
Reviewed by Jeanne Armstrong

Feminist Philosophies A-Z is a small book, 192 pages including bibliography and introduction, with a very specific focus. Arranged in alphabetical order as the title indicates, this book covers terminology, concepts, philosophical theories and philosophers relevant to contemporary feminist philosophy. This book is one of fifteen in a comprehensive philosophy A-Z series published by Edinburgh University Press. Some other topics in the series are epistemology, ethics, aesthetics, Indian philosophy, Islamic philosophy, and the philosophy of science. Author, Nancy Arden McHugh, Associate Professor of Philosophy at Wittenberg University, states her purpose as both providing a “representative coverage of the field” and also focusing on some specific areas, such as transnational feminism and Third World feminism, which “may have received less coverage in other references or are newer to feminist philosophy and are receiving increased coverage in feminist philosophy courses.” McHugh’s intended audience is students in feminist philosophy or women’s studies classes and all those with a general interest in feminist theory.

In her introduction, the author explains her decision to identify country and race or ethnicity of the feminist philosophers or thinkers included in the resource. Since she considers, whiteness to be a “location from which white feminists theorize whether or not they are aware of it,” McHugh identifies feminist philosophers as white, African-American, Indian, Latina, and French and so forth. She decided to limit coverage to twentieth and twenty-first century feminism in comparison to the *Historical Dictionary of Feminist Philosophy* published in 2006, thus Mary Wollstonecraft is omitted. McHugh also decided not to include feminist men and mentions that the book doesn’t include every woman who has contributed to feminist philosophy since “it is hard to give all of these figures the attention they are due.”

Comparing this resource to the *Encyclopedia of Feminist Theories*, Feminist Philosophies A-Z identifies many important feminist philosophers who are not mentioned in the encyclopedia, such as Helen Longino, Sara Ruddick, Mary Mahowald, Uma Narayan, Rosi Braidotti, Susan Bordo, Eva Kittay, and Moira Gatens to name a few. On the other hand, this book does not cover all the feminist theorists included in *Encyclopedia of Feminist Theories* since the author’s criteria require that the entries focus on feminist philosophy, rather than on the broader field of feminist theory. McHugh does include entries on “Black Feminist Thought,” “Chicana Feminism and Latina Feminism,” “Third World Feminism” “Postcolonial Theory,” entries on French feminists and entries on feminist philosophers from other regions or countries like India.
In comparison to the *Encyclopedia of Feminist Theories*, McHugh’s entries in *Feminist Philosophies A-Z* are shorter and very basic. She does not attempt to provide an overview of topics such as postcolonial feminism, but rather offers a brief explanation and suggestions for further reading. For example her entry on feminist epistemologies states, “Feminist epistemologies arose in response to the feminist analysis that standard epistemology may not only not capture all there is to knowledge and knowledge acquisition, but that the very underpinnings and methodologies of mainstream epistemology may be sexist and masculinist.” McHugh then gives some examples of feminist epistemologies, including feminist standpoint theory, feminist empiricism, situated knowledge and ecological thinking, which have separate entries in her book, and then refers the reader to *Feminist Epistemologies* by Alcoff and Porter for further reading. This type of entry, almost like a glossary, could be useful to undergraduates who need an easily understood explanation of sometimes complicated and confusing ideologies.

Since terms for some entries are not intuitive, it may be difficult for users to locate the entry appropriate to their topic. For example, one would need to look under feminist ethics or feminist epistemologies rather than under ethics or epistemologies although you would find entries on epistemology of ignorance and ethics of care. McHugh does not cross reference from ethics to feminist ethics. She has an entry on reproductive rights that discusses abortion but also does not cross reference from abortion to reproductive rights.

The bibliography is more than 13 pages long and includes some seminal sources on feminist philosophy but it doesn’t mention other important sources like *The Companion to Feminist Philosophy* edited by Jaggar and Young or the *Historical Dictionary of Feminist Philosophy* by Villanueva Gardner. While not as comprehensive as other recent reference publications on feminist philosophy or feminist theory such as the *Blackwell Guide to Feminist Philosophy* or the *Encyclopedia of Feminist Theories*, this slight book may be most useful as a brief, though not inexpensive, glossary of feminist philosophy for the general reader or for students in introductory courses.

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