

Women and Political Theory*

Athena Lydia Casambre**

The idea of this paper can be traced to a query, raised rather late, at the close of a two-day workshop on the teaching of Social Science II (Survey of Social, Economic, and Political Thought, in the General Education curriculum of the U.P. System), by a properly cautious latecomer who nevertheless felt compelled to raise the issue at such an hour; the query was, "has anything been said about the handling of social, economic, and political thought from a feminist perspective?" The query was met initially with a collective groan from the workshop participants, now weary from the major battle about which thinkers to retain on the syllabus; then by scattered reassurances that wherever appropriate and/or whenever there was time, some effort was indeed being made to comment on how women are dealt with in the bodies of work included in the syllabus. Two observations may be made of this response: first, that it reveals a lack of the sort of systematic discussion apparently being referred to in the initial query; and second, that if there are indeed occasional discussions, then the question on the nature of these discussions ought to be raised.

I am not, on this occasion, presenting an argument for the systematic teaching of social, economic, and political thought from a feminist perspective, or the systematic discussion of the "woman

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**Associate Professor, U.P. College Baguio.

question" in the context of social, economic, and political thought. Such an argument would be expected from a spokesperson of, or for, the feminist movement, which I am not. Making such an argument would constitute affirmation of commitment to a cause, which is not my present project. Instead, my project, in this paper, is to explore the possible nature of discussions of political thought, in which women are cognized.

When instructors of Social Science II occasionally undertake to discuss women in political thought, what might be the content of these discussions? I shall suggest that the answer is, it will depend on the question asked; that is, how was the question juxtaposing "women" and "political thought" framed? Thus, a feminist perspective on political thought is indeed particular. A discussion of women and political thought could be addressing either a question that is principally feminist, or a question that is principally about politics. Of course, the feminists will immediately and vigorously point out that this suggestion merely underlines their point, that society has been engineered to produce this dichotomy, where politics excludes women. I am not interested in affirming or debating this point; my interest is in examining the multiplicity of discourse on "women and politics" and to create a stronger awareness of the specificity of questions to which diverse, ostensibly common, discourses pertain. In addition, we leave open the question, whether it is possible to do a simultaneously feminist and political philosophy study.

There will be two major parts of my paper. I shall begin with a demonstration of the undertaking to discuss women and political theory, by addressing the simple question, what have political thinkers said about women? This will constitute the major part of the paper. For this paper, I am limiting my examination to texts of Plato, Aristotle, Hobbes, and John Stuart Mill; Plato and Aristotle represent the classical period of political thought, while Hobbes and John Stuart Mill represent the modern period. This part of the paper is written solely from readings of primary sources: Plato's *Republic*, Aristotle's *Politics* and *Ethics*, Hobbes's *Leviathan*, and four of John Stuart Mill's works, *Utilitarianism*, *On Liberty*, *Considerations on Representative Government*, and *The Subjection of Women*. I deliberately and assiduously refrained from reading secondary sources while working on this part, in order not to be influenced by others' readings of the texts. This can be taken as an initial marking off of the horizon from which I begin my inquiry.

In the second part, I shall comment on how my discussion in the first part stands in relation to other forms of discourse on women and political thought, to highlight the particularity of a feminist perspective, this despite the fact that there is no single feminist perspective. It is in this part of the paper that I bring in feminist studies of political theory.

Plato—In Book V of *The Republic*, Polemarchus and Adeimantus (subsequently joined by Glaucon and Thrasymachus) press Socrates to elaborate on his suggestion, made earlier in Book IV that “the possession of women, marriage, and procreation of children must as far as possible be arranged according to the proverb that friends have all things in common.” (423e-424a) Polemarchus’s and Adeimantus’s demand leads to the consideration of the question regarding the place of women in the just state, the construction of which had been meant to provide an understanding of Justice. (450d-457c) This discussion is referred to as the first of three “waves” which Socrates and his companions have to “escape,” meaning three ideas or suggestions regarding the realization of the just state that are expected to be met by resistance and/or ridicule. In the project to show that the city which they had founded (“in speech,”-472e) is “possible and best” (456c), Socrates first argues the case that women guardians must be educated and reared in the same manner as men guardians; second, he proposes that guardian women and the children of guardians must belong in common to guardian men and parents (457d); finally, he suggests that the single change which would bring about the just state is the rule of the philosopher-king (473d).

The “first wave,” which is frequently referred to under the rubric “equality of women” tackles the last part of the original suggestions: that “the things of friends... be in common.” (449c) The exchange between Socrates and Glaucon may be summarized in the following way:

- Q1: Should female guardians guard the things that males guard, and hunt with them and do the rest in common?
A1: Yes.
Q2: Can we use women for the same things as the men without giving them the same education and rearing?
A2: No.
Q3: Women should therefore be taught music, gymnastic, as well as things that have to do with war such as the bearing of arms and the riding of horses?

A3: Yes.

Q4: But this idea will be ridiculed?

A4: Yes.

Q5: Is it possible that a woman does not differ in her nature from a man?

A5: A woman does differ from a man.

Q6: Can the apparent contradiction in our assertions be removed if we specify that the point of sameness or difference we consider is in the occupations, so that a man and a woman, both skilled in the doctor's art are the same/ and two men, one a carpenter and the other a doctor are different?

A6: Yes.

Q7: Is there any practice related to governing a city in respect of which men and women are different?

A7: None.

Q8: Therefore women participate in all practices, just as men do, according to their nature?

A8: Yes.

Q9: Therefore it is not against nature to assign music and gymnastic to women guardians?

A9: No.

Q10: Therefore we were not prescribing anything that was impossible

A10: No.

Q11: And we were also considering what was best?

A11: Yes.

Q12: In the city we founded, is the best guardian not one who has been duly educated?

A12: Yes.

Q13: Will the women, if duly educated, not be the best women?

A13: Yes.

Q14: Is it not best to have the best men and the best women?

A14: Yes.

Socrates thus leads Glaucon to the conclusion that

...there is no practice of a city's governors which belongs to woman because she's woman, or to man because he's man; but the natures are scattered alike among both animals; and woman participates according to nature in all practices, and man in all, but in all of them woman is weaker than man. (455e)

Glaucon agrees that just as "one woman [maybe] apt"—at medicine or music or gymnastic or war,—and another not," so also "one woman [is] fit for guarding and another not," owing to the fact that there is "a lover of wisdom and a hater of wisdom," and "one who is spirited and another without spirit." (45a) Women fit for guarding "must also be chosen to live and guard with such men, since they are competent and akin to the men in their nature," (456b), and, as with men guardians with whom they share the same nature, women guardians must also be assigned "music and gymnastic." (456b)

This statement reaffirms and applies two basic principles in Plato's schema: first, that there are different natures, of which two principal ones are those of wisdom and spirit, both of which make one "fit for guarding" (456a); and second, that justice requires that functions in the city be assigned according to a person's nature (443b/d; 456b). If these premises are held firm, then one can indeed come to the conclusion that women ought to stand in equality with men. As Socrates points out,

if they [the class of men or that of women] look as though they differ in this alone, that the female bears and the male mounts, we'll assert that it has not thereby yet been proved that a woman differs from a man... (454e)

This suggests that the relevant difference between men and women is not to be reckoned from their physiological differences, but rather according to their nature—that is, whether it is reason, or spirit, or appetite which dominates in their soul. Thus some men are different from other men; or some men are the same as some women. (It also follows, though in Plato no point is made of this, that some women are the same as other women.) Sex, of itself, does not define or determine participation in politics.

Thus far, no remark has yet been made of the caveat in Plato's position regarding the equality of women to men: that although "woman participates according to nature in all practices, and man in all, [but] in all of them *woman is weaker than man.*" (455e) Glaucon is led to admit that

...it's true that the one class is quite dominated in everything, so to speak, by the other. However, many women are better than many men in many things. But, as a whole, it is as you say. (455d)

Plato appears to equivocate: on one hand, he asserts that women may indeed share in the qualities of wisdom and spirit with men, and therefore must share in the rearing, education, and practices of guardians; on the other hand, he declares that women are weaker than men. When we examine these two characterizations of women, we find that they are made from different perspectives. The equality of women to men is based on the Platonist categories defining the composition of the human soul, i.e., the rational or calculating part, the irrational part, and the spirited part. (See for example, 439d-e) Souls assume their character depending on how these parts function; thus wisdom comes from the exercise of the rational part; courage from that of the spirited; moderation from the proper ordering of the parts. (Book IV) Using these categories defining the human soul, Plato characterizes women as equal to men, that is, women of wisdom and spirit are equal to men of the same character. (This goes with the observation that men of wisdom and spirit are different from men who are not of wisdom and spirit.)

On the other hand, the characterization of women, as weaker than men is made entirely outside of this central Platonist schema. There is no indication of the basis for the observation made, but in a short passage (455c), we can see the separation of the two perspectives. For in this passage, Socrates establishes in succession, through Glaucon's assent, first that "the man who has a good nature for a thing and another who has no nature for it" are differentiated in terms of their learning aptitude with respect to the thing; second, that there is no human activity in which men do not excel women, even including

weaving and the care of baked and boiled dishes—just those activities on which the reputation of the female sex is based and where its defeat is most ridiculous of all. (455c-d)

In the first, Plato reiterates the basic principle in his schema; in the second, he asserts axiomatically that men excel women in all activities. Further, however, there is a suggestion that conventionally, women are regarded as dominating the domestic sphere of "weaving and cookery." Plato appears to accept this convention, calling women's being surpassed by men in these activities as a "most ridiculous defeat."

That women are different from men is underscored in a short passage in Book III, when, in a discussion of the education of guardians, Socrates proscribes imitation:

So then... we won't allow those whom we claim we care for and who must themselves become good men to imitate women—since they are men—either a young woman or an older one, or one who's abusing her husband, or one who's striving with gods and boasting because she supposes herself to be happy, or one who's caught in the grip of misfortune, mourning and wailing. And we'll be far from needing one who's sick or in love or in labor. (395e)

Guardians are likewise not to imitate slaves, cowards, smiths at work, or men exercising any other craft. The central point being made in this section of the dialogue is that guardians must be good men and

... give all other crafts and very precisely be craftsmen of the city's freedom and practice nothing other than what tends to it—they mustn't do or imitate anything else. (395c)

Nonetheless, the proscription against imitating women, when viewed alongside the grant of equal status to women guardians is instructive. It serves to clarify the meaning of the equality of women, for now we see that the women who are equal to men are those who are like men, that is to say, precisely unlike women. Women can indeed be guardians *if they are like men*—if they exhibit the qualities e.g., “sharp senses, speed to catch what they perceive, and ...strength to fight qualities of a philosophic nature such as love of wisdom, rejection of falsehood, courage, quickness in learning, a good memory, magnificence, charm, etc. (485a-487)

In contrast to these positive qualities, Plato presents womanly qualities negatively. In a discussion of courage, Socrates asks,

“Doesn't it seem illiberal and greedy to plunder a corpse, and the mark of a small womanish mind to hold the enemy to be the body of the dead enemy who's flown away and left behind that with which he fought? (469d)

In another passage, warning once more against the dangerous influence of poets and painters in imitation, Socrates observes:

When even the best of us hear Homer or any other of the tragic poets imitating one of the heroes in mourning and making quite an extensive speech with lamentation...we enjoy it and... we give ourselves over to... imitation; suffering along with the hero in all seriousness, we praise as a good poet the man who most puts us in this state. ...But when personal sorrow comes to one of us,... on the contrary, we pride

ourselves if we are able to keep quiet and bear up, taking this to be the part of a man and what we then praised to be that of a woman." (605d-e)

A final example of Plato's low regard for women is found in the account he offers for the emergence of the timocratic man in whom dominates the love of victories and honors, leading to the change from aristocracy, the rule of the good and just, to timarchy, the rule of warriors. Socrates suggests that this man comes into being

When... in the first place, he listens to his mother complaining. Her husband is not one of the rulers and as a result she is at a disadvantage among the other women. Moreover, she sees that he isn't very serious about money and doesn't fight and insult people for its sake in private actions in courts and in public but takes everything of the sort in an easygoing way; and she becomes aware that he always turns his mind to himself and neither honors nor dishonors her very much. She complains about all this and says that his father is lacking in courage, and too slack, and of course, chants all the other refrains such as women are likely to do in cases of this sort. (549d)

These passages indicate that Plato did not have a high regard for women as women. This low opinion however, appears to have been reached inductively, from empirical demonstration. It thus also reflects a conventional view of women.

In contrast, we have the passages in which Plato appears to grant equal status to women and men. First, it must be noted that in these passages, Plato is talking about guardians, the superior individuals who are the governors and caretakers of the city. Secondly, the conclusion reached regarding women has been arrived at deductively, employing as premises the central Platonist categories defining the human soul. The conclusion therefore, which grants equality between women and men constitutes, as it were, a hypothetical view of women.

This analysis provides us with a clearer understanding of Socrates's response to Glaucon's remark:

Just like a sculptor, Socrates," he said, "you have produced ruling men who are wholly fair." "And ruling women, too, Glaucon," I said. "Don't suppose that what I have said applies any more to men than to women, all those who are born among them with adequate natures. (540c)

If we were to reformulate Socrates's argument, combining the two perspectives on women we found in Plato's dialogue, it would be of the form:

Women with adequate natures can be guardians.

Guardians must not be like women.

Women who can be guardians must not be like women.

There are other sources, in Plato's work, from which we can glean a better understanding of his treatment of women, including the discussion of the second wave in the *Republic*, and a parallel discussion in the *Laws*, but I shall not deal with them at length now. The second wave refers to Plato's scheme for the community of women and children among the guardian class. (See Book V, 457d-471e) In this scheme, it will be the legislator who shall select the men and women who shall mate, in order to ensure that the city shall "breed from the best." The children produced from such marriages, after their pedigree and lack of deformities have been ascertained, shall be raised by nurses and governesses from infancy. Thus

All these women are to belong to all these men in common, and no woman is to live privately with any man. And the children, in their turn, will be in common, and neither will a parent know his own offspring, nor a child his parent. (457d)

The rationale for this scheme is to ensure the unity of the city by preventing factions, which are rooted in private property and kinship, from arising. The greatest good for the city is identified as "having a community of pain and pleasure." (464a-b)

The shift in the image of women guardians from that of women who share the same philosophic nature as men, found in the discussion of the first wave, to that of biological childbearers will be most noticeable to feminists, in particular, those who locate the root of women's oppression in the fact that it is women who bear children. Plato, himself, is unaware of any concern in this matter. Nonetheless, the proposal in the second wave triggers questions about its implications on the status of women.

Aristotle.—Unlike Plato, who appears to grant equal status to women and men, Aristotle plainly regards women as inferior to men, unaware of any pejorative sense in such regard. In Book I of the *Politics*, Aristotle discusses the "art of household management" as including three parts, "the art of controlling slaves; ...the art of exercising

paternal authority; and ... that of exercising marital authority." (Ch. XII, Sec. 1) Of the third part, Aristotle says that it is "like that of a statesman over fellow citizens." He adds, however, "In most cases where rule of the statesman's sort is exercised there is an interchange of ruling and being ruled [which does not occur in regard to husband and wife] ... The relation of the male to the female is permanently that in which the statesman [temporarily] stands to his fellow-citizens." (Sec. 2) Earlier, in Ch. V, Sec. 7, he states: "Again, the relation of male to female is naturally that of the superior to the inferior—of the ruling to the ruled.

The description of male and female relationships in terms of ruling and being ruled stems from Aristotle's belief that

Ruling and being ruled...not only belongs to the category of things necessary, but also to that of things expedient; and there are species in which a distinction is already marked, immediately at birth, between those of its members who are intended for being ruled and those who are intended to rule. (Book I, Ch. 5, Sec. 2)

In any human association, ruling is necessary; further, there is a naturally ruling element and a naturally ruled element. This is true as well of man's relation to animals, and of the relation of man's soul to his body. (Sec. 6) Thus we have the rule of master over slave; male over female; man over animals; soul over body; mind over appetite. (Sec. 6-7)

Belief in the superiority of the soul over the body, of the mind over the appetite, or the rational part of the soul over the affective part, is at the root of Aristotle's conception of ruling relationships. Thus Aristotle suggests.

We may thus conclude that all men who differ from others as much as the body differs from the soul, or an animal from a man (and this is the case with all whose function is bodily service, and who produce their best when they supply such service)—all such are by nature slaves, and it is better for them, on the very same principle as in the other cases just mentioned, to be ruled by a master. A man is thus by nature a slave if he is capable of becoming (and this is the reason why he also actually becomes) the property of another, and if he participates in reason to the extent of apprehending it in another, though destitute of it himself. (Sec. 8-9, underscoring added)

The criterion in determining the order of a ruling relationship is simply, whoever has greater or superior reason rules over another who has less or inferior reason. The difference in reason is however vitally connected to "separate kinds of goodness," meaning that the "goodness of those who naturally rule" is different—in kind, not just in degree—from the "goodness of those who are naturally ruled." (Ch. XIII, Sec. 4-6) The goodness of "higher value," which is expected of those who rule include "temperance, fortitude, justice, and [other] moral qualities. (Sec. 2) Aristotle says.

The ruler... must possess moral goodness in its full and perfect form [i.e., the form based on rational deliberation], because his function, regarded absolutely and in its full nature, demands a master-artificer, and reason is such a master-artificer; (Ch. XIII, sec. 8)

Those who are ruled, on the other hand, "need only possess moral goodness to the extent required of them [by their particular position]. (Sec. 8)

Of females, Aristotle says that although, unlike the slave who is "entirely without the faculty of deliberation, the female possesses it;" yet females do so "in form which remains inconclusive." Unfortunately, there is no elaboration on the meaning of "inconclusive" here, but a glimmer of its sense might be guessed when it is compared to the description of children's possession of the deliberative faculty as "in an immature form." (Sec. 7) As to moral goodness, Aristotle concludes that

...while moral goodness is a quality of all the persons mentioned, the fact still remains that temperance—and similarly fortitude and justice—are not, as Socrates held, the same in a woman as they are in a man. Fortitude in the one, for example, is shown in connection with ruling, in the other, it is shown in connection with serving; and the same is true of the other forms of goodness. (Sec. 9)

The reference to Socrates in this passage is explained by the Aristotelian editor and translator, Ernest Barker (1946) as a reference to Plato's dialogue, the Menon, where Socrates shows the inadequacy of Menon's first attempt to define virtue wherein he differentiates "man's virtue ...[which is] to be able to manage public business..." from "woman's virtue... [which is to] manage the house well, and keep the stores all safe, and obey her husband." (Rouse edition, 1956, pp. 29-30) Aristotle disagrees with Socrates's apparently regarding male and female as the same in virtue (—a view which we have

explained above; Plato was principally interested in arguing the unity of virtue rather than the equality of the sexes).

Nonetheless, Aristotle regards the inequality of male and female as smaller in degree than the inequality between master and slave or between the father and his family. In a discussion of justice in the *Ethics*, Aristotle writes that "justice and injustice are ... defined by the law and in communities where the rule of law is naturally accepted, namely, those whose members rule and are ruled on terms of equality," and concludes thus, "Hence justice between husband and wife comes nearer true justice than does that between master and slaves or that between the father and his family. It is in fact justice between husband and wife that is the true form of domestic justice, although it too must be distinguished from 'political' justice." (Book V, Ch. 6)

Aristotle's discussions of friendship and justice in the [Nicomachean] *Ethics* show a consistent view of the relationship between male and female. The friendship between husband and wife belongs in the class of friendships between unequals (as do those between father and son, older and younger persons, and a ruler and those who accept his rule). In this kind of friendship, the parties should "not expect to receive identical benefits from each other;" however, it is necessary that "the feeling between them should be equalized according to a ratio or proportion." Specifically, Aristotle suggests that "the more virtuous friend should receive more affection than he bestows, and so should the more useful, and in every case whichever has the superiority." (Book VIII, Ch. 7) This would of course imply that the male/husband should receive more affection than he bestows, and it is the female/wife who shall do the bestowing.

Aristotle then goes on to use his discussion of friendship to build analogies for political constitutions. He writes:

Husband and wife live together in a sort of aristocracy. That is to say, the man is master, as is right and proper, and manages everything that it falls to him to do as head of the house. But whatever can be suitably performed by the wife he hands over to her. But when he manages everything without exception, he is turning his government into an oligarchy; for he is going beyond his just claims and what is due to him as the natural superior. But sometimes it is the wife who takes charge, as may happen when she is an heiress. In that event authority does not go by merit but by money and influence, as in oligarchies. (Book VIII, Ch. 10)

This last passage from Aristotle provides a fuller view of his conception of the relationship between male and female. Where it is a relationship of friendship, there is indeed inequality but there is partnership as well. The relationship does not retain its nature, but is corrupted, when the aspect of partnership disappears. The relationship is also corrupted when it is conducted on any other basis than "merit," analogous to the corruption of aristocracy into oligarchy.

That Aristotle's remarks on male and female relationship are made within a larger context has indeed to be noted. In the *Politics*, Aristotle's subject is the polis, which he regards as the "highest association" which aims at the "highest good." (Book I, Ch. 1, sec. 1) All other associations—of master and slave, parent and child, husband and wife—are intermediate and subordinate associations. Ultimately, what is important and relevant is the common good which is to be achieved in the polis:

Every household is a part of a polis. The society of husband and wife, and that of parents and children, are parts of the household. The goodness of every part must be considered with reference to the goodness of the whole. We must therefore consider the government [of the whole polis] before we proceed to deal with the training of children and women—at any rate if we hold that the goodness of children and women makes any difference to the goodness of the polis. (Book I, Ch. XIII, Sec. 15)

The overriding principle in Aristotle's political philosophy is that of the common good, as it was in Plato. The common good is achieved collectively in a polis, in some fashion built upon the intermediate good achieved in the partnerships of master and slave, husband and wife, parents and children—i.e., the parts of the polis. Aristotle identifies the "chief end of man, transcending all other ends," the "true end which good law-givers should keep in view," as

the enjoyment of partnership in a good life and the felicity thereby attainable. (Book VII, Ch. II, Sec. 17)

In an earlier passage, Aristotle had defined this good life in the following manner:

The best way of life, for individuals severally as well as for states collectively, is the life of goodness duly equipped with such a store of requisites [i.e., of external goods and of the goods of the body] as

makes it possible to share in the activities of goodness. (Book VII, Ch. I, Sec. 13)

By a "life of goodness," Aristotle refers to the "goods of the soul" which are "fortitude, temperance, justice, or wisdom." (Book VI, Ch. I, Sec. 3-4) He writes:

To 'do well' is impossible unless you also 'do right'; and there can be no doing right for a state, any more than there can be for an individual, in the absence of goodness and wisdom. (Book VII, Ch. I, Sec. 11)

Although Aristotle draws a parallel between the felicity of individuals and that of communities, nonetheless we are reminded by the subject of this paper that Aristotle did not consider all individuals equally capable of achieving goodness. Instead, Aristotle holds the view that individuals, achieving the best of what they are capable, in partnership and ultimately in community, partake in the common good, i.e., the best life. Considered as males and females, human beings are only parts of the polis in which the best life is fulfilled, thus where human nature is fulfilled.

Hobbes—Thomas Hobbes's remarks on women in his major work, *Leviathan* (1651), are fewer than those we have found in Plato and Aristotle. In these few remarks, we see that in respect of his views on women, Hobbes is at best ambivalent, and at worst falls in with the tradition that regards male superiority as a given.

At the end of Chapter 19, where he discusses "the several kinds of commonwealth by institution; and ... succession to the sovereign power," Hobbes considers "the right of succession," by which the "artificial eternity" of the commonwealth under a monarch is assured. (p. 148) Hobbes declares that "the right to dispose of the succession" belongs to the monarch; further, among the several ways in which the monarch may exercise this right is "by presumption of natural affection," referring to the application of natural inclinations such as the natural preference of one's progeny over those of others and preference for kin over strangers. (pp. 149-150)

Hobbes suggests that in the absence of precedent "custom" or "testament," it is to be assumed that "the monarch's will is, that the government remain monarchical." (p. 149) Secondly, "that a child of his own, *male, or female*, be preferred before any other." On the other hand, Hobbes adds that "of their own, [the preference is] *rather a male than a female*; because men, are naturally fitter than women, for

actions of labour and danger." (p. 150; underscoring added) Hobbes thus permits that women may succeed a monarch if they are offspring of the monarch, and that they thereby precede male pretenders to succession who are merely "brother" or "stranger" to the monarch, but they do not precede their own brothers.

In addition to the principle of natural affection, Hobbes cites the principle of natural aptitude in determining the order of succession. Hobbes attributes natural aptitude for "labour and danger" to men, and associates these aptitudes with the exercise of monarchical power and the performance of the task for which commonwealths were instituted, namely "to produce the peace and security of the people." (p. 143) Hobbes did not apply his methods for speech (see Part 1, Ch. 4), reason and science (see Part 1, Ch. 5) on the names "woman" or "female," thus there are no extended discourses on these in the *Leviathan*. His remarks on the difference between males and females appear to reflect merely adherence to a conventional view.

The First Part (Part I) of the *Leviathan* does treat the subject *Of Man*; but as Hobbes explains in his Introduction, the understanding of man (as the creator of the commonwealth) requires and implies the understanding of "mankind," not of any particular man. (p. 20) The entire discourse on "man" is therefore a discourse on mankind, the collectivity of sensual-rational creatures. Interestingly however, this "mankind" (i.e., collectivity) is described in attributes that have the effect of clearly carving the *individual* (i.e., the abstraction referring to concrete "individualistic" persons) as the author of the commonwealth. The individual which is carved out in Hobbes's political philosophy can be seen as the generic person whose primary concern is the preservation of one's life (—and in later individualist writers, also preservation of property). Thus Hobbes's views on women do not appear integral to his philosophy but merely reflect acquiescence to conventional views about the inferior status of women.

Hobbes's discussion of paternal domination (in Chapter 20) indicates recognition of a natural role of women, associated with their biological condition as childbearers. Of paternal domination, which is domination acquired "by generation," Hobbes writes:

..God hath `ordained to man a helper; and there be always two that are equally parents the dominion therefore over the child should belong equally to both; and he be equally subject to both, which is impossible; for no man can obey two masters. And whereas some have attributed

the dominion to the man only, as being of the more excellent sex; they misreckon in it. For there is not always that difference of strength, or prudence between the man and the woman, as that the right controversy is decided by the civil law; and for the most part, but not always, the sentence is in favor of the father; because for the most part commonwealths have been erected by the fathers, not by the mothers of families. But the question lieth now in the state of mere nature; where there are supposed no laws of matrimony; no laws for the education of children; but the law of nature, and the natural inclination of the sexes, one to another, and to their children. In this condition of mere nature, either the parents between themselves dispose of the dominion over the child by contract; or do not dispose thereof at all. ...

If there be no contract, the dominion is in the mother. For in the condition of mere nature, where there are no matrimonial laws, it cannot be known who is the father, unless it be declared by the mother; and therefore the right of dominion over the child dependeth on her will, and is consequently hers. Again, seeing the infant is first in the power of the mother, so as she may either nourish, or expose it; if she nourish it, it oweth its life to the mother; and is therefore obliged to obey her, rather than any other; and by consequence the dominion over it is hers. But if she expose it, and another find and nourish it, the dominion is in him that nourisheth it. For it ought to obey him by whom it is preserved; because preservation of life being the end, for which one man become subject to another, every man is supposed to promise obedience, to him, in whose power it is to save, or destroy him. (pp. 152-153; underscoring added)

If we look closely at Hobbes's discussion of paternal domination, in which this passage appears, we shall notice that it follows the form of the central argument of Hobbes's political philosophy, namely that political authority is acquired by consent of those who would be its subjects; further, that it being from consent, it is sovereign. Hobbes's political philosophy provides an explanation for political obligation—answering the question, why do men obey authority. The answer is that political obligation comes from the social contract which is the only viable alternative to a life without politics (“in the state of nature”), described by Hobbes as “solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short.” (Ch. 13, p. 100).

Thus, about paternal domination, although it is the "right of dominion by generation ... which the parent hath over his children," (p. 152), Hobbes says that it

... is not so derived from the generation, as if therefore the parent had dominion over his child because he begat him; but from the child's consent, either express, or by other sufficient arguments declared." (p. 152)

Hobbes then continues with the passage already quoted above, which declares that (1) man has a divinely ordained helpmate in woman; (2) that although a child is equally subject to both parents, yet it is nevertheless true that "no man can obey two masters;" (3) that men and women being more or less equal in strength and prudence, it should be expected that the determination of dominion over their issue will entail war; and (4) that, in parallel to the resolution of the state of war in the larger situation, a contract between parents would settle the controversy.

These assertions find parallels in Hobbes's central argument. Hobbes employs the premises that (1) "nature hath made men so equal, in the faculties of the body, and mind," (Ch. 13, p. 98) and (2) that "out [i.e., outside] of civil states, there is always war of everyone against everyone," (p. 100) "competition, diffidence, and glory" being the "principal causes of quarrel." (p. 99) Hobbes then concludes that the state of war is through the "covenant of every man with every man" (p. 132) which creates a common power over them.

Apart, however, from observing that Hobbes's discussion of paternal dominion largely reflects and reiterates Hobbes's central argument, we can also make observations of points raised by Hobbes which are particularly interesting from the perspective of the so-called "woman question." For in these passages, Hobbes does assert that (1) the designation of paternal dominion is the result of social convention, but that (2) this is a "misreckoning" made by those who assume that men are naturally excellent in comparison to women.

As the passage proceeds, Hobbes declares further that in the absence of a contract between parents, the mother's right of dominion is established by the fact that (1) it is she who bears the child; (2) the identity of its paternal parentage is dependent on her declaration; and (3) she is in the original position either to nourish or expose the child, thus wielding power of life or death. In making this last point, Hobbes simply reiterates a theme of his central argument: that since

the preservation of life is the chief end of man, it is the chief purpose of the sovereign. Such purpose is attained through the exercise of authority which is supreme, absolute, indivisible, incommunicable, inseparable. (See Ch. 18) What is striking here is Hobbes's recognition of basic female prerogatives which subsequently grant female dominion: childbearing, parental identification, and nourishment. These are among the principles invoked by feminists in the movement later on. Nonetheless we should remember that Hobbes locates these prerogatives in the natural, pre-contractual state and merely reports without further comment that the bias toward paternal dominion in civil law is rooted in a patriarchal convention.

Hobbes's discussion of paternal dominion ends with a brief reprise of the idea of indifferently male or female monarchies:

If the mother be the father's subject, the child is in the father's power: and if the father be the mother's subject, as when a sovereign queen marrieth one of her subjects, the child is subject to the mother; because the father also is her subject. (p. 15)

J.S. Mill—Finally, we come to John Stuart Mill, who, among all political theorists in the great tradition, is known for his feminist views. These views are principally articulated in two works, *Considerations on Representative Government* (1861) and *The Subjection of Women* (1869).

J.S. Mill's position on the equality of women to men is categorically stated in his argument for the grant of universal suffrage, found in Chapter VIII of *Representative Government*. Pointing out that in his argument, he had "taken no account of difference of sex," Mill declares flatly:

I consider it to be as entirely irrelevant to political rights, as difference in height, or in the colour of the hair. (Ch. VIII, p. 187)

Two types of reasons are advanced by Mill to support his position on suffrage for women: general reasons which apply to other classes of people, and reasons particular to women. Mill's general reasons are as follows:

1. *All human beings have the same interest in good government; the welfare of all is alike affected by it, and they have equal need of a voice in it. (p. 187)*

2. *What they are and are not fit for, and what they shall and shall not be allowed to attempt are rightly judged [of] by individuals themselves;* (p. 188)

3. *Men, as well as women, do not need political rights in order that they may govern, but in order that they may not be misgoverned.* (p. 188)

These views are consistent with the philosophy of enlightened individualism which marks J.S. Mill's liberalism, as articulated in two works, *On Liberty* (1859) and *Utilitarianism* (1861). In the earlier essay, Mill argued strongly for individual liberty, holding that all opinions must be allowed expression since society could only benefit from such exercise. Even if an opinion turned out to be mistake, society would still learn from the error. As for opinions which are true, it is the "complete liberty of contradicting and disproving" of the opinion which allow us to justify assuming its truth. (*On Liberty*, Ch. II, p. 24) In every case, wisdom is acquired only by the "steady habit of correcting and completing" one's opinion by "collating it with those of others." (p. 25)

In *Utilitarianism*, Mill pointed out that pleasure, the basic concept in the utilitarian ethic, has a qualitative as well as a quantitative dimension, therefore happiness comes from the enjoyment of superior pleasures, not simply of quantitatively more pleasures. Thus a happy existence is, "to the greatest extent possible, secured to all mankind," (p. 16) when individuals are able to choose superior pleasures; this is possible through the cultivation of "nobleness of character" in individuals. Mill believed that individuals are capable of acquiring "conscientious feelings of mankind," which may "spring up spontaneously," or nonetheless, are "susceptible of being brought to cultivation to a high degree of development." (p. 39) He further believed that "social feelings of mankind—the desire to be in unity with our fellow creatures" are a natural sentiment. (p. 40) On the basis of these assumptions, Mill held firmly to the belief that individuals should be left alone to decide on their actions; he concluded that:

That principle is a mere form of words without rational signification unless one person's happiness, supposed equal in degree (with the proper allowance made for kind), is counted for exactly as much as another's. ... The equal claim of everybody to happiness, in the estimation of the moralist and of the legislator, involves an equal

claim to all the means of happiness except in so far as the inevitable conditions of human life and the general interest in which that of every individual is included set limits to the maxim; and those limits ought to be strictly construed. (Ch. V. p. 76-77)

In summary, John Stuart Mill firmly held that individuals should be free to decide on their own behalf, as long as society makes it possible for them to cultivate "nobleness of character" by which the interest of the individual is made as close as possible to the general interest.

Mill's reasons for supporting the extension of suffrage to women are diverse, but they are also consistent with what I have here called "enlightened individualism." There is reciprocity in the relationship between individual freedom and contribution to the benefit of society. When individuals are granted freedom of action, they are able to develop themselves in such a way that their individual actions in fact redound to the benefit of society. Thus some of Mill's reasons for granting suffrage to women follow the pattern of his arguments for the grant of suffrage to, for example, manual workers. (Ch. VIII, p. 167) Mill points out that the fact that "the majority of the male sex are, and will be all their lives, nothing else than labourers in corn-fields or manufactories" has not rendered "the suffrage less desirable for them, nor their claim to it less irresistible." (p. 189) On behalf of women, Mill wrote:

Give the woman a vote, and she comes under the operation of the political point of honour. She learns to look on politics as a thing on which she is allowed to have an opinion, and in which if one has an opinion it ought to be acted upon; she acquires a sense of personal accountability in the matter, and will no longer feel, as she does at present, that whatever amount of bad influence she may exercise, if the man can but be persuaded, all is right, and his responsibility covers all. It is only by being herself encouraged to form an opinion, and obtain an intelligent comprehension of the reasons which ought to prevail with the conscience against the temptations of personal or family interest, that she can ever cease to act as a disturbing force on the political conscience of the man. Her indirect agency can only be prevented from being politically mischievous, by being exchanged for direct. (pp. 190-191)

What Mill suggests in this passage is that the quality of the vote will be improved by granting suffrage to women; however, this result comes after the grant of suffrage itself has improved women by

'raising their consciousness' [to use a contemporary expression]. It may be noted that Mill's suggestion here proceeds from the premise that wives influence the votes of their husbands, often listing these "not on the side of public principle, but of the personal interest or worldly vanity of the family." (p. 190) Mill subsequently suggests that having the right to vote will allow women (eventually) to learn that "public principle" must prevail over "personal or family interests."

Considering a different aspect, Mill earlier responded to the anticipated criticism that if women were granted suffrage, they "would vote as mere dependents, at the bidding of their male relations." (p. 189) Expressing unconcern in the issue raised, Mill wrote:

If they think for themselves, great good will be done, and if they do not, no harm. It is a benefit to human beings to take off their fetters, even if they do not desire to walk. It would already be a great improvement in the moral position of women, to be no longer declared by law incapable of an opinion, and not entitled to a preference, respecting the most important concerns of humanity. (p. 189)

A more specific defense of women's position in society is also offered by Mill. He observes that "mankind have long since abandoned the only premises which will support the conclusion that women ought not to have votes." (p. 187) These outmoded ideas include the idea "that women should be in personal servitude; that they should have no thought, wish or occupation, but to be the domestic drudges of husbands, fathers, or brothers;" that women may not hold property or have "pecuniary and business interests, in the same manner as men;" that they should not "think, and write, and be teachers." (pp. 187-188) Despite this optimistic assessment, however, Mill concedes that women are "physically weaker;" therefore, if there should be any differential treatment, women should be given a greater voice in government as "they are more dependent on law and society for protection." (p. 187)

Mill's discussion in *The Subjection of Women* falls in two parts; first, he underscores the fact that this condition is the result of custom merely, and second, he demonstrates the flaws in the "nature" arguments favoring the subjection of women. Mill's position in this essay, as in the first we considered above, echo his basic arguments on liberty and utilitarianism.

A social and political system in which women are dominated by men is favored, Mill observes, not as "the result of deliberation, or forethought," but simply because this—and this system alone—has always been practiced. Laws therefore have simply "converted a physical fact into a legal right." Mill suggests that the sentiment which sees the domination of men as natural is one which is actually "dependent on custom;" he asks, "was there ever any domination which did not appear natural to those who possessed it?" (pp. 130-131) In addition, Mill notes, the apparent acquiescence of women to men's domination is not verified as "a great number of women do not accept it, ... mak[ing] their sentiments known by their writings (the only mode of publicity which society permits to them)," (pp. 131-132) And where it does seem to be the case, this is the result of women's socialization into the male-concocted idea of "meekness, submissiveness, and resignation of all individual will into the hands of a man as an essential part of sexual attractiveness." The success of this socialization program stems from three things according to Mill:

...first, the natural attraction between opposite sexes; secondly, the wife's entire dependence on the husband, ... and lastly, that the principal object of human pursuit, consideration, and all objects of ambition, can in general be sought or obtained by her only through him... (p. 132)

At the end of this discussion of the customary basis of women's subjection, Mill proposes a familiar course of action, one that echoes his position on liberty of thought and discussion:

The least that can be demanded is, that the question should not be considered as prejudged by existing fact and existing opinion, but open to discussion on its merits, as a question of justice and expediency... And the discussion must be a real discussion, descending to foundations, and not resting satisfied with vague and general assertions. (p. 132)

Mill's analysis of the flaw in the conventional view is patterned after a principle he had spelled out in *Utilitarianism* that it is those who are "competently acquainted" with both inferior and superior pleasures who are able to define superior pleasures by their preference of it. (Ch. II, p. 12) In *Subjection of Women*, Mill stated his judgment of the conventional view thus: "it will not do ... to assert in general terms, that the experience of mankind has pronounced in favor of the existing

system. Experience cannot possibly have decided between two courses, so long as there has only been experience of one." (p. 132)

Mill likewise rejects the opinion favoring the subjection of women as one incorrectly based on the premise that the natures of the two sexes are different. First, those who claim to have identified the nature of women have simply made unwarranted inductive conclusions, generalizing about women from a few instances of which they had knowledge. Against this, Mill suggests that the proper way to accomplish this is to undertake "an analytic study of the most important department of psychology, the laws of the influence of circumstances on character." Thereafter, writes Mill

Those only could be inferred to be natural which could not possibly be artificial—the residuum, after deducting every characteristic of either sex which can admit of being explained from education or external circumstances. (p. 133)

Mill's judgment is that "What is now called the nature of women is an eminently artificial thing—the result of forced repression in some directions, unnatural stimulation in others..." (p. 133)

Mill brings up another point in this regard, reminding those who have, or would, put restraints on women's activities, that if indeed there were a women's nature different from men's, it is unnecessary to intervene in order to bring about its results. Twitting those who hold the opinion that women should be restrained because their natural vocation is that of "wife and mother," Mill points out the contradiction in their position—by closing all other doors against them, thus forcing them into marriage, those who hold this opinion are acting as if it were not natural for women to be inclined to marriage. On the other hand, if the opinion that women are naturally inclined to marriage is firmly held, at the same time that it is also felt that women should be compelled to enter into it, then it can only be surmised that men have made marriage an unpalatable choice for women. In sum, Mill does not put much store in arguments purporting to be based on a reading of the natural differences between men and women.

The anxiety of mankind to interfere in behalf of nature, for fear lest nature should not succeed in effecting its purpose, is an altogether unnecessary solicitude. What women by nature cannot do, it is quite superfluous to forbid them from doing. (p. 133)

True to his liberal form, Mill believes that free competition between men and women will result in each one finding the occupation for which they are best suited, and through which they can best contribute to society's benefit. In addition, differences among women will come to light as well. On this point Mill's feminism clearly derives from his individualist philosophy; the competent person—and it is sometimes a woman—must be allowed to exercise such competence. Mill wrote:

It is not sufficient to maintain that women on the average are less gifted than men on the average, with certain of the higher mental faculties, or that a smaller number of women than of men are fit for occupations and functions of the highest intellectual character. It is necessary to maintain that no women at all are fit for them, and that the most eminent women are inferior in mental faculties to the most mediocre of the men on whom those functions at present devolve. .. Is there so great a superfluity of men fit for high duties, that society can afford to reject the service of any competent person? Are we so certain of always finding a man made to our hands for any duty or function of social importance which fall vacant, that we lose nothing by putting a ban upon one-half of mankind, and refusing beforehand to make their faculties available, however distinguished they may be? (p. 134)

To drive from the point about the necessity of a valid, and therefore acceptable, principle on which to settle the question of the subjection of women, Mill brings up the example of females ascending to monarchy. Why can a woman be queen, yet women denied the suffrage? Mill observes: "...Queen Elizabeth or Queen Victoria, had they not inherited the throne, could not have been intrusted with the smallest of the political duties, of which the former showed herself equal to the greatest." (p. 135) Mill poses the question:

Is there any reason in the nature of things that the wives and sisters of princes should, whenever called upon, be found as competent as the princess themselves to their business, but that the wives and sisters of statesmen, and administrators, and directions of companies, and managers of public institutions, should be unable to do what is done by their brothers and husbands?

Mill's answer to his question returns to enlightened individualism. Because they "have never been taught that it was improper for them to concern themselves with politics," princesses have had the opportunity to develop themselves and thereby attain the same level

of competence as men. Individuals—men and women—flourish under liberty; thus the subjection of women in fact produces its own justification.

Feminism and Political Theory—The foregoing discussion of Plato, Aristotle, Hobbes, and John Stuart Mill evolved as the question was addressed: "what did these authors say about women in their major works?" To answer this question, primary texts were consulted, passages where there was mention of women were noted, and an attempt was made subsequently to understand these passages.

As explained at the beginning of the paper, the question was addressed to the texts in response to a suggestion that the body of Western thought dealt with in a General Education course (Social Science II) be subjected to a feminist perspective. Two things may be observed of the outcome: first, the texts themselves generally defined the domain for comment in terms of the equality or inequality between men and women; and second, the project of understanding the selected texts was nonetheless principally informed by a view of the authors as political thinkers. Thus, first, we found that Plato suggested that women guardians are equal to men guardians; that Aristotle believed women to be inferior to men; that Hobbes recognized a sphere of female domination in a natural, pre-contractual state, but admitted the prevalence of male domination in civil society; and that John Stuart Mill actively advocated the recognition of women's equal standing as individuals in political society. These claims about the status of women were clarified: Plato's suggestion of equality turns out to be perverted, as it is women who are like men who are equal, after all, to men; in Aristotle, the inferiority of women is integral to male-female partnership and friendship; there is no concept of equality of men and women in Hobbes's scheme, as either one—and generally it is the male—has domination; the equal status accorded to women by John Stuart Mill is the same which he would accord to any "group," e.g., manual laborers, because, in the first place, it does not make sense to purport to see groups in society, as there are only individuals.

These clarifications invariably entailed locating the selected passages in the context of the author's political thought. What they had to say, and indeed, what they said about women were seen to be integral to their view of politics: Plato's regime of the philosopher-king; Aristotle's polity; Hobbes's Leviathan; and John Stuart Mill's enlightened individualism.

I point out these characteristics of the foregoing discussion in order to anticipate the critique that it does not constitute an adequate feminist perspective of these writers. And indeed, it is so; for fundamental questions of feminism are left unaddressed, although I would claim that the question addressed here is a valid starting point of such an inquiry. In addition, the answers to the question were consciously viewed and examined in the context of each thinker's political philosophy. Thus, the discussion illuminates our understanding of each author's political philosophy, first, and contributes to our knowledge of the universal domination of women, second.

A similar project turns out to be found in Coole (1988) *Women in Political Theory*. Describing her book as "a history of political thought," Coole states that "its focus is on the way in which women have been treated within the tradition." (p. 1) Her project in the book is

... to show, for each author, that the references to women's place were no marginal or optional concerns...their treatment was an integral part of an overall philosophy and is ignored at the price of impoverishing that philosophy. (p. 7)

Coole's interpretations of Plato, Aristotle, Hobbes, and John Stuart Mill, are close to those earlier presented. On Plato, she writes that "it would be difficult, on the strength of the argument in the Republic and the Laws, to maintain that he had any feminist sympathies." (p. 40) Coole agrees that Plato's offer of equality to women rests on the "elimination of womanly qualities." She observes that although he appears even more unsympathetic to women, Aristotle's view is "less devastating for the feminine in the long run." (p. 47) Coole likewise notes Aristotle's ideal of "participatory citizenship" in which "citizens are involved in forging a collective identity." (p. 48)

Two points are made regarding Hobbes: first, that his "materialist logic is sexually neutral," meaning that men and women alike are conceived of as essentially bodies in motion; (p. 75) and second, that Hobbes conceives of the family as an artificial association, based on consent, just like civil society. (p. 77) Finally, Coole finds that "John Stuart Mill's advocacy of sexual equality [is] fitted into his more general pursuit of social utility." (p. 133)

What would an inquiry into these texts of political philosophy look like, if it were principally informed instead by feminist theory? I

shall not embark on that project now; I shall only outline, and provide some illustration of, the direction it might take.

First, although there is no unified feminist theory, it is possible to say that the bottom line of the feminist perspective is that women have been, and are, oppressed systematically. The incidents of discrimination and violence in which the victims are of the female sex are not chance occurrences, and neither are they affronts merely to individual females. These are violations committed against individual females, as *women*, and they are violations which are made possible by social and political arrangements that define social life. For instance, the socialization of girls and boys, men and women, into gender roles is often cited as a cause of the oppression of women. Subsequently, patriarchy (or male domination) legitimizes systems of discrimination (e.g., against homemakers, women in the labor force, women professionals); and/or fails to punish discrimination and violence against women (e.g., rape victims are often deterred from reporting the crime against them, and when they do report these, they often meet incredible obstacles in their attempt to seek redress).

The varieties of feminism stem from differences in the analysis of the root condition which leads to the oppression of women, and the corresponding solution to the problem. Radical feminists invoke biological fact that it is women who bear children. Consequently, radical feminists "advocate a strategy of radical separatism of women from men, particularly in sexual relations." (Mies, 1986, p. 12)

Marxist feminists subsume the "woman question" under the class struggle of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie, thus they foresee the liberation of women as integrally connected to the liberation of the proletariat. Liberal feminists fault patriarchy, and direct their advocacy to gaining equality of women to men. Most of the familiar feminist campaigns—for suffrage rights; equal opportunities for education; non-discrimination in employment opportunities; equal pay for equal work; women-friendly legislation—are informed by a liberal feminist perspective. (See Jaggar, 1985; Bulbeck, 1988; Mies, 1986).

The issues raised by feminists could be expected to constitute the focus of a discussion of texts "from a feminist perspective." Instead of, or in addition to, asking what a text says about women, a feminist inquiry would probably focus on how a text provides, and/or constitutes evidence of patriarchy; or how, in the case of political

philosophies, these justify or cause the establishment of oppressive institutions; or argue that these texts entirely miss the point of feminism even as they define the role of women in their vision of politics. These sorts of inquiries may well result in valid and interesting studies; the point I wish to underline is that these studies would have evolved from a particular question, that is, a question asked in a particular way. These would be feminist studies, informed at the outset by a cognition of "the woman question."

A volume edited by Shanley and Pateman (1991) presents diverse feminist studies of political theory, tied together by the fact that "the authors approached the texts with specifically feminist questions in mind." (p. 3) Shanley and Pateman enumerate these questions:

...the political significance of sexual difference and man's power over women; the patriarchal construction of central categories of political thought; the relation between nature, the sexes, reason and politics; the relation between the private (in the sense of the domestic, the familial, the intimate) and the public (in the sense of the economy and the state); and the political importance of differences among women. (p. 3)

Wendy Brown (1988) characterizes the types of feminist scholarship as phases. The first phase involved "documenting the omission or outrageous depictions of women in traditional scholarship;" then scholarship shifted to "the trenchwork of redressing these omissions and depiction." A second shift changed scholarship from one of "recovering women" to "critically examining the world from the perspective of this recovery." (p xi)

Maria Mies (1986) articulates a strong version of the criticism against indeterminate "women studies." Balking at the "labelling approach" which is often applied to alleged varieties of feminism, e.g., "liberal feminism," "Marxist feminism," "radical feminism," etc., she writes:

*The main shortcoming of this labelling approach, is ... that it tries to fit the 'woman question' into already existing theoretical and political frameworks. This means these frameworks as such are not criticized from the point of view of women's liberation, but are considered more or less adequate and only **lacking** the 'women's component'. If this women's component were added, it is hoped, these theoreticians who follow this approach are obviously unaware of the fact that the nature of the 'woman question' is such that it cannot simply be added to*

some other general theory, but that it fundamentally criticizes all these theories and begs for a new theory of society altogether. (p. 12; See also Coole, 1988, p. 6; Brown, 1988, pp. 10-11)

Although it stops short of being a feminist tract, the discussion above, of women in the texts of Plato, Aristotle, Hobbes, and John Stuart Mill, does more than "add the women's component." In clarifying the substance of these four political thinkers' claims about the equality or inequality of women to men, the discussion provides openings for critical examination of the political philosophies themselves. For example, Coole (1988) uncovers the "subterranean existence" of the multiple dualities in Western thought (e.g., mind-body, subject-object, reason-passion, form-content, culture-nature, order-chaos, etc., on pp. 1-2), which, curiously, align themselves into male-female, good-bad, superior-inferior. This, however, is not an easy task, as it would require one to be equally well-versed in feminist theory and political theory.

One way of showing how feminist theory and political theory intersect and part ways is to focus on a feminist slogan, "The personal is political." This statement contains two assertions: first, that women are staking claim in the public sphere, raising an issue in politics; and second, that the substance of this claim is personal in origin. Concretely, this statement summarizes the politicizing of very personal matters such as women's control of their own bodies, and women's personal (including sexual) relationships. These are seen in the issues raised by feminists in politics: "abortion, birth control, sterilization abuse, domestic battery, rape, incest, lesbianism, sexual harassment, prostitution, female sexual slavery, and pornography." (Bulbeck, p. 30)

In thus obliterating the boundary between the personal and the political, feminism goes against the traditional concept of politics as precisely a public sphere, where one's identity is that of citizen. Plato and Aristotle, in regarding man as a "naturally political animal," meaning that man fulfills his human nature only in a political association, thereby not only separated the personal from the political, but clearly subordinated the personal to the political. Although the preservation of life—a highly personal matter—is the sole justification of politics in Hobbes's philosophy, yet in giving so much weight to the authority of the sovereign, Hobbes likewise subordinates the personal to the political. Even John Stuart Mill's passionate defense of individual liberty results in abstract individualism, an advocacy

in behalf of an abstraction to whom natural rights have been attributed. We are also reminded that J.S. Mill considered the instruction of women, "in the public principle" as a benefit of granting them the right to vote. Wives' influence on their husbands' vote, tending toward, "personal and family interests" would then be mitigated.

I shall conclude my paper by presenting the argument of an article published in the *American Political Science Review* (December 1989), entitled "Freedom, Recognition, and Obligation: A Feminist Approach to Political Theory," written by Nancy Hirschmann. This article provides an example of an attempt at a feminist study of political philosophy which connects the feminist critique integrally to a problematique of political philosophy. This is also the aim of Wendy Brown (1988) in writing "a feminist book about political theory, but [one which] is not a book about women." (p. ix) Eschewing "feminism construed as solely concerned with women" as too easily "endorsed, coopted, tolerated, or marginalized by non-feminist men without much trouble or trauma to themselves precisely because it is not their issue," (p. x) Brown opts for "developing critiques of the institutions, and practices." (*ibid.*)

Aiming to "help liberal political theory get beyond the problems that it has been recycling since the 17th century," (*Abstract*), Hirschmann applies "feminist psychoanalytic and psychological theory" to show that an inherent sexist bias in the formulation of the social contract theory is the stumbling block to its satisfactory explanation. Hirschmann argues that a female standpoint that enables a woman to see her self in continuity with another is traceable to the absence of a girl's need to reject sameness with her mother (the original nurturer) in order to form a sex identity. This standpoint is totally ignored in the individualist formulation of liberal theory. What is reflected in liberal individualism is the male standpoint which is essentially one of "reactive autonomy, a separateness and independence that is a reaction against others." (pp. 1230-1231) Hirschmann suggests that this male standpoint is traceable to the boy's need to reject sameness with his mother in order to "become 'male'," (p. 1230)

Becoming male entails making a radical break from primary femininity, represented by the mother, resulting in an overemphasis on separation; a boy defines himself against the mother, as 'not-mother'. (p. 1230)

Hirschmann suggests that this male standpoint is concealed in the assumption of contract theory that consent is necessarily voluntary. This assumption rests on a negative conception of liberty (i.e., liberty as "absence of restraints"), which is rooted in a boy's experience of the required "radical break" from his mother in order to achieve a male sex identity. But a contract theory which is built on a negative conception of liberty, and which gives rise to the concept of obligation, precisely requires a premise that consent has been voluntarily given, in order to justify the acquired obligation. If a man is said to be obligated to obey the law—that is to say, if he loses his natural freedom—after the social contract, then it has to be believed that the man had consented voluntarily to the establishment of the political power to which he is now subject. This position has led liberal theorists however, to wrestling endlessly, it seems, with problems, such as the form of this consent (express or tacit?) and the precise meaning of consent. Yet, Hirschmann wants to argue, these problems arise only because of the sexist bias—the male standpoint—at the root of liberal/contract theory.

Hirschmann argues that the blindness to the female standpoint has systematically impoverished the articulation of concepts of consent and obligation in liberal theory. If the female standpoint—accessible only through feminist psychoanalysis—were recognized, then liberal theory would not have been locked into a concept of obligation as rooted only in voluntary consent. Hirschmann adds that parallels to the damage wrought by a "reactive" concept of autonomy on a liberal obligation theory can be found in other conceptualizations. Hirschmann writes:

This 'inability' to grant mutual recognition is the vital seed from which other self-other dichotomy grows, as well as other dualism that are variations on that theme: subject-object, mind-body, public-private, fact-value, exchange-use. Not coincidentally, these dualism involve identification of male with the former (the public world of fact, the subject, and the ego) and the female with the latter (nature, the id, privatized objects), thus taking as a primary value the denial of women's subjectivity and personhood. (p. 1238; also in Coole, 1988, pp. 1-2)

Hirschmann suggests that a feminist analysis would radically change liberal theorizing: instead of liberty having priority as a value, it could be obligations; instead of starting from a notion of separateness (rooted in male experience), liberal discourse could start from a notion

of connectedness (rooted in female experience). The value of feminist analysis, according to Hirschmann is that

It enables us to see the reality that women's lives reveal, that is, that we—men and women alike—are often in fact non-censually bound more tightly than our public discourse admits. (p. 1242)

It is important to add that any of these nonconsensual relations are "appropriate to human relations:" Aristotle's ideals of friendship and partnership come to mind. Further, just as men are in reality already nonconsensually obligated although the public ideology conceals this fact," women, on the other hand, "have the capacity to create many of their obligations but are effectively denied the opportunity to do so." (pp. 1242-1243)

It is quite clear that Hirschmann's project does not entail simply adding a women's component to the discourse on freedom and obligation. Her thesis twines feminism and political discourse, on one hand asserting the validity of a feminist perspective, and on the other, applying it to demonstrate how it "profoundly alters the very terms of the discourse." (p. 1242)

Before this point, I might have been quicker to say that the difficulty in doing both women and political theory, simultaneously, lies in the fact that while political philosophy is an objective inquiry, feminist inquiry entails politicized perspective. Now such a view would be in doubt; for it appears that the value of a feminist perspective lies in its ability to lead us to startling insights about the idols of political theory.