

Guest Editor's Introduction: "Philosophy and its Borders"

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The theme of this special issue is "Philosophy and its Borders." It originated in a 2016 Canadian Society for Women in Philosophy (CSWIP) conference at Mount Allison University, in which participants were asked to think about the question of working across borders in philosophy. Four of the papers in this special issue emerged from the conference itself. Following the conference, a broader Call for Papers went out to solicit additional contributions. Six papers were chosen from submissions to this additional call. I want to thank Susan Dimock, the Anglophone Editor of *Dialogue*, for her support and guidance, and especially to thank Jill Flohil, the Editorial Assistant, for her extensive work organizing and shepherding the issue along. The conference itself was largely funded by a Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council Connections Grant.

The title of the special issue is deliberately ambiguous: it refers to borders within the discipline, created by different philosophical traditions, and borders around the discipline, created by separating philosophy from other realms of inquiry. It also refers to borders that keep some ideas and people out. These three kinds of borders are, of course, related. They can all be connected to an implied notion of 'real philosophy.' Not recognizing a given tradition as 'real philosophy' entails not recognizing its practitioners as 'philosophers.' Not recognizing a certain set of issues, methods, or problems as relevant to 'real philosophy' may push those who work on them into other disciplines, or exclude them from the outset.¹

¹ This is discussed in Dotson, "How is this Paper Philosophy?" and Salamon "Justification and Queer Method, or Leaving Philosophy."

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This issue, and the 2016 conference, are dedicated to exploring the ways in which these borders may be crossed, bridged, or challenged. This includes the advantages to doing so as well as risks and hazards that may be involved. I discuss each set of advantages and risks in turn.

Crossing borders within the discipline requires drawing different philosophical traditions together. This has the potential to shed light on each. When drawing different traditions together we are often in a good position to get at the underlying assumptions and unexamined beliefs involved in each tradition's framework, as we try to figure out how they might be able to speak to each other.² Philosophers crossing borders in this sense have more theoretical resources and can often perceive more sides of a problem than can philosophers who work only within any given one philosophical tradition. (And, as discussed further below, border crossing can also work toward inclusion of more people within the project of philosophy.³)

One challenge of this kind of border crossing is the danger of misrepresenting one of the traditions, in the process of translating its concerns and concepts into the terms of reference of the other.⁴ This is a significant concern for both ethical and scholarly reasons. A misrepresentation of a lesser-known tradition can take hold and even dominate the general understanding. This creates a responsibility to get our representation of others' views right, particularly when representing the views of traditionally underrepresented groups who have often been the subject of stereotype and misconception.⁵ Translating everything into the terms of reference of the dominant tradition also creates a missed opportunity for challenging the assumptions and habits of that tradition.

It can simply seem daunting to learn additional traditions, especially when they don't initially seem to have natural points of connection with one's own. Often, however, there are points of connection to be found, once one goes looking. Bryan Van Norden, who maintains a bibliography on his website

² This is discussed in this issue by Julianne Chung and by Jonathan O. Chimakonam and Victor Clement Nweke.

³ This argument is made in Megan Mitchell's paper in this issue.

⁴ This is discussed at length in Julianne Chung's paper in this issue.

⁵ In Canada, there has been a recent push by universities to include Indigenous content and voices in course curricula, as a response to the calls of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. This is not an easy process, as non-Indigenous philosophers may not have the knowledge to differentiate between authentic and inauthentic teachings; further, many important Indigenous stories and teachings are not written down, except perhaps in anthropological work. Chelsea Vowel discusses the general issue of recognizing authentic Indigenous stories in *Indigenous Writes*, 92-99. The American Philosophical Association has a regular newsletter on Native American and Indigenous Philosophers; the most recent issue has an article by Andrea Sullivan-Clarke on "Tips for Teaching Native American Philosophy."

of “Less Commonly Taught Philosophies,”⁶ points out that it is important to remember when undertaking such work that no one philosopher is definitive of everything in their tradition.⁷ He notes that if one tries to compare, for example, the ancient Confucian Mengzi with Descartes, they may seem to be doing something entirely different. However, comparing Mengzi with another philosopher from the Western tradition, the ancient Stoic Epictetus, yields an intriguing connection around the question of the best way to live. Meanwhile, Descartes can be linked to the Buddhist thinker Dharmakīrti around epistemological and metaphysical questions.⁸

Further, there is precedent for finding these connections. Van Norden notes that Western philosophy used to be more cosmopolitan, pointing out by way of example the interest in and knowledge of Chinese philosophy amongst European Jesuits, Leibniz, Wolff, and the court of Louis XV of France.⁹ Peter Park points out that, until the 1780s, historians of philosophy included African and Asian philosophy, and points to an older historiographical tradition that included Moses, the Egyptians, Zoroaster, and others.¹⁰ Finding opportunities to explore these connections is thus not a departure from ‘real philosophy’ as it has been practiced, but a continuation or perhaps even a restoration of it.

Crossing borders to other disciplines may be similar in some ways, in that it involves learning a new set of habits and practices. It can be intimidating to feel that we must learn the methodology and guiding principles of other disciplines (on top of the empirical content), even though doing so provides the advantage of increased theoretical resources and opportunities to discover the unexamined assumptions within our habitual ways of proceeding.

In her 2017 Presidential Address to the Canadian Philosophical Association (CPA), Sandra Lapointe argued for the value of philosophers collaborating with non-philosophers. While noting that the idea of collaborating in interdisciplinary teams may not come naturally to many trained in the humanities, she argued that part of the problem with the traditional individualistic model of humanistic research is that, “Cognitive and conative limitations being what they are, it might be easier (and more tractable) to downplay theoretical complexities in order to tailor issues to manageable, individual or at least sub-disciplinary sizes.”¹¹ As solo researchers, we are inadequate to the complexity and nuances of the problems confronting us.

⁶ Van Norden, “Readings on the Less Commonly Taught Philosophies (LCTP).”

⁷ Van Norden, *Taking Back Philosophy*, 30. I am using ‘their’ as a singular, generic, gender-neutral pronoun.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 31.

⁹ Van Norden, *Taking Back Philosophy*, 19-20.

¹⁰ Park, *Africa, Asia, and the History: Racism and the Formation of the Philosophical Canon, 1780-1830*, 1-2.

¹¹ Lapointe, “Presidential Address.”

There are remaining challenges to crossing this boundary. We may feel that we have to excessively simplify our disciplinary knowledge and methods in communicating with non-philosophers. As a Hegel scholar, I confess to some grumpiness when theorists in other disciplines over-simplify Hegel or misrepresent some aspect of his thought (usually, but not always, the dialectic). A former student who works on Wittgenstein keeps a whole collection of misrepresentations of Wittgenstein that show up in other fields. I could alleviate my own grumpiness by never again speaking to anyone who is not a Hegel scholar, but that is probably not a desirable way to go on; the way forward is to engage my colleagues in other fields and talk with them, sharing what I think is most exciting and fruitful about the areas in which I work, not bemoaning their ignorance of my pet favourites. This distillation is a similar process to what we must also do when we teach beginning students philosophy, and so seems a natural part of our endeavour, not a corruption of it.

On the other side of the same coin, another problem is borne out of what seems to be a particular advantage of philosophy: philosophy can address itself to a wide range of topics, turning them into “Philosophy of X.” But if it does not engage with the research being done in those subject areas outside of philosophy, it risks unhelpfully re-inventing the wheel, or worse, again arrogantly misrepresenting the topic.

The solution to this may go beyond mere collaborative opportunities and into a development of appropriate intellectual humility.¹² One method is to participate in the conferences of other disciplines, so that we have the chance to hear directly from them. Building relationships of trust with researchers in other fields is valuable here as well, since they may then be in a good position to correct misapprehensions. It is also good, as Vanessa Lehan’s paper in this issue argues, to seek out researchers in other fields who do not merely confirm and reinforce our preconceptions.

Hearing directly from people with different sets of knowledge points us toward the third kind of border. It is important that we pay attention to who is included within philosophy itself, and who is excluded.

Several of the papers in this special issue discuss the lack of diversity within the discipline. In Canada, as of the 2010-2011 academic year, women held

¹² Eyja Brynjarsdóttir, in this issue, criticizes the emphasis on intellectual humility within the discipline, arguing that it needs to be balanced with self-confidence, and that it is important in teaching not to give too much negative criticism without balancing it with encouragement. My suggestion about appropriate intellectual humility with respect to what researchers in other disciplines can teach us is entirely compatible with her statements. Regular trust-building conversation and collaboration with researchers in other disciplines may turn out to be a valuable source of self-confidence.

31.19% of tenure-track positions in philosophy.¹³ Members of visible minorities represented 5.5% of the profession, and Aboriginal Canadians 0.3%. The number of disabled faculty members¹⁴ ranged between 0.3% and 2% between 2001 and 2011. This data is drawn from a yearly survey that used to be completed by departmental chairs, and so is limited insofar as faculty members are not required to provide their racial identification or disability status to department chairs. A newer equity climate survey conducted in 2017 sought responses from individual faculty members and students directly; its final report is not yet publicly available. It focused primarily on experiences and perceptions of discrimination and departmental climate, and so should be a useful resource once released. As the survey included undergraduate and graduate students, the demographics do not reflect hiring in the field. Based on a study of departmental websites, however,¹⁵ the gender ratios for tenured and tenure-track faculty were found to be 72-28% (male-female), and for instructors 80-20% (male-female).¹⁶ These numbers do not reflect the Canadian population as a whole.¹⁷

Philosophy itself is improved epistemically and methodologically with a wide range of perspectives and experiences. Broader inclusion can help to get at unexamined assumptions. It can also point us to new questions.

As Alison Stone points out, for example, the emergence of feminist philosophy introduced a range of new topics and concepts to philosophy. While not all women in philosophy need be feminist philosophers, increasing numbers of women in philosophy meant that some topics started to reveal their relevance and importance. One of the examples she lists is birth, noting that “Compared to death, philosophers have neglected birth. Feminists ask how women experience pregnancy and birth and what the fact that we are all born reveals about

¹³ Doucet and Beaulac, “Report of the CPA Equity Survey.” This data, from the CPA’s Equity Committee, draws on a survey filled out by departmental chairs, which uses the language of the four designated groups in Canada’s *Employment Equity Act*. I am following the *Employment Equity Act*’s categorization in my summary of this data.

¹⁴ I am using what is known as ‘identity-first’ language in describing disability (e.g., ‘disabled person,’ ‘disabled philosophers,’ ‘disabled students’) instead of the ‘person-first’ language (e.g., ‘person with a disability’) used by style guides, government agencies, and most disability organizations. Many scholars within Disability Studies, as well as many activists, use identity-first language; Tanya Titchkosky provides a helpful critique of the use and limitations of person-first language in “Disability.”

¹⁵ Nelson, “CPA Gender Report.”

¹⁶ In terms of people’s self-reporting on the survey, 2.55% reported a gender other than male or female.

¹⁷ U.S. data is available from the APA, in “Demographic Statistics on the APA Membership, FY2014 to FY2016.”

the nature of the self and human life.”¹⁸ Not all women experience pregnancy, of course, and not all those who have experienced pregnancy are women, but it is a significant possibility for many women in a way that it had not been for male philosophers through philosophy’s history. It shows up as a concern, as something that must be considered within a life, and thus as something with significant philosophical salience.

It is therefore important to look at patterns of who is left out of the discipline, and so what other kinds of concerns and perspectives are omitted. In order to do this, it is important to ask what assumptions get made about who’s ‘cut out’ for philosophy, and which of these assumptions become self-fulfilling prophecies when those people are denied access, support, and resources. For example, as Shelley Tremain argues, the “assumption that disabled people are biologically or naturally disadvantaged—that is, physiologically inferior or naturally flawed” is connected to the assumption that their exclusion from the workforce and academia is likewise ‘natural’; the low numbers of disabled philosophers mean that there are few to challenge these assumptions about disability, and so the pattern is reinforced.¹⁹

The PhDisabled blog maintained by Zara Bain addressed a range of ways in which academics with disabilities and chronic illnesses encounter obstacles in academia’s systems and practices. In one post, concerning the importance of providing accessibility information up front for events, she notes that:

In truth, I don’t really want to talk about access any more. It is exhausting, and it is boring. It represents a distraction from the more important, more interesting things I have think about, like grappling with questions of justice and the polity and ideology and social epistemology. And yet, merely being a disabled philosopher with differentiated access needs means that I can’t help but need to talk about access if I want to participate in philosophical spaces.²⁰

What would it take to make providing accessibility information as commonplace and basic to conference organizers as remembering to order the coffee? We display a range of assumptions about who belongs in philosophical spaces when we do not prepare for different kinds of access needs.

The 2016 CSWIP meeting held a workshop on accessibility, with Shelley Tremain, Jay Dolmage, and Anne Comfort, the director of Accessibility and Student Wellness at Mount Allison’s Meighen Centre. The purpose of the workshop was to raise awareness of the ways in which, regardless of our

¹⁸ Stone, *An Introduction to Feminist Philosophy*, 3.

¹⁹ Tremain, *Foucault and Feminist Philosophy of Disability*, 3. This argument is developed in detail in the first chapter of the book, and more briefly in “Disabling Philosophy.”

²⁰ Bain, “On the Dearth of Disabled Access Information in Philosophical Events.”

philosophical orientation or personal experiences with disability, we can and should create inclusive spaces for our colleagues and students.

This does not just concern access to conferences and events, but also a range of assumptions and attitudes that obstruct full participation by disabled academics.²¹ In describing the reasons that disabled students are prevented from getting needed supports, Dolmage writes, “This begins with the idea that the university is the space for society’s most able, physically, mentally, and otherwise—not a place to admit to any weakness or challenge.”²² Asking for support, accommodation, or a change in practice is often met with the response, implicit or explicit, that someone just doesn’t belong.

This implication—that needing support, accommodation, or a shift in practices means that someone does not belong—extends beyond disability. Experiences of harassment or sexual assault in the academy can be met with a similar response; as Sara Ahmed notes, they can be met with indifference, “or if they do speak they are heard as complaining ... When she is heard as complaining she is not heard.”²³ As a discipline and within academia more broadly we have only begun to acknowledge who has been excluded in this way.²⁴

In a recent article, Yolonda Y. Wilson gives several anecdotes of members of underrepresented groups being told, more or less explicitly, that they do not belong in philosophy. As Wilson notes, “members of underrepresented groups have strong incentives not to view themselves as ‘victims’ or potential victims who are thin-skinned, complaining, or in need of coddling.”²⁵ In her own case, “I responded to the general sense of not belonging by avoiding the department as much as possible, simultaneously protecting myself from such slights and also reinforcing my own sense of isolation from and within the philosophy department.”²⁶

²¹ A wide range of examples can be found via the Twitter hashtags #academicableism (created by Zara Bain @zaranosaur in 2014 in response to a *Guardian* article about graduate students’ ‘mental health strategies,’ which promoted individual self-management over challenging structural and attitudinal obstacles to degree completion) and #EverydayAcademicAbleism (created by Kim Sauder @crippledscholar in January 2018 in response to a professor bullying a disabled student at the University of Guelph, pointing out that such an incident was not an aberration from the norm).

²² Dolmage, *Academic Ableism*, 96.

²³ Ahmed, *Living a Feminist Life*, 203.

²⁴ Saul, “Philosophy has a Sexual Harassment Problem.”

²⁵ Wilson, “How Might We Address the Factors that Contribute to the Scarcity of Philosophers Who Are Women and/or of Color?,” 855.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 854.

Working for one's access creates an additional burden of labour for those who do not suit the academy's expectation. As Bain goes on to note:

I have long since disabused myself of the naive belief that I might be able to be a philosopher first, and a body that "requires accommodation" second. We must all work to be here, no doubt, but some of us make others of us work that much harder to do so, whether they know it or not.²⁷

The task of noticing who's not present, and of improving access, should not be the job of underrepresented groups in the discipline alone. There are real concerns of burnout and an uneven distribution of additional academic and emotional labour at stake. Ahmed describes this work as "pushy" work, "because you have to push against what has already been built."²⁸ This can be frustrating when it is work that members of already underrepresented groups are expected to do on top of the task of researching, grant-writing, and teaching.

Ahmed notes that "Access can be the formal requirements you might need to meet to enter a world. But accessibility and inaccessibility are also a result of histories that congeal as habits or shared routines."²⁹ The transformation of those habits and shared routines should become a shared responsibility.

This means that, while it is true that these problems are present for other disciplines as well, it is also up to philosophers to address these problems at home. We know the practices, expectations, and norms of our own discipline best. Our departments, professional societies, and formal and informal networks of philosophers represent a place to start, with concrete and practical changes.

Provided philosophers recognize this responsibility, there are resources already within the discipline for educating and informing oneself. The CPA's Equity Committee organizes a panel at the CPA Annual General Meeting every year on equity and diversity issues in the profession; these panels tend to alternate each year between more theoretical vs. more practical talks on opening up the profession, and provide useful opportunities to discover areas and issues of which one might be ignorant. The American Philosophical Association (APA) has released a draft *Good Practices Guide*, aimed at helping "philosophers create and maintain an academic community based on mutual respect, fairness, inclusivity, and a commitment to scholarship and learning."³⁰ A public comment period for this guide is currently open, and so it is a good time to reflect on what would be good for the profession. The APA likewise has a set of resources online for syllabi, recommended texts, information on institutional demographics,

²⁷ Bain, "On the Dearth of Disabled Access Information in Philosophical Events."

²⁸ Ahmed, *Living a Feminist Life*, 109.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 109.

³⁰ American Philosophical Association, "Good Practices Guide."

and so forth.³¹ CSWIP has made available its Working Group on Accessibility's 2016 report and guidelines for conference organization, and will be revising and updating this document in Fall 2018.³²

These resources are there for anyone who takes the time to consult them. As Jonathan Chimakonam and Victor Nweke's article in this issue points out, many believe philosophy to be a universal discipline. That aim is compromised if there are groups of people who experience barriers to participation: philosophy loses the benefit of their experiences, perspectives, and contributions. Megan Mitchell's paper in this issue argues that, given the resources currently available even to non-specialists, it is desirable to diversify our introductory syllabi by including non-Western content (noting, of course, the need to do so carefully and respectfully, with attention to context). On her argument, introductory syllabi signal both what philosophy is and who engages in it.³³

Who is perceived to be part of 'real' philosophy connects to what 'real' philosophy is perceived to be, and brings us back to the beginning. None of my comments about the three areas of border-crossing are intended to suggest that doing so is simple or trivially easy. The papers in this special issue, which address all three kinds, explore the challenges of border-crossing as well as the arguments about the merits of doing so.

One of the limitations of this special issue is that we did not get any French-language submissions, despite a Call for Papers that appeared in English and French. Similarly, the 2016 CSWIP conference that formed the initial basis of this special issue had no French-language submissions, despite also having a bilingual Call for Papers. CSWIP will, however, be hosting two panels at the June 2018 CPA Annual Congress in Montreal, one in French and one in English. It is an ongoing question of how best to attend to this particular border.

Four of the papers in this issue (those by Stacey Goguen, Abigail Klassen, Vanessa Lehan, and Lissa Skitolsky) are developed versions of presentations given at the 2016 conference. The papers that are the result of the further Call for Papers are those by Eyja Brynjarsdóttir, Antoine Cantin-Brault, Jonathan Chimakonam and Victor Nweke, Julianne Chung, Megan Mitchell, and Robin Zheng.

The opening papers of the special issue focus on borders between philosophical traditions. Julianne Chung examines the value of cross-cultural philosophical work. She discusses the challenge of integrating non-Western and Western (usually analytic) philosophies, given significant differences in style and approach. In order to address this challenge, she uses a case study: the Daoist text, the *Zhuangzi*, and the contemporary philosophical theory of fictionalism.

³¹ American Philosophical Association, "Resources on Diversity and Inclusiveness."

³² Canadian Society for Women in Philosophy Accessibility Working Group, "Guidelines for Conference Hosting."

³³ Mitchell, "The Dimensions of Diversity."

By exploring what a fictionalist reading of the *Zhuangzi* might look like, and similarly what the *Zhuangzi* might contribute in turn to fictionalism, she concludes that weaving together methods in this way opens up beneficial possibilities for pursuing philosophical ideas. This interweaving also points to the importance of including articles on Chinese philosophy in generalist journals more often, so that these connections can occur more often.

Antoine Cantin-Brault traces a missed opportunity to make a real connection between traditions, insofar as the practitioner of one tradition, Karl Löwith, student of Heidegger, failed to appreciate the thought of the Japanese philosopher Nishida Kitarô. Cantin-Brault documents how Löwith could only understand Nishida's ideas from within the framework of a Western philosophical conception of history. Cantin-Brault describes each of their theories, and posits that a richer common ground could have been found had Löwith taken the ontological possibilities in Nishida's thought more seriously.

The failure to take non-Western philosophy sufficiently seriously is also addressed by Jonathan Chimakonam and Victor Nweke. They argue that there is a systematic marginalization of African philosophy insofar as the philosophical curriculum in Africa continues to be predominantly Western, faculty are still primarily trained at Western or Western-oriented universities, and scholars elsewhere do not often take up African philosophical traditions themselves. Chimakonam and Nweke explore several options for changing philosophical curricula, arguing ultimately for one based on an intercultural philosophy, called 'conversational philosophy,' in which no single tradition would have prominence, and philosophical concepts would be studied from the perspectives of many different traditions.

The next paper, by Abigail Klassen, takes a somewhat different focus from the first three. Klassen's article does not speak specifically to the boundaries between philosophical traditions, but to the categories and self-understandings of communities or social groups in general. She notes that there will be differences of opinion between groups about what a given social classification should mean; acknowledging and respecting this involves relativism. The interaction between different groups and their self-understandings can provide opportunities to encounter alternative descriptions of a given social concept. Encounters with these alternative descriptions may lead to reflection on one's habits and practices, and to social change. Relativism in this lived social context thus would not mean 'anything goes,' but is part of the give and take of the social world. Given this, Klassen argues, worries surrounding relativism need not rule out projects of ameliorative social constructionism.

The next two articles explore the way philosophy might or should work alongside other disciplines. The first, by Robin Zheng, shifts to exploring a perceived boundary between philosophy and the social sciences. Zheng argues that philosophers should not shy away from empirical questions about social inequality, since given their tools and training they are in a good position to explore and unearth normative commitments guiding perceptions of which

factors matter in giving causal explanations. She argues that philosophers should work in dialogue with empirical researchers to identify background assumptions, understand normative commitments, and help reshape moral expectations.

Meanwhile, Vanessa Lehan warns that just because work is interdisciplinary does not necessarily mean it will insightfully avoid pitfalls of existing preconceptions and assumptions. Lehan notes the way experimental psychology studies on human reasoning drew norms of reasoning from existing philosophical work on logic. When these studies found a disconnect between normative modes of reasoning and what people actually did, this reinforced some philosophers' belief that everyday people are bad reasoners. Other work, however, has shown that, while people often do poorly on tests involving probability or uncertainty, they do much better when problems are presented in terms of frequencies. Lehan encourages philosophers to engage with empirical work, but to make sure that, when they do so, they engage with diverse researchers, and seek out data that does not reinforce their prior assumptions.

Lissa Skitolsky's contribution demonstrates by example the value of drawing together the experiences of different communities. She discusses the concept of mourning and how the right to mourn interrupts and disrupts too-easy narratives of emancipation, which locate oppression and violence in the past, as in post-racial narratives, gender transition narratives, or narratives of prisoner 'reform.' The pervasiveness of mourning in the contexts of racism, heterosexism, and incarceration is important in thinking through solidarity and coalition-building, while yet acknowledging the differences amongst the groups. Preemptive mourning and a sense of mourning-without-end serve as a form of resistance to the normalization of violence against marginalized groups.

The last three papers in this special issue return to the discussion of professional philosophy and explore the ways in which people may feel more or less welcome within the discipline. Megan Mitchell argues that, given the various factors that shape our introductory philosophy curricula, there is good reason to ensure that we have at least some non-Western content. She draws on scholarly work that notes that many students of colour experience alienation at predominantly white universities, and that exclusive focus on the Western canon of philosophy can contribute to this, insofar as this has primarily been carried out by white philosophers (or philosophers understood as white). Mitchell suggests that, given the range of resources now available, we should aim at more diverse introductory syllabi. She works through a number of objections to this project, such as worries about tokenism, and acknowledges that this is just a start to rethinking our practices. She also notes that more diverse syllabi are likely to benefit all of our students, in terms of development of critical thinking and perspective-taking.

Stacey Goguen also asks about what accounts for underrepresentation in philosophy, this time focusing on gender. Goguen explores and assesses several hypotheses for women's underrepresentation. Discussing the hypothesis that women's low participation rates might be due to benign differences in the

interests of men and women, she notes that it can be used to reach conflicting recommendations: it might imply that we should develop more inclusive curricula so as to be of interest to women too, or that we should simply accept it as a permissible difference in tastes (and focus our energies rather on cases of outright discrimination). Goguen draws on empirical research about stereotype threat to explore how some women might feel excluded from philosophy, and so come to dis-identify with it; this would warrant intervention. While this might be risky, she invokes the notion of philosopher as troublemaker, drawing from George Yancy. This might open up ways for individuals to identify with philosophy even as they seek to challenge it.

The final paper continues many of these same themes. Brynjarsdóttir opens by noting that what initially drew her to philosophy was its wide open scope, in which anything can be examined philosophically. This can cause us to be insecure about the borders of philosophy, however, leading us to engage in various forms of gatekeeping, which affects both who gets to do philosophy and the range of acceptable topics and methods. She discusses some of the methods of gatekeeping and practices associated with them, and notes how these prevent philosophy from fulfilling its promise of openness.

As she concludes,

A discipline represented by a homogenous elite using a narrow set of standards to congratulate one another on their outstanding intelligence does not fulfil its potential as a discipline dedicated to deep and urgent questions, nor does it reflect the full capacities of the human mind. This does not show philosophy at its finest.³⁴

The papers in this special issue invite us to explore a different conception of philosophy, in which we are open to challenges and rethinking our ingrained assumptions and habits, by taking seriously what others may have to teach us. Borders on this view need not be sites of exclusion, but of relationship.

³⁴ Brynjarsdóttir, “Against a Sequestered Philosophy.”

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