



# Women in the Liberal Arts Tradition

with Dr. Brian Williams

## Lecture 13: Conclusion

### Outline:

#### Women in the Liberal Arts Tradition

- “We cannot be content to exclude the women who fostered and sustained the communities which produced the men and works we’ve come to prize. When we do this, we thin the contextual realities and leave holes in the rich tapestry that help shape the lives and works of the contributors we have already recovered, both men and women. We must guard against allowing the dark amnesia of obscurity to rob us of the collective memory, which is ours, and from which our schools and students would benefit. Without a more complete knowledge of our past, we all suffer from a distorted picture of the tradition and pass that on to our students.” (Joelle Hodge)
- The reasons for this course:
  - We wanted to offer classical educators a more fulsome and true picture of the liberal arts tradition itself by recovering the educated and literate women who left us works that are artistic, literary, theological, political, and practical.
    - These women, who were educated in the tradition, received it, benefited from it, participated in it, and contributed to the Great Conversation and then passed it on to others.
    - It is important for us as educators and for our students to know these women and to read and benefit from their work.
    - We seem to have inherited a great many myths, and one of them is that women were not educated and did not leave works worth reading.
      - More men were highly educated than women.
      - Women did not have the opportunity to enter positions of power and authority.
    - Convents and abbeys sometimes were places of higher education for women (without responsibilities of husband, home, and children).
    - We focused on women that leave us writing that clearly participates in the great tradition and participates in the Great Conversation.
    - Many men encouraged the education of women and supported their writing and scholarship.
    - We hope to prick the myth that girls and women were entirely uneducated.



- Second, we wanted to introduce authors who offer a richer and more fulsome understanding of the human condition.
- Third, many of these women give us what no other authors have given us. Without them we would lack access to their rich explorations of the human condition.
- We think it is formative for both your girls and your boys, your young women and young men to read, learn from and be encouraged by thoughtful, intelligent, articulate women who have been integral to the tradition.
- Passage from Anna Julia Cooper from her essay *On the Higher Education of Women*