



Has Feminism Changed Science?

Londa Schiebinger

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Do women do science differently? And how about feminists--male or female? The answer to this fraught question, carefully set out in this provocative book, will startle and enlighten every faction in the "science wars."

Has Feminism Changed Science? is at once a history of women in science and a frank assessment of the role of gender in shaping scientific knowledge. Science is both a profession and a body of knowledge, and Londa Schiebinger looks at how women have fared and performed in both instances. She first considers the lives of women scientists, past and present: How many are there? What sciences do they choose--or have chosen for them? Is the professional culture of science gendered? And is there something uniquely feminine about the science women do? Schiebinger debunks the myth that women scientists--because they are women--are somehow more holistic and integrative and create more cooperative scientific communities. At the same time, she details the considerable practical difficulties that beset women in science, where domestic partnerships, children, and other demanding concerns can put women's (and increasingly men's) careers at risk.

But what about the content of science, the heart of Schiebinger's subject? Have feminist perspectives brought any positive changes to scientific knowledge? Schiebinger provides a subtle and nuanced gender analysis of the physical sciences, medicine, archaeology, evolutionary biology, primatology, and developmental biology. She also shows that feminist scientists have developed new theories, asked new questions, and opened new fields in many of these areas.

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