up at a university which is not in the top of the league table, though it could be top in the student's preferences. It takes courage to go against an official classification, especially when the classifications are reinforced by sixth form colleges, parents, and peers (Somerville 2018).

What is more, league tables are difficult to interpret. Reports in the news, but also in academic institutions, often resort to simplifications. When a league table is published, the news normally reports on changes in position between different years, on universities moving up and down a few places. Universities provide the press releases accordingly. If they have moved up, they will celebrate that in a press release. If they have not, they will adapt the message and for instance confirm that they are still in the top ten or twenty. Yet, such changes are probably not news at all, as it is dubitable whether they reflect any changes in reality.

Of course, this kind of spin is to be expected and the more widespread it becomes, the more it is normalised and to some extent accepted, but also the better people are at spotting it. What the reporting does not do, however, is take into account the more substantial fluctuation that affects especially universities and programmes in the middle and lower parts of the table. Universities and individual programmes can change ten, twenty or even fifty places from one year to the next. Yet, this does not mean that they have suddenly become much better

or worse. Rather, the differences between the different universities or programmes are so small that a negligible change in the overall score can translate into a drastic move in the league table.

Lastly, league tables add pressure to academic staff who are already balancing a heavy workload. Too often, the lecturers or the team are tasked with changing the programme's position in the league table and yet their influence is very limited. The *Guardian* league table, for instance, includes tables on satisfaction (overall, teaching, feedback), entry standards, career prospects, value added, spend per student and staff-student ratio. Of these, only the first can be argued to be within the scope of a lecturer and yet it is the other elements which often decide the place in a league table. This is clear when comparing the ranking of the individual factors of the tables, such as student satisfaction or career after 6 months, to the overall position. (The *Guardian* league table allows for such a comparison.)

Such considerations make it doubtful that these league tables provide much guidance for prospective students, even when they understand – as much as that is possible – what these tables can and cannot tell them. The league tables may strive to provide information, but as we note above, they can actually threaten student choice. We, as academics, have experienced the league tables as disempowering. As we have argued, academics' influence on the overall position is limited to student satisfaction and even this factor is unlikely to be an indication of offering a diverse curriculum or of good learning. As it happened, our overall student satisfaction score was very high. In one table, we were second on satisfaction, but two places from the bottom for staff-student ratio. Our possibility to change the overall position was thus negligible and yet we were tasked with changing the position, with explaining these statistics to our management, and then never given the opportunity to make the argument. What presented itself as an objective measurement of quality proved to be reinforcement of marginalisation. (See also Jenkins 2013 on the different ways in which meritocracy can hide bias.)

If league tables are to stay, they need a serious makeover. A first and simple change is to remove the final calculation from league tables and thus the overall score. The next steps could be to rethink the questions. The suggestion of excellence alone can be a threat to pluralistic approaches (Jenkins 2013, 89). We would want to suggest asking fewer questions that assume education is a product for an individual consumer and more questions that reflect the experience and expertise of students and academics. Perhaps to start generating questions that are of immediate significance for prospective students, we can ask *them* for their most pressing concern and ask graduate students what question they wish they had asked before embarking on their education. Academics can be asked for their professional insights and distinctions can be drawn between different disciplines. It is from such changes that an all too simplistic understanding of excellence can be challenged and space created for a plurality

of approaches. The primacy of league tables reflects a trend towards the disempowerment of academics by prioritising metrics that rely on quantifiable data. This trend has left many subjects in the humanities generally vulnerable. But philosophy as a discipline is not immune to the lure of the objective, and this will be our next topic.

3. Science and philosophy: between an objective rock and a neutral hard place

As the above account shows, metrics and quantifiable data, within a narrow conception of what is considered 'scientific', can play a huge role in university decision making. The problems arising from such tendencies in the academy, especially the bias towards quantification, are well trodden ground. In this section however we explore how similar tendencies can be found in philosophy, and we consider the impact of this on our programme specifically. There are many ways to think about the relationship between science and philosophy, of course, but for our purposes we reflect only on the influence that a particular account of neutrality or objectivity has on philosophy.

It is clear that philosophy within the analytic tradition prioritises scientific methods, broadly construed. Moreover, as Fiona Jenkins (2013, 87) describes, "institutionally successful philosophy" occupies a position from which to assess what is *best* in the discipline, and this too is done by comparison with scientific aims and methods. These approaches include "ideals of neutrality and objectivity" (Jenkins 2013, 87), for instance, alongside the distancing of philosophical thinking from the subjective and toward the abstract. These methods may be useful in plenty of ways, including to avoid some logical fallacies, but they also bring problems. For instance, as we will discuss below, by precluding or eclipsing the specificity of concrete positions, including those we offer in this paper.

To explain why ideals of neutrality and objectivity may be problematic, we need to consider a number of factors, as well as the limitations to such methods. The first point to note is that any method, just as any thought process, requires innumerable, even immeasurable, steps in a process which will include a number of overt as well as opaque decisions. For instance, about which method is used, how the process follows, in which direction, and so on. Those decisions are not and never can be neutral. All of which impacts on the possibility of objectivity. The league table examples we offer above show this very well. Decisions are not made in a vacuum (Fürst 2017), and this applies as much in science as in philosophy. Second, there is plenty of evidence to suggest that when neutrality in decision making is taken for granted, problems arise. The preference to find statistically significant data, for example (also known as a preference to be successful), can cause 'selective outcome reporting', which includes the mining of data for anything statistically significant (cf. Open Science Collaboration 2015). To do otherwise is to commit to publishing all studies, including those that show

very little or even nothing in the way of statistical significance. Few careers are built on such studies.

Such decisions in science include reporting evidence and data in a way so as to avoid being wrong. This kind of problematic approach is sometimes described as *bad science*, especially when the preference to avoid being wrong has led to significant scientific misadventures with some major consequences (Ioannidis cited in Lehrer 2010). Selective reporting or bad science has resulted in major controversies like the replication crisis, for instance in psychology. That philosophy replicates scientific methods without recognising associated weaknesses means that we are at risk of replicating some of these failures without addressing their causes. For these reasons Donna Haraway (1981, 477) proposes that:

> The critique of bad science leads directly to an analysis of the material conditions of the production of knowledge and to a personal identification of the objective voice behind the 'pure, unadulterated facts.' Reality has an author. The author always has a proper name, but it has a way of disappearing into declarative sentences or even graphs embedded in published papers issuing from well-funded laboratories.

Recognising that *reality has an author*, as Haraway describes it, also means recognising the preferences and thereby biases of each concrete author. Analytic philosophy is not immune to bias (Brennan 2013; Saul 2013), especially when bias is understood to include more than just negative, selfish, or prejudicial preferences, and is instead associated with ordinary, everyday decision-making, like a preference for this coffee type over another. Efforts towards the neutral or objective mask these preferences and leave little space for the diverse experiences of the specific, concrete individual (Benhabib 1992). Philosophical methods which aim at scientific levels of objectivity can therefore obscure the necessarily subjective accounts at their core.

We can go further and claim that the subjective and the objective are inseparable. Haraway (1988, 583) argues that it is in fact the *partial perspective* that promises an "objective vision." In other words, *objectivity* begins with the *particular*, by virtue of what she calls "specific embodiment": there can be no *objective* vision without *particular* vision, as well as the particular mind that imagines and thinks about what is seen and experienced. The drive to objectivity denies the "active perceptual systems" (senses, body, mind) that allow for necessarily "specific *ways* of seeing, that is, ways of life" (Haraway 1988, 583). When this subjectivity is ignored, the particular merely *poses* as the universal (Jenkins and Hutchison 2013, 13). This might not seem obviously problematic in the sciences (actually it is, but that's for another paper). Especially as it is certainly possible that in the process of experimentation and analysis one scientist *could* be replaced by another, of equal skill and training, without significant harm or even impact on the experiment. It is clearly problematic in philosophy, however, as Crary (2002, 98-99) notes when she describes

philosophical conceptions of objectivity in terms of a "point of view from nowhere". Yet a *view* from nowhere really isn't all that possible for the embodied and embedded philosopher. Wittgenstein makes this point when he complains about people who try to speak "impartially" about things, and who "pretend to be able to slip out of their own skins" (cited in McGuinness 2007, 235, note 7). For similar reasons feminist theorists tend to reject assumptions about objective reality, whether because they are abstracted from a particular perspective or because they are presented as independent of subjectivity (Crary 2002). Our point here is not to examine objectivity in itself, qua a *philosophical endeavour*. Instead our point is narrower than that: it is to show how the *expectations* of objectivity, and of working within these contexts of expectation, have impacted on us in practical terms.

Our aim in this discussion is to show what we have discovered in the margins, and to thereby suggest that philosophy *necessarily* requires the concrete philosopher who can bring this perspective. The philosopher, and their particular way of thinking, is on this account integral to their contribution to the subject. To neglect this is to offer a "false vision promising transcendence of all limits and responsibility" (Haraway 1988, 583). In other words, a person's limits are included in their individual approach to philosophy, with associated responsibility. Intuition, for example, whether in creativity and thinking, as a foundation for philosophical reasoning, or in decision-making, is not easily divorced from the person from whom it originates (Hutchison 2013). Intuitions are grounded in practice and preference, as well as in culture and training. To neglect these dimensions is to ignore the embodied subjectivity of knowledge and of thinking. As Michelle Bastian (2013, 219) suggests, "embodied experience is not external to philosophy", instead it "shapes some of its most central concepts".

It is important to note at this point that our argument rests on concrete positions. It cannot be made only in the abstract. Instead our argument invites, perhaps even requires, the reader to use our concrete experiences as a way to think about their own, and to reflect on where they stand. To consider the concreteness of their own perspectives, intuitions, and limits, and to consider how these impact on the teaching and the research that they do, including on method and on their views about the relation between the subjective and the objective. It is not easy to *show* the view from the margin to those who do not share the space, even if we try to offer some insights in the section below. But to see the space where one finds one's own feet is an important starting point.

That our programme is, or was, built on the work of two very different philosophers, yet both in the margin, cannot be divorced from the identity of the programme that we created. It would not have been possible to replace one or other of us, and yet maintain the specific, concrete experiences, identities, thinking, teaching and learning that emerged in our programme. To recognise this detail is to recognise the value of the unquantifiable, including as it does a

variety of disparate but interrelated experiences (involving also many colleagues and students). It is also to recognise the philosopher in the margin as a concrete individual, with a particular point of view in and of philosophy, and with a particular contribution to offer the discipline. Our programme demonstrated the culmination of such complexity, and so it is unsurprising that we continue to mourn its loss. Our point is that the discipline of philosophy should too.

In recognising the value of the concrete philosopher, and their contribution to the discipline, we must next consider equity of access to the field. What would it mean to say, for instance, that distance, objectivity, and a kind of neutrality are prioritised in, and thereby dominate, some major strands in analytic philosophy? And what evidence can be offered that there is a prioritisation of one group in philosophy, with concomitant prioritising of their vision of what philosophy *is* over that of others (Jenkins and Hutchison 2013, 4)? For the philosopher in the margin, it can be difficult to provide definitive evidence, or even to pinpoint the kinds of inequity associated with marginalisation. This is tied up with the fact that marginalisation can occur as a result of apparently minor decisions and actions. Samantha Brennan (2013, 191) suggests that to view each act separately can result in missing "aggregative effects" and patterns relevant "to understanding bias and discrimination". The accumulative effects include a lack of recognition that accompanies one's work (whether by its being ignored or denigrated), or that one's work is judged outside of the context from which it derives its value and meaning, as can happen with interdisciplinary work, for example. Justine McGill (2013, 211) argues that "no amount of personal brilliance, emotional fortitude, or sheer hard work can protect a woman from being silenced in a context in which implicit shared assumptions about the relevance of her gender operate to leach her words of their power". Indeed, it sometimes seems to us that no amount of hard work from the margins of a discipline will suffice to shine a light on the work of an academic in the margin, nor the programme that they create.

In our work and our teaching, we each (in different ways and for different reasons) sought to offer a challenge to the primacy of *objectivity* in philosophy. At the heart of this endeavour, as the above account implies, is the idea that the philosophical is not easily detached from the person who develops it. From this is a related claim, namely that the requirement in some philosophy to, above all else, *maintain distance from one's own philosophical ideas* can not only engender the kinds of biases and limitations we note above, but also result in positions that are disingenuous. Marilyn Friedman (2013, 28; Tuana 1992) suggests that learning to distance oneself from a philosophical position "promotes a superficial and shallow attitude towards philosophical ideas." If correct, then the prioritising of such methods can, and perhaps already has, caused harm to philosophy as practiced in the analytic tradition. Especially where it has seen the promotion of the apparently objective over the development of the individual as a philosophically embedded person with specific preferences and intuitions.

That our programme gave weight to the latter was not and could not be captured in the league tables against which its value was judged, that much is clear. That philosophy as a discipline has lost something seems to us clear, but as we note above it is not easy to prove.

One way to support our claims would be to show numerous efforts in analytic philosophy to decontextualise philosophical questions and answers. We could also show where this is used to achieve a certain kind of clarity and precision about what has now become a highly theoretical position. Yet an abstract account of this sort, itself divorced from the particular that could give it the kind of depth and meaning with which we are concerned, would replicate the methods that we seek to unpick. For these reasons we instead present some of our particular experiences, as two philosophers in the margin, and in this way offer a personal account which we suggest is essential in discourse on marginalisation in philosophy specifically.

4. The view from the margins

To introduce this section, we need to reiterate our belief that the concrete experience of marginalisation cannot be found in thought experiments or abstract treatises. Experiences are complex and contingent on context (Haraway 1988). The perspective of the concrete philosopher in the margin cannot be known without their contribution. Little in the experience of marginalisation can be predicted, and little more can be reflected in the kind of abstract league table against which apparently objective judgements and decisions are nevertheless made. In such attempts we see over and again a disregard for the 'who' in the pursuit of objectivity (Jenkins and Hutchison, 2013, 4). The life as lived at the margins should begin therefore with an understanding that such views are "from a body, always a complex, contradictory, structuring and structured body" (Haraway 1988, 589). In these ways, judgement differs when experienced from the inside or from the outside. As philosophers in the margin we rarely have access to the *inside*. Meanwhile those who do not experience marginalisation can only speculate about what it is to be on the *outside*. We can offer some examples to aid that understanding.

This section has been in some ways the most difficult to write. For one, our experiences are not identical, and neither is our assessment of them. An even more difficult issue is that telling these stories makes us vulnerable. Take, for instance, how we argued earlier on the basis of our experience that league tables are disempowering. This argument may invite responses that completely dismiss the relevance of personal experience. It may, for instance, be replaced by criticism of a system, or it can be reduced to evidence of *our* failing with no relevance for anyone else. (Apparently, we were simply not up to the job.) While there may be some truth in such responses, they risk missing the point if they are not themselves questioned as a form of what Alison Bailey calls "privilege-preserving epistemic pushback" (Bailey 2017), that is, an attempt to defend the

status quo of philosophy. After all, in the preceding section we argued for the importance of each philosopher recognising their particular perspective. A discussion that ignores experiences misses the point. Indeed, it needs to try and acknowledge them. In 'Concrete Flowers' Kristie Dotson observes how "philosophically-trained black women quit the field of philosophy with a sigh of relief. … More often than not, the final realization … is not, 'I have failed at philosophy,' but rather, 'philosophy has failed me'" (Dotson 2011, 403). It takes courage and pertinacity to articulate such a realisation. It also asks for careful perception by those who observe. The women sighed and Dotson heard.

To work in a small programme in a lower league institute is to experience few opportunities for networking. It is to experience even fewer of the apparently everyday, informal, yet important interactions that impact on one's daily life, one's professional career, and on one's programme. This includes the kinds of conversations that happen in corridors about league tables and the Research Excellence Framework (REF), a national research assessment exercise which generates research-based league tables. Such conversations also prepare someone to play the games that each involves. On the one hand, to be marginalised *within* your own university, such as by *exclusion* from the conversation, can be seen as discriminatory practice. Meanwhile, to be *absent*, namely because you were never there in the first place, can mean that your exclusion isn't even viewed as problematic. Indeed, it is difficult to prove that you are *excluded* from a conversation where your absence is necessary and assumed. Yet, whether it is obvious or not, the philosopher in the margin is conspicuous by her absence, and discussion about things that affect *each* philosopher suffers where there is a dearth of views from the margin in the kinds of ordinary conversations that we note here. Especially as they are spaces in which all kinds of intuitions are honed. Meanwhile we as philosophers in the margin experience our own absence from such spaces and networks as loss. We suffer not only from a lack of opportunity to contribute to important discourse, but also from the lack of space and time in which our own ideas can be tested, supported, and honed through discussion with colleagues in our discipline. The outcome of this absence is seen in league tables but also in a disappointing REF return.

Spaces where philosophers can meet, such as conferences, or as offered by societies like the British Philosophical Association (BPA), can on the one hand offer a way to bridge these gaps. For instance, where there is a chance to meet together with smaller programmes before a larger meeting, as the BPA has offered in the past. On the other hand, some meetings can inadvertently reify gaps. Especially where there is no space to learn and practice unspoken social conventions in advance of such meetings, to know *who is who* beforehand, among other details that can help to lubricate these interactions. For those who occupy the margins for intersectional reasons (university status, gender, ethnicity, and so on), not having those valuable experiences in advance can mean

it is easy to say the wrong thing, or to the wrong person, and to not even know that you have done so.

For instance, to say that you have never had a sabbatical can be difficult to hear for colleagues in universities with established sabbatical systems and funding successes. It can lead to awkwardness, and sometimes stops the conversation. To speak about the enormous pressure that is put on academics at small institutes to ensure that students do not fail (and what it is to be made responsible when students do fail) has led to responses of incredulity as well as of silence. And to acknowledge in a meeting of your peers, for instance at the BPA Head of Department meeting, that some philosophy departments hold enormous power over others is not to ingratiate oneself well into the conversation, nor does it endear you to those about whom you have complained, or those who are their friends.

We can add to the above expectations about appropriate style, including those that arise because of gender. This can include expectations regarding how women will or won't fit within an environment established by (mostly) male predecessors, or in noting how women's experiences may differ from their male colleagues. It has been asked, for instance, whether combative tendencies in philosophy can be alienating to women, and there is plenty of evidence to suggest that it can be (Beebee 2013, 64). Yet it is also clear that a woman with a robust style can also be alienated. What it is to be confrontational is tied up not only with gender but also with culture, and what is perceived as a virtue in one culture or context (frank, assertive) can be a vice in another (blunt, discourteous). To be culturally 'other' can lead to further marginalisation.

Challenging the status quo, whether intentionally or not, has meant that each author of this paper has at one time or another been described as 'a difficult woman'. In this way each individual identity has been subsumed under the category of *difficult women*. We have, as already noted, sometimes been treated interchangeably, and this only added to that grouping. While this is not particular to philosophy, the approach which includes classification based on generalisation certainly is. In this way, ideas are categorised, but so are the individual philosophers, sometimes dismissively. These kinds of behaviours, we argue, deny the authenticity of the individual who is categorised, and thereby their identity as an individual philosopher. Experiences described above (in necessarily generalised form – some of us still wish for careers in philosophy) only help to cement our identities as *difficult*, or as irrelevant, with concomitant increase in marginalisation.

There are other experiences of marginalisation that are less specific to our own collective circumstances. For instance, where philosophy follows the scientific approach to knowledge building, whereby we are "obliged to comment on the received texts", (Haraway 1981, 477), and to build arguments from a position that is not one's own. Discourse on these exclusionary practices are well

established (Alcoff 1996), but the experience of marginalisation contributes further still.

As with the league tables, much about a small university can be counted against the philosopher at the margins, but in ways that they cannot control. For instance, we have each been told that the institution's lack of status further diminished one's own, from which follows that one's own career is cyclically stunted. In one funding application it was made abundantly clear that the university resources were not sufficient for the project, though an explanation of what those resources were was not given, nor were recommendations to remedy this offered.

Issues of inclusion, exclusion, and associated power dynamics are central to marginalisation. Career progression, for instance as offered via funding grants, is protected by the same gatekeepers, e.g. senior academics, editors, and referees, who already hold significant power within the philosophy profession, especially over those who are lower on the academic ladder (Friedman, 2013, 23). Gatekeeping is also visible in publishing (Yang 2003; Sato 2012), and it would be naïve to think that individual and institutional characteristics play no role in further marginalisation during the publication process.

Philosophy, just as science, systemises and propagates norms and paradigms about philosophical systems and methods. These norms dominate discourse about 'good' philosophy, as well as about which philosophers occupy central platforms. It is striking, for instance, that through each of our intellectual careers, invitations to speak at philosophy conferences have been vanishingly few. Too often conference speakers are announced, and it is clear that 'top' speakers from prestigious institutions have been selected, even when their CVs demonstrate no particular expertise on the specific topic of the conference. Intellectual gatekeeping can be harmful to individuals, but also to disciplines who can thereby suffer from a lack of diversity and plurality in their perspectives (Sayer 2014).

Tied up with the above gatekeeping are associated issues of authority and credibility, as well as the injustice that is experienced when a person who should have authority is unfairly doubted. As Katrina Hutchison (2013, 112) notes, judgements about who or what is considered 'authority' in philosophy is made trickier by the fact that philosophy does not have the same kinds of anchors for "theoretical authority" as many other disciplines. Indeed, methods in philosophy are varied and, Hutchison (2013, 124) argues, many of these "are often learned only implicitly". This can make it difficult to challenge the authority of established philosophers, but also, and most importantly for our experiences, "to establish oneself as an authoritative philosopher" (Hutchison 2013, 112). Especially given preferences may be aesthetic (Brennan 2013), as shown in the protest by some analytic philosophers against Derrida's honorary Doctorate from Cambridge in a 1992 letter to the *Times.* The criticism in that letter centred primarily on style.

The kinds of problems we describe above fit what Miranda Fricker (2007) describes as *testimonial injustice*. She says this is "a distinctively epistemic injustice… in which someone is wronged specifically in her capacity as a knower" (2007, 20). This applies especially where the credibility of the knower is doubted, as in the case of what she calls *credibility deficit*, and which we suggest can extend to the category of exclusion. Fricker (2007, 27) offers that injustice can occur *incidentally,* for instance in the prejudice against a particular research method, or *systematically*, as a "prejudice relating to social identity" or *identity prejudice*. This latter category includes

> prejudices that 'track' the subject through different dimensions of social activity – economic, educational, professional, sexual, legal, political, religious, and so on. Being subject to a tracker prejudice renders one susceptible not only to testimonial injustice but to a gamut of different injustices, and so when such a prejudice generates a testimonial injustice, that injustice is systematically connected with other kinds of actual or potential injustice. (2007, 27)

The former category – incidental injustice – includes the research method example as above, or the conference example she describes elsewhere (28) when the philosopher of science suffers a credibility deficit by virtue of their 'academic category'.

In the examples we consider here, the incidental and the systematic overlap. In fact, it seems to us that they do not simply occur simultaneously, but rather that they reinforce each other. On this account the prejudice against a research method or approach, e.g. towards feminist philosophy, can be tied up with a systemic identity prejudice, e.g. towards female philosophers. Similarly, for the philosopher with a foreign name who works at a 'lower' institute, lack of recognition can be understood as not merely coincidental but as a compound of prejudices. Demonstrating this process of reinforcement can be difficult, yet, regardless, the lack of recognition remains. This account fits within the "identity-prejudicial credibility deficit" (28) model that Fricker proposes. Disentangling the correlation or causation question is no easy feat. When such tasks fall to the philosopher in the margin, here is yet another way in which we must undertake emotionally draining labour. What is key therefore is that it ought not to be incumbent upon the person who suffers credibility deficit to accurately locate the source of the deficit. The examples that Fricker offers, for instance, present a case for theoretical analysis by an impartial observer, but one of personal and painful examination by the situated knower, and this distinction needs to be carefully borne in mind if marginalisation is to be understood and processes for remedy considered.

The account we offer in this paper suggests that philosophers need to do more to avoid becoming "mired in our own fields of research and so thoroughly indoctrinated by our working culture and 'best-practices' that we lose the capacity to honestly critique the popular methodologies of our own disciplines" (Murray *et al* 2007, 513). The outsider, including the philosopher in the margin,

has a particular perspective that can be useful for this process. The authors of this paper are not tied to any particular tradition, whether analytic or continental, and instead borrow more or less heavily from each, as well as from other traditions and disciplines. In this way the philosopher in the margin can avoid being tied "by the theoretico-practical terms that govern the insider's regime of knowledge; the outsider brings a different lexicon, novel explanatory terms and a fresh modus operandi" (Murray *et al* 2007, 513). The philosopher in the margin can help to transgress traditional topologies, and to draw attention to methodological weaknesses. We can also question unstated yet obvious (to the outsider) preferences and biases, even if this can make for uncomfortable silences at meetings and conferences.

To recognise the value of a situated knowledge is to recognise the value of hearing the *other*, and not to assume the knowledge or position of the other, nor even to assume that this can be understood by speculation, sympathy or empathy (hooks 1991). On this account, we have proposed that the view of the philosopher in the margin cannot be presumed or hypothesised in abstract or general terms. For these reasons we suggest that it is essential that philosophers in the margin are included. To accept this account is to see what has been lost in the closure of our programme, and to see that this is more than can be quantified. To rectify this would require an additional conversation on time and resources, to which we now turn.

5. Time and resources (even to invent interesting titles)

Time is a precious commodity in academic contexts, yet assumptions are made about a universal temporality as both quantity and as experienced. For instance, when the philosopher in the margin speaks of a lack of time, and the philosopher at a prestigious institute who is currently on a sabbatical replies (without curiosity or enquiry) that they understand. Bastian (2013, 219) suggests that to assume time is the same for each person is to fail to recognise, and thereby to further disadvantage, those who otherwise and already suffer disadvantage. In fact, she says, "seemingly commonsense notions of time mask inequalities within philosophy in multiple ways" (Bastian, 2013, 219-20).

As academics in the margin we have at times been fortunate enough to each have a notional 'day a week' for research (actually, for one of us it was cut to 'half a day' for a while), with the rest of the week apportioned to the usual academic tasks of teaching and admin etc. But even this notional day has rarely been protected in normal times, and in recent years has instead been filled with the closure of our programme. This has included the defence, negotiation, and finally the mediation of outcomes, including the welfare of oneself, colleagues, and students. There is also the administrative and teaching burden that comes from the actual closure. Add to this the years of uncertainty that arise from an ever-present threat of redundancy. All of this leads to a very particular experience of research time.

None of the details in the above example can be considered *external* or personal life events. They do not compare to, say, bereavement, or caring duties (which also need to be taken into account). None of the experiences of closure and redundancy originate from outside the academy, yet little of it is accounted for in the time allotted to the academic *within* the academy. Nor is the quality of the time as it is experienced accounted for. There is no box to tick, or space for narrative about how closure impacts on research, whether as a context for league tables, or for the REF. It may be true that the academic who has a day of research time each week has the same prospect for research as any academic in a comparable position, yet the philosopher in the margin will experience that time differently, even without taking into account the kinds of external factors we note above. It is therefore essential to recognise the embodied experience of (e.g. research) time as experienced at the margins of the discipline. As Bastian (2013) describes, failure to recognise the specificity of these experiences can result in a concomitant failure to notice the causal power of associated inequity. Neglecting "structural exclusions" (Bastian 2013, 221) creates only further marginalisation. Where inclusion is not the norm, the burden of proof will be particularly difficult for those who are already at the margins, and with limited resources to prove one's experiences, or indeed one's worth. This can further exacerbate already vulnerable foundations, as our own submission to the REF proved. Failure to gain entry to the *inside* comes with a very high cost.

This examination of time as a quality matters not only for the individual who is at the margins, but also for the future of philosophy. As Bastian (2013, 225) points out, philosophy is "guided by a narrow vision of the future that only admits of a particular kind of philosopher". This description can be expanded to include a narrow vision that only admits of a particular kind of philosophy programme. This can be seen in the section on league tables above. As things stand, scope for originality is limited to those who have time to find gaps in whatever topics are acceptable (to publishers, editors, reviewers), and often along well-trodden paths. In this way the researcher is vulnerable to the judgement of those who wield power, with judgment grounded in an account that is authoritative and "unequivocal" (Jenkins 2013, 97), and from which there can be no recourse, and no defence.

Haraway (1981, 471) suggests that "To author is to have the power to originate, to name", yet such scope for authorial autonomy is problematised by the need to reflect on an unequal canon, with unequal workloads, amid an unequal distribution of emotional labour that is often draining, especially at the margins. Jenkins (2013, 86) suggests that the gender gap in philosophy can be viewed in part as "an effect of a specific colonisation of the resources and plural strands of philosophy's own traditions", which in turn engenders the privileging of one philosophical approach over another. This colonisation stretches from the present to the future, especially as it enables current hegemony to dictate future paths and to further cement what is marginal (Bastian 2013, 226). As Langdon

Winner (1980) observed about technology innovation, trends and habits can become status quo if we do not take care to avoid hegemony and to recognise when the deck is stacked in favour of some, and against others. What we accept in the short term becomes entrenched as what we do, and this principle along with the caution to take care in these endeavours, long promoted in both science and technology studies, ought to be applied to methods and the identity of philosophy in the UK.

Metric systems that evaluate the productivity and success of an author cannot be fair while they assume a universal volume of available time for research. As Jenkins (2013, 83) describes, "disciplines reproduce themselves", and in this way the "hegemonic conception of the discipline" reflect things like the gender composition of the most powerful within it, as well as the preferences of those authorities. All of which occurs under the auspice of a *disciplinary* narrative. The outcome of such processes is not therefore a *natural* outcome, i.e. as from ideas that compete on an equal footing, but rather a *survival of the fittest*, where fitness is already determined by factors that include systemic privilege and marginalisation. Each is connected with intersectional characteristics e.g. race, gender, disability, culture, class, especially as these link to the availability of resources and time.

At this point it may be wise to consider the question of merit, especially as this is sometimes offered as an objection to ideas of privilege. Perhaps time and resources are allocated according to success and this is reflected in a meritocratic system of reward. Perhaps the successful academic has more time for research, or perhaps they are successful because they use their time well. Such views may contain some promise, but they require further thought. Jenkins (2013, 84) highlights that negotiations about success are "reflective of (contestable) constructions of both value and judgement". Accordingly, criteria for success are not separate to such values and judgement. In fact, the "frameworks for validating disciplinary achievement" are self-perpetuating in so far as they help to reify "practices and processes" (Jenkins 2013, 85) which they both generate and authorise, and from which perpetuation the privileged continue to benefit. It is rather like grading one's own paper. Hutchison (2013, 118-9) argues that a philosopher may not realise the limits of their own training. If a philosopher is familiar only with the methods adopted in their narrow area of specialisation, then they may not be best placed to judge the quality either of contents, of techniques, nor even intuitions, as employed in another area in philosophy (whether viewed positively or negatively).

In this way, a meritocratic system not only "defends its particular results as fair" but develops a system of assessment through which lens "its results will appear as unquestionably and exclusively valid" (Jenkins 2013, 95). This creates and sustains inequity, while systemising and perpetuating imbalance, and thereby also shaping the identity of the philosopher in the margin. Representation requires presence: to have a voice in philosophy requires time,

as covered above, effort, resources as well as people who believe, invest, and offer support in both public and private spheres (Collins 1996; Dotson 2011). That we must make time to write this particular paper for instance, with the pain and sadness it brings each of us, offers further evidence of the emotional labour required to draw attention to what would otherwise not be seen. It is especially difficult to do this while knowing that the burden of proof will remain on us, that our perspectives may not be taken as true or accurate, and knowing that our credibility may be doubted in other rather unpredictable ways.

6. Conclusion

This paper has sought to show the specificity, as we experience it, of being at the margins of philosophy. We've argued for the impossibility of maintaining a programme as we devised it. In so doing we have argued that philosophy should "foster pluralism" (Jenkins and Hutchison 2013, 14), and understand that pluralism also includes a range of methods, approaches, aims, and style. On top of that, methods of accountability and assessment need to be revisited, especially with a view to challenging what are currently "narrow criteria of achievement" (Jenkins 2013, 99). Our experiences show that to neglect these challenges is to risk excluding those who are already at the margins of philosophy. Philosophy needs to value a different range of aims and motivations, as well as methods of discourse (Hutchison 2013, 120), and for this, it needs to take much greater care of those who exist precariously on its margins.

Our pluralistic philosophy programme celebrated a variety of methods, traditions, and approaches within philosophy, and in so doing it bucked the trend for more and more narrow specialisation within university departments. A narrow approach avoids problems that come with complexity, but it also fosters expectations and assumptions regarding shared values, preferences, and intuitions. Bastian (2013, 227) argues that an aversion to contradiction in traditional philosophical discourse, for instance, "risks leaving philosophy unable to respond adequately to the complexities of the world in which it is practiced". This paper offers support for this position and adds that methodological uniformity in philosophy can make these inadequacies more likely. We maintain that our programme offered a way to avoid such inadequacies, and that its loss should therefore be seen as a loss to the discipline.

McGill (2013, 211) argues that the "suppression or distortion of women's speech is a collective, cultural problem that needs to be addressed as such", and we have offered this paper with a case study on league tables to add weight to this position. We do this while noting other forms of intersectional exclusion and marginalisation. Philosophers have for too long taken for granted that philosophy is somehow free of the kinds of cultural assumption, power imbalance, and discrepancies in authority that mire other disciplines. Maintaining this status quo has in fact left philosophy, and particularly philosophers in the margin, especially vulnerable to metric-obsessed,

quantifiable-data-driven capitalist market forces, with judgements and actions grounded in these vices. To defend our programme required resistance and objection, and this, as McGill (2013, 213) predicts, was costly.

References

Alcoff, Linda Martin. 1996. "Is the Feminist Critique of Reason Rational." *Philosophic Exchange* 26 (1): 59-79.

Altorf, Hannah Marije. 2019. "Dialogue and Discussion: Reflections on a Socratic Method." *Arts and Humanities in Higher Education* 18 (2): 60-75.

Bailey, Alison. 2017. "Tracking Privilege-Preserving Epistemic Pushback in Feminist and Critical Race Philosophy Classes." *Hypatia* 32 (4): 876-92.

Barnett, Anthony G. and David Moher. 2019. "Turning the Tables: A University League-table Based on Quality not Quantity." *F1000Research* 8 (583): 1-17.

Bastian, Michelle. 2013. "Finding Time for Philosophy." In *Women in Philosophy: What Needs to Change?*, edited by Katrina Hutchison and Fiona Jenkins 215-30. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Beebee, Helen. 2013. "Women and Deviance in Philosophy." In *Women in Philosophy: What Needs to Change?*, edited by Katrina Hutchison and Fiona Jenkins 61-80. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Benhabib, Seyla. 1992. "The Generalised and the Concrete Other." In *Situating the Self: Gender, Community and Postmodernism in Contemporary Ethics*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Bolten, Hans. 2003. "Spreken Buiten de Orde: Radicale Reflective in een Socratisch Gesprek." In *Het Socratisch Gesprek*, edited by Jos Delnoij and van Dalen Wieger, 14–56. Budel: Damon.

Brennan, Samantha. 2013. "Rethinking the Moral Significance of Micro-Inequities: The Case of Women in Philosophy." In *Women in Philosophy: What Needs to Change?*, edited by Katrina Hutchison and Fiona Jenkins, 180-96. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Christie, Fiona. 2017. "The Reporting of University League Table Employability Rankings: A Critical Review." *Journal of Education and Work* 30 (4): 403-18.

Collini, Stefan. 2010. "Browne's Gamble." *London Review of Books* 32 (21): 23–25. Available at: *http://www.lrb.co.uk/v32/n21/stefan-collini/brownes-gamble*

Collins, Patricia Hill. 1996. "What's in a Name? Womanism, Black Feminism, and Beyond." *The Black Scholar* 26 (1): 9-17.

Crary, Alice. 2002. "What Do Feminists Want in an Epistemology?" In *Feminist Interpretations of Ludwig Wittgenstein: Re-Reading the Canon*, edited by Naomi Scheman and Peg O'Connor 97-118. University Park, PA: Penn State University Press.

Crenshaw, Kimberle. 1991. "Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color." *Stanford Law Review* 43 (6): 1241-99.

Dotson, Kristie. 2011. "Concrete Flowers; Contemplating the Profession of Philosophy." *Hypatia* 26 (2): 403-9.

Friedman, Marilyn. 2013. "Women in Philosophy: Why Should We Care?" In *Women in Philosophy: What Needs to Change?*, edited by Katrina Hutchison and Fiona Jenkins, 21-38. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Fürst, Henrik. 2017. *Selected or Rejected? Assessing Aspiring Writers' Attempts to Achieve Publication* (Doctoral dissertation, Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis).

Goldstein, Harvey and David J. Spiegelhalter. 1996. "League Tables and Their Limitations: Statistical Issues in Comparisons of Institutional Performance." *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society Series A, Royal Statistical Society* 159 (3): 385-409.

Haraway, Donna J. 1981. "In the Beginning Was the Word: The Genesis of Biological Theory" *Signs* 6 (3): 469-81.

———.1988. "Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective." *Feminist Studies* 14 (3), 575-99.

hooks, bell. 1991. *Yearning: Race, Gender and Cultural Politics*. Boston: South End Press

Hutchison, Katrina. 2013. "Sages and Cranks: The Difficulty of Identifying First-Rate Philosophers." In *Women in Philosophy: What Needs to Change?*, edited by Katrina Hutchison and Fiona Jenkins, 103-26. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Jantzen, Grace M. 1998. *Becoming Divine: Towards a Feminist Philosophy of Religion.* Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Jenkins, Fiona. 2013. "Singing the Post-Discrimination Blues: Notes for a Critique of Academic Meritocracy." In *Women in Philosophy: What Needs to Change?*, edited by Katrina Hutchison and Fiona Jenkins, 81-102. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Jenkins, Fiona and Katrina Hutchison. 2013. "Introduction: Searching for Sofia: Gender and Philosophy in the 21st Century". In *Women in Philosophy: What Needs to Change?*, edited by Katrina Hutchison and Fiona Jenkins, 1-20. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Lehrer, Jonah. 2010. "The Truth Wears Off: Is There Something Wrong with the Scientific Method?" *The New Yorker* 13 (52): 229.

McGill, Justine. 2013. "The Silencing of Women." In *Women in Philosophy: What Needs to Change?*, edited by Katrina Hutchison and Fiona Jenkins 197-214. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

McGuinness, Brian. 2007. "What Wittgenstein Got from Sraffa." In *Sraffa or an Alternative Economics,* edited by Guglielmo Chiodi and Leonardo Ditta 227-35. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Midgley, Mary. 2013. "The Golden Age of Female Philosophy." *The Guardian* 28 November *https://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/nov/28/golden-age-female-philosophy-mary-midgley*

Murray, Stuart J., Dave Holmes, Amélie Perron, Geneviève Rail. 2007. "No Exit? Intellectual Integrity Under the Regime of 'Evidence' and 'Best-practices'." *Journal of Evaluation in Clinical Practice* 13 (4): 512-16.

Open Science Collaboration. 2015. "Estimating the Reproducibility of Psychological Science." *Science* 349 (6251).

Sato, Ikuya. 2012. "'Gatekeeper' as a Metaphor and Concept." *Hitotsubashi Journal of Commerce and Management* 46 (1): 41-50.

Saul, Jennifer. 2013. "Implicit Bias, Stereotype Threat and Women in Philosophy." In *Women in Philosophy: What Needs to Change?*, edited by Katrina Hutchison and Fiona Jenkins 39-60. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Sayer, Derek. 2014. "Five Reasons Why the REF is Not Fit for Purpose." *The Guardian* 15 December *http://www.theguardian.com/higher-education-network/2014/dec/15/research-excellence-framework-five-reasons-not-fit-for-purpose*

Somerville, Ewan. 2018. "University League Tables Fuel a Toxic Undercurrent of Snobbery." *The Telegraph* 4 July https://www.telegraph.co.uk/education/2018/07/04/university-league-tables-fuel-toxic-undercurrent-snobbery/

Tuana, Nancy. 1992. *Women and the History of Philosophy*. Saint Paul, MN: Paragon House.

Winner, Langdon. 1980. "Do Artifacts Have Politics?" *Daedalus* 109 (1): 121-36.

Yang, Rui. 2003. "Globalisation and Higher Education Development: A Critical Analysis." *International Review of Education* 49 (3-4): 269-91.

University League Tables

Complete University Guide University League Tables 2020, https://www.thecompleteuniversityguide.co.uk/league-tables/rankings (Last consulted 28 August 2020)

Times Higher Education: Best Universities in the UK 2020, https://www.timeshighereducation.com/student/best-universities/best-universities-uk (Last consulted 28 August 2020)

The Guardian University League Tables 2020, https://www.theguardian.com/education/ng-interactive/2019/jun/07/university-league-tables-2020 (Last consulted 28 August 2020)

The Times Good University Guide 2020, https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/good-university-guide-in-full-tp6dzs7wn (Last consulted 28 August 2020) Note: this table is now behind a paywall.

Between Identity and Ambiguity – Some Conceptual Considerations on Diversity[1]

Karoline Reinhardt

"Do I contradict myself?
Very well then I contradict myself,
(I am large, I contain multitudes.)"
Walt Whitman, *Song of Myself*

Abstract: Diversity matters – theoretically and practically, within philosophy and beyond. It is less clear, however, how we are to conceive of diversity. In current debates it is quite common to discuss diversity as a diversity of social identities. In this paper, I will raise five major concerns with regard to this approach from a philosophical perspective. All of them cast doubt on the flexibility and openness to ambiguity of identity-based concepts of diversity. Contrary to an identity-based concept of diversity, I will propose a perspective that stresses ambiguity and fluidity. In pursuing my argument, I will, after an introduction in §1, outline in §2 how the term 'diversity' is commonly used and how social identities come into the picture. In §3, I describe the dangers of an identity-based diversity concept. In my critique I will build on Adorno's thoughts on the formation of concepts and on Appiah's reflections on identity. I will illustrate my critique with examples from a growing field of Applied Ethics, data ethics. In §4, I will sketch an alternative understanding of human diversity, taking up considerations by Thomas Bauer on ambiguity and ambiguity tolerance.

Keywords: ambiguity, diversity, essentialism, social identity.

1. Introduction

People are different. We have different tastes and interests. We have different mentalities and temperaments. We come in different shapes and sizes. So far, so trivial, one might think. In recent years, however, diversity has become a topic of immense interest: academia as well as the wider public have seen an enormous

[1] The research for this paper was partially conducted as part of the European Union Horizon 2020-Project "WeNet – The Internet of us" (Grant no. 823783). An early draft version of this paper was presented at the Research Colloquium at the International Center for Ethics in the Sciences and Humanities at the University of Tübingen in January 2020. I want to thank the participants of the colloquium for their comments and Jessica Heesen for our conversations on Adorno. I also want to thank Helen Beebee, Moritz Hildt, Anne-Marie McCallion and an anonymous reviewer for their comments and most helpful suggestions on draft versions of the manuscript.

rise in publications on diversity and diversity-related topics. This new interest cannot be called trivial in any way. One of the main reasons for the current awareness with regard to diversity has been the success of political campaigns by women, people of color, LGBTIQ-communities, as well as age and disability-based movements formulating "respective calls for an end to discrimination, for equality of treatment, more positive images, respect of rights and symbolic recognition" (Vertovec 2015, 19). The call for more diversity in institutions and organizations, here, is based on ethical considerations.

In addition to these political and social demands for diversity, business administration and management theory in particular have also discovered diversity as a topic: the so-called "business case for diversity" (see e.g. Mensi-Klarbach 2012) states that companies are more successful if their workforce is diverse. In contrast to less diverse companies, they can draw on a wider range of perspectives, competencies and experiences. Here, the call for more diversity is not based on ethical considerations, but rather on the instrumental value of diversity: diversity is valued because it contributes to an improved performance record.[2]

In philosophy, despite the fact that the concept of diversity in its own right has not been treated extensively,[3] debates that refer to diversity are widespread and vivid. There are, for instance, thorough debates on difference, on moral relativism, on political and cultural pluralism, and on symbolic recognition and recognition of rights of various societal groups, and in epistemology we have witnessed a rise in publications on the role of diverse backgrounds on our philosophical intuitions.[4]

---

[2] "How-to textbooks for 'diversity'-management and practice have proliferated greatly over the past twenty years. The American Institute for Managing Diversity provides an annotated bibliography of over 75 books in English on diversity management (www.aimd.org), while the International Society for Diversity Management lists a further 37 books in German" (Vertovec 2012, 294).

[3] A few examples: There is no entry on diversity in the *Encyclopedia of Ethics* (Becker/Becker 1992). It is, however, listed in the index (diversity: Lao Tzu, liberalism, toleration; cultural diversity: moral realism, property, the Sophists). None of the texts in *The Oxford Handbook of Practical Ethics* (LaFollette 2003) discusses diversity. It can be found in the Index, though (diversity feminists). None of the texts in *Angewandte Ethik. Bereichsethiken und ihre theoretische Fundierung* (Nida-Rümelin 2005) discusses diversity. There is no entry in *The Oxford Handbook of Ethical Theory* (Copp 2006). There it can be found in the index (perfectionist egoism, Rossian deontology, of species). In *Lexikon der Ethik* (Wils/Hübenthal 2006) no entry. No entry in *Handbuch Ethik* (Düwell/Hübenthal 2006), also not in the Index. In *Ethics. History, Theory and Contemporary Issues* (Cahn/Markie 2006): no entry. *Encyclopedia of applied Ethics* (Chadwick/Callahan/Singer 2011) no entry, but listed in the index (affirmative action debate, ecological definition).

[4] It is impossible to retrace all these debates here. To name but a few examples and for further literature in these topics see: Appiah (2005), Benhabib (2004), Buckwalter & Stich (2014), Carens (2000), Forst (2003), Hildt (2016), Kristeva (1988), Kymlicka (1995), Nussbaum

Diversity matters – theoretically and practically, within philosophy and beyond. It is less clear, however, how we are to conceive of diversity. In current debates – first and foremost in the wider public but also within philosophy – it is quite common to conceive of diversity as a diversity of social identities. In this paper, I will raise five major concerns with regard to this approach from a philosophical perspective. They will revolve around essentialism, the problems of a numerical understanding of diversity, the normative force of typicality, what has been called the Medusa syndrome, and problems that arise from conceptualizing categories. All five concerns cast doubt on the flexibility and openness to ambiguity of identity-based concepts of diversity. Contrary to an identity-based concept, I will propose a perspective on diversity that stresses ambiguity and fluidity.

In what follows, I will, in §2, outline how the term 'diversity' is commonly used and how social identities come into the picture when we talk about diversity. After that, I will go on to describe the dangers of an identity-based diversity concept in §3. In my critique of an identity-based concept, in § 3.1, I will draw on Theodor W. Adorno's thoughts on the formation of concepts (Adorno 1966) and on Kwame Anthony Appiah's reflections on identity (Appiah 2005; 2018). Though their main concern is not diversity, I will relate their ideas to the diversity discourse and apply them to the problems at hand here. I will also add further points, e.g. worries about a numerical understanding of diversity, that neither draw on Adorno nor Appiah. In §3.2 I will discuss two objections one might want to raise against my critique and debunk them. In §3.3, I will illustrate my critique with examples from a growing field within Applied Ethics, namely data ethics. Then, in §4, I will sketch an alternative perspective on human diversity and what it would entail. In formulating this alternative, I will take up some considerations formulated by Thomas Bauer on ambiguity and ambiguity tolerance (Bauer 2011; 2018) and apply them to the question at hand. I will conclude the paper, in §5, with a summary and some more general remarks on the concept of diversity.

2. What we talk about when we talk about diversity

The concept of diversity alludes to difference: where there is no difference, there is no diversity. Difference in itself, however, is not sufficient for diversity. First of all, because diversity is an attribute of groups – and not of individuals or pairs – and secondly, with regard to what is referred to as *human diversity* the difference in question has to be meaningful in a particular way. This meaning often stems from the reference to social identities. I will elaborate this point in more detail in a moment, but let's have a closer look at the term 'diversity' first. The term first and foremost refers to any variety of things or persons that differ in at least one

(1999), Okin (1979, 1989), Rawls (1993), Rorty (1991), Taylor (1992), Stich (2013), Young (1990), Zack (2015, 2016).

characteristic. This is, for instance, how the notion of diversity is used in the well-known concept of biodiversity. Biodiversity refers to the number of genetic or visible variants of any occurring species in a given ecosystem, habitat or other geographically limited area (Faith 2007, cf. Gaston 1996). The concept of diversity that is employed here is descriptive and numerical: it refers to a number of genetic or visible variants.

So much for plants and animals – but how do we use the term with regard to humans: what do we talk about when we talk about diversity in the discourses mentioned in the introduction? In his study *"Diversity" and the Social Imaginary* (2012), Vertovec analyzed a wide range of publications, scientific and non-scientific, that employ notions of diversity to see what the term is usually taken to refer to. According to this study, the term 'diversity' refers to a wide range of categories, namely "race, gender, ethnicity, culture, social class, religious belief, sexual orientation, mental ability, physical ability, psychological ability, veteran or military status, marital status, place of residence, nationality, perspectives, insights, background, experience, age, education level, cultural and personal perspectives, viewpoints and opinions" (Vertovec 2015, 2; cf. Vertovec 2012, 295f.; cf. Bendel/Eberherr/Mensi-Klarbach 2012, 11).

As varied as this list may seem, what is apparent is that many of the categories we find in here are what are often called social identities. The term 'social identity' commonly refers to our belonging to a group of people with whom we share certain features as part of our understanding of our distinctiveness. Gender, ethnicity, and social class are common examples for social identities.[5]

Social identities – unlike the number of variants of any occurring species in a given ecosystem – are the product of social processes of construction and reconstruction. That social identities 'are made up', as it were, does not, however, entail that individuals can pick and choose their social identities as they like. Social identities evolve in a complex interplay of ascription by others and self-ascription: the way others refer to us and treat us will have an effect on our understanding of ourselves – and our understanding of ourselves might have an impact on the way others treat us. Others might refer to me as 'female' and this in turn might lead to my understanding of myself as female, or of what it means to be female and so on. What is more, the self-ascribed aspects might be in accord with the ascriptions of others, they might overlap with them to some extent, or they might contradict them.[6] Others might identify me as female, but I

[5] The subtitle of Appiah's book on identities *The Lies That Bind. Rethinking Identity* (2018), for instance, names "creed, country, colour, class, culture". Appiah also reminds us right at the beginning of his book that this understanding of the term 'identity' is relatively new. According to Appiah, it only occurred after the middle of the 20th Century. Up until then a person's identity was understood as "utterly particular and personal" (Appiah 2018, 3).

[6] The ascription of certain features in virtue of our social identities is, of course, more noticeable to us when we disagree with that ascription.

might or might not identify myself that way. In any case, even the process of *self*-attribution is intersubjectively shaped.

I use the term 'ascription' here to point out that in referring to social identities we are not merely describing persons with facts about themselves. That is to say, social identities are not merely factual, *and* they are not merely individual. Let me unpack that a little. I was born in 1986. That is a fact. Whether that makes me young or old, or a member of one generation or another – these are questions of social construction of age groups and what we believe they look like. Social identities are not merely about facts. They are also about what qualities, features, characteristics others and I ascribe to me – often starting from facts about me, but certainly not stopping there. They also refer to socially constructed *groups* of people. Being a member of a generation, for instance, only makes sense if there are others that form that generation with me. In that way, our social identities always relate us to others.[7]

Historically, the emergence of diversity-awareness was closely linked with identity politics that put social identity at its center. The term 'identity politics' was coined in the 1970s by the Black feminist Combahee River Collective.[8] It has since been taken to refer to a variety of political activities as well as theories. The basic idea, however, is that the members of certain societal groups share experiences of injustice. The corresponding political aim was formulated as follows: "to secure the political freedom of a specific constituency marginalized within its larger context. Members of that constituency assert or reclaim ways of understanding their distinctiveness that challenge dominant characterizations, with the goal of greater self-determination" (Heyes 2020). Though, in more recent years, identity politics has in many places taken a different turn with regard to its political leaning,[9] what is crucial for our purposes here is to bear in mind that the discourses on diversity and the discourses on (social) identity have been intertwined for the past decades.

What is important to note is that social identities are also often, if not always, prescriptive: social identities come with certain expectations on how we are to behave – either because they give us reason to do certain things in a

[7] To give an example: I was born in Leipzig in the 1980s. That is a fact. That I am a child of the East German transformation, however, is one of my social identities. It relates me to others who where born roughly at the same time in the German Democratic Republic, having had what feels to us as a specific upbringing under specific historical conditions that shaped us in a particular way. Arguably, if it were the case that *ceteris paribus* nobody – or nobody else but me – recognized that experience as being particular, it would not constitute a *social* identity (cf. Appiah 2018, 9).

[8] It was first used in a 1977 statement by that group that was later published in *Capitalist Patriarchy and the Case for Socialist Feminism* (1979).

[9] One example is the current right-wing identitarian movements in Austria and Germany.

certain way, or because others think that we should or should not behave in a particular way and, therefore, limit our options.[10]

I have said above that many of the categories in Vertovec's list are social identities and seem to form, therefore, the basic unit of the prevalent understanding of human diversity. Anyhow, if we look at the list again, we can see that although most categories can be called social identities, some do not seem to fall under this heading: what about age? Or place of residence? One might want to say that these are facts – not identities.

Taken by themselves this is probably correct, but with regard to the diversity discourse that we are concerned with, they often – if not always – refer to social groups, or function as proxies for social identities. Take for instance age: if a group is composed of people born in 1983, 1984 and 1985, it will usually not be regarded as age-diverse. Though the age of the group members is different, they do not belong to different age-groups. Difference by itself is not sufficient for diversity. Only in reference to a group and its identity, as in its distinctiveness, does the difference become relevant for the diversity discourse. In other cases, categories by themselves do not explicitly name a social group, but the category functions as a proxy for social identity. This is, for instance, the case with "place of residence": having different zip-codes does not by itself make a group more diverse, it is rather the correlation of zip-codes with other features of a person, namely their connection to differing social backgrounds and identities. Depending on how residentially segregated a society is, a zip-code can function as a proxy for race, or class, or other things.[11] So even the categories that do not refer explicitly to social identities are often indirectly linked to them.

What I want to stress here is that the idea of social identity is widespread in the discourse on diversity – often explicitly so and where it is not referred to directly, we can often still find traces of an identity-based understanding of diversity in the categories that are applied. Social identities, though they are not the only approach to conceiving diversity, are prevalent in the current discourse on diversity. A group is regarded as diverse, first and foremost, if its members have a variety of social identities. Thus, what we talk about when we talk about diversity in the discourses mentioned in the introduction is primarily a diversity of social identities.

3. What are the dangers of conceiving diversity in terms of identity?

When we discuss diversity we often refer to social identities like gender, class or social background, or ethnicity – and why shouldn't we? Why shouldn't we

[10] Appiah summarizes the workings of social identities as follows: "identities come, first, with labels and ideas about why and to who they should be applied. Second, your identity shapes your thoughts about how you should behave; and, third, it affects the way other people treat you. Finally, all these dimensions of identity are contestable" (Appiah 2018, 12). This is all well researched for instance in gender studies and I will not expand on that here.

[11] On proxies and their effects see Heesen, Reinhardt & Schelenz (forthcoming).

conceive diversity in terms of identity? After all, the call for diversity was and is often related to calls for recognition, representation, anti-discrimination, and affirmative action. In other words: legitimate claims for justice. And if we want to determine who ought to be the beneficiaries of the policies that make good on these legitimate claims, we need to determine who belongs to the groups in question – and who does not. While there are legitimate reasons to proceed this way, there are also reasons that speak against this approach. In what follows I want to discuss some of them: the danger of – as it were 'traditional' – essentialism, the problems of a numerical understanding of diversity, the normative force of typicality, the Medusa syndrome, and general considerations about conceptualizing categories. In my critique of an identity-based concept of diversity I will take up considerations on concept formation by Adorno (1966) and on identity by Appiah (2005; 2018). I will apply their ideas to the diversity discourse and I will add further points, e.g. worries about a numerical understanding of diversity, that draw on neither Adorno nor Appiah.

3.1 Five Concerns

3.1.1 Identity and Essentialism

Talk of someone's social 'identity' suggests that they have a relatively fixed 'kernel', a core of features and characteristics that we can list and thereby determine who belongs to a certain social group and who does not. By listing core features of persons, we can – so it appears under this perspective – determine who belongs to the same social group qua having the same features. After all, the word 'identity' stems from the Latin word *idem*, the same. While this might seem harmless, it invites an essentialist reading, according to which an entity has a set of characteristics or elements that are necessary and sufficient not merely for categorizing it but for defining that entity, that is, for its being the very entity that it is. Thus conceiving of diversity in terms of social identity suggests not merely that persons are members of a given social group, but that their membership of that group is part of their essence.

While I am not arguing, here, against essentialism, one problem with essentializing diversity dimensions is, however, that the attributes and features that a person has in virtue of her identity are, from an essentialist perspective on identity, perceived as fixed and unchanging. A person is believed to behave and act in accordance with her identity because she couldn't behave or act differently, since that behavior flows from her essence – thus leaving little room for variations and change.[12]

[12] This has all been well discussed and criticized within vivid debates on gender essentialism and I do not want to repeat these arguments here. For discussions of gender essentialism see for instance de Beauvoir [1949], Butler (1988), Grosz (1995). For an overview of the current debate from an interdisciplinary perspective see Bauer, Ammicht Quinn & Hotz-Davies (2018).

To be sure: conceptually, identity is not necessarily connected to essentialism. Contrary to an essentialist understanding of social identities, one can conceive of them, as I have mentioned above, as constructed, as 'made up', and thus open to change. But talking about diversity in terms of identity often, in practice, invites essentialist ideas. The very word *identity,* as I said, refers to 'the same': something remaining 'the same', that is unchanging. Essentialist ideas about identity – and, as I have said, we are easily tempted to form them – thus limit the actual diversity of humans to a list of relatively clear-cut, fixed identities.

3.1.2 Numerical understanding of diversity

Talking about diversity in terms of identities alludes also to a numerical understanding of diversity, similar to the concept of biodiversity that I mentioned earlier: people are ascribed identity categories and then the diversity of a group is determined by counting the number of categories, along a number of set dimensions, that are represented within the group. A group, then, seems to be more diverse when a higher number of different social identities is represented in this group. One problem of this approach is that it might lead to partial blindness to diversity problems: A group that is relatively diverse, according to this approach, along the ethnicity dimension might still be completely homogenous on another dimension, say gender. Thus, we might be content too quickly with the diversity of a group that we supposedly achieved. Of course, we can mitigate this problem by adding more dimensions to list, but we can never fully overcome it. The lack of diversity might function as an indicator that 'something is wrong' on a deeper level, but the supposed diversity is never an indicator that 'everything is all right'.

3.1.3 The normativity of typicality

Of course, we do not need to perceive identities as fixed, we could in fact pursue a form of 'strategic essentialism', a term coined by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (1988). To use essentialism 'strategically', according to Spivak, is to only provisionally accept identities and their essentialist foundations in order to promote certain political ends via the idea of collective representation – while knowing that there is no such thing as a collective identity with clear-cut features.[13] However, even if we do not understand identities as fixed, as traditional essentialism would, social identities come with certain ideas of who meets their defining characteristics and how it is decided whether somebody meets them or not. This in turn leads to a complication: identity categories tend

---

For a short historiography of race essentialism see Appiah (2018, 105-134). For a defense of a different kind of essentialism, namely a human and historical sensitive one, see, for instance, Nussbaum (1992).

[13] Spivak has since then repudiated the concept of strategic essentialism because of the many ways in which it was misused (Spivak 1989). See also Spivak (2008, 260).

to lead to a homogenous understanding of groups.[14] And even if people are aware that groups are rarely monolithic, there is another problem: "Once identities exist, people tend to form a picture of a typical member of that group. Stereotypes develop" (Appiah 2018, 12). This seems to hold, even if members of the societal group in question only acted in a strategic manner 'as if' they would have a collective identity. Even if we do not perceive identities as innate and fixed as traditional essentialism has it, ideas of a 'typical' member will still develop. One problem here is: typicality is often mistaken for normativity or develops its own normativity, as Steffen Mau suggests: "Even very broad and multi-dimensionally defined standards exert a uniformity pressure on those which they do not cover or not adequately or which are regarded as 'deviating' or 'deficient'" (Mau 2017, 227f.; my translation). And one might want to add: the uniformity pressure Mau talks about is also exerted on those who are in fact covered by a particular category. Others and I will form ideas about what I should and should not do to prove myself as a member in good standing of a particular social group.[15] Atypicality is then, in turn, often perceived as deviance from the norm and when that happens, diverging from the standard gets more difficult – psychologically, because it is not in line with my social identity and my ideas about how I am supposed to behave, and socially, because others might, for instance, limit my options or sanction my diverging behavior, in line with their ideas of what I am supposed to act like in accordance with my ascribed identity. That is one reason why social identities are so powerful – and it is one additional reason why we should be careful when applying them to policies, which brings us to the next concern: the Medusa Syndrome.

3.1.4 Identity and the Medusa Syndrome

In Greek mythology, Medusa was a Gorgon, a dreadful creature, usually depicted as a winged human female with snakes in place of hair. The interesting thing about Medusa, for our purposes here, is that everyone who looks her in the face turns to stone, according to the myth. Appiah refers to this feature when formulating what he has called the "Medusa syndrome". In his critique of Charles Taylor's "politics of recognition" (1992), Appiah turns the perspective of Medusa's gaze around, so that it is Medusa's gaze that turns its object to stone: "We know that acts of recognition, and the civil apparatus of such recognition, can sometimes ossify the identities that are their object. Because here a gaze can turn to stone, we can call this the Medusa Syndrome" (2005, 110). Appiah's point is that by – especially political – recognition of certain identities, these identities

[14] For literature on this topic see Hofmann (2012, 31).

[15] Deviance, therefore, also relates to ideas on "who needs to change", as Beebee noted (2013): The person who deviates from the image of a typical member of a group is supposed to be the one who needs to change, because of the supposed normativity of the typicality. The processes that generate and perpetuate a certain typicality are rarely discussed or criticized – sometimes people are not even aware of them being processes open to alteration.

lose their fluidity and become a defining feature of a person. So, "politics of difference" (Young 1990) or "politics of recognition" (Taylor 1992), while setting out to rectify situations in society that we deem unjust – and rightly so – might turn out to magnify injustice by entrenching and amplifying the relevance of categories that we originally wanted to overcome: we are trying to take something into account but by our very attempt, we manifest, solidify, ossify the categories that we use to take diversity into account in the first place – thereby turning the conceptualization into a limitation. These limitations might in turn have negative, or even oppressive side-effects for some. So, there is, on the one hand, the danger of essentialism, that we might perceive diversity categories as a given, never changing essence of something or someone. On the other hand, even if we don't essentialize diversity dimensions, that is even if we are aware that they have to do with processes of social ascription and construction, that they are fluid and ever-changing, through a politics of recognition – or by embedding diversity dimensions into technical infrastructures as I will discuss in the next section – we ossify them; we turn them to stone.

3.1.5 Conceptualizing Identities

If we conceive diversity in terms of identities, we tend to lose fluidity – and often also ambiguity: conceptualizing identities entails a rigid determination of who belongs who does not belong. This process tends to involve the eradication of ambiguities. To get working concepts we have a need to make them less ambiguous, sometimes even unambiguous – thus losing the contradictions, the unsortable, the in-betweens. To conceptualize something means to make it distinguishable from other things (cf. Adorno 1966, 21ff.).[16] That also implies that by conceptualizing, we lose what "is suppressed, ignored and discarded" (Adorno 1966, 21) by these concepts. This is not simply a problem of a poorly conceived concept that could be remedied by a better concept. Conceptualizing anything, and also social identities, always, and necessarily so, leaves things out of the picture (cf. also Heesen, Reinhardt & Schelenz, forthcoming). Concepts are not identical with their objects – by definition they cannot capture the manifold, the fullness of life, that is e.g. the diversity of people.

[16] The perception of something as *per se* unclassifiable is of course often the source of intellectual discomfort. A discomfort that Bauman described powerfully in *Modernity and Ambivalence*: The unclassifiables "do not question just one opposition here and now; they question oppositions as such, the very principle of the opposition, the plausibility of dichotomy it suggests and feasibility of separation it demands. They unmask the brittle artificiality of division. They destroy the world. They stretch the temporary inconvenience of 'not knowing how to go on' into a terminal paralysis. They must be tabooed, disarmed, suppressed, exiled physically or mentally – or the world may perish" (Bauman 1991, 58f.).

3.2 Two Objections

I would like to discuss two objections that one might want to raise at this point. Firstly, one might want to argue that we can fix the problems discussed above by adding more categories. After all, if the problem (or at least part of it) is that existing categories do not fully capture the richness of diversity, or fail to appropriately classify the in-betweens and the unsortables, then perhaps we simply need a more finely-grained system of classification. Moreover, if we are *defining* diversity in terms of social identities, it would seem that enriching our classification with a more fine-grained set of social identities, will increase diversity itself.

This in many ways is the approach taken, for instance, by Facebook in adding more gender options (cf. Heine 2014; William 2014). And there is a legitimacy to this approach: finding ways for taking the apparent plurality into account is, as one might want to argue, better than just ignoring it. In this way, this approach can be understood as an act of symbolic recognition. With regard to increasing diversity, the basic idea behind this approach is: if we have more categories to choose from, or boxes to tick, we will not only have a more adequate picture of a group's diversity, but we will also increase diversity. However, the contrary seems to be the case: boxes in fact reduce diversity. Concepts, as we have seen, always limit ambiguity and diversity. So, if we add more boxes to tick, what we get are more boxes to tick, but not necessarily more diversity. In fact, the opposite is more likely to be the case, because of the inherent uniformity pressure of categorization and standardization mentioned above. Thus, this approach does not solve the underlying (conceptual) problems. The above-mentioned problems cannot be solved by more options. Or, in the words of Thomas Bauer: "The attempt to create unambiguity in an ambiguous world at least by sorting the diversity in the world as precisely as possible into boxes within which there is the greatest possible unambiguity is more likely to displace diversity than to promote it" (Bauer 2018: 81, my translation). All the problems I have raised above would still apply to the amended – though more refined – categorization.

Secondly, one might think that identities are more flexible than I have portrayed them. Maybe we cannot capture the diversity of human life with more categories, but couldn't we acknowledge that we can remake and unmake identities performatively (cf. West/Zimmerman 1987, Butler 1988)? Identities are, as has been argued, institutionalized and re-enacted in daily routines. Therefore, they are not stable and unchangeable – and I would agree with that. However, as these authors have pointed out as well, social identities are also intersubjectively validated and reaffirmed (West/Zimmerman 1987, 131). Their emergence – and change – is in a complex way contextually and intersubjectively shaped and not solely a matter of a person's volition, as we have seen above. Therefore, the unmaking and remaking of social identities has to work with and relate to the meaning and understanding of certain identities, for instance

gender, that we encounter in various societal realms. We can change and shift meanings, but we have to start in a given context. Social identities are not *creationes ex nihilo.*

The problems of an identity-based concept become quite apparent, for instance, in a growing subfield of applied ethics. To illustrate what I have said so far, I would like to turn to data ethics and its take on diversity for a moment.

3.3 Diversity in Data Ethics

Despite the obvious diversity of humans, technology in general and digital solutions in particular still struggle to take diversity into account. Thus, diversity here poses not only an ethical but also a computational challenge. Computer scientists and developers are more and more aware of this problem and try to tackle it by developing the engineering methodologies, algorithms and social interaction protocols to empower diversity-aware machine mediated interactions between people.[17] But what kind of diversity is presupposed here?

A diversity concept that is mainly built on relatively fixed social identities in many ways fits the constraints of computerization more easily: computerization has to deal with a trade-off between over-complexity and over-simplification. To yield usable results, computerization needs to minimize complexity. Therefore, it employs labelling processes by defining relatively fixed categories, target variables, and class labels. What is more: "Digital signals differ from analogue signals in that they consist of individual values, not a continuum" (Lenzen 2020, 15; my translation). This means that in order to work digitally I have to break down reality into individual signals. So if I want to digitally capture and represent the diversity of people, I have to make it digitally readable accordingly, i.e. break it down into digitally processable individual values: A diversity understanding that is based on distinct social identities that people ascribe to themselves – as in the list of gender options Facebook offers its users – instead of, for instance, multidimensional overlapping spectra and continua, fits this approach quite well.

These categories and labels based on social identities used in the models and users profiles do not – necessarily – presuppose an essentialist world view. Still, by embedding them into the technical infrastructure of, say, a social platform, they become part of the fabric of the inner workings of that technical entity. In that way, very similar to the effects of the Medusa Syndrome described above, they get ossified. At best, this approach leads to a merely numerical, and therefore limited, understanding of human diversity: the more boxes I can check for a given group, the more diverse this group is supposed to be, while in fact a whole lot of options and possibilities are excluded via the conceptualization and operationalization. The compatibility of the above-mentioned approach with

[17] One example is the current EU-Horizon 2020 project "WeNet – The internet of us": https://www.internetofus.eu/, accessed April 28 2020.

computerization, however, might also come at a much higher cost: when you work with prefixed labels, statistical discrimination and the reenforcement of stereotypes are usually afoot (cf. Heesen, Reinhardt & Schelenz, forthcoming), thus, perpetuating and increasing societal discrimination.

Contrary to algorithmic computerized decisions, in machine learning these labels and their criteria are not prefixed, but emerge in the training process. At first glance, this might seem, therefore, advantageous. After all, the categories are not pre-fixed, but learned. Here, however, we run into a different problem: machine learning systems usually work with data that originate from the daily routines of people or databases in science, industry, and administration. These data contain biases. If a machine is trained on biased data, it will 'learn' the biases from the data set and reproduce them in the decision-making process. To give an example from picture analysis and image search: In 2016, a tweet by Karbir Alli about the outcome of a search for "three black teenagers" in Google Images led to a storm of protest (Beuth 2016), because this search led to a series of mugshots. A search for "three white kids" in contrast showed mostly pictures of happy white kids as a result (cf. Zuiderveen Borgesius 2018, 16). Google's response was that these search results merely reflected the portrayal of the respective subpopulation across the web and the frequency of that portrayal (York 2016) – and thus the demonstrated unwillingness to acknowledge that reproducing these biases is not a neutral position, it is a choice. What is often missed when this case is discussed, but was also explained by York, is the fact that this frequency also has to do with the market situation for stock photos. It is also a question about demand and supply, market access and purchasing power: there are more pictures of happy white kids on the internet than of happy black kids, because the market for images of happy white kids is much bigger than for images of happy black kids. That is why more stock pictures that are assumed to fit the first label are found on the web. This, in turn, is one reason why when you search for "three black teenagers", this search inquiry is less likely to be matched with pictures of three happy black kids, whereas when you search "three white kids", pictures of happy white kids come up as search results more frequently in Google Images (cf. York 2016). The internet is full of the latter, because they sell – in turn normalizing what 'happy kids' look like.

So, because of a particular labelling process alongside a biased data set, namely the web, we have a search result which many people will – consciously or subconsciously – take for an accurate, or nearly accurate depiction of the world and how it works, though in many ways it only reflects purchasing power and problematic purchasing preferences. The pattern that the Google Images search made apparent does not presuppose a fixed correlation, but even though the ascribed categories are not perceived as fixed by the system, they ossify in the process of their application – and might in the end be (mis)taken as features of the group in question by the end user. Other different, but similar, examples can be found for mortgage applications (Bartlett et al. 2019), or predictive

policing (Lum/Isaac 2016), and many other cases where we deal with computerized decision-making procedures that are informed by machine learning, or algorithmic models.

What does this have to do with diversity? Well, patterns, like concepts – or prefixed categories – reduce ambiguity and focus on the typical, thereby often cutting off the edges and ignoring the margins – while not even realizing that edges and margins are created by defining a core or kernel or a set of necessary features. What is more, machine learning does not start from a neutral place. By working with massive amounts of data, it reproduces the labels we use, the stereotypes and biases we have, and it mirrors and possibly amplifies the injustices in our respective societies.

To sum up: a diversity concept that is based on identities invites essentialist approaches and ideas about typicality, which often turn identities into a rather limiting concept. Even without an essentialist grounding, a diversity concept that is identity-based is in danger of facilitating the ossification of its categories, leaving many things and especially the unsortable and the ambiguous out of the picture. If we believe that we can fix these problems by simply coming up with better concepts and more precise categories, we are mistaken. This isn't simply a problem of poorly conceived categories that could be remedied by creating better categories or better labels. It is a problem of rigidly categorizing people – as conceiving diversity in terms of social identities does. Though the meaning and significance of social identities can be shifted and changed, they cannot capture the whole of human diversity.

A diversity understanding that uses (relatively) fixed categories like social identities and buys into their correlation with other features and characteristics is, in many ways, compatible with the needs of computerized systems, but the danger of essentialism and the Medusa Syndrome can only be mitigated by an understanding of diversity that does not fixate categories, no matter how many and how nuanced they are. If we want to paint an adequate picture of human diversity, making up more and more nuanced categories won't help. What we need instead is an approach that allows for dynamic solutions that leave room for fluidity and ambiguity.

4. Where should we go from here? Diversity, ambiguity and ambiguity tolerance

Where should we go from here? Up to now I have talked about the dangers of an identity-based concept of diversity that I suppose to be currently predominant. In order to avoid the pitfalls of an identity-based concept of diversity, what might an alternative understanding of diversity look like?

My criticism of an identity-based understanding of diversity of course already suggested some of the elements and aspects of the alternative that I would favor. In the following I will, therefore, in a first step summarize the points that have already been addressed and then build on them to formulate a

tentative sketch of an alternative understanding. A central term for the understanding of diversity that I will propose is 'ambiguity': In formulating this alternative, I will in a second step take up considerations of Bauer on cultural ambiguity and apply them to our question of how to conceive of diversity. To make this alternative understanding of diversity effective in practice, however, we need something called 'ambiguity tolerance', a term Bauer borrows from psychology, that I will elaborate in a third step. In a fourth, and final, step, I will take up this concept and outline what an ambiguity tolerance-based policy, for example in Human Resources, could entail.

4.1 What do we have so far?

Though diversity is often talked about in terms of identities, it does not need to be understood in this way. An alternative perspective on diversity would "accept the contradictory, the vague, the ambiguous, the unsortable, the inexplicable as the normal case of human existence – at least respect it, perhaps even endorse it" (Bauer 2018, 79, my translation). It would not try to sort the manifold of human diversity into clear-cut boxes and would thus avoid many of the pitfalls of an identity-based concept. Appiah closes his book on social identities *The Lies that Bind* with a quote from Publius Terentius Afer: "Homo sum, humani nihil a me alienum puto. I am human, I think nothing human alien to me" (2018, 219). If we take humanity in its manifold, contradicting and ambiguous dimensions as the basic unit of our understanding, we will probably gain a much richer understanding of what human diversity entails.

By not conceptualizing social identities as its basic units, an alternative understanding of diversity would avoid eradicating ambiguities and it would not invite the essentialization and ossification of identities. What is more, it would avoid the formation of ideas about typical members of certain social groups and their accompanying prescriptive side-effects. In that way, it would get much closer to a proper understanding of the fullness of human life and, therefore, of human diversity – with its in-betweens, its fluidity and the astonishing manifold individuality of humans.

The diversity of humans is, as we have seen, multidimensional and multilayered and not easily pinned down to a number of fixed categories. In many ways it is unsortable and unfathomable. A proper understanding of human diversity furthermore needs to be aware that aspects of persons change their meaning and relevance to others and themselves depending on the context: aspects of me have different connotations in different contexts. Their meaning also might change over time. This might be due to societal changes in the perception of these aspects, but also to changes on an individual level: my self-understanding changes over time simply because I live my life and make new experiences, gain new insights, err. It might not form a clear picture. It might even be contradictory, for instance in the way that Walt Whitman described in *Song of Myself* (see epigraph). A proper diversity understanding thus has to

acknowledge, as we have seen, the flexibility and fluidity of human self-understanding and its often contradictory character. A further point that became especially relevant when we were discussing data ethics is that, contrary to the requirements of digital processing, human diversity is not laid out in distinct, individual values. As an element of the analogue world, human diversity comes in spectra and continua. Since human diversity does not come along in clearly defined and distinct categories, it cannot be counted. It is non-numerical. This of course raises the question of how we are to measure diversity at all, then, if not via some categories. I will turn to the question of how the radical conceptional shift that I am proposing here would play out in practice, but first I would like to elaborate the concepts of ambiguity and ambiguity tolerance a bit further.

4.2 Ambiguity

The term ambiguity has already come up several times throughout this paper, but what does it mean? The term was originally used in linguistics. Here, it is commonly understood as a property of expressions of natural language – a word, a phrase, a statement – which allows for several plausible interpretations. Bauer takes the concept of ambiguity familiar from linguistics and applies it to entire epochs, cultures and societies. Bauer argues that we should broaden our understanding of ambiguity to cover all cases where people create or are confronted with ambiguity (cf. Bauer 2011, 26f.). He defines cultural ambiguity, therefore, as follows: "A phenomenon of cultural ambiguity exists when, over a long period of time, a term, a mode of action or an object is simultaneously assigned two opposing or at least two competing, distinctly different meanings, when a social group draws norms and assignments of meaning for individual areas of life simultaneously from opposing or strongly divergent discourses, or when different interpretations of a phenomenon are accepted simultaneously in a group, whereby none of these interpretations can claim exclusive validity" (Bauer 2011, 27; my translation). Bauer's wide understanding of ambiguity does not only refer to linguistic phenomena and, thus, can be easily applied to various questions that arise in human action and interaction.

As Bauer puts it, ambiguity is simply everywhere: "People are constantly exposed to sensations and experiences that allow different interpretations, appear unclear, make no conclusive sense, seem to contradict each other, trigger contradictory feelings, seem to suggest contradictory actions" (Bauer 2018, 12). Human diversity is, as Bauer would argue, one of these experiences that have this effect: It allows for different interpretations, it appears unclear, it does not make unambiguous sense, it seems to be self-contradicting at times, it might trigger contradictory feelings, might seem to suggest contradictory actions. Human diversity is, thus, exactly that: a highly ambiguous phenomenon. How people react and deal with ambiguous phenomena is a subject of the research on ambiguity tolerance.

4.3 Ambiguity tolerance

A diversity understanding that puts ambiguity at its centre requires, in practice, something that in psychology has been called ambiguity tolerance: the ability to endure and cope with ambiguities, insoluble contradictions and uncertainties (cf. Frenkel-Brunswik 1949). "An ambiguous situation may be defined," as Budner put it, "as one which cannot be adequately structured or categorized by the individual because of lack of sufficient cues" (Budner 1962, 30). Persons with a high level of ambiguity tolerance "(a) seek out ambiguity, (b) enjoy ambiguity, and (c) excel in the performance of ambiguous tasks" (Mac Donald 1970, 791).

Ambiguity tolerance helps us to live with the fact that human diversity is not readily pinned down to a number of categories – even if there are more and more of them; that human diversity comes with a lot of uncertainties, contradictions and often with "a lack of sufficient cues". Instead of domesticating these ambiguities – for instance by sorting them into predefined diversity categories – we would gratefully accept and even embrace them (cf. Bauer 2011, 13).

4.3 Ambiguity and ambiguity tolerance in practice

How would the conceptual shift that I am proposing here play out in practice? One might think that the main problem lies in the categorization of social identities. Couldn't we just stick to the same categories that we are used to, but simply not consider them as identities? Instead, we could still deploy them, but conceive of them as mere categories as it were. After all, we do need some categories, if we want to measure diversity, don't we?

An approach like that might mitigate some of the worries about an identity-based concept, but it wouldn't solve all of them. Many of the problems discussed above apply to categories as such, or at least to their application to humans. Very much like social identities, categories applied to humans in general are often mistaken to convey something essential about a person who is supposed to fit the category. They also tend to develop normative power and ideas about a typical member of that category. They leave out the margins and are relatively static. So the concerns and worries raised above also apply, after all, to categorizing people not only in terms of social identities, but to social categorization simpliciter. In this way, conceiving diversity as a matter of membership of social categories at all, whether or not we conceive of those categories in terms of social identities, appears problematic from this point of view.

That does not make them irrelevant: The use of categories like gender can help uncover discrimination structures and patterns. A Human Resources equal opportunities monitoring or audit, for instance, might look at the numbers of men and women in a company or a university department and see that they differ hugely, or might correlate gender to payment and thus uncover a gender

pay gap. Categories can, thus, help to identify who is missing, who is not present in a department, a working group, or the management floor. They can help to uncover disadvantages, such as systematically lower pay or a higher workload for the same pay. In these cases comes into play, what Mau has called the "emancipatory potential of numericality [Zahlenhaftigkeit]" (Mau 2017, 19): through categories and their quantification, disadvantages can be uncovered. In this way, the lack of identity-based diversity can function as an indicator of discrimination and injustice. Through the enormous power of numbers in our world these days, these numbers, thus, can lead in turn to concrete action and important structural changes.

However, notwithstanding the usefulness of categories in cases like that, what they measure is not human diversity. In fact, the quantifications that go hand in hand with categorizations in these examples lead, as pointed out above, to a reduction of a multilayered and ambiguous reality (cf. also Mau 2017, 227) and, thus, often counteract diversity through their inherent basic functioning, the various misinterpretations of categories, and their tendency to live a life of their own in developing their own normativity.

So, if we don't deploy categories, then, neither understood as social identities nor as mere categories, how do we ensure diversity, in for instance a company, without them? The answer to this question has various levels. Firstly, there is the familiar freedom from discrimination. This freedom of course is only the very baseline that needs to be met. Maybe it might turn out to be useful to employ sociodemographics and quantifications here in monitoring processes. My suspicion is, however, that one should not rely too heavily on quantitative research methods but also employ qualitative methods. The presence or absence of a sociodemographic group by and in itself, as mentioned above, might be an indicator of discrimination, even an important one, but it is not the only factor to be taken into account.[18] And it surely does not work the other way around: even if all the groups that we usually think of as being discriminated against, and if correlated data show no sign of disadvantage, it might nevertheless be the case that people are discriminated against, but have developed, for instance, coping mechanisms to counterbalance the negative effects of discriminatory structures and behavior.

Accessibility understood broadly could be a second level: Terkessidis, for instance, has formulated a broad understanding of accessibility. It leaves "ideas such as norm and deviation, identity and difference" behind and takes the individual "as a bundle of differences" as the starting point (Terkessidis 2010, 126; my translation). Accessibility thus understood does apply to everybody in their individuality – "as a bundle of differences".

[18] On the question of the extent to which diversity can be analyzed without immediately running the risk of establishing precisely these identifying factors, and on the implementation of appropriate organizational structures, see for instance Hanappi-Egger (2012).

Furthermore – and this is the third level I want to hint at here – ambiguity tolerance seems to be something that we can practice. How this works, and whether there are methods that could be applied to HR, is still under-researched, but I think it would be worthwhile pursuing these questions further. If we understand better how ambiguity tolerance works and how it can be learned and practised, we might also be able to tell what would endorse ambiguity tolerance in the workplace and how we can bring about an ambiguity-tolerant and therefore diversity-welcoming work environment.

5. Conclusions

In the diversity discourse, an identity-based understanding of diversity is prevalent. Though it has many strategic and political advantages, it is also unfortunate in many ways. In any case, it does not paint an adequate picture of the diversity of humans. Therefore, I have argued for an alternative way of approaching the subject matter at hand, one that stresses the unsortable, the contradictory, and the ambiguous aspects of our (human) existence. I have argued that if we want to do justice to human diversity, we need to understand it not in terms of a finely structured system of different branches with even more subbranches, adding more and more nuanced categories. We should rather try to conceive of human diversity as a fluid and ambiguous phenomenon: something that calls for ambiguity tolerance rather than for yet another category.

Does that mean that we should get rid of the talk about the social identities that people so passionately fight about? On the contrary. Social identities are a way for people to make sense of themselves and others, they fulfill important functions in societies, they can help to describe problems at hand and point to injustices suffered. We can use them as a shorthand for a complex phenomenon, or, strategically in political debates. We should not, however, give them too much power over ourselves – and should try to limit them in their tendency to live a life of their own.

References

Adorno, Theodor W. 1966. *Negative Dialektik*. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp.

Appiah, Kwame A. 2005. *The Ethics of Identity*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

———. 2018. *The Lies That Bind. Rethinking Identity: Creed, Country, Colour, Class, Culture*. London: W. W. Norton & Company.

Bartlett, Robert, Adair Morse, Richard Stanton, and Nancy Wallace. 2019. "Consumer-lending Discrimination in the FinTech Era." *National Bureau of Economic Research*.

Bauer, Gero, Regina Ammicht Quinn, and Ingrid Hotz-Davies, eds. 2018. *Die Naturalisierung des Geschlechts.* Bielefeld: transcript.

Bauer, Thomas. 2011. *Die Kultur der Ambiguität*. Berlin: Verlag der Weltreligionen.

———. 2018. *Die Vereindeutigung der Welt. Über den Verlust an Mehrdeutigkeit und Vielfalt*. Stuttgart: Reclam.

Bauman, Zygmunt. 1991. *Modernity and Ambivalence.* Cambridge: Polity Press.

Becker, Lawrence C., Charlotte B. Becker, ed. 1992. *Encyclopedia of Ethics.* New York/London: Routledge.

Beebee, Helen. 2013. "Women and Deviance in Philosophy." In *Women in Philosophy: What Needs to Change?*, edited by Katrina Hutchinson and Fiona Jenkins, 61-80. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Bendl, Regina, Helga Eberherr, and Heike Mensi-Klarbach. 2012. "Vertiefende Betrachtungen zu ausgewählten Diversitätsdimensionen." In *Diversität und Diversitätsmanagement*, edited by Regina Bendl, Edeltraud Hanappi-Egger and Roswitha Hofmann, 79-136. Vienna: Facultas.

Benhabib, Seyla. 2004. *The Rights of Others. Aliens, Residents and Citizens*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Beuth, Patrick. 2016. "Nein, die Suchmaschine ist nicht rassistisch." Accessed April 28, 2020. https://www.zeit.de/digital/internet/2016-06/google-three-black-teenagers-suchmaschine-rassismus.

Buckwalter, Wesley, Stephen Stich. 2014. "Gender and Philosophical Intuition." *Experimental Philosophy* vol. 2, edited by Joshua Knobe and Shaun Nichols, 307-46. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Budner, Stanley. 1962. "Intolerance of Ambiguity as a Personality Variable." *Journal of Personality* 30(1): 29-50.

Butler, Judith. 1988. "Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory." *Theatre Journal* 40(4): 519–31.

Cahn, Steven M., Peter Markie, eds. 2006. *Ethics. History, Theory and Contemporary Issues*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Carens, Joseph H. 2000. *Culture, Citizenship, and Community. A Contextual Exploration of Justice as Evenhandedness*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Chadwick, Ruth, Dan Callahan, and Peter Singer. 2011. *Encyclopedia of Applied Ethics*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Combahee River Collective. 1979. "A Black Feminist Statement". *Capitalist Patriarchy and the Case for Socialist Feminism*, edited by Zillah R. Eisenstein, 362-72. New York: Monthly Review Press.

Copp, David. 2006. *The Oxford Handbook of Ethical Theory*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

de Beauvoir, Simone. 2015 [1949]. *The Second Sex*. London: Vintage Classic.

Düwell, Marcus, Christoph Hübenthal, and Micha H. Werner. 2006. *Handbuch Ethik*. Stuttgart: J. B. Metzler.

Faith, Daniel P. 2007. "Biodiversity". *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Summer 2016 Edition), edited by Edward N. Zalta. https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2016/entries/biodiversity.

Frenkel-Brunswik, Else. 1949. "Intolerance of Ambiguity as an Emotional and Perceptual Personality Variable". *Journal of Personality* 18: 108–43.

Forst, Rainer. 2003. *Toleranz im Konflikt. Geschichte, Gehalt und Gegenwart eines umstrittenen Begriffs.* Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp.

Gaston, Kevin J. 1996. *Biodiversity: A Biology of Numbers and Difference*. London: Blackwell Science.

Grosz, Elizabeth A. 1995. *Space, Time, and Perversion. Essays on the Politics of Bodies.* New York: Routledge.

Hanappi-Egger, Edeltraud. 2012. "Die Rolle von Gender und Diversität in Organisationen: Eine organisationstheroretische Einführung". *Diversität und Diversitätsmanagement*, edited by Regina Bendl, Edeltraud Hanappi-Egger and Roswitha Hofmann, 175-201. Wien: Facultas.

Heesen, Jessica, Karoline Reinhardt, and Laura Schelenz. 2020. "Diskriminierung durch Algorithmen vermeiden. Analysen und Instrumente für eine demokratische digitale Gesellschaft". *Diskriminierung und Antidiskriminierung: Beiträge aus Wissenschaft und Praxis*, edited by Gero Bauer, Maria Kechaja, Sebastian Engelmann and Lean Haug. Bielefeld: transcript 2020 (forthcoming).

Heine, Matthias. 2014. "Deutschland hat zwei Geschlechter mehr als Amerika". Accessed April 29 2020. https://www.welt.de/kultur/medien/article131882997/Deutschland-hat-zwei-Geschlechter-mehr-als-Amerika.html.

Heyes, Cressida. 2020. "Identity Politics". *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Fall 2020 Edition), edited by Edward N. Zalta, forthcoming. https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2020/entries/identity-politics/.

Hildt, Moritz. 2016. *Die Herausforderung des Pluralismus. John Rawls' Politischer Liberalismus und das Problem der Rechtfertigung.* Freiburg/ München: Karl Alber Verlag.

Hofman, Roswitha. 2012. "Gesellschaftstheoretische Grundlagen für einen reflexiven und inklusiven Umgang mit Diversitäten in Organisationen". *Diversität und Diversitätsmanagement*, edited by Regina Bendl, Edeltraud Hanappi-Egger and Roswitha Hofmann, 23-60. Wien: Facultas.

Kristeva, Julia. 1988. *Etrangers à nous-mêmes*, Paris: Librairie Arthème Fayard.

Kymlicka, Will. 1995. *Multicultural Citizenship*, Oxford: Clarendon Press.

LaFollette, Hugh, ed. 2003. *The Oxford Handbook of Practical Ethics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Lenzen, Manuela. 2020. *Künstliche Intelligenz*. Fakten, Chancen, Risiken, München: CH Beck.

Lum, Kristian, and William Isaac. 2016. "To Predict and Serve?" *Significance* 13(5): 14-19.

Mac Donald Jr, Alfred P. 1970. "Revised scale for ambiguity tolerance: Reliability and Validity". *Psychological reports* 26(3): 791-8.

Mensi-Klarbach, Heike. 2012. "Der Business-Case für Diversität und Diversitätsmanagement". In *Diversität und Diversitätsmanagement*, edited by Regina Bendl, Edeltraud Hanappi-Egger and Roswitha Hofmann, 299-326. Wien: Facultas.

Mau, Steffen. 2017. *Das metrische Wir. Über die Quantifizierung des Sozialen*. Berlin: Suhrkamp.

Nida-Rümelin, Julian. 2005. *Angewandte Ethik. Bereichsethiken und ihre theoretische Fundierung*. Stuttgart: Kröner.

Nussbaum, Martha C. 1992. Human Functioning and Social Justice. In Defense of Aristotelian Essentialism. *Political Theory* 20(2): 202-46.

———. 1999. *Sex and Social Justice*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

———. 2006. *Frontiers of Justice. Disability. Nationality. Species Membership*. Cambridge/MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.

Okin, Susan Moller 1979. *Women in Western Political Thought*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

———. 1989. *Justice, Gender, and the Family*. New York: Basic Books.

Rawls, John. 1993. *Political Liberalism*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Rorty, Richard. 1991. *Objectivity, Relativism, and Truth*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Spivak, Gayatri C. 1988. "Sub-altern Studies. Deconstructing Historiography." *Selected Subaltern studies,* edited by Ranajit Guha and Gayatri C. Spivak, 3-32. New York: Oxford University Press.

Stich, Stephen. 2013. "Do Different Groups Have Different Epistemic Intuitions? A Reply to Jennifer Nagel." *Philosophy & Phenomenological Research* 87(1): 151–78.

———. 1989. "In a Word: Interview with Ellen Rooney". *Differences. A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies* 1(2): 124-56.

———. 2008. *Other Asias*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing.

Taylor, Charles. 1992. "The Politics of Recognition." *Multiculturalism: Examining the Politics of Recognition*, edited by Amy Gutmann 1994, 25-74. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Terkessidis, Mark. 2010. *Interkultur.* Berlin: suhrkamp.

Vertovec, Steven. 2012. "'Diversity' and the Social Imaginary." *European Journal of Sociology* 53 (3), 287-312.

———. 2015. "Introduction: Formulating Diversity Studies." *Routledge International Handbook of Diversity Studies*, 19-38. New York: Routledge.

West, Candace, Don. H. Zimmerman. 1987. "Doing Gender." *Gender and Society* 1 (2), 125-51.

William, Rhiannon. 2014. "Facebook's 71 Gender Options Come to UK Users." Accessed April 28, 2020. https://www.telegraph.co.uk/technology/facebook/10930654/Facebooks-71-gender-options-come-to-UK-users.html.

Wils, Jean-Pierre, Christoph Hübenthal. 2006. *Lexikon der Ethik*. Paderborn: Schöningh.

York, Chris. 2016. "Three Black Teenagers: Is Google Racist? It's not Them, it's Us". Acessed April 28, 2020. https://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/entry/three-black-teenagers-google-racism_uk_575811f5e4b014b4f2530bb5.

Young, Iris M. 1990. *Justice and the Politics of Difference*, Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Zack, Naomi. 2015. *The Ethics and Mores of Race: Equality After the History of Philosophy*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield.

———. 2016. *Applicative Justice: A Pragmatic Empirical Approach to Racial Injustice*, Lanham/MD: Rowman & Littlefield.

Zuiderveen Borgesius, Frederik. 2018. *Discrimination, Artificial Intelligence, and Algorithmic Decision-making*. Council of Europe. Strasbourg: Directorate General of Democracy.

The Many Harms of SETs in Higher Education[1]

Cecilea Mun

Abstract: In this paper, I call attention to the problem of continuing to rely on SETs for hiring, reappointment, promotion, and award decisions in higher education, including the problem of continuing to permit the use of SETs despite the clear and explicit acknowledgement of their shortcomings. I argue that to do so manifests a failure to acknowledge the weight of the actual and potential harms of SETs. I then provide an outline of such harms in order to clearly convey not only the weight but also the extent of such harms, especially on marginalized job candidates and non-privileged students. I also report the results of a recent survey I conducted in order to document any actual or possible harms that were committed against professional educators by the use of SETs in hiring, reappointment, or promotion decisions. I conclude by arguing that, given all of the foregoing, the use of SETs should be abolished for hiring, reappointment, promotion, and award decisions in higher education.

Keywords: SET, student evaluations, systemic, biases, women, minority, marginalization.

There are many reasons to be angry currently in the United States: on September 20, 2020, the U.S. surpassed 200,000 deaths due to COVID-19 (Chappell 2020), and a disproportionate number of those who have died are Black and Latinx members of the society (Ford, Reber, and Reeves 2020). The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported that in July the unemployment rate was at 10.2%,[2] with Black and Latinx community members constituting the highest unemployed racial groups. In May 2020, during the last month in which lockdowns were near universally imposed across the country, the unemployment rate for women was 14.3% compared to 11.9% for men, with Hispanic women (19.5%) having the highest rate of unemployment in the nation compared to the rate for women and men of any other major racial or ethnic group; and the unemployment rate among those aged 16-24 also rose to 25.3%, which was more than double the

[1] I would like to thank Leonard Waks, Shay Welch, and the editors of this volume – Helen Beebee and Anne-Marie McCallion – for their helpful comments. Thank you!

[2] U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. 2020. "Employment Situation Summary." Economic News Release. Last updated August 2020. Accessed August 23, 2020. https://www.bls.gov/news.release/empsit.nr0.htm.

.

rate of unemployment for those who were 35 and older (Kochhar 2020). The main contributing causes were the global COVID-19 pandemic and the Trump administration's failure to take appropriate actions.[3] Another consequence of these two causes is that approximately 30-40 million people, with 80% being people of color and especially Black and Latinx people, are currently at risk of eviction (Benfer et. al 2020). Finally, the abuse, violence, and injustice that Black, Latinx, and Native Americans – men, women, and transgender and gender non-conforming people – have suffered throughout the years at the hands of local, state, and federal police officers have inspired Black Lives Matter protests at approximately 4,395 locations around the world, since May 25, 2020 and as of August 1, 2020, but mostly in the United States.[4]

That such harms are ultimately a consequence of racial and economic injustice is obvious, and it is right for one to be angry about such injustices. What is not obvious, however, are the pernicious harms to marginalized groups, and ultimately a society as a whole, of the continued endorsement and use of student evaluation of teaching (SET) instruments for hiring, promotion, reappointment, and recognition practices in higher education. Yet these harms are as or even more detrimental than those gender and racial injustices that give rise to systematic inequalities in health, employment, housing, and the law. One reason why is that these harms work to undercut the distribution of knowledge, skills, and epistemic authority within a society – those goods that ultimately mediate access to healthcare, employment, housing, and equality before the law – while at the same time making at least some of the victims of such harms not only willing, but sometimes eager and enthusiastic accomplices in reinforcing the systemic injustices that cause their oppression.

In this paper, I call attention to the problem of continuing to rely on SETs for hiring, reappointment, promotion, and award decisions in higher education, including the problem of continuing to permit the use of SETs despite the clear and explicit acknowledgement of their problems. I argue that to do so manifests a failure to acknowledge the weight of the actual and potential harms of SETs. I then provide an outline of such harms in order to clearly convey the weight and the extent of such harms, especially on marginalized job candidates and non-privileged students. I also report the results of a recent survey I conducted in order to document any actual or possible harms that were committed against professional educators by the use of SETs in hiring, reappointment, or promotion decisions. I conclude by arguing that, given all of the foregoing, the use of SETs should be abolished for hiring, reappointment, promotion, and award decisions in higher education.

[3] In contrast, the unemployment rate in July of the previous year was 3.7%. Read U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. 2019. "The Employment Situation – July 2019." News Release. Accessed August 2, 2019. https://www.bls.gov/news.release/archives/empsit_08022019.pdf.
[4] Black Lives Matter Protests 2020. Online Map. https://www.creosotemaps.com/blm2020/.

I. Illusions/Delusions of Just Concern with SET Use in Higher Education

The use of SETs in U.S. higher education goes as far back as the early 1920s (Stroebe 2020; Uttl, White, and Gonzalez 2017; Adams and Umbach 2012; Carpenter, Witherby, and Tauber 2020). In 1973 only 29% of colleges relied on the use of SETs; the numbers jumped to 68% in 1983, to 86% in 1993, and then to 94% in 2010 (Stroebe 2020). Their near ubiquitous use today in higher education, both nationally and internationally, is typically attributed to the ease of collecting, presenting, and analyzing data for the purposes of improving teaching quality, as well as its usefulness in appraisal processes (e.g., tenure, promotion, and award decisions), providing institutional assurances and accountability with respect to an institution's quality of education, and as a mechanism for creating a more "democratic" and "inclusive" educational environment for students (Spooren et al. 2017). In business terms, it is supposed that SETs make the business of education more "efficient" and "effective," as well as provide students a sense of "consumer satisfaction" (Katopes 2009). Yet from both a business perspective and the perspective of egalitarian values of diversity and inclusiveness, the continued reliance on SETs by pre-existing faculty and administrators, especially for the purposes of making hiring, reappointment, promotion, and award decisions is self-defeating: 1) they are invalid measures of teaching effectiveness, 2) their adoption is motivationally questionable, and 3) they pose a legal threat to institutions.[5]

Although scholars in the past touted the validity of SETs in measuring what their architects propose they measure, evidence against the validity of SETs in measuring teaching effectiveness has been available since the 1990s

[5] One might note that the diversity among the faculty in higher education has increased throughout the years, along with an increase use in SETs in higher education; and this observation might be used to suggest that the use of SETs is, therefore, not a barrier to diversity and inclusiveness in higher education. This argument, however, fails to attend to the fact that advancements toward diversity and inclusiveness in higher education may have been made despite the use of SETs. As I argue in section two, the use of SETs for hiring, reappointment, promotion, and award decisions equips pre-existing faculty and administrators with a more effective tool for gating since it provides a ready excuse to deny a marginalized candidate a well-earned job, promotion, or award while also providing pre-existing faculty and administrators with a valid excuse (i.e., the invalidity of SETs) for discounting SETs for any particular decision-making process. Furthermore, although there have been some improvements toward equity in higher education, there are still many problems that need to be addressed, and the disuse of SETs may contribute to doing so (e.g., the persistence of minority underrepresentation in academia, read U.S. Department of Education, "The Condition of Education," 2020, which also varies by discipline; and the vertically stratified inequities among those in higher academic ranks, such as inequities in equal pay for equal work, and the continued persistence of gender norms and stereotypes, read Fan 2020).

(Hornstein 2017). There is now even more evidence against their validity (e.g., Esarey and Valdes 2020; Fan et. al 2019; Rivera and Tilcsik 2019; Mitchell and Martin 2018; Aurguete, Slater, Mwaikinda 2017; Hornstein 2017; Wagner, Reiger, and Voorvelt 2016; MacNell, Driscoll, and Hunt 2015; and Smith and Hawkins 2011). Given such evidence, the American Sociological Association (ASA) released a "Statement on Student Evaluations of Teaching" (2019), which was endorsed by 23 additional societies or associations. This statement cited evidence of 1) a weak relation between student evaluations and student learning, 2) methodological problems with studies reporting a positive correlation between student evaluations and teaching effectiveness, and 3) gender and racial bias as reasons for doubting the validity of student evaluations in measuring teaching effectiveness. It further observed that there was an emerging consensus among scholars that "using SETs as the primary measure of teaching effectiveness in faculty review processes can systematically disadvantage faculty from marginalized groups" (ASA 2019, 1).

Furthermore, there is now more evidence for questioning the initial motivation for publishing the flawed research and arguments that have been previously given in support of the validity of SETs, especially during the 1980s when the use of SETs jumped to 68% from 29% in 1973, and continued to significantly increase thereafter. According to a study by Spooren et al. (2017), the following three scholars are credited for authoring at least one of the top 10 articles in SET research, by total citations according to Google Scholar: H. W. Marsh, W. J. McKeachie, and P. A. Cohen. These three authors, along with J. A. Centra, were also found to be among the top 11 authors in the field of SET research, with Marsh identified as the top author and the rest taking a place among the upper ranks of this list (Spooren et al. 2017). Given the significant influence these authors have had in the field, the fact that their research has been associated with at least 1-3 conflicts of interests (corporate, evaluative, administrative, or SET author), which were not originally disclosed to their readers (Uttl, Cnudde, and White 2019), challenges the integrity of the underlying motivation, arguments, and movement to adopt SETs on the basis of their research. In other words, the research that motivated the adoption of SETs as effective tools for measuring teaching effectiveness, especially during the 1980s, were not only methodologically flawed (Uttl, White, Gonzalez 2017), but also motivationally flawed.

Finally, student evaluations have failed to pass legal validation as effective measures of teaching effectiveness. In the recent arbitration case in Ontario, Canada, between Ryerson University and the Ryerson Faculty Association,[6] arbitrator William Kaplan reviewed the evidence provided by both Ryerson University and the Ryerson Faculty Association, and determined that the expert

[6] William Kaplan (Arbitrator), 2018, "Ryerson University vs. Ryerson Faculty Association," CanLII 58446 (ON LA). Accessed August 30, 2020. http://canlii.ca/t/hsqkz.

evidence "establishes, with little ambiguity, that a key tool in teaching effectiveness [SETs] is flawed" (Kaplan 2018, 10). Not only this, but while Kaplan's decision upheld the importance and right of Ryerson University to assess faculty teaching effectiveness, it also established that "the ubiquity of the SET tool is not a justification, in light of the evidence about its potential impact, for its continuation, or for mere tinkering" (Kaplan 2018, 10). Arbitrator Kaplan continued to note that "the evidence is dispositive that some of the [Ryerson University SET] questions do not elicit any useful information about teaching effectiveness and are subject to bias, while the use of averages – individual, Departmental, Faculty and University – provides no relevant information about teaching effectiveness" (Kaplan 2018, 10).

It should, therefore, be surprising that most universities across the country, and around the world, still rely on SETs for hiring, reappointment, promotion, and award decisions. Even the Ryerson University and the ASA are guilty of a lack in integrity. Ryerson University has failed to equally extend arbitrator Kaplan's decision, which was limited to the use of Ryerson's SETs ("Faculty Course Surveys") for the purpose of promotion and tenure decisions, to protect job candidates from being harmed by similar problems with SETs conducted by other institutions during Ryerson's hiring processes. And rather than denouncing the use of SETs in hiring practices, the ASA instead recommends that 1) SET questions should focus on student experiences, as an opportunity for students to give their feedback rather than an opportunity to formally assess their instructor's teaching; 2) SETs should be used as a part of a holistic approach; 3) SETs can be used to appropriately document patterns in an instructor's feedback; 4) interpretive context be provided with quantitative SET scores through the reporting of distributions, sample sizes, and response rates; and that 5) evaluators (e.g., chairs, deans, hiring committees, and tenure and promotion committees) should be trained to appropriately interpret and use SETs as a part of a holistic assessment of teaching effectiveness (ASA 2019, 2).

In short, the ASA, the 23 other associations or societies that have endorsed their statement, and Ryerson University remain complicit in the harms caused by the continued use of SETs in hiring, promotion, reappointment, or award decisions, despite explicitly acknowledging all the problems associated with SETs. This demonstrates a deficiency in their recognition of the actual and potential harms that the continued reliance on SETs authorize and enact, especially against marginalized members of a society. It does, however, put associations like the ASA ahead of associations like the American Philosophical Association, which has yet to endorse any kind of statement regarding the use or disuse of SETs, especially with respect to its aim towards diversity and inclusiveness in the discipline of philosophy.

From the perspective of a professional educator, what the ASA, the 23 additional associations or societies who also endorsed the ASA's statement, and Ryerson University (including the Ryerson Faculty Association) failed to realize

is that, in general, to continue to permit the use of SETs for hiring, reappointment, promotion, and award purposes, even under the five conditions outlined by the ASA, is as ethically problematic as permitting the use of SETs as a sole measure of teaching effectiveness. A moral wrong is a moral wrong regardless of whether or not it is committed within a wider practice that is thought to be more ethical, and embedding such wrongs in what is perceived to be a more ethical "holistic" practice makes such wrongs insidious. The most significant reason why is that these wrongs – the injustices against underrepresented and minority people that result from the continued use of SETs for hiring, reappointment, promotion, and award decisions – are consequences of the continued use, and therefore legitimization, of what is explicitly acknowledged to be an invalid measure of teaching effectiveness. In other words, you can paint a donkey pink and teach it to squeal, but it ain't gonna ever give you bacon.

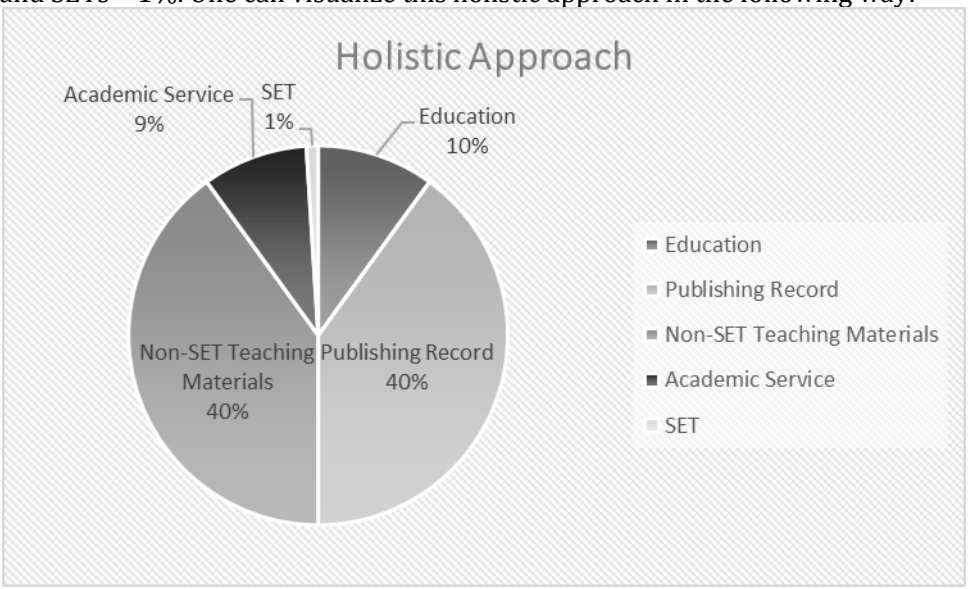
The ASA's primary justification for their recommendation is the "wide use" of such holistic approaches (ASA 2019, 2). Yet as with arbitrator Kaplan's reason for awarding a judgment on behalf of the Ryerson Faculty Association, the ubiquity of such holistic approaches is also not a justification for the continued reliance on such faulty measures for teaching effectiveness. And if this is the case for promotion and tenure decisions, then it is equally true for the purpose of hiring, reappointment, and award decisions. If necessarily flawed measures, such as SETs (Esarey and Valdes 2020), are allowed to be given any weight in a decision-making process, not only is the entire decision-making process dubious, but the explicit acknowledgment of the inadequacies of the defective measures is at best lip service and at worst a calculated sleight of hand. In either case, no real change is implemented in order to ensure that SETs do not continue to detrimentally impact those who are harmed. I now turn to enumerating these harms.

II. The Harms Against Marginalized Educators and Educators in General

Consider how, for example, the ASA's recommendation to take a "holistic approach" in making hiring decisions might actually play out, especially when one is considering a diversity of candidates. Even if a search committee considers multiple items (e.g., education, publishing record, non-SET teaching materials, and academic service), including SETs as an additional item with any weight in the decision-making process would still unfairly bias search committees against hiring an underrepresented or minority candidate. The decision to hire one candidate rather than another is often based on a very narrow margin, which can simply amount to a difference in SET scores, especially since many candidates can be equally matched in all the other factors. Given that SETs have been shown to be biased against women (e.g., Rivera and Tilcsik 2019; MacNell, Driscoll, Hunt 2015; Mitchell and Martin 2018; Wagner, Reiger, Voorvelt 2016; Holroyd and Saul 2016), as well as against women and

non-English speaking instructors (e.g., Fan et. al 2019), and minority and especially Black faculty (e.g., Smith and Hawkins 2011; Aurguete, Slater, Mwaikinda 2017), to include these measures at all as a part of any decision-making process is to introduce a systematically disadvantaging mechanism into that process.

Although the consequences of including SETs as a factor within a holistic approach to decision-making may be at times negligible, especially when a candidate for a job, promotion, or award faces little to no competition or is a shoe-in (which should be rare), it is also possible for SETs to play perhaps the single most important decision-making factor in a hiring decision despite the attempt to give SETs very little weight, as a part of a holistic approach. To illustrate this second point, consider a case in which a job search committee decides to take the following holistic approach, which aims to minimize the weight of SETs to what they believe to be a trivial degree: education = 10%, publishing record = 40%, non-SET teaching materials 40%, academic service 9%, and SETs = 1%. One can visualize this holistic approach in the following way:



One might conclude that such an approach could not possibly disadvantage any underrepresented or minority candidate in the job market since SETs hold so little weight (1%), and is a part of a holistic approach. Yet in practice, such an approach will have a systematically disadvantaging consequence, especially when an underrepresented or minority candidate is competing against a non-marginalized candidate who is equally matched on all

other factors except for SETs.[7] When the above holistic approach is implemented with two hypothetical candidates – a non-marginalized (Candidate 1) and a marginalized candidate (Candidate 2) – in which the only difference between the two candidates is that the marginalized candidate has a total SET score that is only 0.01% lower than the non-marginalized candidate's total SET score, regardless of how the search committee calculates a "total" SET score for its candidates, the actual, practical effect of the weight of the SETs, even when theoretically held at 1% and with only a 0.01% difference between the two candidates, is stark: it becomes the deciding factor.

	Candidate 1	Candidate 2
Education (10%)	10	10
Publishing Record (40%)	40	40
Non-SET Teaching Materials (40%)	40	40
Academic Service (9%)	9	9
Student Evaluation (1%)	1	0.99
Total	100	99.99

SETs can, therefore, actually carry a significant amount of weight even when well-intended search committees believe they protected their hiring process from possible biases by reducing the weight of SETs to a negligible amount.[8] In other words, every time a search committee is deciding between two

[7] One may wonder how often a search committee would ever have to decide between two candidates with different marginalization statuses who are equally matched in every other way but their SETs. If one considers, however, the fact that professional academics must all have the appropriate qualification, publication, teaching experience, and experience garnered through academic service in order to fulfill many of the requirements for even submitting an application, and that competition is a constitutive aspect of life for professional academics, then there should almost always be a case in which at least two candidates are equally matched in every way except in SETs, especially with a candidate pool of over 300 applicants as it is currently the case in the discipline of philosophy. The main reason why is that all the other factors except for SETs are within the sphere, to a certain extent, of a professional academic's control; these are the things that we have been trained to do and we remain in the job market because we continue to do them. In other words, within a pool of over 300 candidates, one should find at least two candidates (which is all one needs) of differing marginalization status who are equally competitive, able, and effective simply as a matter of statistical probability. That one does not may be an indication that various biases are at work in the mind of the perceiver.

[8] One might suggest that such a strict quantitative approach to holistic decision-making is unrealistic, that in practice strict quantitative approaches like this are very rarely used. The point, however, is to provide a quantitative illustration to highlight how much of an impact fine-grained differences can make. My assumption is also that qualitative approaches ultimately underlie these quantitative judgments. Furthermore, such effects are not restricted to quantitative approaches. They can result from taking a qualitative approach that uses no numerical value in the decision-making process. Purely qualitative approaches must still ultimately include the weighing of various factors, and all one needs are conditions in which

equally matched candidates, in which one is a non-underrepresented, non-minority and the other is a marginalized candidate, then the marginalized candidate will systematically lose out given that the student biases reflected in SETs systematically disadvantage marginalized instructors. This is how biases, and therefore injustices, become systemic. It is in these kinds of 'little things' or 'minor details' – the significant effects of which go unnoticed by most – which introduce and sustain many of the systemic injustices in a society. The late Justice Ruth Bader Ginsberg once said that "Real change, enduring change, happens one step at a time"; but this is true for change toward justice as well as injustice. Furthermore, although some research has shown that some biases can be mitigated (Peterson et. al 2019; Rivera and Tilcsik 2019), no study to date has shown that harmful student biases can be entirely eliminated.

Furthermore, SETs do not merely serve, under the guise of 'quality control,' as an illusory measure of teaching effectiveness, but more significantly they serve as a mechanism for gating the diversity and inclusiveness of academic departments, institutions, and academia as a whole by providing pre-existing faculty members and administrators with a ready-made justification, which pre-existing faculty members and administrators can practically use at will. Allowing SETs to have any weight in hiring, reappointment, promotion, and award decision-making processes is to give the harmful biases captured by SETs a default legitimacy, and since SETs systematically disadvantage underrepresented and minority faculty, no issue would be raised if a marginalized candidate or faculty is given what may be a well-deserved position, promotion, or award despite their low SET scores. Pre-existing faculty or administrators who are responsible for making hiring, reappointment, promotion, or award decisions can, therefore, simply make decisions in accordance with their preferences (much of which can be illegitimately based).

SETs, therefore, serve the purpose of alleviating the need for pre-existing faculty and administrators to provide any kind of legitimate justification for their decision, except when deciding to discount SETs on behalf of a candidate, which is always easy to do given their established invalidity. This reliance on SETs for such gating purposes is especially salient when one considers Ryerson University's current policy, which bars the use of SETs for tenure or promotion decisions but does not do so for hiring decisions. Apparently, according to Ryerson University and the Ryerson Faculty Association, SETs are fine to use in order to discriminate against external job candidates, but when applied to internal candidates it has been judged to be irredeemably problematic. Yet one must ask, why the difference?

Thus an institution's decision to include SETs in hiring, reappointment, promotion, and award decisions is a decision to not only maintain SETs as

---

one has two final candidates with only a difference between the weighting of their SETs for SETs to have this kind of effect.

instruments for reinforcing irrelevant and harmful student biases, but also as a mechanism for reinforcing irrelevant and harmful pre-existing faculty or administrative biases, which have not gone undocumented (e.g., Turner, Myers, and Creswell 1999; Bernal and Villalpando 2010; O'Meara, Culpepper, and Templeton 2020). It is to continue the systematization of the direct discrimination committed by students against marginalized faculty, and thereby transforms them into wrongs of indirect discrimination with disparate impact.[9] Once again, this is how such marginalizing biases become systemic.

Some may question the actual occurrence of such harms, perhaps believing that no relevant committee or decision-maker would base such an important, life altering decision on SETs. According to Miller and Seldin (2014), a comparison of a 2000 and a 2010 survey of deans in higher education suggests that the significance of SETs for hiring, reappointment, promotion, and award decisions had significantly increased.[10] After comparing their responses from a total of 410 academic deans who were surveyed in 2010 with the responses from a total of 506 academic deans from a similar study they conducted in 2000, they reported that 97.5% of deans in 2000 ranked classroom teaching as a major factor in evaluating overall faculty performance, while 99.3% ranked it as a major factor in 2010. Furthermore, 88.1% of deans in the 2000 study reported that they always used SETs when evaluating classroom teaching, whereas 94.2% reported that they always did in the 2010 study.

Furthermore, there were no studies in the current literature documenting the actual or possible impact of SETs on the careers of professional educators in higher education. I, therefore, conducted a preliminary, exploratory survey in order to address this concern, albeit to a very limited extent. The survey I conducted consisted of a total of 21 questions, including demographic questions about age, gender, race/ethnicity, political orientation, etc., and several questions about a participant's perception and knowledge of the impact of SETs on their career or the career of someone whom they had some knowledge.[11] The survey was distributed online through a variety of scholarly networks.[12] A total of n = 122 participants gave their consent to participate in the study, but some

[9] Read Rasmussen 2020 regarding forms of direct and indirect discrimination.

[10] There are no recent studies comparing more current conditions to these previous conditions.

[11] A copy of the survey has been provided as an appendix.

[12] These networks are as follows: the PI's Facebook network, including the Teaching Philosophy FB group; the PHILOS-L.listserv; the Moral_Science.listerv; the Society for Philosophy of Emotion Google group; the Southern Society for Philosophy and Psychology listserv; the Society for Philosophy and Psychology listserv; the Society for Women in Philosophy listserv; the Association for Feminist Ethics and Social Theory (FEAST) listserv; Biopolitical Philosophy Blog; and a variety of American Philosophical Association groups (Adjuncts & Contingent Faculty, Disabled Philosophers, Job Candidates, People of Color in Philosophy, Philosophers Outside Academia, Philosophers Outside US and Canada, Teaching Philosophy Online, and Women in Philosophy).

participants did not answer all the questions. The results for the most relevant questions from this study are as follows:

12. Do you ***believe*** that your student evaluations were the ***primary*** reason for why you were not hired for a teaching position during some point in your teaching career?

Yes	No	I don't know/ Prefer not to answer	Total
3 (2.59%)	93 (80.17%)	20 (17.24%)	116

14. Do you ***believe*** that your student evaluations were a ***primary*** reason for why you were not given a promotion or salary increase during some point in your teaching career?

Yes	No	I don't know/ Prefer not to answer	Total
7 (6.09%)	94 (81.4%)	14 (12.17%)	115

16. **Have you ever been** denied a promotion or salary increase during some point in your teaching career, with your student evaluations being given as the ***primary*** reason?

Yes	No	I don't know/ Prefer not to answer	Total
3 (2.59%)	101 (87.07%)	12 (10.34%)	116

18. Do you ***know*** of at least one person not being hired for a teaching position ***primarily*** because of their student evaluations?

Yes	No	I don't know/ Prefer not to answer	Total
35 (30.70%)	65 (57.02%)	14 (12.28%)	114

20. Do you ***know*** of at least one person being denied a promotion or salary increase ***primarily*** because of their student evaluations?

Yes	No	I don't know/ Prefer not to answer	Total
31 (27.43%)	69 (61.06%)	13 (11.50%)	113

It is important to note that this was a preliminary, exploratory survey, the purpose of which was to simply document the occurrence of the possible or actual harmful effects (if any) of SETs, and no hypothesis was being tested. Therefore, the information reported should be understood as simply providing a

descriptive claim about the participants who completed the survey rather than establishing any statistical claim that could be used to generalize across the population of educators in higher education or to identify any trends within this population. One should also note that the discrepancy between the significantly larger number of people reporting that they know of someone who has been negatively affected by their student evaluations and those who have reported that they believe or that they actually have been negatively affected is most likely due to the fact that hiring, promotion, and award decisions are typically made by a committee. So there will generally be more people who know of a person who has been negatively affected compared to those who believe or actually have been negatively affected. Yet these results do provide strong evidence for the conclusion that professional educators could have and have been denied positions and promotions based primarily on their SETs. One might argue that only a small percentage of respondents were possibly or actually negatively affected: Q.12 = 2.59%, Q.14 = 6.09%, Q. 16 = 2.59%. Yet if we were able to generalize these results across the population of educators in higher education (approx. 4,014,800 educators[13]), the number of people affected would be as follows: Q.12 = approx. 103,983 (2.59%), Q.14 = approx. 248,516 (6.19%), Q. 16 = 103,983 (2.59%) educators.

Although we cannot generalize these results in such a way, these numbers should still be somewhat alarming, especially given my arguments in the next section which also imply that more effective educators may be denied jobs, promotions, and awards due to the use of SETs in hiring, reappointment, promotion, and award decisions. The reason is not because these numbers reflect the actual number of educators who have been denied such jobs, promotions, or awards due to the reliance on SETs, but more so because they illustrate the number of educators' lives that might possibly be affected, and such possibilities should always carry a significant amount of weight since these are possibilities that are produced by systematic injustices.

Some may also argue for the continued use of SETs for reasons other than hiring, reappointment, promotion, and award decisions, such as for providing "useful" information about how a teacher affected a student's learning experience or engagement with a subject matter, and whether a student received adequate feedback in a timely manner.[14] The ASA's statement suggests as much

[13] "Teacher Characteristics and Trends." National Center for Education Statistics website. Accessed October 18, 2020. https://nces.ed.gov/fastfacts/display.asp?id=28.

[14] Some might also suggest that SETs help marginalized students have a voice against possibly biased instructors. The problem with this rationale is that such voices are too easily disregarded given all the problems with SETs. In other words, an administrator or department chair can simply choose not to give such an SET any validity, since the general invalidity of SETs is now well established. So the best forum for having such voices heard is not SETs, but instead forums such as those established by Title IX policies. For concerns regarding racial/ethnic discrimination, I would recommend that students demand the establishment of analogous reporting policies and forums at their institution.

in its recommendations. Yet such reasons fail to appropriately acknowledge the inherently discriminatory nature of SETs, and the harms they commit by exacerbating already hostile conditions in which marginalized faculty work (e.g., read Settles, Buchanan, and Dotson 2019; Misra and Lundquist 2015; Alexander and Moore 2008; Jackson and Crawley 2003).

First, given the evidence that SETs reflect a variety of harmful student biases, including gender and racial/ethnic biases, SETs are literally records of students' discrimination against underrepresented and minority faculty. To judge an underrepresented faculty as being less qualified due to one's implicit bias against women is an act of what Rasmussen (2020) refers to as "non-intentional disparate treatment discrimination." In most cases, acts of discrimination are not carried out as acts that are justified by explicit discriminatory beliefs. A student with a gender bias against women and a racial bias against black people does not usually think to themselves, "This teacher is incompetent and her authority is illegitimate because she is a black woman." They simply think, "This teacher is incompetent," and they refuse to follow her instructions. They also do so, unbeknownst to themselves, because the teacher is a black woman. Students may be ignorant of perpetrating their unintentional acts of discrimination while completing their SETs, but this does not mean they are not guilty of committing any acts of discrimination. Such discriminatory behavior also enact what Settles, Buchanan, and Dotson (2019) refer to as role entrapment, in which stereotypes limit a woman's opportunities to what are believed to be more gender appropriate roles.

Students are also not always naive actors. According to Carpenter, Witherby, and Tauber (2020), in some studies students have reported that SET ratings are based on the grades that students have been receiving throughout a course, and that students intentionally provide inaccurate information in order to "get back" at their instructors for the grades they have been receiving; students (36.5%) also reported knowing other students who have intentionally submitted false information about an instructor because they did not like the instructor.

Second, given that SETs are records of student biases, the kinds of criticism collected through SETs are not equally distributed among the faculty even when the circumstances on which these criticisms are based are. For example, evidence suggests that students rate female instructors as taking significantly more time to return feedback compared to male professors even when both female and male instructors returned feedback at the same time (MacNell et al. 2015). Such occurrences of what Settles, Buchanan, and Dotson (2019) refer to as hypervisibility should not be a surprise since such unequal distributions are a feature of discriminatory acts. This is an aspect of what makes them *discriminatory*.

One should also take care to note that it is these kinds of biases – such as gender and racial/ethnic biases – which are also at the root of the disparate

effects of the COVID-19 crisis and the Trump administration's failure to appropriately respond, the kinds of injustices against which Black Lives Matter activists are fighting, and the kinds of wrongs committed by what are now known as "Internet Karen's," in reference to the now infamous woman who made a false police report against a black man who was birdwatching in a park simply because he asked her to leash her dog, in accordance with posted park regulations.

Given the foregoing, the reliance on SETs for any reason also places instructors under conditions that hold them responsible for factors that are beyond their control: students' implicit biases. This places undue burdens, especially on marginalized educators, and can incentivize many instructors, perhaps out of the sheer fear of professional survival, to implement alternative strategies for raising their SETs, such as grade inflation and the use of passive learning strategies. The continued legitimization of the use of SETs for hiring, reappointment, promotion, and award decisions can, therefore, work to motivate marginalized instructors, as well as non-marginalized instructors – perhaps under a coercive threat of "documenting patterns in instructor feedback" – to lower the quality of their teaching. It can also punish both marginalized and non-marginalized instructors who have fought to resist the implementation of less effective teaching strategies due to student preferences for such strategies. I discuss these effects in more detail in the subsequent section on the harms of SETs against non-privileged students and a democratic society, in general.

The use of SETs in hiring, reappointment, promotion, and award decisions also commit harms against pre-existing faculty and administrators, as members of job search committees, tenure review committees, and award committees by both ethically and practically overburdening them with the responsibility to consider *necessarily invalid* data as a legitimate source of information in order for them to make a *just* decision about a job candidate or faculty member. Not only is this impossible, but it also requires them to commit ethically questionable, and perhaps even illegal acts of discrimination in order to make even an attempt at doing so. To base a decision about a job, a promotion, or an award on factors that have been proven to systematically introduce a variety of harmful biases, including gender and racial/ethnic biases, is to amplify these discriminations and thereby compound the harms of these biases. As mentioned earlier, this is how biases become systematized, and it is a form of indirect discrimination with disparate impact.

Furthermore, it is unreasonable to presume that any committee would be able to make an appropriate, ethically just judgment about a candidate for a job, promotion, or award with the addition of necessarily invalid and harmfully biased measures (such as SETs) if they cannot already make such a decision based on all the other less controversial information that they are already required to review (such as non-SET materials in a teaching portfolio, publication quality and record, grant procurement record, history of academic

service, and recommendation letters).[15] As noted earlier, what search committees might regard to be 'helpful' information in SETs might in fact be completely misleading.

Finally, up-to-date institutional teaching observations conducted by experts that are external to a department, review of syllabi and other teaching materials that were actually used in an instructor's course, a review of an instructor's feedback on students' assignments, a review of student reflections on what they learned in a course, and a review of any formal complaints submitted by students through appropriate forums (such as those provided by title IX procedures) should provide enough legitimate and adequately unbiased information for making a more fair and accurate assessment of an instructor's quality of teaching effectiveness. As such, not only is the reliance on SETs for hiring, reappointment, promotion, and award decisions both ethically and practically burdensome for job search committees, tenure review committees, and award committees, but they are unnecessarily so. They, therefore, also commit harms against the pre-existing faculty and administrators who serve on these committees. SETs should, therefore, never be a factor in any hiring, reappointment, promotion, or award decision-making process.

III. The Harms Against Non-Privileged Students and Society

Rather than helping to ensure a student's quality of education, the use of SETs not only harm students in general, but they also make non-privileged students (students of both the general and underserved populations) accomplices to their own oppression. Although in a society like the U.S. – in which gender and racial injustices are systemic – it is not always the case that hard work brings just rewards, it is still the case that most of those who succeed have worked hard to get to where they are. The lesson here is that hard work is, in general, a necessary condition for success even if it is not a sufficient condition. This is also true in education. It is only when students are asked to work through and overcome challenges that one can say that they have truly learned something. Learning is a kind of growth, and simply demonstrating that one is able to do what one has been able to do all along is not learning. It is also true that actual learning not only prepares students with the skills to fulfill their future workplace responsibilities, but it also helps students build the endurance and resilience they will need in order to fulfill these workplace demands and life challenges in such a way that will help them achieve even just the possibility of

[15] I grant that letters of recommendations can also be as or even more biased than SETs, but that this is the case does not discount the bias in SETs nor does it discount any argument to exclude SETs in hiring, reappointment, promotion, and award decisions. The more reasonable inference to draw would be that one ought to also discount letters of recommendation for hiring, reappointment, promotion, and award decisions. But to make such an argument is beyond the scope of this paper.

what many believe to be indicative of a successful, flourishing life: a professional career, in whatever form that it might take, in some industry.[16]

Providing students with a high quality of education, which is the kind of education that achieves the above aims in teaching, is not only beneficial to students but also to a society as a whole. Armed with such knowledge and habits of success, students can enter the workforce with the confidence to achieve bigger and better things for themselves, and also the skills and abilities to do so. Such achievements include access to better health, employment, housing, and recognition before the law. In a litigious, capitalistic, "buyer beware" society like the U.S., it is often the case that one must demand what one is owed through being appropriately informed and knowing how to argue for one's claims.

It is also through having a well-informed voting public that a democracy like the U.S. can ensure its flourishing – with appropriate checks and balances – but this cannot happen when the public is not appropriately educated. For example, being able to read and think at the level of higher education is effective in ensuring that one practices their right to vote in non-self-defeating ways. To deny students the opportunity to develop these skills and habits, therefore, denies such students the opportunity to compete both in the job market and in life. It is to fail in providing students with the kind of adequate education they were promised as good faith consumers of education and as members of a democratic society that touts the value of a higher education.

Given the foregoing, one should be able to agree that to simply give students the impression that they have developed a certain level of knowledge and skills without them actually doing so, and to regard this as an acceptable outcome not only fails to furnish students with their just deserts as good faith consumers and members of our society, but it is to swindle them. Institutions who do so are committing acts of fraud against their students, and to use student feedback as a mechanism to achieve these ends is to make students accomplices to the harms committed against them. Yet this is exactly what the use of SETs in hiring, reappointment, promotion, and award decisions do.

The causal chain is indirect, but easy to follow, especially under the presumption of a business model of education, which operates with the primary purpose of generating a profit and has now become the predominant model for U.S. higher education (Katopes 2009). A growing number of studies are finding that the correlation between higher SET scores and student grades may be more so an indicator of grade inflation than of teaching effectiveness, and arguments are mounting for the conclusion that the reliance on SETs for hiring,

[16] As to whether or not such a life is one that ought to be valued by all is another question. My assumption throughout this paper is that at least one reason why someone would choose to pursue an undergraduate education is because they hope that their education will contribute to their eventual success in the job market. Yet even if this does not apply, as long as a student hopes to actually learn as much as they believe they have, then my arguments about the harms of using SETs for hiring, reappointment, promotion, and award decisions are still applicable.

reappointment, promotion, and award decisions are leading to more ineffective rather than effective teaching (e.g., Stroebe 2020; Carpenter, Witherby, and Tauber 2020; Deslauriers et al. 2019; Lee et. al 2018; Kornell and Hausman 2016; Yunker and Yunker 2003).

For example, Stroebe (2020) notes that GPAs in the U.S. have been increasing for decades; yet rather than university students demonstrating that they have become more hardworking and better qualified for college, students report spending less time on academic pursuits, SAT scores show a downward trend, and students have developed less critical thinking, complex reasoning, and writing skills compared to students from a number of decades ago. What explains this inconsistency, according to Stroebe, between student GPAs and other indicators of high-quality learning is grade inflation, which can be traced back to the motivation that teachers have to achieve higher SET scores due to their use in hiring, reappointment, promotion, and award decisions. Stroebe cites an abundance of empirical evidence suggesting that students reward lenient grading, as well as the fact that instructors resort to lenient grading in order to achieve higher SET scores. This fact should also not be a surprise for anyone with a good amount of actual teaching experience: learning is difficult and students demonstrate a consistent preference for passive teaching methods that leave them with the impression of learning compared to more effective, active learning methods (Kornell and Hausman 2016; Deslauriers et al. 2019; Carpenter et al. 2020).

To illustrate, consider the findings of Deslauriers et al. (2019). They were concerned with the continued widespread use of passive learning practices in STEM programs (e.g., passive lectures) despite the extensive research on student learning which has established that active learning practices (e.g., deliberative practice of concepts in problem solving) are more effective teaching strategies. The fear of lower SETs was cited as one of the reasons why instructors chose more passive teaching strategies compared to more active teaching strategies. As Deslauriers et al. noted:

> Indeed, one-third of instructors who try active teaching eventually revert to passive lectures, many citing student complaints as the reason (23). Instructors report that students dislike being forced to interact with one another (15, 17, 24), they resent the increase in responsibility for their own learning (21, 22), and they complain that 'the blind can't lead the blind' (19). (Deslauriers et al. 2019, 19251)

To test whether or not students have a bias toward passive learning strategies, Deslauriers et al. (2019) conducted a study on students in physics courses at a major U.S. university. They randomly assigned students into two groups, and they toggled the experimental condition of using active learning strategies between the two groups. In other words, when one group was using active learning strategies during a class period the other group was using a passive learning strategy. They also gave both groups a survey at the end of each

class in order to record student perceptions about their class, a multiple-choice test to record actual learning measurements, and conducted a follow-up one-on-one with student participants to learn more about their perceptions of learning.

According to their results, they found that although students significantly demonstrated more actual learning using active learning strategies, students reported that the class in which they practiced the passive learning strategy was more enjoyable and that they felt that they learned more with the passive learning strategy. They also judged the instructor when using a passive learning strategy to be more effective and reported that they wished all their physics courses were taught using passive learning strategies. As Deslauriers et al. summarized, "In this report, we identify an inherent student bias against active learning that can limit its effectiveness and may hinder the wide adoption of these methods" (Deslauriers et al. 2019, 19251), which is problematic since active learning strategies have been proven to be more effective learning strategies than passive learning strategies.

Yet the main reason why student biases hinder the adoption of these methods is because of the reliance on SETs for hiring, reappointment, promotion, and award decisions, and not simply because students have an inherent bias against these kinds of methods. In other words, it is only in contrast with passive learning strategies and the focus on student preferences through SETs that such inherent student biases problematically hinder the adoption of more effective learning strategies. Although teachers should never implement abusive teaching strategies or any other kind of ineffective strategies, there is a difference between such strategies and the kinds of proven, effective, learning strategies to which students show an aversion compared to the kinds of passive learning strategies that are rewarded by more positive SET responses.

What is worse is that students are not only being given a worse education compared to the quality of education that was given to students a few decades ago, but the reliance on SETs as feedback for educators to 'improve' on their teaching effectiveness has led teachers to focus on employing strategies that give students the impression of learning. Carpenter, Witherby, and Tauber (2020) argue that qualities such as better organization, fluency of style, and enthusiasm, which are common factors that are measured in SETs, leave students with the impression of learning, but do not have matching effects on a student's learning.

Furthermore, Carpenter, Witherby, and Tauber also argue that because students have inaccurate perceptions of what effective learning feels like, they misjudge effective teaching strategies as being ineffective and report that they learn more effectively from passive approaches rather than those concrete approaches – such as retrieval practice, distributed practice, and active learning – that have been proven to be effective. Thus student responses in SETs encourage instructors to improve on those factors that leave students with the belief that they learned while jettisoning those strategies that actually lead to improved learning but also lower SET scores. In other words, students – in virtue

of their naive SET responses about their learning experiences – bring about the implementation of bargain-basement learning conditions for themselves and their fellow students, while also feeling like they have made a significant contribution to increasing the quality of their education, institution, and gaining a sense of consumer satisfaction.

Furthermore, students also intentionally contribute to the lowering of the standards for their own education by knowingly making false reports in their SETs because they resented the grades that their teacher gave them, or simply because they disliked their teacher. Again, as Carpenter, Witherby, and Tauber (2020) noted, some students reported intentionally submitting inaccurate information in order to "get back" at their instructors for the grades they received, and some students (36.5%) also reported knowing other students who had intentionally submitted false reports because they did not like the instructor. Such are the consequences of an entitled consumerism, which is fostered by a business model of education that relies on the use of SETs for hiring, reappointment, promotion, and award decisions, and which can turn some students into accomplices to their own oppression.

The result is a general adult population with an inflated impression of having gained a certain level of knowledge and skills, which they will be unable to actually demonstrate in the workplace and in everyday life. They will move through the highly competitive job market without understanding why they are failing or to eventually realize that they were sold a bill of goods, especially after finding themselves under a mountain of financial debt from the educational loans they took out as an investment in their future. This is what the business model of education, which reinforces the use of SETs in hiring, reappointment, promotion, and award decisions, does; and when such consequences also necessarily have differential effects on marginalized students in a community, the implementation of the mechanism that brings about these consequences is the implementation of a structural injustice.

Not every student will be subject to such effects because unlike students from the general populations – which constitute the majority of U.S. students in higher education – students from privileged backgrounds have the resources (e.g., highly educated parents; tutors, academic advisors, and academic consultants external to their institutions; as well as nepotistic professional networks) to help them realize that the education they are receiving is inadequate, and to make-up for these deficiencies in one way or another. The use of SETs for hiring, reappointment, promotion, and award decisions, therefore, leave non-privileged students at a considerable disadvantage. It unwittingly encourages non-privileged students – who typically have little to no recourse for the poorer quality of education that SETs incentivize – to structure their educational environment through their unconscious, biased SET responses in such a way that leave them with educators who lower their quality of teaching to match students' preferences while giving them the impression of learning, so

that such educators can continue to survive within a systematically oppressive system that has been reinforced by the use of SETs.

From the business perspective of education, one might argue that it is a student's responsibility to inform themselves about what constitutes effective teaching. As the saying goes in business: *Buyer beware!* But the inapplicability of this rule to educational goods ought to be a clear indication that a business model, along with its reliance on SETs for hiring, reappointment, promotion, and award decisions, is an inappropriate model for education. One cannot hold students responsible for being knowledgeable consumers of a product that has the purpose of helping them develop the skills and habits that would allow them to be such consumers. To do so betrays not only an institution's unreasonableness, but also its lack of ethical concern for its students.

The reliance on SETs for hiring, reappointment, promotion, and award decisions also enacts procedures that hinder the implementation of at least one corrective to the kind of student biases that make SETs especially problematic. Fan et. al (2019) conducted a longitudinal study of 523,703 individual student surveys at a leading Australian university, across five different faculties with diverse cultural backgrounds (38% of the university faculty had non-English speaking backgrounds), over a period of 7 years (2010-2016). According to their findings, not only is there a significant interaction between gender and culture, such that students seem to unconsciously prefer instructors who are more like them, but they also found evidence for the conclusion that students' gender and cultural biases may be significantly reduced when they are exposed to conditions of diversity, such as having a more diverse faculty. Accordingly, the reliance on SETs for hiring, reappointment, promotion, and award decisions also harm students and a society as a whole by acting as a mechanism to deny students in the general population (i.e., non-privileged students) the conditions that would allow them to overcome their biases in order to be able to make judgements that are the most beneficial for their well-being. SETs should, therefore, never be a factor in any hiring, reappointment, promotion, or award decision-making process.

IV. Conclusion

SETs have been proven to be invalid measures of teaching effectiveness, the motivation for their use is questionable, and they have failed legal validation. The use of SETs in hiring, reappointment, promotion, and award decisions, therefore, enact numerous harms against professional educators, administrators, students in higher education, as well as a society as a whole. As a part of a holistic approach in a hiring process, they can keep pre-existing faculty and administrators from having those difficult discussions and arguments about why a candidate should or should not receive a job, promotion, or award – discussions and arguments that can reveal, and sometimes dismantle or re-establish, the same kind of harmful biases that are documented in SETs. But

these are the kinds of conversations that any committee ought to have in order to ensure that the best possible candidate (rather than what some might believe to be the best possible candidate) for their particular department is hired, despite the kinds of explicit or implicit biases that various pre-existing faculty or administrators may hold. These are the kinds of conversations that need to be had in order to make academia more diverse and inclusive for current and future generations of students.

The use of SETs in hiring, reappointment, promotion, and award decision-making processes also legitimizes the direct discrimination committed by students against marginalized educators, and thereby work to sustain and reinforce a hostile environment for marginalized educators. Their use systematizes the discriminatory acts in SETs into acts of indirect discrimination with disparate impact. They are mechanisms for systemically sustaining and reinforcing gender, racial/ethnic, and other harmful biases. Their use place pre-existing faculty and administrators in ethically impossible and practically overburdensome situations, while also allowing such pre-existing faculty and administrators to offload the moral weight of making such decisions onto naive student preferences (i.e., harmful student biases).

Finally, SETs have led to the implementation of low-quality teaching methods as a response to fulfilling such preferences, and leave many students with having the impression that they have a good quality education rather than actually having a good quality education. This not only harms students, and especially non-privileged students, but also the aims of a democratic society as a whole. A democracy requires an educated general populace so that they can appropriately exercise their rights to truly protect their life, liberty, and pursuit of happiness. A populace with illusional/delusional impressions about their level of knowledge and skills cannot do so. SETs should, therefore, never be a factor in any hiring, reappointment, promotion, or award decision-making process.

References

Adams, Meredith J. D. and Paul D. Umbach. 2012. "Nonresponse and Online Student Evaluations of Teaching: Understanding the Influence of Salience, Fatigue, and Academic Environments." *Research in Higher Education* 53(5): 576-91. http://www.jstor.org/stable/23257596.

Alexander, Rudolph, Jr., and Sharon E. Moore. 2008. "The Benefits, Challenges, and Strategies of African American Faculty Teaching at Predominantly White Institutions." *Journal of African American Studies* 12: 4–18.

American Sociological Association (ASA). 2019. "Statement on Student Evaluations of Teaching." https://www.asanet.org/sites/default/files/asa_statement_on_student_evaluations_of_teaching_feb132020.pdf.

Aurguete, Mara S., Joshua Slater, and Sekela R. Mwaikinda. 2017. "The Effects of Professors' Race and Clothing Style on Student Evaluations." Special Issue:

Ethnic Differences, Experiences, and Connections for All Students in Education. *The Journal of Negro Education* 86(4): 494-502.

Badal, S., and Harter, J. K. 2014. "Gender Diversity, Business-Unit Engagement, and Performance." *Journal of Leadership & Organizational Studies* 21(4): 354–65.

Benfer, Emily, David Bloom Robinson, Stacy Butler, Lavar Edmonds, Sam Gilman, Katherine Lucas Mckay, Zach Neumann, Lisa Owens, Neil Steinkamp, And Diane Yentel. 2020. "The Covid-19 Eviction Crisis: An Estimated 30-40 Million People In America Are At Risk." The Aspen Institute. Accessed August 23, 2020. https://Www.Aspeninstitute.Org/Blog-Posts/The-Covid-19-Eviction-Crisis-An-Estimated-30-40-Million-People-In-America-Are-At-Risk/.

Bernal, Dolores Delgado and Octavio Villalpando. 2010. "An Apartheid of Knowledge in Academia: The Struggle Over the 'Legitimate' Knowledge of Faculty of Color." *Equity and Excellence in Education* 35(2): 169-80.

Carpenter, Shana K., Amber E. Witherby, and Sarah K. Tauber. 2020. "On Students' (Mis)judgments of Learning and Teaching Effectiveness." *Journal of Applied Research in Memory and Cognition* 9: 137-51.

Chappell, Bill. 2020. "'Enormous and Tragic': U.S. Has Lost More Than 200,000 People To COVID-19." NPR. Online. Accessed October 6, 2020. https://www.npr.org/sections/coronavirus-live-updates/2020/09/22/911934489/enormous-and-tragic-u-s-has-lost-more-than-200-000-people-to-covid-19.

Deslauriersa, Louis, Logan S. McCartya, Kelly Millerc, Kristina Callaghana, and Greg Kestina. 2019. Measuring Actual Learning versus Feeling of Learning in Response to Being Actively Engaged in the Classroom. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 116(39): 19251-57.

Esarey, Justin and Natalie Valdes. 2020. "Unbiased, Reliable, and Valid Student Evaluations Can Still Be Unfair." *Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education*. https://doi.org/10.1080/02602938.2020.1724875.

Fan, C. Cindy. 2020, "Gender Inequity in American Higher Education." In *Scholarly Engagement and Decolonisation: Views from South Africa, the Netherlands, and the United States*, edited by Maurice Crul, Liezl Dick, Halleh Ghorashi, and Abel Valenzuela Jr., 55-80. On Higher Education Transformation, vol. 1. Stellenbosch, S. Africa: African Sun Media/Sun Media.

Fan, Y., L. J. Shepard, E. Slavich, D. Waters, M. Stone, R. Abel, E. L. Johnston. 2019. "Gender and Cultural Bias in Student Evaluations: Why Representation Matters." *PLoS ONE* 14(2): e0209749. https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0209749.

Ford, Tiffany, Sarah Reber, and Richard V. Reeves. 2020. "Race Gaps in COVID-19 Deaths are Even Bigger than They Appear." Middle Class Memos. Brookings Institute. Accessed August 25, 2020.

https://www.brookings.edu/blog/up-front/2020/06/16/race-gaps-in-covid-19-deaths-are-even-bigger-than-they-appear/.

Gutiérrez-Fernández, M. and Y. Fernández-Torres. 2020. "Does Gender Diversity Influence Business Efficiency? An Analysis from the Social Perspective of CSR." *Sustainability* 12(9): 3865.

Holroyd, Jules and Jennifer Saul. 2016. "Will the Teaching Excellence Framework Be Sexist?" *The Guardian*. Accessed August 31, 2020. https://www.theguardian.com/higher-education-network/2016/apr/04/will-the-teaching-excellence-framework-be-sexist.

Hornstein, Henry A. 2017. "Student Evaluations of Teaching are an Inadequate Assessment Tool for Evaluating Faculty Performance." *Cogent Education* 4: 1304016.

Jackson, Ronald L., II, and Rex L. Crawley. 2003. "White Student Confessions about a Black Male Professor: A Cultural Contracts Theory Approach to Intimate Conversations about Race and Worldview." *The Journal of Men's Studies* 12(1): 25-41.

Katopes, Peter. 2009. "The Business Model is the Wrong Model." *Inside Higher Education*. Accessed October 5, 2020. https://www.insidehighered.com/views/2009/02/16/business-model-wrong-model.

Kochhar, Rakesh. 2020. "Unemployment rose higher in three months of COVID-19 than it did in two years of the Great Recession." Fact Tank. Pew Research Center. Accessed August 27, 2020. https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2020/06/11/unemployment-rose-higher-in-three-months-of-covid-19-than-it-did-in-two-years-of-the-great-recession/.

Kornell, Nate, and Hannah Hausman. 2016. "Do the Best Teachers Get the Best Ratings?" *Frontiers in Psychology* 7: 570.

Lee, LaDoris J., Connolly, Manju E., Dancy, Melissa H., Henderson, Charles R., Christensen, Warren M. 2018. "A Comparison of Student Evaluations of Instruction vs. Students' Conceptual Learning Gains." *American Journal of Physics* 86(7): 531-5.

MacNell, Lillian, Adam Driscoll, and Andrea N. Hunt. 2015. "What's in a Name: Exposing Gender Bias in Student Ratings of Teaching." *Innovative Higher Education* 40: 291-303.

Miller, Elizabeth J. and Peter Seldin. 2014. "Changing Practices in Faculty Evaluation." *American Association of University Professors*. https://www.aaup.org/article/changing-practices-faculty-evaluation#.X6NuCVNKj2Q.

Misra, Joya, and Jennifer Lundquist. 2015. "Diversity and the Ivory Ceiling." *Inside Higher Ed.* Accessed October 8, 2020. https://www.insidehighered.com/advice/2015/06/26/essay-diversity-issues-and-midcareer-faculty-members.

Mitchell, Kristina M. W. and Jonathan Martin. 2018. “Gender Bias in Student Evaluations.” *PS: Political Science & Politics* 53(2): 270-4.

O’Meara, KerryAnn, Dawn Culpepper, Lindsey L. Templeton. 2020. “Nudging Toward Diversity: Applying Behavioral Design to Faculty Hiring.” *Review of Educational Research* 90(3): 311–48.

Peterson, David A., Lori A. Biederman, David Anderson, Tessa M. Ditonto, and Kevin Roe. 2019. “Mitigating Gender Bias in Student Evaluations of Teaching." *PLoS ONE* 14(5): e0216241. https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0216241.

Rasmussen, Katharina B. 2020. “Implicit Bias and Discrimination.” *Theoria*. https://doi.org/10.1111/theo.12227.

Rivera, Lauren A. and András Tilcsik. 2019. “Scaling Down Inequality: Ratings Scales, Gender Bias, and the Architecture of Evaluation.” *American Sociological Review* 84(2): 248-74.

Settles, Isis H., Martinque K. Jones, NiCole T. Buchanan, and Kristie Dotson. 2020. “Epistemic Exclusion: Scholar(ly) Devaluation that Marginalizes Faculty of Color.” *Journal of Diversity in Higher Education*. Advance online publication. https://doi.org/10.1037/dhe0000174

Settles, Isis H., NiCole T. Buchanan, and Kristie Dotson. 2019. “Scrutinized but Not Recognized: (In)visibility and Hypervisibility Experiences of Faculty of Color.” *Journal of Vocational Behavior* 113: 62-74.

Smith, Betty P. and Billy Hawkins. 2011. “Examining Student Evaluations of Black College Faculty: Does Race Matter?” *The Journal of Negro Education* 80(2): 149-62.

Spooren, Pieter, Frederic Vandermoeren, Raf Vanderstraeten, and Koen Pepermans. 2017. “Exploring High Impact Scholarship in Research on Student’s Evaluation of Teaching (SET).” *Educational Research Review* 22: 129-41.

Stroebe, Wolfgan. 2020. “Student Evaluation of Teaching Encourages Poor Teaching and Contributes the Grade Inflation: A Theoretical and Empirical Analysis.” *Basic and Applied Social Psychology* 42(4): 276-94.

_____. 2016. “Why Good Teaching Evaluations May Reward Bad Teaching: On Grade Inflation and Other Unintended Consequences of Student Evaluations.” *Perspectives on Psychological Science* 11(6): 800-16.

Turner, C. S. V., S. Myers, and J. Creswell. 1999. “Exploring Underrepresentation: The Case of Faculty of Color in the Midwest.” *The Journal of Higher Education* 70(1): 27-59.

U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. 2020. “The Condition of Education 2020 (NCES 2020-144),” Characteristics of Postsecondary Faculty. Accessed October 26, 2020. https://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2020144.

Uttl, Bob, Kelsey Cnudde, and Carmela A. White. 2019. “Conflict of Interest Explains the Size of Student Evaluation of Teaching and Learning

Correlations in Multisection Studies: A Meta-Analysis." *PeerJ* 7: e7225. http://doi.org/10.7717/peerj.7225.

Uttl, Bob, Carmela A. White, Daniela Wong Gonzalez. 2017. "Meta-Analysis of Faculty's Teaching Effectiveness: Student Evaluation of Teaching Ratings and Student Learning are Not Related." *Studies in Educational Evaluation* 54: 22-42.

Wagner, Natascha, Matthias Rieger, Katherine Voorvelt. 2016. "Gender, Ethnicity and Teaching Evaluations: Evidence from Mixed Teaching Teams." *Economics of Education Review* 54: 79-94.

Wallisch, Pascal and Julie Cachia. 2018. "Are Student Evaluations Really Biased by Gender? Nope, They're Biased by 'Hotness.'" *Slate*. https://slate.com/technology/2018/04/hotness-affects-student-evaluations-more-than-gender.html.

Weinberg, Bruce A., Masanori Hashimoto, and Belton M. Fleisher. 2009. "Evaluating Teaching in Higher Education." *The Journal of Economic Education* 40(3): 227-61.

Yunker, Penelope J. and James A. Yunker. 2003. "Are Student Evaluations of Teaching Valid? Evidence from an Analytical Business Core Course." *Journal of Education for Business* 78(6): 313-17.

Appendix

INFORMED CONSENT INFORMATION

KEY INFORMATION: Thank you for choosing to participate in this survey! I am Dr. Cecilea Mun, Assistant Adjunct Professor with the Department of Humanities at Bowling Green State University – Firelands. I am the principle investigator (PI) for this study, titled "SET Impact Study," which aims to study the impact of student evaluations of teaching on the professional careers of educators. Our interest is entirely scientific and we are only interested in your honest answers. You must be 18-70 years old to participate in this study, and we are only interested in responses from those who are or have been teachers in higher education. The survey should also take less than 10 minutes to complete. There is also no risk greater than those experienced in daily life, no personally identifying information will be recorded, so there is no need to worry about the confidentiality of your identity, and no compensation will be given for your participation.

PURPOSE: Student Evaluation of Teaching (SET) measures have been shown to be biased against women, as well as against non-English speaking instructors, and minority and especially Black faculty, to include these measures at all as part of a decision-making process is to allow the introduction of a systematically disadvantaging mechanism to play hiring, promotion, and salary increase

decisions. Yet, currently, there are no studies documenting the impact of SETs on the careers of teachers in higher education. The purpose of this study is to fill this gap in this area of research on SETs so stakeholders can have a concrete idea of the extent of the impact that SETs have had on the careers of instructors in higher education.

COMPENSATION: No compensation is provided for participating in this study.

PROCEDURE: Please clear your internet browser and page history before beginning this survey. Furthermore, some employers may use tracking software. So please complete the survey on a personal device in order to avoid privacy issues. This survey has a total of 21 questions, and it should take no more than 10 minutes to complete. You must also complete the survey in one sitting, and you will only be allowed one attempt to complete the survey. There is no right or wrong answer, we simply ask that you provide the most accurate information that they can. Whenever you need to, you can use the left arrow button at the bottom of the page to go back to previous sections. Use the right arrow button to go forward.

VOLUNTARY NATURE: Your participation is completely voluntary. You are free to withdraw at any time. You may decide to not answer a question by choosing the "I prefer not to answer" option, or discontinue participation at any time by closing your browser window, without explanation or penalty. Your decision whether to participate will not affect your relationship (if any) with Bowling Green State University.

ANONYMITY/ CONFIDENTIALITY PROTECTION: No personally identifying information, including IP addresses, will be collected, and all responses will remain completely anonymous. So there is no need to worry about the confidentiality of your identity. Any data collected with this survey will be stored online through Qualtrics and on the PI's personal computer, which is password protected, for an indefinite period of time. The PI will have unlimited access to the stored, anonymized, raw data.

BENEFITS: There are no direct benefits for you participating in the study. This study will help the academic community, and societies as a whole, better understand the impact of SETs on teachers in higher education.

RISK: The risk of participation is no greater than that experienced in daily life.

CONTACT INFORMATION: Dr. Cecilea Mun, Bowling Green State University – Firelands, cmun@bgsu.edu or cecileamun@icloud.com. Please contact me if you have any questions about the research or your participation in the research. You may also contact the Chair of the Bowling Green State University Institutional Review Board, at 419-372-7716 or orc@bgsu.edu, if you have any questions about your rights as a participant in this research. Thank you for your time and consideration.

IRB: This survey study has been approved by the Bowling Green State University Institutional Review Board, Bowling Green, OH.

By selecting the "I consent. Begin the survey." option below, you acknowledge the following statement:

> "I have been informed of the purposes, procedures, risks and benefits of this study. I have had the opportunity to have all my questions answered and I have been informed that my participation is completely voluntary. I agree to participate in this research."

Please choose of the following options in order to proceed:

- I consent. Begin the study.
- I do not consent. I do not want to participate in the study.

QUESTIONS

1. What is your age?
   - 18-21
   - 22-25
   - 26-30
   - 31-40
   - 41-50
   - 51-60
   - 61-70
2. What is your gender?
   - Male
   - Female
   - Gender Queer
   - Transgender
3. What is your race?
   - White, non-Hispanic
   - African-American or African
   - Hispanic-American, Latinx-American, Hispanic, or Latinx
   - Asian-American or Asian-Pacific Islander
   - Native American
4. Please select the option that best describes your disability status. Please select only one option.

I have a documented disability and I identify as a disabled scholar.
   - I have a documented disability and I do not identify as a disabled scholar.
   - I do not have a documented disability and I do not identify as a disabled scholar.
   - Other _____
5. Please select the option that best describes your political orientation. Please select all applicable options.

Very Conservative/Far Right
   - Conservative/Right

- Moderate
- Liberal/Left
- Very Liberal/Far Left
- Libertarian
- Anarchist
- Other_____

6. Please select the option that best describes your highest, non-honorary degree. Please select only one option.
United States doctorate (Ph.D.) or international equivalent

- United States masters (M.A., M.S., etc.) or international equivalent

7. Please select the option that best describes the year you were conferred with your highest, non-honorary degree. Please select only one option.
1928-1945

- 1946-1964
- 1965-1980
- 1981-1996
- 1997-2012
- 2012-2019
- 2020

8. Please select the option that best describes your current academic employment status. Please select all applicable options.
Full-time, tenure-track, or permanent academic position

- Full-time, non-tenure-track, or non-permanent academic position
- Part-time, permanent academic position
- Part-time, non-permanent academic position

9. What is the primary discipline of study in which you teach: [Enter text]
10. How many years have you been teaching as an instructor in higher education?

- 1-3 years
- 4-6 years
- 7-10 years
- 11-15 years
- More than 15 years

11. Do you ***believe*** that your student evaluations were the ***primary*** reason for why you were not hired for a teaching position during some point in your teaching career?

- Yes.
- No.
- I don't know/I prefer not to answer.

12. Do you ***believe*** that your student evaluations were ***at least one of the reasons*** why you were not hired for a teaching position during some point in your teaching career?

- Yes.
- No.
- I don't know/I prefer not to answer.

13. Do you ***believe*** that your student evaluations were a ***primary*** reason for why you were not given a promotion or salary increase during some point in your teaching career?

- Yes.
- No.
- I don't know/I prefer not to answer.

14. Do you ***believe*** that your student evaluations were ***at least one of the reasons*** why you were not given a promotion or salary increase during some point in your teaching?

- Yes.
- No.
- I don't know/I prefer not to answer.

15. **Have you ever been** denied a promotion or salary increase during some point in your teaching career, with your student evaluations being given as the ***primary*** reason?

- Yes.
- No.
- I don't know/I prefer not to answer.

16. **Have you ever been** denied a promotion or salary increase during some point in your teaching career, with your student evaluations being given as the ***at least one of the*** **reasons**?

- Yes.
- No.
- I don't know/I prefer not to answer.

17. Do you ***know*** of at least one person not being hired for a teaching position ***primarily*** because of their student evaluations?

- Yes.
- No.
- I don't know/I prefer not to answer.

18. Do you ***know*** of at least one person not being hired for a teaching position, with their student evaluations being given as ***at least one*** **of the reasons**?

- Yes.
- No.
- I don't know/I prefer not to answer.

19. Do you ***know*** of at least one person being denied a promotion or salary increase ***primarily*** because of their student evaluations?

- Yes.
- No.
- I don't know/I prefer not to answer.

20. Do you ***know*** of at least one person being denied a promotion or salary increase, with their student evaluations being given as ***at least one*** **of the reasons**?
21. Would you like to share any comments about this study or your response with the principle investigator: [Enter text]

Information about Authors

Hannah Marije Altorf was, until Autumn 2020, Reader in Philosophy at St. Mary's University, Strawberry Hill. She has written on the philosophical and literary works of Iris Murdoch and on different forms of philosophical dialogue. She is the author of *Iris Murdoch and the Art of Imagining* (Continuum 2008) and together with Mariëtte Willemsen she translated Iris Murdoch's *The Sovereignty of Good* into Dutch (Boom 2003). Currently, she is a student rabbi at Leo Baeck College and writing a book on public philosophy, tentatively called *Thinking in Public*. Contact: hannah.altorf@lbc.ac.uk.
Academia page: https://independent.academia.edu/HannahMarijeAltorf

Derek Egan Anderson teaches philosophy at Boston University. He received his Ph.D. from the University of Texas at Austin in 2016. Derek works in a wide range of research areas including philosophical logic, feminist epistemology, social epistemology, philosophy of race and gender, philosophy of language, and the history of analytic philosophy. He is currently writing a book entitled *Metasemantics, Intersectionality, and Truth in the Misinformation Age*, which argues for an account of objective truth for intractable disagreements about the meanings of politically contested words such as "racist" or "woman." Contact: deanders@bu.edu.
Website: https://deanderson.weebly.com/.

Helen Beebee is Samuel Hall Professor of Philosophy at the University of Manchester. She is the author of numerous books and articles, including *Hume on Causation* (Routledge 2006), *Free Will: An Introduction* (Palgrave Macmillan 2013) and, with Michael Rush, *Philosophy: Why it Matters* (Polity 2019). She has served as Director of the British Philosophical Association, President of the Aristotelian Society, and President of the British Society for the Philosophy of Science. With Jennifer Saul, she manages the British Philosophical Association/Society for Women in Philosophy UK 'Good Practice Scheme', aimed at improving the representation of women in philosophy.
Contact: helen.beebee@manchester.ac.uk.
Website: https://www.research.manchester.ac.uk/portal/en/researchers/helen-beebee(6da7f62b-cee9-4fd6-bff3-ba30cbe339c7).html.

Yasemin J. Erden was, until recently, a Senior Lecturer in Philosophy at St Mary's University, Strawberry Hill. This tenure included three years as the Programme Director for Philosophy. Her research covers philosophy of language, aesthetics, and ethics, and she has published work on metaphor, dialogue, and personal identity. Her interdisciplinary work in science and technology includes an article published recently in *Science and Engineering*

Ethics, titled "Correcting the brain? The convergence of neuroscience, neurotechnology, psychiatry, and artificial intelligence". She is Vice Chair of the Society for the Study of Artificial Intelligence and Simulation of Behaviour (AISB) and part of the Nanobubbles project, an ERC Synergy Grant funded research project, due to begin in 2021. In October 2020 she joined the SIENNA project at the University of Twente, working primarily in the 'human enhancement' work stream. Contact: y.j.erden@utwente.nl.
Website: https://people.utwente.nl/y.j.erden.

Simon Fokt divides his time between academic research and e-learning design. His research focuses on Aesthetics (classification of art; ontology and metaphysics of art and aesthetic properties) and Applied Ethics (drug use and cognitive enhancement), and has been published in journals such as *The British Journal of Aesthetics* and *Metaphilosophy*. As the director of TELdesign Limited, he specialises in the design and development of online courses, ranging from Masters degrees, through MOOCs, to short training courses. Simon is committed to promoting equality and diversity in the academia and is the creator and manager of the Diversity Reading List, diversityreadinglist.org. Contact: simonfokt@teldesign.net. Website: http://www.simonfokt.org/.

Nic R. Jones (they/them) is currently a PhD student at the University of Washington working on a dissertation with the tentative title *Building Bridges Across Traditions: The Ethics of Comparative Philosophy* and received their MA from the same institution. Their research interests are in feminist metaphilosophy, social philosophy, and the philosophy of transgender identities, with a focus on improving diversity and inclusion in academic philosophy. When not doing research or teaching at the university, they teach philosophy in elementary schools across the Seattle Public Schools district through the University of Washington Center for Philosophy for Children. Contact: nrjones9@uw.edu.

Ian James Kidd is a lecturer in philosophy at the University of Nottingham, having previously taught at Durham and Leeds. His research interests include topics in epistemology, ethics, and Indian and Chinese philosophy. He also works to try to improve the intellectual and demographic diversity of academic philosophy, including through work with the British Philosophical Association. Contact: Ian.Kidd@nottingham.ac.uk. Website: www.ianjameskidd.weebly.com.

Anne-Marie McCallion is a PhD student at the University of Manchester. She works closely with the Diversity Reading List and the In Parenthesis Project in their ongoing work to make philosophy a more inclusive discipline. Her thesis combines insights from feminist research in sociology and sociological practice theory in an attempt to better understand the norms and assumptions which

uphold 'philosophy' as a distinctive body of human knowledge. She examines the historical representation of women in philosophy and depictions of the 'feminine' throughout the philosophical cannon as a means of shedding light on how some seemingly value-neutral metaphilosophical norms are in fact poignantly gendered. The latter portion of her thesis is based on insights garnered from qualitative research she has conducted into undergraduate philosophers in the UK. Contact: anne-marie.mccallion@manchester.ac.uk.
Website:
https://www.research.manchester.ac.uk/portal/en/researchers/annemarie-mccallion(1bd277c5-7af5-467b-9560-3c22e00a5a4f).html.

Cecilea Mun is a Korean-American, disabled philosopher, and the founding director of the Society for Philosophy of Emotion, and the founding editor-in-chief of the *Journal of Philosophy of Emotion*. She specializes in the philosophy of mind and emotion, epistemology, philosophy of science, and feminist philosophy, and her publications include the edited collection, *Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Shame: Methods, Theories, Norms, Cultures, and Politics* (Lexington Books 2019), which was recommended by CHOICE, and the forthcoming monograph, *Interdisciplinary Foundations for the Science of Emotion: Unification without Consilience* (Palgrave Macmillan). You can also read more about her in her interview with philosopher Shelley L. Tremain in Dialogues on Disability. Contact: cecileamun@icloud.com.
Website: https://sites.google.com/site/muncecilea.

Karoline Reinhardt is currently Postdoctoral Research Associate at the International Center for Ethics in the Sciences and Humanities (IZEW) at Eberhard Karls University Tübingen, and speaker of the Academy College of the Heidelberg Academy of Sciences. She completed her PhD with a dissertation on *Migration und Weltbürgerrecht [Migration and Cosmopolitan Right]*. She held positions as Research Fellow and Scientific Coordinator at the Research Center for Political Philosophy in Tübingen, as Guest Lecturer in Ankara (2012) and in Graz (2015) and, more recently, as Visiting Scholar at Tulane University (2018). In a current Horizon 2020 research project, funded by the European Commission, she works on diversity concepts for algorithmic and automated decision-making. In a further research project, funded by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research, she focusses on philosophical questions relating to migration, integration and diversity management in urban quarters. Besides that she is preparing a Habilitation-project on heroism and supererogation. She held scholarships from the Studienstiftung (2007-2012, 2013-2017), the Heinrich Böll Foundation (2013-2016), the DAAD (2009-2010, 2013) and New York University (2009-2010). For her dissertation she was awarded the Kant-Advancement Award (2018) by the Immanuel Kant

Foundation and the Walter-Witzenmann-Prize (2019) by the Heidelberg Academy of Sciences. Contact: karoline.reinhardt@uni-tuebingen.de. Website: https://uni-tuebingen.de/einrichtungen/zentrale-einrichtungen/internationales-zentrum-fuer-ethik-in-den-wissenschaften/team/dr-karoline-reinhardt/.

Zahra Thani completed her BA with a double major in philosophy and sociology at Boston University in May of 2020. She is passionate about intersectional justice work, data-driven change, and the outdoors. Her research interests include social epistemology, black feminism, indigenous political thought, critical race theory, and gender and sexuality. Contact: zthani@bu.edu.

Rianna Walcott (she/her) is an LAHP-funded PhD candidate at Kings College London researching Black women's identity formation in digital spaces, and a graduate twice over from the University of Edinburgh. She co-founded projectmyopia.com, a website that promotes inclusivity in academia and a decolonised curriculum. She frequently writes about feminism, mental health, race and literature for publications including The Wellcome Collection, The Metro, The Guardian, The BBC, Vice, and Dazed. Rianna is co-editor of an anthology about BAME mental health - *The Colour of Madness* (Skiddaw Books, 2018), and in the time left over she moonlights as a professional jazz singer. Rianna tweets at rianna_walcott. Contact: riannawalcott.com.

About the Journal

Symposion was published for the first time in 2003, as *Symposion – Revistă de ştiinţe socio-umane (Symposion – A Journal of Humanities)*, with the purpose of providing a supportive space for academic communication, dialog, and debate, both intra and interdisciplinary, for philosophical humanities and social and political sciences. *Symposion: Theoretical and Applied Inquiries in Philosophy and Social Sciences* shares essentially the same purpose. Its main aim is to promote and provide open access to peer-reviewed, high quality contributions (articles, discussion notes, review essays or book reviews) in philosophy, other humanities disciplines, and social and political sciences connected with philosophy.

The old series published mainly Romanian papers. The new *Symposion* is an international journal, welcoming contributions from around the world written in English and French.

Although devoted especially to social philosophy and related disciplines (such as normative political theory, ethics, social epistemology, philosophy of culture, philosophy of technology, philosophy of economics, philosophy of education, and philosophy of law), the journal is open for original and innovative contributions in all philosophical fields and on all philosophy related topics from other humanities and social and political sciences. *Symposion* is also available for scholars developing interdisciplinary research, as long as it is philosophy related and/or it can open new approaches, pathways, or perspectives for (theoretical or applied) philosophical problems and philosophical thinking. Proposals for special issues devoted to a particular topic, theory or thinker are expressly invited.

The journal promotes all methods and traditions of philosophical analysis and inquiry (from ideal to critical or other types of non-ideal theory, from philosophical hermeneutics to logical and mathematical investigations of philosophical problems, from conceptual analysis to experimental philosophy, and from analytic to Continental philosophy). We also welcome papers on feminist philosophical (and philosophy related) topics, approaches or methods of inquiry.

From 2017, *Symposion* is published on a biannual basis, appearing at the end of May and November. It is published and financed by the "Gheorghe Zane" Institute for Economic and Social Research of The Romanian Academy, Iasi Branch. The publication is free of any fees or charges.

Author Guidelines

1. Accepted Submissions

The journal accepts for publication articles, discussion notes, review essays and book reviews.

Please submit your manuscripts and your proposals for special issues electronically at: symposion.journal@yahoo.com. Authors will receive an e-mail confirming the submission. All subsequent correspondence with the authors will be carried via e-mail. When a paper is co-written, only one author should be identified as the corresponding author.

There are no submission fees or page charges for our journal.

2. Publication Ethics

The journal accepts for publication papers submitted exclusively to *Symposion* and not published, in whole or substantial part, elsewhere. The submitted papers should be the author's own work. All (and only) persons who have a reasonable claim to authorship must be named as co-authors.

The papers suspected of plagiarism, self-plagiarism, redundant publications, unwarranted ('honorary') authorship, unwarranted citations, omitting relevant citations, citing sources that were not read, participation in citation groups (and/or other forms of scholarly misconduct) or the papers containing racist and sexist (or any other kind of offensive, abusive, defamatory, obscene or fraudulent) opinions will be rejected. The authors will be informed about the reasons of the rejection. The editors of *Symposion* reserve the right to take any other legitimate sanctions against the authors proven of scholarly misconduct (such as refusing all future submissions belonging to these authors).

3. Paper Size

The articles should normally not exceed 12000 words in length, including footnotes and references. Articles exceeding 12000 words will be accepted only occasionally and upon a reasonable justification from their authors. The discussion notes and review essays must be no longer than 6000 words and the book reviews must not exceed 4000 words, including footnotes and references. The editors reserve the right to ask the authors to shorten their texts when necessary.

4. Manuscript Format

Manuscripts should be formatted in Rich Text Format file (*rtf) or Microsoft Word document (*docx) and must be double-spaced, including quotes and

footnotes, in 12 point Times New Roman font. Where manuscripts contain special symbols, characters and diagrams, the authors are advised to also submit their paper in PDF format. Each page must be numbered and footnotes should be numbered consecutively in the main body of the text and appear at footer of page. Authors should use the author-date system for text citations and chicago style format for reference lists, as it is presented in *Chicago Manual of Style*.For details, please visit http://library.williams.edu/citing/styles/chicago2.php. Large quotations should be set off clearly, by indenting the left margin of the manuscript or by using a smaller font size. Double quotation marks should be used for direct quotations and single quotation marks should be used for quotations within quotations and for words or phrases used in a special sense.

5. Official Languages

The official languages of the journal are English and French. Authors who submit papers not written in their native language are advised to have the article checked for style and grammar by a native speaker. Articles which are not linguistically acceptable may be rejected.

6. Abstract

All submitted articles must have a short abstract not exceeding 200 words in English and 3 to 6 keywords. The abstract must not contain any undefined abbreviations or unspecified references. Authors are asked to compile their manuscripts in the following order: title; abstract; keywords; main text; appendices (as appropriate); references.

7. Author's CV

A short CV including the author`s affiliation and professional postal and email address must be sent in a separate file. All special acknowledgements on behalf of the authors must not appear in the submitted text and should be sent in the separate file. When the manuscript is accepted for publication in the journal, the special acknowledgement will be included in a footnote on the last page of the paper.

8. Review Process

Symposion publishes standard submissions and invited papers. With the exception of invited contributions, all articles which pass the editorial review, will be subject to a strict double anonymous-review process. Therefore the authors should avoid in their manuscripts any mention to their previous work or use an impersonal or neutral form when referring to it.

The submissions will be sent to at least two reviewers recognized as experts in their topics. The editors will take the necessary measures to assure that no conflict of interest is involved in the review process.

The review process is intended to be as quick as possible and to take no more than three months. Authors not receiving any answer during the mentioned period are kindly asked to get in contact with the editors. Processing of papers in French may take longer.

The authors will be notified by the editors via e-mail about the acceptance or rejection of their papers.

9. Acceptance of the Papers

The editorial committee has the final decision on the acceptance of the papers. Articles accepted will be published, as far as possible, in the order in which they are received and will appear in the journal in the alphabetical order of their authors.

The editors reserve their right to ask the authors to revise their papers and the right to require reformatting of accepted manuscripts if they do not meet the norms of the journal.

10. Responsibilities

Authors bear full responsibility for the contents of their own contributions. The opinions expressed in the texts published do not necessarily express the views of the editors. It is the responsibility of the author to obtain written permission for quotations from unpublished material, or for all quotations that exceed the limits provided in the copyright regulations.

11. Checking Proofs

Authors should retain a copy of their paper against which to check proofs. The final proofs will be sent to the corresponding author in PDF format. The author must send an answer within 3 working days. Only minor corrections are accepted and should be sent in a separate file as an e-mail attachment.

12. Reviews

Authors who wish to have their books reviewed in the journal should send them at the following address: *Symposion Journal*, Institutul de Cercetări Economice şi Sociale „Gh. Zane" Academia Română, Filiala Iaşi, Str. Teodor Codrescu, Nr. 2, 700481, Iaşi, România. The authors of the books are asked to give a valid e-mail address where they will be notified concerning the publishing of a review of their book in our journal. The editors do not guarantee that all the books sent will be reviewed in the journal. The books sent for reviews will not be returned.

13. Copyright & Publishing Rights

publish their papers but they are kindly asked to inform the Editorial Board of their intention and to provide acknowledgement of the original publication in *Logos & Episteme*, including the title of the article, the journal name, volume, issue number, page number and year of publication. All articles are free for anybody to read and download. They can also be distributed, copied and transmitted on the web, but only for non-commercial purposes, and provided that the journal copyright is acknowledged.

No manuscripts will be returned to their authors. The journal does not pay royalties.

14. Electronic Archives

The journal is archived on theRomanian Academy, Iasi Branch web site. The electronic archives of *Symposion* are also freely available on Philosophy Documentation Center , PhilPapers, Academia.edu, and CiteFactor.