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DISCOVERING REALITY

Feminist Perspectives on Epistemology,
Metaphysics, Methodology,
and Philosophy of Science

Second Edition

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This Second Edition is dedicated to the memory of Merrill B. Hintikka, without whose vigorous struggles this collection could never have reached publication. Her intellectual insights, feminist energies, laughter, and enthusiastic camaraderie in projects such as this are sadly missed.

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INTRODUCTION TO THE SECOND EDITION:

DISCOVERING REALITY TWENTY YEARS LATER

SANDRA HARDING

It is unusual for an anthology to be reissued two decades later. How should we understand the continuing value of these essays for today's students, teachers, and scholars in philosophy, women's studies, and other fields?

The good news is that the issues raised by these essays are still relevant. The collection remains valuable as a scholarly and classroom resource. Indeed, we should probably understand its usefulness in these contexts as having expanded since its original publication. The fact that feminists reasonably can address the abstract, philosophic kinds of concerns represented here has now become more familiar to readers in virtually all research fields, outside as well as inside feminist research and scholarship and women's studies programs. Moreover, while most of the authors were junior scholars at the time, many have now become distinguished senior scholars whose work is widely known in this country and elsewhere. Thus the scholarly credentials of the collection and importance of its kind of issues are more obvious now than initially. Consequently, these essays are both accessible and of interest to a far broader audience than was the case two decades ago. While only pedagogically highly talented teachers, intrepid ones at that, attempted to teach this collection in upper-level undergraduate courses in philosophy or women's studies two decades ago, today such audiences are far more prepared to understand these authors' concerns. The book may be taught at a lower level of familiarity with feminist scholarship and with its stated philosophic topics than at the time of its first publication.¹

There are other issues that this second edition brings into focus in valuable ways. One is that feminist work in epistemology, metaphysics, methodology, and philosophy of science has been a collective endeavor from the beginning. Without taking away from the brilliance, innovative strategies, and truly difficult labors required on the part of the individual authors to produce these analyses, readers can see that it is a transformed and transforming collective consciousness that the anthology presents. Of course the mere appearance of an anthology that is breaking ground in its era provides evidence for that claim. Moreover, the early standpoint epistemology papers in the collection specifically make such a claim: subjugated groups can become groups *for*

¹ Indeed several of these essays have been reprinted in undergraduate philosophy and women's studies texts.

themselves - progressive collective consciousnesses - through the political struggles that it takes to see the actualities of social relations (and their directing conceptual schemes) beneath the ideological "alibis" for them to which we are daily exposed. It takes "science and politics," as Nancy Hartsock puts the point, to learn how to use distinctive forms of exploitation and oppression (such as housework, the institution of motherhood, the exploitation of women's bodies, or women's emotional labor) as sources of collective insights into how society is actually structured.²

However, these essays also are notable for the ways in which they were addressed to other feminists at least as much as to mainstream audiences. They mark the emergence in philosophy of the idea, revolutionary at the time in such scholarly and research contexts, that women should listen and write to each other. Or, rather, since the collection includes two male feminist authors - also an unusual phenomenon at the time - that feminists should listen and talk with and to each other. Of course this was a principle of the women's movement which played such a powerful role in stimulating the issues of this collection. Yet such feminist scholarship of the era often was addressed to the hostile and uncaring androcentric mainstream. Indeed, it had to be so addressed if the task of transforming knowledge-producing institutions, their canons, practices, and cultures were to succeed. Yet there was another important task for feminist thinkers also - to talk with each other, often across otherwise formidable disciplinary boundaries - with which this collection engaged.

This leads to another issue that this collection brings into sharp focus: feminist work in epistemology, metaphysics, methodology and philosophy of science has from the very beginning been actively engaged by scholars working in disciplines other than philosophy.³ While these concerns certainly have spread from the writings of philosophers to other disciplines, they were also initially formulated in those disciplines from whence philosophers have in turn learned. The collection records one "escape route" of significant areas of philosophic work from control by philosophy departments and institutions--a phenomenon far more widespread than feminist philosophy. Moreover, the kinds of arguments these feminist scholars posed have also been raised by poststructuralist and postmodernist thinkers, as well as by race and ethnicity theorists, and by multicultural and postcolonial studies in science and other

² See *The Feminist Standpoint Reader: Intellectual and Political Controversies*, ed. Sandra Harding (New York: Routledge, 2003) for highlights of two decades of lively contestation and revision of standpoint approaches.

³ In addition to philosophy, the authors here came from disciplinary backgrounds in political science (3 authors), biology (4 authors), physics, psychoanalytic theory, and history of science. In this respect the collection does not differ from mainstream philosophy of science, where influential figures in recent decades have been formally or informally trained in physics, biology, the history of science, linguistics, and behaviorist psychology.

disciplines. (Harding 1993, 1998, Harding and Figueroa, 2003). This is so even though the essays themselves are, with just a few exceptions, firmly situated in the analytic tradition from which many of the authors had emerged (a point to which I return.) The depth and breadth of the "troubles" with which mainstream Western philosophy has been confronted are far greater now than two decades ago. *Discovering Reality* has played at least some small role in increasing these troubles.⁴

Yet republication also brings into focus some bad news - namely that the issues raised by these authors *are* indeed still relevant, that they still feel freshly argued two decades later! Unfortunately, mainstream epistemology, metaphysics, methodology, and philosophy of science, as practiced in the natural and social sciences as well as in philosophy, have not yet fully adopted feminist insights (to understate the issue), though the kinds of concerns raised in these essays have increasingly stimulated self-reflection in these fields. To be sure, feminist understandings have been less difficult (but not easy) to integrate into sociology and biology, with their histories of thinking about how politics systematically shapes inquiry, than into economics, physics, and the analytic tradition of philosophy itself, which lack such histories.⁵

The next section reminds readers of the historical context in which these essays were produced. The original introduction to the collection, which follows this one, guides readers into main themes of the individual essays, so such introductions will not be repeated here. Instead, the third section identifies central issues in these essays that have received increasing attention in feminist and other research and scholarship during the last two decades. The fourth section identifies additional concerns that may be usefully examined in thinking about these essays.

Historical Context: "Riding the Torrent of Our Aging Revolutions"⁶

The late Merrill Hintikka and I conceptualized this collection in the late 1970's.⁷ We put out a call for papers through the Society for Women in

⁴ Another piece of good news here is that the collection initially found a publisher who has remained enthusiastic about the kind of scholarship that this volume represents. See, for example, Nelson and Nelson 1996. It has also lead the way among mainstream publishers of philosophy of science in presenting postcolonial science and technology studies, which has come to share assumptions and projects with some feminist science and technology studies authors, such as this one. See, for example, Petitjean, Jami, and Moulin 1992, and Selin 1997.

⁵ Of course marxist theory can be considered the origin for such reflection on how social relations and their politics shape thought. Yet this intellectual tradition has a significant presence in only a small handful of U.S. social science and philosophy departments today, and virtually no presence in U.S. economic policy. To be sure, U.S. policy is far less friendly to centering voices of women and of the poor in global policy than are the vast majority of nations around the world.

⁶ The phrase is Kathryn Addelson's, in correspondence.

Philosophy and other organizations and journals.⁸ I recollect that I was jealous of my colleagues in other fields of philosophy who could far more easily bring the energy and insights of the women's liberation movement, the emerging women's caucuses in the disciplines, and the fledgling women's studies programs to the work into which they had been trained in ethics, political philosophy, philosophy of law and the history of philosophy. But how were feminist concerns and insights to be brought to bear on epistemology, metaphysics, methodology, and philosophy of science--the philosophic fields that were purportedly completely immune to social influences? This was the question we posed in the call for papers (quoted in the original introduction to the collection). To our astonishment, we received some 120 submissions. Evidently we were not the only feminists puzzling over such questions. The time was right for producing this collection.

Let us recollect the larger social, political, and intellectual contexts in which these authors worked and the book was produced. The Cold War was still on. The scars of the U.S. engagement in Viet Nam had barely begun to heal. The spirit of the revolutions of the 1960's was still alive--the civil rights movement, anti-war movements, the counterculture movements-- though aging (as Kathy Addelson put the point). Yet windows of opportunity that they created were still open.

The Women's Liberation Movement, as it was then called, was almost a decade old and still expanding. Many of the authors here had been activists in it as well as, in most such cases, in others of the 60's movements. The concerns of those activist movements in many respects shape how the philosophic issues are framed in these essays.⁹ Socialist Feminism and the movement referred to as Radical Feminism had emerged to challenge the limited resources provided by both Liberal Feminism and earlier forms of Marxist Feminism for feminist thinking in this "second wave," as it was called, of the women's liberation movement. Women's studies programs and women's caucuses in the disciplines had emerged (The Society for Women in Philosophy had been formed in the early 1970's.) Exciting new work was coming out of women's history, feminist social sciences, and feminist criticisms of biology and the life sciences, as well as in every other research field then represented in North American

⁷ Merrill died January 1, 1987--an untimely death. It is a great loss to philosophy and to feminism that her intellectual brilliance, enthusiastic feminist energy, and superior organizing abilities are no longer with us. It has also been a personal loss to me. She was a splendid collaborator in this project: it could not have happened without her amazonian efforts. It is sad that she cannot get to appreciate the effects of her work. Two other contributors have passed away: Ann Palmeri in 1984, and Louise Marcil-Lacoste in the late 1990's.

⁸ The feminist philosophy journal *Hypatia* would not begin publication until 1983, the year in which this anthology appeared.

⁹ Addelson pointed this out to me.

universities. Feminists in England and France had in different ways reclaimed important insights of psychoanalysis in the face of compelling feminist critiques of this theory's assumptions. Interdisciplinary pedagogical and scholarly projects were becoming more acceptable in the humanities and social sciences.

Moreover, fifteen years after the publication of Thomas Kuhn's *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (1962/1970), and more than a quarter century after W. V. O. Quine's (1953) challenges to logical positivist assumptions, "Science, Technology, and Society" programs were beginning to appear on campuses, taking the social studies of science in directions different from the earlier "History and Philosophy of Science" programs. Significantly, Kuhn himself used a political language of reform and revolution to describe patterns in his new kind of history of science; one wonders to what extent that rhetoric itself helped to link feminist science studies into the new social and then cultural studies of science and technology. Progressive science movements were questioning natural sciences' links with militarism, technologies of social control, environmental destruction, and the deepening exploitation of labor in the third as well as the first world, threatening the pose of value-neutrality characteristic of philosophies of those sciences as well. In this context, analytic epistemology and philosophy of science were actively developing the "barricades" mentality still evident today, a stance which insists on separating scientific and philosophic issues further and further from consideration of how the sciences actually function in the world today.¹⁰ In the social sciences, too, had appeared criticisms of anthropology's and sociology's complicity with power.

Thus on the one hand, young feminist scholars were trained up in an environment of lively disputes around the new research possibilities opened up by Quine, Kuhn, left critics, and the subsequent work of historians, sociologists, and ethnographers of the natural and social sciences. On the other hand, positivist tendencies in the disciplines (including in analytic philosophy), firmly declared on the side of conventional philosophies of "pure science" and their accompanying epistemologies, metaphysics and methodologies. In the context of the concerns of the rising women's movement and the still prevalent spirit of such 60's directives as "resist authority!", what were young feminist scholars to do but challenge the authority of their disciplines to determine what counted as legitimate topics, theories, and methods?!

¹⁰ Indeed, today there is little if any attempt to relocate mainstream philosophy of science onto the new maps provided by accounts of the "net society," where the production and management of information has moved to the base of the global political economy. See, e.g., the three volume series by Manuel Castells (1997/2000).

Meanwhile applied ethics was gaining practitioners and audiences, and philosophic concern with ethical issues was moving outside the academy. And feminists were casting skeptical eyes on what were becoming identified as androcentric assumptions of canonical arguments and concepts in both ethics and political philosophy.

The authors of the essays in this collection, like feminists in every field, were mostly early in their research and scholarly careers. They were entering disciplines that were largely hostile to the presence of women, and deeply devoted to positivist projects that had been most recently reconceptualized in the 1950's. Publishing such essays was risky for their careers.¹¹ These disciplines saw feminism as perhaps a legitimate approach insofar as it focused on women's conditions in social life, but could not even conceptualize what was meant by criticisms of androcentrism in the conceptual frameworks of the disciplines. At its first publication these essays were perceived by many as scandalous affronts to the tried and true standards of philosophy and other disciplines. Of course many feminists enthusiastically greeted the appearance of this collection, for it helped to open the way for deeper understandings of the ways epistemology, metaphysics, methodology, and philosophy of science were androcentric.

In short it was a heady moment when intellectual, institutional, and personal transformation seemed crucial, possible, difficult, and exciting. If this narrative suffers from nostalgia, so be it. It was an extraordinary moment, one that made it possible to imagine this collection.¹²

Let us turn to identify some of the central themes these essays raised, and in some cases extensively developed, that have remained the focus of feminist concern.

Persisting Issues

Of course there are more such issues in the papers than the few I can mention here. Yet the ones below would be obvious candidates for anyone's list. These issues remain relevant not because they have been settled, but rather because they have come to serve as important sites of widespread intellectual and political debate; that is what keeps them in focus.

No social immunity for cognitive, technical core of sciences. The most abstract concepts, forms of reasoning, and research methods are not immune to social values and interests--in this case, sexist and androcentric ones. Both Enlightenment and Marxian concepts, reasoning, and methods receive this kind

¹¹ My very supportive department chair, when he heard the title of this proposed collection, said "It better be good!" I knew what he meant.

¹² As readers will see below, it may have been a stimulating moment, but it certainly was not a perfect one in which to imagine such a project.

of analysis in these essays.¹³ This is not a matter of "bias;" androcentric thinking is not a "prejudice" created by false beliefs and bad attitudes. Rather, the kinds of activities socially assigned to men and from which women tend to be excluded make certain kinds of concepts and thinking appear natural and right to men. Our social activities both enable and limit what we can know. Distinctive kinds of thinking have distinctive material conditions. Thus the cognitive, technical core of philosophy and of the natural sciences, not just the explicit principles and practices of scientists, philosophers and their institutions, is a legitimate object of social and scientific criticism. Aristotle's metaphysics, "the problems of philosophy" in Plato, Descartes, Hobbes, and Rousseau, the adversary method of analytic philosophy, individuation principles in philosophical ontology, typical understandings of evolutionary theory (including preoccupations with scarcity and competition), and conceptions of objectivity in natural and social sciences are objects of such scrutiny in these essays.

Scientifically productive political struggles. Thus, political and ethical engagement and struggle can be productive of knowledge. Of course politics can be an obstacle to the production of knowledge; but under certain circumstances it also can be productive. Ann Palmeri points out how Charlotte Perkins Gilman's feminist political ideal of androgyny promoted attention to how humans were damaged by exaggeration of sex-differences. Hartsock, too, argues that it takes political struggles to define, draw attention to, and get support for kinds of research that can improve women's conditions.

After absolutism and relativism. It is necessary to construct/identify a methodological and epistemological position that is neither absolutist (nor foundationalist) nor damagingly relativist. Such a position must neither disregard how our very best of scientific beliefs are always constituted within distinctive historical "epistemes" or discourses, nor reduce these beliefs to merely discursive products. Nature and good reasoning play important roles in the procedures that generate the growth of knowledge, but they are not the only such players since social relations and culture also help to constitute scientific problematics, concepts, favored hypotheses, and research designs. One of the continuing challenges in contemporary intellectual life is how to articulate a position that can acknowledge the valuable roles that both nature and culture play in producing reliable beliefs. The essays here struggle to maintain such balance against the pressures toward an absolutist foundationalism or a constructivist relativism.

A role for women's experiences and collective consciousnesses. The experiences of women, and thought that begins in their lives, can advance the

¹³ A case can be made that Marxism is a kind of Enlightenment project, or at least a modernist one.

growth of knowledge. Progressive collective consciousnesses, new subjects of knowledge and history, can be created through the kinds of political struggles identified above. Today controversies continue over what are the kinds of experiences and thought that have such effects, and how can a researcher identify who are the women from whose lives feminist research should start? Moreover, what are the processes through which a group comes to a collective consciousness that can define projects that are "for themselves" rather than for research disciplines and oppressive public institutions such disciplines serve?

Today these issues remain widely engaged and immensely controversial.¹⁴ Feminist social movements and the thinking emerging from them have contributed to the epistemological crisis of the modern West, as this phenomenon is sometimes identified. Yet they have also contributed to fruitful reflection on resolutions to this crisis.

Additional Concerns

Yet there are other issues that have become centered in feminist thought only after these essays were written. The papers here provide excellent occasions for exploring such topics, and for thinking about the social and intellectual conditions that worked against their articulation here.

Differences between women. The roles of racism, ethnic discrimination, and of other social and cultural differences between women and their contexts in the production and legitimation of knowledge are only occasionally glimpsed in these papers. Occasionally one can see here a kind of peripheral awareness that if gender and class hierarchies have created different and oppositional bodies of and standards for knowledge, then so, too, should have race and ethnicity hierarchies.¹⁵ Consequently missing from these analyses is a focus on conceptualizing the need to "decenter" the subjects of knowledge (to imagine many differently-located and equally productive subjects of feminist knowledge, for example). Also missing is concern for the ways in which race, class, ethnicity, sexuality, culture, and history always intersect with gender to create historically specific subjects of knowledge and history. Yet such issues easily can be raised, and the material causes and ideological reasons for such limitations at the time and place this collection was produced discussed. How should the essays' topics look different if one takes account of these "difference" analyses?

¹⁴ To see one sample of such debates, see Harding 2003. These or parallel debates have been advanced also in race, ethnicity, and postcoloniality-based knowledge movements. See Harding 1998 and Hess 1995 for two overviews of postcolonial science studies.

¹⁵ See Chela Sandoval's (1990, 1991) discussions of the race-blindness of white feminist scholars during this period. Several of the authors here went on to publish books specifically focused on issues of race and imperialism. (Flax 1998, Harding 1993, 1998, Spelman 1988.)

Eurocentrism, heterosexism. Nor do the essays raise issues of Western sciences' complicity with European expansion. Here, too, these papers are still caught in eurocentric assumptions that characterize most contemporary writings in these fields even today, including most Western feminist work. Texts from the multicultural and postcolonial science and technology movement would not begin to be readily available in English until the mid- to late 1980's.¹⁶ Nor were issues of heterosexist assumptions in these fields raised. Indeed such concerns are still difficult to conceptualize in the target fields of the anthology.

Little continental philosophy. With two exceptions--philosophic reflections on and uses of psychoanalysis and on marxism - continental philosophy is not visible in these essays. We do not hear about Adorno, Horkheimer, Marcuse and Habermas, phenomenology or existentialism.¹⁷ Nor do we hear about poststructuralism or postmodernism.¹⁸

It should be noted that these various kinds of silences were not a function of the conscious selection processes of the editors; papers drawing on these traditions were not submitted in response to the call for papers. Most likely, this absence reflects the priorities of graduate education in philosophy and the other disciplines represented here. In the view of one reviewer of the first edition, the absence of continental philosophy influences on the essays was in one respect odd--namely that continental philosophy has greater affinities with feminism than does the analytic tradition which frames so many of these essays. (Held 1984)

Do these essays advance modernism or postmodernism? Most readers have thought it was modernist assumptions in which the essays were grounded, and many of these readers have regarded this as one of the volume's great strengths. Even the title which Merrill and I chose, "Discovering Reality," perpetrates modernist assumptions. However, this feature of the essays--and, indeed, of virtually all of feminist theorizing in every field-- has remained controversial. One reviewer argued that the modernist features of these essays were regressive rather than admirable. This collection was deeply problematic precisely because it was such an important contribution to Western philosophic and political traditions of criticism and reconstruction. It provided "an excellent place to see the dialectic of feminist criticism and reconstruction of epistemology in the tradition of white male Western philosophy, political theory, and radical political movements." This dialectic lead "feminist

¹⁶ See Braidotti et al 1994, Hess 1995, Harding 1998, and Selin 1997 for differently focused reviews of this literature. Petitjean et al 1992 provides one example of early such writings.

¹⁷ Held (1984) raises this question.

¹⁸ These last two were becoming popular in literature departments at the time, but had virtually no presence in philosophy and social science departments. Jane Flax went on to produce influential feminist postmodernist analyses. See her 1990 and 1993.

epistemology, history, and philosophy of science...[to be] in basic tension with their academic sources and also challenge neighboring political theory and practice, for example marxism." (Haraway 1983) Yet other readers have argued that central themes and strategies in contemporary feminist thought in general, and especially in the standpoint epistemology articulated in some of these papers in fact is already postmodernist. Another group argues that feminist thought in general straddles modernism and postmodernism--that feminist thought is an important site where alliances and oppositions between the two are continuously staged. Finally, some observers propose that central strains of feminist epistemology should move past the modern/postmodern dichotomy to take up important issues which are obscured by preoccupations with this binary.¹⁹

What's still useful in psychoanalysis? Insights valuable for Feminisms of the 1970's and 80's had recently been extracted from the otherwise sexist and androcentric texts of psychoanalysis. Several essays here draw on them. But the limitations of these insights to deal with cultural differences between women's situations (and between men's), and other problems with this literature had not yet been articulated. Yet these authors' uses of psychoanalytic insights remain useful when surrounded by appropriate caveats. The jury is not yet in on how best to think about how distinctive processes of becoming a person--of becoming human--help to shape our unconscious fears, desires and motivations, or on how the latter tend to play out in the selection of conceptual frameworks for the production and legitimation of knowledge. Simply ignoring these issues, as critics of psychoanalytic theory tend to do, does not make them disappear.

Feminist ethics and metaethical issues. What are the issues raised for normative ethics and metaethics by these analyses directed at epistemology, metaphysics, methodology, and philosophy of science?²⁰ Ethical issues certainly are visible in the authors' concerns for improving the conditions of women's lives. Of course the collection's announced focus was not on ethics or metaethics. Moreover, its project was certainly ambitious enough already. Philosophies of science and epistemologies encode ethical principles, and ethics and metaethics also have epistemologies, metaphysics, and methodologies to which the arguments here can be pertinent, as subsequent scholars have explored.

Expanding reflexivity. These essays are persistently critical of central features of the conceptual frameworks of the disciplines into which we had been trained. This is a crucial element of a reflexive research and a scholarly position robust enough to maximize the production of knowledge useful in

¹⁹ See the section entitled "Modernism or Postmodernism?" and other essays in Harding 2003 for discussion of this issue.

²⁰ Held (1985) raises this questions.

improving the conditions of women's lives. Yet, like most writings in any and every discipline today, there is here virtually no critical examination of our own new, feminist semantics and conceptual frameworks in these papers.²¹ What would be the main features of such an analysis?

Toward 2023

The continuing strengths and original limitations of these essays, as suggested here, can make this collection an even more interesting scholarly and teaching experience today than was possible two decades ago. The array of topics addressed and disciplinary resources brought to bear on them still stimulate exciting new directions in feminist thinking today. The continuing controversiality of the very fact of feminist approaches to epistemology, metaphysics, methodology, and philosophy of science, as well as of the innovative resources these authors bring to such topics, has insured a continuing and lively career for these essays.²²

Should we hope that these issues will no longer be relevant two decades from now? Or should we envision that the central concerns they address will continue to serve as valuable sites for public debates about how we can design more deeply democratic social relations, and what kinds of knowledge would help us to achieve such a goal?

²¹ This is the kind of point Donna Haraway raised about the modernist assumptions of the volume in the passage quoted above.

²² Thanks to Kathy Addelson, Nancy Hartsock, and Naomi Scheman for helpful responses to an earlier draft.

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CONTRIBUTORS' NOTES: 2003

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Mary Beth Averill taught chemistry and biology in a private alternative high school in Connecticut, and completed a Masters in Social Work degree, writing on "Looking back: Women's Views of Hysterectomy Five or More Years Later." She is now a psychotherapist and writing coach in private practice in Northampton, Massachusetts. She also teaches research methods to graduate students at the Smith College School for Social Work, where she serves on the IRB/Human Subjects Review Board as well. She is interested in research ethics.

Jane Flax teaches political theory at Howard University and is a psychotherapist in private practice in Washington, D.C. However, her thinking has shifted significantly. The philosophic ground for these changes is laid out in her *Thinking Fragments* (1990). Thinking through postmodernist philosophies lead her to explore new directions in epistemology, psychoanalysis and ethics. Further changes emerge in *Disputed Subjects* (1993), where she explores new approaches to knowledge, subjectivity, feminist theorizing, and justice. In *The American Dream in Black and White* (1998) she incorporates critical race theory to track the mutual construction of race and gender. In other essays, including ones in *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* and forthcoming in *Contemporary Psychoanalysis*, she lays out her current rethinking of the unconscious, gender, and sexuality.

Christine Rosenbauer Grontkowski earned her Ph.D. in Philosophy of Science at Fordham University. She taught in the Philosophy Board of Study at State University of New York, College at Purchase, Alfred University in New York state, and at Frostburg State University in Maryland where she was Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs. She served as Chair of the New York Council for the Humanities. She retired in 2001 and lives in Bellingham, WA.

Michael Gross taught the history of science at Hampshire College from 1973 to 1984. From 1984 to 2002 he worked on a series of HIV/AIDS projects in Cambridge Mass, Seattle Washington, and Washington D.C. as a service provider, applied researcher, and director of research and prevention trials, including several projects at the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases' AIDS Division. He now works as an independent consultant to agencies working in such areas.

Sandra Harding is a professor in the Graduate School of Education and Information Studies and in Women's Studies at the University of California at Los Angeles to which she moved after teaching for two decades in the Departments of Philosophy and Sociology at the University of Delaware. She is currently co-editor of *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*. She has authored or edited thirteen books and special issues of journals on issues in feminist and/or postcolonial perspectives on epistemology, methodology, and philosophy of science. These include *The Science Question in Feminism* (1986), *Feminism and Methodology* (1987), *Whose Science? Whose Knowledge? Thinking From Women's Lives* (1991), *The 'Racial' Economy of Science: Toward a Democratic Future* (1993), *Is Science Multicultural? Postcolonialisms, Feminisms, and Epistemologies* (1998), *Science and Other Cultures: Issues in the Philosophy of Science and Technology* (2003) (with Robert M. Figueroa), and *The Feminist Standpoint Theory Reader: Intellectual and Political Controversies*. (2003).

Nancy Hartsock is the author of *Money, Sex, and Power: Toward a Feminist Historical Materialism* (1983), and *The Feminist Standpoint Revisited and Other Essays* (1998). She has co-edited several books and special issues of journals, and is an associate editor of the *Feminist International Journal of Politics*. She has been active in the American Political Science Association, and is a past president of the Western Political Science Association. She is in the Political Science Department at the University of Washington.

Jaakko Hintikka is in the Philosophy Department at Boston University. He is the author of many books on issues in logic, the philosophy of mathematics, and philosophy of language including most recently *The Principles of Mathematics Revisited* (1996), *Language, Truth, and the Logic in Mathematics* (1998), *On Gödel* (2000), and *On Wittgenstein* (2000). He is also the author of articles on Virginia Woolf and the Bloomsbury Circle.

Merrill B. Hintikka passed away January 1, 1987. She was in the Philosophy Department at Florida State University Tallahassee. She co-authored *Philosophical Analysis: An Introduction to Its Language and Techniques* (1963; Third, revised edition 1979), co-edited *Essays on Davidson: Actions and Events* (1985), and co-authored with Jaakko Hintikka *Investigating Wittgenstein* (1986) and *The Logic of Epistemology and the Epistemology of Logic: Selected Essays* (1989).

Ruth Hubbard retired from teaching in 1990 and is Professor Emerita of Biology at Harvard. She writes and lectures, especially on the interdependence of our biology and the ways we live. In this she is trying to counteract the current excessive emphasis on inborn characteristics, and especially genes, to explain everything about us. She is also trying to show what is wrong with the notion, promoted by profit-driven biotechnology, that before long we will be able to alter our own or our descendants' characteristics by manipulating our (or their) genes in predictable ways. She is the author of *The Politics of Women's Biology* (1990), *Exploding the Gene Myth* (coauthored with Elijah Wald; 1993, 1999), and *Profitable Promises: Essays on Women, Science and Health* (1995). She coedited, with Lynda Birke *Reinventing Biology: Respect for Life and the Creation of Knowledge* (1995).

Evelyn Fox Keller received her Ph.D. in theoretical physics at Harvard University, worked for a number of years at the interface of physics and biology, and is now Professor of History and Philosophy of Science in the Program in Science, Technology and Society at Massachusetts Institute of Technology. She is the author of *A Feeling for the Organism: The Life and Work of Barbara McClintock* (1983), *Reflections on Gender and Science* (1985/1995), *Secrets of Life, Secrets of Death: Essays on Language, Gender and Science* (1992); *Refiguring Life: Metaphors of Twentieth Century Biology* (1995), *The Century of the Gene* (2000), and *Making Sense of Life: Models and Explanation in Developmental Biology* (2000).

Lynda Lange is in the Department of Philosophy, Women's Studies, and the Centre for the Study of Religion at the University of Toronto. Her work centers on feminist critique of history of philosophy, with publications on Plato, Aristotle, and Rousseau. Her most recent work is the editing of *Feminist Interpretations of Jean-Jacques Rousseau* in the Penn State Press "Re-Reading the Canon" series (2002). An essay in post-colonial studies in philosophy, on the work of Enrique Dussel, appeared in a special issue of *Hypatia* 13:3 (1998).

Louise Marcil-Lacoste passed away in late 1990s. At the time of her death she was Rector of the University of Montreal.

Janice Moulton teaches in the Department of Philosophy at Smith College. She is co-author of *Scaling the Dragon* (1994), a whimsical story of her adventures while teaching in the People's Republic of China. She wrote *The Organization of Language* (1981), which demonstrates that cellular automata can explain the development of complex syntactic knowledge, *Ethical Problems in Higher Education* (1985), and *The Guidebook for Publishing Philosophy* (1986), now available on the Internet at www.smith.edu/~jmoulton/guidebook. She has written on research fraud, academic freedom and plagiarism, continuing her study of the assumptions that accompany academic methodologies. Recently she completed *Heavy Metal*, an adventure/thriller about a woman helicopter pilot in the U.S. Army.

Ann Palmeri passed away in 1984 at an unfortunately young age. She was a philosopher who taught at Hobart and William Smith Colleges. She also served as a Foreign Expert for the magazine *Women of China*, and gave her services both for the journal and for the Chinese women who published and wrote for the magazine.

Naomi Scheman has taught philosophy and women's studies at the University of Minnesota since 1979. She is also an associate dean in the Graduate School there. Becoming a dean is the latest, and most activist, stage of her interest in how theorizing from variously marginal locations sheds new light on philosophical problems, especially those associated with disciplining knowers. Her essay in this collection appears in her 1993 collected essays, *Engenderings*. She has also (with Peg O'Connor) edited *Feminist Interpretations of Wittgenstein*. Her next volume of collected essays, entitled *Shifting Ground*, will contain "Against Physicalism," a follow-up to the essay in this volume. Other recent publications include "Queering the Center by Centering the Queer: Reflections on Transsexuals and Secular Jews," and "Epistemology Resuscitated: Objectivity as Trustworthiness."

Elizabeth V. Spelman is in the Philosophy Department at Smith College. Her research since the publication of *Discovering Reality* falls into three main areas. Her interest in critical race feminism is most thoroughly represented in *Inessential Woman: Problems of Exclusion in Feminist Thought* (1988). Another focus of inquiry has been the ways in which our emotions are shaped by and give shape to political dimensions of human relations. In *Fruits of*

Sorrow: Framing Our Attention to Suffering (1997) she examines the positive and negative implications of regarding sufferers as tragic figures, as objects of compassion, or as bearers of experience from which others can learn or otherwise profit. Recently she has been exploring the ubiquity and variety of repair activities in which humans engage - from fixing cars to mending friendships to repairing the larger social and political fabric. She explores the nature of such activities and the kinds of knowledge, skills and judgment they require in *Repair: The Impulse to Restore in a Fragile World* (2002).

Judith Hicks Stiehm is Professor of Political Science at Florida International University, where she served as Provost and Academic Vice President for four years. She has taught at San Francisco State University, the University of Wisconsin, the University of California Los Angeles, and the University of Southern California. She has been a Visiting Professor at the U.S. Army Peacekeeping Institute and at the Strategic Studies Institute at Carlisle Barracks. Her books include *Nonviolent Power: Active and Passive Resistance*, *Bring Me Men and Women: Mandated Change at the U.S. Air Force Academy*, *Arms and the Enlisted Woman, It's Our Military Too!*, and *The U.S. Army War College: Military Education in Democracy*. Stiehm has served on the Defense Advisory Committee on Women in the Military.

INTRODUCTION

During the last decade, feminist research has attempted to add understandings of women and their social activities to what we all thought we knew about nature and social life. However, from the very beginning of this project, it has appeared to be in tension with some of the most fundamental insights of the Second Women's Movement. Only recently has the nature of this tension become clear. Within the theories, concepts, methods and goals of inquiry we inherited from the dominant discourses we have generated an impressive collection of "facts" about women and their lives, cross-culturally and historically – and we can produce many, many more. But these do not, and cannot, add up to more than a partial and distorted understanding of the patterns of women's lives. We cannot understand women and their lives by adding facts about them to bodies of knowledge which take men, their lives, and their beliefs as the human norm. Furthermore, it is now evident that if women's lives cannot be understood within the inherited inquiry frameworks, then neither can men's lives. The attempts to add understandings of women to our knowledge of nature and social life have led to the realization that there is precious little reliable knowledge to which to add them. A more fundamental project now confronts us. We must root out sexist distortions and perversions in epistemology, metaphysics, methodology and the philosophy of science – in the "hard core" of abstract reasoning thought most immune to infiltration by social values.

When we called for papers for this collection, we formulated our project in the following way:

In the last decade feminist thinkers have provided brilliant critiques of the political and social beliefs and practices of patriarchal cultures. But less attention has been given to the underlying theories of knowledge and to the metaphysics which mirror and support patriarchal belief and practice. Are there – can there be – distinctive feminist perspectives on epistemology, metaphysics, methodology and philosophy of science?

While it would do a disservice to the richness and variety of the papers we selected to suggest that a single theme emerged from responses to our question, the reader will find that in different ways, all of the contributors examine the nature and implications of the one discovery of the decade

which enables us to understand and to move beyond the tension between the discursive inheritances of Western thought and the feminist perspective. What counts as knowledge must be grounded on experience. Human experience differs according to the kinds of activities and social relations in which humans engage. Women's experience systematically differs from the male experience upon which knowledge claims have been grounded. Thus the experience on which the prevailing claims to social and natural knowledge are founded is, first of all, only partial human experience only partially understood: namely, masculine experience as understood by men. However, when this experience is presumed to be gender-free — when the male experience is taken to be the human experience — the resulting theories, concepts, methodologies, inquiry goals and knowledge-claims distort human social life and human thought. Several contributors to this collection argue that masculine perspectives are not only distorting because they are partial; they are inherently distorting because they must invert some of the real regularities of social life and their underlying causal tendencies. These essays identify some of the philosophical consequences of relying on this partial and distorting experience as the foundation for all knowledge claims, and they begin to describe the kind of experience upon which could be grounded maximally scientific human understanding.

Consequently, contributors to this volume pursue two complementary projects. On the one hand, they contribute to the feminist "deconstructive project." They identify how distinctively masculine perspectives on masculine experience have shaped the most fundamental and most formal aspects of systematic thought in philosophy and in the social and natural sciences — the aspects of thought supposedly most gender-neutral. They show how men's understanding of masculine experience shape Aristotle's biology and metaphysics, the very definition of "the problems of philosophy" in Plato, Descartes, Hobbes and Rousseau, the "adversary method" which is the paradigm of philosophic reasoning, contemporary philosophical psychology, individuation principles in philosophical ontology, functionalism in sociological and biological theory, evolutionary theory, the methodology of political science, marxist political economy, and conceptions of "objective inquiry" in the social and natural sciences. On the other hand, many of the contributors also begin the feminist "reconstructive project". They identify distinctive aspects of women's experience which can provide resources for the construction of more representatively human understanding. Some of the essayists focus extensively on this reconstructive project, showing us what is required in social practice and in scientific inquiry to make women's

experience into a foundation for a more adequate and truly human epistemology, metaphysics, methodology and philosophy of science. The following paragraphs offer a brief glimpse of the arguments in these essays.

Most of the "Great Philosophers" have produced passages, or even whole treatises, where they explicitly explain the "natural" superiority of men and inferiority of women. As Lynda Lange points out in 'Woman is Not a Rational Animal: On Aristotle's Biology of Reproduction,'

It has been the practice of twentieth-century scholars and educators, in the face of the greater equality of women, simply to disregard these works, which they view as minor or peripheral, or perhaps crankish, like Berkeley's late essays on the value of tar water. (1-2)

In contrast, Lange argues that Aristotle's theory of sex difference is consistently interwoven into the fabric of his philosophy, and that it cannot be cut away without affecting the rest of his thought. She shows how Aristotle's biological theory leads him to the unavoidable implication that the female's "most perfect functioning involves creating the conditions for the male element to prevail." (p. 11) It is the "male element" which provides the fully human element, and so we find Aristotle holding that women are nothing else but "matter set in motion by and for the soul of the unified male, for the ends of the (male) species." (p. 12) Thus in Aristotle's ethics and politics, it is an act of positive virtue for a man to attempt to dominate a woman and compel her to be obedient to him, and a man who treated a woman as an equal would be acting in a shameful manner. Challenging Aristotle's sexism requires that we re-evaluate the soundness of the rest of his thought.

In 'Aristotle and the Politicization of the Soul,' Elizabeth V. Spelman also argues that it distorts Aristotle's thought to separate his sexism from the rest of his philosophy. She points out that Aristotle justifies his political theory on the grounds that it is consistent with his theory of the soul. As the rational part of the soul should have certain kinds of authority over the irrational part of the soul, the rational elements in society should have authority over the irrational elements. However, Spelman's close reading of the text shows that his argument is circular:

both understanding what it means to talk about relations of authority between parts of the soul, and establishing that one part has authority over another, depend on understanding what it means to talk about relations of authority between classes of persons (including those between men and women), and on establishing or assuming that certain classes do have authority over others — in particular, that men have authority over women. (p. 17)

Hence Aristotle's political "conclusions" drawn from his metaphysics are in fact the same claims upon which his metaphysics was grounded in the first place. Central parts of Aristotle's philosophy are permeated with a masculine perspective on masculine social experience.

In 'The Unit of Political Analysis: Our Aristotelian Hangover,' Judith Hicks Stiehm demonstrates how Aristotle's assumptions about natural order still inform and distort some of the most respected work in political science today. Although political scientists often believe they are thinking in terms of individuals, groups, or classes, they often in fact think about the polity in terms of families. And they do so principally when they think about women. "The result is a mixed analysis and confused thinking." (p. 31) Her essay demonstrates how this confusion appears in the 1972 book which won an American Political Science Association award as the best new book in its field, and which was cited especially for its excellent methodology. Philosophers will be especially interested in her observation that John Rawls' *A Theory of Justice* is structured by the same confusion. Rawls discusses "the family", which ostensibly contains individuals, as the environment of pre-adults (children), and he also discusses the problem of justice between generations. However, Stiehm points out that in both discussions

his focus seems actually to be on male heads of households and those who will become such heads. Wives, mothers and daughters are of slight interest. Even in thinking about generations his vision is restricted. He considers the next generation (of sons) while *ignoring* the previous generation (with its numerous widowed mothers). (p. 40)

The next two papers initiate a critical focus pursued by many of the other papers in this collection. They argue that we need to reexamine the assumption that the physical sciences have in general succeeded in eliminating political "values" from their descriptions and explanations of nature's regularities and their underlying causal determinants, and that the best scientific inquiry is therefore "value-free." Ruth Hubbard, in 'Have Only Men Evolved?', points out that "Science is made by people who live at a specific time in a specific place and whose thought patterns reflect the truths that are accepted by the wider society." (p. 45) Consequently, we should expect scientific thought to have wide areas of congruence with the social and political ideology of the societies which produce science. Examining evolutionary theory and sociobiology, Hubbard goes on to show how while science defines reality, its definitions are created against a background of what is socially accepted as real. What has been socially accepted as real in societies producing science, as in Aristotle's society, is an androcentric perspective which interprets as

women's biological heritage the sexual and social stereotypes feminists reject. From the perspective of this essay we can begin to see how the knowledge claims of the physical sciences, no less than those of the social sciences, are founded on distinctive and often perverse masculine understandings of only masculine social experience.

In 'Evolution and Patriarchal Myths of Scarcity and Competition,' Michael Gross and Mary Beth Averill show how two related themes in the patriarchal image of nature — scarcity and competition — came into evolutionary theory and how they appear in contemporary evolutionary and ecological thought. They note that we should not be surprised to find the theme of competition appearing in accounts of nature at the same time that modernized societies extolled the virtues of competition between economic individuals to insure that only the "fittest" would survive to direct capitalist accumulation projects. But Gross and Averill point out that the theme of scarcity also reflects the interests of capitalists, for it was perceived as virtually the sole brake on unbridled exploitation of natural resources. The authors show how these two themes remain central in the writings of leading biologists and ecologists today, providing an incomplete and distorted understanding of nature. They suggest that a more reliable understanding of nature would be gained by thinking in terms of concepts central to feminist thought which also accurately reflect the natural order — concepts such as plenitude and cooperation.

Ann Palmeri directly challenges the claim that social science should be "value-free." In 'Charlotte Perkins Gilman: Forerunner of a Feminist Social Science' she examines the conception of social science advanced by this early Twentieth Century socialist feminist theorist. Where Gilman's critics have dismissed her work on the grounds that it is directed by a moral commitment to equality between the sexes, Palmeri argues that it is not moral argument that should cast doubt upon lines of scientific reasoning, but only evidence of improper moral argument. She shows us how Gilman's moral-political ideal of adrogyny made interesting and plausible her claim that patriarchal societies' abnormal exaggeration of sex-difference was damaging to the human species. Palmeri proposes that

through a look at Gilman, we can begin to comprehend more fully the claim of present feminists that adopting a view of women as fully human and as actors in history leads to a more well-founded social science. While a commitment to the equality of women and men by no means commits any social scientist to a particular theory, the acceptance of this moral assumption does preclude the consideration and acceptance of certain sorts of theories. (p. 97)

The next two papers challenge the charge that feminist research and analyses lead us to any new philosophical, methodological or other theoretical insights. As psychological research has repeatedly revealed (see, for example, the Broverman study cited in the Hintikkas' paper), this kind of judgment is to be expected of any characteristics or accomplishments as soon as they are identified as women's. In 'The Trivialization of the Notion of Equality,' Louise Marcil-Lacoste argues that feminist research does not merely make women "equal" to men by adding information about women to male categories of thought, or by simply repeating in a mirror-reflection the concepts of male thought. Drawing on a broad selection of feminist and philosophical writings from Europe as well as North America, she argues that "in introducing historicity, materiality, and values as fundamental epistemological categories, feminist writings represent a forceful challenge to critical thought seen as formal or meta-discourse." (p. 127) In the Kuhnian sense, feminists introduce a new paradigm for human understanding. From Marcil-Lacoste's perspective, the sex-specificity of the new feminist categories is but the prelude to the creation of logics and languages which come closer to human modes of thinking.

Merrill Hintikka and Jaakko Hintikka argue that feminist research and analyses suggest several ways in which the principles of individuation and identification proposed in the history of philosophical ontology and the philosophy of language are sex-biased. Drawing examples from Quine, Kripke, Lewis, Aristotle and Leibniz, they suggest that "Western philosophical thought has been overemphasizing such ontological models as postulate a given fixed supply of discrete individuals, individuated by their intrinsic or essential (non-relational) properties." (p. 146) Feminist research suggests that these are distinctively masculine modes of identifying and individuating parts of the world, for "women are generally more sensitive to, and likely to assign more importance to, relational characteristics (e.g., interdependencies) than males, and less likely to think in terms of independent discrete units." (p. 146) This kind of philosophical "case study" indicates just one of the ways in which feminist concerns raise theoretical problems for the most abstract (and presumably, therefore, most value-free) aspects of Western thought.

Both philosophers and scientists argue that it is the fact that they systematically seek severe criticism of their claims which makes these kinds of knowledge-claims so much more reliable than our common-sense, every day beliefs. The next two papers point out some problems with the kind of criticism philosophers and scientists value so highly. In 'A Paradigm of Philosophy: The Adversary Method,' Janice Moulton analyzes the model of

philosophic methodology which accepts a positive view of aggressive behavior and then uses it as the paradigm of philosophic reasoning. She suggests that the primacy of this model seems based on the perception that aggression is "natural" for males and good for them to exhibit, and "unnatural" for females and bad for them to exhibit. Philosophic methodology thus restricts itself to, and legitimates, attributes thought natural only for males. Moulton points out that even feminist theorists often only criticize the assumption that aggression is more natural to one sex than the other; they often fail to examine the conditions under which aggressive behavior is unproductive and self-defeating regardless of who exhibits it. In philosophy, aggression is uniquely legitimated in the "adversary method," which requires that all beliefs and claims be evaluated only by subjecting them to the strongest, most extreme opposition. Moulton shows how the restriction of critical thought to the adversary paradigm misinterprets the history of philosophy, unjustifiably permits programmatic claims to remain viable, restricts the legitimate range of philosophic argument, and leads to bad reasoning. She argues that discarding the adversary method as *the* single legitimate paradigm of philosophic method would encourage the development of alternative and more productive methods of evaluating thought.

Kathryn Pyne Addelson argues that the scope of scientific criticism is too narrow. In 'The Man of Professional Wisdom,' she points out that a central project of mainstream philosophy of science in this century has been to separate scientific method from metaphysics — from prior assumptions about the nature of the world and of ourselves which scientists cannot help bringing to inquiry and which, it is claimed, always distort our understanding. Because scientific method insists on severe criticism of itself, as well as of the knowledge-claims it produces, it is believed that science can and does succeed in providing understandings of nature and of ourselves which are free of these prior metaphysical assumptions. But Addelson points out that because the scope of criticism is restricted only to the intellectual procedures and products of scientific method, science's faith in the efficacy of its critical method is unjustified. Scientists necessarily bring distorting metaphysical commitments from their class and sex-dominating roles in social life, and these are reinforced in the social arrangements within science. Since the social arrangements of the scientific enterprise as well as of the larger society are considered outside the legitimate domain of scientific criticism, these metaphysical commitments systematically escape critical scientific examination, and thus pass through the scientific process to distort our understandings of nature and ourselves. Her example is functionalist

assumptions in biology and in social theory, and she points out how functionalism's fit with distinctively masculine, professional, and western social experience distorts the experience of nature and social life which women, non-professionals, and non-westerners have. Addelson argues that science's "cognitive authority" to define reality for us is unjustified and illegitimate as long as science fails to include as a legitimate and necessary focus of scientific criticism the class and sex hierarchies which exist both within the scientific enterprise and within the larger society.

The next two papers explore the origins, functions and some of the consequences of the sexual metaphors which permeate our thinking about science and about knowledge in general. In 'Gender and Science', Evelyn Fox Keller argues that both contemporary social research and a re-examination of the history of science reveal that our conceptions of scientific objectivity are deeply distorted by their linkage to cultural stereotypes of masculinity as well as to the real requirements of achieving masculinity. First she reviews the recent discoveries of widespread cultural images containing the curious juxtaposition of scientists as super-masculine and simultaneously as "less sexual" than other men. Within the history of science, this same juxtaposition is reflected in Francis Bacon's metaphors of Nature as the true "bride" of the scientist who should want to control and dominate "her". Turning to post-Freudian psychoanalytic theory, Keller explains how the masculine gendering process requires the development of rigid boundaries between the masculine "self" and all "others." The masculine model of "self" must maintain separation from and control over "others" in order to retain its own identity — just the dynamic of "objectifying" nature and social others required of distinctively scientific methodologies. Keller points out that discovery of these social roots for this distorting conception of scientific methodology has implications for our understanding of, and for our programs for restructuring, both science and social life. We must understand and overcome the

circular process of mutual reinforcement . . . in which what is called scientific receives extra validation from the cultural preference for what is called masculine, and conversely, what is called feminine — be it a branch of knowledge, a way of thinking, or woman herself — becomes further devalued by its exclusion from the special social and intellectual value placed on science. (p. 202)

Contemporary feminist thought has often been suspicious that the pervasive reliance on a visual metaphor for knowledge marks Western philosophy as patriarchal. In 'The Mind's Eye,' Evelyn Fox Keller and Christine R.

Grontkowski examine the role Plato, Newton, and Descartes assign to the visual in their theories of knowledge. They point to the assumption of

two different, even paradoxical, functions of the visual . . . – a connective and a dissociative. Vision connects us to truth as it distances us from the corporeal. As we trace the use of the visual metaphor through history, we find that these functions, originally intertwined, become quite distinct – splitting, finally, into functions of two different eyes, the body's eye and the mind's eye. This split is paralleled by the division of the functions of science into the objectifiability and knowability of nature. (p. 209)

They conclude their analysis by raising some questions about both our reliance in Western thought on the hierarchy of the senses, and about feminist suspicions of this reliance.

In the first part of 'Individualism and the Objects of Psychology' Naomi Scheman points out how such twentieth century philosophers as Hilary Putnam, David K. Lewis, Donald Davidson, W. V. O. Quine, and Ludwig Wittgenstein devote a great deal of discussion to questions about what sorts of "things" emotions, beliefs, intentions, virtues and vices are. However, these philosophers never examine the assumption in all of these discussions that psychological states can be assigned and theorized about on an individualistic basis. There has been no examination of the assumption that the self is sharply distinguishable from its social surroundings. She shows how this unexamined assumption structures the ideology of individualism not only as it appears in philosophical psychology, but also as it appears in classical and contemporary liberal social theory, and even in liberal feminist thought. The assumption of a sharply distinguishable self is not a "natural fact" she argues. The ways in which the assumption

permeates our social institutions, our lives, and our senses of ourselves are not unalterable. It is deeply useful in the maintenance of capitalist and patriarchal society and deeply embedded in our notions of liberation, freedom and equality. (p. 226)

In the last half of her paper she shows how this assumption has its social roots in the psychosexual development of males mothered by women in a patriarchal society, in the development in males of ego and of ego-boundaries. She argues that this assumption "is fundamentally undercut by an examination of female experience, if that experience is seen in its own terms and not as truncated male experience." (p. 226)

In 'Political Philosophy and the Patriarchal Unconscious: A Psychoanalytic Perspective on Epistemology and Metaphysics,' Jane Flax examines the thought of Plato, Descartes, Hobbes and Rousseau to show how distinctively masculine experience has contributed to the definition of *the* "problems

of philosophy." She argues that "the denial and repression of early infantile experience has had a deep and largely unexplored impact on philosophy. This repressed material shapes by its very absence in consciousness the way we look at and reflect upon the world." (p. 245) Flax is not making claims about the particular psychological makeup of individual philosophers, nor is she suggesting that philosophy can or should be treated as the mere rationalization of unconscious impulses and conflicts. Instead, she argues that a feminist theory of knowledge must begin by examining how and why the dilemmas projected onto the world as the "human condition" in fact have their social roots in a virtually universal kind of masculine experience. The apparently irresolvable dualisms of subject-object, mind-body, inner-outer, reason-sense reflect real but repressed dilemmas originating in masculine infantile experience of the sexual division of labor. The epistemologies of all bodies of knowledge which claim to be emancipatory, including psychoanalysis and Marxism, must be analyzed from this perspective, for the female dimensions of experience tend to be lost in philosophies developed under patriarchy. However, she argues that women's experience "is not in itself an adequate ground for theory. As the other pole of the dualities it must be incorporated and transcended" (p. 270), and this requires political transformation of both individuals and of social life more generally.

Nancy Hartsock argues that feminists must create the epistemological standpoint from which an adequate feminist social theory can emerge. In "The Feminist Standpoint: Developing the Ground for a Specifically Feminist Historical Materialism," she shows how feminists can use for their own purposes the epistemological tools provided by Marx's explanation of the enlarged vision available to the proletariat as a consequence of its position in the structural division of labor by class. With these tools, we can grasp how women's structural position in the institutionalized sexual division of labor allows the creation of a standpoint from which feminists can systematically understand patriarchal institutions and ideologies as perverse inversions of more human social relations. The material conditions for the creation of the feminist standpoint begin in the sexual division of labor in childrearing, for this results in systematic differences in male and female experience. "These different (psychic) experiences both structure and are reinforced by the differing patterns of male and female activity required by the sexual division of labor, and are thereby replicated as epistemology and ontology." (p. 296) However, in order to develop the epistemology and ontology required for a feminist standpoint, we must grasp as did Marx "that there are some perspectives on society from which, however well-intentioned one may be,

the real relations of humans with each other and with the natural world are not visible.” (p. 285) Sorting this contention into five distinct epistemological and political claims, she shows how women’s life activity as structured by the sexual division of labor provides unique possibilities for understanding nature and social life and for grasping and opposing all forms of domination.

In ‘Why Has the Sex/Gender System Become Visible Only Now?’, Sandra Harding argues that feminist inquiry during the last decade has produced a new object for scientific scrutiny: the sex/gender system. While it is widely recognized that the feminist perspective calls for revisions in our scientific understandings, in morals and in politics, Harding argues that it also calls for a revolution in epistemology. The need for a new theory of knowledge can be seen if we ask an intuitively reasonable question: why has the sex/gender system emerged into visibility only now? That is, what “causes” its “discovery” at this moment in history rather than in 1776, 1848, or 1919? This question is one which must be asked if we are to understand new ideas as more than “intellectual” achievements — if we are to understand scientific advances as in part the product of changes in historical social relations. While this question appears intuitively reasonable, Harding shows why it is unintelligible — it cannot even be formulated — from the perspective of the three dominant existing epistemologies. Thus asking the question reveals the self-imposed limitations of empiricist, functionalist/relativist, and Marxist epistemologies. She suggests that it is because feminist researchers in the social sciences have relied too heavily on these inherited epistemological discourses that the title question remains relatively unexamined. Until it is answered we will not be able to understand the feminist standpoint as one which history has made possible.

The Women’s Movement has created the impetus and direction for vast changes in the beliefs and social activities of modern societies. We hope these essays contribute to our understanding of how women’s experience can be made into a valuable resource in the creation of more complete and less distorted belief and in the design of emancipatory social life.