

Methodological Reflections on Women's Contribution and Influence in the History of Philosophy. 2020 eds. Sigrid Thorgeisdottier and Ruth Hagenruber. New York a.o.: *Springer Series Women in the History of Philosophy and Science*.



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The Stolen History –

Retrieving the History of Women Philosophers and its Methodological Implications

It is well known that some states sometimes think it is advantageous for their own maintenance in power to suppress history. I do not mention any examples here, because none of these examples covers what I want to address. Depriving women of their history is like creating a person who has lost all memory. That person will be unable to construct an identity. This analogy may be the leading paradigm for what I will deliver in this essay, which is not a political essay. It is in the first place an essay in epistemology and the need for any knowledge to be rooted in a non-restricted access to history. (...) In the last 40 years, many scholars dedicated their endeavors to conserving the writings of women philosophers. Now, we can access these valuable sources and we see that the history of women philosophers stretches back as far as the history of philosophy itself. Edith Stein, Hannah Arendt, and Simone de Beauvoir did not appear from nowhere.

Doing the history of women philosophers as a methodological approach to philosophy is a unique and indispensable means to widen the insights in philosophy. The rise of women philosopher's participation in philosophy is connected to the re-reading of its history. Re-reading the history of philosophy, however, challenges the methodology of today. The exclusion of women philosophers from the history of philosophy turns out to be a factual outcome of gendered-minded self interest, supported by a culturally established patriarchal hierarchy. After centuries of exclusion from those histories, the perspective has now changed.