

Models of Engagement: Luce Irigaray, Genevieve Lloyd,
Michèle Le Doeuff and the History of Philosophy

By

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For my grandmothers, Babe and Ola Bell

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Introduction

On July 19 and 20 1848, a crowd of around 300 people met in the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Seneca Falls, New York “to discuss the social, civil, and religious condition and rights of women” (Wellman 2004, 189).¹ At the meeting, they signed a document that had begun to take shape during an earlier planning session between Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Mary Ann M'Clintock, and probably her daughters Elizabeth and Mary Ann Jr. (Wellman 2004, 192). That document, the *Declaration of Sentiments*, instigated a mass movement for women’s rights in the US. Using the *Declaration of Independence* as its model, the document submits “to a candid world” the facts of the “repeated injuries and usurpations on the part of man toward woman” (Stanton et al. 1881, 70). Like the *Declaration of Independence*, the *Declaration of Sentiments* lists the grievances that constitute the drafters’ reasons for seeking a new political order.² Also like the *Declaration of Independence*, the drafters offer a solution to their grievances. Unlike that first declaration, however, the solution is not to dissolve the bands which have connected the drafters and those they identify as the perpetrators of their grievances. Instead, the *Declaration of Sentiments* seeks to transform the bands which have connected them into bands of equality.

On May 29, 1851, in Akron Ohio, Sojourner Truth delivered a speech at the Women’s Convention that was called in response to the *Declaration of Sentiments*, one of

¹ There are disagreements among sources about how many people attended the convention. Wellman, for instance, states there were 100 (Wellman 2004, 10). Angela Davis gives 300 (Davis 1983, 51), as does Bonnie Mani (Mani 2007, 62). Scholars mainly agree there were 100 signatories, though many later recanted in the face of widespread disgust at the cause of women’s enfranchisement (Wellman 2004, 279). Some of the disagreement may be due to the fact that the first day of the meeting was reserved for women only to meet and the second day was open to men and women.

² For purposes of comparison and analysis, Appendix A is a transcript of the *Declaration of Independence* and Appendix B is a transcript of the *Declaration of Sentiments*.

many conventions called to discuss what it meant to expand the rights of women in the US. Truth, an ex-slave, spoke in support of and as part of this movement. In so doing, Truth highlighted and strengthened the connection between advocating for women's rights and advocating for the rights of those vulnerable to colonization and enslavement. There are many reports of Truth's speech, including one authorized, though not written by Truth herself, but what is clear in every version is that Truth, too, seeks equality through transforming the political order.³

Both the *Declaration of Sentiments* and Truth's speech have much to offer philosophy, especially on issues of equality and establishing the bounds of political community, but it is my contention that, until recently, they could not be philosophically engaged. Until feminists began work to reclaim women in the history of philosophy, reading work by women writers was all but impossible. Alain de Botton, in *The Consolations of Philosophy*, inadvertently captures the reason why in perhaps its most basic form. De Botton writes:

In spite of the vast differences between the many thinkers described as philosophers across time (people in actuality so diverse that had they been gathered together at a giant cocktail party, they would not only have had nothing to say to one another, but would most probably have come to blows after a few drinks), it seemed possible to discern a small group of men, separated by centuries, sharing a loose allegiance to a vision of philosophy suggested by the Greek etymology of the word -- *philo*, love; *sophia*, wisdom -- a group bound together by a common interest in saying a few consoling and practical things about the causes of our greatest griefs (de Botton 2000, 7-8)

The description, compelling as it is, has a fateful phrase: "a small group of men."

Research, primarily by feminist philosophers, shows that de Botton's perception of the history of philosophy is not the ignorance of a non-specialist, but a widely shared belief

³ Appendix C contains different versions of Truth's speech.

even within the discipline of philosophy: women do not do philosophy, women are not philosophers.⁴ The problem in the passage is not that de Botton has expressed a misogynist sentiment. The problem is that women do not figure into philosophical history.

My intent in this project is not merely to bring philosophical attention to women's writing, but also to show different means for making that attention possible. My contention is that we cannot philosophically engage women's writing without methods for incorporating it into philosophical history. I argue further, however, that such incorporation cannot happen without transforming philosophical history. That, in turn, requires transforming how we practice philosophy. In other words, simply trying to bring women's writing to philosophical attention without changing the practices by which we deem something worthy of philosophical attention is futile and reinforces the exclusion of women from philosophy. Thus, I will not return to the *Declaration of Sentiments* or Truth's speech until the final chapter, after I have explored ways of transforming philosophical practice. I will show different means for how philosophy can become a practice capable of engaging women's work *and then* engage these historical texts.

To illuminate the need for such transformation, I will track the fate of a character spoken about in one of Plato's dialogues, Diotima. Whereas many ancient scholars are comfortable attributing philosophical authority to Socrates, even while conducting a contentious and probably irresolvable debate about the extent and nature of Plato's fictionalization of him, Diotima has, especially recently, tended to be treated as little more than a fictional device. Reclamation has contested the relegation of Diotima to the status of a fiction, beginning with Mary Ellen Waithe's attempts to establish Diotima's

⁴ Cf. Haslanger 2008.

historical existence. I show that there are many strategies for engaging Diotima as a philosophical authority and that successful strategies require transformations in how we conceive of philosophy and philosophical history.

I am especially interested in the strategies offered by Luce Irigaray, Genevieve Lloyd, and Michèle Le Doeuff. These three thinkers garner that interest because they have been influential in feminist philosophical scholarship on the issue of women's exclusion. In each case, their view of exclusion can be the basis of a method of reclamation, and, in Le Doeuff's case, is already the basis for a well-developed reclamationist practice. Yet, these thinkers are rarely discussed, or in Irigaray's case, rarely discussed positively, within the field of reclamation. This project urges greater reclamationist attention to the work of Irigaray, Lloyd, and Le Doeuff and shows what these theorists offer in return for such attention.

In the first chapter, I explore the different ways that people, primarily feminist philosophers, have tried to reclaim women's writing in the history of philosophy. I identify and outline four strategies that are the most common approaches employed for treating women as part of philosophical history. The different strategies offer, implicitly or explicitly, different ways to conceive of the problem of women's exclusion and, following from those conceptions, different remedies. The first approach that I treat seeks to enfranchise women into philosophical history. Arguments in these approaches advocate for understanding women philosophers as being just like men philosophers and important to philosophical history on the same grounds as recognized, canonical philosophers. The second approach offers women's work as an alternative to traditional or mainstream philosophical history. The third seeks to correct philosophical history

with the inclusion of women. While I argue that the fourth approach, which seeks to transform philosophy through engagement with women's writing, is the most promising for reclamation, I do not claim there is one correct way to proceed. Indeed, the next three chapters outline three very different approaches to reclaiming women's work as part of transforming philosophical history and practice.

In the second chapter, I argue that Luce Irigaray provides the example of a method for reclaiming women's work in her essay, "Sorcerer Love: A Reading of Plato's *Symposium*, Diotima's Speech." In that essay, Irigaray offers a model of reclamation as love. Irigaray develops that method in conversation with the absent Diotima. By using Diotima's absence from the *Symposium* as the basis for engaging the words Plato attributes to the priestess, I argue that Irigaray shows that reclamation must transform philosophy and models one way that might be done.

In the third chapter, I reconsider Genevieve Lloyd's *The Man of Reason: 'Male' and 'Female' in Western Philosophy*, which is often read as a critique of reason. While I agree that Lloyd offers a critique of reason, I argue that she also offers a method of historiography that has great potential as a means of transformative reclamation. The particular strength of Lloyd's method consists in its demand to treat thinkers as part of the history of conceptualization and to show the role metaphor plays within that history. While Lloyd largely limits her analysis to men philosophers, I find in her work the components of a model for engaging women philosophers that can transform how we understand philosophical history and the practice of philosophy.

In the fourth chapter, I highlight the role of uchronic history in the development of Michèle Le Doeuff's thinking. To understand "uchronic," think first of "utopia."⁵ A utopia is a placeless place in which we can imagine a world ordered by our ideals and their consequences. Uchronic history is a timeless time in which we can imagine a world ordered by our ideals and their consequences. Uchronic history is a species of counterfactual history: one imagines a history in which women's writings were not excluded and projects the possible contemporary consequences of those imagined histories. Of the three thinkers I treat, it is Le Doeuff who attributes philosophical significance to the *Declaration of Sentiments*. Le Doeuff's analysis is not the final word, however, on the document's reclamation, an issue I return to in the sixth and final chapter.

In the fifth chapter, I offer a comparison of the three preceding approaches. In that chapter, it is not my intent to declare a winner. Instead, I highlight the differences among the methods and the implications of those differences for reclamation and philosophy. I compare how the different authors use the concepts "symbolic" and "imaginary" to differentiate their approaches. Then, I compare the sorts of transformations each theorist thinks philosophy must undergo to redress its history of exclusion. Next, I compare how each thinker helps us with the problem of Diotima's reclamation, an example I develop throughout this project. My goal is to show the importance of proceeding from a theory of exclusion to a practice of reclamation. To conclude, I outline general guidelines for how reclamation ought to proceed as a practice driven by exclusion.

⁵ Although this can only be a matter of speculation, I think that Le Doeuff's development of uchronic history has its roots in her scholarship on Thomas More and on the concept of utopia that appear in both *The Philosophical Imaginary* and in the essay "Utopias: Scholarly."

Finally, in the sixth chapter, I return to the *Declaration of Sentiments* with those general guidelines and the lessons of the methods I have examined. I introduce the *Declaration* by employing Le Doeuff's uchronic method. By remaining cognizant of the method's major shortcoming—its tendency to allow our imagination of the ideals the document offers to overshadow the problems that inhere in its vision—I create the opportunity for seeing the exclusions within the *Declaration's* vision of expanded inclusion. Using Sojourner Truth's speech at the 1851 Akron, Ohio meeting on women's rights as my guide, I investigate the exclusions at work in the *Declaration*. Since, however, Truth did not write a text of her speech, we cannot definitively determine its content, and thus its critical force. Rather than lamenting that fact, I suggest Truth's speech illuminates what is always the case: how we engage a historical source determines the critiques it makes available.

The aim of this project is to reflect on what is at stake in the work of reclaiming women philosophers in and for the history of philosophy. Feminist reclamation has its origin in an impulse to redress the silencing of women, but the mechanisms of that silencing have remained un- or under-theorized. In the absence of sufficient theorization, views about the nature of women's exclusion and the nature of what they have been excluded from have operated nonetheless. This meta-reflection is meant to help the field of reclamation see the strategies for thinking about women's exclusion that have already been developed within it and the great promise of one set of strategies in particular: reclamation undertaken as transformation. To bolster development of this mode of reclamation, I identify and outline methods of reclamation in the work of Irigaray, Lloyd,

and Le Doeuff. These three thinkers of exclusion are by no means the only ones from whom reclamation can draw inspiration and concrete methodological approaches. Indeed, my hope is that this project will lead to a proliferation of methods for reclamation. They are, however, three influential thinkers who offer very different approaches to thinking about philosophical history and how it can and must be changed. Thus, analysis and comparison of their methods provides an excellent starting place for reflecting on reclamation.

Chapter I

Enfranchisements, Alternatives, Correctives, and Transformations

When feminists first turned their attention to the history of philosophy during the revival of feminism in the latter half of the 20th century, energy was primarily directed toward critiquing the tradition and its canon for widespread misogyny and its exclusion of women. Few projects asked about women's historical involvement in philosophy. Interest in women philosophers intensified in the mid-80s, a trend both exemplified and fueled by the 1987 publication of the first of the four volume *A History of Women Philosophers*, edited by Mary Ellen Waithe.⁶ There are now many resources, primary and secondary, on women's writing in the history of philosophy.⁷

Those resources are what I will herein refer to as the field of reclamation. Under the heading of reclamation, I include any work that advocates for reading a historical woman's writing as philosophical, regardless of the arguments for doing so. The arguments for doing so are the focus of my analysis in this chapter. I have identified four major types of reclamation models that have dominated this growing field. The first type reclaims women as philosophers who belong in traditional philosophical histories;

⁶ Waithe is often credited by feminist philosophers for making the pioneering contribution to the field of reclaiming women (McAllister 1994, 192; O'Neill 2005, 188; Warren 2009, xiii, to cite only a few instances). In *Historical Dictionary of Feminist Philosophy*, Catherine Gardner writes, "For information about women philosophers from the history of philosophy, Mary Ellen Waithe's edited history, *A History of Women Philosophers*, is incomparably the best" (Gardner 2006, 240). A roughly contemporaneous project, Ethel Kersey's one volume *Women Philosophers: A Bio-Critical Sourcebook*, exhibits some of the same concerns about determining which women deserve to be deemed philosophers as Waithe's project and offers important material for consideration, but it has not been cited nearly as often as Waithe's project. Also, Kersey cites Waithe's research and, thus, while not inspired by Waithe, is in some sense indebted to her work.

⁷ In *The Blackwell Guide to Feminist Philosophy*, Eileen O'Neill's introduction to "Justifying the Inclusion of Women in Our Histories of Philosophy: The Case of Marie de Gournay," offers a particularly good overview of these projects (2007).

reclamation is undertaken to enfranchise women into philosophical history. The second type claims that women's philosophical writing offers us an alternative to traditional philosophical histories; reclamation gives us something other than the masculine tradition. The third model treats reclamation as an endeavor that will make philosophy more philosophical; this is reclamation as corrective to philosophy. The fourth and final type reclaims women's writing as a force that will change philosophical history and, thereby, contemporary philosophical practice; this is reclamation as transformation.

There are no pure examples of any of these types; thus, I will not seek in my analysis to make any project fit neatly into one of them. Rather, I will show how these reclamation projects tend toward certain argumentative strategies and the varied ways they are deployed. Perhaps surprisingly, some reclamation projects have little concern about the exclusion of women from the history of philosophy or, more surprisingly still, even endorse it. Others treat the exclusion of women from philosophy as a failure whose correction will change the nature of philosophy. In other words, within the field of reclamation, there is a great deal of disagreement about what the problem of women in the history of philosophy has been and how it ought to be remedied. By surveying these different strategies, I illuminate these sometimes competing and sometimes compatible ways of thinking about women's exclusion.

Yet, while I think the nature of exclusion is what is at issue in reclamation, I also think that women's exclusion is, by and large, insufficiently theorized within the field. In my analysis, I highlight the connection between the reclamation being enacted and the theory of exclusion that seems to be motivating it, however submerged that theory is. My goal is to show that reclamation projects already contain views about exclusion but that

more explicit reflection on the nature of exclusion is needed within the field. Further, no argument about women's exclusion can avoid the question of what women are being excluded from. Also at issue, then, in projects of reclamation is the nature of philosophy and its history. The only model that sufficiently tackles the problem of defining what philosophy is, the only one that sufficiently makes a problem of defining what philosophy is, I show, is the model of reclamation as transformation. Thus, this analysis is also an argument for reclamation projects to frame the problem of women's exclusion as one that can be redressed only by transforming how we conceive of philosophy and construct its history. I do not, however, prescribe one transformational model as the correct one for reclamation. Instead, I investigate the work of three theorists of exclusion to show the different modes of transformation each offers.

In this chapter, I also make an excursus to consider a problem that feminism inherited from philosophy: the problem of Diotima's existence. Diotima, a character in Plato's *Symposium*, has long been the subject of speculation and theories, but several events in feminist philosophy have given new shape to the problem of whether there was a historical woman on whom Plato based the character of Socrates' teacher. The interest in this woman may seem to be a minor development in the work of reclamation, but throughout this dissertation, I show that concern about Diotima is a point of access for understanding the problem of women in the history of philosophy and what is at stake in reclamation. Indeed, the problem of Diotima exposes the importance of the issue of women's exclusion from philosophy for reclamation.

The Enfranchisement Model

In this section, I look at two different reclamation efforts that argue women should be included in the history of philosophy because they already meet established criteria for inclusion. These strategies rely on arguments that women wrote and write philosophy *just like* recognized canonical philosophers. Conceded, I argue, in this model of reclamation are: the nature of philosophy and the means of constructing its history. Those concessions operate differently in each model. Mary Ellen Waithe's advocacy for women's inclusion in philosophical history, for instance, includes the argument: "women were engaged in precisely the same kind of philosophical enterprises that have historically characterized male philosophers" (Waithe 1987, xii). That sentiment sounds like the more general version of Mary Warnock's claim that the women she treats "are (or were) mostly philosophers in the same sort of sense as, all would agree, Hume was a philosopher" (Warnock 1996, xxx). But Waithe also asks: "Might we come to a different understanding of the nature of philosophy itself as a result of an acquaintance with women's thought?" (Waithe 1987, xviii). In this question, we can see Waithe reconsidering whether women really have been involved in precisely the same kind of philosophical enterprise that has historically characterized male philosophers. Warnock never puts "the nature of philosophy itself" under such scrutiny. Instead, Warnock finds grounds for dismissing the enterprise of feminist philosophy within her conception of what philosophy is: feminist work fails the criterion of gender-neutrality.

Indeed, Waithe's project, in being open to reconceiving philosophy through engagements with women's work, undermines its classification as a model of enfranchisement. Again, however, I am not offering these classifications as a way of

settling, once and for all, what each of these projects is, but rather, as a way of thinking through the way exclusion is being theorized in them. Waithe and Warnock both deploy arguments for women's inclusion that appeal to already established standards of philosophy. Warnock is certainly at greater pains to define and avow those standards than Waithe, but they both try to harness some already established conception of what philosophy is to advocate for women's inclusion in it. Such a move, far from settling what philosophy is, leaves that question unexamined and, thereby, risks in Waithe's case, and explicitly wields in Warnock's, a conception of philosophy that excludes women.

I proceed by examining Waithe's project. Then, I take a detour through her reclamation of Diotima to show how the problem of her historical existence was made an issue for feminist philosophers. I return to my examination of the enfranchisement model by analyzing Warnock's approach to reclamation in *Women Philosophers*.

One indication of how early in the process of recovering women's writing Waithe's *A History of Women Philosophers* appeared is that, when she first began work on women in the history of philosophy, she thought she would find enough material for a journal article. After initial research she realized the project would be book-length and she enlisted the help of other scholars through a notice in the Society for Women in Philosophy (SWIP) Newsletter. The responses she received made her realize the scope of the undertaking and helped her formulate the plan that would produce the four-volume *A History of Women Philosophers*: "We would help restore women's contributions to the history of philosophy through a program of careful research and scholarship" (Waithe 1987, x). In no small part because of Waithe's history, anyone interested in women in the history of philosophy quickly realizes that there is a lot of material to explore.

Early in her introduction, Waithe raises methodological issues. She writes:

I could not presume to undertake the task of re-defining the discipline of philosophy, so I chose a purely *ad hoc* device for identifying philosophical works: use a definition of ‘philosophy’ that has been an accepted definition of philosophy for some identifiable historical period. Unfortunately, this *ad hoc* device, uncontroversial though it may at first seem, begs an important feminist question. If traditional philosophy has always been an essentially male enterprise, by selecting works of women that fit those traditional definitions, am I not merely selecting works by women who ‘thought like men’ or who ‘did what men did’? Perhaps. Examining the question whether philosophy as we have come to know the discipline, defines essentially masculinist enterprises that necessarily exclude women, is a worthwhile undertaking. But it is far beyond the expertise of this philosopher, and beyond the immediate task of the Project. The women were engaged in precisely the same kind of philosophical enterprises that have historically characterized male philosophers. (Waithe 1987, xii)

Within Waithe’s explanation of how she approached the project, we can already see at work the idea that reclamation might affect our understanding of philosophical history. Indeed, she introduced the problem in the passage above by noting that the Pythagorean women discussed issues of running a family, a topic not traditionally considered philosophical. Waithe reports that the Pythagorean women did so by applying ethical theory, using the concept of *harmonia* to compare the state and the family, and therefore, approached the topic philosophically (Waithe 1987, xi). Thus, her introduction of the problem of determining who counts as a philosopher performs a feminist recasting of what is “properly” philosophical; discussions of child rearing and women’s place in society cannot be dismissed *a priori* from the purview of philosophy, even if those have traditionally been dismissed. We must analyze the approach to a topic, Waithe implies, before deciding if philosophy has been done. But the claim she makes in the above passage to be unqualified to determine the extent to which philosophy is a masculine enterprise and the claim that it is outside the task of the history side-steps further

development of the issues involved in reclaiming women's work. Additionally, her conclusion in the above passage, that women were involved in the same kind of enterprises as men, is a clear example of reclamation as enfranchisement.

Waithe's discussion after the passage I quoted above indicates that she continues to negotiate worries about the philosophical legitimacy of women's writing. After surveying the tradition of women who discussed the role of women, she writes: "Yet, the majority of women philosophers' writing do not reflect concern with the nature, status, and rights of women" (Waithe 1987, xii). Then, she talks about Diotima adopting "a masculine perspective," the gender-neutral way Hypatia discusses astronomy, and concludes her survey of topics about which women wrote with the observation: "Indeed, the philosophical topics and theories of the women philosophers are every bit as diverse and interesting as are those which characterize 'traditional' male philosophers" (Waithe 1987, xiii). Women did not spend all their time talking about women, Waithe assures us, and not only did they talk about diverse and interesting things, but often the same diverse and interesting things with which men like Leibniz were concerned. This shows the continued importance of traditional standards of what counts as philosophy, which she had begun to trouble in her discussion of the Pythagorean women, in Waithe's approach to reclamation.

The section on "Research Methods and Materials" gives no further address to issues of legitimizing women's writing. Waithe reports: "Research about the history of women philosophers has proceeded in several stages: first, creating a compendium of names, nationalities, and dates of birth of women alleged to have been philosophers. Second, confirming or disconfirming the allegations" (Waithe 1987, xiii). At first, it

appears that the issue of confirming women as philosophers will lead Waithe to extend the discussion of what is properly philosophical and, in a very interesting way, through attunement to historical period. She writes: “the methods of research for the second stage – confirming that the woman actually was a philosopher – varied somewhat with each volume’s research. Verifying information about pre-17th century women was much more difficult than verifying information about modern and contemporary women philosophers” (Waithe 1987, xiv). But her discussion centers on the *materials* that were used to confirm the women as actual philosophers, rather than the means of confirming the actuality.

From the beginnings of the efforts to reclaim women’s philosophical work, Waithe’s project shows, questions about the relationship between philosophy and feminism were at issue, but how they ought to be negotiated or what the impact of reclamation would be was far from clear. At the end of her introduction, Waithe considers three questions that indicate for her these issues, far from being settled by *A History of Women Philosophers*, were being given initial form. She introduces the questions by writing: “What has struck me as fundamentally serious is the ramification that the contents of these four volumes will have for philosophy itself” (Waithe 1987, xviii). The three questions she asks are: “What *is* the history of philosophy?”; “Have philosophers failed at the most basic task of philosophy – to question one’s basic assumptions thereby to discover the truth?”; and “Might we come to a different understanding of the nature of philosophy itself as a result of an acquaintance with women’s thought?” (Waithe 1987, xviii). Thus, while I include Waithe’s project as an

example of reclamation as enfranchisement, her work also shows the way reclamation can bring into question philosophy and philosophical practice.

Waithe's work motivated feminist concerns about the historicity of Diotima. Acknowledging the then recent trend in scholarship to think of Diotima as a fictional character, Waithe reports:

Other disciplines, especially classics and archeology, have considered this issue, and in following sources outside philosophy I came across two different types of evidence bearing upon it. First, it appears that in the 15th century a scholar suggested that it was 'silly' to think that a woman would have been a philosopher. Second, there is ancient archeological evidence which classicists and archeologists have interpreted as support for the claim that Diotima was indeed a [sic] historical person. (Waithe 1987, xiv)

Waithe suggests that the 15th century scholar set the tone for philosophy's reception of Diotima as a fictional character. Until that time, Waithe argues, Diotima's historical existence was not debated, nor was it considered pertinent to the issue of Diotima's philosophical authority. Further, Waithe contends that archeological evidence may substantiate Diotima's existence.

In addition to that evidence, Waithe also argues that Diotima's arguments differ from that of either Plato or Socrates. Thus, she seeks to show that analysis of the content of Diotima's speech urges us to consider her a real person with views independent from the author or the character reporting them. While Waithe does not think the evidence she considers or the arguments she presents decide the issue of whether or not this was the person whose arguments Socrates recounts in the *Symposium*, the material on Diotima is included as a spur to further research. Waithe's intent, I argue, is to raise that possibility that we need to reassess how we have accorded Diotima philosophical authority. By putting into question the convention of treating Diotima as fictional, Waithe is attempting

to put into question the reduction of Diotima's philosophical contribution to that of Socrates or Plato. Waithe is, through the issue of Diotima's historical existence, trying to open up the possibility that women have been active participants in the work of philosophy since its beginning—well before women are commonly believed to have been involved.

In the following excursus, I contextualize Waithe's intervention on the question of Diotima's philosophical authority. My intent is to show that feminists have acknowledged the importance of Waithe's arguments for Diotima's historical existence without engaging the issue of Diotima's authority. Meanwhile, discussions that assume Diotima is fictional proceed and, thereby, also fail to engage the issue of Diotima's authority in ancient scholarship.

Excursus on Diotima

In this section, I briefly explore the state of scholarship on the question of Diotima's historical existence, beginning with the dialogue in which Diotima's name arises, the *Symposium*. It is a dialogue on love in which seven different views are given and in which Socrates claims to relate the teaching of the prophetess Diotima. Then, I look at interpretations of Diotima and her existence within ancient scholarship to contextualize Waithe's intervention. That is followed by a look at two reviews of Waithe's first volume. One review is by a feminist scholar who grants the importance of Diotima's reclamation and the other by a scholar of classics who finds Waithe's wanting. I show that feminist and ancient scholars have very different investments in the role Diotima plays in the *Symposium*. Rather than trying to account for that difference, I

suggest that feminist scholars, with their interest in Diotima's philosophical authority, are already transforming the way philosophical discourse takes place.

Plato's *Symposium* is the only written record of Diotima's existence. Many authors have made a lot of the fact that Diotima does not speak in the *Symposium* and that the report that Socrates gives is at least a quarter century after their conversation was said to have taken place; we are dealing with a case of reported speech, reported well after the fact. A further problem is, of course, the Socratic problem: Socrates left no written record. Although we have several ancient sources reporting his speech, with Plato as the one most important in the philosophical tradition, we also have, at least apparently, inconsistent reports of his philosophical doctrine. Further still, Socrates does not appear straightforwardly as a character in this dialogue. As Martha Nussbaum so evocatively describes it:

This dialogue consists of a series of elaborately nested reports. Like a Chinese box, it gives us a conversation of Apollodorus with a friend, which reports a previous conversation of his own, in which he recalls a speech of Aristodemus, who reports, (among others) a speech of Socrates, who reports a speech of Diotima, who reports the secrets of the mysteries. (Nussbaum 2001, 168)

The dialogue is the report of Aristodemus's reconstruction of the speeches, not from Aristodemus, but from Apollodorus, who heard it from Aristodemus and is now repeating it for the second time in three days. It is not just Diotima who is absent from the event at which the speeches were given—Socrates and Aristodemus, along with all the other speech makers, are also absent from the *Symposium*. Yet, around Diotima there remains special doubt.

Luis Navia, in his work on the problem of establishing an accurate account of who Diotima was, offers this view:

The friends and acquaintances of Socrates appear distinctly drawn throughout the dialogues, and there are no compelling reasons to believe that any of them are fictitious or imaginary characters, except perhaps for Diotima, the Mantinean seer who plays an important role in the *Symposium* (201d0212b), and about whom there are no other references outside of this dialogue. (Navia 1993, 144)

Navia indicates two of the most important pieces of evidence that feed opposing sides of the controversy. First, that Plato is not known to have constructed from whole cloth any other character in the dialogues, and second, that no other record of Diotima exists except that given to us by Plato.

On the first point, A.E. Taylor provides one defense of Diotima's historical existence that makes much of Plato's otherwise perfect record in fictionalizing real persons:

... I cannot agree with many modern scholars in regarding Diotima of Mantinea as a fictitious personage; still less in looking for fanciful reasons for giving the particular names Plato does to the prophetess and her place of origin. The introduction of purely fictitious named personages into a discourse seems to be a literary device unknown to Plato ... and I do not believe that if he had invented Diotima he would have gone on to put into the mouth of Socrates the definite statement that she had delayed the pestilence of the early years of the Archidamian war for ten years by 'offering sacrifice' at Athens. ... the purpose of the reference to the presence of Diotima at Athens about 440 is manifestly not merely to account for Socrates' acquaintance with her, but to make the point that the mystical doctrine of the contemplative 'ascent' of the soul, now to be set forth, was one on which the philosopher's mind had been brooding ever since his thirtieth year. This, if true, is very important for our understanding of the man's personality, and I, for one, cannot believe that Plato was guilty of wanton mystifications about such things. (Taylor 1969, 224)

Even such a strong defender of Diotima's historicity, however, undercuts any contribution he might make to reclamation when he writes: "To all intents and purposes, we shall not go wrong by treating the 'speech of Diotima' as a speech of Socrates"

(Taylor 1969, 225).⁸ In other words, even if we believe that Diotima was a real person we need not consider the words hers.

Yet, as Waithe reports, Diotima's fictionality is widely accepted by many scholars, even those with feminist commitments. Nussbaum, for instance, does not pause to consider Diotima's possible historicity. In *The Fragility of Goodness*, Nussbaum writes: "Socrates' teacher is a priestess named Diotima. Since she is a fiction, we are moved to ask about her name, and why Plato should have chosen it" (Nussbaum 2001, 177). Nussbaum then engages in exactly what Taylor dismissed as fanciful, a reading of Diotima's name and its importance to the meaning of the dialogue.

Richard Hunter agrees with Nussbaum's view when he writes:

There has been much discussion of the historicity of Diotima, though her role in the *Symposium* is obviously a fictitious one (she has even had an advance inkling of Aristophanes' speech, 205d10-e7)⁹, and we should no more wonder when she and Socrates used to meet than we should inquire when Er of Pamphylia told Socrates the story which concludes the *Republic*. It was common enough at symposia for the male guests to impersonate characters, including women, through the recitation of poetry, whether one's own or another's ... and Socrates' gambit must be seen, in part, as appropriate to the setting in which he finds himself. (Hunter 2004, 81)

Nussbaum and Hunter's treatments of Diotima both appear in works published well after feminist interest in Diotima had been established. Thus, I believe both treatments

⁸ Waithe argues that Taylor is wrong in treating Diotima's speech in such a manner. Waithe argues against Taylor's reading strategy to not only claim Diotima's historicity, but her philosophical authority. To do so, Waithe reconstructs argumentative differences between Diotima and both Plato and Socrates.

⁹ Hunter here alludes to the oft-made observation that Diotima's arguments respond to the views earlier expressed in the dialogue by Aristophanes. Thus, if we are to believe that Socrates is giving us an accurate account of Diotima's speech, she anticipated Aristophanes' views by a quarter century. David Halperin, for instance, argues: "The textual strategies of the *Symposium* reveal Diotima's fictionality as much as they conceal it. Plato hints that Sokrates has—if not simply invented Diotima out of whole cloth—at least shaped the doctrine he ascribes to suit the needs of the present occasion. ... He ... has Diotima rebut the view of *eros* that Aristophanes had articulated a few minutes earlier, on the same evening as his own speech (205d-206a)" (Halperin 1990, 292).

indicate a tradition of thinking about Diotima as fictional and show that the tradition has continued with little or no trouble despite feminist debates.

There is one view from the history of philosophy that deserves special attention in this context. Marie le Jars de Gournay, a writer of much interest to feminist reclamation efforts, in her 1622 “The Equality of Men and Women” defends women’s equality in part by giving the example of Diotima. She writes: “Diotima, who Socrates does not shrink from calling his master and teacher in some of the profoundest sciences—he, teacher and master of all nations under the sun” (de Gournay 1999, 92). While de Gournay does not defend Diotima’s historicity, indeed the example is but one in the development of her case, the example is meant to show a woman’s authority in relationship to one whose authority she thinks unquestionable. If Socrates acknowledges a woman as a teacher, de Gournay argues, we have another powerful reason to rethink the widespread denigration of women. Thus, without defending her historical existence, de Gournay defends Diotima’s authority. De Gournay’s work, with this mention of Diotima in it, has only recently, through the efforts of feminist reclamationists, become widely available or attained any particular notice by philosophers. Thus, it does not form the context for feminist writing about Diotima, though it is now being reclaimed as part of its history.¹⁰

In one of the first reviews of *A History of Women Philosophers*, Mary Anne Warren gives special emphasis to Waithe’s reclamation of Diotima. She writes: “This careful scholarship lends weight to what is probably the most important finding of the

¹⁰ It’s important to note that de Gournay’s granting of importance to the prophetess relies on Socrates’ authority to establish Diotima’s. Diotima’s importance must be granted, she implies, because we already know Socrates is important. I do not mean to give with one hand what I take with another; that is, I do not mention de Gournay’s attention to Diotima to then recommend that we discount it because the strategy of argumentation may be undesirable. Rather, as I will argue in the course of the dissertation, reclaiming women as philosophers must mean critically reclaiming them. De Gournay’s use of Diotima in an argument to garner greater respect for women is meant to serve as an example of what has been lost to philosophical work by the exclusion of women from philosophical history.

volume—i.e., that Diotima of Manitea was almost certainly an historical figure, rather than a fictional character created by Socrates or Plato” (Warren 1989, 157). Warren does not explain the importance of establishing Diotima as a historical figure. The volume reclaims writing by other ancient women, yet Warren singles out Diotima’s historicity as its most important finding.

Perhaps the importance Warren gives Diotima in her analysis relates to the broader importance she sees in Waithe’s project. Warren writes:

The gaps and distortions in the history of western philosophy resulting from millennia of suppression of female thought cannot be overcome in a single volume or series of volumes. But Waithe and her fellow researchers are making a significant contribution to that goal. Further research and analysis will be necessary to determine the accuracy of their specific conclusions and occasional speculations. If this volume leads to such further work, then it will have proved its value. (Warren 1989, 159)

Warren is satisfied with a volume that she criticizes for “lack[ing] a clear unifying theme” because she sees the enormity of the project of establishing women as part of philosophical history (Warren 1989, 158). Waithe, as mentioned, does not claim to decide the issue of Diotima’s historical existence, but Warren is clearly swayed by the new presentation of the evidence. To establish a woman’s presence so early in philosophy’s history and in conjunction with figures no less important to its development than Plato and Socrates would, Warren implies, make it all the more difficult to maintain that women have had no impact on the history of philosophy. However, unaddressed by Warren is the problem that even if Diotima was a historical person, we do not have a record of her writing. In other words, presence does not establish authority.

Warren’s review contrasts sharply with another review that appeared in the same issue of *Hypatia*. R.M. Dancy concludes his assessment with this: “In sum, the chapters

by Zedler and Wolfskeel are good, and the translations and all too infrequent comments by Harper are first rate. But the rest of the books is so fraught [sic] with half-truths, wishful thinking and downright misinformation based on poor or incomplete scholarship that it utterly fails to attain the goals it set out to achieve” (Dancy 1989, 169). Dancy describes the chapter on Diotima as “the centerpiece of this book” (Dancy 1989, 165), by which he means it anchors a work of little value in his estimation. He writes:

Perhaps Diotima was a historical person. If so, she may have held the theory of forms we associate with Plato, if what Plato makes Socrates makes her say in the *Symposium* is true to her, she certainly did. But we have been given no reason whatever for supposing that she must have been a historical person, or that, if she was, she held the views put into her mouth in the *Symposium*. (Dancy 1989, 166)¹¹

Dancy raises the issue of the way we have come to know Diotima, which is as a character in one of Plato’s dialogues. Whether she was fictional or fictionalized, Dancy highlights the seemingly intractable problem of attributing any view to her.

Dancy’s resistance to Waithe’s project is not based on a simple allegiance to the way history has already been rendered. He writes:

No doubt the prospect of having to rewrite the history of Greek philosophy does not disturb Waithe. Nor does it disturb me. But it cannot be done this way. Too much work has been done to separate out the genuine from the spurious in Pythagoreanism, and some account must be taken of this

¹¹ Dancy’s contention that Diotima holds Plato’s theory of the forms is contentious on a number of levels, not least of which is the long history of disagreement about how, exactly, to understand Plato’s theory of the forms. More to the point in this context, how to read Diotima’s speech in relation to Plato’s philosophical views is also a rich area of disagreement. In *Erotic Wisdom*, Gary Alan Scott and William A. Welton begin their exploration of these issues with the following observation:

The decision about how to understand Diotima’s role—in particular, whether we should understand her teaching about *Eros* as a conception endorsed by Plato or as offered in some way for criticism—is a key question to be wrestled with by readers of the *Symposium*. Unfortunately, there is no way to know at the outset which answer is the true one. But there are certain obvious features of Diotima’s role in the dialogue that probably should guide its audience. (Scott and Welton 2008, 89-90)

The reading they develop using this method is a careful and fruitful engagement with the speech attributed to Diotima. Martha Nussbaum’s in *The Fragility of Goodness* is similarly careful and fruitful, yet she assumes at the outset that Diotima is a fiction. Scott and Welton leave that question open.

no matter how we do our rewriting. Waithe does not mention this work.
(Dancy 1989, 165)

Dancy advocates for the importance of the progress already made on the history of Greek philosophy. It is not that Waithe puts that work into question, but her apparent disregard for it that Dancy objects to and that forms the basis of his condemnation of the project.

Dancy is questioning Waithe's attempt to establish Diotima's philosophical authority. I will return to Dancy's critique in the final chapter.

Warren turns out to have been the more prescient of the two reviewers as far as feminist work is concerned. Waithe's work supported the development of reclamation as a field within feminist philosophy. For instance, Catherine Gardner, whose project I will discuss below in the section on transformative models of reclamation, calls Waithe's project the inspiration for her own research. In another instance, Margaret Urban Walker presents her concerns about the future of feminist philosophy by using Waithe's work to illustrate her point and lend it a title. Walker writes: "Waithe's restoration of just a small sampling of women philosophers throughout history, and her concern with Diotima's reality serve as a cautionary tale" (Walker 2005, 155). Since, Walker reasons, women have already produced philosophy and been forgotten, there is reason to worry that it could happen again, regardless of how hale the field seems at the moment. Walker's title reflects both the main point of the essay and the importance of Diotima as a figure in it: "Diotima's Ghost: The Uncertain Place of Feminist Philosophy in Professional Philosophy." The cautionary tale that Walker finds in Waithe's work is not so much that feminist philosophers' historical existence will come to be questioned, but that their philosophical authority will once again be lost. Diotima's ghost is not a remnant of her historical existence, in Walker's rendering, but a specter of her lost authority.

Waithe's contribution was not the only reason feminists developed such a pronounced interest in Diotima. When Heather Hadar Wright posed the following at the 2008 Western Political Science Association Meeting: "why are *feminist* thinkers so interested in arguing about the meaning of a relatively obscure figure in an ancient Greek text, a Platonic work which on the surface appears to be a discussion by men on the subject of male homosexuality?" (Wright 2008, 2), her answer was: Luce Irigaray.¹²

Irigaray's essay on Diotima, "Sorcerer Love: A Reading of Plato, *Symposium*, 'Diotima's Speech'," first appeared in English translation in the 1989 issue of *Hypatia* that preceded the issue in which the reviews of Waithe's work were printed.¹³ Irigaray's essay appeared with an introduction by Eleanor Kuykendall, which I discuss here, and a critical response by Andrea Nye, which I look at in some detail in the chapter on Irigaray. Kuykendall observes that "Sorcerer Love" both connects with the deconstructive work on Plato begun in *Speculum of the Other Woman* and sets up the positive ethical and ontological work of *Ethics of Sexual Difference* in which the essay appears.¹⁴ In her introduction, Kuykendall concludes that Irigaray:

seeks in women's experience an alternative to the ontology of separation and desire posited by Plato through Socrates and Diotima. Irigaray's reading of Plato's *Symposium*, like her readings of philosophers

¹² Wright points to two 2006 *Hypatia* articles in particular as evidence of feminist interest, Shaun O'Dwyer's "The Unacknowledged Socrates in the Works of Luce Irigaray" and Nancy Evans's "Diotima and Demeter as Mystagogues in Plato's *Symposium*." But Wright also acknowledges a great deal of feminist interest that does not owe its focus on Diotima to Irigaray's influence: Elena Blair's "Women: The Unrecognized Teachers of the Platonic Socrates," Wendy Brown's "Supposing Truth Were a Woman: Plato's Subversion of Masculine Discourse," and David M. Halperin's "Why is Diotima a Woman? Platonic Eros and the Figuration of Gender."

¹³ "Sorcerer Love" in its original French version actually preceded the publication of Waithe's first volume by 3 years. The close occurrence of critical engagement with both works in *Hypatia* has meant that, especially in the United States, feminists interested in Diotima have had both authors as resources, along with some history of their reception. Interestingly, the two are not often treated by the same authors or compared.

¹⁴ Kuykendall connects Irigaray's essay to the ballet *El Amor Brujo/L'Amour Sorcier*, which, she observes, "culminates in a ritual fire dance" (Kuykendall 1989, 29). Kuykendall makes the observation to underscore the magical or bewitching aspect of Irigaray's work, but does not speculate further about Irigaray's choice of title.

elsewhere, opens a dialogue with Plato, with Socrates, with Diotima, and with Irigaray herself, which we are now challenged to continue. (Kuykendall 1989, 30)

I will take up that challenge in the second chapter. For now, I want to emphasize the importance the character of Diotima has had within feminist thinking while she has been largely relegated to the realm of total fiction in ancient scholarship. That difference in attention and treatment is all the more interesting given the contentious and enduring debates about the Socratic problem within ancient scholarship. Socrates is, of course, at the center of Plato's dialogic approach and Diotima a small part. I do not wish to argue that ancient scholars are under-invested or feminist scholars over-invested in the importance or meaning of Diotima. Rather, I wish to point to the difference in interest in the authority of a woman as a philosopher.

Even when Taylor points to the fact that Diotima would have been Plato's only non-historically based character, he still fails to see her as a philosophical authority. Waithe's strategy of establishing Diotima's authority through establishing her historical existence has, with the exception of Dancy's strong critique, been ignored in ancient scholarship, even as it was praised in feminist scholarship. Dancy, moreover, dismisses Waithe's argument that Diotima develops an argument that is different from the views of either Plato or Socrates. In so doing, Dancy is keeping company with many ancient scholars. Can Diotima be interesting to feminist scholars because they are aware, in different ways, of the exclusion of women from philosophy?¹⁵ Does Diotima presents an interesting problem about which these scholars are willing to think about creatively and interpret in new ways because they are aware of the need for that creativity? I cannot

¹⁵ I have so phrased this question to suggest that some level of awareness of women's exclusion creates a capacity in feminist scholars to think about Diotima in ways that diverge from the well-established tracks of interpretation into which they may have been trained in their philosophical education.

answer these questions, but I suggest instead that in taking interest in Diotima and debating how to interpret her role in the *Symposium* feminist scholars are establishing a transformative realm of discourse. My intent in what follows is to deepen thinking about how that transformation can happen. One way I will do that is by exploring the ways Irigaray, Lloyd, and Le Doeuff engage or create the possibility for engaging Diotima as a philosophical authority by transforming philosophical practice in light of their critiques of exclusion. First, however, I must return to my review of common reclamation strategies to argue for why I think transformational approaches are necessary for engaging women as philosophical authorities.

Return to the Enfranchisement Model

Mary Warnock's anthology, *Women Philosophers*, is another project of enfranchisement; however, unlike Waithe's, it is one that seeks to dissuade its readers from considering the impact feminism might have on philosophy. I include it as a project of feminist reclamation advisedly, as the author rejects feminism as properly philosophical, but include it none-the-less because it is often cited as a resource for further reading on women in the history of philosophy, both as a primary source and for her perspective on issues of reclamation.¹⁶ Warnock begins the work with the question of who should be considered a philosopher. In answer, she writes: "First, I think, a writer must be concerned with matters of a high degree of generality, and must be at home among abstract ideas. ... he or she would claim not only to seek the truth, but to seek a

¹⁶ As an anthology evidencing the participation of women throughout women's history in Deutscher, Penelope 2000; as primary source writing by women philosophers in Broad 2002; on the diversity of women in the history of philosophy in Alanen and Witt 2004; as a source on the exceptions of the entirely male history of philosophy Landau 2006; as a source for Mary Whiton Calkins in Rogers 2009.

truth, or theory, that will explain the particular and detailed and the everyday” (Warnock 1996, xxix-xxx). Warnock uses Hume as her model—someone who never held an academic post, who argued for his views, wrote essays and dialogues, and was in conversation with other thinkers, responding to and refuting their ideas. The women in *Women Philosophers* “are (or were) mostly philosophers in the same sort of sense as, all would agree, Hume was a philosopher” (Warnock 1996, xxx). Warnock, by using Hume as her standard, exemplifies the enfranchisement model of reclaiming women in the history of philosophy.

With that definition in hand, Warnock notes that she had “considerable difficulties” with “what used to be called ‘the Women Question’. There is, understandably, an enormous quantity of broadly ‘feminist’ literature written by women. How much of this should count as philosophy?” (Warnock 1996, xxxiii). She notes that much of it meets the generality criteria. The paragraph turns bibliographical, reporting on feminist works from the 1980s and 90s “all plausibly purporting to be philosophical” (Warnock 1996, xxxiii). Yet, Warnock’s judges: “there tends to be too much unexamined dogma in these writings, too much ill-concealed proselytizing, too little objective analysis, to allow them to qualify for inclusion among philosophical writing proper” (Warnock 1996, xxxiii). The quality of the writing, in other words, is why it has been excluded. Warnock deems feminist writing to be insufficiently critical and to be too biased to be considered properly philosophical.

But Warnock also reverses her initial judgment that the work meets the criteria of generality. She continues:

Moreover, as we look at these titles and others like them it becomes clear that they fail, after all, the test of generality. For the great subjects of

philosophy, the nature of human knowledge, the limits of science, the foundations of morality or aesthetics, the relation between our language and the world, must be concerned with ‘us’ in the sense in which ‘we’ are all human. The truths which philosophers seek must aim to be not merely generally, but objectively, even universally, true. Essentially, they must be gender-indifferent. (Warnock 1996, xxxiii)

With a line drawn between feminism and philosophy, the only feminist Warnock includes only is Mary Wollstonecraft.

In this passage, Warnock reveals the overshot optimism of Linda Lopez McAlister’s claim in 1989 that “feminism has expanded the bounds of what we have considered to be philosophy both in terms of subject matter and the forms that it may take. There is no longer any denying that women who theorize, e.g., about the rights or liberation of women, whether in the eighteenth century or today, are engaged in a philosophical pursuit” (McAlister 1989, 2). Warnock denies exactly what McAlister says can no longer be denied; women writing on women is anthropology, according to Warnock, not philosophy.

Warnock gives another reason, in addition to lack of objectivity, poor quality, and insufficient universality, for Wollstonecraft being the only writer she included on the “Woman Question.” She writes:

My other reason for omitting most writing that would be called specifically feminist is that I wanted to show the variety of philosophical topics on which women have written, and written well. It may still be asked whether or not women have a particular ‘voice’ as philosophers, but it would prejudge the answer to that question if too great a proportion of the extracts I selected were concerned with ‘women’s’ subjects. (Warnock 1996, xxxiii)

Warnock wants to show a variety of writings by women. She seems also to want to complicate the issue of whether men and women do philosophy differently—have different “voices.” Warnock does so by excluding feminist works or works that are

concerned with “women’s” subjects. Warnock argues in this passage that questions of “voice” are prejudiced by attention to “women’s” subjects. It seems the quotation marks around “voice” serve a different function than those around “women’s.” In the first case, the marks seem to indicate the metaphorical status of voice. The second set of marks seems to be putting into doubt the aptness of the label for the subjects under consideration. That second set can be read as containing a sort of feminist impulse: it is prejudicial to assume that some subjects are gendered. Of course, the passage is concerned with why feminist works are being omitted from the volume, and so it is difficult to know if my reading of the second set of marks is fair.

Eventually, Warnock concludes: “In the end, I have not found any clear ‘voice’ shared by women philosophers” (Warnock 1996, xlvi). Warnock’s reclamation should not, then, be read as giving us an alternative tradition to philosophy or as an attempt to transform what counts as philosophy. She may put in doubt what counts as women’s subjects, but what counts as philosophy has been established on the model of Hume, and her anthology should be read as evidence that women have been philosophers like him. Warnock’s interest in reclamation does seem to have some impulse to correct philosophical history. She writes, for instance, “Anne Conway seems to me to be one of the few women philosophers who may be said to have been unjustly neglected” (Warnock 1996, xxxvii). Without wishing to change what counts as philosophy, Warnock seeks to correct, at least in a few cases, the neglect of women’s writing.

Although Warnock and Waithe both claim the status of philosopher for historical women on the model of traditional, male conceptions of who is a philosopher, I have shown that the overall tenor of their projects are quite different. Interestingly, both

Waithe and Warnock are cited by feminists undertaking diverse projects of reclamation. Warnock's intent may have been to more firmly draw the boundary between philosophy and feminism, but in presenting the writing of women, she has aided feminist efforts in redressing the exclusion of women in the history of philosophy. Warnock's rejection of feminism as properly philosophical lends to her consistency in defining what philosophy is and minimizing the impact reclamation might have on it. Indeed, her view of feminism has led some of her critics to wonder why she wrote a book about women philosophers.¹⁷ Waithe, on the other hand, while tending to make claims for women's inclusion in philosophy based on their similarity to men, also shows her own thinking about philosophy beginning to alter and encourages more thinking about how feminism might change philosophy.

That openness to changing philosophy has the greatest potential for successfully reclaiming women. Enfranchising women into a canon that all but denies women's philosophical writing by using the criteria through which that writing has been excluded risks failing to promote engagement with women's work. Warnock is more consistent in her use of the strategy. While Warnock thinks a handful of women who deserve inclusion in the canon have accidentally been neglected, she concludes that the majority of women's writing and *any* feminist writing does not meet philosophy's standards and was properly excluded. That is to say, Warnock largely denies the possibility of reclamation and, thereby, shows the inadequacy of the enfranchisement model as a reclamation strategy.

¹⁷ Cf. O'Neill 2005; Arnal 1998.

The Alternative History Model

The second model of reclamation that I investigate is what I call the alternative history approach. In this approach, reclamationists argue that women have established a tradition of thinking independently of men's thinking and that there are now compelling reasons for us to appeal to this other tradition as a resource. Andrea Nye argues there is an independent tradition of women thinkers outside of philosophy that can help us resolve issues with which philosophy can no longer help us make progress. Karen Green, by contrast, identifies an alternative tradition *within* philosophy that can help us with some of the most intractable philosophical problems, especially within political theory. As in the enfranchisement model, the alternative history approach to reclamation concedes, to some degree, the nature of philosophy and how its history has been constructed. An important difference, however, is that in the alternative tradition model, women's writing contains resources for us because it has been outside the main tradition of philosophy. Thus, rather than advocating that women ought to take their rightful place within the philosophical pantheon, Nye and Green argue that women's writing has resources for us as a result of its independence from traditional philosophy.

My concern with this attempt to find alternative traditions is in its concessions to traditional conceptions of philosophy. While the concessions are not as thoroughgoing as in the enfranchisement model—women are valued for how their thinking has *not* been like men's, as opposed to how it has been precisely like it—the risk remains that we continue undisturbed to conceive of philosophy as men's domain. It may be stale or in need of help from feminism according to these models, but philosophy is treated as an independent entity with which feminism interacts. Even Green, who identifies a feminist

humanism that has been submerged in the tradition of philosophy, sees this tradition as a competitor with a masculinist humanist tradition. What is not considered in this model, by its structure, is that men and women have shared contexts of thinking and that segregating their histories may obscure more than it reveals.

Nye's *Philosophia: The Thought of Rosa Luxemburg, Simone Weil, and Hannah Arendt* offers an example of reclamation undertaken to establish an alternative to traditional philosophical history. Nye uses the notion of leavening as a central metaphor, which she first introduces in her epigraph: "The Kingdom of Heaven is like unto the leaven which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal until the whole was leavened. *Matthew 13:33*" (Nye 1994, xi). In her conclusion, she writes: "the redemption of thought is that even in failure, even in lost causes, something is left alive, to be saved, to be used again, in another recipe, with a bit more or less kneading, more care in handling" (Nye 1994, 235). What appears as a rather straightforward use of Christian terms, redemption and saving, takes a provocative turn when the saving is for a new recipe. Thus, redemption and saving are on the model of a sourdough starter and not that of salvation through Christ.

What needs to be leavened, according to Nye, is contemporary existence, and philosophy is no longer a powerful agent. As she puts the point in her conclusion: "What I have tried to show is that if philosophy is just a bit old and stale, and not as nourishing as we might wish, there may be other recipes, other ways of thinking, remembered and conserved, able to enliven the heavy stuff of postmodern existence" (Nye 1994, 234). Nye advocates for remembering and conserving another tradition of thinking, something fresh, one she finds in the work of Luxemburg, Weil, and Arendt.

Nye does not try to present these women as somehow involved in a common project, but rather sees their commonality in that they differ from the “mainstream philosophical tradition” (Nye 1994, xix). They return to experience, insist on materiality, are open to many disciplines, reject “knowledge as a privileged representation of reality” (Nye 1994, 228), and the traditional oppositions of Western philosophy. As Nye writes: “the very thickness and confusion of reality provides new material for this other thought that, like leaven, has its source in material reality and its aim the preservation and enhancement of human life” (Nye 1994, 235).

But in reconstructing this tradition of women thinkers, Nye is clear that she is not offering a *feminist* alternative tradition. Notice how Nye describes these women:

Sexism was a dimension of oppression virtually untouched in their theoretical work. They used suspect generic language. They drew on no body of feminist scholarship; they relied on no supportive network of women scholars. Although they had close women friends and allies, they did not identify themselves primarily as women. If this was a weakness in their thought—and it was—it was also a strength. Bypassing the very real fact of women’s oppression, they took upon themselves the authority to rethink the human condition (Nye 1994, xviii)

That language of authority returns in her conclusion. She writes:

These are women who take upon themselves the authority to speak for both women and men. They are also women whose thinking differs from the style of most philosophy written by men. I have not meant to argue that their grasp of the human condition is privileged because they are women, any more than I have meant to argue that their neglect of gender issues is unimportant. But there is a sense in which that neglect made it possible for them to address the deepest of human concerns offstage from the drama of Western philosophy. (Nye 1994, 225)

Nye suggests that neglecting or bypassing a facet of oppression made this alternative tradition possible. Although Nye is an avowed feminist philosopher whose other works

contribute to the field, in this project she is offering an alternative tradition of women and not feminists.

Nye even offers us a name for this alternative tradition. Though the term is not thematized, or even indexed, in the book, “philosophia” is in both the title and the conclusion. After the passage I already quoted—“the redemption of thought is that even in failure, even in lost causes, something is left alive, to be saved, to be used again, in another recipe, with a bit more or less kneading, more care in handling”—Nye asks: “What kind of knowledge or truth could such a philosophia, without the closure of masculine ending, produce?” (Nye 1994, 235). Philosophia is a different tradition, one that relates to philosophy, treats some of its main figures, Descartes, Kant, Marx, to name a few, but that does not continue a tradition of abstraction that Nye understands to be *the* continuity of philosophy.

Indeed, on closer reading, Nye’s conception of “alternative” appears so strong that it is misleading to call her project a reclamation *in the history of philosophy*. She writes: “To ask whether women could have played—would have played if they had been allowed—major roles in this drama is futile. The history of Western ideas has been written by men for male characters; in its narratives women have been occasionally an object of concern but never the agents of change” (Nye 1994, 226). Nye’s view is that reclamation of women for philosophy is futile. Nye does not speculate on why philosophy has been a male tradition or what relationship its maleness might have with its failure. Importantly, however, the neglect of these women’s thought, Nye argues, to some extent “made it possible from them to address the deepest of human concerns offstage from the drama of Western philosophy” (Nye 1994, 225). Thus, though Nye

does not explain why they were neglected, the neglect of these women is related to their ability to offer us an alternative to a failed tradition.

Nye claims that her project does not take a side in the dispute between feminists of difference and feminists of equality (Nye 1994, 225). Yet, Nye contrasts her approach to what she describes as the “retreat to an expressive, nonrational ‘woman’s language,’ embraced by some ‘French feminists,’ which is an exhausted and despairing project that denies women access to logic and politics” (Nye 1994, xvi). Nye may not take sides, but she takes pains to distance her work from any association with feminism of difference.

An interesting result of how Nye situates her project is that she argues against how some feminists conceive of women, but not of how women have been conceived in the philosophical tradition. Nye writes:

what follows is an attempt to begin to trace another tradition, a tradition of women’s thought. If such a line of thought has a claim on our attention it is not for essentialist reasons. It is not because women are more caring and nurturant – these qualities can be weaknesses as well as strengths—or because women are more emotional and sensitive – these qualities can distort truth as well as reveal it – or because women do not think logically – lack of order can rob thought of all power to convince and persuade. There is a simpler reason. The tradition of male philosophers has failed to produce an understanding of divinity, self, value, reality, knowledge viable in the late twentieth century. As long as women’s thought is defined in opposition or resistance to this failed thought, as what is *not* logical, not authoritative, not rational, no redress of that failure is possible. (Nye 1994, xx)

Nye is not resisting philosophy’s conception of women in this passage, but feminist projects that she sees as essentializing. Nye does not want to jettison logic, authority, or reason, even if philosophy is a failed tradition. What remains unclear is why philosophy has been a male tradition, what role gender plays in its failure, and the way the neglect of women’s voices relates to its failure.

Karen Green, in, *The Woman of Reason: Feminism, Humanism, and Political Thought*, wants to reinvigorate the connection between feminism and humanism by arguing that “a careful adherence to the methods of humanism, and a scholarly reappraisal of past feminist humanists, while it shows the inadequacy of masculinist humanisms, offers an alternative viable form of gynocentrism, a feminist humanism” (Green 1995, 3). Like Nye, Green advances her project as an alternative to the dominant tradition. In Green’s case, feminism is right in rejecting masculinist humanism, but she urges us to reassess humanism in light of the alternative tradition she traces in the works of Christine de Pisan and Wollstonecraft, among others. Thus Green, unlike Nye, seeks an alternative within philosophical tradition.

Green writes of her method: “I have chosen a few of the most notable and influential authors in order to illustrate how at each period developing humanist ideas have had implications for the status of women and political theory which have been partly perceived and then largely ignored” (Green 1995, 6). Green indicates in this passage a submerged tradition of thinking about women that she will reconstruct. Green excavates that tradition to provide current feminist political theory with a history of gynocentrism. That is, she is interested in grounding current work in a history that is only now being made accessible. Green writes that in her project: “it will be argued that out of the philosophical tradition, a distinctive feminine conception of rationality and objectivity that can provide the basis for feminist political theory can be seen to emerge” (Green 1995, 3). Reclaimed history can help us to think of contemporary life differently, Green argues, specifically in non-patriarchal ways (Green 1995, 9). In contrast to Nye, this is a history that comes out of philosophical tradition.

As part of her project, Green critiques Simone de Beauvoir's work and indicates a way in which a theory of women's exclusion could stymie attempts at reclamation. She writes: "In chapter 7 de Beauvoir's claim that woman has been Other, even for herself, is examined and ultimately rejected, because it undermines the possibility of taking earlier feminists seriously, and leads to the bizarre and rather arrogant view that it is only in the late twentieth century that women have acquired the capacity to judge their own interests" (Green 1995, 7). Here, Green is concerned with how the relationship of women to thinking is theorized because of its implications for how we can engage the history of women's thinking. Green contends: "The most fruitful way forward from de Beauvoir's thought is not to attempt to speak from the impossible position of the Other of discourse, but to discover our own feminist subjectivity and reason in the cultural legacy left us in the writings of women" (Green 1995, 8). There is a feminist subjectivity and reason to be discovered, Green contends, and that is why we need to engage women's writing. Thus, Green, like Nye, thinks there is something importantly different in women's work.

Green's reasons for rejecting part of Irigaray's project closely relate to the critique of de Beauvoir. Green writes:

At times it appears as though Irigaray herself is caught up by the image of woman, excluded from the rational order, which is the legacy of patriarchal thought. But accepting that woman is the beyond of reason is accepting that woman is what she is for this patriarchal philosophy: its repressed Other. The very possibility of woman speaking then becomes paradoxical for it can seem that the only position available from which to conceptualize oneself as a subject is the masculine one. (Green 1995, 21)

Green resists Irigaray's identification of femininity as the other to representation, just as she resisted de Beauvoir's identification of woman as the other to discourse. Rather than

discussing these interpretations of de Beauvoir and Irigaray, which are, of course, contestable, I wish to highlight the fact that Green sees possible challenges to her project from de Beauvoir and Irigaray—that their work might make reclamation impossible. Thus, Green shows that reclamation raises issues of how feminism should be conceived. Green's is a humanist conception: "Feminism requires the possibility of speaking of women as an identifiable group with identifiable interests" (Green 1995, 20). Indeed, her first chapter in *The Woman of Reason* is titled "Against Anti-Humanist Feminism."

Both Nye and Green resist feminists whom they perceive as rejecting logic and reason, yet their conclusions about philosophy are very different. Both see a threat to the possibility of reclaiming women's writing in the views of some French feminists. Nye seeks an alternative to philosophical tradition in the writing of some women, while Green seeks an alternative deposited within philosophy by the writing of some women. Although they both model reclamation in the pursuit of alternative traditions, the meaning of alternative takes very different shape in Nye and Green's projects. In proposing women's writing as an alternative to philosophy, however, they both encourage a view of men's and women's writing as constituting different traditions. Perhaps women's tradition will save us from the failures of the men's, but that is a limited view of interaction in which women save the day. Lost, potentially, in this model is the sense of shared contexts of thinking, the history of men and women responding to and shaping each other's writing. Perhaps most importantly for reclamation is the loss of focus on women's exclusion as a problem that has shaped our conceptions of philosophy and has perhaps contributed to the staling process of philosophy.

The Corrective Model

The third model I consider is the corrective model of reclamation. In corrective projects, reclamationists argue that including women in the history of philosophy will help philosophy to fulfill its critical aspirations. The corrective model takes to task traditional histories of philosophy for excluding women because in so doing philosophy has failed to be properly philosophical. For instance, Janet Kourany uses the image of the gadfly to illuminate the problem of philosophy's misogyny. Insofar as philosophers have failed to question biases against women it has failed to live up to its role in rousing us out of our complacency. Feminist philosophy is a project of correcting this problem, including through its scrutiny of philosophical history and engagement with historical women's writing. Therese Boos Dykeman takes a different tack by arguing that the philosophical tradition has been incomplete by ignoring women in its history. Like Kourany, Dykeman thinks philosophy has erred in ignoring women and sees historical women's writing as a particularly important resource to redress this problem. However, Dykeman does not use a traditional philosophical ideal, like the gadfly, to ground her critique. Instead, Dykeman points to the incompleteness of a tradition that purports to think about human experience that has not considered women's experiences.

The promise this model makes is that women's work will make philosophy better. What it does not consider is why philosophy is in need of this correction. If philosophers have had sufficient ideals to prevent or correct their own misogyny, why has feminism been necessary to correct it? Could there be something in how the ideals of philosophy operate that has prevented that critical turn? By relying on philosophy's ideals,

corrective models do an excellent job of showing that philosophy has fallen short of its own ideals, but they do not address why.

In her introduction to *Philosophy in a Feminist Voice: Critiques and Reconstructions*, Kourany presents feminism as a corrective to philosophy, one that makes philosophy more philosophical. She writes: “Far from functioning as the proverbial gadfly that rouses everyone from complacency on every question, this philosophy tends to ignore women even while it reflects and reinforces or in other ways perpetuates some of the most deeply entrenched and abusive biases against women in our society” (Kourany 1998, 3). Kourany evokes, of course, one of Socrates’ most famous metaphors for philosophical activity. In so doing, she also suggests that philosophy has failed in its social responsibility, and feminism, far from contaminating it with social and/or political matters, calls it to remember the importance of its role in questioning everyone about everything.

Kourany frames her essay with a question for its title: “Philosophy in a Feminist Voice?” Kourany affirms the importance of a feminist voice, but in a way that invites participation by both men and women. She writes:

In contrast to the overwhelmingly male-dominated philosophical enterprise that most Western philosophers engage in and teach and study, all of this new work—these new directions in philosophy, as well as the critiques that have motivated them—aim in one way or another to make visible and improve women’s situation. And, again in contrast to the male-dominated philosophical enterprise, almost all of this new work is being done by women. It is thus appropriate to speak of this book and the work it deals with as philosophy in a different voice—indeed, philosophy in a *feminist* voice. But the new work this book deals with is relevant and helpful to men as well as women, and in fact promises to more adequately fulfill the aims that philosophers espouse for themselves than the philosophical enterprise that most Western philosophers now engage in. (Kourany 1998, 3-4)

Kourany suggests that a feminist voice is a critical one—the voice that raises questions as philosophy is supposed to do. Through the metaphor of voice, Kourany provides an image of philosophy and feminism together. Both men and women can speak in that voice, and philosophy will be more adequately philosophical when it is so spoken.

Kourany contends that philosophy's history must undergo scrutiny as part of feminism's improvement of philosophy. Included in the volume is an essay by Eileen O'Neill, which Kourany claims: "makes clear, philosophers in the past, especially women philosophers, were at least sometimes engaged in [philosophy in a feminist voice], though most of us are now completely ignorant of their contributions. To profit from their contributions, it is necessary to redo the history of philosophy so as to make them visible" (Kourany 1998, 14)¹⁸. Here again, the image that Kourany gives us is of philosophy and feminism together, a redoing of philosophy's history with feminist voices. Our ignorance of women's historical writing is a failure of philosophy to question everything and is one of the ignorances that must be corrected for philosophy to live up to the image Socrates has given us.

In *The Neglected Canon: Nine Women Philosophers First to the Twentieth Century*, Dykeman presents a multicultural history of women in philosophy and claims for them the label of feminism. She writes:

From fragments and completed writings we have learned that thinking women from antiquity forward have chafed under mental restrictions placed upon them, and that among these women thinkers, there have always been philosophers. This text provides philosophy of nine women from China to modern Europe and America who formulated feminist philosophy as they advance their individual arguments—metaphysics to political theory. (Dykeman 1999, xi)

¹⁸ With the emphasis that Kourany places on voice, it is interesting to note her use of visibility in this quotation. I think Kourany is reflecting the metaphor of invisible ink that O'Neill uses to describe women's writing in the history of philosophy.

The women she presents are bound together by their reactions and responses to the limitations they have faced as women.

Dykeman, like Kourany, sees the voices of these women as a corrective to philosophy: “Voices of women philosophers demand participation in the male-stream of philosophy; for they celebrate women’s contributions already made, and they richly construct a more complete tradition of philosophy. The aim of this anthology is to let these nine ‘powers of the mind’ be taken into account” (Dykeman 1999, xv). The tradition will be more complete when these women’s writings have been taken into account.

Dykeman’s principle of selection is particularly interesting in contrast to Warnock’s. Dykeman writes: “I have chosen in historical sequence works by women philosophers that demonstrate century after century a consciousness of women being barred from full participation in those human endeavors which elevate the species” (Dykeman 1999, xv). It is not just their advocacy for women that earns them a place in Dykeman’s anthology, but it is because that advocacy aims for admission to the fullness of human activity that she includes them. Thus, Dykeman, contra Warnock, sees emphasis and attention to particularity as a means of helping to make human endeavors more fully human.

Far from questioning the propriety of feminism’s involvement in philosophy, Kourany and Dykeman both contend that feminism can challenge philosophy to do its job, which will have broader positive effects, either for society or the species. Although the corrective model is closely related to the next model I discuss, the transformative model, the difference consists in the distinction between making philosophy more what it

is and changing what philosophy is. In the corrective version, philosophy is not meeting its own standards or it is incomplete. By contrast, in transformative reclamation projects, there is a problem with our conceptions of philosophy that can be redressed through attention to women's work. The corrective model does not make the same sort of concession to preexisting notions of philosophy that we see in the enfranchisement model. Indeed, the corrective model allows us to contemplate available conceptions of philosophy and see how incompatible misogyny is with those conceptions. Yet, there is still little contestation over the adequacy of existing notions of philosophy or how they have been developed and deployed. The corrective model insufficiently questions why philosophy is in need of correction.

The Transformative Model

In this section, I analyze the model that I think has the greatest potential for shaping projects of reclamation that promote philosophical engagement with women's writing. This model has this potential because it investigates norms of philosophical engagement and offers new norms that not only countenance work by women, but also highlight its importance. More precisely, this model shows how women's exclusion has shaped prevalent notions of what is considered philosophy and shows how philosophy must be reshaped to redress this exclusion. Catherine Gardner proposes a transformation of the field of ethics through her engagements with the work of women writers who employed generic forms that have been previously deemed non-philosophical. Charlotte Witt takes a different tack in her project by claiming that establishing a lineage of historical women philosophers transforms the nature of the philosophical "us." By

changing the available concepts of who can be a philosopher, i.e., making it possible to think of women as philosophers, Witt maintains philosophy will be transformed.

Yet, while I include Witt's project as an example of a transformative model, I also note her use of an enfranchisement strategy. Witt argues for the transformative potential of "placing women in our canon." Witt's use of "our" here is complex: she is arguing that the philosophical "us" will be transformed through the inclusion of women. Thus, the "our" of "our canon" is what Witt thinks women's work will transform. Hence, Witt is not calling on a stable notion of "our canon" that precedes the work of reclamation to secure a place for women in philosophy. Instead, engaging women as philosophers has the power, Witt argues, to change not *the* canon, but the nature of our canon through transforming who possesses it. My intent in this analysis, as I have noted, is illuminating how exclusion is being theorized in the field of reclamation, rather than finding examples of pure types. In Witt's blending of strategies we see a good example of enfranchisement serving the ends of transformation.

In her introduction to *Rediscovering Women Philosophers*, Gardner writes: "Inspired by Mary Ellen Waithe's four-volume work *A History of Women Philosophers*, I wanted to learn more about our philosophical foremothers; and I wondered what, if anything their work may have to offer modern theorizing in feminist ethics" (Gardner 2000, 1). When she embarked on this work, Gardner reports that genre quickly became an issue. Some of the forms employed by figures she wanted to analyze were letters, novels, poetry, and allegory. Gardner reflects: "as a philosopher from what is typically called the Anglo-American tradition, I did not have the analytic and conceptual tools immediately at hand to read philosophy in these other forms of writing. I had been

trained to read purely for argumentative content and to discuss style and form only if and when they obscured comprehension” (Gardner 2000, 1). Gardner notes that a limit of her training made some forms of writing inaccessible to her for philosophical consideration.

Gardner’s account substantiates the claim Jane Duran makes in her preface to *Eight Women Philosophers: Theory, Politics, and Feminism* that: “Work on women philosophers asks us to retain an open-mindedness about what is constitutive of philosophical thought that is often sadly lacking in professional philosophical circles, while at the same time asking us to be prepared for some surprises insofar as theory is concerned” (Duran 2006, x-xi). Gardner does not, however, choose to remain in her philosophical circle. Rather, Gardner shows an exemplary open-mindedness. Instead of discounting the authors and works that she was not immediately able to engage, Gardner took stock of her own inability. She writes: “I realized that if we are to work towards including the work of these philosophers properly, then one thing we must do is to look further into the reasons for the assignment of non-philosophical status to certain forms” (Gardner 2000, 2). In other words, Gardner’s inability to encounter certain forms led her to investigate the creation of that inability.

As for why it is women’s work that presented this opportunity, Gardner concedes that limited access to education and publishing opportunities may have contributed to the form in which women wrote, but she is clear “that there is no essential connection here between form and sex” (Gardner 2000, 3). While Gardner supports work on the history of women’s exclusion from philosophy, her motivation was to discover “what an interpretation of the work of some of these philosophers can offer modern ethical, specifically feminist, theorizing” (Gardner 2000, 3). Gardner argues that putting

women's thinking to use contributes to revaluing this past work more forcefully than arguing for its merit (Gardner 2000, 3). More important, however, than revaluing the work was finding out how it could enrich contemporary theory.

Form was, however, a formidable obstacle for Gardner to make such reclamations of the work she was encountering. As she writes:

despite bringing all my objectivity and critical thinking skills to bear on some of these works, this approach did not allow me to deal with the type of case where the form *is* part of the argument of the work. ... I began to understand that this classification of some forms as part of the philosophical genre, and the exclusion of others, is not a 'given' or somehow independent of modern conceptions of what moral philosophy is. (Gardner 2000, 4)

Thus, Gardner first reconstructs "*how and why* certain forms become excluded—and will remain so—on this model of moral philosophy" (Gardner 2000, 4). Gardner sets up her engagements with Catherine Macauley, Christine de Pisan, Mary Wollstonecraft, George Eliot, and Mechthild of Magdeburg, by educating her readers about the dominant models of moral philosophy. The chapters on the women thinkers are then guides to how to read their writing, given their choice of form.

Gardner's aim is about more than giving us access to those texts. She also uses her engagement with non-standard forms to question the dominant model of moral philosophy (Gardner 2000, 10). *Rediscovering Women Philosophers'* subtitle, *Philosophical Genre and the Boundaries of Philosophies*, could be rewritten to read: *Transforming the Boundaries of Philosophy with Attention to Genre*. Gardner's project is as much a critique of philosophical practice as it is a reclamation of women's work. Indeed, it is a critique of philosophical practice *through* engagement with women's work. In Gardner's hands, then, reclamation makes it possible for us to question the standards

by which writing is judged as philosophical and to become readers capable of judging differently.

Witt provides a different view of reclamation as transformation in *Feminist Reflections on the History of Philosophy*. Witt writes:

Feminist historians of philosophy have argued that the historical record is incomplete because it omits women philosophers, and it is biased because it devalues any women philosophers it forgot to omit. In addition, feminist philosophers have argued that the philosophical tradition is conceptually flawed because of the way that its fundamental norms like reason and objectivity are gendered male. By means of these criticisms, feminist philosophers are enlarging the philosophical canon and re-evaluating its norms, in order to include women in the philosophical ‘us.’ (Witt 2004, 2)

The philosophical “us” is the organizing idea of Witt’s essay. Feminism’s work, the importance of its historical work in particular, is to transform who is included in the “us”.

Note the metaphor Witt uses to emphasize the nature of this transformation: “The philosophical canon can allow the luster of some of its members to be tarnished by feminist criticism, just as it has weathered criticisms from analytic or continental perspectives. The most radical feminist critics, however, have urged that the canon’s central philosophical norms and values, like reason and objectivity, are gendered notions” (Witt 2004, 5). Feminism is not like other critiques—at stake is not just the luster of a few reputations. Not a tarnishing critique, but a critique that may require complete rebuilding after the storm. Witt categorizes this storm into three approaches: feminist criticisms of the canon as misogynist, feminist revisions of the history of philosophy, and feminist appropriation of canonical philosophers. I will look at her discussion of the first two categories, as they are the ones in which issues of women’s reclamation figure prominently.

Witt identifies Lloyd as an exemplary feminist synoptic interpreter of the canon, which is an interpreter who argues that the history of philosophy is implicated in gendering reason and objectivity male. Contrasting synoptic interpretations like that of Susan Bordo in *The Flight to Objectivity*, which cite the modern period as the start of real trouble, Witt notes that Lloyd's critique focuses on the symbolic, as opposed to the psychological or social, maleness of reason (Witt 2004, 5). Witt maintains that, on one hand, Irigaray is like Bordo in deploying psychoanalytic theory, while on the other, Irigaray is like Lloyd in her focus on "symbolic associations of images and concepts" (Witt 2004, 7). Yet, in contrast to them, Witt maintains that Irigaray's critique is more radical in suggesting that "patriarchal thinking attempts to achieve universality by repressing sexual difference" (Witt 2004, 7). Yet again, Witt thinks that "each of these panoramic visions of the history of philosophy deliver the same moral, which is that the central norms that inform our philosophical culture today are gendered male" (Witt 2004, 7). In arguing that these different critiques amount to the same moral, Witt moves from offering an overview to making an argument.

Witt writes:

Hence, these synoptic narratives of the philosophical tradition provide historical justifications for feminist philosophers who are critical of our central philosophical norms of reason and objectivity. Does the feminist synoptic critical reading of the history of philosophy justify either the conclusion that traditional conceptions of reason ought to be flat-out rejected by feminists or the conclusion that traditional conceptions of reason ought to be subjected to critical scrutiny? (Witt 2004, 7)

Two groups have now formed in Witt's analysis: philosophers who have shared norms of reason and objectivity, and feminists who share the same critique. With differences

effaced on both the side of philosophy and that of feminists, Witt sets up a dilemma—should feminists reject philosophical concepts or submit them to critical scrutiny?

Witt answers by arguing that feminist claims that the traditional concepts of reason and objectivity are male-biased ought to lead to the conclusion that we need better concepts, not that we ought to reject the concepts altogether. Rejection, Witt argues, would only be called for if the concepts *ought* to be male-biased. What needs to be redressed is the fact that the concepts have been biased when they should not have been, which requires critical engagement and not rejection. One question that remains after Witt's analysis is the degree to which her description, and therefore her solution, adequately represents Irigaray's critical project. I will return to that issue when I compare the work of Lloyd and Irigaray in the third chapter.

Witt moves from her conclusion to consideration of the second category by which feminist critiques of the history of philosophy are altering the philosophical "us": feminist revisions of the history of philosophy. Witt writes:

Feminist canon revision is most distinctive, and most radical, in its retrieval of women philosophers for the historical record, and in its placement of women in the canon of great philosophers. It is a distinctive project because there is no comparable activity undertaken by other contemporary philosophical movements, for whom canon creation has been largely a process of selection from an already established list of male philosophers. It is a radical project because by uncovering a history of women philosophers, it has destroyed the alienating myth that philosophy was, and by implication is or ought to be, a male preserve. (Witt 2004, 9)

Witt attributes this branch of feminist critique with the power to destroy the alienating myth of philosophy's absolute maleness. Women, by gaining a place in the philosophical canon, will remake philosophy in a way that benefits their self-image and transforms the nature of the canon.

Witt observes that: “the newly recovered women philosophers suggest that there is little overlap among three groups: women philosophers, feminine philosophers, and feminist philosophers” (Witt 2004, 9). Witt neither claims that all women in philosophy’s history speak in the same “feminine” or “woman’s” voice, nor that they are all proto-feminists. Thus, she notes: “The diversity of women philosophers raises the question why their recovery or re-valuation is an important project for contemporary feminist theory” (Witt 2004, 10). While this work is important to correct mistaken beliefs and counter the effects of discrimination, Witt argues that reclamation’s importance extends beyond either of these issues. Witt writes:

... what is really at issue is not philosophy’s past, but its present; its self-image as male. That self-image is created and maintained in part by a tacit historical justification. It is a damaging self-image for women philosophers today, and for women who aspire to be philosophers. The real significance of uncovering the presence of women in our history, and in placing women in our canon is the effect that has on the way we think about the ‘us’ of philosophy. (Witt 2004, 10)

Witt argues reclamation makes it possible for *us* to think of women as philosophers. She leaves open what the results will be for the future of philosophy, but by broadening the concept of philosopher, reclamation promises to transform philosophy. Interestingly, Witt seems to be making a rather straightforward enfranchisement argument: engagement with women philosophers and inclusion of them in the canon will improve women’s self-image and help overcome the male-bias of philosophical history. Yet, Witt sees the power of engagement with historical women in its ability to destabilize the image of a men’s only canon. The canon in which Witt envisions women being placed is not one that preexists the work of engagement with historical women, but rather one that is transformed through that engagement.

Gardner and Witt agree that attention to women philosophers will transform philosophy. For Gardner, the transformative potential of women's writing lies not just in what they said but also in how they said it; how historical women approached philosophy can benefit current work. For Witt, overcoming the perception of philosophy's maleness is the radical work of reclamation. Witt focuses on the question of who wrote and writes philosophy, while Gardner focuses on what has been written and how we can best approach it. Thus, while agreeing on the transformative potential of reclamation for contemporary philosophy, they have different notions of how philosophy can be transformed by women.

Throughout my analysis, I have been tending toward the conclusion that reclamation must be undertaken as a process transforming philosophy, and I have argued that the other models are insufficient. Transformational models answer Waithe's question—"Might we come to a different understanding of the nature of philosophy itself as a result of an acquaintance with women's thought?"—with a "yes" and explore how our understanding can be changed. I have also granted that transformation can be conceived in different ways. Rather than limit our thinking about transformation, this project aims to provide three different approaches to thinking about exclusion that lead to three very different ways of transforming philosophy through reclamation.

From Reclamation to Exclusion

My review has meant to show that reclamation has happened in diverse ways: some interrelating and some mutually exclusive. In outlining four models for reclaiming women's writing, I have also meant to show that there have been recurring, if divergent,

argumentative strategies in the field of reclamation. Each project shows that reclamation simultaneously raises questions for philosophy and feminism, not just their relationship, but also how they should be practiced and the extent to which philosophy and feminism are engaged in the same project. These are not issues that the historical texts themselves can decide. These diverse projects show that the writings of historical women can be put to many uses, including making the point, as in the very different cases of Warnock and Nye, that we can largely be complacent about women's exclusion from philosophy. In Warnock's case, exclusion has largely been appropriate; whereas, Nye's exclusion has been so complete that women's writing constitutes an alternative tradition.

Yet, many reclamation projects, including the majority of the projects I discussed above, treat women's historical exclusion from philosophy as an issue related to reclamation. That is, these projects connect *in some way* their engagements with women's work to the lack of women in philosophical history. Yet, I have also argued that, on the whole, these projects fail to adequately theorize exclusion. I propose to work from the point of view of exclusion to reflect on what is at stake in efforts to reclaim women's work. The three main figures of my dissertation—Irigaray, Lloyd, and Le Doeuff—are influential thinkers on the problem of women's exclusion from philosophy, and I turn to them to understand what resources their work offers for further development of reclamation. To set up my own engagement with their writing, I will consider, by way of contrast, Michelle Walker's treatment of these three figures.

In "Silence and Reason: Woman's Voice in Philosophy," Walker treats the theories of exclusion formulated by Irigaray, Lloyd, and Le Doeuff. Walker begins her article with the following epigraphs:

So some speak and others are silent. (Luce Irigaray)

... our ideals of Reason have historically incorporated an exclusion of the feminine, and that femininity itself has been partly constituted through such processes of exclusion. (Genevieve Lloyd)

The exclusion of 'woman' is . . . consubstantial with the philosophical . . . Plato's Phaedrus does not say that women must be excluded from the dialectical enterprise. But with Zeus in love with Ganymede serving as an example, it is clear that this is not women's business. (Michèle Le Doeuff) (Walker 1993, 400)

Walker then gives the following description: “Luce Irigaray, Genevieve Lloyd and Michèle Le Doeuff investigate the systematic silencing of both woman and women from the discourse of Western philosophy. They understand silence as involving an absence of women's voices from the dialogues that constitute the philosophical enterprise as a tradition” (Walker 1993, 400). Walker presents these three thinkers as sharing an investigative project into the silencing of women in the history of philosophy. The continuity between these thinkers is further supported by Walker’s description of Lloyd as continuing the work Irigaray began in *Speculum* and Le Doeuff as supporting the claims Lloyd makes in *The Man of Reason*.

Walker does not, however, sustain that opening narrative of three collaborators on the problem of women’s exclusion from philosophy. The rest of the article is a comparison of Irigaray and Le Doeuff on the question of women’s exclusion from philosophy, as well as their views of the relationship between feminism and philosophy. Lloyd only appears once more in a footnote as holding a view similar to Irigaray’s (Walker 1993, 402). I will return to the issue of the similarity of Irigaray and Lloyd’s work in the chapter focusing on Lloyd. For now, I want to focus on how Walker compares Irigaray and Le Doeuff.

Walker concludes her essay by urging for dialogue between Irigaray and Le Doeuff, a dialogue that Walker thinks Le Doeuff is responsible for preventing. Yet, it is not clear from Walker's descriptions that either would want to talk, given their very different views of philosophy. Walker, for instance, writes: "We might say that the two positions fall loosely within the alternatives of (for Le Doeuff) *speaking with*, or (for Irigaray) *speaking against* philosophy" (Walker 1993, 402). Walker's explanations of Irigaray and Le Doeuff's views, while giving rich nuance to that characterization, do not develop a substantially different picture from what she has said here.

Walker writes: "Irigaray's work is emblematic of those feminists who call for a gesture of indifference toward philosophy rather than a transformation of its inner logic, which is a good characterisation of Le Doeuff's work" (Walker 1993, 403). What I find most striking about this characterization of Irigaray is that it precedes Walker's close reading of Irigaray's work on Plato. While highlighting the complexity of Irigaray's conceptualization of woman not as philosophy's outside, but as the place of philosophy's happening and its mute interior, Walker recounts extensive passages in which Irigaray is in dialogue with Plato. Such engagement, with Plato and many other philosophers, seems at odds with a view that feminists ought to be indifferent to philosophy. Is indifference the counsel that Irigaray gives?

Walker's description of Le Doeuff's work, that it seeks to transform philosophy's inner logic, seems apt, especially given how Walker develops that point. Walker explicates the link in Le Doeuff's work between the irreducible lack of knowledge integral to philosophical work and the historical attempt by philosophers to compensate or overcome that lack through the exclusion of women. Repudiating philosophy or

reason is not the necessary solution, Walker explains, given that version of exclusion. Rather, according to Le Doeuff's view, we must accept the lack of knowledge inherent to philosophy, and accepting that lack requires practices of non-hegemonic rationality. In light of this explanation, Walker offers another comparison: "So while Irigaray reduces rationality to a masculine speaking position, Le Doeuff defends it—at least in its future potential—as a gender-neutral practice" (Walker 1993, 422). Here, Le Doeuff's work appears useful for creating a future in which rationality is gender-neutral, leaving us to wonder the extent to which the exclusion of women in philosophy's history has successfully silenced women. Is it only in the future that women will be able to speak as philosophers? And, further, is it only when reason is conceived of as a gender-neutral practice that women will be able to philosophize?

What follows is an attempt to address the questions that Walker's analysis raises. If Irigaray counsels indifference to philosophy and Le Doeuff thinks philosophy will overcome its legacy of exclusion by one day becoming a gender-neutral practice, then it seems they would not have much to offer feminists involved in reclamation. Indeed, it seems they might urge against it. Yet, neither does. Nor does Lloyd. Is feminism's lesson that philosophy is not for women? As I have shown, some thinkers who reclaim women's writing might agree that philosophy has not been women's work, but many more see a problem with the exclusion of women from the history of philosophy that must be addressed by both feminism and philosophy. This dissertation argues that reclamation needs to pay greater attention to exclusion, but that such attention does not have to lead feminism to break with philosophy. The three thinkers of exclusion I present here show us how feminist reclamation can proceed by transforming philosophy.

Chapter II

Luce Irigaray: Absence, Authority, and Love

Irigaray's work does not present an obvious resource for projects seeking to reclaim women in the history of philosophy. Indeed, many authors introduce their reclamation project with an argument against conceptions, attributed to Irigaray or "French Feminists" more generally, that the feminine is the excluded other of discourse.¹⁹ These authors argue that if the feminine is the excluded other of discourse, then women are relegated to a non-rational language outside of logic. In this chapter, I turn to Irigaray's critique of philosophical discourse and suggest that a method of reclamation not only can, but does, follow from it: reclamation as love.

The value of returning to Irigaray for a model, I show, consists in the way she develops the idea that the feminine has been excluded from philosophy and her insistence that this exclusion is a condition of philosophy's possibility. For she does not, based on that work, abandon philosophy, discourse, or reason. Instead, Irigaray proposes that the logic of discourse must be changed *and* models how this might be done. In this project, I argue that in "Sorcerer Love: A Reading of Plato, *Symposium*, 'Diotima's Speech'" Irigaray provides a model of reclamation. The model Irigaray gives us is reclamation as love, and it entails thinking discourse – and thereby philosophy – differently. Indeed, it challenges us to think, with Diotima as Irigaray reclaims her, of philosophy as love.

¹⁹ Penelope Deutscher's *Yielding Gender* offers an illuminating discussion of how Lloyd, Green, and Moira Gatens, among others, defend against feminism of difference in the work on the history of philosophy and fail to see the resources in Irigaray for analyzing the role of women and femininity in the history of philosophy.

I focus on “Sorcerer Love” as the only text in Irigaray’s corpus to offer a model for reclamation of women philosophers. The model Irigaray offers is consistent with, and develops themes from, her other work, but this essay is the only one in which I see Irigaray offering a model for how we ought to engage with the philosophical work of a woman in the history of philosophy. I consider Andrea Nye’s critique of Irigaray’s treatment of Diotima to show how women’s exclusion from philosophy becomes a resource for reclamation with Irigaray’s model.

The problem of speaking of or about woman

Irigaray warns: “to speak *of* or *about* woman may always boil down to, or be understood as, a recuperation of the feminine within a logic that maintains it in repression, censorship, nonrecognition” (Irigaray 1985b, 78). The importance of this warning for reclamation cannot be overstated: getting women into philosophical history may be another means of excluding femininity. For, according to Irigaray, femininity has been not just lost or accidentally forgotten in the writing of philosophy; rather, femininity’s exclusion is integral to the history of philosophical thought. Inclusion, this means, cannot be effectively argued for, or achieved, without transforming the way we engage in philosophy. Making such a transformation on Irigaray’s account requires transforming the symbolic and imaginary processes of culture—transforming its logic. We must move from a logic that represses the feminine to one of sexual difference. Hence, any project of reclamation must also be a project of changing the symbolic and imaginative processes of culture. For reclamation, this means the problem is not just that women are absent from philosophical history, but also that the absenting of femininity

has made philosophical history possible. For Irigaray, therefore, there cannot be reclamation without transforming the logic of that history and creating a culture of sexual difference.

When Irigaray warns that speaking of or about women may always be a recuperation of the feminine in a repressive logic, she is, in part, warning that approaching the problem of women's oppression discursively may always aid in that oppression. Thus, Irigaray famously counsels:

the issue is not one of elaborating a new theory of which woman would be the *subject* or the *object*, but of jamming the theoretical machinery itself, of suspending its pretension to the production of a truth and of a meaning that are excessively univocal. Which presupposes that women do not aspire simply to be men's equals in knowledge. (Irigaray 1985b, 78)

Irigaray's warning means that we cannot merely advocate for the texts of women philosophers or seek their representation in the canon as the solution to the history of exclusion: that would be the aspiration to be the same as men. Irigaray's work shows us, rather, that we must become the sort of readers who can read women as philosophers. That project is more complicated than changing our ideal of philosophy to be more inclusive, more complicated still than enfranchising women into philosophical history by showing how their texts are philosophical. Instead, a place must be made for feminine subjectivity to speak and be engaged. We cannot change the conditions under which historical women lived and worked, but we can change how we engage with the texts they produced.

Yet, jamming the machinery is not a dream of escaping discourse. In proposing that we need to jam the machinery, Irigaray commits both to discourse and to the possibility of changing discourse. When we are changed as readers of discourse, when

we can jam the machinery with our reading and writing—in that way the sexual indifference of discourse is and can be disrupted. For reclamation, I argue, this means that amassing evidence of women’s contributions to philosophical history will never change discourse, for it leaves intact how a reader encounters philosophy and the manner in which it appears discourse ought to be written. Neither can women’s writing be reclaimed as an alternative to traditional philosophical history. Again, a reader’s engagement with discourse would be left intact, unmoved. Nor can philosophy be corrected according to its own ideals, for those ideals have been formed through the exclusion of women. We are left, it seems, with reclamation as transformation.

Overview

To give content to the way in which we must be changed as readers, I will look at Irigaray’s lecture on Diotima and propose that in it Irigaray elaborates a method of reclamation as love. First, however, I present an overview of Irigaray’s project to show why reclamation must proceed as love. In the “Power of Discourse and Subordination of the Feminine,” Irigaray explains that she writes on Western philosophy because it is the back-story of psychoanalysis. Psychoanalysis’s importance stems from the fact that it has uncovered, Irigaray argues, “*the sexual indifference that underlies the truth of any science, the logic of every discourse*” (Irigaray 1985b, 69). But fatefully for the discourse of psychoanalysis, Freud failed to consider the “*sexualization of discourse itself*” (Irigaray 1985b, 73). That failure, Irigaray maintains, is due to the metaphysical presuppositions the “discourse on discourse” supplies to it and all other discourses (Irigaray 1985b, 74). Psychoanalysis relies on philosophy’s ability to “*reduce all others*

to the economy of the Same” (Irigaray 1985b, 74). The failure of Freud and psychoanalysts more generally to question the sexualization of discourse dictated by philosophy turns psychoanalysis back into a tool of masculine logic. Overcoming that failure of psychoanalysis requires, Irigaray argues, engaging with the master discourse and exposing the sexualization of discourse itself.

In *Speculum of the Other Woman*, Irigaray engages the master discourse “by ‘beginning’ with Freud and ‘ending’ with Plato” which is “already going at history ‘backwards’” (Irigaray 1985b, 68). Yet, she has already noted that *Speculum* has no beginning or end; it “confounds the linearity of an outline, the teleology of discourse, within which there is no possible place for the ‘feminine,’ except the traditional place of the repressed, the censured” (Irigaray 1985b, 68). For even reversal, Irigaray notes, does not make a place for the feminine. The order of *Speculum* coupled with Irigaray’s denial of the book’s linearity offers an example of how Irigaray tries to make a place for the feminine. It is not enough that her readings expose moments of the repression of femininity in the text for, according to Irigaray, woman has provided the place for philosophy to unfold. Thus, in *Speculum*, Irigaray writes: “And if one day her sexuality was recognized, if it did enter into ‘History,’ then his-story would no longer simply take place or have a place to take” (Irigaray 1985a, 112). It is not clear from the point of view of the history that has taken place in and through the repression of the feminine *how* discourse could unfold differently. Yet, it is clear that continuing to engage in discourse as it has been done will not overcome the repression of femininity.

Note how Irigaray concedes and performs the difficulty of conceptualizing discourse differently:

what a feminine syntax might be is not simple nor easy to state, because in that ‘syntax’ there would no longer be either subject or object, ‘oneness’ would no longer be privileged, there would no longer be proper meanings, proper names, ‘proper’ attributes ... Instead, that ‘syntax’ would involve nearness, proximity, but in such an extreme form that it would preclude any distinction of identities, any establishment of ownership, thus any form of appropriation. (Irigaray 1985b, 134)

In other words, Irigaray’s positive project is *all but* unimaginable. Even the notion of “syntax” must be suspended in its meaning when projecting what might be.

But Irigaray is not without suggestions for how a place might be made for femininity. Foremost among them: mimicry. Which means, Irigaray writes, for a woman “to resubmit herself—inasmuch as she is on the side of the ‘perceptible,’ of ‘matter’—to ‘ideas,’ in particular to ideas about herself, that are elaborated in/by a masculine logic, but so as to make ‘visible,’ by an effect of playful repetition, what was supposed to remain invisible: the cover-up of a possible operation of the feminine in language” (Irigaray 1985b, 76). The mimic is a role that Irigaray argues is already assigned to femininity (Irigaray 1985b, 76). Thus, by suggesting that women take up the role of mimic, Irigaray is suggesting that women exploit a position already assigned to woman. We cannot skip to representing the feminine in language, but must use the role already assigned to women, that of mimic, to jam those operations of philosophy. The moments of textual repression can become opportunities for imagining new possibilities.

At this point, for reclamation, the following question becomes pressing: were women and their work systematically excluded from philosophy throughout its history through specific mechanisms and practices *or* is femininity the excluded other of philosophical thinking that makes it possible? In the first case, there is a lot of work to be done to understand the history, to overcome those mechanisms and practices, and both to

understand and overcome the systematic historical trend—reclamation is not just possible in that case, but vital to overcoming the history of exclusion. The possibility remains that historical exclusion was so successful that no women wrote philosophy, but that would be an historical result and not a structural impossibility. In the second, however, reclamation seems impossible; the repression, censorship, and nonrecognition of femininity, its disavowal, is the condition of possibility for philosophical work as we know it including, presumably, reclamation work. So, while it may be important for feminist projects to examine philosophical history, the goal would have to be, it seems, overcoming philosophy. These two lines of thinking are incompatible.

Irigaray, as I have explicated her project, offers a structural explanation of femininity's relationship to philosophy and, thereby, seems to thwart the possibility of reclamation. Woman has not spoken. Thus, historical women who have spoken have not spoken feminine subjectivity. I will elaborate this structural problem for reclamation by considering a passage from "Any Theory of the 'Subject' Has Always Been Appropriated by the 'Masculine,'" an essay title that itself seems to bolster the structural view. Irigaray writes:

But if, by exploits of her hand, woman were to reopen paths into (once again) a/one logos that connotes her as castrated, especially as castrated by words, excluded from the work of force except as prostitute to the interests of the dominant ideology—that is of hom(m)osexuality and its struggles with the maternal—then a certain sense, which still constitutes the sense of history also, will undergo unparalleled interrogation, revolution. But how is this to be done? Given that, once again, the 'reasonable' words—to which in any case she has access only through mimicry—are powerless to translate all that pulses, clamors, and hangs hazily in the cryptic passages of hysterical suffering-latency. Then.... Turn everything upside down, inside out, back to front. *Rack it with radical convulsions*, carry back, reimport, those crises that her 'body' suffers in her impotence to say what disturbs her. Insist also and deliberately upon those *blanks* in discourse which recall the places of her exclusion and which, by their *silent*

plasticity, ensure the cohesion, the articulation, the coherent expansion of established forms. (Irigaray 1985a, 142)

At first, Irigaray seems to suggest that there are paths to be reopened into discourse that will overturn its sexual indifference. She reiterates the sense of reopening by saying that woman would *once again* do so with the exploits of her hand. Thus, perhaps, one might hopefully propose, the exclusion of women has been historical and not structural. But, she continues, woman has only had access to reasonable words through mimicry. And those words are put into question as truly reasonable by Irigaray's use of quotation marks. Woman's exclusion can only be recalled by attention to *blanks* in discourse that lend themselves *silently* to many forms that ensure discourse.

Such a description does not sound promising for reclaiming women's writing; woman appears only as blanks and silences and not as an articulator of philosophical discourse. But rather than concede the impossibility of reclamation, I wish to look more closely at the passage to suggest there is a way forward. First, it is important to note that Irigaray speaks of "woman," not "women." As Elizabeth Weed notes: "Irigaray may write about women and their political, economic, psychic, and bodily betterment, but it is through woman that she speaks" (Weed 1994, 79). Thus, we misplace hope for the reclamation of women's writing if we put it on the idea that woman reopens paths with the exploits of her hand. Rather, by using woman, Irigaray repeats a trope of discourse, one we can see in formulations like "The Woman Question," but she also, as Weed highlights, speaks through it. Speaking through woman has the sense both of speaking by way of woman and of woman being a concept through which Irigaray strains to be heard: the difference between speaking through a receiver and speaking through a wall. Woman

both sustains the possibility of speaking and troubles it, which does not yet easily lead to any sense in which individual women's work or writing might be reclaimed.

Irigaray signals with her use of woman that the unparalleled interrogation and revolution of a certain sense, which still constitutes the sense of history also, will not be achieved by enfranchising certain voices into discourse. Woman does not speak. Woman is a trope of discourse. Words, like woman, are powerless to translate all and will always be so, but we do not have to leave un-interrogated the sense, which is the sense of history also, with which we engage discourse. Body thus appears in quotation marks in the above passage. When we write "body" we no more bring that which exceeds discourse into discourse than when we write "woman." Marking off "body" in quotation marks encourages an encounter with it as a concept that has a history in discourse of marking some sort of limit, excess, or disturbance. Irigaray invites us to see every appeal to "body" as a citation with which we engage and through which we are constituted in discourse. Words, as Irigaray writes, are powerless to translate all that pulses, clamors, and hangs hazily in the cryptic passages of hysterical suffering latency, but that does not lead her to abandon discourse. Instead, she tells us to turn everything upside down, inside out, back to front. She tells us to insist, insist on the blanks of discourse and not on the coherence they enable.

This means the history of our relationship to discourse can be changed. We can become readers who pay attention to the blanks and silences of discourse, who read with a sense of the history of discourse, who write with an ear for silences and the history upon which our meaning relies. That does not mean we can master discourse. Rather, we can read with a sense that mastery is always what is at stake in discourse. And

mastery is what discourse cannot offer us. Exclusion has been both historical and structural. The structure is changed by reading and writing differently; thereby, giving us a new historical relation to discourse. As Weed writes:

Consciousness has a history—perhaps, Irigaray observes, the logic of consciousness and the logic of history ‘add up to the same thing in the end, in a way’ –and that history can change and be changed. And, of course, to change the logic of consciousness is to change the relationship of conscious/unconscious: ‘Since the recognition of a ‘specific’ female sexuality would change the monopoly of value held by the masculine sex alone, in the final analysis by the father, what meaning could the Oedipus complex have in a symbolic system other than patriarchy? (Weed 1994, 101)

It is the history of consciousness, the logic of consciousness, that can be changed.

The power of discourse will always be its power to subordinate – to fix everything along vertical and horizontal axes to determine what is above and what is below. But must we as readers remain powerless in the face of this power? Must we accept the feminine as that which provides the place of this ordering? In the “The Power of Discourse and the Subordination of the Feminine,” Irigaray indicates a different possibility in the conjunction of the title. The power of discourse has been the subordination of the feminine, but we can read, write, and rewrite differently. And in reading differently, we can create the possibility of reclaiming women’s work through our reading. We can make a history in which women’s writing is part of history, not as the other to discourse and not as its alternative, but as part of a discourse we are powerful enough to read.

In “Power of Discourse,” after describing philosophy’s power to “*reduce all others to the economy of the Same*,” Irigaray writes:

Whence the necessity of ‘reopening’ the figures of philosophical discourse—idea, substance, subject, transcendental subjectivity, absolute

knowledge—in order to pry out of them what they have borrowed that is feminine, from the feminine, to make them ‘render up’ and give back what they owe the feminine. This may be done in various ways, along various ‘paths’; moreover, at minimum several of these must be pursued. (Irigaray 1985b, 74)

Irigaray does not dictate what sort of readers we must be; at minimum, we must pursue several paths. Irigaray’s work records many different attempts at prying out of discourse what it has borrowed and writing discourse differently.

Sorcerer Love

How will being such readers help us with reclamation? I will focus on Irigaray’s development of the “sensible transcendental” to propose a manner of reclamation guided by her. The sensible transcendental resists a neat division of the world into matter and discourse. Or, perhaps more helpfully, the phrase helps us acknowledge that “matter” is already a discursive formation with a history that cannot be purified from it even when it is deployed as a critical category. Yet, the sensible transcendental does not only mark a failure of discourse to achieve contact with matter. The sensible transcendental also resists the opposition of the sensible to the transcendental by ostensibly bringing them together in a concept. By noting our difficulty in thinking what the sensible transcendental might be, we help it do the work of troubling the notion that what exceeds discourse somehow enters it if we use ideas like matter, material, woman, or the feminine. The sensible transcendental alerts us to the history of the discourse/matter opposition and to the history of critique that advocates for the matter side of the dichotomy. If Irigaray warns that discourse is always masculine, she also warns us against seeking refuge in ideas of what exceeds discourse.

One way to understand the sensible transcendental is as a highly condensed act of mimesis. Irigaray uses the form of a concept, a basic unit of discourse, but in an anomalous repetition. Our eyes cannot glide over the concept, but we must repeat the terms to ourselves and try to pull together “sensible” and “transcendental.” It plays the game of discourse, but it uses the rules to disrupt discourse. Sensible and transcendental do not belong together, but in opposition, comfortably across the chasm within discourse.

Irigaray develops the idea of the sensible transcendental in “Sorcerer Love: A Reading of Plato, *Symposium*, ‘Diotima’s Speech’,” as something attainable; it is “the material texture of beauty” (Irigaray 1993, 32). In a sense, the idea is the accomplishment of the text, one prefigured by Irigaray’s use of the “accessible transcendental” and an “inaccessible transcendent” in “Sorcerer Love.” In order to resist the easy deployment of the sensible transcendental as a definable concept, however, I insist that we must appreciate “Sorcerer Love” as a lecture by a woman giving a reading of a woman’s speech that is voiced by a man in a text written by a man. Irigaray’s reading reclaims Diotima’s voice from its double remove as a report of what she said by a character in a dialogue, but it cannot do so by putting the words back into Diotima’s mouth; Irigaray speaks “Diotima’s Speech.” Further, in her lecture, Irigaray does not decide the issue of who should take the blame for problems of argumentation. Indeed, Plato is only mentioned in the title to the piece and once obliquely in the text; thus, the author is all but absent from the text. Irigaray will suggest that missteps in arguments are perhaps Socrates’ fault, but she also speaks of these missteps as errors in Diotima’s method. Irigaray’s voice, as reader of the speech, tells us what is true to Diotima’s argument and what is a departure from it.

The central theme of the lecture, Diotima's proper argument, is that love is an intermediary between us, that it is the means of our immortality and what makes a progression from ignorance to wisdom possible. By focusing on that theme, lending her voice to Diotima to elaborate that argument, Irigaray also asks us to engage with her as listeners and readers. As Irigaray writes, "If we did not, at each moment, have something to learn from the encounter with reality, between reality and already established knowledge, we would not perfect ourselves in wisdom" (Irigaray 1993, 21). Thus, "Sorcerer Love" does not ask us to trust this instance of discourse because it is a woman reading a woman, reclaiming her from her embedding in a man's text. Rather, she asks us to perfect ourselves in wisdom by being the readers of her reading, which will also make possible her perfection in wisdom. The immortality in such exchange comes, in this case, from the constant movement between text and reader. Fixing the truth of Diotima's speech or Irigaray's reading of it would already place the possibility of immortality in what we produce by engaging the text—another text, for instance. For Diotima, Irigaray writes: "Love is fecund prior to any procreation. And its fecundity is *mediumlike, daimonic*, the guarantee for all, male and female, of the immortal becoming of the living" (Irigaray 1993, 25-26).

Indeed, Irigaray writes that Diotima "miscarries" when she suggests that procreation is the cause of love. Irigaray writes: "Something becomes frozen in space-time, with the loss of a vital intermediary and of an accessible transcendental that remains alive. A sort of teleological triangle is put into place instead of a perpetual journey, a perpetual transvaluation, a permanent becoming" (Irigaray 1993, 27). The perpetual journey, the perpetual transvaluation, the becoming of dialogue that flows between

people are what Irigaray calls the accessible transcendental. We can attain immortality not through what we “leave behind”—legacies, children, texts—but with each other in the becoming of dialogue. As Somer Brodribb observes, “This methodological error of Diotima has fixed [love] on the space-time plane, and lost a vital conduit from living beings to the transcendental” (Brodribb 1992, 106).²⁰ The image of the child as *telos* is a sad image compared to the child who, empowered to love and be loved, achieves immortality through loving. Irigaray does not negate the importance of children or texts, but is rather trying to help us re-evaluate familiar images and ways of thinking about love that would funnel our thinking immediately to procreation and productivity—to alienation as the means of immortality.

The *inaccessible* transcendent becomes “the ideal when daimonic love is suppressed” (Irigaray 1993, 30). Thus, when children, texts, the truth become the means to immortality, the transcendent becomes inaccessible to us. When the circulation of dialogue becomes subordinate to the product of its work, then the transcendent becomes inaccessible—we are merely mortal with dreams of achieving an immortality totally alien from us. Which is not to say that we should not have children, write texts, or pursue the truth. Indeed, if Irigaray attempts in “Sorcerer Love” a daimonic reading of Diotima’s speech, it results in a text. She is dependent on our reading of it, whether we hear the lecture or read it. If we read the text as the goal of Irigaray’s engagement with Diotima, Socrates, and Plato, then we have certainly taken up one possibility of that text. But in having done so, we stop the circulation of dialogue and the text becomes inaccessibly transcendent. We might agree or disagree with it, but it is not ours to change through

²⁰ Brodribb discusses Diotima in the context of presenting Irigaray’s views on procreation. While Brodribb is critical of Irigaray’s work, particularly the role of the heterosexual couple in it, Brodribb does not critique or endorse Irigaray’s use of Diotima.

engagement with it, but rather something that subsists through our interpretations of it. The text becomes, to use Irigaray's words, *beloved*, rather than a *lover*.

Irigaray gains these categories—lover, beloved—from Diotima, but she also argues that Diotima is inconsistent in her treatment of love. Diotima, she suggests, also maintains that procreation becomes the goal of love. In such a view:

[love] risks losing its internal motivation, its 'inner' fecundity, its slow and constant generation, regeneration. This error in method, in the originality of Diotima's method, is corrected soon afterward only to be confirmed later. Of course, once again, *she is not there*. *Socrates relates her words*. Perhaps he distorts them unwittingly or unknowingly. (Irigaray 1993, 27)

Irigaray exposes a contradiction in Diotima's argument. Love is first daimonic, but then Diotima miscarries and links love to procreation. But we cannot be sure who is speaking, whose error and whose method we encounter in the dialogue. Perhaps Socrates is to blame, Irigaray suggests.

Irigaray reminds us that no one can read the words of Diotima. We can read Plato's rendering of Socrates' speech that he attributes to Diotima. As Irigaray repeats throughout "Sorcerer Love": *she is not there*. The challenge before Irigaray is reading and voicing (for "Sorcerer Love" *is* a lecture) Diotima's speech without appeal to it as a historical text on which our authority about matters of love and beauty can be grounded. *She is not there*, and yet we can be lovers in the style Diotima suggests. Diotima fails to be present at all *and* yet she has something for us. Diotima's absence and the importance of her lesson allow us to see authority differently. Irigaray becomes the author of Diotima's speech in dialogue with Plato's authorship. We have a sense, as Carolyn Burke observes, that we are reading a reading and this invites us to read also (Burke

1994, 255). Authority in and through dialogue, open to future dialogues, is the basis of Irigarayan reclamation.

In “An Ethics of Sexual Difference,” Irigaray writes:

Beyond the circularity of discourse, of the nothing that is in and of being. When the copula no longer veils the abyssal burial of the other in a gift of language which is neuter only in that it forgets the difference from which it draws its strength and energy. With a neuter, abstract *there is* giving way to or making space for a ‘we are’ or ‘we become,’ ‘we live here’ together.

This creation would be our opportunity, from the humblest detail of everyday life to the ‘grandest,’ by means of the opening of a *sensible transcendental* that comes into being through us, of which *we would be* the mediators and bridges. Not only the mourning for the dead God of Nietzsche, not waiting passively for the god to come, but by conjuring him up among us, within us, as resurrection and transfiguration of blood, of flesh, through a language and an ethics that is ours. (Irigaray 1993, 129)

The importance of intermediacy is apparent in this passage. What Irigaray called immortality in “Sorcerer Love” appears divine in this description. Not the God of divine authority that all but died with the advent of modernity, nor God the son who will rise again to end our human suffering, but a divine within us. And that divinity is “a new birth, a new era in history” only when we have moved beyond the sexual indifference of discourse that pretends to neutrality through forgetting the placenta that sustains it (Irigaray 1993, 129). The becoming is both divine and mucosal. Transcendental and sensible. It does not close itself off through the forgetting of the maternal body, the elements, especially air, that sustain it. We can be readers who remember: “Language, however formal it may be, feeds on blood, on flesh, on material elements” (Irigaray 1993, 127). We can be readers who resist the closure of discourse, jamming the machine with love.

How can love jam the machinery? That question introduces a positive trajectory into the project of jamming the machinery without simply replicating the imperative to produce more discourse. For love, as Irigaray reads Diotima, is an intermediary that does not end in the production of discourse, but rather flows through dialogue with each other, texts, and readings. The machinery of discourse production is jammed by lovers who do not value the product of discourse as a means to immortality, but rather the becoming that is possible with each other, even in and through discourse. That possibility of discourse circulating differently is the opening for reclamation. For the circulation of philosophy does not have to be guaranteed by the disavowed place of its happening—other norms can shape the circulation of discourse. The machine is jammed in order to make discourse circulate differently. Love as the intermediary that allows one to move from ignorance to wisdom is the normative basis for a method of Irigarayan reclamation.

Reclamation as a practice of love does not have a telos outside itself; it opens up room to experience ourselves as readers of texts and the way the text responds to our reading. Irigaray writes: “Like love, the philosopher would be someone poor, dirty, rather down-and-out, always unhoused, sleeping beneath the stars, but very curious, skilled in ruses and tricks of all kinds, constantly reflecting, a sorcerer, a sophist, sometimes exuberant, sometimes close to death” (Irigaray 1993, 24). Reclamation that is divine and mucosal will have to be skilled in ruses and tricks of all kind. But it is also dependent upon readers who are sometimes exuberant, sometimes close to death. Readers who wonder at what they encounter, capable of “attraction to that which is not yet (en)coded” and “curiosity (but perhaps in all senses: sight, smell, hearing? Etc.) vis-à-

vis that which we have not yet encountered or made ours” (Irigaray 1993, 75). Wonder, as Irigaray reads Descartes, exceeds appropriation.

How can we be readers who exceed appropriation? That is the challenge Irigaray puts to reclamation. The heterogeneity with which she reads, re-writes, mimics the texts of philosophy does not just jam the machinery once, setting up a situation in which we wait for new parts to be ordered or a new machine to be built. Irigaray’s readings offer a model of reclamation in which discourse is jammed with dialogue and style interrupts meaning. Her writing models an invitation to the reader to become author also, as the partner in an exchange that may result in texts, but that does not end in texts. Reclaiming women as philosophers and reclaiming philosophy for women does not require that new idols be erected for our reverence and obedience. But if they are not to become such figures, we must be readers powerful enough to wonder at what we have not yet appropriated.

Diotima

In “The Hidden Host: Irigaray and Diotima at Plato’s Symposium,” an essay that appeared in *Hypatia* with the first English translation of “Sorcerer Love,” Nye presents a different Diotima, one whose argument is consistent throughout the speech in the *Symposium*. The successful student of Diotima, Nye argues, “glimpses no universal, abstracted from imperfect particulars, but an indwelling immortal divine beauty, an attracting center that foments fruitful creation in all areas of existence” (Nye 1989, 47), and Diotima never wavers from developing this line of thought. Nye agrees with Irigaray’s daimonic reading of Diotima’s speech, but disagrees that Diotima’s speech

ever miscarries. Nye writes: “Irigaray judges Diotima as a lapsed French feminist struggling to maintain the ‘correct method’ against philosophical orthodoxy” (Nye 1989, 47). In other words, Nye’s criticism is not only that Irigaray relies on an over-literal translation of the *Symposium*, which she also argues, but that Irigaray’s method of reading causes her to misread Diotima and to misread her as failing in the French feminist method of reading. The source of Irigaray’s misreading, Nye contends, is in the “conceptual infrastructure of Irigaray’s feminist strategy in deconstructive method and textual practice, in ‘*écriture féminine*’, and in the concept of feminine ‘*jouissance*’” (Nye 1989, 49). Deconstruction, *écriture féminine*, and *jouissance* are Nye’s explanation for Irigaray’s inability to read Diotima well.

It is tempting to respond to this criticism by showing the complicated manner in which Irigaray adopts deconstructive methods to counter the image of her as an acolyte of Derrida, or to mention that Irigaray does not use the term ‘*écriture féminine*,’²¹ or to analyze the way that Irigaray deploys ‘*jouissance*’ with and against Lacan. Indeed, it is tempting to show that Nye fails to be the historically informed, subtle reader of Irigaray that she claims Irigaray fails to be of Diotima. But here, we must remember, while Nye can read Irigaray, no one can read the words of Diotima. We can read Plato’s rendering of Socrates’ speech that he attributes to Diotima. As Irigaray repeats throughout

²¹ Margaret Whitford is very generous on the issue of ‘*écriture féminine*,’ offering accounts of why Irigaray’s writing may be associated with this concept (cf. 1991, 4), but also quite helpfully observes:

It is interesting that, although Irigaray has often been associated with *écriture féminine*, women’s writing, in fact the terms which she privileges are not about writing at all: *parler-femme* and *la sexualisation du discours* (translated by Catherine Porter and Carolyn Burke in *This Sex Which Is Not One* as ‘speaking (as) woman’ and the ‘sexualization of discourse’). As far as I know, she does not use the term *écriture féminine* at all; it is a label which has been attached to her by others. (Whitford 1991, 38)

In Nye’s case, she may have been guided by Kuykendall’s judgment, appearing in the same issue of *Hypatia* as “Hidden Host,” that Irigaray experiments with *écriture féminine* (Kuykendall 1989, 28). That is only speculation on my part, but it is bolstered by the fact that Kuykendall provided the translation of “Sorcerer Love” that appears with the Nye essay.

“Sorcerer Love”: *she is not there*. Thus, I think Irigaray’s problem is not that she “judges Diotima within the context that gives meaning to her own deconstructive practice as if Diotima were a twentieth-century Parisian ‘*intellectuelle*’ struggling against the authority of a male academic establishment to produce an ‘*écriture féminine*’” (Nye 1989, 52). Rather, I think Irigaray’s problem is not that Diotima fails as a French feminist, it is that she fails to be present at all *and* yet she has something for us.

Nye and Irigaray, I argue, disagree about authority. For Irigaray, Diotima’s absence and the importance of her lesson allow us to see authority differently. Irigaray becomes the author of Diotima’s speech, not as Plato did, but in dialogue with Plato’s authorship. Irigaray’s approach to establishing Diotima’s authority is consistent with her view of the exclusion of sexual difference from philosophical discourse. Diotima’s absence from the scene of philosophy is imperfect, for a view is still attributed to her, even if quite tenuously. Yet, Irigaray takes the role given to a woman and exploits it to raise the question of sexual difference. Further, she does so by engaging with the assigned role as though it did generate a woman’s speech.

Nye, of course, is not unaware of the means by which Diotima’s speech has been transmitted. There are two ways she negotiates worries about the authenticity or veracity of Socrates’s via Plato’s rendering of it. First, Nye provides historical detail about “a sophisticated Minoan culture” that persisted through Greek culture that granted some authority to women, especially in religious contexts (Nye 1989, 53). She concludes, “In historical context, then, it is neither surprising nor anomalous that Diotima would appear in an authoritative role as the teacher of Socrates. As prophetess/priestess she was part of a religious order that has maintained its authority from Minoan/Mycenean times” (Nye

1989, 53). This contextualization helps to account for Socrates's appeal to the authority of a woman, according to Nye, and his reverence for her as his teacher. Nye contends that even though Diotima was absent *she could have been an authority*. That, Nye's argument suggests, is grounds for considering her an authority now.

Nye's second strategy is more complicatedly related to Irigaray's work. Nye claims that Diotima is the host of the *Symposium*. In her introduction to the essay, she writes:

The root meaning of 'host' is a physical body whose flesh parasites feed. The host is the nourishment they steal and convert to prolong their own dependent existences. The host is a sacrificed animal body offered up to placate heaven. The host is the physical bread the faithful eat at communion to become one with the insubstantial god. If we take 'host' in these root sense, then, as I hope to show, it is Diotima and not Agathon, Socrates, or Plato who is the real host of the *Symposium* (Nye 1989, 46)

It is not, from that etymological lesson, clear why Nye wants to show that Diotima is the host. It appears as if she would then be: (a) the physical body feeding parasites so that they may, in dependence, prolong their existence; (b) the animal body placating heaven; or (c) the physical bread through which the faithful make contact with an insubstantial god. None of these are, on the face of it at least, obvious bases for establishing Diotima's authority.

Nye does not return to the image of the host to provide alternate meanings or to help us re-evaluate the meanings she made available in her introduction. But Nye does return to the idea of Diotima as the host. In her conclusion, Nye writes:

If, with Diotima, [Irigaray's] usual sure touch falters, it is because Diotima does not play the feminine role as deconstruction or Lacanian psychoanalytic theory has conceived it. She is not the uninvited gatecrasher. But the host of the *Symposium*. She is the spokesperson for the ways of life and thought that Greek philosophy feeds on, ways of

thought whose authority Plato neutralized and converted to his own purposes. (Nye 1989, 57)

Diotima is the host upon which Greek philosophy feeds and the basis for the authority that Plato neutralizes and converts. Interestingly, the image that Nye gives of her here resonates with Irigaray's rendering of the feminine as the disavowed material of discourse; for Nye, Diotima is the absent body on which the *Symposium* feeds. Diotima, who by the history Nye gives us should have some authority to speak her own ideas, does not speak in the *Symposium*. She is not the gatecrasher at the party because *she is not there*. Nor can she be, in her absence, the spokesperson for a way of life and thought. Plato or Socrates, perhaps, but not Diotima; *she is not there*.

Nye's strategies give us a clue, I think, to Irigaray's interpretive strategy. Nye urges that through contextualization and proper translation we can gain access to what Diotima really meant, despite even the difficulty that the text we have of her speech does not even pretend to be an accurate record of her speaking. Nye's work raises questions about the style we ought to use to write about, represent, give voice to women's thinking. In other words, Nye's critique raises central questions about reclamation. At the heart of Nye's condemnation is the observation that Irigaray's approach does not take up questions of historical accuracy or the project of contextualization. Irigaray, Nye suggests, cannot be trusted as Diotima's reader because she is not sufficiently knowledgeable, she has not taken the care the text requires, and there is too much of her in the material. Yet, as I have argued, Nye's approach cannot bring Diotima into the scene of philosophy. Diotima was not there.

Nye argues that a woman like Diotima could have been an authority and thus we can consider the speech hers. Irigaray reclaims Diotima from the priestess's absence.

Irigaray uses the fact that Diotima was represented as an authority in her absence to bring the question of sexual difference to the *Symposium*. The uncertainty of what the *Symposium* presents us becomes an opportunity in Irigaray's hands to bring our concerns and needs to the text. *As though* Diotima were her interlocutor, Irigaray reflects what she hears in the speech, endorsing part and finding fault with part. Diotima's absence becomes an opportunity for Irigaray to bring the question of sexual difference to the materials at hand. Rather than appropriate Diotima's speech, either as the words of a woman in the history of philosophy or as Plato's view or as Socrates' speech, Irigaray talks *with* the text. Under Irigaray's treatment, Diotima becomes an interlocutor, not on the basis of her reclaimed historicity, but through the love we can share her.

Although I think that Irigaray helps us move forward on a problem that Nye cannot dislodge – namely, Diotima's absence from the scene of philosophy – I do not mean to dismiss Nye's contribution. Nye continues the dialogue with her response to Irigaray. Indeed, Nye's case that Diotima could have been Socrates' teacher helps to further establish her absence from the dialogue. That is, it was not unthinkable for a woman to have and teach views about love, but still Plato absents her, still we have no record of her and scant records of the words of her female contemporaries. Irigaray's reclamation strategy does not make attention to historicity and contextualization irrelevant to reclamation, but we do not have to start with that work in place, nor must we be thwarted by the inadequacy of the historical record in regards to women. Irigaray's approach makes a place for what we can recover of women's writing and forms of life.

While I will more fully assess Irigaray's approach in the final chapter, I will briefly sketch my assessment here. The strength of Irigaray's approach is that it

generates reclamation's engagement with women's writing from women's absence. Women have long been assumed to have been absent from philosophy's history and Irigaray gives us a means of exploiting that assumption to reclamationist ends. Yet, Irigaray has a tendency to speak as though no women contributed to the history of philosophy. We must be cautious with Irigaray's approach not to become overly invested in women's absence. Women have not been literally absent; feminine subjectivity has been absented. The distinction is crucial for us to be able to look for women we have not been taught to acknowledge as philosophers. Their absenting is our opportunity to engage them, but we must believe that women practiced philosophy. Reclaiming Diotima is important, both because she is a voice from the beginnings of philosophy and because feminist theorists have developed such a strong discourse about her. Reclaiming Diotima is, however, only part of transforming philosophical practice. We have, and we have hope of finding more, women's writing—writing that can be engaged using Irigaray's method.

Chapter III

Genevieve Lloyd: Conceptual Exclusion

In *The Man of Reason: 'Male' and 'Female' in Western Philosophy*, Lloyd argues that while the philosophical tradition has idealized gender-neutral conceptions of reason, it has actually been masculinizing reason. To explain how philosophy has been so self-deceiving, Lloyd analyzes the arguments about reason by philosophers from the pre-Socratics through Simone de Beauvoir. Lloyd shows that philosophers have employed gendering metaphors to conceptualize reason throughout philosophy's history. The result is not just the masculinization of reason, but also the conceptualization of femininity as that which is excluded from reason. Linda Martín Alcoff summarizes one of the most important conclusions of Lloyd's work for feminist work: "we cannot simply remove women from the sphere of the 'body' and claim for ourselves the sphere of the 'mind' and 'reason' when these later concepts have been constructed on the basis of our exclusion" (Alcoff 1996, 64). Alcoff emphasizes what Lloyd first brought to philosophical and feminist attention: the complexity of exposing and redressing the masculinization of reason when it is deeply entrenched in how we think, both of reason and women.

At first blush, it appears that Lloyd has little to offer reclamation, as she maintains that reason has always been gendered masculine and that philosophy has been a tradition of male thinkers. I argue against such an understanding of her work. I suggest instead that in her reading of de Beauvoir, we begin to see how Lloyd's analysis of the

history of philosophy can provide a method of reclamation. Although Lloyd's work reflects a masculine philosophical history in which reason has always been successfully masculinized, I argue that, on the basis of the history she has written and using her method of conceptual analysis, we can construct a richer history of philosophy that resists the masculinization of traditional histories. In other words, Lloyd's project is not just a critique of reason, which it certainly is—it also offers us a model for writing new histories of philosophy.

By showing us the power of a concept's history in its usage and development, Lloyd prepares us to think critically about women's writing. In the case of Diotima, Lloyd gives us the means to reclaim her speech as part of the conceptual history of reason; although, as I discuss below, Lloyd does not take up this possibility in her treatment of Diotima. With the method I find in Lloyd's approach to history, we can engage Diotima's words as both a product of and a force in producing our concepts of reason. With such analysis, we can begin to think about how we want to render that history in light of how we have been formed by it. Lloyd shows us the power of constructing history through critical engagement with how concepts are shaped by symbolic practices. With that power, Lloyd does not promise us full mastery over concepts, but she does show us a way forward for retelling philosophical history with women's voices included.

I begin by arguing against conflating Irigaray and Lloyd's projects. I will briefly look at three writers who exemplify the tendency to pair Lloyd and Irigaray's approaches and show the endurance of that association over time: Elizabeth Grosz in 1987; Margaret Whitford in 1991; and finally, as discussed in the first chapter, Charlotte Witt in 2004.

Then, I look at Lloyd's critique of the concept of reason and its deployment in the history of philosophy. Finally, I turn to Lloyd's treatment of Diotima. While I argue that her analysis of Diotima is incomplete at best, I also argue that Lloyd's model gives us a critical approach to Diotima's role in the *Symposium*.

Aligning Lloyd and Irigaray

To clear the ground for considering Lloyd as a resource for reclamation, I review some moments in which Lloyd and Irigaray's projects are presented together. In an overview of the development of feminist theory from the 1960s through the 80s, Grosz argues that Lloyd and Irigaray are part of a recent radical turn in feminist theory. Grosz writes:

Within philosophy, for example, the presumed eternal, timeless values of the discipline – Truth, Reason, Logic, Meaning, Being – have been shown by feminists (such as Lloyd, 1984, Irigaray 1985a, 1985b) to be based on their implicit but disavowed relations to their 'other' – poetry, madness, passions, body, non-sense, non-existence. These 'others' are thus defined as feminine in opposition to the privileged concepts, and become the silent but necessary supports of masculine speculation. (Grosz 1987, 477)

Lloyd and Irigaray appear in this description to be offering similar critiques of philosophy: philosophy has gained apparently stable concepts through the exclusion of the feminine, and the feminine has come to be defined as the other to the valorized concepts.

In her groundbreaking study of Irigaray's work, *Luce Irigaray: Philosophy in the Feminine*, Whitford also associates Lloyd and Irigaray insofar as they critique philosophy for excluding the feminine. Whitford writes:

Male/female symbolism has been used 'to express subordination relations between elements of a divided human nature' (Lloyd 1984: 28) and

reason, conceptualized as transcendence, in practice came to mean transcendence of the feminine, because of the symbolism used, despite the fact that 'it can of course be pointed out that mere bodily difference surely makes the female no more appropriate than the male to the symbolic of 'lesser' intellectual functions' (Lloyd 1984: 32). (Whitford 1991, 58)

Whitford further observes that Irigaray's critique also uses symbolism, through the symbolism of psychoanalysis, to expose the exclusions of philosophy (Whitford 1991, 58). Thus, while marking the important difference in regards to the role of psychoanalysis, Whitford aligns Irigaray and Lloyd's use of symbolism in understanding the subordination of femininity.

These first two examples of authors aligning Lloyd and Irigaray are brief and in the service of projects that have little connection to issues of reclamation. Thus, though I think they contribute to an elision of Irigaray and Lloyd, their influence is perhaps more in shaping general perceptions of their work than in directly forming reclamationist practices. In *Feminist Reflections on the History of Philosophy*, as I discussed in the first chapter, Witt is concerned with feminist approaches to philosophical history and reclamation in particular. In that essay, Witt aligns Lloyd and Irigaray to set up a dilemma for feminists: rejection or critical scrutiny of reason and objectivity. Witt's solution to the dilemma, to reiterate, is that if the traditional concepts of reason and objectivity are male-biased, then we need better concepts, not the rejection of the concepts altogether. Rejection, Witt argues, would only be called for if the concepts *ought* to be male-biased. What we need to redress, Witt maintains, is the fact that they have been when they should not have been, which requires critical engagement and not rejection.

I argued in the last chapter that Irigaray does not reject discourse, reason, or philosophy, but I also argued that her critique requires doing them very differently. Irigaray's work urges changes to discourse and thinking that require change at a different level than Witt's suggestion that we need to revise our concepts of rationality and objectivity. Revising concepts leaves the logic of concept use—discourse—intact and, thus, Witt's solution seems insufficient to meet Irigaray's critique. By contrast, Witt's solution seems apt for Lloyd. Lloyd seems to point to the need for critical revisions of the concept of reason. I think, however, that Lloyd's project calls for deeper redress than revising our current concepts of reason. Certainly she is at pains to show how our current conceptions of reason fail to be gender neutral despite our best efforts to make them so, but she does this by showing the way the history of reason forms the operation of the concept. That is, it is our accounts of philosophical history that must be critically revised and not reason alone in Lloyd's analysis.

One question raised by the way I have differentiated Lloyd from Irigaray is whether Lloyd's project is radical enough as a critique of exclusion to uncover its mechanisms and suggest a means of its redress. If it is, we might suppose, then why undertake the more radical work of Irigaray's project? If a less radical reform could remediate the exclusion of women from philosophy, then why undertake the more drastic project of changing the logic of discourse? I suggest that Lloyd's conceptual analysis is potentially as helpful to reclamation as Irigaray's project of changing the logic of discourse and that the change Lloyd's work calls for is no less radical than Irigaray's; Lloyd does, however, enter at a different point: on the issue of the conceptual history of

reason. I have differentiated Lloyd and Irigaray's approaches not to suggest that one is better, but to make it possible to show that Lloyd offers another model for reclamation.

Lloyd's Project

In *The Man of Reason*, Lloyd maintains that the history of a concept operates in its usage, but that that history is not obvious within the concept itself. In *The Man of Reason*, Lloyd traces the exclusion of the feminine from conceptions of reason and the alignment of reason with masculinity. What appears as a universal and sexless concept, Lloyd argues, actually relies on the exclusion and devaluation of femininity. In order to undertake this critique, Lloyd writes a history of philosophy. While Witt ultimately effaces their differences, in her initial comparison of Irigaray and Lloyd's projects, Witt indicates the difference that make a difference: Lloyd's focus is on historically contingent way that Western conceptions of reason have been framed, whereas Irigaray seeks to expose the way thinking has been made possible by the exclusion of femininity. In this chapter, I show how Lloyd can help reclamationists look at the relationship between conceptualization and the construction of philosophical history.

Lloyd shows that gendered metaphors have been employed throughout the history of philosophy in a variety of ways and often to serve different conceptual ends. As Penelope Deutscher has well argued, the result of Lloyd's analysis is that femininity is always excluded from reason; this is what Deutscher calls Lloyd's "stabilising tendency" (Deutscher 1997, 7). That is, Lloyd's account reflects no historical contestation or meaningful conflict about the symbolic masculinization of reason, whether generated by men or women. Gendered metaphors operate in a predictable manner, and the net result

has always been deceptive concepts of reason that exclude women without appearing to be the source of the exclusion.

That stabilization of the history of reason's conceptualization is an aspect of Lloyd's analysis that Carole Pateman highlighted in an early review of *The Man of Reason*. Pateman wrote:

[Lloyd's] focus on Woman and 'the feminine' obscures the fact that the Man of Reason and his female companion are only part of the story of the construction of femininity. Femininity as it appears in the classic texts has both drawn on and helped shape the lives of women, but they have also criticized this construction and attempted to develop their own, autonomous womanhood. Moreover, there is a long history of feminist criticism of philosophy going back to the seventeenth century, when modern individualism (the emergence of the modern 'individual' as the *man* of reason) became the basis of general social theories. (Pateman 1986, 509)

Here is a tempting critical opening for reclamationists. Lloyd's analysis, we could say, repeats the exclusions of traditional philosophical history by failing to represent contestations within philosophical history.

It is certainly true that Lloyd does not give an account of women's contestations of the gendering of reason. And it is also true that in her account, the result is always the masculinization of reason. Together, these aspects of her project may appear to make Lloyd more in need of reclamationist help than able to offer help to them. The history that Lloyd recounts is a fairly traditional history; she analyzes Pythagoreans, Plato, Aristotle, Augustine, Aquinas, Bacon, Descartes, Hume, Kant, Hegel, Sartre, and de Beauvoir. Yet, even within that history, she exposes complexities that do not receive attention in traditional histories. Take, for instance, Lloyd's analysis of Descartes:

Descartes's emphasis on the equality of Reason had less influence than his formative contribution to the ideal of a distinctive kind of Reason – a highly abstract mode of thought, separable, in principle, from the

emotional complexities and practical demands of ordinary life. (Lloyd 1993, 49)

Lloyd explains that the abstract mode of thought became associated with already extant ideals of masculinity, *even though* Descartes' separation of mental and physical substances is inimical to the idea of gendered reason. Descartes' view has resources for arguing that there can be no difference between men and women as far as reason is concerned²²; yet, the association, according to Lloyd, of masculinity with that which transcends the corporeal in order to arrive at truth won out in the history of ideas.

Lloyd writes, "We owe to Descartes an influential and pervasive theory of mind, which provides support for a powerful version of the sexual division of mental labour" (Lloyd 1993, 50). On Lloyd's own account, we also owe to Descartes a theory of mind that does not tolerate distinctions based on gender. Yet, "[w]omen have been assigned responsibility for that realm of the sensuous which the Cartesian Man of Reason must transcend, if he is to have true knowledge of things" (Lloyd 1993, 50). Lloyd's explanation for the consistency of the masculinization of reason, not just in Descartes' case, but in the case of all the philosophers she treats, is the momentum of masculinization already at work in the concept of reason by the time of Descartes' writing.

In Irigaray's account, by contrast, the exclusion of femininity is the condition of philosophy's possibility. Thus, the moments in which Descartes' texts open to non-exclusionary possibilities are the trace of the work of disavowal. For Lloyd, the history of reason's conceptualization in ancient and medieval thought bolstered readings of Descartes' account that emphasized the connection between reason and masculinity. The

²² For an illuminating treatment of that history see Christine Fauré's *Democracy without Women*.

carrier of that momentum, so to speak, in Lloyd's account is metaphor. To understand what Lloyd means by metaphor, it is first important to note that it was in looking back at her work that she has come to understand the importance of metaphor in her work. Lloyd explains: "If I were now to articulate the central claims of the book, I would give much more prominence to metaphorical aspects of the male-female distinction as it occurs in philosophical texts" (Lloyd 1993, viii). That retrospective articulation explains why one must look elsewhere than *The Man of Reason* to understand what Lloyd means by metaphor. Lloyd did not fully recognize the import of that concept as she wrote *The Man of Reason*. Thus, in reading the text it is crucial to keep in mind that a concept key to her methodology was under-theorized, but operative.

Lloyd seeks to clarify the nature of metaphors in a later article, "Maleness, Metaphor and the 'Crisis' of Reason." It is in that article that Lloyd states most directly that she sought to generate a critique of reason through analyses of metaphors and their operations in philosophical texts. Lloyd makes that claim in response to two lines of criticism: that she fails to distinguish sex from gender and that she conflates the symbolic and the literal in *The Man of Reason*. Lloyd responds first by undermining the presumption that the sex/gender distinction is appropriate for the sort of analysis she undertook in *The Man of Reason*. Lloyd dismisses out of hand the claim that feminist critiques of reason could pertain to biological sex. Then, Lloyd complicates the idea that it pertains to gender. Lloyd does so by using Sandra Harding's tripartite distinction between structural, individual, and symbolic gender. Structural or social gender refers to divisions made in human activity and labor on the basis of gender. Expressions of masculine and feminine identity fall under the concept of individual gender. Symbolic

gender is meant to capture the operation of male and female as symbols (Lloyd 1997, 289).

Symbolic gender can be obscured, Lloyd argues, by attempts to fit it into an understanding of sex versus gender. She writes, “But even though people can identify with symbolic maleness or femaleness, their proper subjects are not men and women but concepts” (Lloyd 1997, 289). Analyzing the symbolic operations of male and female requires recognizing that individuals are not always the referents of those terms.

Concepts can be gendered. That point is crucial to understanding Lloyd’s critique of reason. The concept of reason has been gendered masculine in the history of philosophy through the metaphors thinkers use to elaborate their meanings. Indeed, Lloyd seems to largely limit the meaning of symbolic operations to the use of metaphors.

The gendering of concepts is the object of Lloyd’s interest. She writes: “My own concern is not with the processes by which social gender and symbolic gender interact but rather with getting a better understanding of symbolic maleness and symbolic femaleness independently of that interaction” (Lloyd 1997, 290). *The Man of Reason* is interested in how male and female are deployed and shaped as discursive symbols. That clarification is an important one for reading Lloyd’s analysis. Lloyd is not arguing that symbolic gender is in fact unrelated to social gender. Rather, methodologically she wishes to make that isolation in order to gain a critical perspective on the history of philosophy.

In response to the criticism that she conflates the symbolic and the literal, Lloyd writes:

Those who talk of mere metaphor here imply that we can keep our received ideals of reason while cleaning up the offensive metaphors

through which they have been articulated. But the problem goes deeper than this—not just because metaphors have their nonmetaphorical effects on our understanding, but also for reasons that pertain to the relations between reason and metaphors that express it. Metaphors have their philosophical import as well as their cultural effects. (Lloyd 1997, 290)

The larger concern for Lloyd is with the nature of philosophical thinking. Lloyd argues that there has been continuity throughout philosophical thought at the conceptual level made possible by the circulation of gendered symbols. She writes, for instance, “From the beginnings of philosophical thought, femaleness was symbolically associated with what Reason supposedly left behind—the dark powers of the earth goddesses, immersion in unknown forces associated with mysterious female powers” (Lloyd 1993, 2). Though the concept of reason changes, as well as the deployment of gendered metaphors, the masculinity of the concept persists, as does the use of gendered symbols to articulate its ideals.

Lloyd also argues, and this point is crucial to the hope for reclamation, that acknowledging the need for metaphor in thinking does not, however, entail the endorsement of any particular metaphor. Lloyd is clear both in the article and in *The Man of Reason* that content of philosophical imagery is contingent. She writes, “To grasp the contingency of philosophical metaphor is often to gain insight into philosophical content even when this does not bring with it any clear idea of how we might think differently” (Lloyd 1993, 300). Gendered metaphors are important to philosophical reason, and we can recount the history of how those metaphors have shaped and been shaped by philosophical discourse, but the use of gendered metaphors are not a necessary feature of philosophical thinking. Thus, though philosophy cannot jettison metaphors, gendered metaphors are not essential. While this means that we will need

always to be involved in reflection on the metaphors we use, there is reason to believe that we can make progress on ending the function of gendered metaphors in philosophical thinking.

Lloyd's work on Descartes shows the possibilities his philosophy presents for thinking more critically about gender and shows how the construction of philosophical history has been instrumental in obscuring those possibilities. Lloyd shows that the weight of conceptual history motivates and maintains a gendering of reason even when a philosopher's work presents complications to that story. For reclamation, Lloyd helps us to see that the conceptual history of reason contributes to the silencing of women in the history of philosophy. If we cannot conceive of women as rational how are we to engage them as philosophers? We cannot make women appear as philosophers, as reasonable interlocutors in the tradition of philosophy, until we have exposed and explored the masculinization of reason.

Lloyd ends *The Man of Reason* with a recommendation for how feminist critique should move forward in constructing history. She writes:

To highlight the male-female distinction in relation to philosophical texts is not to distort the History of Philosophy. It does, however, involve taking seriously the distance that separates us from past thinkers. Taking temporal distance seriously demands also of course that we keep firmly in view what the thinkers themselves saw as central to their projects. This exercise involves a constant tension between the need to confront past ideals with perspective drawn from the present and, on the other hand, an equally strong demand to present fairly what the authors took themselves to be doing. A constructive resolution of the tensions between contemporary feminism and past Philosophy requires that we do justice to both demands. (Lloyd 1993, 110)

Lloyd's proposal for how work on the history of philosophy ought to proceed in light of feminist criticism highlights the fact that it is we, from our perspectives, who construct

that history. By speaking of doing justice to opposing demands, Lloyd anticipates and heads off criticisms that feminists distort the history of philosophy. Lloyd recognizes that attention to the masculinization of reason in philosophy's history, a feminist demand, disturbs our ability to recount the projects of past philosophers, work that is at the heart of philosophical practice. More to the point, Lloyd recognizes that our ability is disturbed at least insofar as our practices of recounting that history ignores gender.

Lloyd maintains that philosophy and feminism are not necessarily antagonists. She connects feminist critiques of reason to "a very old strand in the western philosophical tradition" (Lloyd 1993, 109). But what Lloyd sees is that work on the concept of reason, bringing out the complications of how it has been gendered and how that gendering operates within our own ideals, *is* antagonistic to the traditional histories that have constructed and been constructed by the masculinization of reason. She proposes using the tools of philosophy against philosophy's history of conceptualizing reason, but Lloyd does so while recognizing that it is only with feminist pressure that those tools have been put to such employment. Thus, it is aspirational when Lloyd writes: "Philosophy has defined ideals of Reason through exclusions of the feminine. But it also contains within it the resources for critical reflection on those ideals and on its own aspirations" (Lloyd 1993, 109). We can bring the tools of philosophy to bear when we see the gendering of reason and the need to be critical of those processes.

A Model of Reclamation

Yet, though I have argued that Lloyd's reflections on philosophical history are helpful for reclamation, it is still unclear how Lloyd offers a model to reclamation. While

Lloyd might make us reconsider how we interpret the works of traditional philosophers, she does not necessarily lead us to seek beyond their writing for new voices. Indeed, in a quotation that appears almost unaltered in both *The Man of Reason* and an article from the same year, “History of Philosophy and the Critique of Reason,” Lloyd paints a traditional history of philosophy as the history of philosophy. She writes:

Philosophers have been at different periods churchmen, scientists, men of letters, university professors. They have expressed their understanding of Reason and of what matters about in terms of their own self-perceptions; and this has left marks on successive paradigms of rationality. But one thing philosophers have had in common throughout the history of the activity: they have been *predominantly male*. The *absence of women* from the philosophical tradition has meant that *the conceptualisation of Reason has been done exclusively by men*. It is not surprising that it should reflect their sense of philosophy as a male activity. (Lloyd 1984, 18, emphasis mine)²³

The predominance of maleness in one line has transformed into the exclusivity of it in the next. Lloyd seems to give away the game and ignore a part of history just as Pateman charges.

As I observed above, the history that Lloyd constructs in *The Man of Reason* is a traditional one. What help can Lloyd give to reclamation? To answer this question, I look at Tina Chanter’s response to Lloyd’s interpretation of de Beauvoir to show how a method of reclamation can be gained from Lloyd’s approach to exclusion. Chanter expands Lloyd’s interpretation of de Beauvoir to consider directly the question of how de Beauvoir succeeded in producing philosophy even within such an exclusionary tradition.

²³ The quotation from *The Man of Reason*, reads:

Philosophy reflects the characteristic preoccupations and self-perceptions of the kinds of people who have at any time had access to the activity. Philosophers have at different periods been churchmen, men of letters, university professors. But there is one thing they have had in common throughout the history of the activity; they have been predominantly male; and the absence of women from the philosophical tradition has meant that conceptualization of Reason has been done exclusively by men. (Lloyd 1993, 108)

Lloyd's analysis alone is incomplete, and Chanter helps us to see the work that must be done in light of Lloyd's critique to engage women's writing well.

De Beauvoir is the only woman whose work receives sustained attention in *The Man of Reason*.²⁴ Lloyd argues that de Beauvoir's analysis of women's oppression suggests that it is only through women becoming like men that such oppression can be overcome. De Beauvoir does not, Lloyd maintains, address the crucial problem that the two thinkers most influential for her analysis, Hegel and Sartre, both understand men's transcendence as a transcending of the feminine. By modeling the possibility of feminine transcendence on the transcendence that Hegel and Sartre describe, without undermining that notion of transcendence as transcendence of the feminine, de Beauvoir cannot escape the denigration of the feminine that their models require.

While Lloyd's interpretation here is compelling, it is not clear on Lloyd's account how de Beauvoir came to make a philosophical contribution. After explaining how women have been excluded from rationality for centuries, and despite de Beauvoir's own denial that she was a philosopher, Lloyd does not account for how a woman managed to enter philosophical discourse. Nor does Lloyd address the troubled status of *The Second Sex*, a text that even its first English translator failed to identify as a work of philosophy. The analysis of de Beauvoir's text appears in a chapter with Hegel and Sartre's as part of a lineage of thinking about transcendence. What are we to make of this woman who is an heir to masculine reason and male philosophy?

²⁴Diotima is treated in the section on Plato's conception of reason; Lloyd calls Diotima a "wise woman" and "Socrates' instructor in the art of love" (Lloyd 1993, 21). I'll discuss Lloyd's interpretation below. Princess Elizabeth is mentioned in connection with Descartes to highlight what he said in correspondence to her (Lloyd 1993, 47). A discussion of Virginia Woolf's novel *Night and Day* serves as the introduction to the chapter "The Public and the Private" (Lloyd 1993, 74). Mary Wollstonecraft is mentioned as an exasperated critic of Rousseau (Lloyd 1993, 76).

In the opening to the chapter, Lloyd offers the following that could serve as an explanation of how de Beauvoir, or any woman, could contribute to philosophy. Lloyd writes:

Women's general disinclination to reach for the sky of transcendence is connected not only with practical obstacles, but also with conceptual ones. The 'status of manhood' has been seen as itself an attainment, in ways in which femininity has not. Women have shared in these ideals only at the expense of their femininity, as culturally defined. (Lloyd 1993, 86-7)

What this suggests is that the price de Beauvoir paid to enter philosophical discourse was her femininity. In other words, in traditional philosophical history, there is no need for an account of how a woman broke through the exclusion to write a work of philosophy; neither de Beauvoir, nor any woman could enter philosophical discourse as a woman.

That conclusion creates an interesting problem for reclamation. If de Beauvoir did not enter philosophical discourse as a woman, if any woman who entered philosophical discourse did not do so as a woman, then we might be able to reclaim women philosophers, but only those who paid the price of their femininity to produce philosophy. That consequence seems very close to Irigaray's claim that feminine subjectivity has not yet spoken. Yet, Lloyd's focus on the relationship between concepts and metaphor use does not necessarily lead to the conclusion that women have not spoken, only that the way philosophical history is rendered leads to a history in which women cannot speak, at least not as women. Lloyd's analysis helps us see that women will only be able to share in the history of reason without sacrificing their femininity once we expose the masculinization of reason and change our conceptual practices. We must change the processes by which we conceive of reason in order to construct histories in which women do not have to pay the price of admission with their femininity.

But, of course, that cannot change what de Beauvoir wrote. Changing our understanding of the history of reason and paying attention to the operation of gender in conceptualization does not alleviate the troubling associations of masculinity and reason in de Beauvoir's work. Chanter suggests a way of reading de Beauvoir that keeps in focus the tension of being both a woman and a philosopher. Chanter situates Lloyd's interpretation of de Beauvoir within a larger tendency in feminist discourse to conflate the influence of Hegel and Sartre on de Beauvoir's work. In the course of doing so, Chanter writes in a footnote:

Lloyd sets out "to trace de Beauvoir's diagnosis of the condition of women back to its Hegelian origins" (1986: 87), and she has a helpful discussion of Hegel's master-slave dialectic (1986: 88-93). However, because she assumes that "de Beauvoir's application of Hegel's philosophy is taken not from the original version, but from Sartre's adaptation of it in *Being and Nothingness*" (1986: 93), Lloyd concentrates most of her attention on Sartre's (rather than Hegel's) discussion of the subject's relation with others (1986: 93-96). (Chanter 1995, 278)

Chanter does not speculate on why Lloyd or others tend to conflate the Hegelian and Sartrean influences in de Beauvoir's work. Or, more precisely, why commentators tend to reduce Hegelian influences *to* Sartrean influences. Yet, Chanter's analysis is evidence that there is a great deal to be gained in attempting to resist that conflation and understand de Beauvoir as a reader of both Hegel and Sartre.

One of the ways that Chanter resists that conflation is through trying to account for how de Beauvoir managed to make a philosophical contribution. Chanter asks: "What do we make of Beauvoir's equation between the writer and the male when she says that she was treated 'both as a writer [read man] ... and as a woman?'" (Chanter 1995, 52, emendation in Chanter). Chanter proposes that: "Beauvoir sets up the problem of finding the appropriate standpoint of women in a way that builds her privileged

position into her theoretical approach” (Chanter 1995, 53). Chanter thereby suggests that de Beauvoir’s ability to make a contribution to philosophical thought required a negotiation of the history of women’s exclusion from the role of writer.

There is a long history of feminist concern, however, that what de Beauvoir considers her privilege in fact amounts to a repudiation of femininity that threatens to make *The Second Sex* a repetition of philosophy’s exclusion of women as women. Chanter’s approach looks for de Beauvoir’s negotiations of women’s exclusion from philosophical work and, in doing so, relates the contradictions within de Beauvoir’s texts to those negotiations. The benefits of such an approach are many. The one most relevant to the project here is that if, with Lloyd, we are concerned with exclusion in the conceptual history of reason, Chanter’s approach locates women as writers in the history of that exclusion and assumes neither that they will be immune from its effects, nor that they will simply be shaped by them. Rather, part of the importance of reading women’s texts is to see how the history of femininity’s exclusion has never been merely exclusionary, but has also had productive effects.

Lloyd argues that the exclusion of femininity from rationality has shaped femininity, and Chanter here reminds us that such shaping may lead women, unconsciously or with intent, to treat femininity as inimical or opposed to their work as thinkers. By investigating how de Beauvoir engaged both Hegel and Sartre, Chanter resists the narrative that would have de Beauvoir receive philosophy from Sartre. But in highlighting de Beauvoir’s problematic negotiation of her role as woman and writer—as Chanter puts it: “her eagerness to identify herself as having overcome her status as other”—Chanter ushers into view the importance of woman’s status as other (Chanter

1995, 78). By giving greater insight into how a woman's philosophical writing was shaped by the tradition of her exclusion from philosophy, Chanter extends Lloyd's project in a fruitful way for reclamation.

If we take Lloyd's work into account, then we will not look to women's writing as immune from the masculinization of reason. Rather, we know that we will find critical responses, as Pateman assures us, but also writing that shares in the conceptual history of reason. Reclamation cannot alleviate women's work of the shaping it has received by a tradition that has conceptualized reason in opposition to femininity. We can, however, engage women's writing by looking for both the way it resists the exclusion of femininity *and* the way exclusion operates in it. The traditional history that Lloyd analyzes contains a great deal of complexity that has been obscured or silenced when the history of philosophy is told. Lloyd has inspired feminists to revisit canonical philosophers and engage the ways in which their writings about reason sustain the tradition of masculinization and show that it is only a partial story. She can also, I have argued, help guide us to consider women's writing as part of that history, sharing in the complexity and suffering the obscuring effects of masculinization.

Lloyd's analysis of Diotima offers a rich starting place for reclamation, though she does not present it as such. Indeed, her analysis leaves untouched all of the major feminist concerns that have developed since Irigaray and Waithe's treatments of Diotima.²⁵ Lloyd does not discuss Diotima's historicity or her absence from the

²⁵ *The Man of Reason* was published the same year as *Ethique de la différence sexuelle* in which Irigaray's reading of Diotima's speech originally appeared and three years before the first volume of Waithe's *A History of Women Philosophers*. Thus, I don't mean to say that Lloyd failed to engage feminist thinking on Diotima, but rather that she does not reflect the concerns that began to arise at around the same time as *The Man of Reason*. I am arguing that despite that seeming deficiency, Lloyd offers an important resource for reclamation.

dialogue. Nor does Lloyd interpret the relationship between Diotima, Socrates, and Plato's views. Indeed, Lloyd presents Diotima's speech as a development in Plato's thinking about the tripartite soul while also attributing a view about love to Diotima and explicating it. In the next section, I will look at how Lloyd presents Diotima and suggest how it could be the beginning of a reclamation.

Diotima

By way of introduction to the chapter "The divided soul: manliness and effeminacy," Lloyd gives an account of Plato's views on reason. Lloyd presents Diotima's views on love as part of the later Plato's attempt to incorporate passion and desire into the pursuit of wisdom. Lloyd explains:

The pursuit of wisdom is a spiritual procreation, which shares with physical procreation the desire for immortality through generation – the desire to leave behind a new and different existence in place of the 'old worn-out mortality'. The pursuit of wisdom thus shares a common structure with physical procreation; but its aim is a superior form of immortality. (Lloyd 1993, 21)

Lloyd does not offer a critical reflection on this hierarchization of rational procreation over physical. She also speaks of those who achieve this immortality as men—though she does not attribute to Diotima that view that it can only be men.

Lloyd concludes the discussion of Diotima with the observation: "The old conflicts between Reason and the transcended fertility mysteries are here subsumed in a treatment of Reason as itself generative" (Lloyd 1993, 22). Yet, it is not clear how we are to read subsumption here. Lloyd moves from that observation to a critique of the way Plato's idea of the divided soul became incorporated into later philosophers' conceptions of reason. We are left without a clear sense of how to understand Diotima's role or the

role of her view in the masculinization of reason. Lloyd seems to indicate a new end to an old conflict; reason and the passion of the fertility mysteries are brought together under the rule of productivity. On the one hand, we might read this as the incorporation of rationality and physicality into a transcendent concept of procreation; the rational and the physical are brought together. But it was that form of subsumption that Irigaray called Diotima’s miscarriage. The valorization of production, whether rational or physical, above the exchange between persons was the basis of Irigaray’s critique of Diotima.

We saw above that Lloyd called the productivity of pursuing wisdom a superior form of immortality to physical generation without critically reflecting on that hierarchy. By this point in *The Man of Reason*, Lloyd has already discussed the Pythagorean table of opposites that form the context of not only of the Platonic dialogues but, as much feminist ink has been spilt to show, the history of Western thinking. While Lloyd lists the ten oppositions, I will present them here in columns to more clearly show the associations:

Limit	Unlimited
Odd	Even
One	Many
Right	Left
Male	Female
Rest	Motion
Straight	Curved
Light	Dark
Good	Bad
Square	Oblong

Lloyd observes: “Thus ‘male’ and ‘female’, like the other contrasted terms, did not here function as straightforwardly descriptive classifications. ‘Male’, like the other terms on its side of the table, was construed as superior to its opposite ...” (Lloyd 1993, 3).

Indeed, there is only one clearly normative pair in the list—Good/Bad—but even without the centuries of metaphorical work done by Light/Dark the appearance of those norms within each list underscores the hierarchy at work. Lloyd quickly links this list to the opposition of Reason/Matter. Thus, it is interesting that the valorization of rational procreation above physical generation that Lloyd attributes to Diotima goes unquestioned. Like de Beauvoir, Lloyd, in this analysis, contributes to the history of masculinizing reason.

Clearly, however, Lloyd offers critical resources for addressing such hierarchization. Importantly for reclamation, Lloyd also supplies us, especially with the chapter on de Beauvoir, with the expectation that conceptual masculinization will happen in women's, as well as men's, writing. Thus, we are not surprised on Lloyd's model to find that Diotima does not offer us a concept of reason free of masculinizing tendencies, but we are ready to look for possible sources and to trace the effects of the hierarchizing in the history of philosophy. Further, Lloyd's method does not require us to settle whether Diotima was a real person or the extent to which we can trust the game of telephone that brought us her speech if she was. Lloyd's focus on the history of concepts and the way that history operates whether or not we are aware of it directs reclamation's attention to the concept of reason. Diotima's speech incorporates the importance of physical passion into the pursuit of wisdom, but it also maintains reason as superior to the physical body. The second move is part of the history of associations that pair masculinity with reason and femininity with the body. Thus, while the first move appears to bring together reason and body, the second move shows that such subsumption re-

establishes a hierarchical binary. The progress that may be made by bringing together reason and the passions gets reinvested in the masculinization of reason.

With Lloyd's guidance neither Diotima nor de Beauvoir becomes a hero for feminist philosophy. Rather, Lloyd's analysis allows us to give up the false hope for thinkers who can radically reorient history to free us from it. Lloyd's model instead urges reclamation to engage women's writing as part of reason's conceptual history. We can be historians of the complexities of that history. Lloyd has already given us one history of reason's successful masculinization by staying close to traditional renderings of philosophical history. With my reading, Lloyd can be a model for tracing the effects of metaphors on conceptualization and the way the history of concepts builds across texts, thinkers, time periods, and traditions, even in the writing of women thinkers.

I will end this chapter by arguing that writing women into reason's conceptual history would be reclamation as transformation. As Lloyd's treatment of de Beauvoir shows, including women in the history of reason's masculinization is not the same as overcoming the masculinization of reason. Thus, enfranchisement risks enfranchising women into masculine reason, rather than helping us encounter and engage with women's work. Lloyd's method strongly recommends against reclamation as the construction of an alternative history because her method shows the continuity of conceptual development across thinkers. To advocate for women's writing as an alternative tradition within the tradition or as an alternative outside the tradition risks presenting women's thinking as free from reason's conceptual history. Again, as Lloyd's treatment of de Beauvoir shows and as Chanter helps to develop, women's writing must be understood as part of conceptual history, even if it is also a source of resistance to

some of the dominant trends of that history. Finally, Lloyd's method is not a corrective to traditional philosophical history, because in her view philosophical thinking cannot be cleansed of its reliance on metaphor. Philosophy cannot be corrected to change the way conceptualization works or erase the history of concepts. Indeed, Lloyd emphasizes that aspirations for neutral concepts help to hide the work of a concept's history.

Lloyd's method does not just warn us away from thinking of reclamation in those other modes – she models for us a transformation of philosophical history. She urges us to a project of self-reflection about our concept use, but more importantly Lloyd urges us to think of our history as an ongoing and always contemporary project of construction that is informed by and informs the concepts we use. Philosophical history is thus a communal project and one to which we not only can, but must, bring contemporary concerns. That “must” is descriptive. In other words, Lloyd does not show us that we should bring our contemporary concerns, demands, views, and understandings to the work of past thinkers, Lloyd shows that we inevitably do so. Lloyd's acknowledgement of the inevitability of involving our contemporary investments in our renderings of philosophical history does not lead her to argue for greater objectivity or more faith to texts of the past. Instead, Lloyd's method requires that we become more conversant with what we bring to philosophical history, in particular through understanding the history of our concepts. Further, understanding the history of our concepts changes what we bring to our work of constructing the history of philosophy. Lloyd thus gives us a model of philosophical practice in which conceptualization is a communal process that occurs over time and that cannot be made totally or finally transparent. That open and historically oriented conception of philosophical history makes it possible for questions about

women's writing to become part of the work of constructing philosophical history – and that, as Lloyd's history shows, is a transformation indeed.

I will more fully discuss Lloyd's approach in conjunction with Irigaray and Le Doeuff's in my final chapter, but, briefly, I want to highlight that the great strength of Lloyd's approach is the requirement that we treat women writers as part of conceptual history. Rather than seeing women as supplemental to, external from, or in some way immune to the philosophical history of their times, we can read them as part of that history. We can do so with attention to how their thinking responds to and is shaped by the concerns, assumptions, facts, prejudices, and insights of their time, as well as by the oppression that has shaped every woman's life. Like Irigaray, however, Lloyd tends to present the history of philosophy as something from which women are absent. We must use Lloyd's method to give greater attention to the women Lloyd moves so quickly past: Diotima, Elizabeth of Bohemia, and Mary Wollstonecraft, perhaps even Virginia Woolf. We must use Lloyd's method to engage those women that her method does not alert us may have been acknowledged as philosophers in their own time, who were never called by that name, or even those who rejected it.

Chapter IV

Michèle Le Doeuff: Failure and Imagination

In an observation that would be at home in the writing of Lloyd or Irigaray, Le Doeuff writes: “If you look at the history of philosophy you can find a pattern: on the one hand it would be all too easy to compile a big book based on the dreadful things voiced by philosophers on the subject of ‘woman’. But those things could be summarized very briefly: she is said to be ‘the Other’” (Le Doeuff 1987a, 51). Yet, Le Doeuff’s critique and remediation of that history differs significantly from the thinkers I discussed in the preceding two chapters. Perhaps on no count is the difference more pronounced than in the way Le Doeuff’s critique leads her to engage the writings of women throughout the history of philosophy, beginning with pre-Socratics. Engagements with the work of particular women have not always figured prominently in Le Doeuff’s writing, however. Like Lloyd and Irigaray, Le Doeuff saw the importance of reckoning with the history of exclusion in philosophy and the damage that it has done. The exclusion, not the possible breakdowns of exclusion that women’s writing might present, was her initial focus. Yet, unlike them, Le Doeuff has extensively engaged with women’s work. This chapter shows how her understanding of philosophical history led her to develop a reclamationist practice. Rather than suggesting that Le Doeuff should therefore be the theorist of exclusion for reclamation, I wish to show that she offers another fruitful model for reclamation

From early in her career, Le Doeuff has theorized that both women and the feminine, that is, both living women and woman as sign, have played a role in ameliorating a lack inherent to philosophy. Le Doeuff does not think that radical lack can be overcome, but rather must be acknowledged and embraced as a necessary feature, a necessary disappointment, of philosophical thinking. Indeed, this lack is, according to Le Doeuff, “a radical lack which the Other cannot complete” and, crucially, “to my mind, forms the true starting-point of philosophy” (Le Doeuff 2002, 107).²⁶ Rather than confronting this lack, Le Doeuff argues, philosophers and philosophy as a corporate enterprise have used women and figurations of the feminine to paper over the disappointments that one desiring philosophical knowledge encounters. In other words, for Le Doeuff, the history of philosophy cannot be well understood without considering the symbolic and actual relegation of women to roles of consolation and subordination. Since sexism has been integral to the traditional and continued failure of philosophers to address the disappointments of philosophical work, Le Doeuff argues that a reorientation of philosophical practice to this inherent feature of such work is necessary if the traditional and continued sexism of philosophy is to be overcome.

Le Doeuff promotes openness to incompleteness and non-dominating cooperation among thinkers as part of that reorientation. She asks, “Is it possible to make philosophy, or philosophical work, abandon its wish to be a speculation which leaves no room for lack of knowledge, to make it accept its intrinsic incompleteness and create a non-hegemonic rationalism, so that philosophy will no longer need a defence mechanism involving the exclusion of women – and children?” (Le Doeuff 2002, 126). While this

²⁶ Le Doeuff began to theorize that lack as early as *The Philosophical Imaginary* and has developed it in *Hipparchia's Choice*, *The Sex of Knowing*, and essays.

remains a hypothesis, a question to be tested in her first book, *The Philosophical Imaginary*, from which the quotation comes, Le Doeuff's own writing both explores and models the possibility of philosophical work that has abandoned the hegemonic wish for completeness.

The road as Le Doeuff has mapped it leads through historical reclamation of women's philosophical writing. Yet, Le Doeuff did not begin with the project of reclaiming women's work. Indeed, one of Le Doeuff's early theories from the *Philosophical Imaginary*, the Heloise complex as she came to call it, threatened to obscure the need for such reclamation. By her second book, however, *Hipparchia's Choice*, Le Doeuff modifies the Heloise complex.²⁷ And it is in *Hipparchia's Choice* that philosophical writing by women became important to Le Doeuff's feminist work. By *The Sex of Knowing*, it has become integral. I argue that Le Doeuff's interest in reorienting philosophical practice and her use of uchronic history, that is, imaginative alternative histories in which women's writings were not excluded from philosophical history and projection of the possible contemporary consequences of those imagined histories, in her critical approach to philosophical practice and history made engagement with women's writing both possible and necessary. Le Doeuff's aspiration to non-

²⁷ In *The Oxford Companion to Philosophy*, Jane O'Grady describes the complex this way: Diagnosed by Michèle Le Doeuff, this is the tendency of women in philosophy to idolize either a male colleague or teacher (as did Heloise and Beauvoir), or a 'great' living or dead philosopher whose banner they carry (as do contemporary women seeking the best male exponent of feminism, and becoming 'Lacanian', 'Foucauldian', even 'Nietzschean' feminists). This situation benefits the man, destroys the woman—removing her intellectual independence and need to create philosophy herself. De Beauvoir, however, escaped the Heloise complex sufficiently to produce philosophy 'unawares.' (O'Grady, Jane 1995, 350-1)

The 2005 second edition of the *Companion*, there is no update to the conception. I don't know where in Le Doeuff's works O'Grady finds the condemnation of Lacanian, Foucauldian or *even* Nietzschean feminists. Certainly, Le Doeuff is scrupulous about avoiding claims of allegiance to anyone thinker.

hegemonic philosophy made it possible for her to claim the philosophical value of work that has gone unrecognized as philosophical in its own right.

To dissect this process I look at Le Doeuff's engagement with the writing of Harriet Taylor Mill.²⁸ Then, I consider Penelope Deutscher's critical response to that work. Deutscher raises important problems in Taylor's writing, problems she shows contemporary feminism to be heir to even though it has not largely been heir to Taylor's writings. I argue that Deutscher's critical intervention is only possible in the context of the reclamation that Le Doeuff helps to construct. Thus, I show that Le Doeuff's approach to Taylor is motivated by the former's efforts to understand and overcome the exclusion of women from philosophy. My conclusion is that we need both Le Doeuff's uchronic approach and Deutscher's engagement with the problems of what we thereby bring into our range of hearing.

Finally, I consider the role of Diotima in Le Doeuff's corpus. Although Le Doeuff has not directly addressed Diotima's role in the *Symposium* or used the uchronic method to think through her speech, Le Doeuff's treatment of the priestess helps to further illuminate how the uchronic method works and the structure of philosophy that makes it such a powerful approach to reclamation.

²⁸ I will refer to Harriet Taylor Mill as Taylor throughout this chapter. Jo Ellen Jacobs has observed, "The difficulty in characterizing Harriet Taylor Mill begins with her name" (Jacobs 1998, xii). "Taylor" was her first husband's last name, Mill her second's. Harriet Hardy, her given or *maiden* name, was also her mother's name. Jacobs goes on to note: "Using only her first name, 'Harriet,' hardly seems to present her as an important intellectual figure in the history of philosophy. ... but perhaps the history of philosophy would be approached differently if students studied Immanuel, René, and Baruch instead of Kant, Descartes, and Spinoza" (Jacobs 1998, xii). I must admit, I find the suggestion compelling. I also find using the mother's name compelling. Deutscher uses "Taylor Mill." Ultimately, and perhaps unsatisfactorily, I follow Le Doeuff's practice, as it was *The Sex of Knowing* that introduced me to Harriet Taylor Mill. Jacob's concludes her thoughts on the subject with the following: "In any case, forgive is the oddity of appellations" (Jacobs 1998, xii). I will end mine on a different and with, I hope, a less ambiguous audience: In any case, let's use the problems of appellation in this case to wonder about all the names we use.

The Heloise Complex

Heloise, Elisabeth of Bohemia, and even Simone de Beauvoir are defined, sometimes known only, by their connections to a recognized male philosopher. Le Doeuff's Heloise complex seeks to explain this fate of women who did have access to a philosophical education. Le Doeuff describes it thus:

a woman establishes herself as a philosopher's loving admirer; the situation is profitable to him and fatal to her. She sees the master's philosophy as complete in itself and does not therefore feel condemned to invent or to think something that has never been thought of before. He, on the other hand, benefits from her look, in which he sees his own thought as a perfection (as no thought is). (Le Doeuff 2007, 162)

The situation Le Doeuff describes is one in which both the philosopher and the admirer are "saved" from the disappointments inherent in philosophical thinking by their relationship. The difference, of course, is that the admired has already encountered those disappointments and produced a philosophy that becomes a perfection under and through the gaze of the admirer. The admirer, in this account of it, succumbs to the power of bestowing perfection and fails to be disappointed in the way that Le Doeuff argues is crucial to philosophical work. Neither, though, can really be said to benefit philosophically from this relationship. For even though the admired has produced a philosophy, seeing his own thought as perfection threatens the cessation of thinking and the cessation of thinking is the death of philosophical work. For the woman, however, the effects are truly grim: she does nothing but parrot the master's philosophy. At this point, Le Doeuff, Irigaray, and Lloyd are in agreement that philosophical history is the history of the exclusion of femininity.

In her second book, however, *Hipparchia's Choice*, from which this quotation comes, Le Doeuff modifies the Heloise complex in two ways with important

consequences for how we understand philosophical history and the role of women in it. The first modification connects this gendered dynamic to larger issues of philosophical practice: “the self-sacrifice a woman agrees to in her veneration of a mentor is part of a wider configuration: the mentor is seeking a general admiration (which is not commensurable with philosophical work) and wants not only to produce philosophy but also to be a philosopher” (Le Doeuff 2007, 164). In other words, veneration is not a problem only across gender lines, but in gendered configurations the bleakest effects are shown. Thus, the Heloise complex reveals the importance of separating the title from the activity. That separation makes space for giving philosophical attention to and finding philosophical value in the writings of people who are given no credence as philosophers. Indeed, the de-linking of those concepts is crucial to reclamation, since no one who confidently enjoys the title philosopher needs reclamation. Yet, with this first modification, space is only made for such reclamation. It is the second modification that allows women’s work to be addressed in the space of that opening.

Le Doeuff’s second amendment to the Heloise complex moderates the consequences of the venerating relationship. Le Doeuff writes: “The Heloise complex seems not to be so crippling as I formerly meant it to appear. Can one escape it on the quiet and produce philosophy independently, on the condition of course that one does not attempt to pose as a philosopher? Producing philosophy unawares?” (Le Doeuff 2007, 165). This second modification acknowledges the power of the label “philosopher,” even within Le Doeuff’s own work. Whereas Irigaray puts into question the value ascribed to texts as the end of philosophical practice, Le Doeuff puts into question the practice of identifying who is and who is not a philosopher. Le Doeuff asks: could it be that women

produced philosophy that we cannot see, that they themselves perhaps could not identify as such, because the qualifications for the title of philosopher have been in the way of our being able to see philosophical thinking?

Le Doeuff notes that an interesting problem arises from this question. On the one hand, we might think that no author controls a text; thus, commentators could declare something a work of philosophy that was never avowed as such by the author. Any number of women could have produced philosophy unawares. Or, on the other, one could take a more traditional route, in which the author is considered to be the founder of a text and our job is simply to understand it as the author intended. Thus, no woman who did not claim the mantle of philosophy (or who, like de Beauvoir, denounced it) could authorize a philosophical work. On the one hand, we declare women of the past philosophers, despite their own intentions or desires. On the other, we pretty much agree that prior to the 20th century women did not philosophize. Le Doeuff, taking these options under consideration, refuses to set them up as a dilemma.

Instead, she writes:

there is at least a third way of conceiving of philosophy and the history of philosophy: we can regard both as work, and thus as a dynamic, which can lead to and from each other. From this point of view, a philosophy is neither a monument nor an effect which is blind to its origins and thus in relation to itself, but an effort to shift thinking from one state to another. ... The advantage of this perspective is, among other things, that it regards the history of philosophy as a philosophical activity. (Le Doeuff 2007, 168)

Le Doeuff's third conception of philosophical practice and the history of philosophy moves away from understanding the history of philosophy canonically and toward a model of understanding the history of philosophy as philosophical work to be done. Once Le Doeuff has made these amendments to the Heloise complex, the pages of her work

become crowded with the work of women thinkers. Their demands become our concern as the silencing of their demands helps us to understand how our concerns have become our concerns. While reclamation as love gives us a model by which to resist collapsing our own demands with that of the historical texts we encounter, Le Doeuff gives us a conception of philosophical history that compels us to seek out new voices with which to engage.

Importantly for reclamation, this means that women's work is not reclaimed for "a" or "the" canon; Le Doeuff is not interested in enfranchising women into philosophical history. The non-monumentalizing orientation to philosophy that Le Doeuff outlines moves away from such structures of memory. History on this view is not memorialization, but the opportunity for philosophical practice to open toward works of all sorts and sources of all kinds. Yet, merely making that opening is not enough. For, as any good post-colonial theorist will tell you, simply opening up new sources for philosophical thinking is no guarantee that anything changes. Le Doeuff also offers us an ethics of reclamation based on a practice of writing uchronic histories. What, she asks in the uchronic mode, would our lives be like had women's texts not been silenced? We must consider how to speak with texts that are formed by a history of having no voice and whose silence forms our history.

Uchronia

To understand what has been lost through the exclusion of women from philosophical history Le Doeuff poses questions like the following:

If at school she had read Mary Wollstonecraft in English class, Anna Maria van Schurman in Latin, if a good history course had told her of the

Anglo-American saga of women's right to vote, if in philosophy she had read Gabrielle Suchon and Harriett Taylor, if a popular edition of *The Book of the City of Ladies* had been available, would she have concluded her magnum opus as she did? (Le Doeuff 2003, 217).²⁹

The magnum opus in question is *The Second Sex*. Le Doeuff asks what de Beauvoir might have written not only had she known about women in history (which *The Second Sex* amply shows that she did), but also if women had been diversely represented throughout her society and education. Would de Beauvoir have concluded with the suggestion that we all become brothers? Such a question is not merely an idle counterfactual longing in Le Doeuff's work. Rather, such a question makes an imaginative opening to a history in which women are not ritually excluded.

Such questions are not mere counterfactuals because they have a historical end in Le Doeuff's work. She maintains: "It is a fairly futile mental exercise to seek to 'reclaim' a historical fact, unless one explicitly gives the attempt a [sic] uchronic form: let's imagine that we can start again and that I can draw the outlines of a reworked history on my blank paper ..." (Le Doeuff 2007, 216). In other words, what Le Doeuff suggests is that a historical fact in need of reclamation is one that has not been remembered, and creating the possibility of its being remembered, of its entering history, requires starting again with history.

That starting again has two intimately related parts: one imaginary, one practical. First, what if, for instance, we imagine that women had gained citizens' rights during the French Revolution? In the fourth notebook of *Hipparchia's Choice*, Le Doeuff meditates on what the effects of the establishment of such equality would have been on French

²⁹ Le Doeuff claims that de Beauvoir gave the last word to Rimbaud. The last quotation of *The Second Sex* comes from Marx. And, as occasionally remarked, the last word of the work is *fraternité*. Le Doeuff's reading remains trenchant, but the discrepancy is curious.

society. She writes: “The phenomenon of battered women would long ago have disappeared, since it is basically a problem of married women who are economically dependent” (Le Doeuff 2007, 218). One of the possible historical agents of this imagined history is the French writer and provocateur Olympe de Gouges. Le Doeuff observes of the social contract that, in 1791, de Gouges argued ought to replace the marriage contract: “This is a wonderful contract, for it preserves the rights of women and children and enables us to see, by contrast, how the real legislation at once sacrificed both women’s freedom and children’s interests to what is commonly called patriarchy” (Le Doeuff 2007, 217). De Gouges’s contract is essentially a document for the protection of children, regardless of the legal status of the biological parents. Neither adult entering the contract gains legal rights over the other, but both are bound to provide for the children they produce either together or “as the result of any other inclination” (Le Doeuff 2007, 217). As Le Doeuff notes, such a contract requires the economic independence of women through establishing both parent’s obligation to dependent children.

Though Le Doeuff’s history is an imagined one, one in which de Gouges’s writing influences the course of society and leads to the elimination of domestic abuse, it has the real consequence of engaging with the writing of a woman who has largely been excluded from philosophical history. The imagining of a world in which she was influential begins to suggest a different way of understanding how history has thus far been told and here the imaginary begins to tip over into the practical. Within that achronic story of the French Revolution, Le Doeuff brings to the fore the importance of Olympe de Gouges’s role in the history of the Revolution. Not merely one of the women

guillotined in the course of the Revolution, de Gouges's was a voice silenced with consequences Le Doeuff's uchronic exercise now helps us to hear. Thus, the imaginative becomes grounds for a critical engagement with what occurred and a guide to retelling history. Le Doeuff's uchronic approach revivifies that silenced writing. The importance of that re-awakened work is established through the imaginative exercise of constructing a history that the work was not able to inaugurate. Thinking through the effects that would have followed from the requirement of women's economic independence that follows from de Gouges's contract illuminates the dependence that the actual marriage contract both breeds and requires.

In other words, De Gouges's contract was a failure, but it is a failure worthy of lamentation. The idea of what might have been imparts value on what was and was silenced. It also acts as the guide for writing a different history, one which considers not how influential an idea or a thinker was, but what the world might be like if an idea had become influential; it gives us an opening to imagine the forms of life that were lost with the silencing of that work. Thus, Le Doeuff is not providing us with an alternative account of philosophical history. Her uchronic speculations are not meant to give us a different version of history, but rather to give us critical perspective on the production of our forms of life. In a similar vein, Le Doeuff's uchronic method is not meant to correct philosophical history – that history was produced through women's exclusion, but our future, her method suggests, does not have to be.

While in *Hipparchia's Choice*, uchronic questioning motivates retelling history, by *The Sex of Knowing*, Le Doeuff reverses that order. The ethical force of Le Doeuff's uchronic question about *The Second Sex*, for instance, is deepened by the reclaimed

history that leads to its asking. The women Le Doeuff lists, including the writer of *The Book of the City of Ladies*, Christine de Pisan, are part of the history at work in *The Sex of Knowing*. The introduction to *The Sex of Knowing* does not begin with the assumption that we are familiar either with Christine de Pisan or her writing, but rather it begins with the story of why we are not; that is, it begins with the story of Christine's silencing. As a reader who did know about Christine and her work, I found this introduction thrilling. What had, prior to turning back the cover of Le Doeuff's book, seemed like a bit of arcana picked up in a questionable back alley of philosophical inquiry was suddenly before me as the name of a figure important enough to silence and not just once, but through a series of repetitions by which what Christine wrote was and is ritually reduced to the epithet "bluestocking."

Le Doeuff's question about de Beauvoir does not appear until near the end of *The Sex of Knowing*, by which time Le Doeuff has not only tackled Christine's silencing, but also the silencing of Wollstonecraft, Schurman, Suchon, and Taylor. Whereas in *Hipparchia's Choice*, uchronic questioning was used to motivate and guide the reclamation of Olympe de Gouges's writing, in *The Sex of Knowing*, reclamation occurs throughout the text and motivates the uchronic questioning of a consummate text of 20th century feminism. The flexible relationship between uchronic thinking and reclamation that Le Doeuff demonstrates in her work suggests not only methodological flexibility for reclamation projects, but also the varied means by which the ethical task of reclamation can be undertaken. The uchronic moment, the "what might have been," facilitates our reimagining of the history that has led to current practices and institutions, but, as the *Sex of Knowing* demonstrates, it does not have to precede the work of historical reclamation.

The two together, however, makes it more difficult for the silencing of women's work to appear as a mere historical curiosity or a *fait accompli*.

Further, uchronic thinking and reclamation together build a case for reading women philosophers in a way that does not repeat the criterion of exclusion as the criterion of inclusion. That is, Le Doeuff is not reclaiming these women because they are women. Indeed, Le Doeuff, in *The Sex of Knowing*, aims to reveal the long tradition of sexual differentialism in philosophical thinking and its importance in excluding women not only from philosophical practice but also political life. In Le Doeuff's writing, the fact that a thinker has been dismissed – called a bluestocking, for instance – becomes a reason for engaging with her writing. Each moment of silencing, each name-calling, each repetition of a rumor about a thinker is an opportunity for investigating what is being repudiated, disavowed, effaced. The long philosophical history of othering *woman* is reason to engage the writing of women. Le Doeuff asks with and through her uchronic questioning, what possibilities were lost with the writing of these women? This is clearly a model of reclamation as transformation of philosophical practice.

Olympe de Gouges envisioned a marriage contract that did not subordinate one person's economic status to another's, a contract that did not rely on a tradition of economic dependence of women and children to husbands and fathers. De Gouges sought to expand the restructuring of relationships of dependence that the French Revolution made possible to the domestic sphere. The next figure I will consider, Harriet Taylor Mill, denied sexual differentialism and affirmed women's ability to collectively agitate for political recognition and equal rights. Within philosophical history, however,

we have access to her through a series of contradictory character assessments that largely agree on one thing: she is not worth our philosophical attention.³⁰

Harriet Taylor Mill

Le Doeuff reports that her main method for treating Taylor and Mill as independent thinkers is to focus on points of disagreement between them. Le Doeuff endorses this approach in part because it helps to frame moments of agreement within their writings as part of a process of thinking together, rather than the signs of a pre-established harmony. The development of the Heloise complex in Le Doeuff's work underlines the need for such a seemingly simple methodological commitment. Especially when there is a long history of established discourse claiming that a writer is nothing more than a parrot of an established philosopher, such a method of reclamation helps to counteract unwittingly doxastic readings. Focusing on points of disagreement underscores that, even if Taylor's primary access to philosophy was through Mill, such mediation did not make Taylor and Mill univocal.

Yet, once Le Doeuff begins to engage Taylor as an independent thinker, she finds another influence on Taylor's thinking – one that fed and strengthened the disagreement between husband and wife. Thinking for herself does not, in Taylor's case at least, mean thinking by herself.³¹ Le Doeuff discovers that the conventions on women's rights inspired by the first Seneca Falls Convention and *Declaration of Sentiments* profoundly

³⁰ For a thorough (and disheartening) review of the phases and fads of scholarship dismissing Harriet Taylor Mill see “‘The Lot of Gifted Ladies is Hard’: A Study of Harriet Taylor Mill Criticism” by Jo Ellen Jacobs.

³¹ Nor do I think that the image of the independent thinker is ever meant to be an isolated figure in Le Doeuff's work. The influence of the Seneca Falls convention and the women's movement in the US (as well as women petitioners in Sheffield who seemed also to have impressed Taylor (Le Doeuff 2003, 205) is part of a larger story often touched on in Le Doeuff's work about the power that women's collective work has to shift thinking. Cf. “Ants and Women, or Philosophy without Borders”

affected Taylor's thinking. Taylor's review of the *New York Tribune* article that brought reports of the conventions to England testifies to the effect that the nascent movement had on her thinking. That review is what we now know as the essay, "The Enfranchisement of Women." Le Doeuff lingers over the transformation of the review into an essay and what has been lost by that transformation:

this transformation erased any sense that the essay had initially been the work of a female journalist or historian of the present reporting a current event she describes as historic, namely, that the issue of women's equal access to all rights and their enfranchisement in law and practice is no longer merely an idea, but now manifests itself in something hitherto unheard of—organized agitation. (Le Doeuff 2003, 205)

In restoring the title of the review to "The Enfranchisement," Le Doeuff restores a sense of the newness of what occurred at Seneca Falls, the surprise of it, by situating Taylor's writing as a response to events unfolding. And it allows us to see that Taylor herself was a thinker changed by those events.

As Le Doeuff writes: "[Taylor] is pleased to learn that what she had believed impossible is in fact possible, pleased that History has shown the error of her earlier belief ..." (Le Doeuff 2003, 205). Until these women proved her wrong, Taylor believed that women required men to represent their political interests (Le Doeuff 2003, 206). Post-Seneca Falls, Taylor no longer writes of sexual duality vis-à-vis mental faculties and she no longer thinks men are the necessary agents of women's political demands. In other words, this event is crucial to Taylor's rejection of fundamental sexual difference. Though it may not have been the intentions of the conventioners to intervene on a philosophical problem, they did so.

In writing of the influence of Seneca Falls on Taylor, Le Doeuff states: "When some women and one woman establish themselves as subjects with the capacity to make

judgments about reality and rights, instead of situating themselves among the objects on which people can expound ad libitum, this is a major political-intellectual event that necessarily displaces the givens of discourse” (Le Doeuff 2003, 208). But only, I must insist, if they are heard. When that event is lost to history, when it is written out, then no displacement can occur. In other words, Le Doeuff’s engagement of these historical events makes possible the displacement she attributes to the historical event. Of course, any displacement that Le Doeuff’s engagement effects depends upon the historical events these women caused by establishing themselves as judging subjects. Le Doeuff’s uchronic approach and her understanding of history as a dynamic with which we are engaged allow her to re-examine those events and bring into philosophical discourse the political-intellectual event of women working together to change reality and rights.

One of the points that Le Doeuff emphasizes in her project of disengaging Taylor from discourse on Mill is that Taylor surpassed Mill in her thinking about sexual difference. Mill, Le Doeuff argued, vacillated in his thinking about sexual difference and never fully rejected some notion of fundamental sexual difference, as Taylor was able to do. In particular, Mill never seemed to abandon the view that a woman could be the source of philosophical inspiration, but not its elaborator. Thus, Le Doeuff strikes this cautionary tone about Mill: “A male philosopher willing to recognize civil rights for women is still a historical rarity. But the fact that Mill does not want to recognize our capacity to think without a man is also reminiscent of a common historical practice” (Le Doeuff 2003, 215). This passage is very close to the end of *The Sex of Knowing* and Le Doeuff is returning us to the exclusion of women from philosophy.

Indeed, without the epilogue, the arc of the book is from silencing to exclusion. The silencing of Christine would lead, through a book of reclamations, to the story of how Mill's work colluded in the exclusion of women, including his much loved wife, from the realm of philosophy. The epilogue, however, extends a different ending to her readers. There, Le Doeuff suggests that Taylor and Mill might be a model to us, after all. A man and a woman, "these two romantics," can speak to us of tolerating the unpredictability that comes with each of us gaining a bit more freedom from the stereotypes that would define us. Though it is largely now forgotten, or passed over too quickly, these two thinkers disagreed and yet loved each other. Tolerance, Le Doeuff suggests, is necessary if we are going to keep thinking – for thinking surely breeds disagreements and, not to be underestimated, disappointments. Mill may not be the feminist that we wish he was, but in his work he promotes a notion of tolerance that we can extend to him.

It is a suggestion to keep in mind as we turn to consider the disappointments that await us in Taylor's writing. For, as Penelope Deutscher has well argued, there are many. Deutscher's engagement with Taylor begins with a critique of Le Doeuff's work that results in the opening up a very different Taylor from the one presented in *The Sex of Knowing*. Deutscher argues that Le Doeuff stabilizes the ambivalences and contradictions in Taylor's work and thereby occludes the problematic inconsistencies that are integral to Taylor's feminist arguments and conclusions. Moreover, Deutscher warns, we risk repeating those argumentative tensions, rather than learning from them, if we similarly stabilize the inheritance that we receive from earlier feminists. In Deutscher's reading of Taylor, the ambivalences and contradictions she so well exposes, not only

resists such stabilization, but brings us into dynamic contact with Taylor's thinking. So, Deutscher treats the history of philosophy as philosophical work to be done, as Le Doeuff has urged. Thus, Deutscher reads Taylor, I think, both with and against Le Doeuff and, thereby, offers a guide to further the work of reclaiming Seneca Falls that Le Doeuff initiated.

In brief, Deutscher helps us to see that Taylor intertwines a narrative of progress into her feminist arguments that is in tension with her ideas of equality. Deutscher is clear:

The point is not to condemn Taylor Mill for a race elitism and hierarchy that was common in the nineteenth century, but neither should a reading of Taylor Mill look away from it. We do need to fold into our understanding of her writing the ways in which such hierarchies were *points of appeal in her feminism*, as it was tightly interconnected with notions of the barbarous, the ignorant, the primitive, progress, the high and the low. (Deutscher 2006, 143, emphasis mine)

The concern that Deutscher expresses can fairly be characterized as a reclamationist one. Taylor is an important feminist source, but that is all the more reason for seeing the ways that her feminism was intertwined with and depended upon problematic notions of hierarchy. In other words, Deutscher's interest in reading Taylor critically is to read her well in the context of feminist history.

One of Deutscher's concerns in the article, and a central impetus for the reading of Taylor that she gives, is the way that Le Doeuff presents Taylor. Deutscher writes: "it is true that *this* 'differentialism,' the aspect that decried women, and indeed, the contradictory aspect that revered women's intuition, is largely missing from Taylor Mill's work. But to stop there is to overlook other hierarchies fundamental to her feminism,

many of which she shared with Mill” (Deutscher 2006, 146, emphasis in the original).³² Deutscher describes Le Doeuff as stopping at Taylor’s rejection of sexual differentialism. That stop is also, however, a return to one of Le Doeuff’s earliest preoccupations, and a central theme of *The Sex of Knowing*: the exclusion of women from philosophy. Le Doeuff, rather than continuing to develop a more complex account of Taylor’s thinking, returns to a critique of Mill and the philosophical corporation that sustained the blind spots about women’s capacity for thinking in his philosophy. Le Doeuff does so to suggest that those blind spots are still in the field of philosophical vision today. In other words, Le Doeuff has, at that point in her text, a limited interest in Taylor’s thinking that is restricted to the influence of Seneca Falls and sexual differentialism. Le Doeuff’s focus shares the aim of Deutscher’s broadening of perspective on Taylor’s writing: both Le Doeuff and Deutscher are relating the preoccupations and prejudices of contemporary thinking, the blind spots, to philosophical history and suggesting, further, that engagement with that history is the critical work that will help to shift thinking and expose those blind spots.

My point is not to suggest that Deutscher is wrong in her critique of Le Doeuff or Taylor. Deutscher’s critique is not only trenchant, the essay that she produced on Taylor is a model of engaging a woman’s writing and showing the relevance of doing so for contemporary philosophical thinking. I do, however, think that there is reason to consider again why Le Doeuff returns to the theme of exclusion. The case for reading Taylor as carefully, closely, and well as Deutscher does is not yet sufficiently established

³² It is interesting to note that the hierarchies shared by Mill and Taylor are present in philosophical discourse within Mill’s work. Thus, Deutscher’s critique of Taylor also makes a potential contribution to Mill scholarship, but only by contesting the dismissal of Taylor’s importance that Le Doeuff and Jo Ellen Jacobs have shown to shape the discourse on Mill. By exposing these hierarchies, Deutscher has also made the points of agreement between Taylor and Mill possible sites of motivation for Taylor’s reclamation.

within philosophical practices. That is, I think that Le Doeuff's return to the exclusion of women from philosophy is a move that is still needed for women's writing to be reclaimed. That is not to say that Deutscher ought to have repeated that move, but rather to suggest that the risk of Taylor's work being silenced in philosophical discourse is still very high.

Deutscher makes the argumentative appeal at several points in the essay that feminists need to examine the writings they are reclaiming with a commitment to understanding what is silenced in those texts. Those appeals indicate an ethical motivation to the essay that her conclusion makes explicit:

Is it possible to look another, or one's own, imaginary in the face? How to avoid a clearly impossible ideal of transparency? Could one nonetheless formulate, as an ethical stance, the patient amplification of the locus of the oversights generative of a project, the willingness to articulate costs, exclusions, rhetorical conditions, and blind spots? (Deutscher 2006, 147)

Deutscher is already working in a context of reclamation in which she is highlighting the importance of issues like transparency and oversight. Taylor's work must already be in the field of discourse, it must count as philosophy, for Deutscher to raise these issues. Le Doeuff, on the other hand, is trying to expose how philosophical discourse was framed by the exclusion of Taylor's work. Le Doeuff shows how Taylor's exclusion and, in particular, the exclusion of her rejection of sexual differentialism was productive of the transmissions of Mill's philosophy.

My point is to show that Le Doeuff's and Deutscher's reclamations work together not despite, but because of, the different approaches they have to the material on Taylor. Further, and of particular interest in this project, Deutscher's critique can help us to examine the way that Le Doeuff has reclaimed Seneca Falls and where we might want to

go from Le Doeuff's beginning. Deutscher does not discuss the Seneca Falls Convention beyond making an allusion to it, but in that allusion she indicates that, even in her reaction to Seneca Falls, Taylor thought according to troubling hierarchies. Deutscher notes: "That the enfranchisement of women was in America a matter of public meeting was an indication of what was occurring in the 'most civilized and enlightened' portion of the United States (Taylor Mill 1983, 3)" (Deutscher 2006, 143). The idea of the most civilized and enlightened portion of the US being involved in the women's movement fits in the progress narrative upon which Taylor's feminism depends. Deutscher goes on to note that Taylor contrasts that civilization and enlightenment to the debasement of Australian Aborigines and Native Americans. Beyond helping to expose the hierarchical thinking in Taylor's feminism, Deutscher's work on Taylor also helps to direct our attention back to the source of Taylor's inspiration for rejecting sexual differentialism. What hierarchies did the women's movement in the US rely upon, produce and reinforce?

That is not a question that can be answered by the reclamation enacted by Le Doeuff in *The Sex of Knowing*. Of the Seneca Falls organizers, Le Doeuff writes:

They had found their vision of what had to be done to change the destiny of women, and a language in which to articulate their plan. Not only the right to speak, civil rights, the right to vote, eligibility, access to all occupations including religious ministry, to all levels of education, and so on, but also a technique that would allow them to translate these wishes into political reality: the mass movement. (Le Doeuff 2003, 190)

Le Doeuff helps us to see Seneca Falls as a political event that shifted and can shift philosophical thinking; with Deutscher, we can also look for the ways it failed and fails to do so. Deutscher does not so much offer the Disuchronia to Le Doeuff's Uchronia. Rather, Deutscher returns us to the limits of counterfactual analysis. We must reckon with what did happen. Yet, as I have argued, what did happen is not a stable datum from

which to work. It has been constructed and we are heirs of that construction. The uchronic moment allows us to think about how we construct history through imagining differently, according to different norms. I will return to Seneca Falls in the final chapter.

Diotima

Diotima is a name that appears throughout Le Doeuff's work, but in what I would characterize as a cautionary capacity. For instance, Le Doeuff writes in a lecture, "Ants and Women, or Philosophy without Borders," that: "when philosophers insist on the idea that myth or fables are 'old wives' tales', nanny lore, at best the inspired voice of a Diotima, they are also emphasizing the fact that there is a big difference between philosophy and myth" (Le Doeuff 1987a, 51). Diotima's role as a conduit of inspired knowledge is one that reveals philosophy's distinction from myth. By the time of *The Sex of Knowing*, Le Doeuff's view of Diotima has not significantly changed. She writes of approaches to interpreting *The Apology*:

For my part, and experimentally, I would like to give it a structural reading mixed with a pinch of suspicion, and to hypothesize that the author is willing to imagine that female persons could be capable of thought and the contemplation of truth, but only when it would be of no consequence: as for example on the model of divine inspiration, in the case of Diotima ... (Le Doeuff 2003, 57)

Again, Le Doeuff characterizes Diotima's contribution as what philosophy can dismiss.

This role for Diotima in Le Doeuff's thinking goes at least as far back as the 1977 article, "Women and Philosophy," which would later be incorporated into *The Philosophical Imaginary* as its sixth chapter. In that essay, Le Doeuff wrote:

And the man/woman difference is invoked or conscripted to signify the general opposition between definite and indefinite, that is to say validated/excluded, and opposition of which the logos/mythos couple

represents one form, for the mythos is ‘an old wives’ tale’, or at best the inspiration of a Diotima. But in so far as the activity of separation, of division, is philosophically creative (the field is created by its exclusions), philosophy creates itself in what it represses, and, this object of repression being essential to it, is endlessly engaged in separating, enclosing and insularizing itself. And the old wives’ tales and nannies’ lore are always ‘obscuring’ the clear light of the concept – not because the repressed in general might be overwhelming by nature, but because the finite stock of admissible procedures is never sufficient. (Le Doeuff 1987b, 196)

Here we see Diotima’s knowledge as part of the opposition that is generative of philosophy. Le Doeuff does not think that old wives threaten to obscure concepts because of their power as the repressed, but because what is created through the repression is insufficient – it is insufficient to secure us certain knowledge.

Does this mean that Le Doeuff thinks we ought not to take Diotima seriously?

After all, she represents Diotima as having merely divinely inspired knowledge to share.

If Le Doeuff were interested in shoring up the borders of the discipline, then we would be right to read Le Doeuff as endorsing the denigration of Diotima. But Le Doeuff’s point is, of course, that philosophy must accept its lack. On the issue of lack, Michael Payne suggests an important role for Diotima in “Women and Philosophy.”³³ Payne writes:

A major thread that runs through that essay is Le Doeuff’s tracing of efforts by modern (male) philosophers to suppress the female origins of philosophy in Diotima’s teaching of Socrates as set forth in Plato’s *Symposium*. Diotima bequeaths to philosophy the celebration of a lack, in so far, she writes, “as the activity of separation, of division, is philosophically creative (the field is created by its exclusions), philosophy creates itself in what it represses. (Payne 2008, 203)

³³ Payne calls the essay “Women in Philosophy.” That is a rather more hopeful title than Le Doeuff’s argument would allow, I think. It may be that Payne was directed in his usage by Le Doeuff’s use of the title “Women in Philosophy” in her 2005 essay “Women in dialogue and in solitude,” based on a 2004 lecture. Payne cites *Radical Philosophy* as his source, however, and there the essay in question is titled “Women and Philosophy.”

Payne describes Diotima as the female origin of philosophy in Le Doeuff's essay. Further, according to Payne, Diotima celebrates the lack that generates philosophical creativity.

I cannot find textual support for Payne's view. Certainly, Le Doeuff is arguing that the activity of repression is the means of philosophy creating itself as a discipline. But to give Diotima the status of the repressed origin fixes her as *the* object of repression in a way that Le Doeuff seems at pains to avoid. Indeed, recall the quotation from the beginning of the chapter in which Le Doeuff calls the insurmountable incompleteness of knowledge the lack that is the starting place of philosophy. The excluded may be "at best the inspiration of a Diotima," but even in that phrasing it is not Diotima in particular, but Diotima as the example of a role-type that is constructed as philosophy's other. Nor do I see the role of the *Symposium* in the essay as Payne describes it. Le Doeuff does not mention it by title, as she does the *Phaedrus*, nor does she connect Diotima to Plato or Socrates.

In contrast to Payne's view, I think Diotima's importance for Le Doeuff is as a member of the repressed. Diotima does not stand at the beginning for Le Doeuff; rather, the prophetess is part of the process of repression. I suggest that part of the power of the uchronic process is that no determinate beginning must be established. We can ask: what if Diotima was a real woman? What if Plato has presented us with Diotima's teaching? Then, we might both gain from her vision of love and critique the hierarchy that Diotima establishes with that concept of love. Diotima does not have to have founded anything. The fact that Diotima's historicity has been the subject of speculation with varying degrees of evidence is, with Le Doeuff's method, reason enough to reconsider her works

and ask: What if she had been heard? With Deutscher we can doubt the extent to which Diotima's hierarchy of rational procreation over physical procreation would have changed the structures of Athenian social life. With Le Doeuff, however, her entire speech becomes a resource for feminist thinking. What if we had, from the beginning of philosophy, a theory of love and knowledge handed down to us from a woman? What might we know with history like that?

With the Irigaray and Lloyd's methods I have warned that we must seek out women writers whom the methods will not help us find. Le Doeuff's transformation of her own method of engaging women's work into one of reclamationist practice means we do not have to employ such caution in our use of it. Indeed, all it takes with this method is one snide comment about a thinker and we are alerted that it is worth our while to consider the denigrated more closely—insults indicate where to dig. Yet, a different problem arises with Le Doeuff's method and it is directly related to uchronic thinking. By setting up historical women's writing as an ideal from which we construct an imaginative history we risk losing the critical skepticism with which ideals must be treated. The tendency in Le Doeuff's work is for historical women to appear as benevolent benefactors of a vision of better forms of life without seeing how they are also the sponsors of prejudices and failures of imagination and empathy. Uchronic history is a starting point for engaging women's writing, but we cannot become enthralled with only the hopeful, inspiring, transformative possibilities. We must do these historical women the honor of criticizing their work—that is real engagement.

Chapter V

Reading, Conceiving, Imagining

As I showed in the first chapter, there have been diverse and conflicting approaches to bringing women into philosophical history. What every project shares is an investment in some story about women's exclusion, however ad hoc or under-theorized. My aim has not been to offer the correct story of women's exclusion. Instead, I have shown different ways of thinking about that exclusion and what is required for reclamation in light of each of them. I have also shown that the focus on exclusion can obscure the possibility of engaging with women's writing. There has been a gap or disconnection between theorizing exclusion and reclaiming women's writing, but there does not need to be. My overall aim has been to show that reclamation needs to be motivated and shaped by theories of exclusion. The models of exclusion I analyzed offer us ways to question the norms of constructing philosophical history and new ways to authorize that history. Irigaray reconceives the logic of philosophical discourse and particularly what it means for us to be the readers of women's writing; Lloyd thematizes the relationship between conceptualization and metaphor; and Le Doeuff imagines what history would have been like if women had been heard. My hope is that reclamation will draw on each of these models and others not yet conceived in the work ahead.

In this chapter, I compare the way each thinker theorizes the exclusion of women in philosophy. I begin by differentiating between Lloyd and Irigaray's use of the concept "symbolic." For Lloyd, the predominance of men in philosophy has caused philosophers

to develop a vocabulary of metaphors that privilege maleness and masculinity. Since Lloyd thinks such symbolic operations are essential to philosophical thinking, the result has been gender-biased conceptualizations of reason that cannot simply be cleansed of that history. By contrast, for Irigaray, symbolic exchange has been enabled by the disavowal of femininity as that which lies outside of symbolism. Rather than privileging either way of conceiving of the symbolic, I suggest that both theories can support reclamationist efforts.

Lloyd makes a suggestion that links the concepts of the imaginary and the symbolic, but I turn to the more developed accounts of Irigaray and Le Doeuff to consider the imaginary. The first point I make is that *the* imaginary is a misleading formulation that is more properly rendered as imaginaries. Yet, the multiplication of imaginaries operates differently for Irigaray and Le Doeuff. Irigaray shows that the repression of femininity has resulted in the development of a masculine imaginary that reduces everything to the same and that the feminine imaginary, psychotic under the conditions of its repression, offers a resource for bringing about a culture of sexual difference. Le Doeuff argues that the philosophical imaginary has been shaped by the disavowal of the work that images do in philosophical thinking. Philosophy cannot be cleansed of images; indeed, that has been a problematic aspiration of philosophers according to Le Doeuff. Instead, by accepting its inherent incompleteness, Le Doeuff thinks that we can gain critical leverage on what shapes our own thinking and knowledge.

Next, I compare the sorts of transformations that each thinks philosophy needs to undergo to redress the exclusion of women, and I pay particular attention to how the image of the philosopher is transformed in the course of their work. Irigaray expands the

dialogical nature of philosophy into the work of love. The authority of philosophers is predicated on an exchange that occurs between people and between people and texts—there is no solitary transcendence to philosophical knowledge. Philosophical knowledge develops between people and the texts they read and write as part of the work of pursuing wisdom. Lloyd similarly brings a communal sense to the work of a philosopher, most notably by reflecting on the history of concepts as an on-going process. Lloyd's theory that history accumulates in our concepts leads to an understanding of philosophers as inextricably related to each other's thinking across time, periods, and schools of philosophical thought. For Le Doeuff, the needed transformation of philosophy would not so much alter our image of the philosopher as have us abandon an interest in establishing who is and who is not a philosopher. Philosophy is the activity of shifting thinking, and it is an activity that can be undertaken by anyone, which means that any text can be of philosophical interest.

In the third section, I return to a thread developed throughout this project: the reclamation of Diotima. I make that return via a critique presented in the first chapter by R.M. Dancy. Dancy criticized Mary Ellen Waithe's reclamation of Diotima and Pythagorean women philosophers on the grounds that the reclamations did not sufficiently consider prior work to establish a history of Ancient Greek philosophy. In this section, I consider how reclamation methods motivated by Irigaray, Lloyd, and Le Doeuff's theories can respond to that criticism. Irigaray, I argue, shows that the historical record has been established through the disavowal of femininity. There is no simple way to overcome those mechanisms of constructing history, for what has been preserved and invested with importance are artifacts of that construction. Hence, Irigaray's approach is

to engage with the fragments of disavowed feminine subjectivity to begin to create a discourse of sexual difference. Lloyd, I argue, does not have a robust defense against Dancy's criticism. Lloyd's theory of exclusion is most effective when applied to women who have already come to philosophical attention. Although I think it is important to note the limits of Lloyd's method, nevertheless, since we are not at the beginning of reclamation work there are plenty of figures now brought to our attention who can be treated using her method. Le Doeuff's response to Dancy is to imagine what history would have been like had a woman priestess spoken in the *Symposium*. The norms of traditional historiography are suspended by Le Doeuff's uchronic practice precisely to help us understand the importance of ideas and demands that were not victorious and that have not been preserved as important.

In the fourth section of this chapter, I argue for the importance of moving from exclusion to reclamation. I mean this in two ways. First, while the work of theorizing women's exclusion from philosophy is not complete and cannot be complete while women are excluded from philosophy, in this project I have tried to show the importance of not accepting that such exclusion has ever been totally effective. And yet, the exclusion of women has been very effective and so—this is my second point—attempts at reclamation must follow upon careful consideration of how exclusion has been effected. I consider a story told by Eileen O'Neill about her efforts to include women in an encyclopedia of philosophy. Through an analysis of that story, I reflect on the importance of Le Doeuff's engagements with historical women.

Finally, I conclude by suggesting guidelines for practices of reclamation. Most generally, I suggest that reclamation must be guided by theories of exclusion. Theorizing

exclusion can best be done, I suggest, by working with multi-disciplinary partners, both for thinking about exclusion and for methods and traditions of engaging with material that has traditionally been defined as “not philosophy.” Further, historical women offer us many perspectives on exclusion that can benefit our theorizing, even or especially when their explanations seem far-fetched or improbable. I also suggest that generic boundaries must be transgressed for reclamation to be truly transformational. My point in that section is not to articulate the correct method of reclamation, but to urge creativity and resourcefulness in theorizing exclusion.

Exclusion: Symbolic and Imaginary

I recommend Irigaray, Lloyd, and Le Doeuff to the field of reclamation because they theorize the exclusion of women from philosophy. This exclusion has largely been under-theorized in reclamation, with consequences for the arguments that have been advanced for women’s reclamation from and for the history of philosophy. Irigaray shows that philosophy has been made possible by the repression of sexual difference. Lloyd argues that reason has been conceptualized through the exclusion of femininity. Le Doeuff argues that philosophers have tried to compensate for the inherent incompleteness of philosophical knowledge by excluding women and the feminine from philosophy. These are different forms of exclusion: for Irigaray the exclusion makes discourse possible; for Lloyd, exclusion makes our conceptions of reason possible; and for Le Doeuff, exclusion makes the practice of philosophy and the construction of philosophical history possible.

While Lloyd focuses on the symbolic mechanisms of exclusion and Le Doeuff on

the imaginary, Irigaray contends that both the symbolic and the imaginary must change to overcome the economy of the same. To what extent are these thinkers talking about the same thing when they use terms like “symbolic” and “imaginary”? I begin with the symbolic. Lloyd connects the symbolic and the imaginary when she considers Irigaray’s work on sexual difference, which she does via an essay about Irigaray by Whitford.³⁴

Lloyd writes:

What emerges from Whitford’s reading of Irigaray is that sexual difference does not yet exist in the ‘social imaginary’ of the West. Rather than being located within the operations of symbolism, sexual difference is aligned with the distinction between the symbolic and what lies outside its operation. Sexual difference symbolizes the distinction between the symbolic and what lies beyond it. (Lloyd 1997, 290-1)

In the first sentence, sexual difference is not yet part of a geographically delimited social imaginary, though that latter concept is suspended in quotation marks. In the second, sexual difference is more ambiguously *aligned* with the symbolic and its outside. Finally, sexual difference *symbolizes* the differentiation of the symbolic and its beyond. In that last instance, sexual difference functions as a symbol – the activity it was denied in the first formulation of sexual difference.

Lloyd persists in understanding sexual difference as that which is outside symbolism, which leads her to understand Irigaray’s strategy of mimicry as ironic. Lloyd writes, “The strategy, of course, cannot but be an ironic one—it is itself an operation with symbols” (Lloyd 1997, 291). Giving an interpretation of texts from outside symbolism cannot but be ironic, Lloyd reasons, since symbols are required for the reading to be given.

³⁴ Interestingly, Lloyd reads Irigaray through a reading and, therefore, we could say that Irigaray is absent from Lloyd’s text.

In the chapter on Irigaray, I presented a different reading of mimicry. I suggested that Irigaray occupies a position assigned to femininity in being a mimic. Thus, it is not that mimicry is applied to feminine positions, but mimicry itself is a role assigned to femininity that Irigaray uses as an entry point for exposing the disavowed operations of symbolization. The role of mimic is not strictly outside of symbolic operations; rather, it is a role assigned to femininity to secure the boundary between the symbolic and its outside. It is not the only such role assigned to femininity. Indeed, femininity is, for Irigaray, defined by its role within the symbolic as that which lies outside the symbolic; femininity is disavowed, within the symbolic. Sexual difference is not yet possible, Irigaray maintains, because femininity has this disavowed role. The avowal of femininity would make possible a culture of sexual difference, but Irigaray counsels ruses and tricks because femininity has functioned to secure the economy of symbolic exchange and, thus, avowal cannot happen as a simple reversal of the things said about woman.

Lloyd is cautious about the connection in Irigaray's writing between the symbolic and actual exclusion of women. Indeed, Lloyd puts that connection in question by speaking of the exclusion of women in the history of philosophy. Lloyd writes:

What does it mean to say that women are outside the symbolic structures? In one sense it is, of course, clearly true. It is not women but men who have created the symbolic structures we have inherited in the philosophical tradition. Men have conceptualized reason through Woman, symbolizing what is opposite to maleness and, to that extent, what is opposite to themselves as men. The symbolization of reason as male derives historically from the contingent fact that it was largely men—to the literal exclusion of women—who devised the symbolic structures. This is a symbolism appropriate to men as exclusive symbol users. (Lloyd 1997, 291)

Lloyd's explanation is causal and a reiteration of her view that the history of philosophy is comprised only of men. Symbolic structures are masculine because men created them.

Lloyd goes so far as to claim that the symbolic exclusion of women is appropriate, insofar as it is men who were exclusive symbol users.

Rather than critique Lloyd's view of Irigaray, which is mediated by Whitford's essay, I think there is value in seeing different notions of the symbolic at work. One way to read Lloyd, and one that I think is productive for reclamation, is that she is saying that so long as philosophy engages in exclusionary practices, the metaphors essential to philosophical thinking will be those of the excluding and probably use the excluded for conceptual ends. Further, as I argued in the chapter on Lloyd's work, since concepts cannot be cleansed of that history, we must contend with it, even in the work of women; the history of exclusion forms the concept and its uses, not, perhaps, regardless of the user, but certainly outside the full control of the user.

Irigaray, on the other hand, does not have a causal story in which the exclusion of women is a contingent historical fact that has led to the exclusion of femininity from symbolic structures. Nor is Irigaray arguing that women are simply outside symbolic structures. Indeed, no one has a privileged position outside the economy of the same according to Irigaray. The challenge that Irigaray presents is that symbolic exchange has been predicated on the disavowal of femininity, even among women. Women are included in the exclusion, as symbol users. Women and men are not, therefore, the same as symbol users. The subjectivity of those designated feminine has been formed by the disavowal and that is why Irigaray encourages women to take up the role assigned to woman. Women, she urges, can shake the frame of discourse by occupying their symbolic role in a way that overloads that role. Thus, Irigaray is not ironic in her suggestion of mimicry as a strategy, but the strategy may be ironic in the way workers

enact a slowdown in a factory through exact adherence to the rules governing production.

In the chapter on Irigaray, I raised a concern that stems from her view that feminine subjectivity has not yet spoken. Namely, if feminine subjectivity has not spoken, I suggested, then perhaps women philosophers can only give us access to masculine discourse. Perhaps there is no good feminist reason to reclaim women as philosophers. I resolved that apprehension by arguing that Irigaray engages philosophical discourse because the disavowal of femininity occurs within the texts of the philosophy and leaves there the marks of the work of repression. Hence, philosophical history has value for feminist philosophers as a site for us to take up the position assigned to the feminine and jam the machinery from within discourse. Now, I want to say something more in light of Lloyd's critique and her position on the symbolic.

Women philosophers, as Irigaray showed us with Diotima, leave us more than just the site of femininity's repression. In women's words we also read a subjectivity under repression and can perhaps, as Irigaray did with Diotima, find resources for changing the mechanisms of repression. From whence do those resources come? Is there something special about women that supplies these hoped for resources? I do not think that is Irigaray's view and, to clarify what I think is her view, I return to the notion of the/a "social imaginary" that appeared in the first passage from Lloyd. Whitford lists the following meanings for the imaginary at work in Irigaray's writing: "there is the position of the female in the male imaginary; there are the scraps and debris of what might be an alternative imaginary (a fragmented female imaginary); there is the anticipation of a more fully deployed female imaginary which might exist in creative intercourse with the male" (Whitford 1991, 67). Thus, I suggest, Lloyd's ascription to Irigaray of the view that

sexual difference does not yet exist in the social imaginary of the West collapses the concept of the imaginary into a monolithic thing producing exclusionary metaphors.

As an alternative, I suggest that Irigaray's reading of Diotima takes the fragments of a female imaginary available in Plato's speech and presents them as possibilities for how we might (re)conceive of the world. What I find particularly compelling about understanding Irigaray's reading in this way is that the fragments of the female imaginary come to us via the writing of a man. This suggests that there is not an essential linkage between one's gender and the imaginary one can express. Instead, Irigaray shows us how to read for the female imaginary at work in a man's text. That is not to denigrate the importance of the attribution of the speech to a woman, but instead it requires that we read with the complications of the text, rather than looking for "the" imaginary at work. The conflict of imaginaries, the mark of the work repression, is the entry point into philosophical history that Irigaray provides for reclamation.

To what extent, then, are Le Doeuff and Irigaray talking about the same thing with the term imaginary? Le Doeuff, who is best known for her writing about the philosophical imaginary, distances herself from psychoanalytic renderings of the imaginary (Le Doeuff 2002, 5). Thus, already we can expect differences in the concepts the two thinkers employ, for Irigaray's project is to question the imaginary from within psychoanalytic discourse. Whitford expresses the difference this way: "Whereas philosophy in general, according to Michèle Le Doeuff (1980a), attempts to purify itself of images – in fact unsuccessfully – and yet remains secretly dependent on them in order to express what it is unable to say in other terms, Irigaray is using fictions *with intent*" (Whitford 1991, 188). Thus, according to Whitford, we have Le Doeuff exposing images

on the one hand and Irigaray employing them, on the other. Exposure, in Le Doeuff's work, means showing how the thinking done in a text cannot be exhausted by attention to what the text purports to argue or reason. Instead, at work in texts, revealed especially in the images a philosopher uses, are the conditions and context of thinking that form the text.

Whitford highlights the different conceptions employed by Le Doeuff and Irigaray. Here, I want to consider more narrowly what these different conceptions mean for reclamation. Le Doeuff suggests the idea of writing a history of the images in philosophy, but she doubts that such a history would be taken seriously. She argues that philosophy does not just have a history of images, it is a history of an imaginary; but further, philosophy is a history of disavowing its imaginary (Le Doeuff 1989, 2). *The Philosophical Imaginary* is, in part, Le Doeuff's analysis of the different means philosophers have used to disavow its trade in images; in particular, she treats the disavowal of women. Le Doeuff, like Irigaray, thinks disavowal structures philosophy. But the form of disavowal and the resultant structures are significantly different for both thinkers. For Le Doeuff, the need for images arises from the incompleteness of conceptual work. Images appear in philosophical work, Le Doeuff argues, where concepts cannot create a coherent whole. The images that appear are formed by the philosophical imaginary into which philosophers are brought through philosophical education. The disavowal of images is a way of denying the lack of completeness possible in philosophical thinking and the lack of analysis of the imaginary that forms and supplies these images supports the continued disavowal of the inherent incompleteness of philosophical knowledge. Thus, Le Doeuff's reconceptualization of

philosophy as a practice that avows its incompleteness would not necessarily be stripped of images, but avowing incompleteness could also mean avowing the work that images do and reflecting on how the philosophical imaginary is formed.

Irigaray, as discussed, sees the disavowal of the feminine as what guarantees symbolic operations. Symbolic exchange is built on the disavowal of femininity. A culture of sexual difference, one in which the feminine did not represent what stands outside of symbolization, is almost impossible to imagine, as our imaginary is built on the disavowal of the feminine. But through readings like that of Diotima's speech, Irigaray suggests what the avowal of femininity might do to the circulation of symbols. In this case, transcendence would become an immanent process of love between people and between people and texts.

For reclamation, the differences in approach and understanding are substantial. With Irigaray, strategies like mimicry are essential for addressing the disavowal of femininity—our very ability to theorize is predicated on that disavowal and so it takes wile to expose and alter the logic of consciousness. With Le Doeuff, images may be difficult to register because they are integrated into the structure of philosophical thought and because they are integral to the possibility of philosophical thinking, but the critical tools necessary to register and analyze them are the tools of philosophy. The history of disavowal within philosophy has been, according to Le Doeuff, unphilosophical.³⁵ Hence, while for Irigaray philosophy has been predicated on disavowal, for Le Doeuff, philosophy has erred insofar as it has been sustained by disavowal. Elizabeth Grosz

³⁵ Le Doeuff is a champion of critical epistemology, which she characterizes "as the main tradition of philosophy" (Le Doeuff 1987a, 43), but which she thinks has been exemplified in the feminist work in a variety of fields other than philosophy since the resurgence of women's movements after 1968, not by philosophy (cf. especially "Ants and Women"). Hence, Le Doeuff sees the possibility of a salutary influence of feminism on philosophy.

renders the contrast this way: “[Le Doeuff’s] position is ... neither an attempt to reveal and rewrite the masculinity of notions of the feminine in philosophy (as Irigaray is) nor an attempt to develop a counter-philosophy for women, one that breaks dramatically with the male-dominated history of philosophy” (Grosz 1989, 212).

Indeed, Le Doeuff has been criticized for championing philosophy. Meaghan Morris, for instance, writes in the *Pirate’s Fiancée*:

The other question that concerns me is that through *L’Imaginaire philosophique*, the most explicit argument used to urge the practice of philosophy is in fact the argument by menace. To say that certain feminisms of difference, for example, run the risk of reproducing the schemas they presume they are renouncing, is to invoke the classically philosophical threat of entrapment *by* philosophy for those who do not pay heed. It would be excessive, as well as parasitic on Michèle Le Doeuff’s own arguments, to read in this a trace of the paternalism of reason. The problem is rather the accompanying absence of *other*, positive arguments for the value of philosophy to feminism. (Morris 1988, 99)

Authors like Grosz and Michelle Walker echo Morris’s concern that Le Doeuff fails to provide arguments for philosophy and only menaces feminism with the force of philosophical tools.

Grosz, who quotes Morris, writes: “One is left with a suspicion that, rather than render Irigaray’s insights in her critique of philosophical phallocentrism historically and textually specific, as her comments may imply, Le Doeuff is instead acting as feminine preserver and commemorative historian of masculine wisdom” (Grosz 1989, 212).

Walker, in the essay, “Silence and Reason,” I discussed in the first chapter, draws on both Morris’s and Grosz’s work, though she does not quote their reservations about Le Doeuff’s allegiance to philosophy. Walker’s concern, however, echoes theirs: “I am concerned that Le Doeuff’s project of salvaging rationality runs the not inconsiderable risk of silencing those who reject her belief that reason is in fact gender-neutral. Le

Doeuff works against herself when, in the final analysis, her own voice enacts a closure of those discourses attempting to speak in logics other than the dominant rationality of the logos” (Walker 1993, 423).³⁶

The debate about Le Doeuff’s endorsement of philosophy has never reached the pitch of the essentialism debates in the US about Irigaray’s work; still, with the continually uneasy relationship between philosophy and feminism, some response to these concerns is necessary. First, and as something of an aside, the reading that Morris suggests, but does not develop, would not be parasitic on Le Doeuff’s arguments. That is, Le Doeuff does not think that reason has a paternalistic character. Le Doeuff is certainly interested in how it has been conceived as masculine and why that has been a characterization with such a long life, but nowhere does Le Doeuff argue that paternalism is a feature of rationality.

Second, and more to the point, I think it misunderstands Le Doeuff’s project to look for an explicit argument in Le Doeuff’s work that urges philosophy on feminism. Her view is rather more complicated. Take, for instance, the following from *Hipparchia’s Choice*: “If we make a link (as least as a hypothesis) between thinking philosophically and self-assertion through thought, or the individual withdrawal from generally held beliefs, then ‘thinking philosophically’ and ‘being a feminist’ appear as one and the same attitude: a desire to judge by and for oneself, which may manifest itself in relation to different questions” (Le Doeuff 1990, 29). Yet, as Le Doeuff repeatedly

³⁶ Steven Maras, in “Translating Michèle Le Doeuff’s Analytics” in *Michèle Le Doeuff: Operative Philosophy and Imaginary Practice*, gives a careful analysis of the concept of “l’imagier” in Le Doeuff’s work and, in so doing, critiques Morris’s and Grosz’s readings. While I don’t follow his critique here, it was Maras’s attention to the concept, which he explains: “has less to do with the image or the imaginary as an autonomous site than with the conditions of rationality, and the tension between philosophy and the *socius* as they impact on the function of imagery,” that helped me develop the critique of Morris and Grosz, as well as Walker, that I present here (Maras 2000, 93).

documents, the history of philosophy fails to bear out this complicity. Indeed, feminism appears in many different ways in Le Doeuff's texts as a spur to philosophy to remember its critical role.

Now to Grosz's concern that: "that there is a certain reverence and respect, a propriety in her patient, meticulous, restricted readings, almost as if she were to claim that if philosophy is misogynist, this can be confined to those imaginary elements she has been concerned to reveal" (Grosz 1989, 212). In these comments, one can see a category implicitly at work that Grosz employs in *Jacques Lacan: a feminist introduction*: the dutiful daughter. The dutiful daughter, Grosz explains, is "one who submits to the Father's Law" (Grosz 1990, 150). Grosz suggests here that Le Doeuff submits to the law of philosophy, one form of the Father's Law.

In her essay, "'Imperfect Discretion': Interventions into the History of Philosophy by Twentieth-Century French Women Philosophers," Deutscher reminds us of Le Doeuff's argument in "Long Hair, Short Ideas" that women have been admitted to philosophical history as commentators and thereby excluded from importance as canonical figures. Deutscher, responding to Le Doeuff, suggests:

To undermine the marginal status attributed to the woman commentator, we could ask what women have achieved as creation and innovation within the crevices of philosophical commentary. We can, strategically, read the commentator in more interesting ways. Perhaps it is impossible to be successfully dutiful, really faithful, really reproductive, not distorting? In writing, as in life, acts of fidelity are often acts of passive aggression and resistance. If dutiful commentary often displaces that to which it is ostensibly faithful, we might renegotiate our understanding of the texts of figures who are coded as 'faithful.' (Deutscher 2000, 164)

Deutscher's suggestion that we re-evaluate what we have been taught to disregard has both powerful potential for reclamation and is in the spirit of Le Doeuff's suggestion that we look at what we have been told not to look at and consider what has been denigrated.

I bring up Deutscher's suggestion, which she carries through to wonderful effect with the work of Clémence Ramnoux, Nicole Laroux, and Barbara Cassin among others, for two reasons. First, Deutscher highlights something that Grosz and Morris seem to have disregarded in their apprehensions that Le Doeuff is a disciple of philosophy to the detriment of her feminism. Deutscher highlights Le Doeuff's critique of philosophical practice for privileging the image of the philosopher over the effort to shift thinking. Thus, Deutscher helps us to see that Le Doeuff's allegiance to philosophy's ability to move thinking is conflated with an allegiance to a male pantheon within Grosz and Morris's critiques.

Second, Deutscher's interest in revaluing commentary suggests that Grosz's concern—that Le Doeuff's reverence and respect for philosophical texts undermines her critical ability—may be part of the denigration of commentary. Where Le Doeuff appears merely dutiful to Grosz, Deutscher asks us to look for displacements and resistance. One caveat to that second point: I think Grosz exaggerates the faithful nature of Le Doeuff's writing. That is not to elevate Le Doeuff's work for being something other than commentary and, thus, subtly effecting the denigration that I have been arguing against. It is just that if Le Doeuff's writing has a tendency, it seems to me to be towards the polemical, not a style common to commentaries, and, moreover, her polemical intent seems to change depending on whether she is critiquing feminist writing or philosophical writing. Thus, at the very least, I think if we are searching for an epithet

for Le Doeuff's work it might be traitorous, for her allegiance seems to waiver. I offer that label with the hope it will draw the attention that Le Doeuff would have given to any name-calling.

Finally, I'm not sure where Walker thinks Le Doeuff argues for a gender-neutral conception of reason. *The Sex of Knowing*, the title of which points to questions of gender and reason, is, if nothing else, an exposé of how ideas about the gendered nature of reason developed, took hold, and persist – both in philosophical and popular discourse. Le Doeuff's response to what would amount to a hilarious history of rumor, innuendo, prejudice, and power grabs, except for its dire and enduring consequences, is not to argue for a gender-neutral conception of reason. Instead, Le Doeuff brings diverse resources to bear, including and especially the philosophical writing of many women in philosophy's history, to move our thinking not just about reason, but also about a concept that I think may have greater importance in Le Doeuff's writing and thinking: judgment. Le Doeuff writes, for example: "Not all the conditions that affect the exercise of judgment are derived from knowledge: not all are rational" (Le Doeuff 2003, 136). Le Doeuff continues in this passage to suggest that there is an important parallel between Christine de Pisan's thinking and Arendt's. Le Doeuff writes:

If we take Christine de Pisan and Hannah Arendt together, we can begin to see, not that the thinking subject can be marked by gender, but—and this is more important—that every subject is caught up in an imaginary network of self-representations, authorizations, or inhibitions more significant than the mere intellectual conditions of thought, and error can result from too many of these just as easily as from too few. (Le Doeuff 2003, 136)

Le Doeuff is not interested in whether reason is gendered or neutral, she is interested in understanding how that became a compelling framing of an issue in feminism and philosophy. Further, she is interested in moving well beyond that debate that has acted

like a stopper on further consideration of women's thinking and the cultivation of everyone's judgment.

It is unfair, perhaps, to address Walker's criticism with passages taken from a work published after the criticisms were made. While I think *The Sex of Knowing* is Le Doeuff's most developed exploration of how knowledge is produced and how we can gain critical leverage on that production, I don't think it constitutes a radical break with her earlier work. From *The Philosophical Imaginary* on, Le Doeuff shows her readers how we have come to "know" that women are not philosophers and that men are the reasonable sex and her suggestions for what should happen once we are aware of that history has never included the adoption and promotion of gender-neutral conceptions of reason. Walker erroneously reduces Le Doeuff's thinking to that debate, but, I think not unsurprisingly, given the pervasiveness of that way of framing throughout feminist and philosophical writing about reason.

Transformation

Each author, I have argued, offers a way forward for reclamation that re-engages with philosophical discourse through the redress of women's exclusion. The result is that each re-envisioning philosophy. For Irigaray, a text is only part of the dialogue of philosophical knowledge and each author a partner in the development of the dialogue. For Lloyd, concepts cannot be wrested away from their history. Although we can change concepts through our usage of them, they are also bearers of a history that requires our communal and never fully completed reflection. For Le Doeuff, the demands of texts must be met anew. We can look where we have been told not to and find new ways of

thinking about the seemingly intractable problems of contemporary life. Thus, though none of them leads away from philosophy, the methods of reclamation their theories support are transformative.

Indeed, by showing the role of exclusion in the development of philosophy, Irigaray, Lloyd, and Le Doeuff help us see that trying to get women into the canon, enfranchising them into the traditional histories, maintains the dynamics of exclusion that have barred women's access to philosophy. Further, for these theorists, women's writing does not comprise an alternative to the history of philosophy. Instead, each theorist insists that we must contend with the history of exclusion within philosophy. Finally, reclamation does not proceed as a corrective to philosophy from these theories of exclusion. Philosophy has been formed by the exclusion of women and it must be reformed in non-exclusionary ways to operate differently. Philosophy must be re-idealized, as well as reconceptualized.

As part of their critical work on philosophy, each thinker has given us a different picture of what it has meant to be a philosopher. Through their theorization, they have also given us a sense of how the role of the philosopher could be transformed. These thinkers have shown us that the image of the philosopher has been produced through the exclusion of women. Thus, they have shown us that to make it possible to imagine women as philosophers, we must transform the role of the philosopher. Irigaray presents philosophers as products and producers of imaginary and symbolic structures that work according to a logic of exclusion. Introducing the question of sexual difference sheds light on those structures, but philosophers do not thereby gain greater mastery over the imaginary and symbolic processes that produce us and which we produce. Rather,

Irigaray imagines philosophers as lovers, lovers whose dialogue is their immortality, produced between each other and the texts of philosophy.

Mastery is not promised by Lloyd either. Concepts are shaped by their history, and they cannot be stripped of that history by fiat. Philosophers have not sufficiently reflected on the role of metaphors in the production and maintenance of conceptual histories; they must become reflective about the work of metaphors to overcome the exclusion of femininity from reason. The result hoped for is not one in which philosophical thinking can do without metaphors, but one in which the metaphors essential for thinking are constantly brought under scrutiny. That scrutiny is broader than solitary reflection. Conceptual history builds over time and across thinkers—so must our investigations of it. Hence, Lloyd conceives of philosophers as inextricably bound up in each other's thinking, shaped by it, and capable of shaping it.

Finally, Le Doeuff exposes the exclusionary function of the image of the philosopher and advocates for jettisoning that image. Indeed, Le Doeuff envisions a world with philosophy but without philosophers. According to Le Doeuff, any writing that moves thinking falls under the purview of philosophy. One of the major changes such an approach to philosophy could have is to make philosophy the work of many, instead of a very few. Le Doeuff imagines not only women, but also children philosophizing when they are no longer what must be made the other to the philosopher. One consequence of jettisoning the ascription “philosopher” is that any text can be of philosophical interest, regardless of who wrote it. What matters is, if through engaging with the text, our thinking is shifted.

Diotima

Diotima has been a central thread of this project, and I have sought to show the different ways these models operate to bring her into the range of hearing. Irigaray offers the most thorough reclamation of Diotima, but I have argued that all three thinkers can give us access to this woman philosopher. What I have not yet addressed is the concern with the accuracy of the historical record that Dancy raised in the first chapter. While Dancy's critique was directed to Waithe's project, it is a concern that could extend to the methods of reclamation discussed here. If you will recall, Dancy wrote:

Perhaps Diotima was a historical person. If so, she may have held the theory of forms we associate with Plato, if what Plato makes Socrates makes her say in the *Symposium* is true to her, she certainly did. But we have been given no reason whatever for supposing that she must have been a historical person, or that, if she was, she held the views put into her mouth in the *Symposium*. (Dancy 1989, 166)

In other words, if Diotima was a real person whose speech Plato accurately records, then she held the theory of the forms. None of the issues of historicity can be decided, however, based on the evidence we have or on evidence we can hope to attain.

Further, Dancy criticized what he saw as Waithe's disregard for the careful historical work already done on Greek philosophy. Nye's objections to Irigaray share a similar concern with Dancy. Nye uses established historical facts about Ancient Greek culture to argue for Diotima's authority and for an interpretation of her views contra Irigaray's contribution. In both cases, the authority of the historical record is invoked to challenge the feminist reclamation proposed. In Dancy's case, he argues against attributing authority to Diotima in light of what he sees as over attribution of her importance by Waithe. In Nye's case, she seeks to bolster Diotima's authority in light of

what she sees as Irigaray's failure to contextualize the priestess and treat her with historical care.

As I argued in that chapter, Irigaray's method counters concerns about Diotima's historicity by claiming her authority through engaging her speech *as though* she were a woman speaking. Irigaray looks for the opening of sexual difference, here given to use through Plato's attribution, via Socrates, of the words in Diotima's speech. Diotima becomes Irigaray's interlocutor through the love Irigaray shows her words. This love is admiring and hopeful. Irigaray finds a beautiful vision of immortality—immortality as something developed between us through engaging one another in whatever way we find to listen and to respond. No source can be so degraded, according to Irigaray's method, as to prevent us from treating it with love and sometimes even finding a lesson of love in it.

While Nye and Irigaray disagree about how to establish Diotima's authority, Dancy and Irigaray disagree as to whether Diotima's authority can be established at all. Dancy and Nye's critical use of the historical record are opposed on this point. Nye and Irigaray agree with Waithe that Diotima offers a view different from Plato's, even while each offers a different rendering of the difference. Dancy claims that even if Diotima were a real person, Plato rendered her views to coincide with his own. Further, Dancy maintains that the work already done has told us that there were not (important) women thinkers in the Ancient world, at least not any whose work has survived.

I suggest that Irigaray's strategy is a more effective response than Nye's. Dancy's suggestion that any change of the historical record must take into account the work already done is a deceptively simple criteria of critique. Irigaray's approach exposes the

power of such a demand. The record thus far has been generated through the disavowal of sexual difference. We do not just happen to lack records of Diotima or other women of the ancient world. The record has been constructed through their absenting. But the absenting has been incomplete. Women still appear. While the question of the historical veracity of Plato's rendering of Diotima's speech must be suspended because we lack the evidence to answer it, we can still move forward with the project of introducing the question of sexual difference. We can introduce it through the way it has been absented.

Whereas Irigaray's approach puts concerns about historicity under scrutiny, Lloyd seems to ignore them. Lloyd does not engage with questions of the priestess's historicity. Further, Lloyd presents Diotima's words as her own and as representing an advancement in Plato's view of reason. Further still, Lloyd seems to endorse the view she finds in Diotima's speech. I argued that Lloyd has resources for critiquing the hierarchy of reason over body that she finds in the speech. More contentiously, I argued that Lloyd offers us a means of reclaiming Diotima. I have argued that Lloyd's view of exclusion requires us to see ourselves as the reconstructors of philosophical history. We must reconstruct by engaging with the history of our concepts. Lloyd worked on reason, but her work shows us a feature of conceptual use more generally and an example of what it looks like to re-interpret a traditional philosophical history with concerns about the gendering of a concept. We can use Lloyd's method as an approach to reclamation, I argued, if we amend it with critical help from Chanter.

Of the three, Lloyd has the least defense against Dancy's criticism. If we accept the speech as the words of a woman, then Lloyd gives us a powerful method for analyzing the concepts Diotima employs. Lloyd does not help us to establish Diotima as

part of the historical record, either in her absence like Irigaray, or in our uchronic rendering like Le Doeuff. Indeed, we might see Lloyd's choice to reproduce a traditional philosophical history as one consequence of her lacking a means to imagine a history that is different than the one we have been given. Lloyd certainly urges new histories, but she is most helpful with the analysis of figures once they are identified as philosophers.

Finally, there is Le Doeuff in whose work Diotima arises in an apparently cautionary fashion: as a woman who is only allowed to speak through a man, and as the teacher of divine inspiration, but whose knowledge does not originate with her. Yet, it is Le Doeuff's project to make us reconsider whatever we have been told is not worth our attention. Le Doeuff gives us the method of uchronic questioning with which to approach these denigrated figures and texts. We can ask: What if Diotima was a woman who taught Socrates about love? As uchronic history is counterfactual practice, it is already suspending the norms of traditional history to imagine what might have been had an excluded voice been heard. Indeed, with Le Doeuff's approach, we can ask what philosophical history might have been like if Plato had made Diotima present at the *Symposium*. What if Plato had put a theory of love and knowledge in the mouth of a woman?

Beyond offering a satisfying exercise in what might have been, Le Doeuff helps us to understand what has been silenced through the exclusion of women's writing and thinking. We do not have the words of the priestess that Nye gives us evidence to believe had some authority to speak in public in Greek culture. Indeed, we have a very scant history of any women speaking in public in any culture, and much of the record has been established in the last two centuries. The point is not merely to lament the loss of

excluded voices, though that is an important part of uchronic history writing, but also to see how our ways of thinking have been shaped by exclusion.

Women in the History of Philosophy

As I have noted, only Le Doeuff has a well-established practice of engaging with the writing of women in the history of philosophy. While my interest is to promote all three thinkers as resources for reclamation, Le Doeuff's attention to women's work deserves special attention. It is possible, indeed, quite easy to work in the discipline of philosophy without considering women in its history, even if one works in feminist philosophy. It is, of course, difficult to see what is absent unless you know what *should* be there. Becoming capable of thinking that women ought to be in the history of philosophy is more difficult still.

A story from Eileen O'Neill, reported in "Early Modern Women Philosophers and the History of Philosophy," helps to illustrate this point. O'Neill writes:

In the mid-1990s a publishing company decided to produce a supplement for one of its reference works on philosophy. Since the original version of the reference tool had included pitifully few entries on women philosophers, a feminist philosopher who was on the editorial board had encouraged the press to include in the supplement a number of entries on women philosophers. But despite the feminist editor's many suggestions, in the end the press chose to add entries only on the following figures: one woman from the ancient world, Hypatia; one from the Middle Ages, Hildegard of Bingen; one from the Renaissance, Marie de Gournay; one from the seventeenth century, Anne Conway; and one from the eighteenth century, Mary Wollstonecraft; plus Anscombe, Arendt, and Beauvoir from the twentieth century. It was never explained to me why Conway was chosen but not Mary Astell; why Wollstonecraft was selected but not Emilie du Châtelet; and why no women philosophers from the nineteenth century were included.

Since the press wasn't going to budge on the issue of adding more entries on individual women, I asked if the supplement couldn't at least include

an overview essay. After some negotiations, I was asked to write a 1500-word article on “Women in the History of Philosophy,” to which I agreed on the condition that the length of the bibliography for the article would not be restricted. I continue to be pleased about the fact that the bibliography of primary sources alone is about the length of the article to which it is appended. Although I was allowed no space in which to speak about the importance of the women’s philosophical contributions, the sheer volume of the titles of the women’s publications stand as a type of monument. The bibliography seems to shout, ‘Here is the material that within this reference work remains buried and silenced. Here is the material about which we are not permitted to speak. But by all means, find these titles and read them for yourself.’ (O’Neill 2005, 190)

Of the many striking things about this story, not least of which is the exclusion of any women philosophers in the 19th century, I focus on O’Neill’s characterization of her bibliography as a monument. One can imagine a reader encountering the bibliography within the reference work as a list of figures of insufficient importance to garner their own entries. Hypatia, Hildegard of Bingen, Marie de Gournay, Anne Conway, Mary Wollstonecraft, Anscombe, Arendt, and de Beauvoir would all have an elevated status in relation to the monumentalized women. There are eight women worth our attention in the history of philosophy and a crowd of others that might be interesting for specialists.

O’Neill’s publication of this story, however, gives a different interpretative frame for the monument, and it is one that puts pressure on the figures represented in the reference work. The women chosen for representation were not selected through a considered process that yielded a well-justified or apparently justifiable set of thinkers to include. Instead, O’Neill exposes the lack of a coherent approach and the apparent arbitrariness of the attempt to solve the lack of women’s representation. By showing that women constitute a problem for reference works on the history of philosophy, O’Neill helps foster readers who will be alert to this issue when referring to such works.

But it is impossible for even those readers, as individual readers, to make up for

the deficit. As O'Neill observes:

Determining the philosophical value of a text requires that we first understand the context in which a text was written, what its philosophical goals are, what the argumentational strategies are, and so on. Accomplishing all this in the absence of any preexisting critical and historical literature on the text is very difficult. It typically takes many scholars, working hard for some time, before we can properly interpret, and thus be in a position to evaluate the philosophical significance of, a text. (O'Neill 2005, 194)

The accumulation of scholarship, interpretive disagreements, and a great deal of contextualization are necessary for a figure to be appreciated. A bar to establishing that appreciation, O'Neill notes, is the presupposition that "if there were women who contributed in significant ways to early modern philosophy, well-educated scholars would already know about them" (O'Neill 2005, 194). The inertia of exclusion requires accumulating scholarship, lodging protestations in the form of bibliographies, and reflecting on such work in *Hypatia*.

Le Doeuff's engagements with women thinkers helps to create more readers capable of encountering O'Neill's bibliography and registering it not just as a monument to women in the history of philosophy, but as readers who are familiar with the work of some of the monumentalized women. The problem of women's exclusion, an abstract problem, becomes attached to the words and thoughts of the women Le Doeuff treats through her treatment of them. The same can be said for all the reclamationists I have discussed. Even Mary Warnock, who argues against seeing women's exclusion as a problem, gives us access to the names and words of women thinkers and thus makes their absence or their passing mention registerable for her readers.

My point here is to urge a movement from attending to the exclusion of women from philosophy to engagement with women thinkers. The philosophers I have examined

in this project offer us not just means, but also norms for how to undertake those engagements. In each case, we are shown ways to assess the role that exclusion plays in the construction of philosophical knowledge, practices, and education, and also given guidelines, implicit or explicit, for how to redress the constructive exclusions of philosophy. In this project, I have attended to the exclusion of women and engaged Irigaray, Lloyd, and Le Doeuff with an emphasis on the issue of women's exclusion and reclamation. My hope is that redressing the exclusion of women will aid in the redress of the exclusion of many others from philosophy.

As Le Doeuff reminds us in the opening to an essay that has become a classic in feminist philosophy, "Long Hair, Short Ideas:" "Up to and including today, philosophy has concerned only a fringe – minimal, indeed evanescent in certain periods – of what was itself a minority class. Sexist segregation seems of slight importance compared with the massive exclusion that has caused philosophy to remain the prerogative of a handful of the learned" (Le Doeuff 2002, 100). As is so often the case in Le Doeuff's writing, we risk misunderstanding that passage taken out of context. Her essay proceeds by showing the importance of the exclusion of women for the many other exclusions upon which philosophy has been built. Redressing massive exclusion is Le Doeuff's aim, but its remedy must redress the sexist segregation of philosophy.

This does not mean that women's exclusion must be remedied before the exclusion of others can be addressed. It does mean, however, that the exclusion of others cannot be addressed without attending to the exclusion of women. For Le Doeuff, redress must attend to the sexism of philosophy if philosophy is to accept its lack and give up the dream of completeness that has for so long formed its imaginary. For

Irigaray, the redress of philosophy's exclusion must proceed through attending to the disavowal of femininity because no difference can enter the economy of the same and the only way to establish a new economy of discourse is to end the repression of femininity. For Lloyd, we must address the sexism of philosophy in order to understand the history within our concepts, as sexism has been a recurrent and dominant theme of its history.

Desiderata of Transformative Methods

These methods show us, singly, but especially together, that a history of exclusion shapes what we know. Further, they show us that to understand that shaping we must consider the many places in which exclusion has occurred and how it has been sustained. Doing so shows us that exclusion always also creates an opportunity. I have argued that for reclamationists to transform philosophy they must employ methods that exploit that opportunity. Again, my intent has been to show that there is no single correct method for making the most of that opportunity. There are, however, some general guidelines that I believe will be important for any project of reclamation.

We stand to gain much by beginning at fine-grained investigations of specific mechanisms of exclusion. That level of investigation requires the sort of multi-disciplinarity exemplified by Simone de Beauvoir in *The Second Sex*. History, literature, biology, anthropology—any field—can be partners in understanding exclusion. The site of investigation can be a figure, a time-period, an aspersion. There is no single appropriate object of reclamation. The difficulty in this stage of reclamation is remaining fluid in our conceptions of what exclusion is. Multi-disciplinarity is crucial to keeping that fluidity. Even just the necessary work of translation across disciplinary

discourses helps to illuminate one's own habits of thinking; habits that can obscure mechanisms of exclusion.

Women throughout philosophy's history have been keen theorists of their own exclusion and they can be our collaborators in investigating its mechanisms, as well. These women are not being reclaimed to satisfy an abstract principle of equality in representation, but rather to help us shift our thinking. They do not have privileged views of exclusion, but they have historically, contextually, and experientially different views of it. Some views are so familiar as to seem like accounts of contemporaries. Others, and these are the ones that are truly valuable, will seem foreign, alien, and obviously wrong. The trouble of understanding why someone could think that the exclusion of women from philosophy, politics, or history operates *like that* is the trouble that will help to show us our own habits of thought.

By including historical women as partners in our investigations of exclusion we already begin to make the move from exclusion to reclamation. To avoid creating a new canon, however, reclamation must take it as axiomatic that there are always new voices to be heard. The goal of reclamation is not The History of Philosophy, but yet another history of philosophy (perhaps one that only appears in the reading list for a course or for the length of a lecture). Indeed, another axiom is that every work of philosophy is also a history of philosophy. My point is not to burden each work with the injunction to present the right version, but rather to emphasize that philosophical history is in a constant state of production by us. We do not have executive control over that process, but nor are we incapable of innovations and provocations. Relieved of thinking that exclusion can

ultimately be redressed, we can become interested in how exclusion can be redressed in this work, at this time.

Methods will benefit from seeking forms, genres, and styles for reclamation. Partners from other discipline will be crucial, for they will have traditions and methods of reading mystical texts, for example, that philosophy abandoned as non-philosophical during the Enlightenment. They will also have traditions and methods for approaches to objects that have never had widespread acceptance as material for philosophical reflection. Not all newly engaged objects will help shift our thinking, but we cannot pre-determine what deserves our attention and what does not. Generic boundaries are an old tool of exclusion.

Since history is the work of the present, no method can be the definitive method of reclamation. Indeed, a proliferation of methods is needed. However, I have argued that exclusion must be the guide for projects of reclamation and I have shown how three influential theorists can offer us such guidance. In the final chapter, I put to use the lessons of my analysis to consider the founding document of the women's rights movement in the United States, the *Declaration of Sentiments* and one of the legendary responses to it. I explore how this declaration that agitates for inclusion also excludes and generates, through its reclamation, the need for more reclamation. While Diotima has offered an example throughout this project of how to engage with the words of a woman who has been all but disappeared from history, in the final chapter, I show how the work of reclamation can reframe a document that has never been lost from historical record. I do so with the help of a woman who, like Diotima, did not record her own words. Sojourner Truth's Akron speech guides my reclamation and also becomes an

object of reclamation in its own right. I hope to illustrate through this example of reclamation the disruptive effects the past can have in the present and the importance of continuing to seek that disruption.

Chapter VI

The *Declaration of Sentiments* and Sojourner Truth's Speech in Akron

It is tempting to move from the preceding analysis and reflection to the project of reclaiming some particular figure—a woman from Eileen O'Neill's bibliography perhaps. In keeping with my intent of encouraging reflection on what is at stake in reclamation and broadening the possibilities of how it can proceed, I have chosen to look at a document in this final chapter. That analysis leads to the consideration of a figure, not one of its writers, but a figure who has been cast as the heroic critic of it: Sojourner Truth. My final analysis brings into focus a document and a woman to consider what illuminating claims they may have for us. I hope to reinforce the impression that constructing history is a perpetual undertaking and one that is always caught in the dynamic of inclusion and exclusion. We cannot construct a story of what has happened without determinations that will leave much aside and invest in a narrow range of details. But the process of leaving aside and investment has no natural norms; we must reflect on it. That has been the project of the preceding chapters. Now, I will make that analysis concrete by engaging with the *Declaration of Sentiments* and Truth's response to it.

First, however, is the question: why talk about *reclaiming* the *Declaration of Sentiments* when it has not been lost or eliminated from philosophical history? If reclamation were a process by which individual pieces of writing or individual thinkers were brought to philosophical attention, then there would be a relatively limited set of objects in need of reclamation. In other words, only those texts that had, at some point

prior to now, come under philosophical interest and then subsequently ceased to be included in philosophical history would fall under the purview of reclamation. Reclamation theorized from the point of view of exclusion, however, shows that the processes of excluding women's writing have been more complex and of greater consequence than writing some texts or people out of history. Philosophical history has been constructed through excluding not just women and their writing, but also their critical claims. To *reclaim*, then, is not simply to show an interest in the fact of historical women's thinking, but to engage the claims that have been muffled or silenced in the process of constructing philosophical history. Reclaiming the *Declaration of Sentiments* is not an attempt at restoring its place in the history of philosophy, but part of a project of transforming how we construct the history of philosophy.

Throughout this chapter, I treat the *Declaration of Sentiments* as a collaborative document representing the views of the conventioners at Seneca Falls. Although Elizabeth Cady Stanton is often given the greatest credit for its drafting, we know that no stage of the document's or the convention's development was the work of one person alone. Also, it was disseminated as the sentiment of its signatories—leading many of them to disavow their participation in the face of the fierce criticism with which it met. Thus, though I attribute what is expressed in the *Declaration* to the conventioners, who, exactly, that includes is difficult, if not impossible to determine. The *Declaration* presents, therefore, an excellent opportunity to do philosophical work, rather than identify who is a philosopher and who is not.

I begin my analysis of the *Declaration of Sentiments* by employing Le Doeuff's uchronic method. With that analysis we can gain a sense of what was being agitated for

in the *Declaration* and what our lives might have been like had those demands been met in 1848. I then follow Deutscher in critiquing the problematic hierarchies that the *Declaration* relies on to produce its radical vision. In that section, I also briefly analyze Lloyd's method in comparison to Le Doeuff's. The most notable advantage I identify in Lloyd's approach is that it does not risk hiding the flaws in a document's vision behind its ideals, as we see in the uchronic method. Lloyd, instead, anticipates problematic metaphors undergirding concepts and allowing them to operate intelligibly. That strength is also the weakness in Lloyd's method. The critical perspective the *Declaration* can give us risks being lost in treating the document as another instance of concepts exceeding those who use them.

After that comparison, I return to a critique of the *Declaration*, but at this juncture I enlist an 1851 speech by Sojourner Truth as my guide. Truth, like Socrates or Diotima, did not write. Determining the content of Truth's speech—and thereby the critique it makes available—requires, therefore, tracing its incorporation into narratives about the women's rights movements. Unlike those ancient figures, there are dozens of sources available that recount Truth's words, including accounts authorized by her. Following Irigaray, my intent is not to find the authoritative account of what Truth said. Instead, I highlight the process of history construction we are inevitably involved in when we engage historical texts.

The Possibilities

Le Doeuff suggests that with the *Declaration of Sentiments* the women at the convention established themselves as judging subjects, as did Harriet Taylor in her

response to it. I have argued that for those subjects to be established as subjects *to us* we must be able to hear and engage them. At issue is how Seneca Falls becomes part of our philosophical history. Le Doeuff's analysis resists the common practice of reducing the Declaration to a demand for suffrage. The *Sex of Knowing* was not her first such analysis. In a 1993 article for the *New Left Review*, Le Doeuff turned to the *Declaration of Sentiments* to elaborate happiness as a political theme.³⁷ Le Doeuff quotes the preamble and the first resolution³⁸, with the observation: "what they found in this juridico-political thematization of happiness was a language making it intellectually possible to oppose in a specific way the absolutist oppression to which they were subjected" (Le Doeuff 1993, 132). Le Doeuff does not take her reflections in an uchronic direction in this article, though she had developed the resource of uchronic history prior to it. She does, however, offer us a frame for applying her method. Le Doeuff writes: "our friends at Seneca Falls added a list of all the legal or social dispositions which they thought ran counter to women's happiness" (Le Doeuff 1993, 132).

What might the world, or at least the US, be like if those legal and social dispositions had been remediated? This question directs us away from some of the most startling rhetorical effects of rewriting the *Declaration of Independence* – "We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men and women are created equal," for instance.

³⁷ In "Feminism Is Back in France—Or is it?," Le Doeuff refers to "our Seneca Falls grandmothers" (Le Doeuff 2000, 253). The article is based on a lecture given after the publication of *Le Sexe du savoir*.

³⁸ "Whereas, the great precept of nature is conceded to be that 'man shall pursue his own true and substantial happiness.' Blackstone in his Commentaries remarks that this law of nature, being coeval with mankind and dictated by God himself, is, of course, superior in obligation to any other. It is binding over all the globe, in all countries and at all times; no human laws are of any validity if contrary to this, and such of them as are valid derive all their force, and all their validity, and all their authority, mediately and immediately, from this original; therefore, Resolved, That such laws as conflict, in any way, with the true and substantial happiness of woman, are contrary to the great precept of nature and of no validity, for this is "superior in obligation to any other" (Stanton et al. 181, 71-72).

Instead, it directs us to the list of grievances and asks us to imagine a world in which they had been redressed. The document takes us further than the grievances, for it is not only a list of grievances, a valuable sort of list in itself. The *Declaration* also contains resolutions for the remedies of the grievances within the current political body. It is, thereby, a document fundamentally different than the *Declaration of Independence*. As Le Doeuff puts the point about our friends at Seneca Falls: “their discourse was not separatist” (Le Doeuff 1993, 132). The *Declaration of Sentiments* did not seek to dissolve the bands which have connected men and women. Rather, it sought to transform them.

The conventioners did not have a sovereign to whom the *Declaration* was addressed, but rather they were enlisting men and women alike to reject the rights and claims of sovereignty by one class of subjects over another as the basis for organizing political and social life. The *Declaration* charges that men have been engaged in the project of establishing “absolute tyranny” over women and the grievances are the evidence to establish this problem as one that must be addressed (Stanton et al. 1985, 70).

The first grievance, the most contentious, and the one to which the *Declaration* is most often reduced is women’s lack of access to the franchise. It reads: “He has never permitted her to exercise her inalienable right to the elective franchise” (Stanton et al. 1985, 70). The *Declaration* returns to this issue in the fourth grievance when it states: “Having deprived her of this first right of a citizen, the elective franchise, thereby leaving her without representation in the halls of legislation, he has oppressed her on all sides” (Stanton et al. 1985, 70). Intervening are two related grievances. First, “He has compelled her to submit to laws, in the formation of which she had no voice” (Stanton et

al. 1985, 70). In other words, the lack of enfranchisement is directly linked to being under laws to which one has had no say, through representation or otherwise.

The second intervening grievance between the enfranchisement grievances reads: “He has withheld from her rights which are given to the most ignorant and degraded men—both natives and foreigners” (Stanton et al. 1985, 70). In a sense, this is a reiterative grievance. It underscores that women have been denied access that men have been granted. But the grievance makes this point by highlighting that even foreign and degraded men have been granted civil rights. Deutscher’s reading of Taylor alerts us to a hierarchy being invoked: there are educated and non-degraded women, the grievance implies, who are being ranked below men of ignorance and degradation in access to civil rights. I return to this grievance and its importance below.

The *Declaration* describes voting as the first right of citizens and connects that right to representation. The *Declaration of Independence* said of the right of representation that it was “formidable to tyrants only” (US Declaration Ind.). Although we are still far from universal suffrage—children and many felons, even those who have served their time, do not have access, for instance—it may still be difficult to appreciate the radical nature of this grievance. There is no longer any public debate about whether women ought to have the right to vote. Imagine, however, if women had been given the right to vote in 1848. What might have happened?

It is very tempting to wonder how women’s votes might have affected the make-up of the congress that created the Compromise of 1850.³⁹ Perhaps civil war would not have been delayed and there would have been a war on the heels of the Mexican War.

³⁹ Introducing a mass of new voters with unknown voting habits and no cultivation by local, state, or federal political machines was, of course, a pressing worry for politicians and political bodies right up until the passage of the 19th Amendment.

Without the 11 years of industrialization in the North, the outcome of the conflict might have been quite different.⁴⁰ This is not, however, the sort of counter-factual speculation that Le Doeuff's method invites. When we ask with Le Doeuff's method what might have happened if women had been granted the vote in 1848, the level of questioning is not about how specific events might have changed. Rather, as when Le Doeuff connects de Gouges's contract to the elimination of domestic abuse, the most salient questions are about how an historically available theoretical innovation in the way we organized our life in common might have changed the structures by which we live.

If voting rights had been granted in 1848 we can imagine, for instance, the expansion of the concept of citizen to account for bodies with the potential to bear and feed infants. There is, nearly 100 years after the expansion of the suffrage, far from perfect protections for parental leave (or any sort of leave for the care of family members), but the 1993 Family Medical Leave Act is a huge advance from when women were not only fired but also barred from employment because they might one day bear a child.⁴¹ I do not mean to suggest that "progress" would have sped up. I mean rather to suggest that industrialization would have taken place in a US where political bodies would have had to take into account the will of women voters. There is no guarantee that the most politically powerful women would have prioritized the rights of working

⁴⁰ Thanks to my dad for speculating with me about what might have happened if the Compromise of 1850 had not taken place. He pointed out the importance of industrialization. We were in agreement, as most scholars of that compromise maintain, that Zachary Taylor's death was of singular importance. I was wrapped up in thinking about the readiness of federal soldiers such a short time after the conflict with Mexico, as well as the probable bifurcation of California. Industrialization is at once a clearer factor about which to speculate and more clearly decisive.

⁴¹ Anti-suffrage thinkers were concerned about women's reproductive capacities explicitly in the mid-19th century. As Sue Davis reports, for instance: "In an editorial, [James Gordon] Bennett asked his readers to consider how funny it would be if Lucy Stone, in the midst of arguing a case in court, were suddenly to be taken by the pangs of childbirth and give 'birth to a fine bouncing boy in court.' How ridiculous would it be, such comments suggested, for females to attempt to function in the public space that was appropriate only for males" (Davis 2008, 96). Not only how funny, I might add, but, with Carole Pateman firmly in mind, how utterly disorderly.

women. Indeed, there is a great deal of evidence from what did happen that they would not. But there would have been many more workers with the right to vote.

To continue with our uchronic speculation, it is important to note that the resolutions do not have a one-to-one correspondence with the grievances. Indeed, what takes the conventioners 15 grievances to enumerate takes them 12 to resolve. In the ninth resolution, the *Declaration* resolves: “that it is the duty of the women of this country to secure to themselves the sacred right of the elective franchise” (Stanton et al. 1985, 72). The franchise is the first among the list of grievances, but not among the first resolved. I think this fact offers us reason to take pause over the emphasis placed on the role that enfranchisement played at the convention and in the women’s rights movements.⁴² In conventional histories of the women’s movement, First Wave feminists are often portrayed narrowly, as suffragists, with the resulting neat resolution of their cause by the 19th Amendment. But the uchronic method allows us to see suffrage as part of a complex envisioning of social and political change in the *Declaration of Sentiments*.

The eight resolutions that precede the duty to fight for enfranchisement enumerate demands that we are still struggling to meet. Take, for instance, resolution four: “Resolved, that the women of this country ought to be enlightened in regard to the laws under which they live, that they may no longer publish their degradation by declaring themselves satisfied with their present position, nor their ignorance, by asserting that they

⁴² I am not arguing here that enfranchisement was not the most contentious. As Angela Davis notes, it was the point in the document that caused disagreement among the conventioners and Frederick Douglass was essential to having it adopted as part of the Seneca Falls agenda (Davis 1983, 50-51). Lucretia Mott’s initial reaction to Stanton’s proposal seems to have been: “Lizzie, thou will make the convention ridiculous” (Wellman 2004, 195). Stanton’s husband refused to attend the convention and reportedly said to his wife: “You will turn the proceedings into a farce” (Wellman 2004, 193). Further, the history Stanton, Anthony, Gage, and Harper produced was called *History of Woman Suffrage*. My point is that enfranchisement was only part of the radical agenda and, as one we now tend to consider addressed, perhaps the point on which the *Declaration* can be most easily dismissed as old news.

have all the rights they want” (Stanton et al. 1985, 72). The Equal Rights Amendment would, most likely, have been unnecessary in a world in which the grievances of the *Declaration of Sentiments* had been redressed. Yet, it is worth noting, the anti-feminist activism of people like Phyllis Schlafly, who argued that women would lose privileges if they were given rights equal to men’s, was something the conventioners were already familiar with and saw as an obstacle to women’s true and substantial happiness.⁴³

The first two resolutions speak against laws that limit women and thus raise the question of what laws need to be altered or eliminated. The fifth grievance tackles specifically the problem of the status of wives: “He has made her, if married, in the eye of the law, civilly dead” (Stanton et al. 1985, 70). The limitations on wives’ ability to own property, have bank accounts, and sign contracts—all marks of civil death—were issues tackled by late twentieth century feminists; imagine for a moment what the world would have been like if these issues had been redressed in 1848. Perhaps the most startling example of civil death, and one that is taking an almost inconceivably long time to address, is the non-recognition of marital rape.⁴⁴ The civil invulnerability of wives to rape was not redressed in all 50 states of the US until 1993 and remains an unaddressed

⁴³ The Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) reads:

Section 1. Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of sex.

Section 2. The Congress shall have the power to enforce, by appropriate legislation, the provisions of this article.

Section 3. This amendment shall take effect two years after the date of ratification.

Phyllis Schlafly was instrumental to defeating the bid for its ratification in the 1970s (<http://www.equalrightsamendment.org/era.htm>, last accessed 4/29/11).

⁴⁴ Marital rape is an issue that Le Doeuff connects to what she argues is the larger problem that in marriage, “whatever the mode, the woman comes under a man’s authority and hand, and there is something identifiable as marital authority” (Le Doeuff 1999, 109). Le Doeuff further argues that violence in marriage requires institutions to sustain it and that work to change that institutional support and organization of men’s violence against women was only able to gain real ground with the establishment of reproductive rights (cf. “Each Man in His Cave”).

problem in other countries.⁴⁵ Naming the civil death of wives while repeatedly avowing men and women's equality creates a basis for laws protecting women's civil rights. That naming and avowal also demands that we consider how women's inequality has been established by and operated through laws.

In the seventh grievance, the *Declaration* acknowledges that equality will require greater moral responsibility for wives. That grievance begins: "He has made her morally, an irresponsible being, as she can commit many crimes with impunity, provided they be done in the presence of her husband" (Stanton et al. 1985, 70). In this grievance, however, the conventioners directly link that lack of moral responsibility to the authority that husbands are granted over their wives. "In the covenant of marriage," the second part of the grievance reads, "she is compelled to promise obedience to her husband, he becoming, to all intents and purposes, her master—the laws giving him power to deprive her of her liberty and to administer chastisement" (Stanton et al 1881, 70). The *Declaration* clearly links the assumption of moral responsibility with authority. Here, the conventioners urge a question on reclamation that I have not developed in this project: what responsibilities come along with establishing women's philosophical authority? The potential fruit of such reflection could be a transformational vision of philosophy's role in social and political life.

Showing a masterful understanding of the paradoxes of women's subjugation, the *Declaration* demands that men be held to the same high moral standards as women, writing: "Resolved, that the same amount of virtue, delicacy, and refinement of behavior that is required of woman in the social state also be required of man, and the same

⁴⁵ http://ncmdr.org/state_law_chart.html, last accessed on April 21, 2011. It is interesting to note that the passage FMLA and the recognition of marital rape in the whole US both happened in the same year.

transgressions should be visited with equal severity on both man and woman” (Stanton et al. 1985, 70). So, the drafters recognize that wives gain some license in marriage to violate laws—the amount allotted left to the discretion of husbands—the drafters also recognize that women’s social behavior is policed to a greater extent than men’s. Women are held to a higher standard of decorum. Indeed, in the resolution before, the conventioners used the attribution of moral superiority to women to claim expanded roles in religious assemblies, thereby turning a means of limiting women’s activity into the grounds for expanding it.⁴⁶ When the *Declaration* insists that men and women are equal and that there has been a massive failure of the state to enact and protect that equality, they are not simply demanding that women be treated like men. What the *Declaration* demands is a thorough assessment of sexual difference at all levels of public and private life with the understanding that adjustments will have to be made in the expectations everyone faces.⁴⁷ The conventioners directly link that assessment to expanded roles in religious life, as well as employment opportunities, pay, public assemblies and public life more generally, and in education.⁴⁸

The right of women to speak in public deserves special attention, for unlike unequal pay for equal work, this may seem like an issue that has been resolved in the course of time. The fact that women spoke in public at the Seneca Falls Convention was,

⁴⁶ The fifth resolution reads: “Resolved, that inasmuch as man, while claiming for himself intellectual superiority, does accord to woman moral superiority, it is preeminently his duty to encourage her to speak and teach, as she has an opportunity, in all religious assemblies” (Stanton et al. 1985, 72).

⁴⁷ Grievance 13 supports such an interpretation. It reads: “He has created a false public sentiment by giving to the world a different code of morals for men and women, by which moral delinquencies which exclude women from society are not only tolerated but deemed of little account in man” (Stanton et al. 1985, 71). Although they resolve that men ought to be held to the same standards as women, they don’t seem to think the standards women are currently held to, even leaving aside the contradictory ones, are worthy of endorsement.

⁴⁸ Issues covered explicitly in grievances 6, 9, 10, 11, 12, 14 and resolutions 7, 8, 11, 12, as well as in the preamble and transitional sections.

itself, a radical action. Sue Davis devotes a chapter of her book, *The Political Thought of Elizabeth Cady Stanton: Women's Rights and the American Political Traditions*, entitled, "Gatherings of Unsexed Women: Separate Spheres and Women's Rights," to the power of the prohibition on women having a public role in political life. To gather together in public assemblies to hear speak about anything, let alone women's rights, was scandalous in the mid-nineteenth century.⁴⁹ Harriet Beecher Stowe of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* fame advocated for women's suffrage, but maintained that women ought not to speak in public (Higgins 2004, 197). The *Declaration* specifically addresses this prohibition and its selective application with the seventh resolution: "Resolved, that the objection of indelicacy and impropriety, which is so often brought against women when she addresses a public audience, comes with a very ill grace from those who encourage, by their attendance, her appearance on stage, in the concert, or in feats of the concert" (Stanton et al. 1985, 72). The conventioners were performing their refusal to be bound by the prohibition on public speaking, thereby exposing the use of the prohibition in preventing the achievement of women and men's equality, but not in preventing women from serving as entertainment.

Try now to imagine the 2008 US presidential election if the *Declaration* had been able to inaugurate a society in which women could not only speak in public, but also be public actors. Would Hilary Clinton have found her voice only after several decades into

⁴⁹ It has often been argued, including by the authors of *History of Woman Suffrage*, that the barring of Lucretia Mott and Elizabeth Cady Stanton from participation in the 1840 World Anti-Slavery Convention—"they found themselves excluded by majority vote, 'fenced off behind a bar and a curtain similar to those used in churches to screen the choir from public gaze'" (Davis 1983, 46-47, quoting Stanton et al.)—was *the* event that gave birth to the women's rights movement in the US. Angela Davis has convincingly argued that this legend of the movement's birth obscures the greater complexity of how Stanton and Mott were differently radicalized, as well as the ongoing struggle by women in the abolitionist movement to be treated as equals (Davis 1983, "Race and Class in the Woman Suffrage Movement").

her career as a highly visible public person?⁵⁰ Would Michele Obama have been repeatedly described as angry?⁵¹ Would there have been continual discussions, fueled by her own reversals on the issue, of whether or not Sarah Palin was a feminist (discussions which have not yet died out completely)?⁵² While presidential politics may not be exemplary of any other part of life, the rhetorical and analytical habits used during presidential campaigns are. An uchronic analysis of the *Declaration* allows us to think more deeply about the effects of equal access to public-ness and equal acceptance of men and women acting in public. Would there still be the widespread eroticization of women's domination by men if women had equal access to the public sphere? Recall the basis for Catharine MacKinnon's provocative arguments that pornography "sexualizes the definition of male as dominant and female as subordinate" (MacKinnon 1989, 247). MacKinnon thinks pornography functions that way *because*: "Sexuality is socially organized to require sex inequality for excitement and satisfaction" (MacKinnon 1989, 251). Perhaps Seneca Falls would not have eliminated pornography but rather the investments of social life in the eroticization of male dominance and female subordination.

While the conventioners do not offer a radical reframing of the marriage contract in the manner of their feminist foremother in rewriting declarations, Olympe de Gouges, they were aware that the dissolution of a marriage could be as devastating to a woman's

⁵⁰ Clinton's speech after the New Hampshire Primary in which she claims to have found her voice can be seen at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-Gs0vyf3u5U>, last accessed 4/25/11.

⁵¹ For Fox News Network's mid-campaign discussion of media coverage depicting Michelle Obama as angry <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9a5DBDHQmtQ>, last accessed 4/25/11.

⁵² National Public Radio, for instance, has September 7, 2008 segment entitled: "Sarah Palin: New Face of Feminism?" <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9a5DBDHQmtQ>, last accessed on 4/25/11. *The Daily Show with Jon Stewart* juxtaposed Palin's different answers to the question of her feminism on its October 27, 2008 show, <http://www.thedailyshow.com/watch/mon-october-27-2008/moment-of-zen---is-sarah-palin-a-feminist->, last accessed on 4/25/11.

rights as marriage itself.⁵³ They grieve: “He has so framed the laws of divorce, as to what shall be the proper causes, and in case of separation, to whom the guardianship of the children shall be given, as to be wholly regardless of the happiness of women—the law, in all cases, going upon a false supposition of the supremacy of man, and giving all power into his hands” (Stanton et al. 1985, 71). The conventioners bring to light how the law unequally distributes protections for relationships of men and women with their dependent children. We can, perhaps, then wonder if divorce reform in the spirit of the *Declaration* could have helped to bring about the sort of protections for dependent children that Le Doeuff imagined as a result of marriage contract reform with de Gouges’s critique.

Even without an exhaustive reading of the *Declaration of Sentiments*, the uchronic method helps us bring into focus many aspects of our current social and political structures that perpetuate and depend upon the unequal treatment of men and women. Indeed, one of the strengths of the method is that even short forays of the imagination are critically fruitful—and repeated trips by many imaginations can continue to build critical resources. The efficacy of this method is directly linked to the extent to which we feel the loss of the *Declaration* as an historical antecedent. By encountering that loss, we are given new ways of framing our narratives about history in which what has been deemed as important, right, or necessary can be seen as the contingent results of political and historiographical contestations about what ought to be the case.

⁵³ A comparison of the *Declaration of Sentiments* and Olympe de Gouges’s *Declaration of the Rights of Women* must be done. The repetition of strategy is startling. The differences between French and US feminist histories and theories would be well illuminated by such an undertaking. Also, the differences between a collective undertaking and an individual rewriting bear analysis. The drafters of the *Declaration of Sentiments* do not, to my knowledge, credit or cite de Gouges’s work. It is doubtful they knew of it. None of the sources I consulted, including the *Second Sex* or Le Doeuff connect these documents.

Critical Reflections on a Timeless Time

One of the powers of uchronic thinking, like that of utopic thinking, is that for as long as the exercise lasts, our ideals can determine the nature of the world. The danger, however—and this returns us to Deutscher’s critique—is that that imaginative freedom can obscure the need to think critically about the negative consequences of our ideals. With this warning in mind, let us return to the third grievance of the *Declaration*: “He has withheld from her rights which are given to the most ignorant and degraded men, both natives and foreigners” (Stanton et al. 1985, 70). There is something about dessert being expressed here. There are women whose place of birth, education, and refinement are being ignored while less deserving men are civilly recognized. This may appear to be just a hint of the problems that Deutscher showed were integral to Taylor’s feminism. Perhaps we can read away this one grievance as an unfortunate slip in an otherwise extraordinary vision.

Angela Davis does not think so. She writes:

The inestimable importance of the Declaration of Sentiments was its role as the *articulated consciousness of women’s rights* at midcentury. . . . However, as a rigorous consummation of the consciousness of white middle-class women’s dilemma, the Declaration all but ignored the predicament of white working-class women, as it ignored the condition of Black women in the South and North alike. (Davis 1983, 53-54)

The *Declaration*, while claiming to speak on behalf of women in the US, Davis observes, hardly reflects the lives of all those women. One way to interpret Davis’s claim is that the document does not make explicit demands for improvements for differently situated women, on behalf of slaves, for instance. In fact, Davis writes:

While at least one Black man was present among the Seneca Falls conferees, there was not a single Black woman in attendance. Nor did the conventions documents make even passing reference to Black women. In light of the organizers' abolitionist involvement, it would seem puzzling that slave women were entirely disregarded. (Davis 1983, 57)

Indeed, the document nowhere refers to race. But I think it would be wrong to narrowly interpret Davis's claim to mean that the document's failure was its failure to refer. These conventioners, at least the ones who were actively involved in abolitionist organizations, knew something about the unequal treatment based on race in the US. The problem that Davis identifies is that the conventioners failed to imagine all the sorts of differently situated women being denied rights.

Further, this was *Seneca Falls*. Sally Roesch Wagner gives compelling evidence that direct (and documented) experiences of conventioners with the people and the organizations of the six nations of the Iroquois confederacy was a crucial source for "*a vision not of band-aid reform but of a reconstituted world completely transformed*" (Wagner 2004, 267). The people at Seneca Falls not only saw possibilities for equality unavailable in their own lives, Wagner argues, they were witness to the erosion of those equality sustaining forms of lives (Wagner 2004, 279). Conventioneer Matilda Joselyn Gage wrote an editorial supporting the Council of Chiefs decision to oppose American citizenship for Iroquois men, linking the government's treatment of the Iroquois and US women (Wagner 2004, 279). The people gathered at Seneca Falls were not just aware that race mattered deeply in the US, they were directly involved, sometimes politically, with *how* race mattered. Yet, in a document of grievances, the differences between the grievances of women in different situations went unarticulated.

Indeed, the *Declaration* employs the following construction: “in view of this entire disfranchisement of one-half the people of this country” (Stanton et al. 1985, 71). Much, much more than one-half of the people in the US were de jure disenfranchised. Large numbers of people, including men, did not meet the qualifications of citizenship.⁵⁴ To that point, we can return to the ninth resolution—“that it is the duty of the women of this country to secure to themselves the sacred right of the elective franchise”—and ask if this was a duty for women who were not recognized as persons. In the same vein, the document grieves the civil death of wives, what about the civil death of slaves? To put the point in the starkest terms and reiterate Davis’s point, the *Declaration* seems to best articulate the claims of women who could, through meeting the myriad qualifications, expect the rights of citizenship but for the fact that they were women.

To paraphrase Deutscher, the point is not to condemn the *Declaration* for a race elitism and hierarchy that was common in the nineteenth century, but neither should a reading of the *Declaration* look away from it. It is worth noting, as Davis does, that organized agitation on the part of women working in factories had been going on for decades prior to the convention and the Grimke sisters, Sarah and Angelina, had long been chastising abolitionist movements for their failures to involve black women and consider their suffering (Davis 1983, 54-58). I think these facts help us lament a failure of a different kind. If the uchronic exercise helps us to lament the opportunities that were lost with women’s voices, then reflection on the uchronic exercise helps us to lament the failure of those voices to articulate a more completely transformed world. There were

⁵⁴ Most obviously, men owned by other men were excluded from citizenship. Each state had different laws for who could vote and property qualifications were common. Women could vote, for instance, in New Jersey prior to 1807, if they met the property qualifications (Wellman 2004, 138). Barring people from voting based explicitly on gender and race was a later development in most states.

resources for the drafters and signatories to the *Declaration* to propose an even more radical vision than they did. The point, again, is not condemnation, but to examine what appears with the radical vision—what undergirds it and makes agitation for the vote, for instance, possible. The point is to look for the exclusion within the *Declaration's* expansion of possibilities.

Before turning to Sojourner Truth's help with a critical reading of the *Declaration*, I want to pause here and note that Lloyd's method would not set up this two part process of critical reflection for reclaiming documents. Lloyd sees every thinker as part of a conceptual history that cannot be escaped with even the most rigorous criticism. The conventioners cannot be the source of a radical break, according to Lloyd's method, because they are bound to think by the metaphors of their times. Some of those metaphors can be criticized and a great deal of the history can come under critical reflection, but there is no total purification of anyone's thinking. So, the *Declaration* must be read as a document that shares in the history of the concepts it wields, even as it lodges protests against that history. Thus, Lloyd's approach does not risk obscuring the problems of the document with a focus on critical possibilities it engenders, since every document is heir to the problems of its concepts.

The oft-remarked irony about the *Declaration of Independence* is that a slave owner wrote that all men are created equal. There are several strategies for dealing with that irony, including dismissing the entire US American project as one of unending hypocrisy. Lloyd offers us a different compelling strategy; namely, by engaging with the vicissitudes of the conceptual history of equality we can avoid a few problems and perhaps think differently than we did before. I do not have to argue here for the need of

feminist critiques of the notion of equality as there are many, including Irigaray's, and there will hopefully be many more. I am more narrowly interested in how Lloyd's method would allow us to engage the *Declaration of Sentiments* as a philosophical document. Lloyd does not offer us a way out of the reliance of conceptualization on metaphor or the accumulation of history in the operation of concepts. Rather, Lloyd helps us keep those limitations of critique firmly in mind.

Yet, the limitations that Lloyd demands we keep in view can also limit our ability to see the critical possibilities in a historical text. Lloyd's analysis of Descartes's view that mind is not the sort of substance that can be gendered suffered, I argued, from that limitation. In Descartes's argument was the potential for claiming women's equality of mind, but Lloyd did not follow that line of argument. Instead, she showed how Descartes contributed to a history of reason's masculinization. There are many problems within the *Declaration* that deserve our attention and critique, but perhaps it is possible to move too quickly to such critique if we do not spend time appreciating the radical potential in the texts we engage.

“Ain't I a Woman?”

There is a contemporaneous speech that can help us with our investigation of the *Declaration's* exclusions. The speech was given by Sojourner Truth at the 1851 Akron, Ohio Women's Rights Convention. In it, Truth makes two crucial assertions that are particularly important for seeing the limitations of the *Declaration*. First, Truth, a former slave, inserts herself and her demands in the movement. Truth announces, “I am a

woman's rights."⁵⁵ Second, Truth observes: "man is in a tight place, the poor slave is on him, woman is coming on him, he is surely between a hawk and a buzzard."⁵⁶ Truth asserts that free women and enslaved men and women are making demands that will change the lot of men who have had access to citizenship. Through her speech, Truth links the struggles of the unenfranchised, be they free or enslaved.

By claiming the movement as her movement, Truth denies narrower interpretations of "woman" in the *Declaration of Sentiments*. "Woman" is not just that propertied person being taxed without representation, if single, or losing her property, if married. "Woman" is also that person who was property and, in some places, could not become a wife because she could not be recognized as a person capable of consent. So, while her expansion of the *Declaration's* demands does not negate the importance of civil rights for wives, Truth makes us consider the nuances of disenfranchisement that are obscured in the call for women's enfranchisement. As Truth links the claims of the enslaved and formerly enslaved to those of the women's movement by claiming her place within the women's movement, she puts pressure on the concept of citizen at work in the *Declaration*.

Truth was able to apply that pressure because of the work the *Declaration* and the movement had done to expand the notion of citizen. By changing the truths held self-evident in the *Declaration of Independence* via the addition of women to category of those created equal, the conventioners insisted on an idea that was, until very recently, still commonly seen as the petty complaint of militant feminists (and one that would ruin beautiful writing forever, insisted some of the more aesthetically minded sexists). They

⁵⁵ <http://www.sojournertruth.org/Library/Speeches/Default.htm#RIGHTS>, last accessed 4/27/11

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

insisted that “man” does not mean “men and women.”⁵⁷ Further, the *Declaration*, with the addition of those two words, casts light on the nature of the equality thus far enacted. Straightforwardly, for instance, it claims that the state and its citizens have benefited from the taxation of women’s property without recognizing those women as citizens. More complexly, in highlighting how the state has guaranteed husbands the benefit of authority over their wives’ bodies, properties, fortunes, and the children they produced together, the document indicates how citizens have been equal to one another by wielding power over other classes of people in complex and sometimes quite intimate ways. Truth includes herself in the class of women oppressed to secure men’s equality.

Yet, through its silences on questions of slavery and colonization, the *Declaration* also maintains the dependence of citizens’ equality on the denial of equality to others. Truth’s claim to inclusion in *woman’s* rights, rather than citizen’s rights, uses the momentum of the protest already begun and expands that protest. Davis provides the following assessment:

When this Black woman did rise to speak, her answer to the male supremacists also contained a profound lesson for the white women. In repeating her question “Ain’t I a Woman?” no less than four times, she exposed the class-bias and racism of the new women’s movement. All women were not white and all women did not enjoy the material comfort of the middle classes and the bourgeoisie. Sojourner Truth herself was Black—she was an ex-slave—but she was no less a woman than any of her white sisters at the convention. That her race and economic condition were different from theirs did not annul her womanhood. And as a Black woman, her claim to equal rights was no less legitimate than that of white middle class women. (Davis 1983, 64)

⁵⁷ To its great good credit, the American Philosophical Association published the “Guidelines for Non-Sexist Use of Language” by Virginia Warren in 1986 and promoted it as a resource for philosophers to use in strengthening their conclusions (available at <http://www.apaonline.org/publications/texts/nonsexist.aspx>, last accessed on 4/26/11). It has been an invaluable resource to this writing teacher, not least of all because a national organization backs up my insistence that sexist language damages philosophical arguments.

Davis's analysis drives home the point that Truth's speech expands the notion of woman wielded in the *Declaration*.

However, Davis is relying on *A History of Woman Suffrage* for her account of the Akron meeting. That account is essentially a reprinting of Frances Gage's 1863 article about what happened 12 years earlier. The quotations I have given from Truth's speech come from a newspaper article published within days of the Akron meeting and nowhere in that version is the phrase "Ain't I a Woman."⁵⁸ Indeed, no account of the speech contains that phrase until Gage's 1863 article (Mabee and Mabee Newhouse 1993, 76). Carleton Mabee and Susan Mabee Newhouse argue that: "The 'Ar'n't I a Woman?' expression, as Gage reported it, was undoubtedly an adaptation of the motto, 'Am I not a Woman and a Sister?,' which had for many years been a popular antislavery motto" (Mabee and Mabee Newhouse 1993, 76). To support this claim, Mabee and Mabee Newhouse note that, in addition to that fact that none of the contemporaneous reports what Truth said contain the phrase, Truth is never reported to have repeated the rhetorical devise in her other speeches (Mabee and Mabee Newhouse 1993, 76). Further, Mabee and Mabee Newhouse observe that Gage, not Truth, was given to rhythmic repetitions (Mabee and Mabee Newhouse 1993, 77).

Davis presents a heroic image of Truth when she writes: "Sojourner Truth single-handedly rescued the Akron women's meeting from the disruptive jeers of hostile men" (Davis 1983, 60). That is the image most often replicated in late twentieth century accounts of Truth's speech at the Akron, Ohio Women's Convention. Mabee and Mabee Newhouse's research shows that:

⁵⁸ Marius Robinson's 1851 account is available here: <http://www.sojournertruth.org/Library/Speeches/Default.htm#RIGHTS>, as well as in Mabee 81-82. I have reprinted three versions of Truth's speech, including Robinson's account in Appendix C.

In fact, none of the twenty-seven descriptions published at the time, despite their many different points of view, gives the impression, as Gage did twelve years later, that there were ‘mobbish’ opponents of women’s rights present, much less that the convention or its leaders were ever ‘staggering,’ or about to panic, or about to be overwhelmed by these opponents. (Mabee and Mabee Newhouse 1993, 71)

Again, the image of a hostile meeting in which misogyny and racism threatened to win the day but for Truth’s speech, seems to have its origins in Gage’s 1863 article.

Contemporary accounts, including Gage’s and Truth’s, do not reflect a tenor of hostility at the meeting, either directed at the women or Truth in particular (Mabee and Mabee Newhouse 1993, 79). Nell Painter succinctly observes: “The antiblack setting, though crucial to latter-day users of Sojourner Truth the symbol, is Gage’s creation” (Painter 1996, 169).

Indeed, other accounts of the meeting, including and especially Harriet Beecher Stowe’s 1863 article that prompted the Gage article, received more attention than Gage’s account until the latter half of the 20th century. Mabee and Mabee Newhouse reports: “It was only in the 1970s and 1980s, in a period of heightened concern about both black and women’s rights and the relation between the two, that references to Gage or her article for the first time exceeded references to Stowe or her article” (Mabee and Mabee Newhouse 1993, 80). Davis’s rendering of events at Akron is from that period of heightened concern. Mabee and Mabee Newhouse write: “As far as is known, no one has seriously attempted to check the accuracy of Gage’s account until now” (Mabee and Mabee Newhouse 1993, 68).

As compelling as Mabee and Mabee Newhouse’s explanation for why Gage’s account gained currency in the 70s and 80s, the question remains how that account could supersede those other accounts. As I noted above, Davis is relying on the reprint of

Gage's article in *A History of Woman Suffrage*. That is one clue to the legitimization of the Gage account. Another is Truth's own apparent endorsement of Gage's rendering in *Narrative of Sojourner Truth*. Mabee and Mabee Newhouse give two distinct possibilities for why Truth allowed Gage's report to be included in *Narrative*. First, because Truth could not read she could not check the accuracy of the report. Second, Mabee and Mabee Newhouse speculate that Truth may have felt the moral message of her speech was retained and "Truth often seemed willing to let friendly myths develop about her, myths that might make her a more fascinating advocate of the causes she supported" (Mabee and Mabee Newhouse 1993, 68).

So, two 19th century documents present Gage's account as history and one of them is said to be the dictated autobiography of Truth herself. Mabee and Mabee Newhouse speculate that Gage may have written the sensational account with the interpolated refrain in order to reinvigorate interest in women's rights during the Civil War (Mabee and Mabee Newhouse 1993, 79). In other words, a speech that was used in the 20th century to bring racial inequality to the fore in the women's rights movement may have been an attempt to bring a country fully engaged in questions of race to also consider gender. Whatever Gage's motivation, she made available an imaginary version of events, not to mention a slogan, that has been importantly incorporated into how we understand the history of feminism. By paying attention to the process of that incorporation, we gain a more complex story of the relationship between women's rights and the struggle for racial equality in the US.

Further, we encounter what may be the more startling story—how easily many people in the mid-19th century accepted the link between women's rights and the rights of

the enslaved and formerly enslaved. Painter reports: “The call to the conference had specifically invited a wide range of reformers, including antislavery people, the backbone of antebellum feminism” (Painter 1996, 169). Mabee and Mabee Newhouse also recount the rich interrelations of abolitionism and women’s rights activism. Neither their point, nor Painter’s, nor mine is to romanticize abolitionism or women’s rights activism as bastions of perfect equality among all peoples—they were not. Rather, Mabee and Mabee Newhouse carefully point out that there are several available accounts of white women’s discomfort with the link between abolitionism and women’s rights activism (Mabee and Mabee Newhouse 1993, 73). While acknowledging that “perhaps at times there is only a fine line” between hostility and discomfort, Mabee and Mabee Newhouse’s research shows people were actively engaged in working out the political, theoretical, and moral connections between women’s rights and racial equality.

Could it be that the drafters of the *Declaration*, many of whom were actively involved in the abolition movement, assumed that pushing for women’s rights meant pushing for greater racial equality? Do we, reading more than a century after the fact, import the silence into the document? There is, of course, reason to be quite careful on this issue. In her study of Stanton as a political thinker, for instance, Sue Davis writes: “Cady Stanton also utilized inegalitarian, undemocratic arguments to argue that educated, white, native-born women were far better suited to participate in the political life of the nation than were males who were uneducated, nonwhite, and foreign born” (Davis 2008, 2). Further, every account of the women’s movement records contestations between people on questions of race, including the disagreement that led to the 1869 schism over

the 15th Amendment.⁵⁹ My point is to underscore the need for reading the silences of the *Declaration* and the help Truth's speech can be as a critical guide, but one that we must also engage as document in need of reclamation.

We cannot decide the fact of the matter with regards to the intent or the racism of the conventioners. But that does not have to be reclamation's work, as perhaps is best illustrated by Irigaray's method. Reclamation does not have to be a project of finding the truth of the matter about a text, its import, or its proper place in the history of thinking. Reclamation can have the seemingly more modest goal of expanding the scope of our philosophical attention and changing how we conceive of the work of conferring that attention. Like Diotima, Truth did not write her speech. Perhaps, after considering Truth's case, we can imagine Diotima endorsed Plato's rendering of her speech, even though it was an extensive revision of what she said and contained poetic flourishes she was not prone to employing. Neither Diotima, nor Truth's absences from the scene of philosophy mean, however, that they have nothing for us. Reclaiming can mean entering loving dialogue with Truth's speech in its many versions, to find an argument we need, and perhaps the miscarriage of that argument.

My intent in this chapter has been to use a concrete example to illuminate the dynamics of inclusion and exclusion that shape the construction of history. Even as the conventioners expanded the vision of citizenship in the US, they redrew and reinforced the limits of it. Truth intervened into that exclusion by aligning her struggle for freedom with that of the women's rights movement. By refusing a narrow reading of "woman" in the *Declaration*, Truth aligned herself with those who saw the demand for equal rights in

⁵⁹ The National Woman Suffrage Association broke off from the Equal Rights Association after strategic disagreements about including the category of sex as a protected category in the 15th Amendment (cf. Gurko 1974, 226).

the women's movement as a demand inextricably linked to equality of rights for those who had been colonized and enslaved. Truth's speech also came to be part of a narrative, important particularly within the history of feminism, in which a former slave spoke truth to the white supremacist power of the women's movement. Rather than correcting or reconciling these versions of history, I have urged approaching reclamation as a project of transforming our ability to engage with this history. The *Declaration* and Truth's speech are critical resources, but the means by which we engage them determine the critiques they make available.

Conclusion

We are now in the third decade of sustained effort by scholars to identify and make available the writing of women who have been excluded from histories of philosophy. My contention has been that exclusion has remained under-theorized in the field. That has not meant, however, that views about exclusion have not operated within reclamation projects. Indeed, a promising way of thinking about reclamation has developed: reclamation as transformation. That way of conceiving of reclamation identifies the exclusion of women as a means by which philosophical history has been constructed. The result is not only an absence of women from philosophical history, but also the development of a discipline that persistently practices the exclusion of women. Transformative approaches recognize that the problem of women in philosophy is a problem with philosophy as such that must first be redressed to make possible philosophical engagement with women's writing. Such work will not just transform philosophical history but the way philosophy is practiced. I have analyzed the work of Irigaray, Lloyd, and Le Doeuff in an effort to contribute to the development of transformational methods of reclamation.

I began by arguing that simply trying to bring something to philosophical attention without changing the practices by which we deem something worthy of philosophical attention is futile and, moreover, that such approaches reinforce the exclusion of women from philosophy. In approaches that seek women's addition to the philosophical canon without transforming the practice of philosophy, the moment of the exclusion, and thus the means of its efficacy, is misunderstood. Exclusion is not only

something that happened, but also something that keeps happening. What must be considered is not just philosophy's history, but also its present. The exclusion of women is not a mistake that has been made in philosophical history, but a means of creating what philosophy is, the standards by which we judge what is philosophical and what is not. Re-approaching philosophical history through attention to excluded texts does not restore philosophical history to what it should be; it troubles what exclusion has made—it troubles what we know.

Each of the theorists I engaged offers a different means for troubling what we know based on the theory of exclusion she develops. In the second chapter, I examined how Irigaray troubles the discourse of philosophy by exposing the constitutive role femininity plays as the excluded other. Based on that view of exclusion, Irigaray counsels exploiting the role assigned to the feminine in order to make discourse flow differently. Far from advising that we capitulate to the role assigned to the feminine, a charge often made in reclamation literature, Irigaray models ways to explode the assigned role from within and thereby disrupt the logic of discourse. In "Sorcerer Love," Irigaray offers us, I argued, an example of transformative reclamation by engaging Diotima as a woman thinker who can teach us about loving dialogue. Further, Irigaray uses Diotima's lesson in loving dialogue to critique parts of the argument Plato attributed to Diotima in the *Symposium*. Through that engagement, Irigaray models not how to correct philosophy's history or establish Diotima as a canonical authority, but how to speak with a text, disrupting it and being disrupted by it.

In the third chapter, I examined how Lloyd troubles attempts to construct histories in which philosophers are autonomous thinkers who are masters of the concepts they

employ. By paying attention to the role metaphors play in conceptualization, Lloyd shows how philosophers think within a history of metaphor usage that shapes their conceptual work. By focusing on the masculinization of reason and its consequences for our concepts of femininity, Lloyd shows that what we know is shaped by the metaphors we inherit for elaborating concepts. Lloyd begins to show how such a historiographical method can be used to treat the writing of women thinkers in her analysis of de Beauvoir. With the help of Chanter's critique of Lloyd's reading of de Beauvoir, I showed how Lloyd's work could be used as the basis for a method of transformative reclamation. While Lloyd's focus was on the masculinization of reason, she also shows us a way forward for reclamation that critically engages women thinkers as resistant to, but also part of, philosophical history.

In the fourth chapter, I examined how, throughout her work, Le Doeuff troubles the way history has been constructed through the denigration and dismissal of women's work. Rather than assuming we can identify the effects of that denigration and dismissal on what we know, Le Doeuff offers us a method with which to engage what has been lost. Le Doeuff's uchronic method gives us critical perspective on the present by showing how it has been formed by the silencing of women's demands. Importantly, Deutscher identifies a limitation of the uchronic method: attention to the promise of silenced writing can obscure the exclusions that writing enacts. Beyond identifying that limitation, Deutscher shows the critical gains of engaging women's writings to find the exclusions entwined with, and sometimes making possible, the arguments for women's inclusion in social, political, and intellectual life. In the final chapter, it is Le Doeuff's

method modified by Deutscher's critical response that I use to engage the *Declaration of Sentiments* and Sojourner Truth's speech.

Before turning to the *Declaration* and Truth's speech, I compared the different views of exclusion and consequent methods of reclamation offered by Irigaray, Lloyd, and Le Doeuff. My point in the fifth chapter was not to determine which transformational method is the best method of reclamation. Rather, I wished to show the relative strengths of each while also arguing that reclamation must be driven by exclusion. That is, I argued that reclamation can not only be radically transforming—of philosophy, philosophical authority, norms of historiography, as well as how we conceive of the symbolic and the imaginary or imaginaries—but that for reclamation to occur at all philosophy and philosophical history must be transformed to redress the exclusions upon which they have developed. My hope is not that a single view of exclusion will be adopted within the field of reclamation, an outcome as undesirable as it is unlikely, but that reclamation will recognize the importance of thinking about and redressing mechanisms of exclusion in the effort to engage women's writing.

In the sixth chapter, I modeled reclamation attuned to exclusion. Using Le Doeuff's uchronic method to read the *Declaration of Sentiments*, I showed the critique of the present that can be generated through attention to the demands of the past. But I also showed that the demands of the past are not perfect in their guidance, for they are built on enabling exclusions. I enlisted Sojourner Truth's response to the *Declaration* to examine some of the exclusions enacted at Seneca Falls. To use Truth as such a guide, I also had to reclaim her words for philosophical history. Rather than trying to shake free Truth's real speech from the competing accounts available, I explored the history of the speech's

transmission to show the different critiques its multiple iterations make available. My view is not that such work is an unfortunate necessity arising from Truth's inability to author her own speech. Instead, I argued that history is the work of the present and that the way we engage any text determines the critique available to us.

I also argued that the promise of transformational reclamation is not an end to exclusion. Constructing history always requires excluding some things and including others. The irreducibility of exclusion from history's construction means that reclamation does not guarantee the construction of the right history. History remains, always, the work of the present. That is why I have chosen to talk about the many and diverse engagements with women's writing as "reclamation." Reclamation reasserts the claims of the past for the sake of the past, the present, and the future. We remember what has been sacrificed for the sake of history through attention to the claims that have been silenced. But the work of reclaiming is not, thereby, finished. The past does not offer the present its completion, but its calling.

Appendix A

The United States Declaration of Independence

IN CONGRESS, JULY 4, 1776

The unanimous Declaration of the thirteen united States of America

When in the Course of human events it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. — That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed, — That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness. Prudence, indeed, will dictate that Governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and accordingly all experience hath shewn that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed. But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same Object evinces a design to reduce them under absolute Despotism, it is their right, it

is their duty, to throw off such Government, and to provide new Guards for their future security. — Such has been the patient sufferance of these Colonies; and such is now the necessity which constrains them to alter their former Systems of Government. The history of the present King of Great Britain is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations, all having in direct object the establishment of an absolute Tyranny over these States. To prove this, let Facts be submitted to a candid world.

He has refused his Assent to Laws, the most wholesome and necessary for the public good.

He has forbidden his Governors to pass Laws of immediate and pressing importance, unless suspended in their operation till his Assent should be obtained; and when so suspended, he has utterly neglected to attend to them.

He has refused to pass other Laws for the accommodation of large districts of people, unless those people would relinquish the right of Representation in the Legislature, a right inestimable to them and formidable to tyrants only.

He has called together legislative bodies at places unusual, uncomfortable, and distant from the depository of their Public Records, for the sole purpose of fatiguing them into compliance with his measures.

He has dissolved Representative Houses repeatedly, for opposing with manly firmness his invasions on the rights of the people.

He has refused for a long time, after such dissolutions, to cause others to be elected, whereby the Legislative Powers, incapable of Annihilation, have returned to the People at large for their exercise; the State remaining in the mean time exposed to all the dangers of invasion from without, and convulsions within.

He has endeavoured to prevent the population of these States; for that purpose obstructing the Laws for Naturalization of Foreigners; refusing to pass others to encourage their migrations hither, and raising the conditions of new Appropriations of Lands.

He has obstructed the Administration of Justice by refusing his Assent to Laws for establishing Judiciary Powers.

He has made Judges dependent on his Will alone for the tenure of their offices, and the amount and payment of their salaries.

He has erected a multitude of New Offices, and sent hither swarms of Officers to harass our people and eat out their substance.

He has kept among us, in times of peace, Standing Armies without the Consent of our legislatures.

He has affected to render the Military independent of and superior to the Civil Power.

He has combined with others to subject us to a jurisdiction foreign to our constitution, and unacknowledged by our laws; giving his Assent to their Acts of pretended Legislation:

For quartering large bodies of armed troops among us:

For protecting them, by a mock Trial from punishment for any Murders which they should commit on the Inhabitants of these States:

For cutting off our Trade with all parts of the world:

For imposing Taxes on us without our Consent:

For depriving us in many cases, of the benefit of Trial by Jury:

For transporting us beyond Seas to be tried for pretended offences:

For abolishing the free System of English Laws in a neighbouring Province, establishing therein an Arbitrary government, and enlarging its Boundaries so as to render it at once an example and fit instrument for introducing the same absolute rule into these Colonies.

For taking away our Charters, abolishing our most valuable Laws and altering fundamentally the Forms of our Governments:

For suspending our own Legislatures, and declaring themselves invested with power to legislate for us in all cases whatsoever.

He has abdicated Government here, by declaring us out of his Protection and waging War against us.

He has plundered our seas, ravaged our coasts, burnt our towns, and destroyed the lives of our people.

He is at this time transporting large Armies of foreign Mercenaries to compleat the works of death, desolation, and tyranny, already begun with circumstances of Cruelty & Perfidy scarcely paralleled in the most barbarous ages, and totally unworthy the Head of a civilized nation.

He has constrained our fellow Citizens taken Captive on the high Seas to bear Arms against their Country, to become the executioners of their friends and Brethren, or to fall themselves by their Hands.

He has excited domestic insurrections amongst us, and has endeavoured to bring on the inhabitants of our frontiers, the merciless Indian Savages whose known rule of warfare, is an undistinguished destruction of all ages, sexes and conditions.

In every stage of these Oppressions We have Petitioned for Redress in the most humble terms: Our repeated Petitions have been answered only by repeated injury. A Prince, whose character is thus marked by every act which may define a Tyrant, is unfit to be the ruler of a free people.

Nor have We been wanting in attentions to our British brethren. We have warned them from time to time of attempts by their legislature to extend an unwarrantable jurisdiction over us. We have reminded them of the circumstances of our emigration and settlement here. We have appealed to their native justice and magnanimity, and we have conjured them by the ties of our common kindred to disavow these usurpations, which would inevitably interrupt our connections and correspondence. They too have been deaf to the voice of justice and of consanguinity. We must, therefore, acquiesce in the necessity, which denounces our Separation, and hold them, as we hold the rest of mankind, Enemies in War, in Peace Friends.

We, therefore, the Representatives of the united States of America, in General Congress, Assembled, appealing to the Supreme Judge of the world for the rectitude of our intentions, do, in the Name, and by Authority of the good People of these Colonies, solemnly publish and declare, That these united Colonies are, and of Right ought to be Free and Independent States, that they are Absolved from all Allegiance to the British Crown, and that all political connection between them and the State of Great Britain, is and ought to be totally dissolved; and that as Free and Independent States, they have full Power to levy War, conclude Peace, contract Alliances, establish Commerce, and to do all other Acts and Things which Independent States may of right do. — And for the

support of this Declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of Divine Providence,
we mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes, and our sacred Honor.

Appendix B

Declaration of Sentiments

When, in the course of human events, it becomes necessary for one portion of the family of man to assume among the people of the earth a position different from that which they have hitherto occupied, but one to which the laws of nature and of nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes that impel them to such a course.

We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men and women are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness; that to secure these rights governments are instituted, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed. Whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of those who suffer from it to refuse allegiance to it, and to insist upon the institution of a new government, laying its foundation on such principles, and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their safety and happiness.

Prudence, indeed, will dictate that governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and, accordingly, all experience has shown that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they were accustomed. But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same object, evinces a design to reduce them under absolute despotism, it is their duty to throw off such government and to provide

new guards for their future security. Such has been the patient sufferance of the women under this government, and such is now the necessity which constrains them to demand the equal station to which they are entitled.

The history of mankind is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations on the part of man toward woman, having in direct object the establishment of an absolute tyranny over her. To prove this, let facts be submitted to a candid world.

He has never permitted her to exercise her inalienable right to the elective franchise.

He has compelled her to submit to law in the formation of which she had no voice.

He has withheld from her rights which are given to the most ignorant and degraded men, both natives and foreigners.

Having deprived her of this first right as a citizen, the elective franchise, thereby leaving her without representation in the halls of legislation, he has oppressed her on all sides.

He has made her, if married, in the eye of the law, civilly dead.

He has taken from her all right in property, even to the wages she earns.

He has made her morally, an irresponsible being, as she can commit many crimes with impunity, provided they be done in the presence of her husband. In the covenant of marriage, she is compelled to promise obedience to her husband, he becoming, to all intents and purposes, her master — the law giving him power to deprive her of her liberty and to administer chastisement.

He has so framed the laws of divorce, as to what shall be the proper causes and, in case of separation, to whom the guardianship of the children shall be given, as to be wholly regardless of the happiness of the women — the law, in all cases, going upon a false supposition of the supremacy of man and giving all power into his hands.

After depriving her of all rights as a married woman, if single and the owner of property, he has taxed her to support a government which recognizes her only when her property can be made profitable to it.

He has monopolized nearly all the profitable employments, and from those she is permitted to follow, she receives but a scanty remuneration. He closes against her all the avenues to wealth and distinction which he considers most honorable to himself. As a teacher of theology, medicine, or law, she is not known.

He has denied her the facilities for obtaining a thorough education, all colleges being closed against her.

He allows her in church, as well as state, but a subordinate position, claiming apostolic authority for her exclusion from the ministry, and, with some exceptions, from any public participation in the affairs of the church.

He has created a false public sentiment by giving to the world a different code of morals for men and women, by which moral delinquencies which exclude women from society are not only tolerated but deemed of little account in man.

He has usurped the prerogative of Jehovah himself, claiming it as his right to assign for her a sphere of action, when that belongs to her conscience and to her God.

He has endeavored, in every way that he could, to destroy her confidence in her own powers, to lessen her self-respect, and to make her willing to lead a dependent and abject life.

Now, in view of this entire disfranchisement of one-half the people of this country, their social and religious degradation, in view of the unjust laws above mentioned, and because women do feel themselves aggrieved, oppressed, and fraudulently deprived of their most sacred rights, we insist that they have immediate admission to all the rights and privileges which belong to them as citizens of the United States.

In entering upon the great work before us, we anticipate no small amount of misconception, misrepresentation, and ridicule; but we shall use every instrumentality within our power to effect our object. We shall employ agents, circulate tracts, petition the state and national legislatures, and endeavor to enlist the pulpit and the press in our behalf. We hope this Convention will be followed by a series of conventions embracing every part of the country.

Resolutions

Whereas, the great precept of nature is conceded to be that "man shall pursue his own true and substantial happiness." Blackstone in his Commentaries remarks that this law of nature, being coeval with mankind and dictated by God himself, is, of course, superior in obligation to any other. It is binding over all the globe, in all countries and at all times; no human laws are of any validity if contrary to this, and such of them as are valid derive all their force, and all their validity, and all their authority, mediately and immediately, from this original; therefore,

Resolved, That such laws as conflict, in any way, with the true and substantial happiness of woman, are contrary to the great precept of nature and of no validity, for this is "superior in obligation to any other."

Resolved, that all laws which prevent woman from occupying such a station in society as her conscience shall dictate, or which place her in a position inferior to that of man, are contrary to the great precept of nature and therefore of no force or authority.

Resolved, that woman is man's equal, was intended to be so by the Creator, and the highest good of the race demands that she should be recognized as such.

Resolved, that the women of this country ought to be enlightened in regard to the laws under which they live, that they may no longer publish their degradation by declaring themselves satisfied with their present position, nor their ignorance, by asserting that they have all the rights they want.

Resolved, that inasmuch as man, while claiming for himself intellectual superiority, does accord to woman moral superiority, it is preeminently his duty to encourage her to speak and teach, as she has an opportunity, in all religious assemblies.

Resolved, that the same amount of virtue, delicacy, and refinement of behavior that is required of woman in the social state also be required of man, and the same transgressions should be visited with equal severity on both man and woman.

Resolved, that the objection of indelicacy and impropriety, which is so often brought against woman when she addresses a public audience, comes with a very ill grace from those who encourage, by their attendance, her appearance on the stage, in the concert, or in feats of the circus.

Resolved, that woman has too long rested satisfied in the circumscribed limits which corrupt customs and a perverted application of the Scriptures have marked out for her, and that it is time she should move in the enlarged sphere which her great Creator has assigned her.

Resolved, that it is the duty of the women of this country to secure to themselves their sacred right to the elective franchise.

Resolved, that the equality of human rights results necessarily from the fact of the identity of the race in capabilities and responsibilities.

Resolved, that the speedy success of our cause depends upon the zealous and untiring efforts of both men and women for the overthrow of the monopoly of the pulpit, and for the securing to woman an equal participation with men in the various trades, professions, and commerce.

Resolved, therefore, that, being invested by the Creator with the same capabilities and same consciousness of responsibility for their exercise, it is demonstrably the right and duty of woman, equally with man, to promote every righteous cause by every righteous means; and especially in regard to the great subjects of morals and religion, it is self-evidently her right to participate with her brother in teaching them, both in private and in public, by writing and by speaking, by any instrumentalities proper to be used, and in any assemblies proper to be held; and this being a self-evident truth growing out of the divinely implanted principles of human nature, any custom or authority adverse to it, whether modern or wearing the hoary sanction of antiquity, is to be regarded as a self-evident falsehood, and at war with mankind.

Appendix C

Printed Versions of Sojourner Truth's Speech at the 1851 Akron, Ohio Women's Rights Convention.

I. Sojourner Truth's speech as reported by Marius Robinson in the June 21, 1851, issue of the *Anti-Slavery Bugle* and the one reprinted by Carleton Mabee in *Sojourner Truth: Slave, Prophet, Legend*:

I want to say a few words about this matter. I am a woman's rights. I have as much muscle as any man, and can do as much work as any man. I have plowed and reaped and husked and chopped and mowed, and can any man do more than that? I have heard much about the sexes being equal. I can carry as much as any man, and can eat as much too, if I can get it. I am as strong as any man that is now. As for intellect, all I can say is, if a woman have a pint, and a man a quart—why can't she have her little pint full? You need not be afraid to give us our rights for fear we will take too much, —for we can't take more than our pint'll hold. The poor men seems to be all in confusion, and don't know what to do. Why children, if you have woman's rights, give it to her and you will feel better. You will have your own rights, and they won't be so much trouble. I can't read, but I can hear. I have heard the bible and have learned that Eve caused man to sin. Well, if woman upset the world, do give her a chance to set it right side up again. The Lady has spoken about Jesus, how he never spurned woman from him, and she was right. When Lazarus died, Mary and Martha came to him with faith and love and besought him to raise their brother. And Jesus wept and Lazarus came forth. And how

came Jesus into the world? Through God who created him and the woman who bore him. Man, where was your part? But the women are coming up blessed be God and a few of the men are coming up with them. But man is in a tight place, the poor slave is on him, woman is coming on him, he is surely between a hawk and a buzzard.

<http://www.sojournertruth.org/Library/Speeches/Default.htm#RIGHTS>, last accessed 4/27/11

Mabee 1993, 81-82

II. The speech as reported in *Narrative of Sojourner Truth* based on the account in Frances Gage's May 2, 1863 *National Anti-Slavery Standard* article:

The leaders of the movement trembled on seeing a tall, gaunt black woman, in a gray dress and white turban, surmounted by an uncouth sun-bonnet, march deliberately into the church, walk with the air of a queen up the aisle, and take her seat upon the pulpit steps. A buzz of disapprobation was heard all over the house, and such words as these fell upon listening ears:—

“‘An abolition affair!’ ‘Woman’s rights and niggers!’ ‘We told you so!’ ‘Go it, old darkey!’

I chanced upon that occasion to wear my first laurels in public life as president of the meeting. At my request, order was restored and the business of the hour went on. The morning session was held; the evening exercises came and went. Old Sojourner, quiet and reticent as the ‘Libyan Statue,’ sat crouched against the wall on the corner of the pulpit stairs, her sun-bonnet shading her eyes, her elbows on her knees, and her chin resting upon her broad, hard palm. At intermission she was busy, selling ‘The Life of

Sojourner Truth,' a narrative of her own strange and adventurous life. Again and again timorous and trembling ones came to me and said with earnestness, 'Do n't let her speak, Mrs. Gage, it will ruin us. Every newspaper in the land will have our cause mixed with abolition and niggers, and we shall be utterly denounced.' My only answer was, 'We shall see when the time comes.'

The second day the work waxed warm. Methodist, Baptist, Episcopal, Presbyterian, and Universalist ministers came in to hear and discuss the resolutions presented. One claimed superior rights and privileges for man on the ground of superior intellect; another, because of the manhood of Christ. 'If God had desired the equality of woman, he would have given some token of his will through the birth, life, and death of the Saviour.' Another gave us a theological view of the sin of our first mother. There were few women in those days that dared to 'speak in meeting,' and the august teachers of the people were seeming to get the better of us, while the boys in the galleries and the sneerers among the pews were hugely enjoying the discomfiture, as they supposed, of the 'strong minded.' Some of the tender-skinned friends were on the point of losing dignity, and the atmosphere of the convention betokened a storm.

Slowly from her seat in the corner rose Sojourner Truth, who, till now, had scarcely lifted her head. 'Do n't let her speak!' gasped half a dozen in my ear. She moved slowly and solemnly to the front, laid her old bonnet at her feet, and turned her great, speaking eyes to me. There was a hissing sound of disapprobation above and below. I rose and announced 'Sojourner Truth,' and begged the audience to keep silence for a few moments. The tumult subsided at once, and every eye was fixed on this almost Amazon form, which stood nearly six feet high, head erect, and eye piercing the upper

air, like one in a dream. At her first word, there was a profound hush. She spoke in deep tones, which, though not loud, reached every ear in the house, and away through the throng at the doors and windows:—

“Wall, chilern, whar dar is so much racket dar must be somethin’ out o’ kilter. I tink dat ‘twixt de niggers of de Souf and de womin at de Norf, all talkin’ ‘bout rights, de white men will be in a fix pretty soon. But what’s all dis here talkin’ ‘bout?”

“Dat man ober dar say dat womin needs to be helped into carriages, and lifted ober ditches, and to hab de best place everywhar. Nobody eber helps me into carriages, or ober mud-puddles, or gibbs me any best place!” And raising herself to her full height, and her voice to a pitch like rolling thunder, she asked. ‘And ain’t I a woman? Look at me! Look at my arm! (and she bared her right arm to the shoulder, showing her tremendous muscular power). I have ploughed, and planted, and gathered into barns, and no man could head me! And ain’t I a woman? I could work as much and eat as much as a man—when I could get it—and bear de lash as well! And ain’t I a woman? I have borne thirteen chilern, and seen ‘em mos’ all sold off to slavery, and when I cried out with my mother’s grief, none but Jesus heard me! And ain’t I a woman?”

“Den dey talks ‘bout dis ting in de head; what dis dey call it?” (“Intellect,” whispered someone near.) “Dat’s it, honey. What’s dat got to do wid womin’s rights or nigger’s rights? If my cup won’t hold but a pint, and yourn holds a quart, wouldn’t ye be mean not to let me have my little half-measure full?” And she pointed her significant finger, and sent a keen glance at the minister who had made the argument. The cheering was long and loud.

“Den dat little man in back dar, he say women can't have as much rights as men, 'cause Christ wan't a woman! Whar did your Christ come from?” Rolling thunder couldn't have stilled that crowd, as did those deep, wonderful tones, as she stood there with out-stretched arms and eyes of fire. Raising her voice still louder, she repeated, “Whar did your Christ come from? From God and a woman! Man had nothin' to do wid Him.”

Oh, what a rebuke that was to that little man. Turning again to another objector, she took up the defense of Mother Eve. I can not follow her through it all. It was pointed, and witty, and solemn; eliciting at almost every sentence deafening applause; and she ended by asserting:

“If de fust woman God ever made was strong enough to turn de world upside down all alone, dese women togedder (and she glanced her eye over the platform) ought to be able to turn it back, and get it right side up again! And now dey is asking to do it, de men better let 'em.” Long-continued cheering greeted this. “Bleeged to ye for hearin' on me, and now ole Sojourner han't got nothin' more to say.”

Amid roars of applause, she turned to her corner, leaving more than one of us with streaming eyes and hearts beating with gratitude. She had taken us up in her strong arms and carried us safely over the slough of difficulty, turning the whole tide in our favor. I have never in my life seen anything like the magical influence that subdued the mobbish spirit of the day and turned the jibes and sneers of an excited crowd into notes of respect and admiration. Hundreds rushed up to shake hands, and congratulate the glorious old mother and bid her God speed on her mission of 'testifying again concerning the wickedness of this 'ere people.

III. Finally, the version most likely to end up on a poster or in a textbook:

Well, children, where there is so much racket there must be something out of kilter. I think that 'twixt the negroes of the South and the women at the North, all talking about rights, the white men will be in a fix pretty soon. But what's all this here talking about?

That man over there says that women need to be helped into carriages, and lifted over ditches, and to have the best place everywhere. Nobody ever helps me into carriages, or over mud-puddles, or gives me any best place! And ain't I a woman? Look at me! Look at my arm! I have ploughed and planted, and gathered into barns, and no man could head me! And ain't I a woman? I could work as much and eat as much as a man - when I could get it - and bear the lash as well! And ain't I a woman? I have borne thirteen children, and seen most all sold off to slavery, and when I cried out with my mother's grief, none but Jesus heard me! And ain't I a woman?

Then they talk about this thing in the head; what's this they call it? [member of audience whispers, "intellect"] That's it, honey. What's that got to do with women's rights or negroes' rights? If my cup won't hold but a pint, and yours holds a quart, wouldn't you be mean not to let me have my little half measure full?

Then that little man in black there, he says women can't have as much rights as men, 'cause Christ wasn't a woman! Where did your Christ come from? Where did your Christ come from? From God and a woman! Man had nothing to do with Him.

If the first woman God ever made was strong enough to turn the world upside down all alone, these women together ought to be able to turn it back, and get it right side up again! And now they is asking to do it, the men better let them.

Obliged to you for hearing me, and now old Sojourner ain't got nothing more to say.

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