MUSINGS

Changing the Ideology and Culture of Philosophy: Not by Reason (Alone)

SALLY HASLANGER

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. Most of the time I suppress this rage and keep it sealed away. Until I came to MIT in 1998, I was in a constant dialogue with myself about whether to quit philosophy, even give up tenure, to do something else. In spite of my deep love for philosophy, it just didn't seem worth it. And I am one of the very lucky ones, one of the ones who has been successful by the dominant standards of the profession. Whatever the numbers say about women and minorities in philosophy, numbers don't begin to tell the story. Things may be getting better in some contexts, but they are far from acceptable.

OUTRIGHT DISCRIMINATION

The situation for women in philosophy has been changing over the past several decades and every woman's experience is different. I was in graduate school at Berkeley from 1979 to 1985. I have held tenure-track or tenured positions in five schools. I am now a full professor. But the rank of full professors is broad and there are many women, such as my wonderful colleague and role model, Judith Thomson, who entered the profession decades before me when the situation was very different from and, to my mind, much worse than mine. So, there has been progress. However, there are trends that have continued throughout my time in the profession, because I see evidence of them today.

Why aren't there more women of my cohort in philosophy? Because there were very few of us and there was a lot of outright discrimination. I think a lot of philosophers aren't aware of what women in the profession deal with, so let me give some examples. In my year at Berkeley and in the two years ahead of me and two years behind me, there was only one woman each year in classes of eight to ten students. Eventually, the other four women dropped out, so I was the only woman left in five consecutive classes. In graduate school, one of my teachers told me that he had "never seen a first rate woman philosophy and never expected to because women were incapable of having seminal ideas." I was the butt of jokes when I received a distinction on my prelims, since it seemed funny to everyone to suggest I should get a blood test to determine if I was really a woman. In a seminar in philosophical logic, I was asked to give a presentation on a historical figure when none of the other (male) students were, later to learn that this was because the professor assumed I'd be writing a thesis on the history of philosophy. When I was at Penn as a junior faculty member and told a senior colleague that I was going to be married (to another philosopher, Stephen Yablo, then at the University of Michigan), his response was, "Oh, I'm so sorry we'll be losing you." That was in 1989.

I mention these anecdotes (and there are many more) not in order to gain sympathy or because they are especially egregious, but because this sort of thing still happens all the time. When I was at the University of Michigan in the mid-1990s there were three consecutive graduate student classes with no women. When this was raised as an issue, the majority of faculty hadn't even noticed it. In many departments, women find themselves alone on faculties or in graduate school cohorts. Virtually all minorities in philosophy find themselves solos. Surviving as a solo is a painful and difficult process I'll discuss more below.

Moreover, blatant discrimination has not disappeared. I've witnessed plenty of occasions when a woman's status in graduate school was questioned because she was married, or had a child (or had taken time off to have a child so was returning to philosophy as a "mature" student), or was in a long-distance relationship. For some reason, this never seems to be an issue for men. I know many women who have interests and talents in metaphysics and epistemology who have been encouraged to do ethics or history of philosophy. I've been contacted as recently as this year by graduate student women's groups and individual women to help them strategize about problems they are facing as women in their programs, problems that include alleged sexual harassment, a hostile or chilly climate, and various sorts of unfairness. I am contacted by deans who are reevaluating tenure decisions of women (and minorities) to comment on norms and practices in philosophy that seem to have disadvantaged the tenure candidate in question. And I never cease to be amazed.

My point here is that I don't think we need to scratch our heads and wonder what on earth is going on that keeps women out of philosophy. In

my experience, it is very hard to find a place in philosophy that isn't actively hostile toward women and minorities, or at least assumes that a successful philosopher should look and act like a (traditional, white) man. And most 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. Many who recognize that something about choices is relevant have explained to me that women choose not to go into philosophy because they have other options that pay better or have more prestige. This may be true for some, but this doesn't sound like the women I know who have quit philosophy (and it sounds a lot more like the men I know who have quit). Women, I believe, want a good working environment with mutual respect. And philosophy, mostly, doesn't offer that.

Unconscious Bias, Schemas

Schemas provide the currently most compelling model for understanding unconscious bias (Valian 1998). The basic idea of a schema is: "A mental construct that, as the name suggests, contains in a schematic or abbreviated form someone's concept about an individual or event, or a group of people or events. It includes the person's or group's main characteristics, from the perceiver's point of view, and the relationship among those features" (Valian 1998, 104). Schemas work somewhat like hypotheses in that "they give rise to expectations. They interpret behavior in ways that are consistent with the schema rather than inconsistent with it. They supply explanations where data are missing or ambiguous. They direct the search for new information. They make subtyping a likely way of handling exceptions (106). However, schemas are often more primitive than hypotheses and are more like a patterned set of dispositions in response to one's circumstances. Schemas are also typically intersubjective in a way that an individual's hypothesis is not.

Problems arise when schemas clash. Virginia Valian uses the example of women in the military (1998, 122–23). The schema for women has us assume that women are life-giving and nurturing. The schema for the military, of course, has us assume that troops are life taking and aggressive. In such cases, it is difficult to accept anything that seems to be an instance of both schemas. The deeper the schemas, the more difficult it is to tolerate a conflicting case.

Schema clashes are resolved in a number of ways (Valian 1998, chap. 6). For example:

- Disappear the difficult cases, by ignoring them or forcing them out.
- Find ways to pretend that false assumptions of the schemas are preserved. (Successful women philosophers are really men/masculine after all!)

- Allow exceptions to the rule (tokenism), but maintain barriers to limit access.
- Change the schemas.

As feminist philosophers have been arguing for decades, the familiar dichotomies with which Anglophone philosophy defines itself map neatly onto gender dichotomies—rational/emotional, objective/subjective, mind/body; ideals of philosophy—penetrating, seminal, and rigorous; and what we do—attack, target, and demolish an opponent, all of which frame philosophy as masculine and in opposition to the feminine. These ideals and dichotomies are not only gendered but also are relevant in considering challenges philosophers of color face; like women, non-whites are often perceived through schemas that represent them as less rational and more identified with nature and the body than whites. Even if one consciously rejects these assumptions, they may continue to work at the schematic level.

Where might we look for the impact of schemas? There are a variety of studies in psychology and economics in which identical term papers, CVs and the like, are presented to subjects with characteristic male or female, black or white names attached. The results show that evaluators—regardless of sex—respond differently, depending on whether the name is a man's or woman's, or is associated with blacks or whites (Bertrand and Mullainathan 2004; Goldin and Rouse 2000; Steinpreis, Anders, and Ritzke 1999). This, plausibly, is an example of schemas at work. Understandably, we interpret information believed to be about women differently from how we interpret the same information when it is believed to be about a man. But in the workplace, this tendency can constitute evaluation bias. Psychological research (Valian 1998, chap. 14) has shown that schemas are more likely to govern evaluation when:

- The response is quick, rushed, or given insufficient time for consideration.
- Full attention is not given to the task.
- Decisions are not held accountable.
- The individual being evaluated is a member of a group that is a significant minority in the field, with the tipping point somewhere around 25 to 30 percent.
- The evaluator is unaware of common errors concerning reasoning about the group so does not correct for them.

Such evaluation bias is potentially relevant to admission to graduate school, applications for jobs and fellowships, teaching evaluations (Superson 1999), and tenure and promotion decisions.

But, one might think, there are objective criteria for evaluation. Rarely are there two job candidates who are exactly equivalent. The better candidate's

CV will have, for example, more articles in peer-reviewed journals. However, drawing on data concerning the gender of authors in seven highly rated philosophy journals over the past five years, I'd like to suggest that given the current state of things in philosophy, we should consider the possibility that there is evaluation bias even in the peer-review process. Based on the limited data I've gathered (for example, I don't have data on submission), I cannot argue that evaluation bias *is* playing a role in publication in philosophy. Rather, I offer the data to make two points. First, the numbers suggest that women are underrepresented in what are considered "top" journals, and we should investigate why the numbers are so low. Second, the hypothesis that women's work is not being fairly considered provides a vivid example of how deep evaluation bias can be. If women's CVs are not being fairly evaluated in comparison with men's, and if the work they produce that provides lines on a CV is also not being fairly evaluated, then there is a double disadvantage: your work is unfairly judged, so it is harder to be published in prestigious journals; but even when you succeed in establishing equivalent credentials to a man, your CV is "read" as inferior. The same accumulation of disadvantage is relevant to the situation of minorities in philosophy as well.

This is not to say that we should put our thumb on the scale for women (and minorities) and not judge the credentials of all candidates based on a sincere evaluation of their merits. It does mean, however, that even if there is due care in making decisions at one stage, this may not be enough because there may have been insufficient care at an earlier stage. We must root out bias at every stage.

DATA

Appendix 1 includes a table that summarizes data on the gender of authors of articles and discussions (not including book reviews) over the past five years in *Ethics, Journal of Philosophy, Mind, Nous, Philosophical Review, Philosophy and Public Affairs,* and *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research.* Appendix 2 includes a table indicating the editors and associate editors of the seven journals surveyed. Appendix 3 includes a table that indicates the number of men and women tenured or tenure-track faculty in the "Top 20" graduate departments in the country as ranked by Brian Leiter's *Philosophical Gourmet.*[1]

Although the data mostly speak for themselves, a few things are worth noting. First, of course, many other excellent journals are excluded from the data. My goal was to begin with what are considered the high-ranking journals by the dominant analytic paradigm, the journals that hold the most power within the profession. Because some schools have a list of "preferred" peer reviewed journals that plays a role in evaluating cases for tenure and promotion, we should be especially attentive to the statistics for such journals.

Second, in many ways, the overview numbers don't give the full picture. For example, considering only "articles" over the past five years, and excluding "discussions," 95.5 percent of those in Mind were by men.

Third, it may be that women do not submit work to these journals in large numbers. But if that is so, we need to ask why. Below, I raise the issue of stereotype threat, under which individuals look for low-risk strategies. But low-risk strategies may also bring low rewards. If women avoid submitting work to the journals that distribute prestige, then this is a problem.

Fourth, although, on average, 19 percent of the faculty in the top twenty graduate departments are women, only Ethics comes close to having published this percentage of articles by women over the past five years. If, as is commonly suspected, more women specialize in ethics than in other fields (it would be good to get data to confirm or deny this suspicion), even this achievement by Ethics cannot be counted as a clear success.[2]

Fifth, although in philosophy it is often thought that women "just aren't as interested" in philosophy of mind, philosophy of language, and such, this does not sit well with the fact that women seem to be doing well in linguistics, cognitive psychology, and cognitive science more generally.[3] For comparison, we looked at data from two journals in related areas, again considering main articles over the past five years, and the results were:

Mind and Language: 26.5% articles by women
Linguistics and Philosophy: 24.4% articles by women

We didn't collect data on the representation of women faculty in top departments in these fields. A more thorough study should make such comparisons.

Sixth, it is appalling to me that there is so little feminist work published in the journals examined, even in journals focused on ethics and political philosophy. Note that there has been more work on race and racism published in these journals over the past five years (though very little of this) than work on feminism. Given the numbers of women philosophers working on feminism, this is striking. Jennifer Saul has told me that she sees a pronounced difference in the responses she gets from journals to her work in philosophy of language compared to her feminist work. Her papers in philosophy of language are always sent out to referees; her feminist submissions, however, are routinely sent back without having been considered by a reviewer. What is going on here?

I was not in a position to gather data systematically on the peer-review process at the seven journals considered. However, I was able to collect some information through journal websites and by contacting members of a few of the editorial boards. Based on this, it is clear to me that there is a wide variation among philosophy journals in how anonymous the review process is. For example, according to a member of the editorial board of the Journal of Philosophy: "JP doesn't do blind reviewing at all and it doesn't send papers to outside

referees, but does almost all reviewing in house." The author guidelines on the *Analysis* website note:

> All papers are initially read by the Editor. Some are accepted, perhaps after amendment or resubmission, by the Editor himself and a proportion are then sent out to referees. When papers are sent on, the referees receive "blinded" versions of the papers if copies are sent in that form. And referees' reports are sent on to the authors if the referees agree, though in the interests of speed referees may give brisk verdicts for the Editor's eyes only. (Blackwell Publishing 2007)

I was also told an anecdote about a prestigious journal at which a student worker made the "first cut" before papers were masked for review. *Philosophy and Public Affairs*, however, seems to have a thoroughly anonymous referee process whereby a managing editor masks all papers before sending them on to the editor. The editor rejects a substantial number without sending them to referees, but referees do not know the author of the papers they review unless they see it published in the journal.

Given that schemas are more likely to have a bearing on evaluation when decisions are "brisk" and when they are not held accountable, more research needs to be done on the refereeing policies *and practices* of journals in the profession.

Antifeminist "Consensus"

The virtual absence of feminist philosophy in the journals considered stands in stark contrast to the acceptance of feminist work in other humanities and social sciences. Philosophy is, and is generally perceived to be, reactionary in this respect. Given that many departments require (or at least encourage) women to teach feminist philosophy classes (even if they have no interest or background in the area), there is a significant number of women who are qualified to publish feminist work.

Can schemas help us understand the attitudes in the profession toward feminist philosophy? As we saw before, the schema for philosophy presents it as hyperrational, objective, and masculine. The schema for feminist philosophy surely associates it with women and femininity and codes it as emotional, political, and non-objective. Again, we have a conflict of schemas that makes it difficult for philosophy and feminism to seem compatible. (The lack of feminist philosophy in the seven journals considered does not itself demonstrate a bias against feminist philosophy. It is plausible that little feminist work is submitted to these journals. Support for my claim that there is an antifeminist bias in philosophy comes from many sources, including personal experience and reports by others. The journals data are just another sign that something is wrong.)

CLIMATE, SOCIAL NORMS

If philosophy is governed by gender/race schemas, then it makes sense that this affects the climate.

- Philosophy departments often are hypermasculine places. They are:
  - competitive, combative, (non-nurturing),
  - highly judgmental,
  - oriented toward individual accomplishment, individual intelligence, and agency,
  - hostile to femininity.
- Philosophy departments often are socially dysfunctional places. It is a familiar joke that (male) philosophers are poorly socialized. Women, socially, are responsible for maintaining good social dynamics. Because successful social interaction is very difficult in philosophy departments, women either are burdened by this sense of responsibility or are alienated by the atmosphere where ordinary social norms are not recognized.

It is difficult for women to feel "at home" in a hypermasculine environment since it requires sublimating potentially important aspects of identity; because some of the specific elements of masculinity that are emphasized in philosophy are also associated with whiteness, the same is true for minorities. Women and minorities who succeed are good at adjusting to or managing dysfunctional social environments or are able to conform to a milieu governed by certain masculine norms. Of course, climate is also an issue for men who aren't comfortable with highly masculinized norms (or with the breakdown of broader social norms).

In contexts where there are strong masculine gender (and race) schemas at work, stereotype threat becomes an issue for women and minorities. Substantial research in psychology (Steele 1997; Maass and Cadinu 2003) has shown that "negative stereotypes are in part responsible for the underperformance of minority members in stereotype-relevant domains. More specifically, those tasks for which negative association exists between the task domain and the minority group will represent a threat for minority members; their preoccupation with inadvertently confirming the stereotype will in turn lead to a decrease in performance" (Maass and Cardinu 2003, 244).

In addition to minority status in a negatively stereotyped domain, predictors for stereotype threat include:

- Strong identification with domain.
- Strong identification with social group under threat.
- Sense of internal control over performance.
- Possibly "high stigma consciousness."

This suggests that individuals in philosophy who identify as women (or as non-white), have a strong investment in philosophy, and also identify as agents responsible for their cognitive performance (as is encouraged by the norms of the profession) are highly susceptible to stereotype threat.

Although there is some controversy over how stereotype threat works, the mechanisms seem to include:

- Anxiety.
- Intrusive thoughts.
- Shift towards caution (in response to expected evaluation bias).
- Decreased performance expectancy, that is, agents expect less of themselves.
- Disengagement.

Even in cases where there is little or no stereotype threat, there are effects similar to stereotype threat when an individual is solo in a group, that is, if they are the only member of their social group (Sekaquaptewa and Thompson 2002, 2003). Solo status has been shown to have an impact on both learning and performance. An important point to note is that the effects of solo status are situational: they disappear when solos are in non-solo contexts. This shows that it is not a chronic deficit.

In my experience, solo status often results in my feeling tongue-tied and "stupid," even to this day. I watch myself unable to follow an argument or clearly articulate my question on an utterly familiar topic. We all know what it is like to struggle with complex ideas when overcome with anxiety. What is less evident is how gender and race imbalance creates contexts in which it is more difficult for women and minorities to perform up to their potential. People are unlikely to want to pursue fields in which they regularly feel "stupid," where they can tell that they are underperforming. But given the combination of stereotype threat and, all too often, solo status, this is likely a familiar experience for women and people of color in philosophy.

The good news is that there are actions that can diminish stereotype threat (Maass and Cadinu 2003, 268–70):

- Provide evidence that the stereotype doesn't hold, or introduce a counter-stereotypical role model.
- Activate alternative group identification that is not negatively stereo-typed, by, for example, not activating gender or race identification in evaluation contexts and encouraging identification with other (not negatively stereotyped) categories.
- Avoid casting evaluation as testing ability in the stereotyped domain. Logic tests do not capture logical intelligence.
- Encourage incremental view of intelligence as malleable and capable of expanding with hard work.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. We need more data on various issues. This is important both to develop plausible accounts of gender and race bias in philosophy so we know what we're dealing with, and also because data-gathering encourages self-monitoring and allows us to hold institutions accountable.
   • Pipeline: number of women and minorities in majors, graduate programs and at every rank.
   • Journals: gender (and race?) breakdown of submissions, percent of submissions sent to referees, given revise and resubmit, accepted, published.
   • Referee policies for journals: How anonymous are they?
   • Neighboring disciplines.

2. Disrupt the bias against feminism. Established feminists should:
   • Submit work to mainstream journals.
   • Use the terms *feminism/feminist* in our writing.
   • Cite feminist work; urge mainstream colleagues to read and reference feminist work in their areas.
   • Challenge false assumptions about feminist work; encourage forums for educating mainstream colleagues/students.
   • Encourage men to teach and write on feminism.

3. Disrupt schemas.
   • Do not disappear, ignore, or redescribe women and minorities in philosophy. Become visible, make others visible.
   • Make the schemas for gender, race, class, and philosophy explicit and defuse them.
   • Don't acquiesce in the masculinization of philosophy spaces. Find ways to discourage antisocial behavior. Encourage a sense of belonging.
   • Broaden the philosophical understanding of intelligence.

4. Organize!
   • Establish contexts where women philosophers and philosophers of color are in the majority.
   • Establish contexts where feminist philosophy and philosophy of race is valued.
   • Establish systems for accountability and support.
   • Learn about broader institutional (college/university/nationwide) resources that may be useful.

Appendix 1:
Representation of Women in 7 Philosophy Journals, 2002–2007

Journal	Authors	Female	Percentage
Ethics	114	22	19.30
Journal of Philosophy	120	16	13.33
Mind	141	9	6.38
Noûs	155	18	11.61
Philosophical Review	63	7	11.11
Philosophy and Phenomenological Research	212	26	12.26
Philosophy and Public Affairs	93	13	13.98
Overall	898	111	12.36

Journal	articles	feminist	% feminist	race	% race
Ethics	105	3	2.86	3	2.86
Journal of Philosophy	113	0	0.00	2	1.77
Noûs¹	140	0	0.00	1	.71
Philosophy and Public Affairs	78	4	5.13	3	3.85
Overall	296	7	2.36	8	2.70

NB: Mind, Philosophical Review, and Philosophy and Phenomenological Research did not publish any
    articles with feminist or race content in the past five years (as far as I can tell).
¹The one article on race published in Noûs during the five years in question was missed in our
initial count. This is the corrected data.

Appendix 2:
Editors and Associate Editors for 7 Philosophy Journals, Spring 2007

	Editor	Associate Editor or Advisory Editor		
		Total #	Total # female	
Ethics	John Deigh	9	2	
Journal of Philosophy	*	n/a	n/a	
Mind	Thomas Baldwin	3	0	
Noûs	Ernest Sosa	13	1	
Philosophical Review	Nick Sturgeon, Brian Weatherson	14	3	**
Philosophy and Phenomenological Research	Ernest Sosa	56	9	***
Philosophy and Public Affairs	Charles Beitz	5	2	****
TOTAL		100	17	

*Faculty of Columbia Philosophy editors: Bernard Berofsky, Akeel Bilgrami, John Collins, Arthur C. Danto, Kent Greenawalt, Patricia Kitcher, Philip Kitcher, Isaac Levi, Wolfgang Mann, Mary Mothersill, Frederick Neuhouser, Christopher Peacocke, Carol Rovane, and Achille C. Varzi, plus four male consulting editors.

**The editorship rotates among faculty at Cornell University. Currently, Nick Sturgeon and Brian Weatherson are editors; the rest of the department constitutes the associated editors: Richard Boyd, Andrew Chignell, Matti Eklund, Gail Fine, Carl Ginet, Harold Hodes, T. H. Irwin, Michelle Kosch, Scott MacDonald, Richard W. Miller, Michele Moody-Adams, Sydney Shoemaker, Henry Shue, and Nicholas Silins.

***No associate editor. Numbers are for editorial board.

****Plus five male advisory editors.

Appendix 3:
Gender Ratios in Tenure-Track Positions in Philosophy Departments

		Leiter #'s	%	Confirm Women	Confirm Total	%	Full Professor Women	Tenured Associate Women	Untenured Associate/Assistant Women
1	NYU	2/18	11%	2	18	11%	1		1
2	Rutgers	4/29	13%	4	29	13%	2	2	
3	Princeton	4/19	21%	4	21	19%		1	3
4	Michigan	1/22	4%	1	22	4%	1		
5	Pittsburgh[1]	4/29	13%	4	19	21%	1	1	2
6	Stanford	7/24	29%	6	24	25%	1	1	4
9	Harvard	5/17	29%	4	16	25%	4		
9	MIT	2/11	18%	2	11	18%	2		
9	UCLA	3/17	17%	3	17	17%	1	1	1
10	Columbia	8/22	36%	8	22	36%	4		4
11	UNC	3/22	13%	3	22	13%	2		1
12	Berkeley	4/16	25%	3	16	18%	2	1	
13	Arizona	6/21	28%	6	21	28%	1	3	2
14	Notre Dame	5/41	12%	6	42	12%	2	2	2
15	UT-Austin	2/27	7%	2	27	7%	2		
16	Brown	3/13	23%	3	13	23%	2	1	
17	Cornell	3/14	21%	3	14	21%	2	1	
18	USC	3/19	15%	3	19	15%	1	2	
19	Yale	6/17	35%	6	17	35%	4	1	1
20	UC Irvine	4/21	19%	4	21	19%	3		1
			19.5%	77	412	19%	38	17	22

[1]These numbers reflect a correction based on information helpfully provided by Eduard Machery.

NOTES

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    1. http://www.philosophicalgourmet.com.

    2. Thanks to Marilyn Friedman for pointing this out in discussion at the APA panel convened by the Committee on the Status of Women at the APA Central Division's 2007 meeting, where I first presented this data.

    3. Thanks to Sylvain Bromberger for this point and for the suggestion that we look at journals in linguistics and cognitive science.

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