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A NEW LOST WOMAN PHILOSOPHER

Amalie John Hathaway

IN THE DECADES since feminist scholars first turned our eyes to the past in search of women philosophers unmentioned in history, it has become clear that not all women philosophers get missed by history for the same reason. Some women philosophers, like Julia Ward Howe, one of whose many philosophical lecture manuscripts was only recently discussed in a philosophical journal for the first time, were missed because, among other reasons, they were remembered too well for some other accomplishment—in Howe’s case, writing the lyrics to “The Battle Hymn of the Republic.” Or they

were passed by because their other activities or opinions, such as Catharine Esther Beecher’s, were anathema to the pro-suffragism and/or the secularism that seemed integral to the beliefs that drove the recovery movement. This kind of exclusion has been corrected. It is hard to believe that now, in 2012, any women philosophers are still being missed because of practical reasons due to lack or failure of research. Such does, however, seem to be the case with Amalia Hathaway.

Amalie Hathaway, to give her her legal first name, was a far more conventional philosopher than any of her more studied age cohort,

Eliza Sunderland and Marietta Kies. With one exception, her corpus consists of six papers all consistently, specifically concerned with nineteenth-century German idealist philosophy, the exception being in psychology, at a time when psychology had not quite fully separated from philosophy. These papers were seemingly all given before cultural societies in the Midwest, including primarily the Chicago Philosophical Society. Her one publication is one of those papers that she also gave before the Concord (Massachusetts) Summer School of Philosophy and Literature founded by Bronson Alcott and

Ralph Waldo Emerson, a paper which by means unknown, ended up published in the second volume of a bimonthly periodical called *Education: An International Magazine* in Boston, in another volume of which Howe was also represented.

So, why doesn't anyone know about Amalie Hathaway? Why hasn't anyone cared about Amalie Hathaway? As was said, she was far more conventional, that is, far easier for a historian of philosophy to recognize at face value. A paper called "Schopenhauer" is obviously about philosophy.

The truth seems to be that in the recovery movement, unconventional women philosophers took priority. Frances Wright, the radical communitarian who travelled from Scotland to the United States where she became the first woman to give speeches to the public, for example, was one of the first American women philosophers to be recovered. The movement was not so much interested in in-house-type philosophical subjects as historical philosophers as in feminist politics such as written by Judith Sargent Murray or feminist theory like that written by Margaret Fuller (although Fuller was strangely excluded by retrievers of American philosophers until Jane Duran wrote an article in 2005 in *The Pluralist*). Hathaway's list of papers "Immanuel Kant," "The Hegelian Philosophy," "Hartmann," "Pessimism and the Hegelian Philosophy," "Mental Automatism," and "Schopenhauer" (alternatively referenced as "Schopenhauer and His Philosophy," and "Scho-

penhauer and Pessimism") sounded too conservative. As well, Hathaway seemed too successful to need feminist rescue. Her Concord talk was reported on in the *New York Times*. Surely someone so mainstream must have gotten taken care of by the mainstream. Proving that sexism was still active, however, Hathaway was not so taken care of, and because she was not taken care of by nineteenth-century feminists either, I conjecture, the twentieth-century-begun recovery movement missed her.

At present I am working on gleaning from Hathaway's 18-page Schopenhauer paper published in *Education* and its contemporary reviews why Hathaway was both the "idol" of the Chicago Philosophical Society and a figure of so little interest to the feminist philosophical recovery movement that in its work to date in, for example, *Women in the American Philosophical Tradition: 1800-1930*, a 2004 special issue of *Hypatia*, a journal of feminist philosophy, edited by Dorothy Rogers and Therese B. Dykeman, she appears in a footnote only.

Carol Marie Bensick is a CSW Research Scholar. She received her Ph.D. in English and American Literature from Cornell University in 1982 after completing a dissertation titled "La Nouvelle Beatrice: Renaissance Medicine and New England Theology." She has taught at University of Denver, Cornell University, UCLA, University

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