Katrina Hutchison and Fiona Jenkins (editors)
Women in Philosophy: What Needs to Change?
New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013
ISBN 978-0-190932561-0

Margaret A. Crouch

Margaret A. Crouch is a professor of philosophy and section chair of the philosophy department at Eastern Michigan University. She is president of the North American Society for Social Philosophy (NASSP), treasurer of the Association for Feminist Ethics and Social Theory (FEAST), and editor of the *American Philosophical Association Newsletter on Feminism and Philosophy*. Her current research focuses on higher education, philosophy, and diversity. With Lisa H. Schwartzman, she co-edited a recent special issue of the *Journal of Social Philosophy* entitled *Gender, Implicit Bias, and Philosophical Methodology*. Her recent teaching interests are in interdisciplinary and global learning, especially about the environment.
mcrouch@emich.edu
http://www.emich.edu/historyphilosophy/faculty/crouch.php

Women in Philosophy: What Needs to Change? is a collection of articles addressing the question: "what it is about philosophy--the *über*-rational discipline--that has left it, along with several of the science, technology, and engineering (STEM) disciplines and a couple of the social science ones (notably economics and political science), lagging well behind a general trend toward improvement in women's representation and standing in academia"? (1) The articles focus on the under-representation of women generally, and are written by professional philosophers in Canada, the UK, New Zealand, Australia, and the US, about the institution of academic philosophy in their specific national contexts. An appendix provides useful empirical data on women in philosophy.

We are finally seeing explicit attention to the issue of what the academic discipline of philosophy *is*, that is, what it is as a *social institution*. Institutions are human creations, consisting of rules and norms.<1> Disagreement about what philosophy is, or should be, is everywhere--especially on blogs dedicated to philosophy. The recent exchange between Brian Leiter and Lucy O'Brien is a case in point. Leiter states, "If Dr. O'Brien is really embarrassed that Dr. Stern's hack work has been called out, then she can leave the profession and perhaps find a field where nonsense is permitted to pass in silence--there are many such fields in the academy, though philosophy is happily not one of them" (Leiter 2014). Here, Leiter is claiming the authority to define the field of philosophy, and defining it in ways that many may find problematic. Who has the authority to define philosophy, and on what grounds? How do we take philosophy from what it has been to what we believe it ought to be?

Though a good deal of attention has been paid to the under-representation of women in the profession in recent years, it seems to have taken the work of some of the few women who have reached the philosophical elite to get traction for this issue in philosophical journals, publications, and professional philosophical associations. One of the most significant contributors to this new focus is Sally Haslanger. Haslanger's article, "Changing the Ideology

and Culture of Philosophy: Not by Reason (Alone)" (Haslanger 2008), was a major catalyst for change, since she herself is widely recognized for her work in mainstream analytic philosophy, and she is on the faculty at MIT. The significance of her article is demonstrated by the fact that nearly every subsequent paper on the topic of women in philosophy has cited hers. This is true of the papers in the volume currently under review; only one does not include Haslanger's paper in its list of references.

The editors acknowledge their own debt to Haslanger's article by quoting its opening sentences in their introduction:

> There is a deep well of rage inside of me. Rage about how I as an individual have been treated in philosophy; rage about how others I know have been treated; and rage about the conditions that I'm sure affect many women and minorities in philosophy, and have caused many others to leave. (1; Haslanger 2008, 210).

They frame the articles included in the volume as "careful reflection on how to make sense of such experience, how to find an articulation of its form, structure, causes, and potential remedies" (1). For example, Haslanger acknowledges the importance of the numbers, the statistics about women in philosophy, but says that they don't tell the full story (Haslanger 2008, 210). Not only do numbers not tell the whole story, but without an understanding of the gendered nature of institutions, they misrepresent the story. This has the consequence that efforts to try to increase the number of women in philosophy are bound to fail. Susan Dodds and Eliza Goddard go behind the numbers in "Not Just a Pipeline Problem: Improving Women's Participation in Philosophy in Australia." According to the "pipeline model, all we have to do is increase the numbers of the target group coming into the pipeline and, over time, there will be growth in the relative participation of the target group" (145). They argue that the "pipeline model" is faulty because it assumes that the pipeline is gender neutral when it is not: "it falsely assumes that educational and academic environments do not reflect gendered institutional and social structures" (148). Hutchison's own article, "Sages and Cranks: The Difficulty of Identifying First-Rate Philosophers," is in part inspired by Haslanger's recounting of her experience in graduate school, when a professor in effect denied that women could be first-rate philosophers. This leads Hutchison to question the gendered and raced nature of the notion of a "first-rate philosopher" in academic philosophy. Haslanger raises the issue of unconscious bias and of schemas and how they can affect the way that women and racial minorities are perceived and treated in philosophy by their graduate professors and by their colleagues. Jennifer Saul takes up the most recent research in social psychology on implicit bias and stereotype threat in her contribution, "Implicit Bias, Stereotype Threat, and Women in Philosophy." According to Saul, "women's progress in phil is impeded by the presence of . . . implicit bias and stereotype" (39). Saul points out the ways in which implicit bias affects the evaluation of women's work in philosophy, as evaluators rate women's presentations and achievements lower than men's. Stereotype threat, which involves the internalized belief on the part of members of groups against which there are biases that these biases are true, creates a vicious circle for women in philosophy. One believes herself to be less good at philosophy than her male colleagues, and this leads her to perform less well on exams and on other "tests" of her philosophical ability, thus confirming her own and others' biases.

Women in Philosophy has many strengths, including: the variety of theoretical perspectives; the combining of theoretical analysis with practical recommendations; and attention both to the need for more women in philosophy and the need for a broader conception of philosophy. Furthermore, in many articles, both the claim that women are under-represented in philosophy and the explanations for that under-representation are empirically grounded in statistics and psychology. An appendix includes numerical data comparing males and females in philosophy in Anglophone countries. The main weaknesses of the anthology are that it is limited to Anglophone philosophers, and that it does not substantially address any groups under-represented in professional philosophy except women, thereby obscuring the fact that the men and women under discussion here are overwhelmingly white, heterosexual, and able-bodied.<2> I shall have more to say about this below.

In what follows, I shall summarize a sampling of the articles contained in the volume, and comment on their theoretical approaches and practical recommendations.

In her contribution to the volume, "Implicit Bias, Stereotype Threat, and Women in Philosophy," Saul explains how implicit bias and stereotype threat affect women in philosophy. Saul does an admirable job of supporting the claim that implicit bias and stereotype threat are explanations for why more women do not pursue philosophy as a profession. She also shows in detail the ways in which both practically affect women in the field. Saul also includes numerous suggestions for how to mitigate the negative effects of implicit bias and stereotype threat at all levels of a philosopher's progression in the field--how to break down or block the effects of stereotypes, for example. This article represents only a small part of what Saul has done for women in the profession, both in her scholarly work and in her activity in professional organizations.

Fiona Jenkins, in "Singing the Post-discrimination Blues: Notes for a Critique of Academic Meritocracy," maintains that "feminist critique needs to take on another form than accepting slow progress toward the perfectability of the meritocratic idea" (99). She argues that meritocracies, in philosophy and elsewhere, are inherently conservative and serve to preserve the *status quo*. They are sustained by the faith that "elite status is conferred by merit" (83). However, "if what *counts* as 'success' or 'excellence' is currently generated and inhabited by a predominantly male cohort, then this constitutes a powerful mechanism of *affirmation* of subsisting institutional arrangements . . ." (83). In other words, the criteria of excellence in philosophy have been determined by those within the top echelons of the discipline: white males. The discipline then develops by rewarding those who meet these criteria--usually white males--thereby reproducing both the gendered constitution of the philosophical elite and the criteria for evaluation of excellence. The question why the upper echelons tend to be white males is seen, according to these criteria of excellence, to be external to the discipline itself, whereas the criteria for excellence are considered to be objective and neutral, to apply to an individual regardless of his or her gender, race, disability, or nationality. But feminists and others should question why these criteria for excellence in philosophy tend to select white males at much greater rates than any other social group. Might it not be something about the criteria themselves, created as they are by white males? I cannot do justice to the complexity and depth of Jenkins's argument here, but suffice it to say that she convincingly articulates the ways in which "merit" in philosophy is deeply gendered, and suggests strategies challenging the norms of the discipline to

allow greater pluralism, broader conceptions of excellence, and nongendered standards for what constitutes worthwhile philosophy.

Katrina Hutchison, in "Sages and Cranks: The Difficulty of Identifying First-Rate Philosophers," focuses on "whether women are at a disadvantage in terms of establishing credibility (and thus authority) in contemporary analytic philosophy" (104). After exploring the notion of authority, she argues that there are some circumstances in which philosophers are said to be authoritative, and articulates the way in which such authority is understood. She further argues that members of some groups might not be considered authoritative in philosophy for illegitimate reasons, and offers suggestions for how this might be challenged. In particular, she advocates rendering philosophical methodologies more explicit, and teaching these methods to students more explicitly. Finally, she points out the tension between authority in philosophy and philosophy's traditional role as critique of authority. She recommends that pluralism in philosophy is more likely to ensure that the authority within philosophy is subject to critique. Because there is no independent standard for the subject matter of philosophy, as opposed to some other disciplines, people typically rely on other indicators of authority in determining whether a given philosopher is an authority. Because the stereotypes of women tend to downplay their credibility, women are less likely to be seen as exhibiting those indicators, and so less likely to be seen as authorities in those places where philosophers are authorities, for example, the classroom, or among other philosophers.

Catriona Mackenzie and Cynthia Townley, in "Women In and Out of Philosophy," take on another "article of faith" in the profession: that success equals getting a tenure-track job in philosophy. They argue that this is a very narrow conception of success, and that we ought to look beyond this to the benefits of a philosophy education for students, their communities, and society as a whole. Rather than focus solely on getting women and members of other under-represented groups into graduate school and into academic employment, they examine all philosophy education, from the student who takes one or two philosophy courses to the PhD employed outside philosophy. Mackenzie and Townley then describe some of the implications of this perspective for the teaching of philosophy and for the conception of philosophy as a discipline: undergraduate teaching should be more inclusive of non-Western, feminist, race, and indigenous philosophies; mentoring should be the task of the whole department, not just the members of under-represented groups already on staff. Like most of the articles in this collection, this one recognizes that making philosophy more inclusive means changing philosophy, not the few members of under-represented groups who enter the field. The authors express concern for philosophy as an academic discipline in the context of shifting conceptions of higher education. If it does not change and make its benefits more available and clearer to those outside philosophy, it may not survive.

Justine McGill, in "The Silencing of Women," uses speech act theory, as developed by Langton and West in response to the US debate over pornography as speech, to explain how women in philosophy are silenced. According to Langton and West, pornography is a language game that silences women. Because of the specifically sexist implicit presuppositions of the pornography language game, women are not considered players in this game: "Insofar as the consumption of pornography of the type described by Langton and West can be understood as involving a conversation, this is a conversation between men, and one of its most fundamental

presuppositions is that women are not the kind of creatures that are fit to take an active part in it" (207). Women are silenced by pornography. McGill claims that a similar argument can be made about the language game that constitutes academic philosophy. For most of the history of Western philosophy, philosophy was a conversation among men; women were presumed to lack that which is fundamental to engaging in philosophy. Though few would state this outright today, even if they believed it, it haunts the discipline of philosophy still. Furthermore, gender differences in intuitions evoked by thought experiments, where the correct intuition is not held by a woman student, as well as "[i]magery and examples chosen by philosophers to illustrate their theoretical ideas are another point at which signals are emitted regarding who is granted standing to participate in philosophical conversation" (210). That women are not properly *heard* in philosophy is further supported by the fact that when anonymous review is used, more women's papers are accepted for publication. To eliminate the silencing effects of philosophy, McGill recommends "patiently and persistently exposing the unexamined presuppositions that structure these practices, as well as the harm they do in inhibiting both the success of women in philosophy and the free development of ideas" (213).

Michelle Bastian's "Finding Time for Philosophy" provides a thought-provoking, interdisciplinary final article to the anthology. Bastian claims that what needs to change in philosophy in response to its exclusion of women is "the particular experience of time that informs the culture of philosophy" (215). Bastian applies social conceptions of time, and their relation to exclusionary practices, borrowed from sociology and anthropology, to the under-representation of women in philosophy. "I suggest that part of what supports the exclusionary culture of philosophy is a particular approach to time, and thus that changing this culture requires that we also change its time" (215-16). The exclusionary approach takes time as objective and as "an all-encompassing, linear, immutable succession of moments" (216). It assumes that time is the same for everyone. However, Bastian argues that this notion of time is "only available to certain types of idealized persons and as a result should be read not as an objective account of how things are, but as a normative and political discourse that is supportive of some while excluding many others" (216). Bastian selects three different moments when the linear notion of time in relation to philosophy shows how women are excluded from philosophy. First, following Battersby's "critique of the Kantian conception of space for its male bias," she critiques Kant's notion that time is universally experienced for human beings. Embodiment matters for one's experiences of space and of time, and one's philosophy of space or time can be expected to reflect one's particular embodiment. Second, she addresses the clash between the schemas of "woman" and "philosopher," focusing on the "iterative, rather than linear, character of identity" (216). Last, she addresses philosophy's time, its history and future, "to question the way women are continually refused a place in the flow of philosophy's time" (216).

Though there is some degree of diversity in this anthology in that it addresses women in philosophy in different national contexts, in several ways the anthology is not nearly diverse enough. It does not address sufficiently the ongoing difficulty of just who "women" includes in texts such as this. This ongoing problem in feminist scholarship has been addressed explicitly by many philosophers. The failure to include an article explicitly on this issue, or by an author addressing women in philosophy other than white, middle-class women, is a serious deficit. Unfortunately, it perpetuates the very issues that the articles discuss with regard to groups other

than white women. How can a small portion of the population of English-speaking philosophical world represent all of the English-speaking philosophical world?

In addition, there is no mention of people outside the Anglophone countries from which the authors come. This is also a serious omission. Both the concern about equity and the concern about the good of the discipline demand attention to philosophers and philosophy outside Britain and its former colonies.

Only one of the articles addresses the question why women *should want to* enter the field of academic philosophy (Mackenzie and Townley). This is a crucial question, and one that women of color have addressed profoundly (see, for example, Dotson 2012). Yet none of the articles mentions undergraduate teaching as a reason for entering the profession. This is revealing about the people whose voices are being heard on this subject, and the replication of the hierarchy of professional philosophy, and higher education generally, that many of these articles perpetuate. One major reason for nonwhite males and women to enter the field is to make sure that students know that there is something other than what they are taught by their white male teachers that counts as philosophy. This raises the question why we want women and other under-represented groups in philosophy. Is it for their sake or ours?

This is an important volume for philosophy as an institution. It raises many difficult questions for the institution of philosophy with regard to its own internal injustices and what is being left out of academic philosophy itself. The articles also offer many useful suggestions for how we might do things differently, so that more women want to be philosophers and help to change the discipline so that it can more closely resemble what it has long claimed to be: a universal discipline, inclusive of human thought.

Notes
1. According to John Searle, for example, institutions are composed "of constitutive rules of the form *X counts as Y in C*." In addition, institutions encompass norms for creating and justifying hierarchies (Searle 2005, 10).
2. One article, in particular, uses ableist language extensively (see McGill).

References

Dotson, Kristie. 2012. How is this paper philosophy? *Comparative Philosophy* 3 (1): 3–29.
Haslanger, Sally. 2008. Changing the ideology and culture of philosophy: Not by reason (alone). *Hypatia* 23 (2): 210–23.
Leiter, Brian. 2014. *Brian Leiter's Nietzsche blog*. **http://brianleiternietzsche.blogspot.com/2014/09/tom-sterns-silly-review-of-oxford.html** (accessed September 21, 2014).
Searle, John R. 2005. What is an institution? *Journal of Institutional Economics* 1 (1): 1–22.