

qui ne s'appellent pas Heidegger. À cet égard, on s'étonne par exemple qu'un des fleurons des études hölderliniennes, le commentaire d'*Urtheil und Seyn* publié par Dieter Henrich, ne soit jamais mentionné – signalons au passage que l'entrée « Dieter Henrich » de l'index est fautive : la mention indiquée (p. 123, n. 3) renvoie en fait à une occurrence du prénom d'Henrich Steffens. Mais, tout bien pesé, ce sont là peu de choses en comparaison du travail remarquable accompli dans cet ouvrage, qui nous semble appelé à devenir une référence majeure dans les études hölderliniennes de langue française.

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**Dalia Nassar, Kristin Gjesdal (eds.), *Women Philosophers in the Long Nineteenth Century: The German Tradition*, transl. by Anna C. Ezekiel, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2021, 327 pp. ISBN 978-0-190-86803-1.**

Sometimes when I check my social media account, I see other academics asking for tips to expand our teaching canon – and most often, the respective replies reference this very volume: *Women Philosophers in the Long Nineteenth Century*. Even though just published, a lot of researchers and especially instructors are already putting it to good use, expanding our students' awareness of the rich history of philosophy that we for so long neglected to reflect on properly. Our forgetfulness is due mostly to the still formative work of late nineteenth century authors of the history of German literature and philosophy who intentionally excluded the contributions of women writers (most instructive on this exclusion is Ruth Whittle's study *Gender, Canon, and Literary History*, De Gruyter, 2013), but also the current, relentless streamlining of course design. Little do we remember that even before the nineteenth century, in the lifetime of Maria Sibylla Merian (1647-1717), women could not only get a decent education, but they could also become leaders in trade, silk production, or in other areas. Thus, not always and everywhere have women been strictly excluded from 'public life', and hence there is no reason why all of them should have been hiding in the long nineteenth century.

This present volume is the perfect handbook to expand the canon of any 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> course on European philosophy in exactly this area. With the exception of Madame de Staël, it contains leading voices of German

and Austrian women intellectuals who made significant, albeit often overlooked, contributions to contemporaneous debates. And even if Madame de Staël's influence in France might also be notable, her works, in particular *On Germany*, left an impression on those she described as well. Given that she herself was an expatriate, she might have become something like a German by popular acclaim; ultimately, her perspective on Germany shows how sympathetic outsiders saw the famous land of poets and thinkers, and how these same poets and thinkers came to see themselves.

As the editors explain, the scope of the volume covers important fields in the history of philosophy that were particularly lively (and respectively contested) in their time: the philosophy of nature, of consciousness and embodiment, the philosophy of history, economics, aesthetics, and epistemology, all including the 'female' perspective on experience as such, and their experience as females within these fields. The true lineage that emerges with the thinkers in question is the one "from romanticism to phenomenology" (Introduction, p. 7). In particular, the presented texts are indeed revealed to be in communication with and a critique of those texts usually contained in nineteenth-century textbooks, such as those of Fichte, Schopenhauer, Marx, Kierkegaard, or Nietzsche. Just take, for example, the inclusion of Karoline von Günderrode's commentary on Fichte's influential *The Vocation of Humankind* (1800), which gives the reader an instructive insight into the immediate effect of this late, and nearly last stage of a dominant debate in the eighteenth century. And Günderrode's text is one of lively affirmation instead of Lutheran groveling: "[N]ature spiritualizes itself before my gaze, it becomes related to me, it is, like me, an expression of that will, presented in another form. And so, to me, death itself is only a wrestling of the inner life to a better life. I am part of that spiritual life force; how could I die, who am myself life?" (p. 74)

What the texts of this volume show us is not only that the history of philosophy is far richer than the established canon (this might always be the impression if we add any texts to the canon), but also, that philosophy as construed by women intellectuals should not be conceived of as an intellectual exercise against life, but one within it (see, for instance, Introduction, p. 19). This is a continuation and deepening of eighteenth century *Popularphilosophie* at its best. Woman intellectuals had to explore and manifest their space. Due to a lack of possible academic positions, they wrote less for academia, but "developed a way of philosophizing that was more activist in spirit and geared toward communicating with ordinary people rather than university colleagues and students." (Introduction, p. 1) This also helps us to detect "unexpected points of continuity between" different

philosophical or literary movements that were rather seen as separate (Introduction, p. 6), and which come together, for instance, in Bettina Brentano von Arnim's work (who the editors rightly place within socialism and romanticism), or Gerda Walther's transition from studies in Marx to phenomenology.

In addition, these writings show "a distinctly transnational orientation and the forging of international networks" (Introduction, p. 9), reaching towards Russian literature, the international reception of Marxism, and ideas presented by Mill or Wollstonecraft, for instance.

In light of this it is quite jarring to see the difference between the writings by Günderrode and Brentano-von Arnim, which are indeed the fascinating midpoint between German Romanticism and *Vormärz*, and the other writings which all appeared after 1848. It might have been interesting to include some writings or letters by the *salonnières* (see intro to chapter 3), such as those of Rahel Varnhagen or Henriette Herz (for example, her exchange with Friedrich Schleiermacher).

The impact of the political events of the mid-century, and the subsequent Biedermeier period during the Restoration was apparently quite great. These might have been limiting for women's agency, but at the same time they offered the foundations for more activism and more opportunities, as we can see in the higher numbers of women educators throughout the second half of the century, and an increased activity in social justice movements. The implications of suppression, the issue of women's suffrage, and the social and political implications of Nietzsche and Marx were discussed and critiqued by Hedwig Dohm and Clara Zetkin. We get to know Dohm as one of the most important advocates for women's rights, and a firm adversary of biological essentialism, stating that being born a woman should not be the same as being effectively "stillborn" (p. 122). She also highlights the importance of self-transformation (and also, contra Nietzsche, the value of consistent argumentation). The image of the new mother / new daughter shows the transformation of our self-image as intellectuals and human beings within social contexts, and seeks to delineate a new conception of freedom and the self.

Clara Zetkin, public speaker, successful journal editor (p. 155), fighter for socialism and women's rights, *the* public face of the SAP, who promoted Socialism in Germany and Europe at large, gears this more towards the political sphere (and less toward the personal sphere as Dohm does). It is interesting here that the editors not only chose essays on women's rights, but also on race-relations in the US, to showcase that feminists did indeed think about other issues as well. Zetkin's intervention on behalf of the "Scottsboro

boys” (pp. 174-6) attests to the intensified unity of socialist movements in the fight against oppression. Unsurprisingly, Zetkin was also more sensitive than Dohm to socio-economic conditions and their influence on emancipatory efforts. Even more, Zetkin is highly conscious of the fact that the subjugation of the woman by her husband would only be replaced by the subjugation to the employer if emancipation did not go hand in hand with the emancipation of the worker (p. 157) – a historical consideration of the concept of right as pertaining to human beings as persons (and not as man, employer, or any other specific form; an interesting debate between her and Lily Braun, who supported the idea that women’s emancipation necessitates them to stand up against men, is hinted at on pages 160-1).

The inclusion of both Rosa Luxemburg and Gerda Walther completes the picture of the politically engaged practical philosopher, whereas Lou Andreas Salomé and Edith Stein, both in their own way, deepen aspects of self-knowledge, psychology, and phenomenology. It is the notion of embodiment (whether in its sexual expression, see Salomé, or in its situatedness in a world, see Stein) that plays an important role here and in this regard foreshadows some discussions of the late 20<sup>th</sup> century. I am particularly glad to see Salomé included in this volume, as this is one further step to get her out of the box as a mere “muse, mentor, and collector of male geniuses” (p. 177) – though many of her publications explicitly relate to these figures (p. 179 mentions a few). Her philosophical treatment of Nietzsche’s work opened up new hermeneutical paths to explore a complex philosophical perspective (p. 179), and it would indeed be an interesting contrast to read Dohm and Salomé together in a seminar on Nietzsche and the phenomenology of the self and the body.

This wonderful, fruitful, and comprehensive edition contains a very informative introduction by the editors, instructive comments on translation, a bibliography, and a helpful index. The translations for each author are preceded by informative introductions that not only reference the author’s life and works (with specific attention to the translated texts), but also their influence on male and female philosophers alike. This helps tremendously when fitting these women into the histories of philosophy we have been telling ourselves – and it also alters them considerably.

If there is one reason to complain – and it is indeed minor – it would be that the supposed “richness in style” (Introduction, pp. 13-15), which also contributed to the showcased authors’ exclusion from the usual manners of academic debate, is omitted here “mostly for pragmatic reasons” (Introduction, p. 15). This is understandable as this volume seeks to make available (and this includes: teachable at a beginner’s level) representative philo-

sophical texts by women philosophers. It is, at the same time, to be lamented that teaching these texts should bind us to the common style of philosophical argumentation, whereas the writing styles of these women are much more diverse and progressive. We do not limit ourselves to Nietzsche's "more philosophical" books (whichever those might be, maybe the *Genealogy of Morals*?), but digest the *Gay Science* and even *Zarathustra*. We can and should extend this courtesy to the present authors. For instance, Bettina Brentano-von Arnim's *This Book Belongs To The King* (1843) is a wonderful example of a non-traditional writing style in political philosophy, and it contains great tongue-in-cheek arguments for the improvement of statesmanship as well as arguments for public welfare and criminal law with respect to social circumstances. It would also be a more convincing testament of how Brentano-von Arnim's thought is independent of other historical figures, such as her friend Günderröde, whom she aspired to immortalize in her book *Die Günderröde* (1840).

In any event, we can say with this volume that the door is now open for an expansion of the canon stylistically as well.

Overall the translations by Anna C. Ezekiel are excellent; they are not littered with German phrases, but occasionally, the English translation is rather given in brackets for greater clarity or when a technical phrase is used (for instance, "woman *an sich* [in herself]", p. 135). Readability is superb throughout.

This volume will tremendously increase discussion of contributions to philosophy by women, of the role of women in the history of philosophy, psychology, art, and literature, and it will expand the range of "philosophical questions" (Introduction, pp. 6-7) in the process.

Even though I personally have started teaching again in a German-speaking country and do not seem to be in need of such a collection of translations, this edition will surely inspire the design of my future courses.

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