

1. Género, feminismos e estudos sobre as mulheres

OC - (23168) - WOMEN IN THE HUMANITIES: THE STRANGE CASE OF PHILOSOPHY

Silvia Di Marco (Portugal)¹

1 - Centro de Filosofia das Ciências da Universidade de Lisboa (CFCUL)

In the demographics of university life, women are usually thought to be the majority in the Humanities. Still, if we break the data down, we see that in Philosophy they are a minority. This raises a chain of interesting questions: (i) Why so little women in Philosophy? (ii) Is it a function of the disciplinary field or of the academic environment? (iii) Is the lack of women in Philosophy an ethical issue only, or does it entail epistemological consequences? (iv) Should we take action and promote women's participation in Philosophy the way it is being done in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics)?

In this talk I present some data on the presence/absence of women students, researchers, and professors in Philosophy, comparing data from Spain and Germany (Torres González 2020, Torres González & Pau 2012); put forward some common hypotheses to explain such absence; and explore its ethical and epistemological dimensions.

Drawing on the canonical work of feminist epistemologists, in particular on Harding's standpoint theory and Longino's contextual empiricism, I show in which ways the lack of women (and, more generally, marginalised groups) in Philosophy is deleterious at the epistemological level.

Finally, taking into account some of the reasons that might keep women (and other marginalised groups) away from Philosophy, and the epistemological consequences of their underrepresentation, I address the last question. Against institutionally-oriented pragmatic views (e.g., 'diversity that promotes excellence' theories), I argue that merely adding women to Philosophy departments will not improve the diversity of the field – hence, will not have the desired ethical and epistemic effects – and that feminist scholars-activists should aim at reformulating the discipline, making it more relevant to marginalised lives.

Palavras-chave : philosophy, epistemology