

Gender and Agency Lecture

Clare Hemmings

Beyond the Feminist Subject of Feminism: Emma Goldman and the Critique of Femininity

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Beyond the Feminist Subject of Feminism: Emma Goldman and the Critique of Femininity

This lecture explores the importance of considering Emma Goldman's trenchant critiques of both femininity and feminism as an important part of a 'history of feminist thought'. I argue against feminist critics who seek to reclaim Goldman as a feminist ahead of her time - despite her refusal of the label and anti-feminine vitriol - suggesting we lose the value in those critiques when we seek to domesticate them. Instead, I highlight Goldman's critical value both for retaining judgement as part of feminism and for holding apart the subject and object of feminism. Exploring her value for a reconsideration of the political grammar of the phrase 'I'm not a feminist, but...' I propose conditions under which we might consider such refusals to be an important part of feminist history (rather than only a sign of its demise).

Clare Hemmings is Professor of Feminist Theory and the current Head of the Department of Gender Studies at LSE (where she has been teaching for almost 20 years). She completed her PhD in Women's Studies at York in 1998 and has been located within the field of interdisciplinary gender and sexuality studies ever since. Her book-length publications include 'Bisexual Spaces' (2002); 'Why Stories Matter' (2011) and 'Considering Emma Goldman' (2018).

Eine Kooperation des Forschungsverbundes Gender and Agency mit dem Referat Genderforschung und der Professur für Gender Studies der Universität Wien.