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"Woman Has to Set her Stamp on Science, Philosophy, Justice and Politics"

A Look at Gender Politics in the "Knowledge Wars" of the European Past

Since at least the late 14th century (a full century before the beginning of print culture and book commerce), women have been complaining about the way men constructed knowledge, often maligning women in the process.¹ "If women, though, had written all those books", asserted Christine de Pizan in 1399, "I know that they would read quite differently. For well do women know the blame is wrong. The parts are not apportioned equally, because the strongest take the largest cut and he who slices it can keep the best."² Thus did Christine encapsulate an astonishingly up-to-date feminist critique of the intricate interplay of gender and the politics of knowledge. By the early 19th century, a considerable number of educated men and a growing number of intrepid women were speaking eloquently on this subject, and frequently enough that one might speak of this period in terms of the "knowledge wars", a sequence of wars over ideas that picked up enormous velocity following the French Revolution.

It is very important to be asking why and how "knowledge" (*die Wissenschaft, la science*) has been constructed in a sexist and discriminatory manner. The feminist critique of "science" since the 1970s – in the American context labelled as the behavioral, natural, and social sciences (if not the physical sciences) – has been both profound and dramatic.³ The so-called "science of women" as developed by male writers (particularly with respect to medical literature) has found its critics as well.⁴ Feminist critiques of the way history has been written and practiced have been no less profound and dramatic.⁵ But it is not my purpose here to rehearse the findings of the last 30 years of theoretical or historical work on this topic, or even the last ten.

My objective is to build on these advances, by exploring the particular question of how gender issues specifically shaped the politics of knowledge in the European past during the 30 years that span the period from the failed revolutions of 1848 to the later 1860s. I will briefly revisit a significant though limited period in the development of historical, medical, economic, and legal knowledge that was marked not only by sustained efforts by medical men to "prove" women's inferiority, by legal experts to justify their exclu-

sion from political authority, and by political economists to confine them to domestic activities, but also by women's own sustained efforts to attain and challenge both existing and new expressions of male-centered knowledge, in part by demanding entry to public institutions of higher education and certification as "authorities" in their own right but also by challenging antifeminist formulations in print. During this period a few intellectual women on the European continent – especially (but not exclusively) in the French-speaking world – began not only to contest their exclusion from institutions of higher education but to formulate new woman-centered approaches to knowledge, including knowledge of the past, the historical condition and contributions of women, problems surrounding their work, and the possibilities of medical certification for women practitioners (justified through their historic role as healers). In contrast, during the same period, male scholars in the French-, German-, and English-speaking world began to investigate the notion of patriarchy, or male rule, from a historical point of view, more often than not (like their counterparts, the physicians) with an eye to justifying its necessity – even its inevitability, and the necessary masculinity of "genius" – in the face of inconvenient evidence to the contrary. By developing this gendered comparison in context, and by strongly suggesting that such gendered constructions of knowledge were influenced by – even responses to – the course of political events, I hope to contribute to a feminist rethinking of a counterrevolutionary period at mid-century that is thought of more as a period when nothing good happened for women.

Exploring the 19th-Century Feminist Critique of Sexism in Historical Knowledge

What I find absolutely fascinating is the keen insight that French-speaking women critics had developed by the mid-19th century about the problem of sexism in organized knowledge and about the power that sanctified and surrounded it. Already, 50 years earlier, at the outset of the French Revolution, arguments from the history of women worthies were being deployed as evidence to justify the case for women's political rights.⁶ By the early 1830s women such as the Belgian-French writer, "Marie de G***" (later identified as Zoé Gatti de Gamond) published arguments for writing a substantive history of women, which did more than discourse on the merits or faults of women and which would include "a historic résumé of the condition of women in past centuries that might serve to exhibit the gradual improvement that has taken place in their condition", "The study of the improvements made in the past", the author added, "would allow one to conjecture improvements to come".⁷ By 1848, this critique exploded radically in the outburst of one

Henriette Wild, a French Protestant writer who signed herself "Henriette, artiste".

Henriette's article *Les Sages femmes d'Athènes*, published in *La Voix des femmes* in late April 1848, told the story of Agnodice, who "stole" knowledge of medicine and midwifery from men by disguising herself as a man and attending lectures at the famous school of Herophilus. She became a highly respected practitioner in Athens, but so popular with the women that the authorities arrested her, and condemned her under the law that forbade women medical practice. But thanks to the outcry of the women of Athens, she was ultimately spared and the law was revoked. Henriette's text coupled this story with a soliloquy on the importance of women's exploring the domain of history: "For women, history is a lie and [...] the truth will only appear once feminine observation and intelligence enter into it and, specifically, link it to women's interests."⁸ It was one thing to aspire to learning; it was another thing to critique, as did Henriette, the foundations of – and latest contributions to – the learning that women aspired to embrace. "Because of her unceasing need to believe and feel, woman will in turn throw herself into unexplored territory, her own domain, from which she had been banished." In reflecting on her own surprise and fascination with the story of Agnodice, she exclaimed against the absence of this and other stories from her education: "What! Such things have happened and no women were taught about them, and they were not engraved in the memories of every young girl? Women, women? And you are astonished at your own fall and your abjection! And you ignore the means of your own regeneration? Open your eyes, get going; here is one of the paths that can bring you back to the high road of honor and justice [...]." Henriette's exhortation, albeit filled with melodramatic gestures and fuelled by the fires of the revolutions of 1848, hot with demands for women's rights, eloquently expressed the need we still feel today: to investigate, write, publish, and teach women's history as a means of enriching and empowering women.

Feminists Claim Knowledge and "Genius" as Women's Right

The development of a more general feminist critique of knowledge took several dramatic steps forward on the European continent in the years between 1850 and 1870, as several women writers attempted to seize the high ground, claiming knowledge in their own right, and thus going beyond the old debate about women's creativity by demonstrating it. Thereby they hoped to mute questions as to whether women could create works of "genius", or should settle for being the mothers of "men of genius", as the British historian Henry Buckle would suggest in 1859.

In France, the novels of the prolific George Sand continued to pour forth from

the presses, inspiring women writers all over Europe to speak their minds.⁹ Artistic genius manifested itself in the massive canvases of the painter Rosa Bonheur. In June 1865, France's Empress Eugénie awarded the Cross of the Legion of Honor to the cross-dressing Bonheur, insisting that: "It was my desire that the last act of my regency be consecrated to showing that in my eyes genius has no sex."¹⁰

The French Protestant feminist Jenny P. (Poinsard) d'Héricourt had used the years following the failure of the 1848 revolution to earn a degree in homeopathic medicine and to become a practicing midwife, certified by the Paris Faculty of Medicine. In an 1855 article, *On Woman's Future*, published in Turin in the Kingdom of Piedmont, she reminded her readers of the Saint-Simonians' earlier call for women to speak out: "Today", she wrote, "several women have disengaged themselves from the secular absorption of their sex and have developed their own individuality. These women, and I am one of them, can now reply to that call [...] and that is what I am going to do."¹¹

Challenging established wisdom, Jenny P. d'Héricourt revealed herself as a full-fledged combatant on a par with men in the knowledge wars. Invoking the law of progress, she traced out a theory of gender formation. Organic modifications, she argued, have their seat in the brain, which is "essentially modifiable". There are now women, who have had a masculine education who are in possession of rational faculties, just as there are men who preponderantly display feelings. "It is *radically false*", she argued, "that nature made men rational and women emotional; it is education and morals that made them thus: feelings and rationality are equally distributed [...]. The brain is the instrument of progress." The mind may have no sex, but the genderless brain requires exercise to develop. No more women's nature, women's destiny, women's functions, no more women's sphere. Women, just like men, are en route to "individual independence". Finally, women must cease asking for their rights and *take them*. They must remain women, not emulating masculine habits or airs, and they must ally themselves in solidarity with other women. "Victory", d'Héricourt insisted, "will belong to those who are united by affection and a common goal, who know how to *dare* and to act."

Intellectually unleashed, Jenny P. d'Héricourt also challenged biblical authority, insisting that claims for the equality of the sexes based on Christian belief (much discussed in recent years) were in fact not true. Citing multiple examples from the Old and New Testament alike, she demonstrated that "both proclaim the inferiority of woman, imposing on her the most absolute submission to her father and her husband, refusing her every right, as daughter, spouse, mother, alienating her from the priesthood, from science, from instruction, denying her intelligence, outraging her modesty, torturing her feelings, permitting the sale and exploitation of her beauty, preventing her from inheriting or owning property".¹² Catholicism, in her view, was a particular obstacle: a falling away

from blind faith would be a good thing for women. It was on the crest of these attacks that Jenny P. d'Héricourt confronted the antifeminism of her countryman from the Franche-Comté, Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, a leading spokesman for the workers' mutualist movement and the adversary of Jeanne Deroin's 1849 electoral campaign in Paris. In a heated exchange Jenny challenged Proudhon's published views on the woman question since 1841. She also published his response to her, in which he argued that women's cause must not be separated from that of men, that justice could never make woman man's equal, and that the "inferiority of the feminine sex did not constitute either serfdom or humiliation, or a lessened dignity", but rather the opposite. He considered the agitation of women on women's behalf as "a madness due precisely to the infirmity of the sex, and to its incapacity to know itself and to govern itself alone".¹³

Jenny d'Héricourt quickly counterattacked, claiming that Proudhon was effectively applying a double standard for justice as concerns women. In reply, Proudhon sketched the outline of what would become his infamous "calculus" of the inferiority of women to men. The discussion terminated abruptly in March 1857, when Jenny declared Proudhon's failure to respond to her rebuttal to be his admission of defeat.

Proudhon's response was forthcoming with the publication in 1858 of his major work, *De la Justice dans la Révolution et dans l'Église* ("On Justice in the Revolution and in the Church") particularly the section on "Love and Marriage". Singling out the would-be emancipators of woman, Proudhon claimed: "Feminine indiscretion has caught fire, a half-dozen inky-fingered insurgents obstinately try to make woman into something we do not want, reclaim their *rights* with insults, and defy us to bring the question out into the light of day."¹⁴ Emancipation, Proudhon insisted, maintaining his earlier formula "housewife or harlot", amounted to prostitution. He then laid out the details of his calculus of women's "physical, intellectual, and moral inferiority" to men, based on the Aristotelian premises of what G. J. Barker Benfield aptly named "the spermiatic economy", and what we might now call the testosterone imprint. "The complete human being", Proudhon proclaimed, "is the male." With regard to intellect, he claimed: "Genius is [...] virility of spirit and its accompanying powers of abstraction, generalization, invention, conceptualization, which are lacking in equal measure in children, eunuchs, and women, [...] To the generation of ideas as to the generation [of children] woman brings nothing of her own; she is a passive, enervating being, whose conversation exhausts you as much as her embraces."¹⁵ In her book *La Femme affranchie* (1860), Jenny P. d'Héricourt returned to the charge: "We demand our right, because we are persuaded that woman has to set her stamp on Science, Philosophy, Justice and Politics."¹⁶

In Lausanne, one French woman had already begun to set her stamp on science

and philosophy. In the late 1850s Clémence Royer opened a course for ladies on “woman’s philosophy”, defending the position that women had a special sort of genius. “What I must find”, she explained in her introductory lecture, “is a form, a feminine expression of science.” “It is [...] a new art which I have to create”, an art that could give life to the cold and virile character of science, an art that could engage women fully in scientific endeavors. “As long as science remains exclusively in the hands of men”, Royer explained, “it will never go down into the depths of the family and society. [...] Why [...] should [women] be excluded from the hunt for truth?”¹⁷ Royer went on to publish (in 1862) her French translation of Charles Darwin’s *Origin of Species*, which she prefaced with a long and iconoclastic commentary. In the 1870s, following her return to France from Switzerland, Royer would become a controversial participant in the Anthropological Society of Paris. By the 1890s, she had become a feminist heroine.

Tracking the Responses of Antifeminist Male Scholars

Brave proclamations, these proclamations of women’s integral being and intellectual capacities – and they were hotly contested from the 1850s on. Indeed, one of the least well known features of the knowledge wars in this period is the pan-European surge of scholarly or quasi-scholarly publications by antifeminist male authors diminishing the force of women’s intellect and justifying the necessity of patriarchy. Amid the celebrations of womanhood, the eulogies of motherhood, and the enthronement of the feminine on a pedestal, a more hostile intellectual countercurrent was developing. In addition to the widely circulated responses of Proudhon and Jules Michelet in France, the contributions of their German contemporaries Arthur Schopenhauer and Wilhelm Heinrich Riehl and those of Sir Henry Sumner Maine in England and J.-J. Bachofen in Switzerland must be noted. Some of the most distinguished intellects of the 19th century engaged the woman question head-on, assembling their physiological, anthropological, philological and historical expertise in defense of – or justification of – male rule and, indirectly, of male monopoly on learning. The newly-emerging human sciences – sociology, psychology, anthropology – all engaged these debates increasingly after 1860.¹⁸ Here, however, I will focus on French developments during the preceding ten years.

The French sociologist Frederic LePlay embarked on an investigation of worker and peasant households comparable to that of Riehl, with an eye to discovering the key to social reform that would keep women in their place as men’s auxiliaries and reinforce the standing of male heads of households. In LePlay’s view, as expressed in his treatise, *Réforme sociale* (“Social Reform”;

1864), in which as yet unreformed English marriage laws provided his model, women’s place must be definitively in the household; she should have nothing to do with manufacture, commerce, or property. This so-called reformer championed separation of spheres and male breadwinners with a vengeance. LePlay’s investigations into social and economic life would be complemented by the findings of Paul Bernard, winner of a competition on the history of paternal authority sponsored in 1860 by the French Imperial Academy of Moral and Political Sciences.¹⁹

Jules Michelet’s popular sociophilosophical inquiries into *L’Amour* (“Love”; 1859) and *La Femme* (“Woman”; 1860) drew heavily on recent medical research about female reproductive physiology to promote the doctrine of women as perpetual invalids and thus to give new meaning to the term “physiological reductionism”. Michelet argued that “woman” must necessarily remain under man’s authority within his household, her mind as well as her body fertilized by his superior attributes. In addition, he advocated cutting woman off from her family of birth, thereby rendering her totally dependent upon her husband. Michelet’s flowery and pseudopoetic patriarchal doctrines, disguised in the form of marriage manuals addressed to men and widely translated, would cast an unusually long shadow throughout Europe and America during the remainder of the century.²⁰

It is in light of such repressive reactions to the feminist eruptions in 1848 that these campaigns to reformulate the intellectual foundations of patriarchy – and indeed, to reassert masculinity and its prerogatives (including its intellectual prerogatives) – must be reevaluated. It is in this light, too, that one must reconsider the better-known accompanying literary and philosophical campaign by poets and writers to idealize “woman” as “the angel of the house” (*angel del hogar*, in the Spanish version; *angelo del focolare*, in Italian).²¹

New historical scholarship by male scholars during this period focused close attention on the origins and development of human societies, particularly European antecedents. Writing before the era of great archaeological excavations and on-site anthropological expeditions, these scholars had to rely on evidence drawn from early written records preserved in law and literature. They prided themselves on observing a scientific, scholarly approach to the past, though they wrote with an unapologetic eye on their own times. Johann Jakob Bachofen’s work published in 1861 reveals the centrality of contemporary quarrels over gender politics to theories about the history of societal development.

At the University of Basel, where he was professor of Roman law, Bachofen carefully analyzed the rise and fall of what he believed to be matriarchy (or female rule) in the ancient Mediterranean world. He was deeply impressed with the significance of religion and the importance of myth as an interpre-

tative tool. In *Das Mutterrecht* ("Mother Right"), Bachofen thought he had documented the overthrow of female rule by male rule, and he clearly considered patriarchy to be a superior state in social organization, representing in his mind the triumph of "mind" over "matter". His enduring contribution was to demonstrate authoritatively the existence of matrilineal kinship patterns in early Mediterranean culture, if not that of actual female governance.²² The findings of Bachofen provided new rounds of ammunition with which to attack the problem of appropriately reordering the sexes in contemporary European societies. Their influence was felt in the subsequent works of such diverse writers as Friedrich Engels and Friedrich Nietzsche.

Feminist Campaigns for Medical Certification and Employment Equity

Two of the most important aspects of the knowledge wars with regard to the development of feminism in the 1860s were, first, the campaign for women's medical education, and second, the development of a well-documented critique of women's serious disadvantages with respect to paid employment.

At stake in the campaign for medical education was nothing less than knowledge of and control over women's bodies and over reproduction. Male physicians were increasingly asserting their authority in issues of gynecology and obstetrics, and building practices in these areas, the traditional prerogative of midwives. In France, where abortion had been declared a crime against the state during the French Revolution, and again criminalized in the Napoleonic Penal Code (1810), and where midwives were subjected to governmental control, the debate was complicated by concerns over feeble population growth. The stakes were raised in the later 1850s and 1860s when prominent male physicians, particularly the public health enthusiast Ambrose Tardieu (who brought up the issue of abortion at the Academy of Medicine in early 1852, and subsequently became France's leading medical-legal authority on the subject), first argued for changing the legal standards to ensure conviction of abortionists, and second, alleged that midwives were functioning all too frequently as abortionists – that is, as antisocial profiteers – rather than as promoters of new life.²³

Meanwhile, in 1864, the University of Zurich had quietly opened its doors to women auditors. Young women from Eastern Europe, including Poland, Romania, and especially Russia, flocked to enrol at Zurich. In Russia, science and progressive politics had linked arms in the later 1850s and 1860s, in tandem with the freeing of the serfs. But a feminist critique had begun to develop only with the publications of M. L. Mikhailov (inspired in no small part by the publications of Jenny P. d'Héricourt, whom he had met in Paris)

and with N. G. Chernyshevsky's novel *Chto Delat'?* ("What is to be Done?"; 1863). Some privileged women were swept into study of the natural sciences and medicine on the same wave as their male counterparts, auditing courses at St. Petersburg University. But after these universities and medical schools were closed to them in 1863–1864, many left Russia to pursue their studies abroad, and Zurich gave them an initially warm welcome. This set a precedent that could not be ignored by other medical schools in Western Europe.²⁴

The admission of women to the study of medicine unfolded quite differently in France. A German woman, Mathilde Theyessen, claimed the honor of becoming the first certified woman physician of 19th-century Europe, passing her examinations as an "officier de santé et de pharmacie" in Paris in 1865. The 1868 decision to admit women to the examinations of Paris Faculty of Medicine was made by the Empress Eugénie (long a promoter of girls' education) and the Council of Ministers, during another short regency. When the Second Empire fell, she and Victor Duruy, the minister of education, were rushing to found a women's medical school before the Russians established one in St. Petersburg. The obstacles to women's practice of medicine in France lay not in the faculties or in access to the examinations, but in the subsequent steps: their exclusion from the competitive examinations leading to hospital-based internships and residencies in medical specialties. These hurdles, controlled by the medical authorities themselves, would prove far more difficult for women physicians to clear.

Feminists did not need university degrees, however, to make important critiques of economic knowledge, based on systematic observation in the debate over women's employment. In a time when both economists and labor leaders in Britain and France were arguing the case for a "family wage" for men that would keep women in the home, women acting as social scientists were gathering data of their own to point out the problems with the male breadwinner model. Already in the 1840s, Flora Tristan had been surveying the issues regarding women and employment, and had offered some especially astute observations on the issue of women's inferior pay in her book, *Union Ouvrière* ("Workers' Union"; 1843): if women were given equal pay for equal work, she noted ironically, women would earn more than men, because they are more productive.

In *La Femme* ("Woman"; 1860), Jules Michelet damned the word *ouvrière* as an "impious" and "sordid", but his indignant opposition could not eradicate the phenomenon of women workers. Jules Simon's study of the woman worker, published in 1861, reignited opposition to the industrial employment of women outside the home. Simon was well informed about the many difficult social problems that had developed for working-class families in English textile-manufacturing towns and examined their counterparts in France with those problems in mind. Though historians have since shown that a

surprisingly high proportion of the women employed in textiles were young and single, Simon nevertheless discussed their work exclusively as that of married women. His operating assumption was that every single woman was a prospective wife and mother of a large family whose labor-force participation, even prior to marriage, not only actively prevented the acquisition and practice of domestic skills, but also posed a deadly threat to her virtue. Like many of the liberal economists of his time, Simon advocated raising men's wages to provide a "family wage" that could support a wife and children. Any productive labor performed by women, he argued, should be done by them in their homes, where they could remain "women". "If there is one thing nature clearly teaches us", Simon asserted, echoing Michelet, Comte, and others, "it is that woman is made to be protected, to live as a girl with her mother, as a wife under the protection and authority of her husband."²⁵

Julie-Victoire Daubié, the first woman to pass the French *baccalauréat* examination (1861) – which carried with it admission to university education – disputed Simon's arguments. She had prepared her book, *La Femme pauvre* ("The Poor Woman") for an essay competition sponsored in the late 1850s by the Academy of Lyon, and she published it in 1866. Rather than attempting, like Simon, to return working women to a dependent familial role by raising men's wages, Daubié, like her feminist predecessors, urged reforms that would permit women to become economically independent. Moreover, she called for the passage of laws that would curb sexual harassment and thereby allow women more freedom of movement in French society. She objected particularly to the intrusion of men into what she considered to be women's occupations:²⁶

"Whenever we investigate carefully the causes of the poor woman's precarious state, we see that these can be attributed to an administrative centralization that arbitrarily excludes her from schools and employments, and to an irresponsible immorality that, after banishing her from the family, has loaded her down with the triple oppression of laws, institutions, and customs."

Daubié enumerated and condemned these laws, institutions, and customs in exquisite detail in her lengthy study, which tore holes in the paternalistic arguments of liberal economists such as Simon. In the 1860s, when the American Civil War had inscribed the emancipation of black slaves on the consciousness of most thinking Europeans, the studies of women's work by Bessie Rayner Parkes in England and Louise Otto in Germany likewise called for freedom for individual development through economic emancipation for women. "We want to free ourselves from the pressure of dependence", asserted Otto, "by demanding a natural sharing of labor for men and women."²⁷ In 1866–1867, when the debate over the woman question surfaced in the annual congresses of the newly formed International Working Men's Association, studies such as these provided ample ammunition for advocates

of women's right to work. These meetings, attended by a mixture of progressive middle-class intellectuals and craft workers, engendered heated debate over women's role in the labor force and in the family. Few of the workingmen present supported the principle of women's right to work. Like so many of the learned men of that time, they preferred the notion of a "family wage" that would allow men to earn enough to support their wives and children. Here arguments from Proudhon, Simon and Michelet were much rehearsed, comingled in the workingmen's debates with those of Marx and Engels. The consensus of the 1867 Workers' Congress, following a year of study and heated debate, was that women should be emancipated *from* work in order to remain in the family. "The greatest name on earth is the name of the father; the greatest thing is paternal authority; these are the creative and conserving elements of the family", announced the Commission's 1867 Report:²⁸

"Woman, by her physical and moral nature, is naturally called to the peaceable minutiae of the domestic hearth; this is her department. We do not believe it is useful for society to give her any other charge. If the wife of the proletariat is able to become a deputy to the Chamber, the worker's soup may well be inadequately seasoned. As a mother, woman is the child's first educator, but on the express condition that the father acts as the directing agent."

In Paris, feminists objected strenuously to the First International's conclusions. In a series of public lectures held there in 1868, numerous speakers – including a number of concerned women – addressed the issues. The feminist socialist Paule Mink eloquently made the case for women's autonomy, for her right to work and to receive equal pay: "By denying woman the right to work, you degrade her; you put her under man's yoke and deliver her over to man's good pleasure [...]. It is work alone that makes independence possible and without which there is no dignity." But like the arguments of many of her predecessors, Mink's argument for equality and independence was cast in terms of women's differences from men:²⁹ "Why can't woman be man's equal without wanting to become like him? Copying is inevitably a form of weakness; above all, one must affirm and remain oneself. Women have virtues that are their own, and men have qualities peculiar to themselves. Why meld them into a formless mass whose parts are unrecognizable? We affirm our individuality, but we want to remain women."

Far from unsexing women, Mink argued that paid employment would allow women to develop themselves to the fullest extent as female individuals.

The knowledge wars of the 1850s and 1860s had precipitated significant contributions from feminists as well as the rearticulation and reaffirmation of objections to women's emancipation from those we can call learned men, and in retrospect, antifeminist learned men. By the late 1860s the roles of work and family, and the male monopoly on learning in structuring female subordination had been clearly identified. The time was ripe, then, for re-

newed campaigns of various sorts: for legal and educational reforms in France, and elsewhere, for campaigns on behalf of women's work and equal rights in employment, for the beginning of the international campaigns against men's vices in the form of regulated prostitution, and for the publishing event that would greatly accelerate the flow of feminist thinking throughout Europe: the appearance in 1869 of John Stuart Mill's much-translated and influential work, *The Subjection of Women*.

Conclusion

In conclusion, then, my point here is that in this 30-year period between 1848 and the late 1860s, the "woman question" was no longer a matter of men debating about women among themselves, of "he who slices it can keep the best". At this historical juncture, despite – or perhaps in response to – the post-1848 backlash, feminist women had begun to talk back – not only to critique the laws and institutions that held their sex in subjection (that they had been doing for decades, even centuries, since Christine de Pizan) but also to contest the form and substance of male-defined knowledge and its authorities, from the Bible right up to Darwin, and to begin to reformulate the questions that needed to be addressed in a variety of pertinent knowledge fields. Women's search for higher education may well have been about admission to the formal pursuit of knowledge, and to degrees, but it was increasingly understood by some feminists as a vehicle for critiquing organized knowledge and for reformulating it. "When women ask the questions", as Marilyn J. Boxer put it (encapsulating the observation of Adrienne Rich) in her study of the creation of women's studies in the United States, things look different.³⁰ In the space of 20 years, Europeans had seen the "science of women" morph into "science and knowledge by and for women". This overlooked dynamic in European history is now becoming visible, thanks to the work of feminist scholars in many countries, including Switzerland, and it carries the potential to transform our understanding of Europe's intellectual, cultural, and political history in the 19th century and beyond, and to fuel yet further the feminist knowledge revolution of our own time.

These women were the pioneers, our forerunners. Yet their critiques of organized knowledge were never taught to us in school or at the university; nor for that matter did many of us learn about the flurry of attempts to rejustify patriarchy – a salient piece of information in itself. We should be asking "why not". And we should also be ensuring that our daughters and granddaughters do not experience the same problem. They should never have to exclaim, as did Henriette, artiste: "What! These Things Happened and No Women Were Taught About Them?"³¹

Anmerkungen

- 1 The examples used in this essay have been taken from my book, *European Feminisms, 1700–1950: A Political History*, Stanford CA, 2000. Used with permission. The abbreviation WFF in the notes below refers to the documentary interpretation: Bell Susan Groag, Offen Karen (ed.): *Women, the Family, and Freedom. The Debate in Documents*, vol. 1, Stanford (CA) 1983.
- 2 Fenster Theima S.: *The Letter of the God of Love*, lines 417–422, as translated from the Harley Ms. 4431. British Library, in: Willard Charity Cannon (ed.): *The Writings of Christine de Pizan*, New York 1994, p. 149. My thanks to Susan Groag Bell for helping me locate this verse.
- 3 See Rossiter Margaret: *Women Scientists in America. Struggles and Strategies to 1940*, Baltimore (MD) 1982; Harding Sandra: *The Science Question in Feminism*, Ithaca (NY), London 1986; Schiebinger Londa: *The Mind Has No Sex? Women in the Origins of Modern Science*, Cambridge (MA) 1989; Schiebinger Londa: *Has Feminism Changed Science?*, Cambridge (MA) 1999.
- 4 See Hoffmann Paul: *La Femme dans la pensée des lumières*, Strasbourg 1978; and the penetrating critique by Marcu Eva: *Pensées sur la femme*, in: *Diderot Studies* 20 (1981), pp. 331–341; see also the works of Jordanova Ludmilla, and on male medical thinking about women in Laqueur Thomas: *Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud*, Cambridge (MA) 1990.
- 5 For discussion of Enlightenment uses of the history of women to argue that women were a civilizing force, see Rendall Jane: *The Enlightenment and the Nature of Women*, in: *Rendall Jane: The Origins of Modern Feminism*, New York 1984, and Tomaselli Sylvia: *The Enlightenment Debate on Women*, *History Workshop* no. 20 (1985), pp. 101–124. For critiques of "professionalized" European and American academic history and its exclusion of women, see Scott Joan W.: *Gender and the Politics of History*, New York 1988, and Smith Bonnie G.: *The Gender of History: Men, Women, and Historical Practice*, Cambridge (MA) 1998.
- 6 See the "Requête des dames à l'Assemblée Nationale" [1789], repr. in: *Les Femmes dans la Révolution française, 1789–1794*, presented by Albert Soboul, vol. 1, Paris 1982, unpaginated.
- 7 Marie de G***, *De la Condition sociale des femmes au dix-neuvième siècle: Lettre aux directeurs de la Revue encyclopédique*, in: *Revue encyclopédique* 56, no. 168 (Dec. 1832), pp. 598–622. Cf. my earlier discussion in: *The Beginnings of "Scientific" Women's History in France, 1830–1848*, *Proceedings of the Eleventh Annual Meeting of the Western Society for French History* (3–5 November 1983, Riverside, California), ed. by Sweets John F., Lawrence (KS) 1984, pp. 255–264. An updated version of my article has been published in German: *Die Geschlechterpolitik in der französischen Frauengeschichte des 19. Jahrhunderts*, in: Kuttler Wolfgang, Rosen Jörn, Schulz Ernst (ed.): *Geschichtsdiskurs*, Bd. 3, *Die Epoche der Historisierung*, Frankfurt a. M. 1997, pp. 100–117.
- 8 This text, originally in: *La Voix des femmes* no. 28 (20 April 1848), pp. 2–3, is republished in French with full English translation by Offen Karen, in: *Getting to the Source: "What! Such Things Have Happened and No Women Were Taught About Them": A Nineteenth-Century French Woman's View of the Importance of Women's History*, in: *Journal of Women's History* 9 (1997), no. 2, pp. 146–153. On the story of Agnodice, see the discussion of imaginary midwives by King Helen: *Hippocrates' women: Reading the female body in Ancient Greece*, London, New York 1998, chap. 9. I am indebted to an unidentified participant in the Freiburg conference for bringing this reference to my attention.
- 9 For an important reassessment of the writings of Sand and her contemporaries as political thought, see Walton Whiteley: *Eve's Proud Descendants. Four Women Writers and Republican Politics in Nineteenth-Century France*, Stanford CA, 2000.
- 10 Quoted in Bonheur's account in Klumpke Anna Elizabeth: *Rosa Bonheur: sa vie, son œuvre*, Paris 1909, p. 264.
- 11 Hélicourt Jenny P. de: *De l'avenir de la femme*, in: *La Ragione* no. 54 (27 Oct. 1855), pp. 26–31, and no. 56 (10 November 1855), pp. 59–64. Quotes, pp. 31, 59–61, 64. On

- Héricourt, see Offen Karen: A Nineteenth-Century French Feminist Rediscovered: Jenny P. d'Héricourt, 1809–1875, in: *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 13 (1987), no. 1, pp. 144–158. See also Antegnati Alessandria: Socialismo e femminismo nella Francia del XIX secolo; Jenny d'Héricourt, Genova 1988, and Arns Caroline, Honegger Claudine: Jenny P. d'Héricourt (1809–1875): Weibliche Modernität und die Prinzipien von 1789, in: *Frauen in der Soziologie: Neun Porträts*, Munich 1998, pp. 60–98.
- 12 See her series of four articles: La Bible et la question des femmes, in: *La Razione* (Sept.–Oct 1857). Quote: issue of 24 Oct. 1857, pp. 38–39. A slightly different version had appeared the previous August as a single article in the *Revue philosophique et religieuse*, Paris.
- 13 Proudhon's letter, quoted in M. Proudhon et la question des femmes, in: *Revue philosophique et religieuse* 6 (Dec. 1856), no. 21, p. 7.
- 14 Proudhon [Pierre]-[Joseph]: De la Justice dans la Révolution et dans l'Église (1858), in: Bouglé Célestin, Maysset Henri (ed.): *Œuvres complètes de [Pierre]-[Joseph] Proudhon*, XII, Paris 1935; as transl. by Offen Karen in: *WFF*, I, doct. 95. All quotes from this latter source.
- 15 *WFF*, I, *ibid*. This Aristotelian viewpoint seems decidedly retrograde, given the discovery of the ovum in the late 1820s. See Horowitz Maryanne Cline: The "Science" of "Embryology" Before the Discovery of the Ovum, in: Boxer Marilyn J., Quataert Jean H. (ed.): *Connecting Spheres: European Women in a Globalizing World, 1500 to the Present*, New York, Oxford 2000, pp. 104–112.
- 16 Héricourt Jenny P. d': La Femme affranchie, 1860, in: English translation as *A Woman's Philosophy of Woman, or Woman Affranchised: An Answer to Michelet, Proudhon, Girardin, Legouvé, Comte, and Other Modern Innovators*, New York 1864; reprinted by Hyperion Press, Westport CT 1981, and excerpted in *WFF*, I, doct. 98. Quote, *WFF*, I, p. 346.
- 17 Royer Clémence: Introduction à la philosophie des femmes, cours donné à Lausanne par Mlle A. C. R.: Leçon d'ouverture (1859), as translated by Miles Sara, in appendix to her unpublished Ph. D. dissertation, *Evolution and Natural Law in the Synthetic Science of Clémence Royer*, University of Chicago 1988. Quoted with permission from Miles, pp. 397, 405, 407. On Royer, see Fraisse Genevieve: Clémence Royer, philosophe et femme de sciences, Paris 1985; Harvey Joy: "Strangers to Each Other": Male and Female Relationships in the Late and Work of Clémence Royer, in: Abu-Am Pinna G., Outram Dorinda (ed.): *Uneasy Careers and Intimate Lives: Women in Science, 1789–1979*, New Brunswick (NJ) 1987, and Harvey Joy: *Almost a Man of Genius: Clémence Royer, Feminism, and Nineteenth-Century Science*, New Brunswick (NJ) 1997.
- 18 See Ann Taylor Allen's brilliant article on the subsequent period, *Feminism, Social Science, and the Meanings of Modernity: The Debate on the Origin of the Family in Europe and the United States, 1860–1914*, in: *American Historical Review* 104 (Oct. 1999), no. 4, pp. 1085–1113.
- 19 See Paul Bernard's prize-winning study, *Histoire de l'autorité paternelle en France*, Montdidier 1863.
- 20 Michelet Jules: *Love*. Tr. Palmer J. W., M. D., New York 1860; originally published in Paris, 1859; and Michelet Jules: *Woman (La Femme)*. Tr. J. W. Palmer, M. D., New York 1873; originally published in Paris, 1860. Both excerpted in *WFF*, I, doct. 97, 98. An important feminist analysis is Moreau Thérèse: *Le Songe de l'histoire. Michelet, l'histoire et l'idée de la femme au XIX^e siècle*, Paris 1982.
- 21 See Christ Carol: *Victorian Masculinity and the Angel in the House*, in: *Venus Martha* (ed.): *The Widening Sphere*, Bloomington (IN) 1977, and Kirkpatrick Susan: *Las Romanticas. Women Writers and Subjectivity in Spain, 1835–1850*, Berkeley (CA), Los Angeles 1989.
- 22 Bachofen Johann Jakob: *Myth, Religion, and Mother Right*, tr. Ralph Manheim, Princeton (NJ) 1967; originally published as *Das Mutterrecht. Eine Untersuchung über die Gynokratie der alten Welt nach ihrer religiösen und rechtlichen Natur*, Stuttgart 1861. Excerpted in *WFF*, I, doct. 102.
- 23 For the information on the importance of Tarlieu to this debate, I am indebted to the unpublished dissertation of Jauck Nancy Robin: *Angel Makers. The Crime of Abortion in Nineteenth-Century Lyon*, Ph. D. dissertation, Columbia University, 1993. Tarlieu also strongly opposed homosexuality.
- 24 The most recent English-language study of the Zurich women's medical education, 1864–1874, in: *Journal of the History of Medicine*, 44, no. 1 (Jan. 1989), pp. 7–27. See also Bonner's book, *To the Ends of the Earth. Women's Search for Education in Medicine*, Cambridge (MA) 1992. Natalia Tikhonov has decisively pointed to the Jewish origins of many of these women students from the Russian Empire; see her article, *Les étudiantes russes dans les universités suisses à la fin du XIX^e siècle et au début du XX^e siècle*, in: Head-König Annelise, Motta-Weber Liliane (éd.): *Les femmes dans la société européenne/Die Frauen in der europäischen Gesellschaft*, 8^e Congrès des Historiennes suisses/8. Schweizerische Historikerintentiontagung, Geneva 2000, pp. 91–103. An important new interpretation of the Russian situation is Pietrow-Enker Branka: *Russlands "neue Menschen". Die Entwicklung der Frauenbewegung von den Anfängen bis zur Oktoberrevolution*, Frankfurt a. M. 1999.
- 25 Simon Jules: *L'Ouvrière*, 4. Aufl., Paris 1867; quote in: *WFF*, I, doct. 126, p. 458. My translation.
- 26 Daubé Jules-Victoire: *La Femme pauvre au XIX^e siècle*, Paris 1866. As quoted in: *WFF*, I, doct. 127, p. 459. My translation. The second edition (3 vol.) of Daubé's *Femme pauvre* (1870) is now back in print (Paris 1992–1993). A fine analysis of the Simon-Daubé exchange is Scott Joan W.: "L'Ouvrière! Mot impie, sulfure ...". *Women Workers in the Discourse of French Political Economy, 1840–1860*, in: Joyce Patrick (ed.): *The Historical Meanings of Work*, Cambridge 1987, pp. 119–285.
- 27 Otto Louise: *Das Recht der Frauen auf Erwerb. Blicke auf das Frauenleben der Gegenwart*, Hamburg 1866. As translated by Susan Grong Bell in: *WFF*, I, doct. 129, p. 465.
- 28 The First International Workingmen's Association, Lausanne Congress 1867, *Rapports au Congrès ouvrier réuni du 2 au 8 septembre 1867 à Lausanne*, in: Freymond Jacques (ed.): *La Première Internationale. Recueil des documents I*, Geneva 1962. As quoted in: *WFF*, I, doct. 131, pp. 469–470. My translation.
- 29 Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, microfiche RP 12236. Mink Paul: *Le Travail des femmes. Discours prononcé par Mme Paul [est] Mink à la réunion publique de Vauxhall, le 13 juillet 1868*. As quoted in: *WFF*, I, doct. 132, pp. 472–473. Thanks to Marilyn J. Boxer for providing a copy of this posted speech. My translation.
- 30 Boxer Marilyn J.: *When Women Ask the Questions: Creating Women's Studies in America*, Baltimore (MD) 1998. See also Boxer's quotation from Rich, *Blood, Bread, and Poetry* (1986): "We are not 'the woman question' asked by somebody else; we are the women who ask the questions."
- 31 See note 8 above for the reference.