The Situated Student: 
Strategies of Inclusion in Teaching Philosophy

Preface

This manuscript is the intellectual output of the Erasmus+ Strategic Partnership Gender and Philosophy. The initiators of the project and the developers of the book’s original idea were the members of the project’s academic board, namely Professor Sigridur Thorgeirsdottir (University of Iceland, coordinating university), Senior Lecturer Martina Reuter (University of Jyväskylä), Professor Antje Gimmler (University of Aalborg) and Professor Tove Pettersen (University of Oslo). The board members contributed to the book through planning the content and teaching of the summer schools held in each country 2016–2017. The exchange between the board members and myself gave direction to my writing process, and I am particularly grateful for their comments on the manuscript. During the project, I shared my office with Reuter at the University of Jyväskylä, which resulted in numerous discussions on the work in process and joined involvement in various events. What is more, Reuter’s previous work on the underrepresentation of women in philosophy served as a groundwork for the questionnaires we prepared to gather data about students’ experiences of learning philosophy.

I am also most indebted to Thorgeirsdottir and Eyja Margrét Brynjarsdóttir for inviting me to the conference Feminist Utopias in Reykjavik and Skálholt in the spring of 2017. This extremely inspiring conference allowed me to get feedback about our project and to discuss with researchers with similar interests. I am equally thankful to Elsa Haraldsdóttir for taking excellent care of the numerous practicalities of the project.

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Last but not least, I wish to thank all the students of the *Gender and Philosophy* summer schools, as well as all my students at the University of Jyväskylä, for sharing their insights through the interviews, questionnaires and informal discussions, and also for sharing the experience of learning together. I can only hope that you will find some of your concerns covered in it and that it could in some ways, some day, inspire you in your own teaching practices.
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Introduction

During the past ten years, there have been more and more expressions of discontent and disappointment by professional women and diverse philosophers concerning the persistent underrepresentation of women and racial, ethnic and gender minorities in the field. This worry in itself is not new but can be dated at least to the 1960s (see Friedman 2000), and the historical roots of the underrepresentation can be found in the very beginning of philosophy. Still in our days, the underrepresentation applies to all levels of academic philosophy, from the student level to full professorships. This study starts from the assumption that there is, in fact, something in the practice and public image of philosophy that is experienced as more alienating by the underrepresented groups than by white, heterosexual males, who form the majority of students and staff. The goal is to identify the sources of alienation on the basis of earlier empirical and philosophical research, and to examine how teaching and learning practices could contribute to making philosophy more welcoming towards women and minorities, as well as those men who do not currently feel comfortable within the discipline.

The word “alienation” is used here to describe the discomfort experienced by many students and also by some professionals: they find it hard to feel at ease within the discipline, to feel that it is their intellectual home or that it represents values and practices they can identify with. In feminist criticisms, this experience has also been called “sense of incongruence” and “dissonance” (Dotson 2012, 13–14; Allen et al. 2008, 164, 177, 185). It has been suggested that most of such discomfort is brought about by mechanisms that are difficult to detect, such as implicit bias, micro-inequities and stereotype threat, rather than by outright discrimination or sexual harassment, which certainly are not absent either (Brennan 2013; Haslanger 2008; Saul 2013).

In addition to the concepts of “inclusion” and “alienation”, also the concept of “situation” is central for the book. The book is divided into three major chapters, which reflect the different aspects of the learning situation: the historical situation, the affective, social and embodied situation, and the moral situation. The concept of situation as it is used in the context of this book, has its basis in the phenomenological—
existentialist view that all subjectivity is necessarily situated and embodied and that each situation is at the same time constitutive of subjectivity and lived and actively taken upon by the subject in their choices.

Before examining situatedness in the case of women in philosophy, it is necessary to say a few words about the concept itself. For many feminist readers the idea of situatedness may first bring to mind stand-point theory, represented, for instance, by Nancy Hartsock’s and Sandra Harding’s work. In it situatedness is understood first and foremost as epistemological. On the other hand, marginalised groups are thought to be socially situated in such a manner that they have a more realistic view of the power dynamics than others, which in turn makes their perspectives of particular interest for feminist research.

While the study at hand mainly draws from chronologically earlier philosophical approaches, namely philosophy of existence and phenomenology of the body, especially as these manifest themselves in Simone de Beauvoir’s and Maurice Merleau-Ponty’s work, it must be noted that all these approaches converge in being influenced by G. W. F. Hegel’s phenomenology and Marxism. A point of intersection can also be seen in W. E. B. Du Bois’s concept of double consciousness, which refers to the consciousness of oppressed subjects (in this case black people), who have to be able to observe themselves not only from their own perspective but also from the perspective of their oppressors (see, e.g. Du Bois 1964).¹ Hartsock refers to this idea in her discussion of the epistemically privileged vantage point of women in patriarchy (Hartsock 1998, 27, 243). As for Beauvoir, Margaret Simons has argued that Du Bois’s influence is implied in her analysis of woman as the secondary and inessential subject, who can become an accomplice in her own subjection, when she accepts man’s perspective to her as the primary one (2010).²

¹ Du Bois writes: “After the Egyptian and Indian, the Greek and Roman, the Teuton and Mongolian, the Negro is a sort of seventh son, born with a veil, and gifted with second-sight in this American world, – a world which yields him no true self-consciousness, but only lets him see himself through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity. One ever feels his twoness, – an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder.” (Du Bois 1964, 16–17.)

² As Simons shows in her article “Richard Wright, Simone de Beauvoir, and The Second Sex” (1999), Beauvoir was influenced by discussions of the situation of black people, when she wrote The Second Sex. According to Simons, Du Bois’s racial theory and his concept of double consciousness influenced Beauvoir through the work of Richard Wright and Gunnar Myrdal (Simons 1999, 176).
In Hartsock’s materialism the idea of situation is defined mainly in reference to knowledge and material reality understood as social and economic reality. In existentialism, however, situation is understood in reference to the totality of existence. In Being and Nothingness, Jean-Paul Sartre discusses the concept of situation at length, arguing that freedom only exists in a factual situation that consists, among other things, of one’s past, one’s spatial place, environment and mortality. (Sartre 2003, 503–573). Beauvoir elaborates on the concept of situation to describe the embodied existence of girls and women in The Second Sex. (Beauvoir 1960, 562–563; 1984, 548–549; 2010; see Kruks 1998, 51.) According to Beauvoir, it is within a social, cultural, historical, economical, psychological and bodily situation that a child grows into a woman, a man or a person with an identity that does not easily fit into these categories, and embraces or rejects “feminine” or “masculine” attributes and modes of behaviour (2010).

Drawing from this vision of a multifaceted development of gender that anticipates the later feminist analyses of the performativity of gender as well as Foucault’s analyses of power and disciplined embodiment, I discuss the different aspects of the student’s and teacher’s situations. In particular, I elucidate the power relations in the learning environment and demonstrate how women and men come to occupy different possibilities in a seemingly egalitarian setting.

At present, the very use of the categories of “woman” and “man” is sometimes questioned, and if we look back in time, we will recall already Beauvoir ask, if there even are women (2010, 3). The diversity of gender identities and biological realities beyond the dualist man–woman model is hardly contested by contemporary feminist philosophers. On the other hand, there is, indeed, a large number of human beings who identify themselves as women, whether cis or trans, and who are likely to encounter

3 In the feminist critiques of the 1980s, however, Beauvoir’s philosophy was seen as problematic because of her adoption of Sartre’s dichotomous set of concepts and an ideal of human freedom that was in some ways modelled after the male (e.g. Lloyd 1983; Le Dœuff 1989). Also Hartsock refers to Beauvoir’s work mainly negatively (1998, 123, 129n). Since then, Beauvoir’s work has been discussed in more positive terms (e.g. Bergoffen 1997; Bauer 2001; Heinämaa 2003; Kruks 2013). It is not my intention to embrace the whole conceptual framework of Beauvoir’s thought, warts and all, but rather to draw from her insightful discussion of the variables of women’s experience.

4 The category of cisgender refers to those who identify with the gender defined for them in birth, and usually also express themselves according to that gender. The term ciswoman, then, would refer to those who identify themselves with the gender “woman” defined for them in birth, and usually express themselves according to this gender. (About the formation and use of the term, see, e.g. Enke 2012.) However, these definitions have sometimes been seen as problematic, because individuals may experience different levels of estrangement from the social category of women depending on the situation, even if they did not challenge their categorisation as women as such. Yet I believe that even though these terms do not account for all the nuances of the lived reality of gender identities, they will experience a similar normalisation over time as the term “heterosexual”, which acquired its current meaning only in 1934, when Karl Maria Kertbeny used it as the opposite of
specific problems as ones. Women’s underrepresentation in philosophy has, indeed, been the most crucial the starting point of this book. Even so, the idea is not to restrict the discussion to the position and possibilities of women within philosophy but to consider the question of inclusion in a broader frame, taking different minorities and questions of intersectionality into account, when possible. Nor should the primacy of women in this study be interpreted as an indication of a commitment to a binary model of gender or a homogenisation of women as a group. Many of the studies I discuss do not differentiate between ciswomen and transwomen, but it is clear that the problems faced by these groups are not always identical. The mechanisms of exclusion and inclusion are similar, however, which may make it possible for other scholars to draw from this study for further research that goes beyond my limited attempts to address the diversity of gender identities, including genderfluidity. I would also hope that this book offers inspiration for philosophy teachers to deal with different kinds of marginalisations, such as those pertaining to race and ethnicity.

Data on the Underrepresentation of Women in Philosophy

During the past few years, quite a few empirical studies on the underrepresentation of women in philosophy have emerged. The data comes primarily from the English-speaking countries, and problematically, the data coming from different countries is not directly comparable. In the British data, we can see a steady decline in the proportion of women from the undergraduate students (46%), the graduate students (37%) and PhD students (31%) to staff members with temporary (28%) and permanent jobs (24%) (Beebee and Saul 2011, 8). The figures from Australia tell us that while within the period 2001–2008 as many as 61% of students taking introductory courses in philosophy were female, only 44% of the philosophy major completions and 41% of the PhD doctorate completions were from women (Bishop 2013, 235–236). These figures still seem rather high in comparison to the UK, but when it comes to members of faculty, the tendency is similar: in 2009, women comprised only 28% of staff (Bishop 2013, 232).

“homosexual” (e.g. Herzer 1985). What we are dealing with here is, after all, a change of paradigm in how we interpret gender identity: no longer in terms of normality and deviance but in terms of diversity.
Some quantitative studies have been conducted also on gender parity in philosophy in the United States (e.g. Paxton et al. 2009; see Bishop 2013, 246). However, the reluctance of philosophy departments to provide the requested information and the low answering percentage resulting from this makes it difficult to generalise the results. For this reason, I will only refer to a result obtained at the University of Oklahoma by Heather Demarest et al.: the percentage of women in introductory courses in philosophy is 51, but in more advanced courses women make only 37% of students. In 2003, the proportion of women in full-time philosophy faculty positions was only 17% (Demarest et al. 2017, 525).

These trends are indicative also of the situation in the Nordic countries, even though no large-scale study has been made (see, however, Reuter 2015). Generally speaking, philosophy differs significantly from the other humanities that tend to be female-dominated, and resembles more mathematics, physics and engineering in that all of these fields are male-dominated. A fairly persistent observation across different countries and universities is also that there is a significant drop in the percentage of women students between introductory courses and more advanced ones. This result is often interpreted as indicative of a possibility to make a difference by how philosophy is taught.

In a fairly recent American study, Morgan Thompson et al. (2016) examined the possible motivators of women’s opting out. They looked into seven different aspects pertaining to this question: 1) identification with philosophy, 2) perceived instructor fairness, 3) perceived student respect, 4) comfort of speaking in class, 6) beliefs of field-specific ability and 7) beliefs of gender and race gap. One of their findings was that the students’ perception of the proportion of women on the syllabus had an influence on whether women were willing to continue in philosophy or not. (Thompson et al. 2016, 16.) Even though the results remain fairly inconclusive overall, the researchers argue that there is a significant difference in how women and men experience their belonging to the field, to the disadvantage of women. As for methods of teaching and learning, Thompson et al. suggest that women are less likely to enjoy thoughts experiments as a method of practicing philosophy, and that therefore a wider variety of teaching methods could be of use to attract more female students to major in philosophy. In addition,
highlighting the relevance of philosophy to a wider range of problems might make it more interesting among women. (Ibid., 18.)

A similar result is obtained in a study by Demarest et al. (2017). The researchers argue that there are two attitudes that predict continuation in philosophy, namely “feeling similar to the kinds of people who become philosophers” and “enjoying thinking about philosophical puzzles and issues” (Demarest et al. 2017, 526–527). Women, however, are less likely to hold these attitudes than men. The researchers suggest that having more women instructors or more women authors in the syllabus may not be the only way to tackle the issue of “feeling similar”, for at least in some cases it may be enough to point out the counter-stereotypical characteristics of a historical philosopher to make room for diversity and to provide objects of identification. As for the question of enjoying thinking about philosophical puzzles or issues, women were less likely than men to hold this attitude in the beginning of an introductory course, but the likelihood to do so even dropped during the term. (Ibid., 529–531.)

As the researchers admit (Demarest et al. 2017, 530), the way they formulated the question was somewhat problematic, because the emphasis on “philosophical puzzles” reinforces the idea of philosophy as a game that works through thought experiments. In other words, the formulation directs the respondents’ attention to one specific mode of practicing philosophy. However, in an environment in which philosophy is practiced mainly in a manner that detaches it from the everyday concerns and works with thought experiments, a low interest in “philosophical puzzles” can understandably predict discontinuation.

In their survey on women’s opting out from philosophy at the University of Sydney, Dougherty and others found that there may be pre-university factors that have an effect on women’s low likelihood to identify themselves with the discipline. They suggest that there may be, in fact, a gender schema operating that is very difficult to undo by means of changing the teaching or the number of female lecturers. However, the researchers point out that women’s choices of disciplines should be examined in a larger scale, because they do not choose between philosophy and nothing, but philosophy and other disciplines, many of which apparently fascinate a good part of
female students more than philosophy does (Dougherty et al. 2015, 471; see also Reuter 2015, 16–17).

In an even more recent study, Ma et al. (2017) demonstrate that women are more likely than men to view the discipline as masculine and not to identify with it, and that there is a correlation between these two things: the same women, who think that philosophy is “a masculine field”, have difficulties to identify with it. In contrast, male students’ perception of the field as masculine does not correlate with their likelihood to continue in philosophy. Diverging from the view of Dougherty et al., Ma et al. suggest that it is possible to influence the gender disparity in philosophy through a pedagogy that does not reinforce the view of philosophy as a masculine discipline.

In the course of the study at hand, I have also come across numerous issues, which could be elucidated through empirical research. For instance, it would be of interest to investigate the attitudes to philosophy at the high school level, and to compare the success experienced by female and male students in their high school philosophy courses with their identification with the subject. It would be important also to acquire more data on the sources of alienation from philosophy, and about the reasons behind the choices of the major. The fact that in Finland, for instance, there has been a significant difference between the percentages of women applicants in philosophy between different universities, suggests also that women’s willingness to study philosophy as their major may also have to do with the fame or location of the university. For instance, women made 50% of the applicants, who were taken in to study moral philosophy at the University of Helsinki in 2016, when students still started directly as majors in a specific subject. At the same time, a smaller and less centrally located Finnish university, the University of Jyväskylä, had a significantly lower percentage of accepted women applicants (12 %) and a yet lower percentage of women applicants in philosophy in general. In a further empirical study, one might therefore have to consider also the attraction of bigger cities and the reputation of different universities for women interested in studying philosophy, as well as the possible regional differences in the general interest of women applicants in philosophy. The question of regional factors brings us back to the differences in the high school

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5 This information can be found at the database of the Ministry of Education in Finland (vipunen.fi).
education given in different areas in the subject of philosophy, not forgetting the possible regional impact on the applicants’ values and perception of the gendered aspects of different disciplines. At the time students apply to a university, they may have a poor conception of how the theoretical emphasis of a specific department may affect their feeling at home as a student of that department, and more general ideas about the university and the possibilities to be accepted in it may have a lot of weight when it comes to the choices made by the applicants.

As we can see, there are a lot of variables that may have an effect on the opting out of women students from studying philosophy. While quantitative studies can help map out some aspects of the issue, they leave a deeper layer of the student experience virtually intact. Interviews can provide a much richer understanding of the issue, not least because interviewees can elucidate experiences that the researcher might not come to think of to ask about in a questionnaire. If women’s underrepresentation in philosophy is researched further, an approach that combines quantitative analysis to qualitative methods might be particularly useful.

Overt Sexism and Discrimination

What can we then say about the overall situation of women studying and practicing philosophy? During the past few years, there has been a lot of discussion about sexism and discrimination within philosophy. That there are male philosophers who routinely engage in sexual innuendos or worse may come as a surprise to those male philosophers who themselves treat women with respect. Women philosophers, on the other hand, quite often have either first-hand experience of such treatment, or they have witnessed their female colleagues being sexually harassed. Yet it is difficult to estimate exactly how common sexual harassment is within philosophy, for this varies not only from one department to another but also within departments, depending on the constitution of the staff. On the other hand, many cases may remain hidden, due to the fact that the targets may experience the incidents too hurtful or shameful to discuss them openly. It is also

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6 For instance, the blog What Is It Like to Be a Woman in Philosophy? (https://beingawomaninphilosophy.wordpress.com, retrieved 4 April 2017) collects and publishes the recollections of harassment and discrimination experienced by women students and members of faculty. The reported incidents range from situations, in which women’s input is ignored, to sexual assaults.
possible that they do not expect to be believed, or they may consider their case as unique rather than symptomatic of a larger problem. As the targets are often young women who have very little power, they may choose not to risk their career development by speaking out.

While sexual assaults are evidently the most extreme form of sexual abuse in the academia, other forms of sexism and discrimination are certainly more common. Among these are belittling attitudes towards women and members of different minorities, low expectations of the quality of their work and their ability to make a career in philosophy, and generally treating women and individuals belonging to different minorities as representatives of those minorities rather than as fellow philosophers. In a professional setting, we all surely want to be considered primarily as professionals rather than as hot babes, wife-substitutes, studious Asians or examples of transpeople.

Yet some may find it difficult to discern the line between discriminative or harassing action and acceptable behaviour. Sally Haslanger relates, for instance, how she was asked by fellow students to have a blood test to make sure that she was not a man after all, doing so well in philosophy (2008, 211). This is one of the examples in which the male interlocutor may not have “meant” harm but has definitely done harm by annulling the value of the woman’s identity as a woman.

In an interview, black women philosophers also suggest that the stereotype of black women as maids or prostitutes affects how they are viewed by other staff members (Allen et al. 2008, 170–172; see also Hill Collins 2009, 142–145 and Dotson 2013). This phenomenon of sexualisation is not limited to black women philosophers, for it has been demonstrated that women of different minorities are often sexualised (Shimizu 2007). It is as if a different set of rules applied to how to act towards women of your ingroup and towards those of an outgroup. Of course, young women can be said to be sexualised also as a group: they are the objects of most of the inappropriate behaviour.

In addition, transwomen, transmen and genderqueer people face other kinds of challenges in the academia. As transpeople often have to endure harsh attitudes and rejection by people close to them as well as by strangers, diverse problems may
accumulate in their lives, so that they may not make it to the academia at all. Once in the academia, their gender identity may be misrecognised, or they may be offended on its basis. Needless to say, if you belong to many marginalised groups, that is, if you are, for instance, a black transwoman, your situation may be quite fraught despite the apparent dominance of liberal attitudes in the academia.7

Yet the more overt forms of discrimination are not as much present in the everyday life of the academia as are the subtler mechanisms of discrimination, such as implicit bias, stereotype threat and micro-inequities. These mechanisms are, in fact, so common, that they can be said to be omnipresent, and practiced by even the most enlightened of us. This is why they deserve particular attention.

Subtle Mechanisms of Discrimination: Implicit Bias, Micro-Inequities and Stereotype Threat

Implicit bias refers to unconscious biases that affect our ways of perceiving and evaluating people from the targeted groups. Implicit bias affects individuals of all genders, which means that in the case of women’s achievements, also other women tend to evaluate these more negatively than they would if they thought they were evaluating men’s achievements. For instance, the same CV can be assessed as better and the person behind as deserving of a higher salary, if the name at the top of it is a male name, than is the case when a female name is written at the top of the CV (Moss-Racusin et al. 2008; Saul 2013, 41). This said, it does not appear to be the case that implicit bias could always be found in assessments. For instance, in the study of Phil Birch et al. the assessments of undergraduate student works did not reveal a gender bias on the part of the evaluators (2016). Even so, implicit bias exists in the academia, as has been demonstrated by a number of studies (e.g. Moss-Racusin 2012; Steinpreis et al. 1999), and even though these studies have not targeted philosophers specifically, there is little reason to presume that philosophers would be freer from implicit bias than other academics (see Saul 2013, 43–44).

7 For the difficulty to do research in transgender theory in the academia, see Grearey 2016.
Another mechanism of subtle discrimination is that of micro-inequities. These are “small harms” such as disrespectful gestures, being ignored or singled out on the basis of characteristics such as sex, race or age. These behaviours are hard to prove, but when they accumulate over time, they can have devastating effects, such as low self-esteem and poor career success. The victim and the perpetrator may both be unaware of the continuum of micro-inequities that they are involved in and that may slowly undermine the victim’s chances of a satisfactory career in the extremely competitive field of philosophy. (Brennan 2013, 184–185.) Unsurprisingly, micro-inequities are intimately connected to implicit bias: we are more likely engage in them, if we are implicitly biased against people of targeted groups.  

According to Samantha Brennan, the flip side of micro-inequities is the genius-treatment received by some. She argues that academics may “detect” budding geniuses on rather flimsy grounds, and that the heightened expectations and good career opportunities faced by the chosen ones may in fact produce their good performances. (Brennan 2013, 185.) In a like manner, negative expectations can affect the performance of targeted individuals negatively. This may not even require any belittling attitudes on the part of the members of the dominant group, as the phenomenon stereotype threat shows. When individuals of a stigmatised group are preoccupied with fears of confirming the stereotypes about their group, they often do worse in their tasks than they would otherwise. Jennifer Saul points out that stereotype threat can be provoked simply by visual reminders of the group’s underrepresentation in the field. In philosophy, situations like this occur easily, for instance, when a woman is presenting her work to an all-male audience in a room decorated with pictures of male philosophers. (Saul 2013, 41–42, 46–47.)

The problem with these subtle mechanisms of discrimination is they are difficult to detect by both the victims and the perpetrators. Even if the victims identify these mechanisms at some level, they may be inclined to accuse themselves of paranoia. After all, they are not consistently harassed, and often they can only fathom the different kind of treatment some of their peers receive. The perpetrators, on the other hand, may

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8 For a general discussion on the measures that can be taken to make the atmosphere of the department more welcoming towards women, see Brennan and Corless (2009).
consider themselves as enlightened people who embrace the ideals of equality and justice. It may be very hard for us to understand our own contribution to a culture of subtle inequities.

The good news is that the discussed inequities need not be perpetuated. There are many ways to loosen their hold. Some of them are easy. Adding pictures of women philosophers, black philosophers, and Asian philosophers on the wall, to complement the row of white male philosophers, is a generous gesture that does not tax the department budget too heavily. However, already this example brings us to the core of the resistance of philosophy towards change. We may be generous and fair in principle, but when we are asked to redefine philosophy to include “the others”, we tend to become less generous. This generosity does not necessarily exist even between western philosophers of different philosophical leanings: in their view, what the other is doing, is not philosophy at all, or is at best a caricature of philosophy.

Philosophy is something precious to us philosophers, something we want to protect and which we own, as it were. Subsequently, we are ready to increase diversity in the student body and as well as in staff, as long as the elected individuals are perceived to be up to par and ready to embrace the “right” view of what philosophy is all about. Through this policy “the good guys” of any gender or ethnicity can at least in principle become successful in philosophy. This policy only leaves out those who might challenge the dominant views about philosophy, its limits and the questions most proper to it. Unluckily, those people often belong to the already underrepresented groups.

For this reason, all the necessary changes to make philosophy more inclusive imply negotiations about the nature of philosophy. These necessary changes include: a) increasing the visibility and impact of underrepresented groups by hiring more people from these groups in the staff, and b) increasing diversity in the curriculum, so that the questions that are of particular interest to the philosophers and students of the underrepresented groups become covered (see Dotson 2012, 17). Sometimes steps towards this direction are taken, but without truly allowing the new additions to challenge one’s own idea of philosophy. In such a case, the diversity practitioners are

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Kristie Dotson discussed this idea in her keynote lecture “On the Value of Challenging Philosophical Orthodoxy: A Tale of Two Careers”, in the conference Feminist Utopias: Transforming the Present of Philosophy, in Reykjavík, 30 March 2017.
marginalised and mainstream philosophy remains as resistant as ever towards alterity. What is even worse, positive discrimination may make diversity candidates appear as not deserving their position.\(^{10}\)

However, change may be quite slow or non-existent when there are no real incentives for hiring individuals of the underrepresented groups in the academia. In Finland, the Equality Act of 1986 makes it possible to use positive discrimination in appointments, if the organisation favours positive action. In reality, voluntariness of positive discrimination does not appear to produce results: it does not raise the percentage of women in the hired staff. (Husu 2007, 98.) Yet the situation could be improved by endorsing the diversity of philosophical traditions in the curriculum and staff appointments. Unfortunately, such a policy is discouraged by the government’s demand that subjects and departments create recognisable profiles, in other words, that they focus on specific themes and approaches. This demand offers, in fact, a convenient avenue for those in positions of power to solidify their power, and to shut out competitive views of philosophy along with those who present them.

Why Does the Underrepresentation of Women and Minorities Matter?

As we see, there may be a whole cavalcade of discriminatory mechanisms operating within philosophy: implicit bias, micro-inequities, stereotype threat, overt discrimination and harassment. All this notwithstanding, some may wonder, whether it matters, how many women practice philosophy. After all opting out and choosing another field may be wise, when it comes to economic possibilities and even the aspect of emotional rewards within a trade. What is more, we witness a similar disproportion in many other fields, such as nursing or engineering, without necessarily thinking about it twice. Yet even in those fields a more even distribution of sexes could be for the good of the development of the field: diversity as such can be seen as beneficial, as it can bring along with it new questions or different ways of looking at familiar questions. It could be argued that also philosophy would benefit from attracting more students from

\(^{10}\) There are numerous reports by American women philosophers at the site *What Is It Like to Be a Woman in Philosophy*? on complaints about how they got their position “only because they are women”.

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diverse gender identities as well as from different ethnic and economic backgrounds: the homogeneity of the staff and student body simply makes philosophy outsider to many of the developments and enriching features of the other humanities. This is the justification of what is beneficial for philosophy itself (see, e.g. Friedman 2013, 32–36). Even if the underrepresented groups were underrepresented because their members have more interesting study paths to follow, we can still regret this absence as a loss to the discipline of philosophy.

Another justification points towards what is beneficial to women and minorities themselves. Learning philosophy can be beneficial to the currently underrepresented groups in a number of ways: 1) it can be highly enjoyable, 2) it develops the student’s capacity for critical in-depth analysis, and 3) as professional philosophers, women and members of minorities can take part in the analysis and development of philosophical approaches rather than just apply them. Such participation implies, in turn, intellectual and social influence.

Finally, and perhaps most self-evidently, we can ask what is just towards women and minorities. It is hard to question the justness of creating a learning and working environment in which nobody feels alienated because of their gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, race or social background. If the lack of such an environment is one of the reasons for the underrepresentation of women and minorities, then one can consider the current state of affairs as unsatisfactory, one that should be changed. What is more, an organization that claims to be committed to justice and equality is simply inconsistent, if it allows unjust structures to persist.

Feminist Pedagogy and Philosophy

It is not a new idea that education is a powerful tool for change. According to Mary Wollstonecraft’s (1792), for instance, giving women a rational education will allow them to contribute to the activities of the society in a more comprehensive manner. Yet we can go back all the way back to Plato to find the idea that the right kind of education
allows both women and men make full use of their talents, and what is more, help create the ideal state.

For feminist pedagogy, the idea of change through education – the ideals of liberation and empowerment – have been essential. This is no wonder considering that the roots of feminist pedagogy are in the feminist movement and in feminist theorisation. Another important source of for feminist pedagogy has been critical pedagogy, which has critical theory as its starting point and is described also as a pedagogy of liberation. Here Paulo Freire’s thinking and especially his *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970) have been influential, which can be seen, for instance, in the work of bell hooks and her famous *Teaching to Transgress* (1994). Freire advocates dialogical learning, in which members of the oppressed groups get their voices heard, share their experiences, become aware of their possibilities as political agents, and finally, become actors in their own liberation. These ideas are shared by many feminist pedagogues, and in fact, the feminist practice of consciousness raising, which became widely known in the late 1960’s, has been compared to and sometimes equated with Freire’s conscientisation (*conscienciação*) or critical consciousness. On the other hand, his lack of concern for gender issues have been also criticised (see e.g. Luke and Gore, eds, 1992).

All in all, the different trends in feminist pedagogy have followed the shifts in feminist theory. Consciousness raising was primarily a technique of radical feminism, according to which the society was, inherently, a patriarchy and women its oppressed class. In the 1990s, the focus shifted to post-structuralism, which emphasised the dispersion of identities. The concerns of feminism have broadened to cover the issues of different marginalised groups, including sexual and gender minorities and ethnic minorities, as well as women of colour. The introduction of the term *intersectionality*\(^\text{11}\) in the late 1980s by Kimberlé Crenshaw was particularly important to the development of feminist pedagogy, for it facilitated the understanding the intersecting marginalisations of different groups and how these can affect each other, and, in particular, how one person may be marginalised in a number of ways (see also Hill Collins 2009, 15, 138–145).

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\(^\text{11}\) In fact, the term was coined already in 1989, that is, before the advent of third-wave feminism, but it was only with third-wave feminism that it achieved its status. Kathryn T. Gines has traced the earliest expressions of proto-theories of intersectionality in the 1830s, in, for instance, Maria Stewart’s pamphlet (1831) and Anna Julia Cooper’s collection of speeches (1892), in which she discusses the particular position of black women as outsiders to both to the debates on gender and race (Gines 2011, 276).
This implies that in a classroom, teachers should develop their sensitivities towards their diverse students and find practices that allow an atmosphere of trust to develop and different kinds of viewpoints get expressed (e.g. Caporale Bizzini and Richter Malabotta, eds, 2009). The theory of intersectionality has gradually gained a more and more central position in feminist pedagogy, and, despite some criticisms, it remains central.

Among other trends in feminist pedagogy, we can mention, for instance, norm critical pedagogy with its demand that teachers themselves should identify the norms they carry in their teaching. There have also been attempts to engage meditative and body awareness practices (e.g. mindfulness), and attention has been paid also to how space and the way it is used contributes to the learning situation and issues of hierarchy in the classroom (e.g. Asher 2003; Thompson 2017; Shalk et al. 2017). One of the most recent influences comes from posthumanism, which has lead pedagogues to take into account the relevance of non-human agents for learning processes (e.g. Radomska 2013; see also Jokinen and Rautio 2016).

To be sure, feminist pedagogy has not developed separately from other pedagogical trends. In fact, quite a few of its methods are used also outside feminist pedagogy, which is understandable in the light of the current popularity of the student-centred approach. For instance, memory work, a tool used in feminist pedagogy, is also used in social pedagogy.

Yet we can ask, how the inclusive teaching of philosophy relates to this larger ensemble of feminist pedagogy. Certainly there is no one correct way of teaching philosophy, any more than there is one correct way of teaching anything else, for teaching is always partly dependent on the personalities of individual teachers. However, any pedagogical training helps lecturers pay attention to the methods of teaching instead of just trying to convey the content “somehow”. After trying out a number of different methods of teaching and learning in one’s own pedagogical studies, one may be able to find out the methods that fit best one’s own teaching. What is more, one may become less worried about maintaining the façade of an unfaaltering expertise – a very common concern among academics – and more interested in the actual learning of students.
It is true, though, that as a discipline, philosophy appears to resist some of the more experimental practices. For instance, while philosophers may be interested in analysing experience, describing one’s personal experience is not, as a rule, encouraged in seminars. Interlocutors are supposed to jump over the singular elements of experience and speak about experience at an abstract level. Experiences have value when they are used as examples of a universal case or as counterexamples of a supposedly universal case. Whether this practice should undergo a transformation or not, is one the issues that will be discussed in this book. It is safe to say, however, that while some techniques of feminist pedagogy may be challenging to try within a philosophy class, a great part of its principles and concerns, especially its concern for diversity and power struggles, are worth examining in the philosophical setting.

The Structure of the Book and Its Relationship to the Gender and Philosophy Summer Schools

This book has grown in a close contact with the four experimental summer schools of the Nordic Erasmus+ Strategic Partnership Gender and Philosophy. The developers of the summer schools asked each specific questions about the teaching of philosophy while at the same time offering insights to different aspects of feminist philosophy.

The first chapter “The Historical Situation” takes its cue from the Jyväskylä Summer School, Feminist Thought in Historical Perspective. This summer school was organised at the University of Jyväskylä by Martina Reuter, who works there as a Senior Lecturer in gender studies. Her research in the history of women philosophers and feminist thought has a special focus on the thinkers of 17th and 18th centuries. This summer school discussed the history of feminist thought, elucidating it in dialogue with the texts of male philosophers. The aim was to help the participants view not only feminist thought but also the history of philosophy in a new light. In the chapter drawing from this summer school, I point out that the subject – the student – should always be understood also as a subject in time, projecting themselves towards the future with an understanding of a specific facticity creating their historical background. In the case of
philosophy this background consists not only of the white and male canon, through which the history of philosophy is usually narrated, but also of the marginalised female and non-white voices. I suggest that the more detailed an understanding the underrepresented groups acquire of their history within and around the history of philosophy, the easier it will be for them to join and develop future projects of philosophy. In this chapter I also discuss students’ relationship to the philosophical canon, describing the possibilities and restrictions offered by being contact with the written, canonised tradition.

I point out that this canonisation is closely related to the cult of the genius we can observe within philosophy. This discussion, which is a part of the first chapter, is also connected to the aims of the Aalborg Summer School, which is described together with the Reykjavík Summer School in the second chapter, “The Affective, Social and Embodied Situation”. In addition to the two summer schools, the second chapter draws from the small-scale background surveys and interviews conducted for the purposes of this study. The chapter starts with a discussion of the affective situation of students, focusing especially on women students’ passion for and estrangement from philosophy. In this respect, the focus is slightly different from the studies in which students’ interest in philosophical puzzles is measured. After that I analyse the significance of students’ class and ethnic background for studying philosophy, demonstrating that, apart from gender-related alienation, many other kinds of alienation can in fact manifest themselves in the insecurities of philosophy students. In this connection, I also point towards the tendency of philosophical teaching to take distance to all the factual differences in embodied existence in favour of universalisation. The question of embodiment is further analysed in the part that deals with the summer school held in Reykjavík, Philosophy of the Body, organised at the University of Iceland by Sigridur Thorgeirsdottir. Thorgeirsdottir is professor in philosophy in the same university and has specialised in Nietzsche’s philosophy, feminist philosophy, and environmental questions. In this subchapter, I also discuss the relationship of the body and the surrounding world.

The third summer school, Feminist Political Philosophy: A Problem-Based Learning Approach was organised by Antje Gimmler at Aalborg University. Gimmler is professor in philosophy in this university, and has specialised in pragmatism, social
philosophy and philosophy of technology. Using problem-based learning (PBL) as its pedagogical point of departure, the summer school addressed universalism and partiality, psychoanalysis, post-colonialism, and legitimation of subjectivity from the perspective of feminist political philosophy. On the pedagogical level, the summer school addressed the difficulty of women students to identify with the predominantly male tradition and male teachers, and proposed an explicit method of doing philosophy, namely PBL, as an empowering tool of learning philosophy, and as an alternative to engaging in the imitative process often seen in classes of philosophy. The Aalborg Summer School also answered the challenge described above, namely the idea of philosophy as detached from everyday life, by making room to applied philosophy and to questioning that starts from everyday life.

The third chapter, titled “The Moral Situation: Self and Other” draws from the summer school organised by Tove Pettersen at the University of Oslo. Pettersen is professor in philosophy at the in this university and has specialised in care ethics and Simone de Beauvoir’s existentialist ethics. This summer school, Care Ethics and Conflicts, familiarised the students with the different trends in care ethics, discussing its theme of care and conflict in the contexts of private and professional life, war and peace, and global relations as well as in relation to nature. A reoccurring topic was to examine and discuss how experience, reason and emotion played a part in our moral reasoning.

The chapter explores the possibilities of feminist ethics in teaching philosophy and the ways it can deal with power struggles in the classroom. In this connection, I discuss the concept of generosity as it is conveyed in Beauvoir’s philosophy and in Debra Bergoffens’s analysis of it (1997), that is, as such a generous attitude towards the other that allows the other to find their own way and to either take or leave the gift that is offered to them. I suggest that care and generosity could and very often do act as ethical points of departure in teaching philosophy, and that by cultivating these one can pass them on to new generations of philosophers. This would be an antidote sorely needed to counteract the highly competitive atmosphere of the meritocratic academia.

Like it was noted earlier, the students of the summer schools as well as the students of some other courses in philosophy and gender studies asked to answer some tentative questions about their experiences of learning philosophy. They were asked mainly free-
form questions about the things they enjoyed in philosophy and the things that they found problematic in their philosophical education, including possible discriminative practices. It must be acknowledged here that the number of questionnaire answers and interviews was too small to make any sweeping generalisations about the experience of students. However, the students’ responses did indicate some ways of experiencing philosophy and could be used as a check of what is being suggested. For this reason, when I quote some of the students, anonymously and with their consent, these quotations should not be read as demonstrative of a comprehensive study of students’ attitudes but rather as examples of the lived experience of the students, and as illustrations of some of the discerned problems. The interviews were extremely illuminating and helped me a lot in the developing of the ideas of the work at hand, but, again, the purpose was not to analyse them in depth or make them the object of research as such.
1. The Historical Situation

In this chapter I briefly return to the roots of European philosophy in ancient Greece to provide a reference point for the discussion of women students’ position in philosophy today. It appears that from the very early days of philosophy, there have been women with either indirect or direct access to philosophical education and that this has been an issue that has received some attention also in the texts attributed to ancient philosophers, such as Plato and Phintys. However, ever since those days women have also been a minority within philosophy and their position in it has been fairly precarious. I discuss Michèle Le Dœuff’s idea of the erotico-theoretical transference through which, according to her, women’s marginalisation in philosophy has been perpetuated, as well as the cult of genius in philosophy. In addition, I analyse the temporal and pedagogical meaning of having women predecessors in philosophy, and present ways in which the discussion of such predecessors could be integrated in the curriculum. The chapter ends in a discussion the goals and outcomes of a related Gender and Philosophy summer school, Feminist Thinking in Historical Perspective.

Sisters in the Brotherhood:
The Historical Roots of Women’s Inclusion and Alienation in Philosophy

While many people perhaps think that it is not appropriate for a woman to philosophise, just as it is not appropriate for her to ride horses nor to speak in public, I think that some activities are peculiar to men, some to women, and that some are common to women and men, some are more appropriate for men than women, and some are more appropriate for women than men.12 (Phintys, translation I. A. Plant in Plant 2004, 85.)

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12 The original Greek text can be found in Johannes Stobaeus’ Anthologie 4.23.61; 4.23.61a.
This discussion of the appropriateness of women’s philosophising is attributed to the ancient female philosopher Phintys, and even though larger whole of the extant fragment leaves the author’s conclusion of the right relationship between women and philosophising somewhat open, it is usually interpreted as an early defence of women’s access to philosophy. While the identity and even the gender of the author remain uncertain, this text, alongside with some passages in Plato’s *The Republic* (4th BCE), demonstrates that the question of women’s philosophical capacities and whether they should take part in a philosophical education was discussed quite early in the history of philosophy, in this case possibly in the 3rd century BCE.\(^{13}\)

Philosophy was practised and learnt predominantly by upper class males and prospective leaders of Graeco-Roman Antiquity, but some philosophical schools, such as the Pythagoreans or Plato’s Academy, did accept female members. As it is well known, Socrates argues in *The Republic* that as different natures are distributed evenly among men and women, also women should be able to become guardians (455e), and the same things should be taught to men and women (451e). Yet women’s philosophical education could not, in reality, be taken for granted. Sometimes women came to enjoy this education indirectly, through their family members,\(^{14}\) and many of the female philosophers of Antiquity were, in fact, wives and daughters of male philosophers (see, e.g. Castner 1982). Of some female students Diogenes Laertius writes that they dressed as men, in order to escape becoming hetairas (D. L. 3.1.46).

In addition to the described diversity in gender, there also was some variation in the socio-economic status of students in philosophy. Epicurus is said to have been joined by a slave of his in his philosophical studies (D. L. 10.4), and for some philosophical

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\(^{13}\) There is very little reliable information about the ancient Greek female philosophers, but allegedly Phintys was a Spartan-born female philosopher, who lived as a member of a Pythagorean community in Italy. According to Wider, she lived in the 3rd century BCE. (See Wider 1986). Letkowitz and Fant argue that the text was in fact written as a rhetorical exercise by a later male Pythagorean, and that it was erroneously attributed to Phintys, an earlier female philosopher (Fant and Letkowitz 1982, 208n). Waithe, on the other hand, accepts Stobaeus’ claim that Phintys was a 5th century philosopher and actually wrote the fragment attributed to her (1987, 73). Whichever the case, the author’s differentiation between what is appropriate, what is common and what is peculiar or natural leads the author to state that intellect and courage are common to both women and men, whereas they are more natural to men, and moderation is more natural to women. The fragment does not tell us much about the author’s conclusion about women and philosophy, but it can be deduced that the author links philosophising with the virtue of intelligence. In other words, philosophising may not be as natural to women as it is to men, but it is not inappropriate for women to philosophise. In accordance with the Pythagorean teachings, the author appears to insinuate that a philosophical education helps women to attain their greatest virtue, namely the virtue of moderation (*sophrosyne*), which was one of the Greek cardinal virtues. Aspiring for this virtue appears to be reconcilable with philosophising, which is why philosophising is appropriate for women.

\(^{14}\) The Cynic philosopher Hipparchia (350–280 BCE), for instance, accessed philosophy first through her brother, who attended a philosophical school, and only later learnt to know the Cynic philosopher Crates, who subsequently became her husband. See D. L. 6.7.96–98.
schools, such as the Cynics, poverty was an ideal, which led some members to give away their fortune. Of the Stoic philosophers, Epictetus (55–135 CE) was, in fact, originally a slave, who later obtained his freedom and founded a philosophical school.

The role of women is described in a fairly similar manner in the few extant texts attributed to ancient Greek women philosophers, all Pythagoreans (Theano, Perictione, Phintys, Melissa, Aesara, and Myia), as well as in many of the Greek male philosophers’ texts. It is a subject of debate whether this is because of the actual similarity of the views of male and female philosophers or whether it is because the texts attributed to women would have been, in fact, written pseudonymously by male philosophers.15 According to the text attributed to Phintys, it is peculiar for a woman to keep house, stay indoors and look after her husband, while the vilest thing she can do is to mix “with men outside the family” and to give birth to “bastards”. In contrast to this, men’s natural tendencies, political activity and public speaking, cannot be reduced to loyalty to their wives or family. Apart from the case of Hipparchia, who abandoned all comforts of life to live with Crates in the streets in the way of the Cynics, and Aspasia of Miletus (c. 470–410), who is depicted in conflicting ways but appears to have had a lot of influence in her time, most anecdotes about ancient women philosophers as well as the handful of remaining texts attributed to women would place them in a docile and self-effacing outgroup. Even in Plato’s utopia, in which philosopher women do not confine themselves to childrearing and housekeeping activities, these women are “handed over” to the men philosophers to produce new individuals of excellence (Rep. 458c, 459d). What is more, Socrates also says, according to Plato, that women are weaker than men in everything they do. (Rep. 451e, 455d–e.)

It should be noted, however, that even though the extant fragments attributed to female philosophers are scarce, this does not mean that some of the ancient female philosophers would not have been influential and well-respected in their own time. For instance, the astronomer, mathematician and Neoplatonist philosopher Hypatia (355–

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15 In Melissa’s (3rd century BCE) letter to Clearata the author emphasizes the importance for women to act moderately and to obey their husbands, which is why the letter has been suspected to have been written by a pseudonymously by a male author (Plant 2004, 81). In contrast, even if the text attributed to Myia was hardly written by Theono’s and Pythagoras’ daughter Myia (c. 500 BCE), it would seem to be written by a woman, given the detailed descriptions of breastfeeding and advice on how to choose a nurse for a baby (Plant 2004, 79–80).
415 CE), whose writings have not survived to our days, made, according to a contemporary historian, “such attainments in literature and science, as to far surpass all the philosophers of her own time”.16

It would appear, then, that women were a part of practicing philosophy, sometimes a highly-valued part, too, but always a minority within a community of male thinkers. In this perspective, it is hardly surprising that Pythagoras’ philosophical school – which allowed female members – was, in fact, called a brotherhood. In the case of this particular school, the connotation of religious orders or secret brotherhoods is not totally mistaken, considering the school had a leaning towards mysticism and that entering it required participating in a rite of initiation. Yet the idea of brotherly interaction or even rivalry is not far removed from, for example, Plato’s dialogues – be it as it may that Socrates’ superior position remains for the most part unchallenged.

Yet it can be asked why philosophy has maintained the form of a fairly homosocial and also ethnically homogenous community. After all, many fields that used to be male-dominated, such as medicine, are no longer so, and even riding horses and speaking in public, mentioned in Phintys’ text as quite inappropriate for women, have become perfectly acceptable activities for women in the western countries. Despite a degree of underrepresentation of women in politics and recurring misogynist backlashes, women’s political activity is generally seen as important, and as for horseback riding, in countries such as Sweden, France and the United States, the overwhelming majority of riders are nowadays women (Hedenborg 2007; Lagier 2009; White 2003). Philosophy, however, still bears a somewhat masculine stamp.

Despite this it can be claimed that there is nothing inherently gendered in the practice of philosophy as wonder, doubt, dialogue, critique, and a shared quest for truth and wisdom. As long as philosophy operates in this mode, it holds a promise of the freedom and power of thought and appears as valuable to those who appreciate these things. In other words, I disagree with those arguments according to which philosophy as a conceptual discipline would be inherently misogynistic. However, philosophy also has

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16 Socrates of Constantinople: Ecclesiastical History. Even if the ancient Greek culture does appear as rather restrictive of women’s space in the society, it is notable that there were also female poets, such as Sappho and Anyte, who were spoken of admiringly in the works male authors (see, e.g. Meleager, AP 4.1).
a tendency to become riddled with what could be described as non-philosophical human tendencies of claiming for ownership of knowledge, expertise and authority over others. In this game those, who feel more insecure about their entitlement to be heard, can have a hard time making space for their own points of departure and interests. As we will see, also Le Dœuff argues that the perpetuation of women’s marginality in philosophy depends on the idea of philosopher as someone who possesses knowledge.

The Perpetuation of Women’s Marginality

In *The Philosophical Imaginary*, Le Dœuff argues that due to women’s long-lasting exclusion from the academia, they failed to develop an independent relationship to philosophy. Typically, a woman’s love for theory was transferred to a male philosopher, who adopted the role of a teacher, to the extent that the woman’s relationship to philosophy was totally mediated by that one philosopher. This shift is what she calls “erotico-theoretical transference” (1989, 104).17 In the spirit of this transference, Hipparchia (350–280 BCE) married her teacher Crates (365–285 BCE), Héloïse (c. 1098–1164) was associated with her teacher Abelard (1079–1142), Elisabeth, Princess of Bohemia (1618–1680) with René Descartes (1596–1650), and even Simone de Beauvoir (1908–1986), who already had an access to university education, with a student slightly her senior, Jean-Paul Sartre (1905–1980). (See Le Dœuff 1989, 100–120.)

Le Dœuff, whose point of departure is in psychoanalysis, insists that it is not the presence of female students that diverts the master–disciple relationship towards the instinctive realm, nor is the discussed transference only the product of women’s historical exclusion from universities. Rather, philosophical didactics itself “tends to take the form of a dual transference relationship”. Also male students of philosophy are likely to experience their own version of the erotico-theoretical transference, to the

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17 For a detailed discussion of Le Dœuff’s ideas and a comparison between them and Luce Irigaray’s philosophy, see Lehtinen 2007.
extent that they may emulate the clothing styles of the object of their admiration. (Le Dœuff 1989, 105–106.)

Le Dœuff argues, however, that in the past centuries, the relationship to philosophy was characterised by a different form of lack in the case of women and men. After becoming disappointed with their teachers, male students of philosophy came to realise that their lack is of the radical kind that the Other cannot complete. This philosophical lack is the true starting point of philosophy and leads them to new questions, a re-evaluation of the philosophical tradition, and new ideas. For women students, who were only amateurs, being shut outside universities, the situation became problematic. Their lack remained of the ordinary kind, the kind that can be fulfilled by the all-knowing master. (Le Dœuff 1989, 105–107.)

In Le Dœuff’s view, the desire of a student can be redirected towards theory and the whole field of philosophy only within the institutional framework. She argues, however, that even now, when women students can, in principle, enjoy the same institutional support as men, they still move very prudently within philosophy, carefully examining the work of past philosophers, often conforming with the demands of the academic life to every detail. At the same time, they have difficulties in performing as the possessors of true knowledge, which is something that, according to Le Dœuff, still characterises the role of the philosopher. Nevertheless, she argues that rather than criticise the ways of doing philosophy that are more or less typical to women, we should give up the ideal that makes philosophy a speculation that leaves no room for lack of knowledge. She also suggests that the subject of philosophy should not be seen so much as a master who knows, a solitary all-knowing subject. Instead, we could see philosophy as a collective enterprise which leaves space for not-knowing. (Le Dœuff 1989, 116–127.)

Le Dœuff undoubtedly exaggerates the extent to which the relationship of women philosophers to philosophy was mediated through their lovers, and how derivative their thinking was. Even if Le Dœuff’s description of this relationship was read loosely as a description of falling in love with philosophy without being able to transcend the mediating role of one male philosopher, rather than as descriptions of clearly erotic relationships, it can be argued that she overlooks the diversity of women’s relationships
to their advisors. Sometimes, like in the cases of Hypatia, Christine de Pisan (1364–1430) and Lucrezia Marinella (1571–1653), the father’s role was important, and one can only assume that the encouragement of a father can have a function rather different from that of a lover, a husband, or even a distantly admired teacher.

Nevertheless, Le Dœuff’s conclusion about the transformation needed seems credible. For the practice of philosophy to become more inclusive, and in fact, to become more philosophical, philosophy should be seen more in terms of a continuously evolving process of thought than as mastery. Young women become enthralled by the open-ended quest that philosophy purports to be in the first instance, but many of them experience discomfort when they realise that in order to “make it” in philosophy, they have to fight for speaking space and repeatedly demonstrate their learnedness, argumentative skills and possession of knowledge. In this way, there appears to be something self-defeating in the philosophical enterprise: it promises dialogue and freedom of thought but often produces hierarchies and silencing.

In what follows, I examine the role of the philosophical canon and a phenomenon connected closely to it, namely the cult of the genius, in learning philosophy. The problem of this aspect of philosophy will be analysed in some detail. I start my discussion, however, from a more rewarding side of being in a relationship to the canon, namely the patient labour of thinking with the other that philosophy students are encouraged in.

**Dealing with Tradition: Intimacy and Idolatry**

In philosophy, more than in many other fields, the tradition is mediated through a discussion of a canon, that is, texts from the history of philosophy that are deemed central or epoch-making. That the canon is quite homogenous in terms of the gender and ethnicity of the authors is a question we have touched upon already. This phenomenon is connected with another equally problematic one, namely the cult of the genius. I argue, however, that the mediation of the tradition through canonic texts is not
merely problematic but can be seen as one of the distinctive features of philosophy. That we might need to allow for a plurality of canons does not imply that we should or could cut down the ties of philosophy with its past. Philosophy involves a dialogue across millennia, and in its ability to contact the historical other it resembles some other disciplines, such as literary studies or history. What is specific to philosophy, however, is the role that the texts and their authors take. Even though a study of those texts produces information about their authors and their intellectual context, very often philosophers are motivated by the possibilities of dialogue, of obtaining a better understanding of issues that the historical philosopher discusses.

In the process of reading and studying the texts, the authors become important interlocutors to the readers, be the latter students or researchers. As I have argued elsewhere, following Beauvoir, there is a specific intimacy to the reading experience: the reader is spoken to by the other – the author, the narrator, the text –, and yet the reader is the one who brings these words to life with one’s own activity. In other words, there exists a particular kind of intersubjectivity within the reading experience, one that involves both passivity and activity on the part of the reader: the words written by the other guide the reader’s attention and take the place of one’s own “inner speech”, and yet without the act of reading and one’s own imaginative input the letters would remain just black marks on white background. In other words, while reading, we adopt the voice of the other as our own, sharing, in part, its intentionality. At the same time, the voice of the other remains foreign to us: it speaks to us within us, but it is not controlled by us in other ways than by the fact that we can decide to stop reading. (See Korhonen and Ruonakoski 2017, 30–33, and Beauvoir 1948, 1965, 1979, 2004, 2011a and 2011b.) Even so, we can disagree and pause to think of alternative ways of dealing with the issues the author is addressing. The alteration between the activity of reading and reflective pauses is, in fact, how the philosophical dialogue works during the reading process. Perhaps more than in the case of reading fiction, we engage in a movement between the activation of the words of the author, development of an affective stance on them, one of disbelief or of a happy recognition, and pauses during which beginnings of possible counterarguments become formulated.18

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18 Literary theorists typically distinguish the reading experience of fiction from that of more scholarly texts. From Aristotle’s *Poetics* on, theorists have formulated in different ways the idea that literary texts – or in Aristotle’s case “mimetic” texts – are not expected to make arguments, whereas scholarly texts are (see, e.g. Beauvoir 2011a and 1979). Likewise, reading fiction is said to involve a participation in a multitude of different perspectives, unlike scholarly texts. I have argued that
Indeed, philosophical writings are not read mainly because they provide “facts” but because they help us think by engaging both our affective and reflective abilities. It is a mistake to read Hannah Arendt because she tells us “facts” about how the Nazis came to power or even “facts” about the nature of totalitarianism; instead, one should read *The Origins of Totalitarianism* in order to learn to think about totalitarianism with her. This is precisely the liberating aspect of reading philosophical works: not learning what to think but engaging critically in an inner dialogue with someone who has already produced an analysis of particular topic, learning to think more rigorously and more creatively than you would be able to do all by yourself, thinking with the other.19

I have discussed the issue of reading philosophical works at some length in order to show how much feeling can be invested in this act, and what kind of liberating power it has. Yet there is a flipside to this affective–intellectual process: the author becomes the object of an adoration similar to that of authors of more literary genres, and, with the institutional support to the philosophical canon, acquires the cloak of genius. In other words, the very human need to be in contact with another human on an intellectual level, together with the cultural demand for academic trailblazers as sources of inspiration, paradoxically contributes to the production of a demi-god. Given the scarcity or virtual non-existence of female philosophers in the canon, this phenomenon is particularly problematic from the viewpoint of female students.

What do we then mean by “a genius”? To be sure, the meaning of the word has changed radically over time. Christine Battersby, the author of *Gender and Genius* (1989), argues that the current conception of the genius was born only in the 18th century, with

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19 Even so, it can happen that the close learning of a philosopher’s thoughts becomes an emulation of that philosopher’s project in every detail and the kind of ownership of knowledge we discussed above. This is a tendency that philosophers should struggle against. If the idea of teaching philosophy is to empower students and to liberate their thinking, teachers should also avoid adopting the cloak of the genius themselves, even if students, who may be in the search for role models, may be ready to grant it to them. Again, the question about philosophy should be about “how”, not about “who”, for if the emphasis is on the latter, we will easily end up in a situation, in which loyalty to the master rather than critical and creative thinking becomes rewarded.
the Romantics, when two concepts, namely the concept of *genius* (Lat. *genius*) and the concept of *ingenious* (Lat. *ingenium*) amalgamated. In Roman Antiquity, the word *genius* first referred to a male household spirit, and it was associated with the *paterfamilias*, but later each free male was considered to have from his birth a genius, which represented his potential virility and life-giving force. (Battersby 1989, 52–53). *Ingenium*, on the other hand, referred to natural abilities or inborn talent.

To cut a long story short – which means skipping the intriguing gendered developments of these concepts through the Middle Ages and the Renaissance –, in his influential *The Critique of Judgement* (1790), Kant, in fact, conflated the concepts (see Battersby 1989, 76): “*Genius* is the innate mental aptitude (*ingenium*) through which nature gives the rule to art.” (2007, 136, §46.) 20 Kant underlines that genius is a natural gift, a talent that differs from dexterity (*Geschicklichkeitsanlage*), which was, according to Battersby, earlier associated with *ingenium*. For Kant, genius is opposite to the spirit of imitation and characterised primarily by originality. (Kant 2007, §46–47; Battersby 1989, 43–51, 76–77.) He is aware of the etymology the word, and describes the workings of the genius, as if nature itself worked through a man:

> Hence, where an author owes a product to his genius, he does not himself know how the ideas for it have entered into his head, nor has he it in his power to invent the like at pleasure, or methodically, and communicate the same to others in such precepts as would enable them to produce similar products. (Kant 2007, 137, §46.)

True enough, Kant discusses genius in the context of great art, but Arthur Schopenhauer, who proclaimed himself a Kantian (and a man of genius), discussed genius in a larger scope, as a category of superhumans. For Schopenhauer, geniuses were also characterised by solitude:

> The same reason indeed accounts for the peculiar inclination of all men of genius for solitude, to which they are driven by their difference from the rest, and for which their own inner wealth qualifies them. For, with

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20 The beginning of the German original of §46 reads as follows: “*Genie* ist das Talent (Naturgabe), welches der Kunst die Regel gibt. Da das Talent, als angeborenes produktives Vermögen des Künstlers, selbst zur Natur gehört, so könnte man sich auch so ausdrücken: *Genie* ist die angeborene Gemütsanlage (*ingenium*), durch welche die Natur der Kunst die Regel gibt.”
humanity it is as with diamonds, the extraordinarily great ones alone are fitted to be solitaires, while those of ordinary size have to be set in clusters to produce any effect. (Schopenhauer 1907, 251.)

In Schopenhauer’s philosophy the celebration of the genius as a virile force, which, nonetheless, incorporates feminine sensitivities, is conflated with a clearly misogynistic discussion of women’s capacities (see Battersby 1989, 107–111). However, it is difficult to see how the category of the philosopher genius – which Schopenhauer and Friedrich Nietzsche were perhaps the keenest to represent – could even in principle accommodate women, given that the romanticist idea of genius which we have inherited was built on the idea of male life-giving force. According to Battersby, it has often been the case that male thinkers have specifically argued against the possibility of the female genius. “There are no female geniuses. A female genius is a man.” In other words, should there ever be a woman who is talented and influential enough to be considered a genius, one should understand, that this person is not, in her core, a woman but a man.

The need to pose as a budding genius that mystically arises in seminars may very well be one of the alienating aspects of philosophy for women students. Indeed, the idea of the solitary philosopher genius seems to accommodate poorly women and diverse philosophers, who may fail to see themselves as the legitimate heirs of the tradition. It is perhaps not rare to witness among white male students in philosophy a kind of affectionate mocking attitude towards the “big names” in philosophy, as if Aristotle and Heidegger were their big brothers who they make fun of but at the same time admire and feel supported by their example. Whether or not women philosophy students were likely to adopt a similar jocular attitude towards historical female thinkers, the very fact that these thinkers never occupied a position as such universal icons as the mail thinkers of the philosophical canon makes the relationship of students to them nonparallel to their relationship to male philosophers: mocking historical female thinkers is hardly

21 The English translation On the Fourfold Root of the Principle of Sufficient Reason and On the Will in Nature, includes two essays, which were published in German under the titles Über die vierfache Wurzel des Satzes vom reichen Grund (1813) and Über den Willen in der Natur (1836).

22 According to Carl Pletsch, Nietzsche’s life demonstrates that “genius is a role that needs to be learnt and nurtured” (1991, 15).
like mocking the incomparably ingenious and influential ancestor but rather like mocking the already ridiculed, poor and marginalised distant relative, a mad auntie who herself may be the only one to think that she is a philosopher.

If we are not happy the idea of genius as it has been described above, should we then discard it altogether? After all the cult of genius obscures the character of philosophy as a collective endeavour and because it emphasises the person instead of the work. As it is frequently repeated, philosophy is dialogue: we discuss ideas that belong to a tradition, try to understand that tradition and the views of others as best we can even when we wish to overcome that tradition, and ask for our peers’ comments and counterarguments for whatever new ideas we are able to develop. Philosophy is a collective effort in the sense that it requires a community of thinkers who believe in the importance of doing philosophy and who, across millennia, strive for clarity and a better understanding of reality. True enough, at the same time it is the effort of individuals, who often need solitude in order to engage in this dialogue with their full capacity and who enjoy working in solitude. Even so, it can be asked whether the very idea of describing philosophy through “geniuses” is flawed.

Battersby’s solution is not to discard the category of genius but to discard the romantic idea of genius as a solitary man, who is like a madman and like a woman but at the same time embodies a virile force of life, and expresses utmost originality. In her view, the task of feminists is to change the definition of genius and to bring out female geniuses. And in fact, during a workshop in which the cult of genius was being discussed, a female colleague exclaimed: “Don’t we all want to be geniuses?!” Perhaps this question could be transformed into the form: “Don’t we all want to achieve individual brilliance in our thinking?” In that case, the answer is probably “yes”. We do not do philosophy to be bad or mediocre thinkers, such as those inferior interlocutors of Socrates, who get is so wrong before Socrates helps them out.

Brilliance is something that we can achieve in philosophy through a long and loving engagement in thinking, discussing and writing. Achieving it does not require being placed higher than others in intellectual hierarchy, but rather a success in a more limited endeavour. At the same time, the word “genius” is associated with heroic, solitary achievements, which are recognised as superior by others. It cannot be denied that being
recognised as beyond compare in one’s field, may still be one of the alluring qualities of genius. In reality, however, attaining a high standard in one’s field may not be so much a question of innate talent, as the Romantics would have had it, but one of practice and perseverance (see Berliner and Eyre 2018).

From the perspective of temporality, the satisfactory moments when one can experience that one achieves brilliance in one’s work are not the moments in which others applaud the finished work, for in those moments the work in question exists mainly as a past engagement from the philosopher’s viewpoint. That is when the philosopher’s living engagement with the topic has already ceased to exist, be it as it may that for the readers the work now holds a promise of their own future possibilities. For the author, the philosopher, the actual moments of satisfaction consist of the moments of insight, which often take place after a long period of seemingly going in circles or of inefficiency, of the moments of flow, when philosophical thinking seems relatively effortless and appears to hold a lot of promises: it opens up towards a limitless future. In comparison to all this, any recognition by others seems secondary, no matter how much one yearns for it, for it can only ever be a celebration of a work that has already been left behind by the philosopher and represents a gap between the author and the readers.

One way of understanding brilliance in philosophical writing is precisely how it positions us temporally. If a work opens up new possibilities for the reader, if it transforms their relationship to their own future, the work is likely to appear to the reader as brilliant. This way of understanding brilliance as a kind of transformative force is somewhat – but not completely – relativistic, because in the case of different readers different works have this power, and even the same reader experiences the same work differently depending on the stage they are in studies. Wagner does not do it for everybody. Now, in respect to the philosophical canon, this would imply that a plurality of canons is imperative.

23 In her book *Genius: The History of an Idea*, Penelope Murray argues that a genius generally understood to be an individual with exceptional gifts, who nonetheless differs from people who are simply talented (1989, 1).

24 Again, my analysis of temporality and intersubjectivity relies on Beauvoir’s discussion of them in *Pyrrhus and Cineas* (2003, 2004b?).
The analysis reveals that the philosophy student’s relationship to the canon, or, to the part of that canon that the student chooses to familiarise themselves with, consists of a specific intimacy brought about by the reading act itself, a dialogue over time or a phenomenon of thinking together, and, in optimal cases, a new set of intellectual and experiential possibilities opened up by those works. I suggest that even if we may harbour some remains of the Romantic conception of “genius” and even though the institutional solidification of a specific canon as if legitimises a conception of certain thinkers as heroic and superior, we should not ignore the future-opening aspect of different philosophers’ work that contributes to their adoration through the thankfulness it inspires.

Perhaps fittingly with the inflation the concept of genius has endured over the past decades, not least due to feminist criticisms, we seem to have simultaneously attained the situation in which a woman or a person of colour or a person belonging a gender minority can be seen as “a genius”. Even though it is difficult to raise anyone of one’s contemporaries as a genius, many women philosophers seem to have already reached a status which would allow them to be later viewed as “female geniuses”, such as Judith Butler, Luce Irigaray and Martha Nussbaum, if only their ideas are later deemed to be central to the narrative of the history of philosophy, and they are not written out of the history of philosophy, which has often been the fate of female philosophers. Also many of the posthumanist thinkers are women and may be fathomed to acquire this position someday. Women students of philosophy might find this encouraging if most of these thinkers had not moved from the philosophy department to fields such as comparative literature. After a century or so, however, it may be of little importance in which department those “geniuses” taught.

In what follows, I discuss the role female predecessors in philosophy, and how their presence in the studies of female students could perhaps empower them. After our discussion of the future-opening aspects of historical philosophical texts, it is time to consider yet another the empowering potential of the past: the power of a historical “us”.

Why and How to Bring forward Female Predecessors
The thoughts attributed to Phintys were not discussed in the beginning of this chapter by chance. Rather, this was a case of deliberately introducing a possibility of an early female voice in philosophy, despite that little of the writings of Greek women philosophers has been preserved to posterity, that these philosophers do not belong to the philosophical canon, and that their ideas may not appear particularly progressive from the perspective of philosophers of our time. The idea that there is a thinking, arguing woman far away in the history of philosophy, and that these could be her words, rather than just words of female characters in male philosophers’ writings or male philosophers’ views about women, can be meaningful as such as for many female students as well as for female professional philosophers. Why? Not because of any feminine essence that all women would share, but because that woman has spoken out of the position of a woman, who is also a philosopher, and a member of a minority within her philosophical community.

In other words, we are dealing with the formation of an “us” in the historical continuum that reaches from the Graeco-Roman Antiquity to our days and to the coming generations female philosophers, towards whom our own actions open up. True enough, not all women philosophers relate themselves primarily to this continuum of female philosophers, but for some a sense of this continuum may help affirm their belief in themselves as philosophers: the history of philosophy is not simply the history of men philosophers, even though it is often presented as one.

More precisely, the sense of belonging does not emerge merely from arguments proposed by philosophers, but it is also of importance, from which positions those arguments are proposed. When Socrates writes that women, too, should get a philosophical education, if they show talent for philosophy, a woman reader may think: “A point well made, Socrates. You stood up for us!” – happy for his words, even though he (or Plato as the author of The Republic) also says that women are weaker in everything they do in comparison to men. When a woman writes that women, too, should be able to philosophise, a female reader may think: “Good for you, sister! You stood up for us!” While the “us” refers in both cases to “us women”, Socrates’ argument comes from the ranks of the privileged majority and concerns a minority, whereas a woman philosopher speaks about a group she belongs to. The difference then comes to concern the sense of agency: whether I, as a female philosopher or as a female student
of philosophy am given some concessions by a male philosopher or whether I participate in the formation of an awareness of “us women” as agents of philosophising and of political questioning of the sense of entitlement of different genders as “owners” of philosophy. What is more, it is of relevance that through my own actions, I myself participate in achieving a goal that was recognised already by my female predecessors in the history of philosophy. In other words, it is not a question of merely achieving a goal but a question of participating in action that makes the achievement of that goal possible. (See Beauvoir 2004, 183–184.)

It would thereby seem important to bring forward female predecessors. They can act as role models to women students and provide a fuller sense of what it is to be a practitioner of philosophy as a part of a continuum: I, as the subject of experiencing both pleasure and difficulties in philosophy, am not alone – there have been others before me, and for them, too, these issues have been of significance. When my female predecessors speak about the position of women in philosophy, I acknowledge an “us”, rather than myself as an object of gaze and a historical male figure as its subject.

The attempt to bring forward of female predecessors, however, immediately faces several obstacles. First of all, in the case of the earliest history of women philosophers, it is impossible to deny the scarcity of the remaining texts. In the case of ancient Greek philosophy, it may even be difficult to say whether the person to whom a text has been attributed to, actually wrote it, as we saw in the case of Phintys. In the case of later female philosophers, the attempt to introduce their work is complicated by the lack of available modern editions and translations. Secondly, it can be difficult to define the philosophical weight of some of these texts, especially if they are very short. Thirdly, the existing philosophical all-male canon is already in itself so extensive that it is an impossible task for any contemporary philosopher to master it all. Why introduce minor figures whose philosophy most certainly has been less influential than that of those already accepted in the canon? Fourth, even if a philosopher who is not specialised in the history of women thinkers would like to introduce them in his lectures, this may be difficult to do without a degree of dilettantism. Finally, if we widen our horizons

25 In a similar way, Beauvoir emphasises the sense of agency in the liberation of Paris in 1944: “the goal was not a liberated of Paris, it was the liberation itself”. In other words, it was of pivotal importance for the participants to participate in the liberation rather just being handed over a liberated city. (Beauvoir 2004, 183–184.)
beyond the Northern hemisphere, and try to take into account also African, Asian and South-American philosophers, or philosophers of different minorities, does not our task of teaching philosophy become even more impossible and can it not at best provide only a very superficial glimpse to different philosophies rather than a good understanding of the history of European philosophy?

Now, introducing some diversity in the curriculum does not, of course, need to end up in the exclusion of major European philosophers. However, it might not be a bad idea to broaden our views of what philosophy is. This would quite likely result in the diversification of course contents both in the sense of bringing in new perspectives into individual courses and in that of including of whole courses with new content. To alleviate the problem of dilettantism, there luckily exist already many sources and research traditions on women philosophers.

Authoring a monograph on the history of women philosophers as a whole, is, of course, extremely challenging. I will just mention Mary Anne Waithe’s four-volume *A History of Women Philosophers* (1987, 1989, 1991, 1995), Cecile T. Tougas’ and Sara Ebenrecks *Presenting Women Philosophers* (2000), Marit Rullmann’s *Philosophinnen I und II* (1998) and Ursula I. Meyer’s *Philosophinnen-Lexikon* (1997). As regards books with a narrower focus on philosophers of a certain era or on even individual philosophers, certain topics and periods are better represented than others. For instance, there already exists a remarkable body of work on early modern women philosophers’ treatises pertaining to epistemology and metaphysics. A lot has been written on the work of Elisabeth of Bohemia, Anne Conway, Margaret Cavendish, Émilie du Châtelet and Wollstonecraft. Like in the case of René Descartes and Immanuel Kant, there exist already detailed critical research and what can be called traditions of interpreting these women philosophers. In other words, it is no longer only a case of making these women philosophers’ work known, but passing on ways of interpreting them to future generations.

Another question is, how to integrate a discussion of women thinkers into the discussion of the male-dominated philosophical canon. There are several ways to tackle this issue. In the teaching of the history of philosophy, integration can be promoted minimally by giving references to the work of women philosophers or including some of their work
in the reading materials, so that those students who become interested in their work can do at least a part of their course work on it. A more developed form of integrating historical women philosophers in the teaching is discussing their work in conjunction with that of their male contemporaries, pointing out connections and the actual dialogues they have engaged in with one another. Finally, a deeper knowledge of work of the historical women philosophers may lead us to a new conception of the whole of the history of philosophy, and to presenting it, too, in a new way to the students.

There are already some online resources, from which we can draw when we plan inclusive teaching on different philosophical topics. Project Vox (http://projectvox.org), for instance, showcases early modern women philosophers such as Margaret Cavendish (1623–1673), Anne Conway (1631–1679), Damaris Cudworth Masham (1659–1708), Mary Astell (1666–1731) and Émilie du Châtelet (1706–1749), providing also alternative syllabi for discussing issues pertinent to philosophy of that era. Another interesting resource is New Narratives in the History of Philosophy (http://www.newnarrativesinphilosophy.net/projects.html), which provides links to several databases, and develops projects of its own, such as digitalising manuscripts of women philosophers. The website Querelle (http://querelle.ca) publishes especially the pro-woman texts of the so-called querelle des femmes. This website focuses particularly on the work of 16th and 17th century Italian and French thinkers. Also the German website History of Women Philosophers and Scientists (https://historyofwomenphilosophers.org) offers information about historical women philosophers, their work, and about events related to them.

At the same time, the inclusion of women authors in the curriculum should not be reduced to bringing forward historical figures. Inclusive teaching could also come to mean that whatever topic we deal with, we should every now and then check what kind of gender balance exists in the articles that we ask the students to read. This is, in fact, more or less the practice in some universities, such as the University of Iceland. If we notice that all of the articles are written by men, we should consider the possibility that it does not reflect the actual ratio of the sexes among the writers of high-quality articles in that area, but that an implicit bias may be operating within our thinking, or that our interests are, in fact, gendered (see Haslanger 2008).
Most importantly, also teachers themselves are predecessors of the students, and often act, whether they like it or not, as role models. For women and diverse students of philosophy, the diversity of the staff is one positive signal of a possibility for themselves to have a career as a professional in philosophy (see, e.g. Dotson 2013). Molly Paxton, Carrie Fidgor and Valerie Tiberius have, in fact, demonstrated, that the presence of female teachers in the philosophy class correlates with the percentage of women students. Yet it remains uncertain, whether this correlation is due to women teachers’ ability to cater for their female students’ interests or whether their mere presence inspires women in their studies. (Paxton, Fidgor and Tiberius 2012, 995.)

The Jyväskylä Summer School: Feminist Thinking in Historical Perspective

The Jyväskylä Summer School was an experiment in how to integrate female thinkers in the discussion of the history of philosophy in a novel and potentially empowering manner, creating different layers of dialogue through the ages and in the classroom. At the same time, the summer school proposed a nuanced critique of the politics of exclusion. It drew attention to how female thinkers have been excluded from the philosophical canon, but also to how the feminist foremothers and forefathers tend to be excluded from feminist canons of thinking.

The programme of this summer school was developed in a close interaction between the responsible teachers, who were all specialists in the history of philosophy. Together they had designed a course that would elucidate the development of feminist thought both as a part of the history of philosophy and in dialogue with the influential philosophers of each era. Starting from Plato and Aristotle, the teachers went on to discuss the ideas of Héloïse, Christine de Pisan, Marie de Gournay, Lucrezia Marinella, Mary Astell, Poulain de la Barre, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Madame Roland, Olympe de Gouges, Mary Wollstonecraft, and Simone de Beauvoir. The lectures together with the readings from these thinkers provided a comprehensive introduction to the roots of feminist thought. The teachers demonstrated how female and male thinkers had argued with and against prominent philosophers such as Aristotle and Rousseau, to defend
feminist positions, and how ideas, which would not necessarily strike us as feminist, had contributed to the historical development of feminist modes of thinking.

In this course, the content was designed very carefully to provide a coherent narrative, and most importantly, students were given a history against which they could reflect upon their own situation in philosophy. Importantly, they were given an overview of the ideas of early feminist thinkers, and a description of why and how these thinkers, whose intellectual background differed in a number of ways from ours and who thereby sometimes defended positions alien to us, could still be considered as feminists: they stood up for women and women’s possibilities of action in their own societies, discussing the relationship between gender and power. In this way, the course not only provided the participants with a history of feminist thought, but also a wide, non-judgemental understanding of the possibilities of argumentation in a specific historical situation.

Pedagogically, the course was an example of how to discuss the history of philosophy creatively rather than following the already established patterns. At the same time, this course demonstrated how one can, within fairly traditional modes of teaching, such as lectures and reading seminars, still foster feelings of belonging and in fact empower students, when the content of the course is planned to support this. As Brook J. Sadler has pointed out, it is indeed possible to create a dialogical atmosphere also through the careful elaboration of the ways in which the discussed philosophers have engaged in dialogue with each other (2004). This provides a model of dialogue for the students, and, of course, the teacher, too, is an example of a philosopher engaging in a dialogue with other philosophers over time. Yet another level of dialogue is the dialogue between the students and the teacher. Evidently the passion that the teacher demonstrates for her topic and for the dialogue is also extremely important, for when the teacher demonstrates an affective relationship to the topic, it is easier for the student to be drawn towards that topic empathetically. In the course feedback, many of the students did in fact refer positively to the passion of the teachers showed towards their topics.

A typical summer school day consisted of two 90 minutes’ lectures and a workshop, in which the students discussed the reading material of the day. The students were divided in three groups with three different instructors, due to the large number of total
participants in the course. These seminar sessions were yet another opportunity for dialogue, one more student-driven than the dialogue that took place during the lectures. At the end of the course – and following the model of the Icelandic summer school –, the students presented their research questions for the final papers in four groups. These groups were divided along their topics, namely 1) concepts of gender, 2) equality and difference, 3) virtue and morality and 4) reason and passion. Finally, there was a concluding session, in which students were asked to air their views about the summer school. After this summer school, like after all the others, the students were also asked to give feedback through a questionnaire.

Despite the generally positive undertone of the feedback, some participants found the course too Eurocentric. One respondent, on the other hand, considered the attempt to accommodate more than 2000 years of philosophy and feminist thinking within one course already overly ambitious. Perhaps this goes to show the problem of exclusion and inclusion does not concern only the presentation of the history of philosophy in general but also the presentation of feminist thought. While many academic teachers may sigh at this point and think that we are facing an impossible mission, given that the expertise of one person can go only so far, this is not a reason to give up. Without claiming that there should no longer be courses in exclusively European philosophy, I suggest we acknowledge that the phase of globalization we are living in right now could in fact produce new kinds of combinations in teaching and learning, and that an increasing co-operation with feminist scholars from non-western countries is one of the promising avenues we might want to explore.
2. The Affective, Social and Embodied Situation

This chapter deals with the affective, social and embodied conditions of studying philosophy, incorporating the voices of the students as quotations of their answers to the questionnaire on attitudes to studying philosophy, and paraphrasing the views some of them expressed in the interviews. The chapter starts with a discussion of the “pleasures” of philosophy, and especially women students’ affective relationship with philosophy. After an analysis of the alienating features of philosophy for women students, I suggest pedagogical ways to overcome at least some of them. Also the estrangement from philosophy experienced by students because of their class or ethnic background is discussed. The chapter ends with a description of approaches proposed in the summer schools of Reykjavík and Aalborg to address the alienating features of philosophy for women and diverse students.

Women Students’ Passion for and Estrangement from Philosophy

That philosophy appears as a field of intellectual freedom and interaction at its purest may be one of its most important lures. As we remember, Aristotle suggests that philosophic wisdom offers “pleasures marvellous for their purity and their enduringness”, for philosophical contemplation is, according to him, the only activity that “would seem to be loved for its own sake; for nothing arises from it apart from the contemplating, while from practical activities we gain more or less apart from the action” (NE X:7).

Not all philosophers entirely agree with Aristotle’s view – for many philosophy is also a force for social transformation, starting from Plato through Wollstonecraft and Karl Marx to Arendt and Franz Fanon, and a long list of feminist and environmental philosophers. Even so, it may not be misguided to claim that the core of the philosophical attitude consists of intellectual curiosity, the attitude of wonder and constant search (see Heinämaa 2000). The aim is a better understanding of things, pursued in a community of thinkers who share the ideals of intellectual humility and bravery. It is this particular kind of camaraderie that philosophy majors are supposed
to enjoy so much that they are ready to make it the centrepiece of their lives. In other words, at its best philosophical activity brings about a shared intellectual joy and a sense of belonging.

The wideness, depth and intellectual rigour of philosophy are features that often become mentioned, when students of all genders discuss their interest in philosophy. When asked, what are the things she most enjoys about philosophy, a female student answers:

*The issues discussed, the stringent mode of thinking and the dedication to really go to the bottom with things. The clarity of writing and use of words. The dedication to really be on point. The curiosity to really dig deep into fundamental questions. Philosophy has made me see every day things with new eyes. The tools you get to analyse, question and understand parts of the world.*

Another female respondent describes her interest in philosophy in a similar way:

*I like that it takes nothing for granted, and that no question is unaskable. One can keep being surprised and keep going on to delve deeper into a subject. So the radical critical attitude, in the sense that philosophy wants to understand the roots of everything, is what interests me the most.*

Yet these praises of philosophy are not unreserved. One of my interviewees likewise pointed out that she was first impressed by the fact that the whole reality was the topic of philosophy. She also felt that philosophy did, indeed, give tools for thinking, and she did find in it an area of an intellectual curiosity. This aspect of philosophy was rewarding for her. At the same time, she had great expectations of the interaction between philosophy students, anticipations of discussions that would be conducted in a tolerant atmosphere and would be broad in content. These expectations were not met, however: she found that especially in the beginning of her studies, the atmosphere in the discussions between students was competitive and even aggressive. Open dialogue was difficult, because some male students had what she described “a downright
religious attitude” towards theory: they idealised a theory and clung to it instead of engaging in a dialogue freely.

Here we return to the problem framed by Le Dœuff: the ownership of knowledge. It certainly is typical of philosophy that its practitioners find security and shelter in a tradition of thought they choose to represent. Even if you may not be able to provide your own ideas about specific philosophical questions, you can always refer to the solutions of earlier philosophers. It can, in fact, be useful to try out how a problem would be approached through a particular philosophical framework, even if you did not subscribe to that framework. This allows us to see if that framework would be fruitful in solving the question we are interested in. It can also be argued that a studious emulation of a philosophical framework is a necessary step on the way to a freer thinking. The peril of this approach is that your thinking may become engulfed by a conceptual framework to such an extent that you cannot really conceive of alternative modes of thought, or that your interpretation of reality follows dogmatically your chosen theory or thinker. I will not take a stance on how gendered such a tendency is; yet it is clear that memorising and using a theory allows you to present yourself as a possessor of knowledge, that is, living in the wealth of knowledge instead of moving between wealth and poverty as Eros described by Diotima in Plato’s Symposium.26

It appears that different individuals may have different ways of coping with the feelings of inadequacy they may have in the beginning of their studies. The very same things that make philosophy so alluring, namely its wideness both in terms of history and topics, and its depth and open-endedness, also make it very challenging to get a grasp of. Facing this challenge, students may overestimate the demands of the discipline, and underestimate their own abilities. One of the female respondents of the project questionnaire explains how her love for philosophy was overshadowed by feelings of inadequacy:

\[
\text{I love this subject and I have felt a strong feeling of privilege and happiness about being able to study this subject. But I also got depressed when writing my Bachelor’s thesis because of (among other things)}
\]

26 About love and wonder as attitudes of philosophising and an analysis of The Symposium, see Heinimaa 2000 and 2017.
feelings of not being good enough. I thought I would not manage to write the thesis, but then I got an A. It felt like a joke afterwards that I had gone through so much anguish about something that, as it turned out, I was really good at.

While these unwarranted feelings of inadequacy are not entirely gender-specific, it is, according to several studies that do not specifically focus on philosophy, more typical for boys and male college students of at least to overestimate their performance and more typical for girls and female students to underestimate theirs. It is also typical for both schoolboys and male college students to underestimate the performance of their female peers. (E.g. Bench et al. 2015; Cole et al.; Grunspan et al. 2016). All in all, it seems that even if girls, as a group, tend to do better in high school than boys, a great part of women students of philosophy are not ready to take up speaking space with the same confidence as men, nor do they trust their abilities in philosophy. What came up repeatedly in the interviews and questionnaires was that the image of the philosopher is quite gendered. The above-quoted female student, who has a passionate relationship to philosophy, describes her estrangement from philosophy as follows:

I do not feel that I have been discriminated against. I feel, though, that being in a male majority context has at times made me more insecure. I also feel that I have a picture of the ideal philosopher being male, and that I have had a hard time seeing myself as a person who can do the sorts of things that philosophers do, and answer those types of questions they do.

On the surface, it seems that adopting an identity as a professional philosopher may come more easily for men than women. Some female students also feel that they get less attention and recognition than male students or that they have to work harder to be recognised by professors and other students. Some also suggest that assertiveness and confrontation – attitudes more often linked with the traditional masculine virtues rather than the feminine ones – are overly appreciated in the philosophy class:

I think it is very easy for a Philosophy class to turn into an environment that rewards rhetorical confidence and assertiveness over substance.
Confrontation is sometimes overly rewarded as well. I think norms of femininity tend to clash with this environment and make women think “this is not for me”. But, even when women don’t think that, the problem is that men think it is “for them”. That is to say, I have seen too many young men who seem to think they are naturally gifted in Philosophy, with very little evidence. Their self-image seems to adhere to the discipline very easily. And this leads them to be very controlling in discussions, take up too much space and be often condescending towards women students. I feel the kind of young men who are in this category are (coincidentally or not) those most likely to not treat their fellow women students as colleagues and not to be critical of current gendered norms and arrangements.

On the bases of the questionnaires, some male students are very much aware of this problem, and monitor their own behaviour in the classroom. There may also be cultural and institutional differences in whether confrontational strategies are rewarded or not. Even the culture within a specific institution evolves over time, depending on the changes in the staff. Unfortunately, it may take only one person with a condescending attitude towards women to cause a lot of bad feelings or even to alienate women students from philosophy, especially if no one protests against the person’s derogatory comments.

In a male-dominated environment, women students can also have less casual relationships with the staff than male students. For instance, the affective framework of one-on-one discussions with staff members can be totally different for male students than it is for female students. A female graduate student writing at Women in Philosophy website points out the difference between her own attitude towards the possibility of sexual harassment and that of her boyfriend’s (also a graduate student in philosophy). Unlike the boyfriend, she was always painfully aware of the possibility of sexual underpinnings and misunderstandings in one-on-one meetings:

whenever I have ever had a meeting with a male member of staff I am on some level worried that they might express interest in me, or that I
will realise that they are interested in me, or that they will think that I am interested in them.\textsuperscript{27}

This example shows how heteronormativity plays out for women in a male-dominated setting. A brotherly bonding is not likely to take place between a male professor and a female student, because both may be occupied in making sure that the situation is not understood as sexually charged. Similar situations may occur also when the roles are reversed (see hooks 1994, 192)\textsuperscript{28}, but given that philosophy faculty is predominantly male and many power structures and sexual expectations work in the favour of men, we can assume that the space of female students in their interactions with the staff is more limited than that of male students. For this reason it is likely that their relationships to male staff members remain on a more formal level than those of male students. The problem is, of course, that a continuum of informal discussions “over a pint” can, in fact, play a major role when career tips are given or research group members are chosen. In a small Finnish survey a female respondent describes her experience of studying philosophy in the following manner:

\textit{In the beginning of my studies I noticed that male students also spent more of their free time with the department staff. I myself did not feel I knew anyone of the department staff, nor did I believe any of them would remember my name. I remember a discussion I had when I was writing my master’s thesis. [One of the male students] stated that since his freshman year, he had spent time mainly with the teachers. Young men do not appear to question their knowledge and abilities so much. At the same time, young women communicate continuous uncertainty about their competence and skills. In my class the young, clearly talented women, who also did well in their studies, did not feel capable of becoming philosophers or doing philosophical research. I’m the only one in that group who continued in philosophy after the master’s thesis.} (Halttunen-Riikonen 2014, 108.)


\textsuperscript{28} Hooks describes an incident between herself and a male student to whom she, without totally acknowledging it, had become attracted to. In order to outweigh her erotic feelings, she treated the young man so dismissively that he finally complained about her behaviour (hooks 1994, 192).
To summarise, women’s alienation within philosophy appears to include, at least, the following aspects: 1) exclusion from the most informal modes of social interaction between male staff members and students, 2) the occasional gender-based underdog’s role in classroom confrontations, 3) difficulties to identify oneself with the traditional masculine role of the philosopher, 4) the dominance of the all-knowing attitude over not-knowing, and 5) underestimation of one’s abilities. All things considered, it would then seem that many women students may need support from the teacher to be able to live up to their potentials. The question remains, how to provide this support. The answer needs not be complicated even if the exclusions and alienations listed are manifold.

The support can consist of encouragement and classroom strategies that create space for those who may not be so quick to verbalise their views or self-certain enough to air their views without questioning the need for this. The needed encouragement can be noticing the person individually also outside the classroom, commenting on their work in an encouraging manner, all in all demonstrating that they are worthy interlocutors and have valuable things to say. The classroom strategies that take into account different kinds of participants can include, for instance, giving the students some time to first silently write down ideas on a specific topic, then go through those ideas one by one in a small group, and finally, to share their views with the class. Sometimes women students can also benefit from learning a theory that thematises their marginal position, in other words, a feminist theory that allows them to become rooted within their field, instead of feeling adrift. Like I suggested in the previous chapter, providing a discussion of the history of women thinkers can also help women students to become rooted in philosophy.

Finally, one should not let the belittling of female and diverse students pass without interfering with it. This must not take the form of embarrassing the misbehaving student, but if a female student has been brutally interrupted, it is pivotal to return the floor to her. If her comments have been ridiculed, it is crucial to show support. It is critical not to let things slide, when somebody with a sense of entitlement attacks someone from an “outgroup”. If the teacher does nothing, this is often as good as an approval of the discriminating behaviour and contributes to the alienation of the targeted person. As a teacher, one may become involved in these detrimental dynamics
without ever making a conscious choice to do so, so one should be have patterns of constructive action – whichever work best for one’s own style of interacting with the students – in mind in case of the emergence of such problems.

Students’ Class Background and Ethnicity as Sources of Alienation: Is Philosophy Disembodied?

“Philosophy is not for black women. That is a white man’s game.” This is an advice a career counsellor gave to American philosopher Kristi Dotson’s sister after she had suggested that she might want to become a professional philosopher. British philosopher Patricia Haynes, who has a Caribbean background, recalls her father’s reaction to her idea of making a career out of philosophy: “Philosophy is for posh white boys with trust funds.” (Ratcliffe and Shaw 2015.) At the moment of writing the article, Haynes identifies herself as one of the three black women philosophers in Great Britain.

In these examples three characteristics are attributed to philosophy: it is for white people, it is for men, and it is for affluent people. If you can’t tick all of these boxes, the worse for you. If you can’t tick any of these boxes – what’s the point in even trying to become a professional in philosophy?

It is true that diverse students may opt out of majoring in philosophy simply because they or their parents see other alternatives as financially more secure career options. However, if one does choose philosophy against all odds, one may have to face a feeling of discomfort, of not quite belonging. Yet the class status of studying philosophy varies from one country to another. In countries such as the Nordic countries, where university education does not – as yet – require a financial input from the parents, studying philosophy is not generally associated with an upper-class background. In some other countries, on the other hand, a high socioeconomic status may be taken for granted among students, as a female student describes:
Philosophy has a gender problem. But, at least in North America, it also seems to have a very big race and class problem. One very obvious way in which this manifests is the plain under-representation of students from diverse backgrounds in graduate programs. It leads to the formation of a certain social “consensus”, of an imagined shared background that is distinctively affluent and “white” American. For example, I have felt very alienated from many informal social occasions among philosophers because of the level of wealth and the economic family background assumed in conversation. The gap is so big that I feel like I cannot relate to those people and I often withdraw from conversation altogether. This carries over to philosophical discussions where I am sometimes shocked by the lack of familiarity with other more disadvantaged economic situations (and also the explicit assumption that everyone in the room is unfamiliar with them).

It has been suggested, however, that also students from the Nordic countries participate in an academic culture that is based on the lifestyle and values of middle and upper classes. Sociological studies have shown that students and researchers that come from a working-class background, may, in fact, feel continuing insecurity within the academia, not having immersed the middle and upper class values that produce the ability to engage in a dialogue, to speak out and to present arguments (Käyhkö 2015). In their homes, they may have had to differentiate from values that present manual labour as more worthwhile and honest than academic work, which is “just studying” or even “wasting tax-payers’ money”. In the academic world, students and researchers may be quite successful, but despite their success they may experience a constant need of proving themselves, a fear “being found out” as lacking, and a feeling of discomfort.

One of the male students that answered the questionnaire, describe the impact of his working-class background as follows:

I come from a lower working-class background in which I was the first in my entire family to even get a "high school" degree.\textsuperscript{29} I do not come

\textsuperscript{29} In the Nordic countries, the compulsory education lasts for nine years (in all the Nordic countries?) and consists of a primary school of six years and a middle school of three years, the latter equivalent to lower grades of the American high
from a literary home. This means a lack of cultural background that is beneficial to studying a topic like philosophy and a great and persistent feeling of insecurity, inadequacy and being an “imposter” who is out of his element.

Despite the fact that he is able to articulate his thoughts in an eloquent manner, he still feels like “an imposter” and “out of his element” in philosophy. What we have here is a degree of estrangement from the academic philosophical culture, a feeling of incongruence that is parallel to that of students with a very different cultural (possibly non-western) background, women students, students of colour, and students with disabilities. At the same time these experiences of alienation and incongruence are not present in a uniform manner within or across these divisions: a white female student with an academic family background may feel more at ease in classroom debates than a white male student with a working-class background, whereas she may experience more feelings of discomfort in some other parts of the student life, in male-dominated informal get-togethers, for instance. In other words, the experiences of alienation and incongruence have a somewhat fluctuating character: they are born from exclusions from the white, western, cis-male, middle-class, heterosexual, able-bodied norm, but in different instances the different exclusions (non-male, non-white) may be more or less apparent and they can be compensated by privileges or “strengths” in some other areas (upbringing in an academic home, good self-confidence).

In her “How Is This Paper Philosophy?” (2012), Dotson identifies within philosophy “a culture of justification” that prevents diverse philosophers from feeling at ease within the field. By “culture of justification” she means a system which requires that all scholars justify their methods, topics and pedagogical choices with a “traditional” conception of philosophical engagement. (Dotson 2012, 6.) Analysing more specifically the situation of philosophers of colour, Dotson draws from the discussion of Gayle Salamon, according to whom justification as a method requires congruence and reconciliation of differences and is therefore particularly ill-suited to queer theory:

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30 About the “imposter syndrome”, see Sandra Lee Bartky 2003.
“queerness as a method would proceed in the opposite way, by supposing a diversion or estrangement from the norm and using that divergence as a source of proliferation and multiplication with the aim of increasing the livability of those lives outside of the norm” (Salamon 2009, 229). One could, perhaps, say the same about feminist philosophy in general: in feminist philosophy divergence is seen as a resource and richness, not as something that is in need of justification.

Dotson suggests that to make philosophy more inclusive, philosophers should work towards a disciplinary culture where “incongruence becomes a site of creativity for ever-expanding ways of doing professional philosophy” and multiple canons are accepted as a point of departure for philosophy (2012, 16–17). She also argues that the view of philosophy as a fundamentally critical enterprise and the necessity to adjust to a fairly restricted set of questions may alienate diverse practitioners from philosophy (ibid., 20–21).

In a similar vein, Carlos Sanchez has pointed out that mainstream philosophy, which tends to hold disembodiment, ahistoricity and universality as its ideals, does not allow a discussion of questions of marginality, and judges philosophies that are able to address them as falsely profound.31 For a “homegrown” U.S. Hispanic philosopher, then, to adapt oneself to the mainstream would require “looking away” from everything that makes one Hispanic. (Sanchez 2011, 40; see also Dotson 2012, 14, and hooks 1994, 192.) Now, to go back to the theme of rootedness – which, as I argued in the previous chapter, requires either an intuitive connection to some of the generally discussed themes in the field or working out one’s own history as an embodied and gendered practitioner of philosophy – such requirement will, in fact, leave diverse practitioners without a rooted existence within philosophy. They can go through the motions of academic philosophy, but this exercise can remain void of meaning, because they cannot orient towards new ideas with the support of their personal history and ethnic background.

It follows from this that in order to better integrate diverse students, the boundaries of philosophy should not be guarded as jealously as is often the case. When the discipline

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31 For a discussion of disembodiment and embodiment in philosophical writing, see, e.g. Thorgeirsdóttir, forthcoming, and Lehtinen 2007.
of philosophy shows that not only does it tolerate the study of politically charged areas but that it actually appreciates these, diverse students will feel more drawn towards philosophy. Pedagogically this means integration of courses that directly deal with such issues, and hiring teachers from diverse backgrounds.

Another question that is linked to the above described problem of “disembodiment” in philosophy is the often abstract and even game-like character that many students recognise in mainstream philosophy. When students were asked “what is it about philosophy that you do not like?”, they most often pointed towards the overemphasis of reason and the alienation from everyday life. According to a male student, he found it disturbing that “at times, [philosophy] can be very detached, academically self-centered and arrogant”. This critique concerns also the relationship of philosophy towards other disciplines: that it fails to acknowledge the things other disciplines have to offer. Another male student described his grievances as follows:

I am less fond of philosophy as “puzzle solving”. I used to like that but it is not really that interesting to me anymore. I am thinking of the widespread practices of conceptual analysis and definitions, and of thinking of abstract hypothetical problems or scenarios that others then try to think of equally hypothetical counter-examples to. I am also not fond of the tendencies in philosophy that mostly seem to be about making up new words and to critique texts and concepts that relate to other texts which refer back to yet other texts but never seem to have any relevance to the world outside those texts. Both are examples of abstract and purely theoretical philosophy that doesn’t actually try to understand the world but only creates a world of its own to play with.

In other words, the fact that students find philosophy to be alienated from the world produces their own alienation from philosophy. A female student, in turn, points out that philosophy appears to require a detachment from emotions and focuses on rationality: “[in philosophy] emotions are in the way (instead of being harnessed into energy for individuals and groups)”.

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Not only do students perceive philosophy – or parts of it – as detached from reality. In *Socrates Tenured* (2016), Robert Frodeman and Adam Briggle argue that due to its integration within the modern research university, philosophy has lost its living core and become a pedantry of technical details, which only a handful of other researchers can understand. While this analysis is directed mainly towards the currently dominating form of philosophy, namely analytic philosophy, they do not think the situation is much better within continental philosophy or applied philosophy.

In our summer schools, the questions of affectivity, rootedness and embodiment were addressed in very different ways. The Jyväskylä Summer School attempted to bring about rootedness in philosophy through providing a history of women thinkers. At the University of Iceland the very idea of the subject of philosophy as purely rationally based was put into question, and bodily and affective practices were introduced in order to create a new beginning for philosophising. The Aalborg Summer School gave a detailed method of practising philosophy, with the idea that the focus on the method rather than on the master–disciple relationship might emancipate the students. At the Oslo Summer School, again, the contextuality of ethical choices was emphasised in order to discuss the relationship between the subject of philosophy and the world in a non-reductionist manner. In what follows, I address the approaches proposed by the Icelandic and Danish summer schools.

**The Reykjavík Summer School: Nature, Emotions and the Body**

The summer school held at the University of Iceland in Reykjavik at the end of May 2016 was the first of our summer schools. This summer school, designed by Thorgeirsdottir and titled *Philosophy of the Body*, started from the idea that current academic practices are still based on a dualist conception of subjectivity and thereby incorporate an alienation from the lived body. For the same reason, these practices are blind to the body’s intertwining with the natural world. In their article “Reclaiming Nature by Reclaiming the Body” Guðbjörg R. Jóhannesdóttir and Thorgeirsdottir argue that while the conception of nature as a place outside of us is limited, abandoning the concept of nature altogether is not the alternative, either, as so-called end-of-nature
theorists have done. The place to start reconceptualising nature and its power to surprise us and to take hold of us is within ourselves, in our experience “of being nature ourselves, of being bodies, of connecting to the core of what it means to be a breathing, pulsating, sexuate human being”, of the fact that “we are something before we start thinking and having ideas”. (Jóhannesdóttir and Thorgeirsdottir 2016, 41.) This extended notion of gendered the body was thematised from both the phenomenological and social constructivist perspectives in the Reyjavík Summer School.32 The theoretical treatment of embodiment and gender formed a foundation for the more practical approach to embodied thinking introduced in the course.

In the end of their article, Jóhannesdóttir and Thorgeirsdottir sketch a way of thinking that goes beyond the traditional western rationalising, detached mode of thought:

we should try to think like water and sense like plants – sense closely and feel how we touch and shape and are shaped by the riverbank we are flowing in, and allow our thoughts to flow from our bodies rather than restricting them to what can be squeezed [sic!] through the workings of the analytical mind. (Jóhannesdóttir and Thorgeirsdottir 2016, 47.)

The mode of thinking outlined here got an explicit expression in the choice of the pedagogical point of departure of the Icelandic summer school. That point of departure was focusing or thinking from the body developed by the philosopher–psychologist Eugen T. Gendlin.33 His philosophy starts from the idea that there is a deep bodily awareness that profoundly influences people’s lives. He calls this awareness “a felt sense”. Focusing consists of getting in touch with this felt sense: paying attention to what is obscurely experienced in the body, and by staying with the unclear felt sense, going through different steps that produce a change in one’s body and in one’s way of understanding things. (Gendlin 2016, 37.)

Focusing resembles meditative practices in so far as it requires turning towards the embodied self. On the other hand, it is different, as it allows dwelling on specific

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32 For a social constructivist discussion of gender and embodiment, see Sveinsdóttir 2011 and Witt 2011.
33 In another article, “The Torn Robe of Philosophia” (forthcoming), Thorgeirsdóttir discusses similar views on the practice of philosophy by a much earlier thinker, Boethius.
problems, themes, words and concepts, getting in touch with their felt sense, discovering their felt meaning. Gendlin has developed also a focusing-oriented psychotherapy (see Gendlin 1996), and a certain affinity with psychotherapeutic approaches can be detected in the practice of active listening, which is another central part of focusing.

Active listening involves making space for truly hearing the other, and waiting with a sense of wonder for how the other wants to fill that space. The listener should not give advice, interpret, judge or argue. The listenee should only share what feels right, and not be afraid to correct the listener if the listener has not understood. In active listening, the focus is on listening and in the listenee, not on the listener. (Lehtinen, forthcoming; Gendlin 1996.)

The course incorporated several practices of active listening. In one exercise students formed groups of three. One was the listenee, who told about their way of experiencing the lecture just given. Another was the listener, who focused on completely on the listenee, silently listening to them. Finally, the third person made notes about the account of the listenee. When the listenee had ended their story, the one making notes read those notes aloud the listenee, who in turn could comment on the notes, perhaps adding something or further specifying what was meant.

Together with Mary Hendricks, Gendlin also developed a novel method for philosophical thinking, thinking at the edge (2004). After becoming familiarised with the basics of focusing, the students were provided with exercises in practice by one of the teachers, Donata Schoeller. “The edge” means a space in thinking in which one approaches the felt sense of the problem. Hesitation, faltering and struggling for words are signs of entering the space of felt meaning. In one exercise, the teacher acted as a facilitator of a student’s thinking process of their work. While the student uses a method of association to rearticulate the central ideas of their project by replacing some of the key words by alternative ones, the teacher listens, takes notes, and reflects back especially those parts in the student’s speech that seem particularly meaningful, “glowing”, and paying attention also to the bodily, affective expressions of the student in reference to what they are discussing. The aim of this process is to facilitate a positive
shift the student’s thinking in a way that does not shut out the embodied nature of human existence but embraces it as a resource for thinking. (Gendlin 2018.)

All in all, the organisers of the course wanted to experiment in and make room for experiential thinking, embodiment and emotions in philosophy. The lectures dealt with different philosophies of the body, bringing Gendlin’s philosophy of the implicit, phenomenology of the body and social constructivism into contact with each other. As for spatial arrangements, the lectures took place in conventional classrooms, but for the group exercises students could freely use the different spaces in the university building. As a nature excursion was a part of the programme, also the Icelandic nature with its mountains and hot springs was one of the learning spaces. The syllabus was quite varied, integrating lectures, panels, different kinds of exercises and feedback sessions, and ending with a theme-based research question seminar.

During the summer school, we noticed that experimental practices such as focusing and thinking at the edge require a lot of preparation in advance, and especially making sure that all the participants are from the very start aware of what kind of learning process they engage in. These learning experiments presupposed a very different attitude from the typical critical and argumentative attitude of the philosophy student, namely one that incorporates openness and trustfulness. For those students, who are already drawn towards alternative practices such as meditation or yoga and who are looking for a relief of the perhaps overly rationalistic atmosphere in philosophy, it is certainly easier to immerse themselves in the exercises than for those, who are not oriented in such a manner. Bringing focusing methods into the classroom also requires a degree of expertise from the teacher, not least because of the emotional component engaged in the exercises.

In a meaningful way, this summer school demonstrated the lack of attentive listening in academic life: while academic life purports to embrace dialogue, even in seminars one very often focuses more on one’s next argument than what the other is saying. Even if one does not engage in actual active listening or thinking at the edge exercises with students, it can be helpful for a teacher to go through these or similar exercises to be able to relate attentively to one’s students, especially to those whose theses one supervises. An attentively listening supervisor is of value not only for those, who have
difficulties getting their ideas expressed, but also for those, who tend to take up a lot of speaking space, for teachers always influence also through their example. Likewise, it may be a good idea to explain one’s pedagogical and ethical points of departure in the very beginning of a course, and ask the students, too, to pay attention to their interaction with other students and the way they listen to others.

The Aalborg Summer School: Problem-Based Learning

Our third summer school was held at Aalborg University 20 May – 2 June 2017. This summer school was titled Feminist Political Philosophy: A Problem-Based Learning Approach, and as the title already tells us, the pedagogical point of departure of the course was problem-based learning (PBL). PBL is one of the manifestations of the pedagogical awakening that started in the 60s and 70s, and like feminist pedagogy and critical pedagogy, it emphasises the meaning of collective formation of knowledge, transformation through learning\textsuperscript{34}, and student-centredness.

The use of PBL in a feminist summer school was motivated by the anticipation that the approach has a potential to emancipate students by offering them a clear method of practicing philosophy and doing research. This point of departure echoed some feminist philosophers’ concerns about the vagueness of the philosophical method and the arbitrariness of the evaluations of philosophical work. Katrina Hutchison has suggested that the identification of high standards in philosophy would require, in the absence of “data” that in empirical sciences is often used as the proof for the significance of the research, a thorough examination, articulation and teaching of methods used in philosophy. This would enhance the students’ awareness of what are the different ways of approaching philosophical questions as well as their ability to see themselves as skilled practitioners. (Hutchison 2013, 120.)

In Aalborg, the students are encouraged to explore and experiment in their projects. However, as one of the Aalborg Summer School teachers, Ole Ravn, put it, the method

\textsuperscript{34} About transformative learning, see Illeris 2014.
of research taught in Aalborg is not completely different from the usual research practice. Rather, the idea is to present that method very clearly and to check that the research process is working.

Even if PBL forms the pedagogical point of departure for all studies in Aalborg, there are still differences between the disciplines in how it is applied. For instance, project groups tend to be smaller in the humanities than in the natural sciences. Philosophy is, of course, also different from the technical sciences, for in philosophy the focus has always been on questions rather than answers. However, the idea that the problems should be found “in the outside world” is different from how philosophy is often taught in universities, for often students are encouraged to understand a problem already framed in philosophical discussions before them. The Aalborg University PBL model, which encourages to find the problem in the society, typically in worklife, and writing the Master’s theses for companies and organisations, emphasises the role of applied philosophy and opens up avenues for students to find work outside the academia. In this sense, Aalborg University already answers to the call of Frodeman and Briggle described earlier, namely the one of introducing philosophy to a wider range of social environments.

One of the important influences on PBL, as it is currently practiced at the University of Aalborg, is the work of a Danish theorist, Knud Illeris. According to him, one should rather talk about problem-oriented than about problem-based learning, for the latter is easily associated with the idea that a problem is handed over to a student by the teacher, whereas, the students in should be encouraged to formulate their problems themselves (1974). From Illeris’ point of view, the problem is to be found outside the disciplines, in the society, rather than within the disciplines themselves and their idiosyncrasies. Even so, the term “problem-based learning”, already quite well known as such, has not been abandoned. Instead, the Aalborg model has been redefined as project-oriented – problem based learning (PO-PBL) (see, e.g. Hernandez, Ravn and Valero 2015).

In Aalborg, students typically work on their projects in groups, which is also quite different from the typical philosophical way of working. Hernandez, Ravn and Valero argue that group work enhances the students’ abilities of co-operation (2015). In its
commitment to collaborative student work, PBL resembles feminist pedagogies. Collaboration, on the other hand, differs from the emphasis on individual performance that is more common in philosophy classes. Despite the group work mode, however, students in Aalborg are assessed individually.

Due to the limited length of the Gender and Philosophy summer school as well as the dispersion of students in different countries and universities after the summer school, the typical PO-PBL mode of learning of the University of Aalborg had to be modified. In other words, less time could be spent in problem formulation and the student works were more limited in scope. What is more, the written course work was done in most cases individually, whereas group work was done mainly in forms of discussions.

A typical day in the summer school started with a lecture, after which the students went on to discuss the reading material pertaining to the lecture in two-hour hands-on workshops. After that the students returned to the classroom to share the results of their workshop and to discuss the issues they were particularly interested in. At the end of the day, there was time reserved for reflecting the insights of the day.

During the first day of the summer school the students were initiated with PBL. The historical background of the method was discussed, as were the different phases of doing a research project. The teachers also explained the role of one's own experience in formulating the research question: it is essential to start with one's experience that is understood as an interaction with the environment, and to yet become aware of one's own viewpoint as limited and normative. In other words, a recognition of and a critical reflection of one's own viewpoint were integrated in the pedagogical approach.

After the first day, PBL remained present on the level of practice, while other topics became the explicit content of lectures. From the second day on, feminist political philosophy was discussed from different perspectives. Universalism and difference in feminist political philosophy were examined by Gimmler, wheras Henrik Jøker Bjerre discussed the relationship between psychoanalytic theories and feminist political philosophy. The fourth day focused on the theme of violence, with Robin May Schott
as the teacher. The theme of the fifth and final day was, in turn, the global south, introduced by Pauline Stoltz.

As for the student assignments, the students were asked already before the beginning of the course to write a short paper on their relation to feminist political philosophy. They were advised to start with their own position and to reflect upon what affects them as persons. After this they were requested to bring up one question in feminist political philosophy that they were particularly interested in and explain the basis of their interest. They could also reflect on the ways in which the issue was present in the media and understood by the general public. In other words, the students were encouraged to reflect upon their own experience and own point of departure first, and only then think of the issue at a more general level.

This assignment formed a kind of background paper for the actual course work, but the question discussed in the actual course work did not have to be the same as in the initial paper. In their course work, the students were to deal with “real” issues that disturbed them and to use the lectures and theory to reshape the initial issue into a problem. It was emphasised that the thought process moves back and forth between experience and theory, and that it is quite possible that one is able to properly formulate the problem only after writing the paper. However, after the first formulation of the problem, the students were asked to think about the means through which they could solve the problem. With a readiness for a reformulation of the problem, the initially elusive phenomenon is described in the paper.

As we can see, in this process the personal experience of the student is valued and the rootedness of learning in that personal experience is highlighted. Instead of presenting the student with an abstract task of reflecting upon a theory, theories are presented as possibilities for giving shape for already meaningful, real-life issues. In short, the goal of PBL is not only to help students learn, but to allow a learning process that transforms the student and makes them more in control of their own resources as thinkers.
3. The Moral Situation: Self and Other

The questions of power and ethics were already implicitly present in the previous chapters. In this chapter, I deal with them in more detail, examining the power struggles in the classroom, as well as recognition, generosity and care as possible solutions to overcoming the difficult ethical situations in learning and teaching philosophy. In this context, I discuss also the Oslo Summer School, which had the ethics of care as its theoretical point of departure. The chapter ends with an examination of the challenges of philosophical education in the neoliberal university.

Power Trips in The Classroom

To gain an insight on your own power as a teacher, you only need to temporarily to become a student again. At that very moment, you become aware of how many feelings rush through you during the class. Sometimes those feelings are feelings of pride, joy and inspiration, but quite often there are also feelings of frustration, disappointment, humiliation and anger. When the well-meaning teacher first encourages you, who are only a beginner in whatever you are learning, to engage in a group discussion, and only a while later uses your mistake in order to make a general point to the whole classroom, doesn’t it feel like a smack on the face? Wouldn’t you like to protest? Or, when you have prepared a short presentation about an issue that is important to you, and the teacher, who is worrying about the passing of time, practically ignores your input, don’t you feel betrayed? Furthermore, you may feel you are quite knowledgeable on a topic discussed in the class, but at the same time you feel that the discussion is lingering on basic issues, and you do not participate in the conversation in order not to hinder the teacher to move to more interesting matters. End result: the teacher takes you for a timid beginner, who needs encouragement, and you feel extremely frustrated.

Of course, as a teacher who temporarily is in the student’s role, you are is still in a different position than a person who is a full-time student and has no pedagogical training or experience: you are not as trapped in the power dynamics between the teacher and the students, because you are able to evaluate the learning situation from
different perspectives. However, the teacher’s position of power can hardly escape your attention. Even if the teacher’s intentions are good and their teaching methods progressive, the teacher still holds the power to judge, the power of telling you that you are wrong or right, the right to evaluate, power over you who are a student. Some teachers, on the other hand, wish to assert their authority and use the classroom as a showcase of their own brilliance. The relation in which students occupy the position of a reverent audience whereas the teacher obtains that of a demi-god, can develop regardless of the methods the teacher uses. It is not unheard of that charismatic figures use unconventional methods in order to gain further control over others rather than to emancipate them.

Nevertheless, the teacher is not the only one who possesses power in the classroom. A student can challenge the teacher’s authority: their expertise on the topic and their ability to take into account different viewpoints – for instance, feminist, lgbtiq+, racial, political or religious ones, or ones pertaining to a different manner of doing philosophy. Sometimes a student’s question or comment may catch the teacher off guard, and they may in fact feel that their authority is threatened. The teacher may be tempted to use their superior knowledge, their skills in argumentation and their power position to “show the student their place”. This is a somewhat cowardly strategy, however, for the teacher and the student are hardly equal rivals. Even in philosophy, arguments are not just arguments, but there are living, breathing, vulnerable individuals behind them, and it may occasionally serve the learning situation better if the teacher does not continue the combat until the bitter end but leaves things open-ended. After all, one is not teaching just theory but is always also an example of how a philosopher relates to others, and how a teacher relates to students. Through one’s example, one can teach the students how to gain and maintain authority through undermining the viewpoints of others, or one can teach them a mode of dialogue and interaction that is tolerant of uncertainties and differences and progresses as a shared quest for increasingly nuanced understanding of matters.

The question of hierarchy is not present only in the relationship between the teacher and the students. Students may be involved in building hierarchies between themselves. Occupying speaking space, showing off their knowledgeability, emphasising their commitment to the practise of philosophy, forming circles of the like-minded and
belittling or ignoring the input of others are some of the ways in which students may seek to establish a high-ranking position among their peers. Some of them may invest more in such pursuits, while others may feel frustrated with the implicit competition, or come to identify themselves as misfits or as inferior to the more knowledgeable. Yet finding one’s place in the hierarchy is not necessarily reflected upon or planned but lived as a part of the everyday interaction.

Given the teacher’s position as the one who gives the frames for the learning experience and is expected to provide something meaningful for the students to consider, it is hardly surprising that the teacher’s attention is also a resource competed for. Attaining that attention can have significant consequences on the student’s future in the academia, too, if the relationship between the enthusiastic student and the teacher turns into one of academic patronage (see, e.g. Nichols, Carter and Golden 1985; Martin 2009).

Not all agree, however, that such competition should be an inbuilt feature of any system of education. Hooks has suggested that the competition for the teacher’s attention reflects the competitiveness built in the capitalist economic system (1994, 199). While this may be partially true, it should not be forgotten that, as depicted by Plato in his Symposium, already Socrates’ students competed for his attention. This may indicate that it will not go away with the demise of capitalism, should that day ever come.

With an admirable candour, hooks analyses her own relationships with students. She points out that sometimes she is accused of becoming attached with some students of the class (1994, 198–199). Such attachments may not be altogether rare, not least because some students may be more enthusiastic about the teacher’s topic and approach them more eagerly than others. Also personal background and temperament can explain why teachers may become more interested in some students than others.35 Hooks’ response is to ask her students to analyse, why her affection for some would be away from the others (1994, 198–199). Nevertheless, the solution to dismiss the students’ concerns about favouritism as a part of the traps of a competitive society is not satisfactory and hardly alleviates the students’ worries of not being treated equally. I would suggest that a more ethical avenue for the interaction between the student and

35 Bridget Cooper shows that a teacher with a working-class background may find teaching pupils with a similar background particularly rewarding (2011, 73).
the teacher can be attained if, rather than asking the students to disregard the teacher’s more affectionate relationship with some students, the teacher engages in self-reflective practices in their teaching, and observes the learning situation with sensitivity towards the diversity of the students and their needs. This is where hierarchy reducing practices actually become useful: pair work and group work that allow the less vocal students to become more confident to express their views, or setting a fixed time for everybody’s interventions. Most importantly, the students will eventually become aware of it if the teacher consistently practices the ethics of generosity and care, that is, if the teacher is genuinely open towards the needs of all students and shows that their approaches are equally welcome. The teacher does not have to give into impulses of preferring this student to that: it is their job to become interested in the potentials and flourishing of all their students. In the long run, this attitude will become rewarded by the trust of the students.

As was demonstrated by the first example of this chapter, both the teacher and the students contribute to the affective atmosphere of the class without being aware of it. Often the given feedback is merely gestural: smiling, looking serious, frowning, looking at the the other (student or teacher), ignoring them, and so on. Given the phenomenon of implicit bias, the teacher should, perhaps, pay particular attention to how they relate to women and diverse students: whether their gestures are encouraging, disparaging, uninterested or sexually charged.

Of course, hyper-reflectivity is hardly the ideal to be looked for in a teacher – it is well known that such an attitude makes all action difficult or impossible. However, if one takes upon oneself the task of teaching, one should be genuinely interested in the student and to check one's own attitude, too, when it feels like something is going wrong in the student–teacher communication or in the general classroom situation.

As Beauvoir argues in *The Ethics of Ambiguity*, it is when one no longer feels uncertain about the justification of one’s actions that one should become concerned about it. According to her, the difference between “the tyrant” and “the man of good will” can be found in the certainty with which they relate to their own aims and actions. The tyrant “rests in the certainty of his aims”, whereas the man of good will keeps asking
himself: “Am I really working for the liberation of men? Isn’t this end contested by the sacrifices through which I aim at it?” (Beauvoir 1976, 133–134.)

It is always possible for both the teacher and the student to become “a tyrant”, in the broad sense Beauvoir understands the word: a person who disregards the subjectivity and futurity of the other and nihilates their will. Talking over the other, interrupting the other, and ignoring and belittling the other’s comments are strategies that hinder two-way interaction and are, in some cases, an outright attack against the other subjectivity.\textsuperscript{36} This said, it is true that many of us engage in some of those behaviours and enjoy the rapid pace of discussion. However, for the communication to be two-way, genuinely interested questions have to be asked in order to allow the discussion to develop into more than a monologue. Attentive listening has to be practiced. Power struggles come about without effort, but undoing those effects of those struggles does require efforts. Space and attention have to be conscientiously allocated to those who are overwhelmed by the outpour of ideas from the mouths of others, or who, because of their different take on matters, are temporarily excluded from the discussion. It is a safe assumption that even if a person has not said anything for a half an hour, they do have things to say.

Teaching philosophy is not only about teaching how to make good arguments. It is about opening space for an intellectual curiosity, and sometimes, if the one in the position of authority puts all their efforts into showing how the student’s argument fails, more is lost than gained: the space of intellectual freedom and inquiry is blocked.

To summarise, the power dynamics of the classroom – brought about by the stratifications of the teacher, the students or even the physical space\textsuperscript{37} –, do not have to be taken for

\textsuperscript{36} In conferences, one can sometimes witness how a conviction of the rightfulness of one’s agenda can lead scholars to attack students or colleagues whose work or views do not live up to their expectations or are interpreted to exemplify what is called “the master discourse” – incidentally a label that is occasionally stuck onto the whole of the philosophical tradition. Again, from the Beauvoirian perspective, any adopted identity (great scholar, feminist, gender theorist, activist) does not justify one’s actions, nor does one’s goal (overthrow of patriarchy, liberation). In a sense, the case of the righteous feminist scholar and that of the privileged mainstream scholar, who never questions his entitlement of to be heard and the justification of his perspective, are parallel: one may act to subvert, the other to hold on to the status quo, but both are ready to use their position of power to ridicule and put down the other. When a person opens up the door for disrespectful critique, which is only thinly disguised as a defence of scholarly integrity or a revolutionary point of view, it easily happens that others follow, finding relief for the discontent they have been harbouring.

\textsuperscript{37} It has been suggested that circular arrangements would diminish the power distance whereas the traditional arrangement of the teacher on the podium and students arranged in neat rows before them emphasise the authority of the teacher over the students. From the point of view of learning results, however, there appears to be no one superior classroom arrangement: what is the best arrangement depends on whether the learning calls for silent concentration on the topic or communication with others. Circular arrangements and groups of tables appear to facilitate communication whereas rows facilitate
The teacher can use their position of power to create an atmosphere of trust, in which energy is liberated from implicit competition to collaboration and developing ideas together. It is important to remember, however, that there is a specific interplay between pedagogical methods and ethics: while certain hierarchising and competitive tendencies of the classroom are hard to undo without pedagogical methods that allow for alternative interactions to develop, pedagogical methods on their own cannot build trust among the students and between them and the teacher. What is required from the teacher, is sensitivity, concern, genuine generosity towards the students, and an appreciation of the opportunity to philosophise together.

Most importantly, one should never be too sure about one’s ability to take all the students into account in an adequate manner. Especially when there are numerous students, the classroom situation involves such a great diversity of experiences and individual situations that one most certainly remains ignorant of some of these. Yet, even when failure may be inevitable, and even if not all learning sessions are glowing examples of a shared flow, with a vigilante attitude towards the classroom interaction and one’s own practices the educator already can go a long way. In addition to this vigilance, the ethical demands of the classroom situation include the recognition of others and a generosity towards them. These aspects of learning and teaching are discussed in the following sub-chapter.

Recognition and Generosity

In the philosophy class, there always exists a possibility for a shared intellectual quest, during which the students and the teacher are directed towards a common object of wonder, and strive together for a greater clarity, encouraging each other with their concentration on individual assignments. (Wannarka and Ruhl 2008.) Needless to say, already the architectural design affects the possibilities of interaction in the learning space (e.g. Lei 2010). In places like auditoriums it is very difficult for the teacher to move in the space freely and approach the individual students who ask questions. In this way, the spatial arrangement can be paralysing for the teacher herself. However, thinking about the typical situation of a philosophy lecture, the teacher is hardly ever totally non-moving: especially when the teacher tries to answer questions, their gestures reflect the process of thinking and can as such encourage the student to understand the practice of philosophy as a process of questioning that involves the whole body. Yet making eye contact can be difficult, especially if the lighting circumstances make it difficult to discern people’s faces.
questions and interpretations.\textsuperscript{38} This kind of shared search differs significantly from the everyday distractedness of our interlocutors. What is more, it may help everyone involved to understand their own lives more profoundly. At best, the students do not come out from the classroom exhausted but energised, still intensely discussing the topic of the class with each other. For the teacher, the class is then equally energising. Especially if the course deals with her particular area of expertise, it is, in fact, a great opportunity for her to think together with others, who, even if temporarily, engage themselves with the topics she herself is most interested in – and not for only one day but in many cases the weekly meetings go on at least for a couple of months. This is when the learning and teaching acquire a character of gift – rather than duties, they are freely and passionately lived and given.

The teacher shares her passion for philosophy, inviting the others to engage in thought processes that are directed towards understanding rather than developing an expert front. The students, likewise, shake out their concerns about how they look in front of the others, and engage in a lively exchange of ideas. All in all, the inner movement of the participants of the learning session could, perhaps, be described as a shared orientation in the same direction, which, however, allows individual movement between one’s prior understanding and the fumbling for a new grasp of the topic, drawing from the thoughts expressed by others, experiencing them as impulses to one’s own associative processes.

True enough, Beauvoir describes the liberated and equal erotic relationship in a similar manner, that is, in terms of exchange, gift and passion (2010, 763; 2008b, 648). What we are dealing with is, of course, a kind of love, the love of wisdom, \textit{philosophia}, and the relationship of this love to erotic love is discussed already in Plato’s \textit{Symposium}. Yet such experiences are not typical only to learning philosophy, as bell hooks’ descriptions reveal to us (1994). Rather than try to argue for the specificity of philosophy in this instance, it is perhaps more important to understand the general ethical attitude behind such learning experiences. I already mentioned the importance of the subjects’ mutual recognition of each other’s freedom, which is discussed, for instance, in Beauvoir’s works and Axel Honneth’s philosophy of recognition. Debra

\textsuperscript{38} For a discussion of philosophy as love and wonder see Heinämaa 2000, as well as Irigaray 1989.
Bergoffen, however, points towards another ethical resource in Beauvoir, namely an ethics of generosity (1997, 7). In fact, generosity and the recognition of the other’s freedom are tightly interwoven in Beauvoir’s philosophy.

Generosity should be distinguished here from self-sacrifice and self-denial, as well as from Aristotle’s description of generosity as the middle way between meanness and wastefulness (see NE IV:1). From the Beauvoirian point of view, being generous towards others does not imply a nihilation of the self, nor does it reflect a “moderate” attitude towards consumption and wealth. Instead, giving in generosity does not imply losing anything or asking for something in return. This conception of generosity resembles the one Friedrich Nietzsche puts forward in Thus Spoke Zarathustra (1883–1885). Both Nietzsche and Beauvoir argue that genuine generosity does not operate within the sphere of bargaining or commerce. An act simply does not demonstrate generosity, if something – appreciation, adoration, loyalty – is asked for as a return gift. In fact, it is Beauvoir’s idea that generosity can only operate when the other’s freedom is recognised, and if I wish to control the other’s actions, thinking that he owes me, I did not really give him a gift but a loan, or what is even worse, I was, in the first place, motivated by my own vanity and will to gain power over the other, to be his tyrant – which is the exact opposite of true generosity (see Beauvoir 2004, 123–124).

The only thing the benefactor can ask from the other is the recognition of freedom in the act of giving (Beauvoir 2004, 123; 2003b, 277).

While Beauvoir’s ethics of generosity is at best implicit, numerous authors have developed such ethics during the past few decades, relying not only on Beauvoir’s or Nietzsche’s but also on Mauss’, Bataille’s and Levinas’ work (see, e.g. Bergoffen 1997; Schrift 1997; Diprose 2002). Without investigating these developments in more detail, I contend myself with making a comment about the possibilities of an attitude of generosity in the context of learning and teaching philosophy. A generous attitude towards the other is caring but not patronising, and as it involves the recognition of the

39 For an analysis of Nietzsche’s conception of gift-giving and generosity, see White 2015.
40 Beauvoir writes: “The sick man requires care; I give it to him; he recovers. But the health her recovers through me is not a good if I stop him at that. It becomes a good thing only if he makes something of it.” (Beauvoir 2004, 121.)
41 Beauvoir’s way of conceiving gift and generosity resembles Marcel Mauss’ and Georges Bataille’s discussion of the gift and excess in that it challenges utilitarian ethics and the idea of economy being driven by self-interest. The difference lies in Beauvoir’s idea that genuine generosity does not require reciprocation. In contrast to this, Mauss and Bataille argue that the exchange of gifts is the glue that holds the archaic society together.
other as free, it tends to inspire a similar attitude in the others rather than a stinginess
with which the other might guard their boundaries and possessions. As I have pointed
earlier, both students and teachers are in many ways vulnerable in the classroom, too,
and it is all too easy to withdraw to the attitude of indifference and detachment when
one feels threatened.

I do not propose that merely the identification of generosity as a basis for ethical action
would suffice to deal with all possible moral dilemmas. Certainly there will be
situations in which generosity is not enough, and in which one has to protect oneself
from becoming too involved. Within the context of care ethics, which likewise focuses
on relationality, Pettersen has elaborated on Carol Gilligan’s concept of mature care.
For Pettersen, mature care involves equal care for oneself and the other (2011, 56).
Perhaps it is along the lines of generosity and care that the teaching and learning of
philosophy should be thought of.

The Oslo Summer School: Ethics of Care

The last of the summer schools, Care Ethics and Conflicts, was organised at the
University of Oslo in mid-August 2017 by Pettersen. During the course, care and
conflicts were discussed from a variety of perspectives, namely from those of private
and professional relationships, war and peace, global relations, and nature. Through
these perspectives, the course demonstrated the applicability of care ethics to issues
wider than had perhaps been earlier thought of: all of human interaction and even
beyond.42

Care ethics is a relatively new ethical theory, the starting points of which are usually
located in Carol Gilligan’s In a Different Voice (1982) and Nel Noddings’ Caring
(1986). Both authors suggested that the entrance of women into ethics is different from
that of men, challenging deontological and utilitarian ethics and arguing that it was
more typical for women to think of ethical choices in terms of relationality and care
than through rights, rules or justice. Care, on the other hand, has been defined in a

42 For a discussion of the widening range of care ethics, see Pettersen 2011, 51–52.
number of different ways. Among the best-known ones is Joan Tronto’s categorisation of care into: 1) attentiveness (as an inclination to become aware of need) 2) responsibility (responding to need) 3) competence (ability to provide good care) and 4) responsiveness (feeling with the other and recognition of the possibility of abuse in care) (Tronto 1994, 126–136). Care ethicists emphasise the virtual universality of the experience of care: practically all people know what it is to receive and give care, and can thereby extend their narrow self-centred horizons towards the experience of others and a concern for their well-being (e.g. Pettersen 2011, 58; Clark Miller 2010, 150). As we can see, Tronto’s definition of care does not presuppose that care should be seen as an exclusively female approach to ethics. In this sense, even though the first expressions of care ethics incorporated assumptions that can be criticized of essentialising gender, the whole of the care ethical project needs not be confined to an essentialist framework.

As Pettersen has suggested (2011, 59), the care ethical concerns and concepts are in many ways compatible Beauvoir’s ethical concerns, which were already briefly discussed earlier. Both care ethics and existentialist ethics recognise the ambiguity of lived experience and the difficulty of making ethical decisions merely on the basis of abstract rules, while at the same time advocating systematic reasoning in the service of ethics. Yet another similarity is a suspicion towards the ethical value of absolute self-denial in the favour of others (see Pettersen 2011, 59–60). As Pettersen puts it, sometimes “the devoted carer is exploited and injured, and sometimes she inflicts harm on others in the name of care” (ibid., 60). Beauvoir, likewise, points out that it is possible for a benefactor to act tyrannically towards the protégé, when the former attempts to control the latter. Similar relationships of oppression can take place between lovers, spouses, and parents and children – in all cases one can in bad faith inflict pain on others and oneself while pretending to act for the good of others. (Beauvoir 2010, e.g. 201, 208, 430, 561.) In the classroom, too, devotion to the other can be, at its basis, a form of control, a desire to own the affection and appreciation of the other.

This concern for the possible abuse of care for the harm of oneself and others, is related to the concept of mature care. According to Pettersen, the notion of mature care, first introduced by Gilligan, is of particular interest, because it helps understand care as “a relational process in which both the carer and the caree participate”, and in which each
participant engages in promoting the flourishing of all parties as well as preventing harm to all parties (Pettersen 2011, 55).

Care ethics has also been discussed in the context of education. Noddings, for instance, argues that care provides a more humane point of departure for dealing with students than rule ethics, because it is more concerned with the needs than the rights of the other (e.g. 2017). Fittingly with the theme of the summer school, the pedagogical principles were motivated by care ethical concerns, such as how to address the diversity of students in a manner that takes into account their individual needs, inclinations and learning strategies. One of the leading ideas was to create a non-judgemental environment in which it feels safe to both express one’s ideas and to be quiet, and in which both students and teachers are able to listen to each other attentively and respond to each other in a respectful, caring and benevolent manner. In addition, students were invited to reflect upon the role of experiences, emotions and reason in philosophy and ethics, and to self-reflection both in the sense of reflecting upon their own approaches and their reactions to the discussed topics. This way the emotional and relational aspects of learning were consciously integrated to reasoning processes. What is more, attention was paid to the fact that the cases and dilemmas typical to care ethics can in many cases be difficult to deal with emotionally, and that for different individuals different issues can present that difficulty.

It was pointed out to the students that the cases care ethics deals with are not hypothetical problems made for intellectual exercises only: actual cases that often involve pain and suffering form the basis for care ethical analysis. Also for this reason, students encouraged to be reflective about their experiences during the class as well as about the different points departures of others.

As we can see, the approach adopted in this summer school differed from that of the mode that is common in the teaching of philosophy. Firstly, emotions were taken into account in the teaching and learning processes. Secondly, instead of resorting to thought experiments, the messiness of the everyday life and its moral challenges were brought into analysis. In this way, the course answered to two complaints that philosophy students have proposed: that there is no room for emotions in philosophy and that philosophy is understood as a game-like, empty exercise of reason (see Chapter 2).
On the practical level, the diversity of students was addressed in a number of ways, perhaps the most important one of them being the diversity in teaching methods. The idea was to create a space that would accommodate both sociability and withdrawal. The days of the summer school consisted of lectures, group work, student presentations, structured debates and more informal discussions. At the end of each day, the students engaged in quiet work, writing their reflections on the day in a journal.

An approach that makes space for silence is quite different from what bell hooks, for instance, suggests, as she insists that all her students have to speak, even if it was in sign language, as has sometimes been the case (1994). It is perhaps worth noting that often lecturers can be surprised by the results when the course essays are returned: it is not rare that the most talkative of the students are not always the ones who write the most thought-out essays. Some students may need the peace and quiet to process their thoughts, whereas others may have difficulties in forming their thoughts in writing and prefer to proceed through discussion.

However, a recent study suggests that even though there are differences between people in how readily they engage in social interaction, both so-called introverts and extroverts feel equally tired three hours after engaging in an extrovert behaviour, and the same concerns engaging in conscientious behaviour (Leikas and Ilmarinen 2016). For this reason, it may not be a bad idea, from the viewpoint of all students, to engage in a variety of learning approaches during the day.

By now, we have discussed the relevance of ethics in learning philosophy, and how care ethics, in particular, can be applied in developing pedagogical strategies. However, the ethical choices pertaining to learning and teaching are not made in a vacuum. For this reason, I describe briefly the environment in which teachers and students of our days have to make those choices, namely the neoliberal university.

Philosophy in the Neoliberal University – What Is to Be Done?
In the universities of our days, neoliberal politics are aligned with meritocratic practices to produce what Michel Foucault (1977) would have called docile bodies: bodies that have internalised control and act with an almost robot-like precision to achieve the goals set by the highly organised, competitive and hierarchical system. Universities in different parts of the world face the demands of neoliberal politics in different degrees, but in most cases the means to attain a more “efficient” and “productive” academic environment are similar: politics of austerity, attempts to decrease the number of universities and disciplines within them particularly when it comes to the humanities, attempts to gradually introduce term fees into universities that were earlier completely free of charge, privatisation, growing influence of non-academics in university boards, competition for private funding, endless changes in the organisation structure and teaching, and precariousness of work.

The meritocratic tendencies of academic life have been harnessed to serve the needs of neoliberal politics by making the universities, research groups and individual researchers constantly compete for the shrinking funds. Excellence is presented as the criteria for winning in the competition for funding, and numerous ways of measuring this excellence are created, most of them built to incorporate both quality and quantity. For instance, one of the most important criteria for evaluating a researcher’s competence is the number of publications in high-standard peer-reviewed international journals. Even Master’s students may be painfully aware that in order to become academics, they should efficiently collect credits towards their degree, with the highest possible grades, thus creating the image of a prospective doctoral student.

A system based on the accumulation of merits and their evaluation by peers could be, in principle, woman-friendly, provided that all the necessary precautions against implicit bias had been taken into account and if forms of discrimination like the stereotype threat and micro-inequities had somehow been ruled out of the picture. In a meritocratic system, which the academia appears to represent par excellence, the most talented and the most industrious individuals are ideally rewarded, which in turn means that basically women with excellent merits would be equals with men with excellent
merits in the competition for advancement, first in their studies and then in their careers.\textsuperscript{43}

The problem is, of course, that even though a degree of rivalry appears to have always been present in the practice of European philosophy, at the same time the demands of constant competition for the utmost merits, efficacy and production under pressure are quite far removed from the reasons why people want to learn philosophy in the first place. In other words, there is a fundamental tension between philosophy as a production of knowledge and philosophy as an attempt to genuinely engage with the world around us and with each other in the attitude of wonder. At the same time, a half-hearted adoption of values of efficacy and production appears to be the price that one has to pay if one wants to have a career in the academia. If women were, indeed, to acquire a steadier foothold within philosophy, the question remains, whether there is anything left in the practice of philosophy within the constraints of the neoliberal university that is worth pursuing.

If we direct our gazes towards students who have chosen to study philosophy in the hope that it is a quest for wisdom, it appears obvious that the competitive framework provided by the contemporary academia hardly helps them grow as human beings or to become, through this growth, better philosophers. Frodeman and Briggle have, however, suggested that instead of deploring the current state of academia we should embrace the current crisis as a chance for a rejuvenation of philosophy (2016). As they interpret the situation, academic philosophy has long ago cut its ties with problems that people actually experience as meaningful, and become a hermetic inquiry into questions that have no significance outside the department. In their view, the answer to the crisis is to relinquish philosophy as defined merely in terms of academic professionalism, to bring it into contact with real issues, and to turn the classroom into a laboratory of pedagogical experimentation. As they see it, the goal of philosophers should be to take matters into their own hands to produce a reformation of philosophy rather than just to adjust to the change that is imposed upon them from the outside. (Frodeman and Briggle 2016.)

\textsuperscript{43} For accounts of meritocracy, see Young 1958 and Jenkins 2013.
It is obvious that in our times, riddled with the rise of anti-intellectualism and populism along with overt misogyny and racism, philosophers can no longer hide their head in the sand, but it is rather natural and necessary for them to start discussing philosophy in a closer connection with the current political and ecological developments. In other words, I would suggest that the orientation towards the surrounding world may not become urgent as a result of the crisis of philosophy, but rather the social and environmental crises awaken philosophers to re-evaluate their goals. Certainly changing direction within the framework of contemporary university politics may be difficult, but at the same time there is still space for criticism and new ideas.

The fact is that working within the academia in all its imperfection has until now provided at least some security and freedom for philosophers. The problem of how to react to the demands of increasing competition and specialisation in the academia can therefore be divided into two questions: firstly, how to develop philosophy and its teaching within the academic setting, and secondly, how to broaden the scope of philosophy outside the academia, and what kinds of demands this broadening may bring to the teaching of philosophy. In the case of women, it is not entirely satisfactory to show them a way out of academic philosophy at the moment their foothold within it is still insecure. For this reason, we still have to try to think of ways to change the academia from within, and strive for a politics of education that has more humane values than those of meritocracy and neoliberalism. Solidarity, generosity and care do not come about because the environment in which we work or study would be geared to nurture them, but because of the conscious choices we make within the limits given to us, and because of the way we are, perhaps, ready to push those limits.
Conclusion: The Minimal Requirements of Teaching Philosophy Inclusively

In the summer schools of Gender and Philosophy, diverse strategies were used to promote in teaching philosophy. As I have demonstrated in this book, there is not any one magic wand with which one could conjure an equal and non-discriminative learning space out of the complex reality of the competitive academic world. However, I have emphasised the significance of ethics in education: not necessarily one of teaching ethics but finding an ethical way of interacting with the students, and remaining attentive to their needs. At the same time, like Pettersen’s conception of mature care suggests, one has to remain sensitive to one’s own needs, too, and not be taken in by the easily presenting chance to act as an idol, role model, and omnipotent benefactor with all the impossible demands those things bring along. Within the academia of our days and the demands to be active not only in teaching but also in scholarly publication, organisation of scholarly events, participation in scholarly associations, development work, public events, interviews, and diverse platforms of social media, it is, however, perhaps more rarely a question of self-sacrifice for the good of the students than for the professional survival in the academia. For this reason, the change for the better cannot happen merely within the walls of the classroom, but it has to happen also on a more structural level, in university politics.

Yet I propose a checklist which can be used as an aid of inclusive teaching of philosophy. Some of my suggestions could be applied to the teaching of any subjects, while some of them are more philosophy-specific.

I suggest that when we teach philosophy, we ask ourselves the following questions, if not every day, at least every now and then:

✔ Do I listen to my students attentively? If some of them are insecure or feel alienated from their studies in philosophy because of their gender, ethnicity, race, disability or class, do I have the means to encourage them? (For instance, do I favour small assignments during the course instead of just one big course work, so that I can get information of my students’ interests and abilities and tactfully encourage the more silent ones to participate more in the discussions?)
✓ Do I have a policy for making it easier for women and diverse students to feel at home in philosophy? (For instance, do I discuss the work of female and black philosophers? Do I take into account different theories of gender and sexuality when I refer to these issues? Am I at least on some level familiar with how transwomen and men describe their experience? Am I ready to check my own assumptions of what is relevant in the history of philosophy?)

✓ Do I inadvertently engage in micro-aggression or implicit bias against my outgroups?

✓ Do I offer the same encouragement and opportunities to all my students? If not, why not? Is my inability to encourage some students intertwined with my difficulty interact with that particular gender or race? Do I give slack to some students because assume that persons of their gender, race, etc. are not motivated enough or capable enough to work within the rules I propose to the majority of my students?

✓ Am I prejudiced against some topics that are typically chosen by women and diverse students? Should I find out more about them?

✓ Do I interfere if students in my class engage in subtle discriminatory practices, e.g. show appreciation only to comments from their own ingroup (e.g. white cis-males)? (Rather than pointing my finger at anybody, do I show interest in the questions and comments asked by the overlooked person?)

✓ Is the classroom harassment-free?

✓ Am I aware of my own power and possibilities as a teacher or do I find myself silently blaming the students if something goes wrong in the classroom? Am I able to overcome situations in which I am challenged by my students? Do I find ways to build trust between them and myself or do I simply appeal to my authority?
Are some of the students sexualised or racialised? Do I myself engage in such practices? Do I refer to students as representatives of specific gender identities, race or religion or do I allow them to be learners among others, without unwarranted assumptions of their outlooks on life?

How do my own insecurities reflect on my teaching? It may be impossible and not even desirable to lose all insecurities, but acknowledging them already helps dealing with them.

Am I aware of the ways in which emotions can be shut out of a philosophy class? Do I allow space for a discussion of personal experience? Do I consciously encourage learning strategies that integrate the student’s emotions and past in the learning process?

Academics often think that the topics they teach are more important than how they are taught. Learning about pedagogy seems to steal time from something more important, namely the content of their research and teaching. However, just like learning about philosophy can free our thinking in general, learning about pedagogy can free our teaching. It is, of course, obvious that we may remain critical of some “trendy” pedagogical practices and ideas, but at the same time, not every teacher needs to use exactly the same methods. The goal is not to conform to a specific pedagogical framework but to gain more latitude in one’s teaching practices and make the learning experience more rewarding for the students with the means that go well together with one’s own abilities and characteristics as a teacher.

References


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