

Table C. Authors of articles, discussions, and review essays, published in Volumes 118 & 119 of *Ethics* (Oct. 2007 – July 2009):

Year	Authors	# Male	# Female	Percentage female
Vol. 118	23	19	4	17%
Vol. 119	26	22	4	15%

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Hypatia: A Journal of Her Own

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This year, 2010, sees the publication of Volume 25 of *Hypatia, A Journal of Feminist Philosophy*—a major achievement for the journal and, indeed, for the extended community that brought *Hypatia* into being in the early 1980s and have since built it into a major force in philosophy. In the process of organizing a conference to honor this quarter century of publication,¹ we learned a great deal about the history of the journal; past editors and members of the founding editorial board dug into their files and circulated minutes of SWIP meetings, planning memos, and editorial proposals going back to the origins of the journal in the mid-1970s.² So I begin with some background on the formation of the journal and its editorial practices, then give an overview of our current review practice and publication profile as this bears on the question of how women fare publishing in philosophy journals.

I. Hypatia History: Mandate and Editorial Policies

Hypatia is, in fact, several years older than the publication of Volume 25 suggests. It was originally published as a series of three special issues of *Women's Studies International Forum (WSIF)* between 1983 to 1985, under the editorship of Azizah al-Hibri.³ These *Hypatia* special issues of *WSIF* were the culmination of plans that had been taking shape for a decade: the impetus to create a journal of feminist philosophy came from discussions at regional meetings of the Society for Women in Philosophy (SWIP) dating to the early 1970s.⁴ The minutes from a Midwest SWIP business meeting in February 1976 summarize arguments for supporting the proposal for a "Journal of the Society for Women in Philosophy" that had been circulated by members of the Pacific APA.⁵ Chief among them was concern that women in philosophy were finding it difficult to gain access to "'standard' avenues of publication," especially if their work was feminist. Regular regional SWIP meetings, well established by 1976, were generating "a large amount of material" for which there was growing demand given the number of courses then being created and offered in feminist philosophy. In short, SWIP members felt a pressing need for a "forum for publication" (Midwest SWIP 1976).

There was debate at the time about the focus and orientation of this new SWIP journal. Was it to serve primarily as a venue for publishing philosophical work by women (whatever the area), or should it be an explicitly feminist journal? If the latter, should it be a broad spectrum feminist journal, with a mandate to publish feminist philosophy alongside other genres of feminist theory and writing, or should it be, more specifically,

a disciplinary feminist philosophy journal? These last options mark a distinction that figures in retrospective accounts of the process by which feminist scholars carved out academic niches for themselves in the 1960s and 1970s (McDermott 1994, 1-3, 189). Several expansively interdisciplinary feminist and women's studies journals had been founded in the 1970s at the time plans for a SWIP journal were taking shape (e.g., *Feminist Studies* in 1972, *Signs* and *Frontiers* in 1975), but *Hypatia* was one of a number of journals founded in the 1980s, in fields like history, law, literary studies, and politics, that served discipline-specific constituencies of feminist scholars.

The 1976 proposal for a SWIP journal settles these questions of scope and mandate in favor of a disciplinary feminist journal. The "main body of the journal" was to be made up of articles in feminist philosophy, organized thematically where appropriate (by "area or field of philosophy or topic"), and the early editors' introductions (e.g., Simons 1986, 1) make it clear that *Hypatia* was understood from the start to be inclusive of feminist work in all areas, subfields, and traditions of philosophy. Although its audience was expected to include feminist and women's studies scholars, it was only in connection with reviews that the journal's content was described as extending beyond philosophy; reviews were to include "both philosophy books and books thought to be important contributions to feminist theory" (Proposed editorial policy, 1976). This resolutely philosophical and pluralist orientation is reflected in the mission statement that appeared in the front matter of the journal when *Hypatia* was first published as an autonomous journal in 1986.

Hypatia has its roots in the Society for Women in Philosophy, many of whose members have for years envisioned a regular publication devoted to feminist philosophy. *Hypatia* is the realization of that vision; it is intended to encourage and communicate many different kinds of feminist philosophizing (*Hypatia* 1986, front matter).

The "Statement of Policy" included in the 1976 proposal makes it clear that *Hypatia's* founders envisioned a highly systematic and rigorous review process: it calls for anonymous review of each submission by two referees, with provision for a tie-breaking third review when referees diverge in their recommendations. But at the same time, manuscript review was not solely a matter of gatekeeping. It was to be a constructive process, aimed at fostering the intellectual development of feminist philosophy: "reviewers will be committed to provide critical comments on papers received, particularly if publication is not recommended" (Statement of Policy 1976). In the "Acknowledgements" with which al-Hibri opens the first *Hypatia* special issue of *WSIF* she notes that, in implementing these policies, it was clear that the SWIP members who reviewed submissions for this issue had "a special commitment to the journal and...high expectations concerning its quality and standard of excellence"; she reports "a very high rejection rate," but satisfaction that the result was well worth the process (al-Hibri 1983, vii).

These policies continue to be the framework within which *Hypatia* operates.⁶ All content is refereed with the exception of invited book reviews, occasional review essays, and "Musings." We decline very few manuscripts without review, and only when both co-editors concur that a submission is significantly out of area or underdeveloped; and we ask referees not only to recommend decisions on the manuscripts they review (to publish, to request revisions, to decline), but also to provide authors with "helpful and supportive feedback," even (indeed, especially) when they do not recommend publication. Our goal now, as when the 1976 "Statement of Policy" was circulated, is to encourage the kind of dynamic community of discourse necessary to sustain both the quality and the creativity of

feminist scholarship in philosophy in the long term. Our current mission statement acknowledges the interdisciplinary reach of the journal, but emphasizes the founding commitment to pluralist breadth within feminist philosophy.⁷

II. *Hypatia* Today

Close to thirty years later *Hypatia* is thriving. Our circulation is robust and is showing rapid growth in electronic subscriptions and downloads. Combining reports from Wiley-Blackwell and JSTOR, there were over 1,000 views and downloads of *Hypatia* articles a month in 2009, with 250 downloads for the most frequently accessed articles published that year and over 1,000 “unique prints” for each of the most frequently downloaded articles in the three years that *Hypatia* back content has been available through JSTOR.⁸ *Hypatia* continues to be a disciplinary journal of feminist philosophy with an international editorial board and readership. A regional analysis of article downloads for 2009 shows that over half our online readership is in Europe, Australia/New Zealand, and Asia, and a third of our institutional subscriptions are to libraries outside North America. *Hypatia* also continues to be expansively pluralist. Although distinctions by area and tradition are difficult to draw with precision, the distribution of submissions across sub-fields and traditions has been fairly stable in the last two years⁹: roughly half the manuscripts we receive are on topics in value theory (ethics, social/political philosophy, aesthetics); just over a quarter are in epistemology, philosophy of science, metaphysics; and a quarter represent various areas of continental philosophy, with history of philosophy manuscripts cross-cutting these categories.

Hypatia has a tradition of publishing two thematic issues a year going back to a special issue on Simone de Beauvoir that appeared as the third of the initial *WSIF Hypatia* issues (edited by Simons; 1985). Although all submissions are subject to the same review process—double-anonymous review by two referees—the timetable on which refereeing is carried out is much more regimented for thematic special issues as compared to open issues, and acceptance rates for special issues vary depending on the volume of submissions. What follows is a profile of the *Hypatia* review process for 2009 (for both open and special issues), focusing on factors that figure prominently in recent rankings of philosophy journals and in online discussions of journal practice.

We received just under 100 manuscripts for open submission issues in 2009 and, as indicated, we reviewed all but a few of these; our desk rejection rate is less than 5%. We accepted for publication 14% of the open submission manuscripts that were under review in this period, virtually all after they had undergone one or another level of revision.¹⁰ The initial decision for the majority of submissions was to reject (just under 70% of manuscripts reviewed), although in 40% of these cases we encouraged the authors to resubmit if they were willing to substantially rewrite their manuscript along lines recommended by the referees.¹¹ Referees are asked to provide us their reports in 6-8 weeks and most return reviews within this timeframe, although with wide variance. Our average time to initial decision for open submission manuscripts was 13 weeks, and the time to decision for revised manuscripts was 9 weeks.

Special issue themes are selected on the basis of a review of formal proposals by the Board of Associate Editors in consultation with the editors, and a vote by the Associate Editors.¹² In the last two years we have received six formal proposals for special issues, two of which have been accepted and are scheduled for 2011 and 2012. The three special issues whose deadlines fell in late 2008 or 2009 drew altogether 50 submissions and, on average, the guest editors accepted just

over a third of these manuscripts. Given the tight timeline on which special issue contents are reviewed, guest editors typically redirect manuscripts to open issue review if they require major revisions, or if referees recommend a decision to reject and resubmit. Although the distribution of manuscripts across decision categories varies by special issue, all the guest editors made an initial decision to redirect manuscripts or reject them (with or without the option of resubmission) in over half, and usually two-thirds, of the submissions they reviewed. The time to initial decision for special issue submissions was the same as for open issue submissions (9 to 13 weeks), but longer and with wider variance for final decisions (4 to 17 weeks). This last reflects the fact that guest editors typically defer final decisions until all revised (conditionally accepted) manuscripts are in hand and they are in a position to finalize the contents for the issue as a whole.

In online discussion of journal practice generated by posts on the blogs PEA Soup (“The Ethical Obligations of Journals”: 29 June 2004) and Leiter Reports (“Philosophy Journals: Which Ones are Responsible, Which Ones Not”: 29 November 2004), perhaps the sharpest point of contention was the length of time it takes journal editors to provide authors with a response. One highly regarded mainstream journal was described as promising a 12-week turnaround but routinely taking up to a year to provide authors with a response, while other journals were commended for providing an initial decision to reject within 6 to 8 weeks. Timely response is described in several posts as 3 to 4 months,¹³ so *Hypatia*’s average time to initial decision is within the range of expectation for philosophy journals identified as “well run” in these discussions. In addition, however, a second focus of concern in these discussions is the quality of the feedback: whether journals provide authors with reviews of their manuscripts and how substantive these are. One especially striking post registers frustration that, in an intensely competitive publishing environment, journals “no longer see themselves as able to fulfill [a] duty, or as even having such a duty...[as] to further the professional development of those who submit manuscripts by providing extensive, constructive feedback that responds not only to the paper’s weakness but also to its strengths” (Cholbi on Leiter: 29 November 2004). The quality of feedback provided by *Hypatia* referees has impressed all of us, not least the many authors who make a point of telling us how much they appreciate the rigorous detail of the comments we include with our decision letters. While we have not undertaken a systematic content assessment (e.g., of the kind reported by Carole Lee and Christian Schunn in this issue of the *APA Newsletter*), the vast majority of referees’ reports we see reflect a very close reading of the manuscripts under review, and a commitment not just to ensure that *Hypatia* publishes top quality philosophy, but to foster the professional development of individual scholars, as mandated by the 1976 “Statement” on editorial policy.

Another issue of timeliness that has drawn attention in online discussions of journal practice is how long it takes for an article accepted by a journal to appear in print. Contributors to *Hypatia* know when articles accepted for a special issue will appear from the time the call for papers has been circulated; the process of review, revision, and production takes roughly a year and a half, and special issues are typically scheduled and advertised a year in advance of their submission deadlines. Although articles accepted for publication in an open issue may not appear in print for a year or more, Wiley-Blackwell has recently implemented EarlyView: a system which makes it possible to publish articles online as soon as proofs are approved. Combined with a new small batch production system, this means that open issue manuscripts can be published in citable form electronically within six months of

acceptance, often well before they have been assigned to a specific issue.

Finally, the list of “Ethical Obligations of Journals to Authors” posted on the PEA Soup blog puts particular emphasis on transparency of the review process, a principle that has been endorsed by *Hypatia*’s founders and editors from the time editorial policy for the journal was first drafted in the mid-1970s. Our current review policies and practices, our submission guidelines, and our acceptance rates and average review time for open issues are posted on our website. In addition, since December 2008 when we moved to an electronic submission and review system (Manuscript Central), authors have been able to check online to see where their manuscript is in the review process at any point after it has been submitted.

In short, feminist philosophy is now an established field, and *Hypatia* is a mature journal by any measure. Perhaps more to the point, from the outset *Hypatia* has instituted and maintained many of the key recommendations now endorsed as responsible journal practices. To reiterate: we review the vast majority of submissions in a double anonymous referee process; we have a commitment to provide authors with detailed feedback; we balance the demands of securing substantive, well-informed reviews against the imperative of timely response, and maintain a 3 to 4 month turn-around time for initial decisions; our policies and practices are publically documented.

III. The Implications for Women Publishing in Philosophy

Consider, first, the question of what difference it makes that journals implement the kinds of policies adopted by *Hypatia* in the early 1980s and now widely recommended in discussions of responsible journal practice. Reflecting on this I am reminded of an observation made by Virginia Valian when asked what she had learned from consulting widely on gender equity issues.¹⁴ Her response was that when administrators recognize that they have a “gender problem” or a “race/ethnicity problem,” it is almost always entangled with (and exacerbated by) deeper, more widespread forms of institutional dysfunctionality. What she described in this connection is well documented by studies of the impact of inhospitable workplace environments: women and minorities are especially disadvantaged when policies and procedures are not transparent, when success depends heavily on integration into informal communication networks from which they are all too often excluded, and when there is a lack of accountability for the fairness of outcomes.¹⁵ The corollary is the conventional wisdom, arising from decades of work on equity issues in a range of fields: that fair, transparent practices can make a real difference for women and minority scholars, mitigating the effects of cognitive schemas that inculcate patterns of misrecognition of the kind described in the empirical literature on evaluation bias and recently, in a philosophical context, by Miranda Fricker as forms of testimonial injustice (2007). Given the concerns that impelled SWIP members to take on the challenge of founding a journal in the 1970s, it is not surprising that the 1976 “Statement on Policy” should make it a priority to establish rigorously fair, systematic, and constructive review practices.

That said, leveling the playing field is by no means all that’s needed. Making the rules of the game explicit, while beneficial for its enhanced transparency, leaves intact the conventions that structure publishing practices in philosophy, and these may themselves be unjust in subtle (and not-so-subtle) ways. They may incorporate various forms of evaluation bias (often unrecognized, unintended) that put women and minority scholars at a disadvantage, not least because the onus is on

them to accommodate to disciplinary norms they had little part in shaping that we should be prepared to critically scrutinize. *Hypatia* was intended to create, and has succeeded in fostering, an intellectual and professional space in which innovative feminist work in philosophy can flourish. In this it has served to counteract patterns of hermeneutical injustice that have marginalized philosophical work on a range of issues and perspectives that particularly concern women and feminists (to draw on Fricker’s terminology again; 2007). One might expect that, 30 years later, conditions would have changed. But sadly, as Sally Haslanger demonstrates in her recent *Hypatia* Musing (2008), feminist scholarship is still not getting uptake in many mainstream philosophy journals. This is especially striking given the number of areas of philosophy in which cutting edge developments resonate with, or were anticipated by, lines of inquiry pioneered by feminist philosophers. Consider, for example, the recent, rapid growth of social epistemology predicated on the insight, forcefully argued by contributors to early issues of *Hypatia*, that epistemic agency must be understood in social terms, or the arguments for reconceptualizing the nature of moral and political agency in ways that take account of moral psychology, relational qualities, and structural inequities which were the point of departure for the research in feminist ethics and political philosophy that has flourished since the 1970s.

Nowhere are these issues more clearly marked than in recent debate about journal ratings. The reputational rankings of philosophy journals published online by Leiter and by Colyvan are aimed at general rather than specialist journals so they do not include *Hypatia*.¹⁶ However, *Hypatia* does appear in the more comprehensive journal ratings developed by the Australian Research Council (ARC) and the European Science Foundation, where it is listed as an A* journal on the Australian list and as a B journal in the European Reference Index for the Humanities (ERIH).¹⁷ This discrepancy is puzzling because the Australasian rating system was evidently the template for the ERIH system, and both are intended not to rank journals reputationally, but to assign them to broad categories defined, for example, by their publishing standards (e.g., peer review, timely and regular publication), their international reach (in readership and board membership), the degree to which they are discriminating (as evident in acceptance rates): all measures on which *Hypatia* has an exemplary record.

The response to these discrepant ratings for *Hypatia* was immediate. In a discussion thread on the Feminist Philosophers blog (“Philosophy Journal Rankings” 2007), a number of contributors observe that the ERIH rating of *Hypatia* as a B journal is enormously consequential, given the role these ratings play in research assessments, and in appointments and funding decisions. One notes that “it is very difficult to publish feminist philosophy in other journals,” and it can be “difficult to get publications in *Hypatia* taken seriously by one’s department” (Jender 2007), so that a B rating for *Hypatia* reinforces the marginalization of feminist philosophy in the field as a whole. Leiter’s comments on the Australasian rating of *Hypatia* as an A* journal powerfully illustrate the problem:

The A* list isn’t bad, apart from dubious inclusions (probably meant to pander to this-or-that interest group) like *Hypatia*, *Political Theory*, and *Philosophy East and West*. (The best work in feminist philosophy, for example, has surely appeared in many of the other A* journals, not in *Hypatia*...) (Leiter, *Leiter Reports*, 29 September 2008)

The firestorm of commentary that these remarks generated on the Feminist Philosophers blog provoked a policy change. Most of the discussion has been deleted but the original post is

still online under the title, “Brian Leiter reveals vast knowledge of feminist philosophy”:

Surely the best work in feminist philosophy is published in top mainstream journals all the time! Surely! Mere introspection reveals this. Sadly, however, very little feminist philosophy makes it into mainstream journals....Seeking confirmation? Check out Sally Haslanger’s paper. (Jender, *Feminist Philosophy*: 29 September 2008).

Much more work is required to document and—more to the point—to counteract the patterns of marginalization of feminist scholarship in philosophy, and of women publishing in philosophy more generally, that were identified by Haslanger in 2008 and that are reflected in contributions to the two special issues on women in philosophy recently published by the *APA Newsletter on Feminism and Philosophy*. But it would seem that, as much as things have changed for the better—feminist philosophy is clearly flourishing and *Hypatia* is now a well established, highly successful journal—the concerns that mobilized SWIP members to found *Hypatia* in the 1970s have by no means disappeared.

Endnotes

1. The 25th Anniversary conference, “Feminist Legacies/Feminist Futures,” was hosted by the Simpson Center for the Humanities at the University of Washington in October 2009. Details are available on the *Hypatia* editorial office website. This URL and others cited in what follows are included in the “online sources” section of the references.
2. *Hypatia* founders and editors reflected on this history in an opening keynote panel and in an interview recorded for the oral history project, “Feminist Philosophers: In Their Own Words” (Callahan and Tuana). Videos of both the interview and the keynote panel are available through the *Hypatia* editorial office website (linked to *Hypatia* Online), and audio podcasts of the keynote panels are posted on the Wiley-Blackwell *Hypatia* website.
3. Azizah al-Hibri provides an account of this history in the “Acknowledgements” published as a preface to the first of the three *Hypatia* special issues of *WSIF* (al-Hibri 1983).
4. Joyce Trebilcot (1983, 1990) describes the process by which SWIP took shape, beginning with an initial meeting in 1970 as the APA Women’s Caucus at the Eastern Division APA, and taking the name “Society for Women in Philosophy” the following spring at a meeting of the Western Division APA (Trebilcot 1983, vi; 1990, ix). By the mid-1970s regional SWIPs were organized across the U.S. and in Canada, with counterparts in Europe and Mexico (1983, vi). Trebilcot recalls that “almost as soon as SWIP was formed, members began to discuss the idea of a journal” (1990, ix).
5. This proposal, entitled “Proposed Editorial Policy for a Journal of the Society for Women in Philosophy,” was discussed at a meeting of the Committee on the Status of Women at the Pacific Division meeting in March 1976. The membership of the founding Editorial Board was announced in May 1977 (Garry and Thomason), and Azizah al-Hibri was appointed the founding editor in the spring of 1979 (Trebilcot 1990, x). Minutes of an Editorial Board meeting the following spring record the decision to name the journal “*Hypatia*: A Journal of Feminist Philosophy” (March 28, 1980, San Francisco).
6. The details of *Hypatia*’s “Review Policy and Practice” are posted online, on the *Hypatia* editorial office website under the tab “for contributors.”
7. This mission statement is printed on the inside cover of each issue and is posted on the *Hypatia* homepage of editorial office and Wiley-Blackwell websites.
8. *Hypatia*’s current content is only available online through Wiley-Blackwell (all back issues area available on the Wiley-Blackwell website as well); JSTOR has offered electronic

access to back issues of *Hypatia*, with a five-year moving wall, since April 2007.

9. These figures reflect a tabulation of submissions under review or received since July 2008 when our editorial term began.
10. Our decision categories for manuscripts are: accept (as it stands); accept with minor revisions (subject to review by the editors); accept on condition that the author makes major revisions (subject to review by the editors and one external referee); reject but with encouragement to resubmit if substantially rewritten (if resubmitted, the manuscript will go through full review by two external referees); reject (the manuscript will not be considered again). The 14% acceptance rate cited here includes all manuscripts accepted for publication without further external review (as they stand or with minor revisions). A decision of “major revision” was assigned to 17% of manuscripts reviewed; if revised they will require a second round of external review.
11. That is to say, just under 70% of manuscripts were assigned to the two “reject” categories cited in Note #10, the majority without the option of resubmission.
12. The guidelines for preparing special issue proposals and a governance document that sets out the role of the editors and associate editors are available on the *Hypatia* editorial office website.
13. Several of the survey responses reported by Haslanger in this issue of the *APA Newsletter* also include recommendations of deadlines for journal decisions: 2 months in one case and 4-6 months in another. And Henry Richardson notes that the response time for *Ethics* is under 2 months for first tier decisions to reject manuscripts without external review.
14. This was one focus of discussion at a conference on “Women, Work, and the Academy” convened at Barnard College, 9-10 December 2004. The conference website includes links to a video of the keynote panel presentations that precipitated this discussion.
15. See, for example, Valian’s overview of the impact of gender schemas (1999) and the range of studies on workplace environment issues summarized in Wylie, Jakobsen, Fosado (2007).
16. A further question that warrants attention is what counts as a “specialist” journal, and how these fare in the ERIH journal rating. A number of commentators who responded to posts on the Leiter and Brooks blogs (June 2007) objected that there is a general problem with the rating of specialist journals on the ERIH system: few rise above a B rating; there is no differentiation between journals within specialist fields; and those that are more specialized tend to do less well (e.g., Millstein, Leiter: 28 June 2007). The editors of close to 30 history of science, technology and medicine journals issued a collective condemnation of the ERIH ratings as “defective in conception and execution” (Ariew et al. 2009, 2). It may also be significant that, for a journal to receive an A rating on the ERIH index it must not only meet the criteria set out for this category, but representatives of at least two EU countries must assign it an A rating and there must be no dissenting voices (see the ERIH website for details). For the outcome of these debates, see Thom Brooks’ most recent post on the ERIH ratings (23 January 2009).
17. *Hypatia* is also included in a 2004 “Journals Survey,” published on the blog Thoughts Arguments Rants (Weatherson, TAR: 17 August 2004), and in an application to philosophy journals of the Hirsch Index (a citation-based impact rating), the results of which are available on the blog Certain Doubts (Kvanvig: 24 April 2008). A contributor to the Feminist Philosophers blog notes that, on the Hirsch system, *Hypatia* “comes in 26th [of the 75 journals listed],” and ahead of half a dozen journals that the European Science Foundation ranked higher (Telbort, *Feminist Philosophers*: 12 January 2008). On a reputational survey reported by Weatherson, *Hypatia* receives an average score of 4.0 (median of 4.1) on a 10-point scale; the highest score assigned to the 86 journals surveyed is 8.9, and the

lowest score is 2.7. The six journals that share *Hypatia's* average score were all assigned a B rating on ERIH, while on the ARC ratings they include one other A*, two A, and a B rating. What distinguishes *Hypatia* is the standard deviation recorded for its score: at 2.56 points it is the largest spread for any but one other journal included in this survey.

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APA Newsletters

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FROM THE EDITOR, CHRISTINA M. BELLON

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