



INTRODUCTION

Women-focused Special Issue

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When Yujin Nagasawa and I first commissioned this special issue in 2021, fewer than 8 per cent of submissions to *Religious Studies*, the foremost philosophy of religion journal globally, were by women. We had a hunch that this was for (at least) two reasons. The first is that women may be less likely to submit articles to top journals than men. The second, of course, is that in spite of the fact that some of the most interesting work in philosophy of religion is being done by women, philosophy of religion remains a male-dominated subject.

All of the articles in this special issue were anonymously peer-reviewed by two reviewers, in the same way that any other issue of *Religious Studies* is reviewed. None of the reviewers knew that the authors were women, or that the articles were for a women-focused special issue. In other words, there were no special favours: all of the articles were accepted on their academic merit alone. In response to the call for the special issue, we received significantly more submissions from women than we would normally do. This seems to bear out our hunch that women philosophers of religion are less likely to submit high-quality articles to top journals – but also that, when they do, the articles are often worthy of publication in those journals.

When we sent out the call for articles, the special issue was going to be called the ‘women-only’ rather than the ‘women-focused’ special issue. We changed this because we have included two symposia on books by two women authors, Christina Van Dyke and Joanna Leidenhag, and most of the commentators on these books are men. Women in philosophy of religion often take on roles that support the research, and representation, of other philosophers of religion, most of whom are of course men. We decided it was entirely consistent with the aims of this special issue to foreground the work of two women scholars, Van Dyke and Leidenhag, and for men to contribute to the celebration of their work and to giving them the attention they deserve.

Did we get any flack or opinionated rants for putting out a call for a women-focused special issue? Of course we did. But we are happy that the end-result bears out the importance of the project. Including women’s voices in philosophy of religion is not just a matter of justice for those women. By virtue of having experiences that women characteristically have, or are more likely to have than men, women often notice things of philosophical and religious significance that men might not. Including the voices of women as well as men makes the discipline better. The same of course can be said for other groups of people who are marginalized in the discipline. We need more diverse

voices, and especially voices of marginalized people, because it makes for better philosophy.

A women-focused special issue will not solve all of the systemic issues that stand in the way of women and other people from marginalized groups and exclude them from academic philosophy of religion, but it is a step in the right direction.