FEMINISM IN PURGATORY: THE ONTOLOGICAL SUBJECT CAUGHT BETWEEN MODERNITY AND POSTMODERNITY

by

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ABSTRACT

By assuming there to be a philosophical relationship between one's ontology and the politico-moral framework one advocates, this thesis places modern political philosophy in the context of meaninglessness to argue that liberal ontologies and communitarian frameworks have historically excluded women from being ontologically self-determining, morally free, and from equal respect. Taking both these philosophies as characteristic of modern patriarchalism, it is claimed they responded to the decline of premodern metaphysical meaning through an elaboration of institutional frameworks dominated by reason and order, and in juxtaposition to women and nature. However, in order to transcend this modern patriarchal framework and its associated masculine ontology, feminism experiences a sense of intellectual purgatory. Desperate to establish, at the least, a gender neutral post-patriarchal framework, feminism cannot risk positing a universally applicable ontology on which to base it for fear of committing the same error of exclusion of modern ontologies. Nonetheless, feminism remains at the same time committed to a postmodern politico-moral framework that disparages metanarratives and universal ontologies. Feminism, therefore, is caught at the ontological level between modernity's framework which it rejects, and postmodern ontologies which are not sufficient on their own to transform this framework.
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DEDICATION

Für meinen 'Zeitgeist', S.B.
Introduction

The tradition of political philosophy in the west dates back to the Socratic dialogues of Plato, wherein the issues of societal justice and individual virtue or being play a complementary role. As one of our earliest literary sources, *The Republic* symbolises the dawning of moral and political philosophy which has concerned itself ever since with two fundamental issues. On the one hand, there has been the elaboration of varying ontological accounts of the subject. Hence, although the word ‘ontology’ first made its appearance in the mid-seventeenth century in the works of Leibnitz and Baumgarten, its meaning has not only been limited to the epoch of modernity. Its etymological origins, for example, are Greek, from *ontos* (being) and *logos* (knowledge), and the term refers literally to the ‘knowledge of being’ (Reese, 1980, pp. 401-402), and metaphorically in our context to a normatively posited account of the subject’s mode of existence.

On the other hand, political philosophers have helped in constructing societal institutions and moral frameworks, sometimes as a result of their ontologies, and at other times as a justification of them.\(^1\) In this respect Taylor (1985, pp. 109-114) argues academic accounts of the subject are often far removed from common experience. This arises because of a philosopher’s desire to explain something of which an ontology is simply a supportive assumption. Elsewhere, A.J. Ayer has written that questions about ontology can "...legitimately be interpreted as questions about the choice of conceptual schemes and about the relationships

\(^1\) In this sense, therefore, politics can be dichotomised into those who place the ‘I’ before the ‘We’, and those who give priority to the ‘We’ rather than the ‘I’ (Strong, 1992, pp. 1-21).
of their various elements,...(an ontology) is to be attacked or defended on purely pragmatic grounds" (quoted in Quinton, 1992, p. 496). Similarly, Corngold (1986, p. 2) claims the "...idea of the self organises a vast economy of concepts; how we think about the self altogether determines how we are in the world".

In the context of our discussion, however, we will, using a philosopher's or a tradition of philosophy's ontological assumptions, examine the moral frameworks that have characterised the western world since Plato. There are two reasons why we will examine the moral frameworks in terms of their ontologies. Firstly, and implicitly, modernity in the west is characterised by a liberal democratic framework that is seemingly so entrenched that it threatens to overwhelm the potential for 'non-conformist' modes of existence. Giddens (1990, p. 139) portrays this latter point as the subject's existential anxiety, and the liberal democratic framework of modernity as "...a runaway engine of enormous power which, collectively as human beings, we can drive to some extent but which also threatens to rush out of our control and which could rend itself asunder. The juggernaut (of modernity) crushes those who resist it,...". Alford (1991, pp. 3-4), too, has noted this but in terms of politics. The difference between the ancient and modern conceptions of politics, he argues, is that for the former a core question concerned the nature of the good man (that is, subject), and how politics could support and foster 'him'. In contrast, modern politics looks at how society can best be organised so as to control the worst, that is conflictual, aspects of human nature.² In so doing, modern political frameworks, by assuming human nature to be conflictual, become oblivious to the realisation that perhaps the societal frameworks themselves are the causes of these deviant human natures. Secondly, and explicitly, therefore, will be the task of showing

²Strauss (1968, pp. 3-8) argues somewhat more cynically that liberal societies are characterised by mass rule due to the subject's only virtue, electoral apathy.
how, for women, modernity's moral framework and the historical tradition from whence it originates, are hostile and oppressive to them. Following Taylor (1989a, p. 3), who argues that in modernity "...selfhood and morality (are) inextricably intertwined themes,..." it will be shown that to assign respect to others - women - as fellow human beings, necessitates a new moral ontology that includes, rather than classifies as deviant, their accounts of existence.

By concentrating on one of the dominant debates within modern political philosophy, that between liberals and communitarians, it will be illustrated how the former has excluded women at the ontological level, whilst the latter has done likewise at the level of a moral framework. Taken together, these two traditions of modern political philosophy might be seen as constituting the core of modern patriarchal society. Feminism, however, as the vanguard of women's efforts to be ontologically self-determining and morally free, finds itself faced, when challenging modern political philosophy, with a political dilemma. As a mode of discourse advocating an ontology of a gendered, feminine subject, it must necessarily accept one of two alternatives. That is, in positing a specific feminine subject, feminism is unable to extrapolate a political and moral framework to replace that which has historically oppressed women, namely modern patriarchal society. From this perspective, feminism must adhere to a political framework wherein groups function, and whose particular parts share the same ontological characteristics at the group level but who do not share the same vision of the whole. To do so, though, would only serve to perpetuate the very society that has oppressed the female and imposed the feminine.3 Alternatively, to attempt to restructure modern

3The word 'female' is not seen as pejorative, in contrast to 'feminine' or 'woman' which denote traits, cultural roles, attitudes and abilities held to be specific to the socialised 'female'. Klein (1972) thus sees the feminine as historically and culturally determined, with Harding (1983) sharing the same view although she emphasises gender (masculine and feminine) as a socially constructed difference derivative from sex (male and female), the biologically constructed difference.
patriarchal society by hypothesising a feminine conception of the subject, risks situating feminism within modern political philosophy insofar as this feminine subject would lead us back into the realm of ontological universalism, whence exclusion.

For instance, at the epistemological level, Harding and Hintikka (1983,p.ix) argued that feminists "...must root out sexist distortions and perversions in epistemology, metaphysics, methodology and the philosophy of science,...". Central to the distinctions and perversions was a 'hard core' of abstract reasoning and objectivity which, if justice was to be done to women, had to be at the very least transformed if not altogether abandoned. However, as Antony and Witt (1993,pp.xiii-xiv) claim, whilst this 'hard core' is "...too deep and pervasive to be simply dismissed as accidental (to the charge of misogyny),..." it is nonetheless of vital significance to feminists. Apart from empowering rather than oppressing them, they claim that to abandon reason and objectivity would be self-defeating for feminism, as it would "...be giving up on the possibility of persuading others of the correctness of our views,... (whilst) embracing and reinforcing - rather than challenging - the invidious stereotypes of femininity" (Ibid.). What we see, therefore, is a case of how feminism is caught between the modern and the postmodern. Desperate to transcend the perceived patriarchal epistemology characteristic of modernity, feminists must instead first transform the institutions of modernity derivative from this epistemology. Only then, within a gender neutral framework of institutions, can they embark upon (relatively) radical subjective and contingent forms of knowledge generation like, for example, the experiences of women in their everyday lives as mothers or spouses.

Similarly, the same dilemma is to be found at the ontological level where a universally defined, autonomous agent has formed the foundation for a masculine moral framework. Rejecting both this concept of the subject and the moral framework as masculine specific, feminists seek to posit an ideal of subjecthood which must necessarily be non-contingent nor
particular in order to change the existent moral framework. Yet, in so doing it subsumes all into this ontological realm and, like its masculine predecessor, denies difference and radical subjective freedom. The dilemma, therefore, is typical of and has its origins in modern, post-sixteenth century political philosophy: how do we safeguard the liberty and freedom of the subject yet still maintain a common form of association or framework to which he or she is obligated and a part of? Additionally for feminism, how do we transform this modern masculine framework into a postmodern gender neutral system posited on some notion of common, unengendered subjecthood, without denying the subject its right of radical subjectivity? Purgatory for feminism, therefore, is, the (feminine) subject’s dilemma of being caught between the need to transcend modernity’s patriarchal moral framework, whilst simultaneously wanting to be contingent and particular in one’s subjecthood too.
CHAPTER ONE

A conceptual clarification of the subject

The ways in which political and moral philosophers have addressed ontological questions has varied considerably over the last two millennia, from the immortal psyche of Plato or Aristotle’s anima, to the German concept of Geist or its English equivalent, ‘mind’. Shoemaker (1963,p.8) goes so far as to suggest a privileged position for human beings in the natural world due to the entity of the ‘mind’, as "...it is obvious enough that the existence of a special problem about the nature of persons, and the nature of personal identity, is somehow connected with the fact that persons have minds". More recently psychologists and political and social philosophers have referred to concepts like the individual, the self or the person in the context of their ontological theories. Irrespective of the terminology one uses, however, is the widespread cross-cultural acceptance of this kind of theorising. Indian Vedantic philosophy, for example, is concerned at the ontological level with the nature of the empirical or phenomenal subject and its relation to other states of higher consciousness. It thereby identifies the subject not with ‘mind’, but unlimited spiritual being (Deutsch,1992a). In Chinese Confucianism the subject is governed by ethical considerations and is social in nature, and he or she is constituted organically by these relations (Ibid). However, the discourse of the ‘individual’, the ‘self’ and the ‘person’, that is "...l'être de raison, le sujet normatif des institutions,..." is particular to the western tradition (Dumont,1966,p.22). Further, this ‘sujet normatif’ conceives of itself as an ethical value sui generis, "...la mesure de toutes choses" (Ibid,p.23).
The political importance of ontological theory for liberal democratic societies can, at the level of a subject seen to be imbued with reason, be traced back at least to Kant's *Grundlegung zur Metaphysik der Sitten* (1785). Several modern theorists like C.B. Macpherson (1962), for example, would contest this claim by pointing to the works of Hobbes and Locke who, he argues, laid the foundations of the possessive individualism of bourgeois, democratic 'man'. A similar argument about this categorisation of the modern (and eventually liberal democratic) person might also be extended to earlier theorists like Machiavelli, the Scottish Enlightenment philosophers, or Bentham and the utilitarians. However, the issue at stake is not so much the portrayal of a sixteenth century Italian as a rationally calculating, power maximising person, or the belief that seventeenth and eighteenth century England was inhabited solely by utility maximisers in search of material pleasures. Rather it is the discovery by Jean-Jacques Rousseau of what Solomon (1988, pp.16-21) calls the transcendental pretence. Upon this understanding Rousseau gave to Kant the opportunity to make the subject the core focus of philosophy. Kant was thereby able to postulate a conception of the person who creates the objective world through self-reflection. During this process of creation one comes to know not only oneself but others too in a transcendental realm of similarity or sameness. It is this notion of the ahistorical subject that has arguably formed a barrier to women's attempts to be self-determining, in both the public-private dichotomy this subject requires, and in the use of reason as the determinant of moral being (versus the amorality of women and nature). As Solomon (Ibid., p.6) argues, the transcendental pretence was "...no innocent philosophical thesis, but a political weapon of enormous power. Even as it signalled

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4"'Fully developed, the transcendental pretence has two central components: first, the remarkable inner richness and expanse of the self, ultimately encompassing everything; and secondly the consequent right to project from the subjective structures of one's own mind, and ascertain the nature of humanity as such" (Solomon, 1988, pp.1-2).
a radical egalitarianism, and suggested a long-awaited global sensitivity, it also justified unrestricted tolerance for paternalism and self-righteousness - 'the white philosopher's burden'". And it is through Kant that this conception of the subject finds one of its most eloquent expressions, and hence his importance in the course of our discussion.

In another, broader sense Kant and his German compatriots were important. Whilst political philosophers from Plato to Descartes had ascribed reason - as did Kant - to human beings, they had also constructed grand theories which saw the person as part of a metaphysical whole. Hence Plato's polis and the theory of the forms. Or Descartes' solution, by the use of God to guarantee that our perceptions are not deceptive, to the problem of a human consciousness establishing relations to other consciousnesses and objects outside the subject's consciousness. German Idealism reformulated this metaphysical domination of the ontological, particularly Kant's autonomous subject as constructing Moralität and Hegel's subsequent attempt at reconciling it with Sittlichkeit. Kant especially wrote in contrast to Hume, who tried to grapple with the idea of a subject with a unitary consciousness. But Hume was only able to envisage a strictly relational subject which he used to explain how disjoint experiences of discreet sensations, feelings and images could be rendered meaningful (Alford, 1991, p.4).5

Hence it was Kant who explained the unity of perception and consciousness by assuming a transcendental subject who could connect experience according to particular

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5Hume was quite clear about the impossibility of a unitary subject: "There are some philosophers who imagine we are every moment intimately conscious of what we call our self.... But setting aside some metaphysicians of this kind, I may venture to affirm...(that the self is) nothing but a bundle or collection of different perceptions " (Hume, 1888, bk.1, part 4, sec.6).
universal laws. In effect, therefore, Kant saw, as had Rousseau before him, that because of the impossibility of a return to premodernity’s l’homme de la nature, it was therefore necessary instead to legitimate society for the modern l’homme de l’homme. As a result Kant’s legacy is the subject as a conscious being, as well as a moral and aesthetic person. This he achieved by introducing the subject as a noumenal category, that is to say as an object conceived purely by reason and in juxtaposition to Hume’s phenomenal subject. On this understanding the subject is the bearer of moral practical reason, a Zweck an sich (point in itself) and the Endzweck (final purpose) of nature, leading logically to Kant’s categorical imperative: "Handle so, daß du die Menschheit sowohl in deiner Person, als in der Person eines jeden Andern, jederzeit zugleich als Zweck, niemals bloss als Mittel brauchst" (quoted in Hubbeling, 1990, p.12).

From this Kantian conception of being arose the subject’s sovereignty, and its conciliation with the previously estranged but concomitant notion of tolerance, or respect for other persons. Taylor (1989a, pp.10-18), for instance, argues that respect for others is a universal principle, with the boundaries of who to include or exclude at any one point in history drawn from the cultural setting. In the west, Taylor claims, this principle is formulated in terms of rights. Respect for human life is thus linked to the notion of autonomy which involves respecting a subject’s personality, wherein lies an implicitly respected moral autonomy. Politically speaking, this morally autonomous agent has gradually permeated our societal

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6"Therefore the original and necessary consciousness of the identity of oneself is at the same time a consciousness of an equally necessary unity of the synthesis of all phenomena according to...rules, which render them not only necessarily reproducible, but assign to their intuition an object" (Kant, 1963, pp.136-137).

7Arguably a Zeitgeist is a better determinant of who we choose to include or exclude. For example, prior to 1945 countries which discriminated against their citizens on the basis of race were tolerated by international organisations, whereas after this date countries like South Africa were castigated for these policies.
institutions, and forms the ontological foundation of the modern welfare state. This is in
virtue of moral agency being a basic precondition of moral activity which requires a certain
degree of freedom or the satisfaction of basic needs, leading to autonomy or the freedom to
act morally. Plant, Lesser and Taylor-Gooby (1980, pp. 46-51), for example, advocate freedom
from arbitrary power, ill-health and ignorance as fundamental to moral agency, giving rise to
the needs of rights, welfare and education.\footnote{Similarly, Barry (1989, p. 231) argues autonomy is a precondition for a subject to be ascribed rights.} The autonomous subject is also the person for
whom democracy exists. Beetham (1993), for example, justifies democracy as it protects the
subject’s interests and autonomy. He argues that if we defend democracy as a means of interest
maximisation then implicitly people are seen as the best judges of their own interests. Also,
autonomy does not specify the content of decision-making, only the procedures.\footnote{Held (1987, ch. 9) discusses the relationship between democracy and autonomy further.}

At a theoretical level the ontological subject has varied in character. Fromm argued
for a fixed, non-contingent subject as an enduring, valuable human quality to be used as the
benchmark in critically appraising the repressiveness of society, and as the basis for
specific and acultural subject, namely the sublated pleasure principle repressed in the interests
of the reality principle. Coles (1992, pp. vii-viii) sees a "...world where ideas offered to advance
freedom so often contribute to the intensification of subjugative practices,...". As a result he
believes an analysis of the subject to be of vital importance if we are to explore alternative
ontological and ethical positions from whence we can derive new freedoms.

In contrast, the subject for theorists like Alford (1991, p. vii) is "...not so much an entity
as an idea. Or rather, the logical consequence of other ideas about freedom, responsibility, the
good society, and so forth". Still a different idea of the subject comes from Taylor (1985, pp.15-44), who distinguishes the strong evaluator from the weak evaluator. That is, the former is a subject with depth, willing and able to evaluate desires by employing certain categories, for example noble-base, or higher-lower. The weak evaluator, in contrast, is a subject whose function is to weigh desires and evaluate how they might best be met. In fact, Maclntyre (1981, pp.203-206) and Bloom (1987, pp.173-179) lament the decline of the strong evaluating subject, arguing that the depth of today's subject is indicative of the cultural resources available to it.¹⁰

It becomes apparent, therefore, that at both the practical and theoretical level the ontological subject is crucial to our conceptions of politics and morality. At the very least it is implicit, sometimes even complacently so, in all political and social philosophy. Increasingly in modernity, though, a theory that is explicit about an ontological subject is often the harbinger or advocate of change. We might understand this in two senses. On one level, an explicit ontology can be used in juxtaposition to an 'opposition's', for example, the nurturing, attached feminine subject is contrasted with the independent, individuating masculine subject, with the intention of showing the latter's shortcomings. At another level, an explicit ontology can be used as the basis to substantiate claims for societal and institutional reform. The explicitness of an ontology is perhaps better understood if we think about Rousseau's innocent and intrinsically good subject, the psycho-scientific self-preserving subject of Hobbes, Kant's transcendental subject, or the freedom loving subject of modernity's existentialists, from the Frankfurt school to liberals like Rawls. In each case the theory of the subject supports radical

¹⁰ Both Maclntyre and Bloom, however, risk equating the subject with its culture, as does Oakeshott, for whom "...understanding the self is understanding a culture; there is no separate entity, 'the self', to be explored by introspection" (Passmore, 1989, pp.567-568).
new political practices, whether as la volonté générale or Leviathan, a secular morality, or a pluralistic, neutrally governed society.

Nonetheless, it is often difficult to find a consistent terminology of the subject. Alford (1991, pp. 3-5), as an example, says the mode of discourse vis-a-vis the subject has moved from the epistemological and metaphysical of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, to the psychological and political discourses of today. Still, he says it is unnecessary to make "...fundamental distinctions among self, ego, I, me, the person, the subject, or the individual. (Because) distinctions are not...theoretically fundamental; (and) do not structure the analysis" (Ibid, p. 4). A lack of consistent terminology might be because a theorist is not thorough enough nor concerned essentially with the ontological underpinnings of his or her theory. Alternatively, the normative content of this kind of theorising might be said to play a part in this terminological web, and a consideration of the descriptions of the subject is thus of use in our attempt to clarify the feminist critique of modern political philosophy.

An analytical framework of the subject

There are numerous ways in which an analytical framework can be derived. One could simply follow the established norms whilst adding whatever alterations were deemed relevant. Theorising the ontological, however, shows little consistent analytical framework or terminology. Perhaps this is partly because of the changing nature of our understanding of the subject, or due to the multidisciplinary concern of it within academe. Kohâk (1992) suggests, as a point of reference, human beings are the 'exotic' species in virtue of our displacement from the habitat to which we are adapted, that is to say we have moved from a natural to a
cultural environment. As such, different aspects of the human being within a cultural environment arise, and hence the need to clarify and explain it. An explanation of a framework might best be done via a threefold classification of the subject into the individual, the self and the person. Grammatically this would correspond to the ‘it’, the ‘I’ and the ‘me’ in everyday language.

At the most basic level is the human being, a biological entity signifying membership of a species and separated from other human beings by means of spatio-temporal criteria. Deutsch (1992b, pp.2-4), for example, mentions two dimensions to these criteria, the particular like hair colour and height, and the universal as in a central nervous system. These, he argues, are sufficient conditions for what he calls the individual, but on this understanding the individual is no different to other species. To avoid this it is necessary to conceive of the individual, in addition to having these cross-species spatio-temporal criteria, as being rational and therefore distinct from other species. In terms of our classification, therefore, we can follow McCall (1990, pp.10-12) who says the individual is the subject of cognition in various modes of understanding and perceiving.11

The uniqueness of each individual, however, and the subsequent requirement to be one was introduced by the Christian philosopher Boethius in the sixth century, who said the "...persona est individua substantia rationalis naturae" (quoted in Doran, 1989, p.13). Later, in the first volume of Summa Theologiae, Aquinas accepted this definition of a subject: "...the term individual substance is placed in the definition of ‘person’, as signifying the singular in the genus of substance; and the term rational nature is added, as signifying the singular in rational substances" (quoted in Ibid., p.13). If we understand ‘substance’ as a soul which belongs to each

11On this basis the individual is fulfilling a minimum of cogito ergo sum.
human being, then for these early Christian theologians having a soul was sufficient for identifying one subject (or genus, literally 'man') from another, whilst a rational nature indicated that each soul was different. Hence a person was the bearer of a soul, though the argument below will maintain that a soul (a rational nature) is not tantamount to personhood but rather qualifies one as an individual. Dumont (Ibid.,p.22) calls this conception of the individual l'agent emperique, that is the individual with a rational nature as coexistent with the human race. Hence the individual or the 'it' referred to above finds expression in Aquinas' soul bearing a rational nature, Rousseau's noble savage, or Locke's individual in the state of nature, and all assume, at a minimum, a being with a rational nature.

Despite the change in modern terminology from the soul to the self, the meaning and notion of the self is as old as the tradition of western political philosophy. Plato’s elaboration of the polis rested on the trio of gold, silver and bronze souls, with each representing a phenomenon of his ideal of humanity. For Aristotle the soul was the immanent form of each individual body, with the body epitomising the substantive matter of each soul (Outler,1987,pp.410-411). However, it was not until Saint Augustine wrote the City of God that the soul attained the mythical proportions with which we associate it today.

Saint Augustine was primarily concerned with rejecting the nonconfessing subject of pagan Rome. The pagan subject, according to Saint Augustine, was driven by a lust for domination. This arose due to the pagan subject’s civitas terrena mode of being, wherein pride was a dominating factor. Saint Augustine thus saw pride as a psychological state - "...a longing for a perverse kind of exaltation..." - which was intertwined with an ontological error, namely that "...man regards himself as his own light" (Saint Augustine,1972,vol.14,book 13). The pagan subject and the Greek soul erred in seeing themselves, instead of God, as the self-originating light and way of being (Coles,1992,pp.16-19). The notion of a confessing subject was therefore
introduced by Saint Augustine. This subject was based on a mode of being whereby one becomes morally self-regulating for fear of eternal damnation. In contrast to the pagan subject, who faltered by going outside itself in its unreflective enslavement to lust, the Christian subject was defined by "...its perpetual trajectory toward its own depths to rout out Godless desires and conform one's soul to the deep truths and will of God" (Saint Augustine, 1972, vol.14, book 16). Asking the questions: "What then am I, O my God? What nature am I?" (Ibid., vol.10, book 17), Saint Augustine, by combining the ontological and psychological aspects of the subject, was able to give us the reflective subject as a question to itself (Coles, 1992, pp.30-32). Our understanding of the self is thus of an entity who has moved beyond *cogito ergo sum* to a level of moral, reasoning judgement akin to Saint Augustine's *si fallor sum*.

It was then left to Aquinas to synthesise the biblical views of the soul with Aristotelean psychology, and he posited an individual as a composite of soul and body. The soul informed and directed both the sensory and rational aspects of the individual, and a *vis cogitativa* was understood as transcending a *vis aestimativa natura* (Outler, 1987, p.413). Aquinas therefore gave us both the soul and the self, the former indicating a religious, faith based mode of being and the latter a metaphysical or material, reason derived mode of being. The self, then, is the aspect of the individual which constitutes self-consciousness in political language, or the subconscious in psychological language, and it enables us to reflect upon our actions, thoughts, intentions and values. It is the 'I', or the experiencing individual (McCall, 1990, pp.13-14).

The notion of the self, though, has been the object of controversy and its very existence often questioned. Perhaps most famously by Hume, but also cynically by Nietzsche

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12Henry James (1945, p.315) captured the essence of this transition from the soul to the self: "Our doubt is our passion and our passion is our task. The rest is the madness of art."
who, in On Truth and Lie in an Extra-Moral Sense (1953,p.244), asked: "What, indeed, does man know of himself! Can he even once perceive himself completely, laid out as if in an illuminated glass case? Does not nature keep much the most from him, even about his body, to spellbound and confine him in a proud, deceptive consciousness...? ...(M)an rests upon the merciless,...in the indifference of his ignorance...". Recently, French theorists like Derrida\textsuperscript{13} and Benoist\textsuperscript{14} have questioned whether the concept of the self is even possible. A multiple of selves is a further problem for any analytical framework. It is, for instance, the way in which the self has been portrayed in literature, from Dostoevski's character Roskolnikov in Crime and Punishment, to Gogo and Didi's expectation of a synthesis in a title figure, Godot, in Beckett's Waiting for Godot (Waldock,1979,pp.29-30). Freud, in The Poet and Phantasy, said this tendency arises because authors distribute their own split selves amongst their characters (quoted in Ibid.,p.21f).

Perhaps one of the ways around these critiques of the self is to understand the need for a redefinition of it, especially in the context of modernity. Lacan (1977,pp.173-174) has, in Agency of the Letter in the Unconscious, interpreted Freud's Kern unseres Wesen in this way: "It is not so much that Freud commands us to seek it (the self), as so many others before him have, with the empty adage 'Know thyself' - as to reconsider the ways that lead to it". Another way and of relevance to the discussion is to realise the personal nature of selfhood.

That is to say, at the spiritual level of the soul and its relationship to a divine order, the issue

\textsuperscript{13}Derrida (1973) argues that the self can never be articulated, as it cannot be present in the future act of being read in a work for which it holds itself responsible. In his own words, that is to say the "...unconscious is a 'past'...that will (not ever) be present and whose future will never be its production or reproduction in the form of presence" (Ibid.,p.152).

\textsuperscript{14}For Benoist (1978,pp.215-216) the conscious self has been obliterated: "The subject is diffracted and caught in the symbolic order, in the structures which pervade, regulate and express themselves through it".
of defining one's soul since Saint Augustine has, in theory at least, been one of choice or conversion. Similarly with the self in the moral pluralism of modernity, where one's selfhood has, if you will, been privatised out of the public sphere. The self or the 'I' in the realm of political practice has thus become an irrelevance, although this should not be seen as detracting from its continued social significance.

The third category of human being we are concerned with is the person. He or she is partly the social characterisation of the individual. Smith (1979), for example, says a person is a public entity, the individual as cognised by others, as whatever is known, attributed or thought of the individual constitutes that individual as a person. The person is also the public image put forward by the self. In ancient Rome the term *persona* referred to an actor's mask, signalling to the audience that he or she was assuming a role (A.O.Rorty, 1973). This image is similar to the public image projected by the self today, and assumes that we have and should fulfil what Marcel Maus in *Une Catégorie de l'Esprit Humain: La Notion de Personne, Celle de "Moi"* called a cultural and historically contextual role (quoted in Kippenberg et al., 1990, introd.). By assuming this public role, a self moves from conscious *sein* to fulfil the *sollen* of personhood (Kohák, 1992). A person is hence neither wholly constituted by society nor fully independent of it. G.H.Mead (1964) portrays these two aspects as the 'I', the private, reflexive and subjective self, and the 'me', the socially determined, objectified person. We might suggest, as does Johnstone (1967), that the concept of person is in fact ontic, whilst the never directly encountered self is ontological. In this case the self would only be referred to when our ordinary, everyday language could not express some sort of ontic experience performed by a person.15

15"The existence of the self is a sort of hypothesis used to explain the behaviour of persons" (Johnstone, 1967, p.205).
Being a person further involves meeting several criteria. Some theorists emphasise bodily identity as either a primary or necessary condition of personal identity.\textsuperscript{16} Shaffer (1966), however, counters the need for the body on logical grounds when describing the person, although he acknowledges physical attributes as necessary elements in the criteria for persons. Similar doubts about the need for the body as being an essential part of the person have been expressed by Borowski (1976). Finally, though, he acknowledges how improbable the person is without a body: "...a necessary condition for making supposed identifications on non-bodily grounds is that at some stage identification be made on bodily grounds" (Ibid., p.494). Still other philosophers focus upon psychological characteristics that can guarantee the continuity of personal identity over time.\textsuperscript{17} A dualistic understanding of the person as a combination of the body and mind, however, is a contingent rather than logical relationship. It is conceivable that the mind could exist without the body\textsuperscript{18} although this does not then exclude there being causal connections between them, "...so that even if they are separable in principle, there may still be grounds for holding that they are inseparable in fact" (Ayer, 1963, p.83). Lewis (1977, p.256) advocates this concept of the person too, when he says it is "...an essentially mental entity, which has a unique and final identity, which is nonetheless in continuous interaction with the physical world, mainly at least through one's own body".

Dennett (1976) argues that the concept of a person is both a honourific and normative


\textsuperscript{17}Kitcher (1978) discusses this.

\textsuperscript{18}Monists like Berkeley and Hume held this view, saying physical objects were dependent for their existence upon being perceived. Another popular monist view is materialism which holds there is no mental existence distinct from physical reality, in the event of which the mind could not function without its body correlate.
concept. As such what it is to be a person must account for the notion of an intelligent (reasoning) and conscious agent, as well as an agent who is accountable and the bearer of rights and responsibilities (Ibid., p.176). This idea of personhood is particularly apt for a liberal democratic society, and Dennett is quite specific about the conditions to be met in order to become a person. According to Dennett (Ibid., p.179), the honour of personhood is bestowed upon an 'Intentional System', that is someone whose (rational) behaviour can be explained by ascribing to it intentional predicates. Normatively speaking, personhood for Dennett entails rationality, reciprocity, second order Intentional Systems (or evidence of an intention behind reciprocity), language for communicating our intentions, and moral agency (quoted in McCall,1990,pp.72-78).

There are, to be sure, several problems associated with Dennett's thesis. Young (quoted in Ibid.,p.93) critiques his assumption that it is always human beings who have to adopt an intentional stance to validate an individual as a person. For Wilson (1984) a similar critique arises, namely that personhood should amount to more than merely being the object of a stance or view of other people. The important factors for our purposes, however, are the public identity of a person, which endows the person with sufficient qualities to participate in social and political institutions, and the dually constituted notion of the person. And it is this last point which is of significance as it indicates how a publicly defined person, derived from masculine assumptions, has slowly come to usurp the personal self. In our context, this publicly defined person will be shown to have historically been masculine oriented, derived, for example, from the reciprocal recognition accorded by and to each person. This leads to the recognition of an 'other', obtained from what Bertrand Russell called "...our sombre solitude, the genuine inner existence and essential privacy of everyone,...(which are) the major conditions of healthy personal and social relations" (quoted in Lewis,1977,p.256). Alternatively,
and more precisely, is the publicly defined person that does not take the body into account, nor the sociality of the (feminine) self with others. Feminism, therefore, is, at the ontological level, an attempt to have the body included in the public conception of the person, and at the level of the self, to be self-determining and free of the oppressive structures of a patriarchal moral framework.

An analytical framework of meaning as context

We need to distinguish at the outset an understanding of the terms modernity and postmodernity. There are several ways we can do this and it will be useful to perhaps start by differentiating modernity from premodernity. Habermas (1981) traces the term 'modern' back to the late fifth century when the Latin word *modernus* was first used to distinguish the new Christian era from the preceding epoch of Roman paganism. Hence 'modern' has become the means by which the "...consciousness of an epoch relates itself to the past of antiquity, in order to view itself as the result of a transition from the old to the new" (Ibid,p.3). In terms of this discussion, modernity indicates a *Weltanschauung* reorientation in political philosophy. Berki (1977,pp.116-119), for instance, argues that in the sixteenth century political thought was described as modern or, at the least, early modern, in virtue of its focus upon the state and the subject. Machiavelli is cited by Berki as representative of this shift. This is not to say these early shifts in emphasis represented a decisive break; indeed, modernity was as reliant upon reason as the ancients had been although after the sixteenth century it came to be seen instrumentally. Modernity did differ, however, in its metaphysics which became mechanistic, in its material conception of virtue, by its adherence to legal and political equality, and
through its championing of the individual (Ibid.). Similarly, Skinner (1978, pp.110-112) traces the start of modernity to the Italian and subsequent northern European Renaissance. It came fully to fruition, though, in the Scottish and French Enlightenments whose practitioners rejected medieval thought and the feudal mode of relations.

Modernity, therefore, can be seen as encapsulating four interrelated concepts: ‘modernity’ proper, an epochal-historical category which had its origins in the sixteenth century; ‘modernité’ (modernity), an experiential category capturing a particular state of mind and being typical of human experience in the modern era; ‘modernisation’, the material development of society industrially, technologically and in terms of economic relationships; and ‘modernism’, the unique cultural and aesthetic values and practices found in modernity (Featherstone, 1988). A conceptual differentiation of the premodern from the modern era might then be seen in various ways: mechanical versus organic structures of solidarity (E. Durkheim, The Division of Labour in Society); Gemeinschaft versus Gesellschaft (F. Tönnies, Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft); or traditional ties versus rationality and rational relations of social institutions (M. Weber, Economy and Society) (quoted in Bell and Newby, 1971, ch.2).

Importantly for our purposes, however, is an understanding of premodernity as an epoch characterised by a moral framework that gave the subject an *a priori* purpose. This might have ranged at the philosophical level from being a slave in a Greek *polis* to the more prevalent example of this epoch, that of having been a subject under the Christian framework of ontological security in heavenly certainty. Modernity, in its ultimate manifestation, differs insofar as one’s purpose becomes removed from the ‘framework level’, and is instead pursued

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19Sabine (1937, p.342) writes that Machiavelli’s main assumption was "...human nature is essentially selfish.... Government is really founded upon the weakness and insufficiency of the individual."
privately, if at all. In the language of political philosophy, modernity is the triumph of the right (the subject) over the good (a framework). Or, for this discussion, the threat of infinite conceptions of private right becoming so subjective that the foundations of the moral framework in which they exist becomes illegitimate and empty. In short, the moral framework vis-a-vis the subject becomes meaningless.

The characteristic that will concern us and is arguably fundamental to modernity is its use of reason to postulate a rational, autonomous subject. Giddens (1991,p.28) talks of 'proverbial reason', or "...the idea that increased secular understanding of the nature of things intrinsically leads to a safer and more rewarding existence for human beings...". One of the more elaborate articulations of this view can be found in Kant (1974), and as such he personifies the dominant ontological tradition of modernity, the Enlightenment. M.C.Taylor (1992,p.12) portrays modernity's project at this ontological level as "...an extraordinarily diffuse movement(); different versions of modernism share a will-to-purity and will-to-immediacy that implicitly or explicitly presuppose a philosophy or theology in which being is identified with presence". At the societal level modernity is arguably best illustrated by the culture of contractarianism, a diverse but perceptible tradition traceable from Hobbes through to Rawls (1971). Philosophically, reason in modernity is the means of realising the dream of a foundation for knowledge, or what Derrida calls a search for a 'metaphysics of presence' that guarantees the subject unmediated access to reality (quoted in Best and Kellner,1991,p.21).

The focus of political philosophy within modernity has shifted from a concern with

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20 In a similar vein, Giddens (1991,p.20) writes:"Modernity is essentially a post-traditional order. The transformation of time and space, coupled with the disembidding mechanisms (that have come to characterise social institutions), propel social life away from ...pre-established precepts or practices".
the place of virtue in, and the conquest of fortune by, the state (Machiavelli),\textsuperscript{21} to an investigation into the relation between the state and its citizens, especially the question of political obligation and the state's legitimacy (Hobbes, Locke, and Rousseau). More recently we find contemporary political philosophy engaged in legitimising liberal democracy and discussing the degree of interference permissible by the state in the lives of people (Frazer and Lacey, 1993, pp. 26-31). During this evolution we have witnessed the entrenchment in society of the Enlightenment (liberal) values of liberty, equality and the rule of law. And as a response we have seen a variety of critiques including those which fall within modernity's rubric of individual freedom, like marxism, anarchism and feminism, and others which continue to adhere to premodern values of wholeness, like communitarianism.

A third critique of modernity is that which arises from the protagonists of postmodernity. As with liberalism, feminism and other intellectual movements, it is difficult to give a single definition of postmodernism. An underlying theme nonetheless is a rejection of modernity which is seen as responsible for the misery and suffering wrought upon a range of categories. They include the urban proletariat, women through their exclusion from the public sphere and their misogyny in the private, or the victims of the genocides of imperialist colonisation (Best and Kellner, 1991, pp. 2-3). These phenomena are often seen as having occurred because of what Horkheimer and Adorno called the 'dialectic of Enlightenment', a process whereby reason turns into its opposite and modernity's promise of liberation ends up hiding oppression and domination (Ibid.). In arguably one of its subtler forms, this dialectic is the moral and political framework of patriarchy, which fails to address the freedom of women despite claiming at the ontological level to represent liberty and equality for all.

Prior to the 1980s Best and Kellner (Ibid., pp.5-16) discern two conflicting matrices of postmodern discourse. There were some theorists - the avant-gardists\(^{22}\) - who spoke in a positive tone of hope and expectation about an approaching era free of oppression and inequality. Somewhat less euphorically were the cultural conservatives\(^{23}\) who lamented the decline of the traditional values and structures of society. Out of this milieu arose an understanding of postmodernism as an attack upon Enlightenment theory, especially that of reason. Initially evident in the linguistic-oriented discourse of structuralism, postmodernists like Foucault, Derrida, Kristeva, Rorty and Lyotard saw it as their task to continue the project of Nietzsche, Heidegger and Wittgenstein, which was to deconstruct modern philosophy at the ontological and epistemological levels. In this sense postmodernism is "...a critique of modern theory and a production of new models of thought, writing, and subjectivity" (Ibid., p.25). In addition, and of significance for our purposes, is Lyotard's view in *Just Gaming*: "Postmodern (or pagan) would be the condition of the literatures and arts that have no assigned addressee and no regulating ideal" (quoted in Ibid., p.164).\(^{24}\)

In the context of an absent addressee and ideal, postmodernism becomes what Hassan (1985) calls the 'Age of Indeterminance' (indeterminacy plus immanence). Modernism and postmodernism can then be juxtaposed as follows: Narrative-*Grande Histoire* versus Anti-Narrative-*Petite Histoire*; Genital-Phallic versus Polymorphous-Androgynous; Metaphysics versus Irony; Determinacy versus Indeterminacy; or Transcendence versus Immanence (Ibid.).

\(^{22}\)Here Best and Kellner (1991) include P.Drucker (economics), S.Sontag (culture critic), and M.Foucault, J.F.Lyotard and F.Frere (social and political theory).

\(^{23}\)For instance, A.J.Toynbee (history), D.Bell and J.Baudrillard (social and political theory), and G.Steiner (intellectual) (Best and Kellner, 1991).

\(^{24}\)See Griffin (1993), the *New German Critique* 33(1984), or *Theory Culture and Society* 5(2-3) (1988), for further discussion of the postmodern condition.
Lyotard, in *The Post-Modern Condition*, therefore characterises modernity as an epoch that legitimised its theories "...with reference to a metadiscourse...making an explicit appeal to some grand narrative, such as the dialectics of Spirit, *the hermeneutics of meaning*, (or) the emancipation of the rational subject..." (quoted in Callinicos, 1985; my italics). Further, by appealing to metanarratives to legitimate foundationalist claims as well as in its desire for homogenous epistemological and moral prescriptions, modernism excluded certain categories. Hence, postmodernism can be defined "...as incredulity toward metanarratives" (Lyotard, Ibid.), though we should not interpret this position as tantamount to nihilism.\(^{25}\)

Meaning as context, therefore, should be understood as follows. In premodernity, classical political philosophy defined the subject in relation to a teleological moral framework. As the latter collapsed, modern political philosophers sought to replace it with a framework derived from a particular tradition within modern political philosophy which saw the subject as the possessor of reason. Gradually, however, this framework has ceased to provide meaning as self-determining subjects have weakened its foundations by being morally pluralistic. As a compromise, the modern framework came to ultimately define no more than the rules that give the subject the right to be free within a framework of moral meaninglessness. Recently, feminism has questioned whether this framework of meaninglessness does in fact allow women to be free. Rather, they argue its biased rules uphold masculine superiority and is thus more typically patriarchal. Demanding to be free like their gender counterparts is hence an example

\(^{25}\)Indeed, according to D.M. Levin in *The Opening of Vision: Nihilism and Postmodernism*, the discovery of a genuine 'dark mode of thinking' is inseparable for postmodernism from the critique of the 'metaphysics of presence' (alluded to earlier by Derrida): "Western metaphysics has forgotten, has suppressed, this *other* vision, this vision without the presence, the *parousia*, of the light of day: a vision which understands (the ontological significance of) the *absence* of light and is open to learning from the greatness - even the terror of night" (quoted in Berry, 1992, p.2).
of postmodernism - the absence of all encompassing ontologies, epistemologies and metanarratives. To reach this stage, however, arguably requires a modern ontology with which to replace modernity’s patriarchal framework. This simultaneous demand by the feminine subject to be free within an essentially antithetical moral framework is the contradiction, dilemma or realm of purgatory that forms the basis of the discussion to follow.
CHAPTER TWO

An ontology of political philosophy

The preceding chapter dealt initially with a conceptual framework where a distinction was made between the individual, the self and the person. It was intimated that the changing conception of the subject, originally from a soul to a self, and more recently to that of a public person, was largely a cultural and historical phenomenon. During the course of these changes we have witnessed in modernity the rise of a conception of the person who, it has been assumed, is an accurate representation of all people. In this light, institutional structures materialised to foster this person, and left his or her ontological concerns to the realm of the private self. We also dealt with an analytical framework in which postmodernity was characterised as where the public person came to be seen as less and less representative of all people, to the extent in fact of being specifically oppressive to women. The institutional structures, therefore, are also unsupportive of women. Rather than seeing the (masculine) public person and his moral framework as deliberately oppressive of the feminine, we will, in this chapter, focus on the historical conditions that have brought them about.

What will be claimed, therefore, is an ontological subject in the specific cultural predicament of modernity at two levels: the publicly defined person and the privately defining self. It will be illustrated how these two subjects have arisen by situating them within the broader context of meaninglessness. We will argue for an understanding of the publicly defined person as the liberal response at the ontological level to a loss of metaphysical meaning. A privately defining self will be shown to represent yet another attempt to come to terms with
the moral pluralism of modernity by a retreat into tradition and community. To an extent, therefore, we are following Strong’s (1990, pp.1-23) idea of politics as a mode of discourse responding to the existential problem of who we are. Politics does, as Strong argues, overlap with other modes of discourse, for example, morality (‘What should I do?’), economics (‘How do I get what I want?’) or psychology (‘What do I want?’), and we will focus upon the ontological subject within two dominant strands of politics as representative of a search for an answer to the question: ‘Who am I?’.

At the societal level we might understand these two ontological phenomena as indicative of two varying attempts at politics. The first, the publicly defined person, is the liberal tradition’s way of restoring order, in a fragile world of (supposedly) conflicting subjects, via the introduction of rules that appeal to a reasoning person. In the discourse of theory this translates into the tradition of foundationalism, where it is assumed that questions about political morality can be answered in rational and objective ways. At the other extreme is the privately defined self who is a means of retrieving meaning at the communal rather than metaphysical level. As such political philosophy takes on a more substantive role. The effects of these endeavours upon the feminine subject will be our task in chapters three and four, and we now must concern ourselves in this chapter with establishing the development of these modern ontological definitions.

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The soul and metaphysical meaning

In order to articulate a conception of politics as the existential quest for meaning it is important that we situate it in a historical context. By necessity brief and thus general as well, it is appropriate that we return to the pagan self of Rome. Saint Augustine was a vehement critic of the pagan self and was concerned at redirecting it into the realm of the metaphysical, and away from its preoccupation with the material world. To be sure, this was not the first time this sort of project was attempted. Taylor (1989a, pp.127-129), for example, links Saint Augustine’s use of God as an ontological meaning to Plato’s idea of the good. The pagan self characteristic of Rome might be understood, relative to the ancient Greeks or Saint Augustine, as the exception to a metaphysical orientation.

The main concern for Saint Augustine in the City of God was with what Coles (1992, p.18) calls the ontological conceit of the pagan self. This situation had arisen with the fall of Adam and Eve who "...made themselves their own ground...(instead of God as) the real ground of their being" (quoted in Ibid.). In Adam, Eve and the Serpent, however, Pagels interprets the fall in a different way to Coles’ version of what Saint Augustine may have intended. Instead, Pagels writes that three hundred years prior to Saint Augustine theologians viewed the fall as a progression from innocence to responsibility, from persons as ‘zombies’ to one’s with free will (quoted in Stendahl, 1992). Saint Augustine, thinking persons were badly in need of spiritual reform and moral guidance, introduced God over and above a conscience and free will as defining the self. Nonetheless the ontologically conceited self had renounced relations of reciprocity and dependence upon God in its desire to be conditionless
and absolute.\textsuperscript{27} For example, by employing a combination of perception and judgement as experience the pagan self erred in its relations to the external by viewing everything instrumentally, as opposed to intrinsically, leading Saint Augustine to conclude: "...it is the nature of things considered in itself, without regard to our convenience or inconvenience, that gives glory to the creator" (quoted in Coles, 1992, p.18).

The lifestyle and experiences of the pagan self revolved around the flesh - "...the rule of the self..." - and included "...faults of the mind..." such as enmity, animosity and envy, together with bodily lusts (Coles, 1992, p.20). Perhaps most importantly for Saint Augustine was the destructive power of lust in both its bodily form of \textit{libido carnalis}, and its psychological form of \textit{libido dominandi}. Under these circumstances the pagan self was always outside itself in itslust to appropriate. This unreflective self meant enslavement as the multiple lusts of the body and soul attempted to dominate each other. The main cause of unreflective enslavement was the uncontrolability of sexual lust, which caused the "...almost total extinction of mental alertness,..." and by originating in pride led to shame as the self became "...embarrassed by the insubordination of the flesh" (Saint Augustine quoted in Ibid., p.26).

Although not the only 'culprit' to succumb to contingent, finite meaning, the pagan self served as the basis upon which Saint Augustine built.\textsuperscript{28} His task was to give the self meaning in the transcendental, spiritual sense. This he did by introducing being-as-confession

\textsuperscript{27}Saint Augustine was able to forgive this conceit, as it was a "...a deep truth animating and characterising the desires and practices of the pagan self while remaining beneath the level of consciousness" (Coles, 1992, p.18).

\textsuperscript{28}Marx provides another example of a rejection of the metaphysical. He cites Aeschylus' Prometheus who confessed:"In a word, I detest all the Gods" (quoted in McLellan, 1990, pp.12-13). Prometheus then turned to the servant of the Gods, Hermes, and said:"Understand this well, I would not change my evil plight for your servility," leading Marx to remark:"Prometheus is the foremost saint and martyr in the philosopher's calendar" (Ibid.).
whereby one exposes the deeper meanings and motives behind each thought and action by constantly questioning oneself. In doing this the self was able to unify and purify the multiplicity of selves caused by the temptations of the external world. This was achieved in two ways: firstly, confession makes the self present by reflecting upon and holding its past constantly before itself, with this past or memory allowing the incomprehensible present - for example, desire - to be overcome, or pure presence - that is, God - to be seen. Hence the reason why Saint Augustine asks: "...how shall I find You if I am without memory of You" (quoted in Ibid., p.35)? Secondly, the self achieves unity by confessing the truths of its soul to God, and humbles itself before Him as these truths reveal the self's finitude. Finally, it is this unified self which is then able to face God (Coles, 1992, pp.31-33).

This is not to say, however, that Saint Augustine's views were unchallenged. Despite his scant regard for the self’s ability to be self-originating, he had always maintained that the self could choose its mode of being, as "...no man loses Thee, unless he goes from Thee" (quoted in Ibid., p.39). This emphasis upon human will was rejected, for example, by Meister Eckhart, a fourteenth century German theologian, who admonished synthesising the creaturely will into God's will.29 Indeed, being spiritually poor was not akin to becoming poor but rather to being untouched and rich in inexhaustible possibilities (Oliver, 1992, p.42). For Meister Eckhart, then, Saint Augustine erred in envisaging the human will inviting God into the emptiness of the self, as "...God does not first need to enter the person who is already free from all otherness and creature nature, because he is already there" (quoted in Ibid.).

From whatever ontological perspective within Christian Platonism one takes, however,
the final *raison d'être* for the soul is the same - a metaphysically divine order of being that promises immortality. This philosophy remained intact for centuries to come and was encapsulated by Saint Gregory of Nyssa: "...the essence of man is an imitation of him who fashioned the universe,...(and the self) is easily the greatest of all things known to us, because none has been made in the likeness of God except that creature which is man" (quoted in Outler, 1987, p.412).

**The subject and existential Angst**

It is the framework of meaning just discussed that Foucault (1970), in *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences*, has described as indicative of what he calls the premodernity wherein, as we saw through Saint Augustine, all subjects shared in a common meaning. Foucault contrasts this premodern or Renaissance episteme with the modern, the major difference having been in the ontological assumptions and beliefs that changed to the extent of leaving the modern subject in a framework without meaning. So as to establish a relationship between this meaninglessness and the rise of a supposedly universal conception of personhood, we now turn to look initially into Foucault’s notion of epistemes.

Foucault (1970) was in search of the borders and limitations of our own way of thinking (Merquior, 1985, p.35), and he used the term ‘episteme’ to distinguish one mode of intellectual *Weltanschauung* from another. Involved in a similar though more socio-cultural process of identification than Thomas Kuhn’s *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, Foucault’s epistemes illuminate the "...historical *a priori* in a given period, (which) delimits in
the totality of experience a field of knowledge, (and) defines the mode of being of the objects that appear in that field,..." (Ibid., p.xxii; my italics). Further, the mode of being in each episteme is incompatible and incommensurable with the one that preceded it, enabling Foucault to clearly delineate the modern from the classical.

The oldest episteme identified by Foucault is the Renaissance episteme which was at its most prominent in the early sixteenth century, although Foucault is seldom specific about dates. It was essentially an episteme of resemblance, and language was used simply to reiterate and demonstrate the similarity of the thing being represented. In the Renaissance episteme it was assumed that each thing had a divinely ordained purpose, albeit often hidden, which needed to be interpreted rather than observed or demonstrated (Merquior, 1985, pp.44-45). Despite there being nothing new to know this interpretation as a form of knowledge was an infinite task. To an extent, therefore, the Renaissance episteme sought similarity for "...if the things that resembled one another were indeed infinite in number,...then it was necessary to establish the forms according to which they might resemble one another" (Foucault, 1970, p.17).

By the middle of the seventeenth century Foucault is able to discern the beginnings of modernity in what he labels the classical episteme. This transformation was fuelled by the new knowledge areas of linguistics, natural history and economics, with each covering language, life and labour, respectively. As a result, the knowledge generated led to resemblance

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3°Foucault speaks of four forms of resemblance: convenientia portrays the resemblances between things that have related properties; aemulatio shows resemblance of distant objects; analogy relates resemblances that are neither visible nor essential to things themselves; and sympathy defines resemblances between all objects through its potential to exist everywhere (Shumway, 1989, pp.64-66).
being replaced by representation. But of most importance, Foucault argues, is the change in relationship between signs and things. The Renaissance episteme was only able to characterise the resemblance between things, that is the sign and the thing were the same, but with new forms of knowledge in the classical episteme the sign became a mode of representing the thing (Mahon, 1992, p. 67). Foucault (1970, pp. 42-43) says these "...new arrangement(s) brought about the appearance of a new problem, unknown until then: in the sixteenth century, one asked oneself how it was possible to know a sign did in fact designate what it signified; from the seventeenth century, one began to ask how a sign could be linked to what it signified"? Ultimately, then, order was imposed by these new sources of knowledge, especially mathesis, and Foucault is able to reduce in importance mechanisation and mathematisation as forms of scientific classification, in favour of language (Shumway, 1989, p. 75).

During the classical episteme the growth in the forms of knowledge had led to a proliferation of social and scientific fields, so that it gradually became impossible by the nineteenth century to group all the modern disciplines together. The new modern episteme, therefore, was less concerned with the form of knowledge than with the problem it centred on, namely the subject (Ibid., p. 81). From 1775 onwards authors began to historise life, labour and language, culminating in the early eighteenth century in function overcoming structure, and the subject as a producer (Merquior, 1985, p. 51). Put another way, the classical concern with order and classification gave way in the modern episteme to history, where people became recognisable in their factual, contingent existences.

Foucault is therefore claiming that the modern, post-Renaissance epistememes were

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31 The main structures of representation were mathesis which created a universal science of measurement and order, and taxonomia for classifying it (Merquior, 1985, p. 46).
responsible for the birth of 'man': "Before the end of the eighteenth century, man did not exist" (1970, p. 308). More metaphorical than literal, Foucault seems to be arguing that the classical episteme did not articulate or "...isolate, in any way, a specific domain proper to man,..." as opposed to the modern where all forms come to hinge upon an "...analytic of (human) finitude" (Ibid.). It is within and by necessity of human finitude that the person assumes a dual role as both the object of knowledge and the subject who knows (Shumway, 1989, p. 86). As a consequence Foucault says the person became defined through three philosophical problems, the most important of which he calls the empirico-transcendental 'doublet', or contradiction. From the modern episteme's 'analytic of finitude' arises the task of man's finitude as having to provide its own foundation. Hence, finitude as founding is 'the fundamental', and finitude as the founded is 'the positive' (Gutting, 1989, p. 200). Modern philosophy's project, therefore, is to discover a relation between the fundamental and the positive as a basis for human finitude's self-foundation. The empirico-transcendental doublet, for example, began with Kant and has continued on through Marx to Husserl and Merleau-Ponty (Ibid., pp. 201-203). Interestingly, Taylor (1989a, p. 112) provides us with a similar example to Foucault's empirico-transcendental doublet when he writes: "The really difficult thing (for a self existing in moral space) is distinguishing the human universals from the historical constellations and not eliding the second into the first so that our particular way seems somehow inescapable for humans as such,... (Making this distinction is the) greatest intellectual problem for human culture".

There are undeniably several problems with Foucault's thesis. These range from

32"Finitude is not the sudden discovery of human mortality, but the problem of founding knowledge once representation has become a problem having lost its transparency and its guarantee in God-given human nature" (Shumway, 1989, p. 86).
historical inaccuracies, the difficulty with his claim of the absolute discontinuity between epistememes, or his tendency to read unique meanings into primary texts.\textsuperscript{33} Habermas (1981) has written of Foucault's rejection of the Enlightenment as that of a young conservative who lacks normative yardsticks. Or Taylor (1986) accuses Foucault of monolithic relativism, which prevents him from confirming one set of practices over another. Alternatively, Foucault's aesthetic decisionism enables him to take irrationalist leaps to affirm everything (Wolin, 1986). Most critiques, however, do not focus upon the characterisation of the subject, which is the context with which we are concerned. That is, Foucault has portrayed in the premodern epistememes the subject - Saint Augustine's soul, if you will - as part of an infinite cosmos of being, with all earthly experiences examples of the soul's limitations in relation to this infinity. Strong (1990, pp. 22-25), for instance, interprets Foucault in this way by saying the Renaissance and classical epistememes understood personhood as divinely determined due to the subject not being the epistemological basis of the world. Ontologically, therefore, the significance of the modern episteme is evident in Hegel's conception of the subject as self-defining. In \textit{Elements of the Philosophy of Right}, Hegel (1991, pp. 151-152) wrote: "The right of the subject's \textit{particularity} to find satisfaction, or - to put it differently - the right of \textit{subjective freedom}, is the pivotal and focal point in the difference between \textit{antiquity} and the \textit{modern} age. This right, in its infinity, is expressed in Christianity,... . Its more specific shapes include love,...the eternal salvation of the individual as an end,...(and) morality and conscience...". Subjective freedom as typical of modernity was, initially in Adam Smith, John Locke, Hegel and Marx, expressed through labour.

Coles (1992, pp. 64-66) also shares a similar view, arguing that each being varied only

\textsuperscript{33}See Merquior (1985, pp. 56-75), Gane (1986) and Shumway (1989, pp. 91-93).
slightly from another in the premodern, divinely inspired epistemes. All beings had to compare the 'givens' - Foucault's resemblances - of the world in order to construct a reality that resembled the order of God, and this left them little space in which to be ordinary.\footnote{Coles (1992,p.67) cites Foucault (1970,p.310) on this: "...man, as a primary reality with his own destiny, as the difficult object and sovereign subject of all possible knowledge, has no place in (the Renaissance and classical epistemes)".}

During the modern episteme, however, people emerge into an incoherent world where they are forced to provide themselves with representations. In Being and Time, for instance, Heidegger captures dramatically this predicament of the modern episteme when he talks of how man is 'thrown' into 'they' and 'idle talk', or society and social and political arrangements, respectively. What we see in Foucault, therefore, is a conception of the development of ontological meaninglessness. By focusing on the changing perceptions of knowledge within historical epistemes, Foucault illustrates how the emphasis of knowledge shifted from resemblance and representation, to concern with the subject and its finitude.

Another author who has attempted a similar historical account of the subject is Charles Taylor (1989a), in his book Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity. Taylor's task, as the title of his book suggests, is to trace the sources of modern selfhood, and Taylor argues that the self and morality are inextricably linked. What he seeks to establish is the divergent sources whence modern morality has developed, and Taylor employs these as bases for the modern self to evaluate its constitutive goods. That is to say, our currently dominant values, or what Taylor calls our moral intuitions, revolve around the notion of rights. The notion of subjective rights as one of our most treasured moral intuitions is expressed, Taylor argues, in our strivings for universal justice and beneficence, by our sensitivity to claims of equality, the demand to be free and self-determining, and by the high
priority placed on the avoidance of pain and suffering. This notion has developed historically, and started from a theistic grounding dating from Platonic, hierarchical reason, through to the naturalism of disengaged reason characteristic of the Enlightenment, and eventually matured in the rational expressivism of the Romantics. Gay (1969, pp.2-3) talks similarly of a change in humanity's sense of situation during the late eighteenth century due to the Enlightenment and Romanticism, with Europeans having experienced "...an expansive sense of power over nature and themselves". Hegel, too, recognised the dawning of a new era which he described in the *Phenomenology of Mind* as represented by *Geist* in its defining act of becoming aware of itself; hence we begin to celebrate "...our existence on its own account" (quoted in Trilling, 1972, pp.34-35).

Although Taylor's level of analysis is primarily ontological versus Foucault's socio-cultural history of knowledge, the two authors share several similar conclusions vis-a-vis the subject. Like Foucault, for example, Taylor (1989a) distinguishes a premodern epoch from the modern which he variously labels the 'age of belief' (Ibid., p.311), or the 'existential predicament of the fear of condemnation' (Ibid., p.18). To argue this thesis Taylor characterises three axes of modern morality: our sense of respect for and obligations to others; our understanding of what makes a full life; and our sense of dignity or the way we command respect from others (Ibid., pp.11-19). In ancient Greece, for example, the latter was the most important as seen in the exaltation of the warrior and honour ethic. Today, it is the former realised in an ethic of general principles based on reason, whilst for those in the age of belief the question of a full and purposeful life was the dominant issue.

The (Christian) moral framework of premodernity, therefore, went unquestioned which aided the soul in realising a full life. In any case it was an unchallengeable framework which made imperious demands that each soul feared it was unable to meet. With a penalty
of irretrievable condemnation, exile and damnation we can understand why Taylor labels it the existential fear of condemnation. In contrast to this predicament is the modern fear of meaninglessness. This is primarily due to the exposure, by our increased sources of morality, of the premodern moral framework as problematic, so that we now have no one framework forming the moral horizon of society. We thus find ourselves driven to search for a personal framework which we invent and articulate in the face of modernity, with "...those whose spiritual agenda is mainly defined in this way... (being) in a fundamentally different existential predicament from that which dominated most previous cultures and still defines the lives of other people today" (Ibid., p.18). In introducing a multiple of frameworks the modern subject, to avoid conflicting with others over scarce resources or indeed a framework itself, operates within a grand framework of rights. Presumed to be neutral, this framework will, in the following chapters, be shown to be gender specific, although Taylor is more worried about its neutrality leading to subjects neglecting it, and ultimately coming to see it as illegitimate.

However, we need to first look into the reasons for this transformation in moral framework and its connotations for the ontological subject. Taylor (Ibid., pp.305-314) considers the large-scale institutional changes of the last two centuries, including industrialisation and technological innovation, and the way they have weakened traditional forms of allegiance and belief. Another possible reason for the change in frameworks was the spread in education and scientific knowledge. However, on their own these are insufficient explanations of the framework's transformation, the former because of an ambiguous causal effect and the latter for its implicit assumption that religious beliefs are irrational, unenlightened or unscientific. Instead, Taylor prefers an ontological explanation associated with the increase in moral sources. This feature of modernity - representing, he argues, an epistemic gain - made people no longer feel "...that the spiritual dimension of their lives was incomprehensible if one
supposed there was no God. To most of our forebears it seemed strange and bizarre, not to say wicked, to deny the existence of God" (Ibid.,p.310). If we follow Taylor's argument of selfhood and morality as inextricably linked then another way of understanding the shift in moral frameworks is via the discourse of rights. In the premodern epoch all souls were ascribed natural rights in virtue of being a part of a divine whole. However, this right required each soul to live under the law (of a divinely inspired morality), with the conferral of certain benefits like immortality. In contrast the modern age is dominated by subjective rights which rely upon the bearer for their realisation, and as such for his or her participation with others in making sure these rights can be exercised (Ibid,pp.11-12).

We have seen above how the dominant axis of modern morality requires our sense of respect for and our obligations to others. Within this moral framework we encounter a notion of respect for others as a means to guaranteeing their autonomy, and as a way to seeing suffering eradicated. In addition, there is a third dimension which, Taylor suggests, epitomises modernity, and he calls it the affirmation of ordinary life.\textsuperscript{35} This is characterised by a culture that accords significance to subjective freedom through productive work, and sees love as an important part of human fulfilment. It is also individualist in three senses, as it incorporates autonomy as a value, it assigns an important part to self-exploration or what Mill called individuality, and because visions of the good life have come to involve personal commitment (Ibid.,pp.305-306). Politically, therefore, we are back to the particular versus universal problem dating back to Plato, with Taylor depicting it within this new moral culture as follows: "As a consequence, in its political language, it formulates the immunities due people in terms of

\textsuperscript{35}...this affirmation of ordinary life,...has become one of the most powerful ideas in modern civilisation. ...This sense of the importance of the everyday in human life, along with its corollary about the importance of suffering,...(and) the central place given to autonomy,...defines...our civilisation, the modern West" (Taylor,1989a,p.14).
subjective rights. Because of its egalitarian bent, it conceives these rights as universal" (Ibid.). Elsewhere, Taylor (1992) says we are only today becoming familiar with the implications of these early transformations. They are encapsulated in a dichotomised politics divided between the intimate sphere where the formation of identity and the self takes place, and the public sphere where we encounter the politics of equal recognition (Ibid., p.39). And it is in the public sphere, he argues, that we meet the politics of universalism with its vision of the equality of all individuals, and the politics of difference with the demand for the acknowledgement of each particular identity.

Thus far we have focused upon Foucault and Taylor's senses of the development of the subject in western culture. They both distinguish a period when what the ontological subject in the shape of the soul amounted to was no more than a given part in a divine whole. Foucault writes how the self suddenly, in the modern episteme, became the subject and object of knowledge - a public entity, if you will, participating in an expanding culture of artistic diversity and economic production. Similarly, Taylor talks of modernity and the self's fear of meaninglessness although, as we will see, the self retreats into the private sphere for its affirmation. Hence, we might suggest that for Foucault modernity hails the publicly defined person that, in our argument, oppresses the female, while for Taylor modernity signifies the dawning of the privately defining self, but in the context of a framework that is silent about women.

Whether as the classical episteme of Foucault or the age of belief for Taylor, the soul was essentially defined, and only in the transformation to modernity has a plurality of choices for one's selfhood materialised. A subject faced with a multiple of moral choices is problematic insofar as he or she neglects, or becomes complacent about, the modern framework of rights. To be sure, it is, in terms of freedom, a gain over the framework of premmodernity where one's
options were limited. However, just how free we are is dependent on sustaining and legitimising our contemporary moral framework, and the failure to do so in response to feminist arguments is what will be shown in chapters three and four. Further, it will be argued below that the publicly defined person can be found in modern conceptions of liberal thought, whilst the idea of a private self is enshrined in the theory of communitarianism.

The defined person and liberalism

It was in what Foucault called the modern episteme that we witnessed the birth of the ontological subject in virtue of the change in focus, and the increasingly diverse sources of knowledge. With the confrontation and subsequent consciousness of its finiteness the subject establishes itself as a reality. In the nineteenth century this reality is portrayed by Foucault as the Hegelian-Marxian legacy of definition through labour. However, this process of definition was soon reversed by the external forces of subjectification, leading Foucault to speculate on the death of the self-defining subject (Strong, 1990, pp.23-24). This speculation, then, is the central question for the ontological subject and Foucault cites Nietzsche as the initiator of this speculation; that is, it is not so much the death of God as how to establish a permanent guarantee of the identity of the person in the period following the death of God (Ibid., pp.24-25).

It is in Foucault’s (1979) book Discipline and Punish that a conception of personhood

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36 Foucault echoes Hegel (1991,p.86) on this point, particularly in the following passage of the latter: "The human being, in his immediate existence (Existenz) in himself, is a natural entity, external to his concept; it is only through the development (Ausbildung) of his own body and spirit, essentially by means of his self-consciousness comprehending itself as free, that he takes possession of himself and becomes his own property as distinct from that of others."
as inescapably defined is to be found. Specifically, he writes about the various forms of training and organisation of individuals that arose towards the end of the eighteenth century, and how these institutions have come to discipline individuals. Here, we should understand discipline not as disciplined conduct but rather as disciplinary techniques that exercise power over the self’s ability to define itself (Cousins and Hussain, 1984, p. 185). Discipline at this level consists of four techniques: the division and surrounding of the body and its desires; the detailed prescription of activities; the division of knowledge into historical subjectivity; and the impact of the exterior upon the interiority of expectation (Deleuze, 1988, pp. 103-106). Practically speaking these forms of discipline have manifested themselves hand in hand with the rise of capitalism. The production of the modern person cannot therefore be studied outside of its relation to exploitation and domination, and Foucault argues that the subjectification of the person coexists with economic exploitation (Coles, 1992, p. 55). In particular, Foucault (1979, pp. 79-81) claims that with the rise of capitalism more systematic forms of punishment arose, with the power to punish becoming "...more regular, more effective, more constant and more detailed in its effects". Additionally, the increasing demand for productivity and growth led to the discipline and docility of the worker so as to maximise its utility.

Discipline, therefore, is the means by which the self’s ability to be self-defining is limited. On the one hand, there is the spatial distribution of individuals under strict supervision within purpose-built functional structures. Perhaps the classic metaphorical analogy of disciplinary power was Bentham’s suggestion for a new prison design. Called a ‘Panopticon’, it was a circular building with individual prison cells located on the periphery with an observation tower in the middle. Each prisoner would know he or she was under observation but never when, and so a sense of being perpetually observed would develop. As a result, Foucault in Power/Knowledge writes that "...each individual under its (the observer’s) weight
will end up by interiorising to the point that he is his own overseer, each individual thus exercising this surveillance over, and against, himself" (quoted in Coles, 1992, p.58). On the other hand, discipline is also an art of composition, where each individual's labour is treated as a node in an interrelated network of production (Cousins and Hussain, 1984, pp.186-190).  

Finally, there are three ways or methods by which disciplinary power is exercised, namely through hierarchical observation, by the normalisation of judgement, and via examination and assessment.

The methods of exercising this disciplinary power were most evident, Foucault says, in the military camps, workshops, schools, hospitals, housing projects and other similar institutions that developed in the nineteenth century. What they did was to increase the visibility of the people therein, with groups organised, divided and arranged into hierarchies to foster the surveyability of the now visible persons. The function of surveyability was to constitute certain actions, attitudes and abilities, while excluding others, leading to the establishment of a norm.  

This norm decreases the range of heterogeneity though not to the extent of disqualifying a narrow range of differences which form "...the continuous individualising pyramid" (Foucault, 1979, p.220).

We can see in Foucault's thesis just discussed the development of what we called a publicly defined person. Under the mode of capitalist disciplinary power the subject is continuously being constituted by the public sphere - interiorising through self-observation the

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37 "Discipline is...an art of distributing bodies, of extracting time from them and accumulating it, (and)...of composing forces in order to obtain an efficient machine" (Foucault, 1979, quoted in Cousins and Hussain, 1984, p.186).

38 Foucault (1979, p.191) writes: "For a long time ordinary individuality - the everyday individuality of everybody - remained below the threshold of description. ...The disciplinary methods reversed this relation, lowered the threshold of desirable individuality and made this description a means of control and a method of domination".
exterior. Eventually it is not just a crime, a deviation or an error that is judged, but the passions, potentials, instincts and any notions of alternative selfhood, too. The modern soul (or publicly defined person) is what we are left with under disciplinary observation. Kafka (1953), in his Letters to his Father, provides an example of a disciplined and thus defined modern soul. He wrote of his ruinous relationship with his father whose power was so complete that Kafka was virtually paralysed in every process of thought: "...it was almost impossible to endure (your belittling judgements) and still work out a thought with any measure of completeness or permanence" (Ibid., p.23). Behind Kafka's father's power was the threat of punishment made worse as it was never exercised; similarly for Dostoevski who was condemned to death by the Tsar, put through the preliminaries of execution but escaped to live under the shadow of the threat (Eisendrath, 1987, pp.151-152).

A product of modernity, the modern soul or person surveys and governs the self from within. It is a self related to itself through a colonised, codified and continuous self-reflection, with self-reflection normalising as it observes.39 And by impregnating the self with self-definitions constituted by hegemonic discourses and practices, the self becomes circumscribed via the engendering of 'desirable characteristics', whilst reducing the 'undesirable' to 'Other' (Coles, 1992, pp.58-62). The Foucauldian sense of selfhood in the modern episteme is thus fundamentally and inescapably defined: "...we have moved from a reflection upon the order of Differences (in the classical episteme)...to a thought of the Same, still to be conquered in its contradiction. (The public person) is always concerned with showing how the Other, the Distant, is also the Near and the Same" (1970, p.339).

39Selfhood for Foucault thus involves two aspects. The modern, produced soul found in Discipline and Punish, and the deep, self-deciphering self of volume one of The History of Sexuality (Coles, 1992, p.60).
As Foucault argues, the modern, public person is concerned with making all persons the same. Viewed in the context of meaninglessness, this was arguably a necessary ontological assumption, as it supports the modern framework of rights. Today, this public person, rather than being representative of all, is instead seen to be masculine and is personified in a central part of liberal thought. Characterising or relating an oppressive liberal conception of the person to feminist concerns is, however, an undeniably difficult task, made all the more ambitious if we consider how broadly applicable the concept of liberalism is. Gray (1979, p.29), for instance, argues that "...being a liberal is often a matter of broad cultural allegiance... If the central dispositional value of liberals is tolerance, their central political value is perhaps a fundamental antipathy to authority...".

Nonetheless, the strand of liberal thought that will be examined is contractarianism, a methodology originally concerned in the works of Hobbes, Locke and Rousseau, with solving the problem of political obligation (Barry, 1989, pp.115-116). In fact Berns (1972, p.375) argues that "...to the extent that modern liberalism teaches that all social and political obligations are derived from and are in the service of the individual rights of man, Hobbes may be regarded as the founder of liberalism". Hobbes as a contractarian liberal assumes further significance for our discussion when we consider how he personifies modernity. That is, his ontological assumptions envisaged the subject as mechanical, an entity in perpetual motion rather than rest (following Galileo and Bacon). As such, Hobbes not only for the first time described the state as akin to the modern subject - 'an Artificial Man' - but as an

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40 Macpherson (1962, p.2) also sees Hobbes as the founder of liberalism, as indeed does Lukes (1973, pp.76-77), although it is in virtue of his possessive individualism rather than individually derived social and political obligations.

41 As indeed does Locke, who Bloom (1987, p.173) claims was the first to use the term 'self' as a substitute for 'soul'.
‘Artificial Soul’, too (Ibid., p.379). The importance of this phenomenon for our understanding of modernity is that the mechanical subject was to replace "...all those transcendental values that men (had) shown themselves willing to die for" (Alford, 1992, p.90). Johnstone (1986, p.208) argues that Hobbes’ formulation of the subject was as a counterweight to the crumbling divinely based, medieval order: "England was, in Hobbes’ view,...undergoing a cultural revolution - a period of dissolution in social ties and ethical norms as well as in political authority...".42

Contractarianism, therefore, presupposes that a legitimate moral order emanates from agreement and is guaranteed by the promises of the contractors. Implicit is the assumption that there is no viable objective moral order or socio-political state of affairs, a feature of modernity first described by Berlin. In the seminal essay Two Concepts of Liberty, Berlin wrote: "The world we encounter in ordinary experience is one in which we are faced with choices between ends equally ultimate, and claims equally absolute, the realization of some of which must inevitably involve the sacrifice of others" (quoted in Strong, 1992, p.12). Ever since, the idea that we have substantively to shape the self and its corresponding moral order has been seen as impossible. Theorists have hereby been led to pursue formal rather than substantive theories by seeking to illuminate the procedures all people would agree upon, irrespective of the substantive outcome. It is to Rawls, therefore, that we turn in virtue of him being the modern embodiment of procedural political philosophy,43 and because of his conception of the person who is assumed to agree about the formal procedures of society. Further, Rawls understands

42 Peters (1956, p.185) makes a similar point, though he substitutes universal patriarchalism in place of 'divinely based'.

43 Rawls (1971, p.554) shows his scepticism about substantive theories when he says "...to subordinate our aims to one end...strikes us as irrational, or more likely mad, (even though it does not) strictly violate the principles of rational choice."
modernity as necessitating political order due to the impossibility of a commonly defined moral framework, or what Rorty (1983) calls Rawls' "...post modern bourgeois liberalism".

The reemergence of a forceful argument for liberalism is often seen as having arisen from John Rawls' (1972) treatise, A Theory of Justice. Rawls (Ibid., p.12), by his own admission, is a member of the liberal contractualist tradition when he says "...the original position of equality corresponds to the state of nature in the traditional theory of the social contract". In addition, Rawls' person in the original position is primarily concerned with the grave risks that threaten life and self-respect, most notably a malevolent enemy who potentially (could) "...is to assign (the person) his place (in society)" (Ibid., pp.152-153). It is in the original position, therefore, that we find one of the more sophisticated arguments that leads to a publicly defined person. Public, that is, in terms of its assumed applicability to all people, and defined due to the use of reason from whence the person is derived.

As a contractarian, Rawls employs his veil of ignorance as a means of abstracting the person from its particular social and economic circumstances. By so doing he attempts to construct the rules and institutions of society from a position of equality. The hypothetical-literary device of a veil of ignorance is thus a position where the person is deprived of the basic knowledge of its wants, skills, interests, abilities and desires (Ibid., pp.36-42). The mentally reflective person in Rawls' book stems from Kant's moral constructivism which relates the

44 Thus the description by Caney (1992,p.273) of the 1970s as the decade wherein "...liberal political thought flourished,...". In addition to Rawls, other works of a similar orientation include Buchanan (1975), Gauthier (1986) and Gewirth (1978).

45 If we follow Gray (1979), then arguably Rawls' book is a good example of a theoretical reformulation within the (liberal) Weltanschauung of Anglo-American political culture.

46 In Politics and Vision: Continuity and Innovation in Western Political Thought, Sheldon Wolin claims liberals see fear and anxiety as central, with Hobbes as an initiator of this theme, and arguably Rawls too (quoted in Alford,1992,pp.142-143).
idea of autonomy to a person's ability to act reasonably. Both argue for reasoning as a priori to the Good, but whereas for Kant (1974, p. 92) the basis of moral law is the transcendental "...subject of ends, namely a rational being himself...", for Rawls (1978) it is the empirical subject.\footnote{See Plant (1991, pp. 344-348), or Sandel (1984b), for a discussion of this point.} In considering what institutions to choose, the person, using its ability of reflective equilibrium, will seek to rationally maximise the primary goods of liberty, opportunity, income, wealth and self-respect (Rawls, 1971, pp. 90-95). These goods are crucial in enabling people to pursue a plurality of ends without having to posit any substantive theory of the good.

Rawls' conception of the person, however, has been the subject of much controversy and criticism, most notably by the communitarians and especially Sandel (1984b).\footnote{Communitarian critiques are not only conducted in the discourse of the Self. Other problems they have with liberalism include the undervaluing of community, the devaluing of political life to a mere instrumental good, an absence of an adequate account of the importance of certain obligations and commitments, and the exaltation of justice as the first virtue of social institutions. These are the common themes of opposition to liberalism within communitarian thought according to Buchanan (1989).} He describes Rawls' account of the person as akin to being an unencumbered self, which involves "...a distinction between the values I have and the person I am....One consequence of this...is to put the self itself beyond the reach of its experience,... (Ruling) out the possibility of what we might call constitutive ends" (Sandel, 1984b, p. 87). Wittgenstein, in the Philosophical Investigations, illustrates the logical difficulty involved for selves prior to their ends by showing how we would have to learn mental concepts from ourselves. To do this, however, is an impossibility as we cannot learn the language to characterise our experiences by simple reflection upon the internal nature of experiences. For Wittgenstein there is thus a non-contingent relationship between being the subject of experiences (that is, language) and a
member of a social world of shared meaning (Plant, 1991, pp. 339-341). An unencumbered self is hence incapable of belonging to any community, as a community is bound by moral ties antecedent to choice. The self envisioned along these lines, Sandel argues, is not so much free and rational as without character and moral depth, beyond its own experience or capacities for deliberation and reflection, lurching "...between detachment on the one hand, and entanglement on the other" (Ibid.: p. 93).

The society constructed by the person from behind the veil of ignorance is one where justice as fairness is institutionalised. Politically speaking, Taylor (1991, pp. 17-18) portrays this society as indicative of a liberalism that is neutral between political morals: "One of its basic tenets is that a liberal society must be neutral on what constitutes a good life. The good life is what each individual seeks, in his or her own way, and government would be lacking in impartiality, and thus in equal respect for all citizens, if it took sides on this question." And it is arguably within this neutral societal framework that we encounter the publicly defined person, and who has historically been unreflective of women.

In particular, Rawls (1972, sec. 63) claims a person's life is autonomous if its pattern and existence stems from deliberative and conscientious choices. Autonomy thus comprises several characteristics, including being independently minded (Wolff, 1970, p. 15) and critically reflective (Mill, 1991, pp. 62-71), and having the opportunity to a formal conception of life, that is to say the absence of restriction on the content of an autonomous life (Dworkin, 1988, chs. 1-2). A similar appreciation of autonomy incorporates people as reflecting upon and recognising the

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Impartiality, however, does not have to result in a liberalism of neutrality, as Barry (1973, pp. 126-127) says: "My own view is therefore that a liberal must take his stand on the proposition that some ways of life, some types of character, are more admirable than others... . Liberalism rests on a vision of life: a Faustian vision. It exalts self-expression, self-mastery and control over the environment, natural and social; the active pursuit of knowledge and the clash of ideas; the acceptance of personal responsibility for the decisions that shape one's life".
reasons for leading their lives. People are seen as being in a position to make decisions in the light of self-consciousness - decisions made critically and rationally - and thereafter to adhere to them without the life chosen being anything but our own.\textsuperscript{50} Thus, Raz (1986, p. 369) argues the "...ideal of personal autonomy is the vision of people... fashioning (their own destiny) through successive decisions throughout their lives".

We have, therefore, a publicly defined person within Rawls' theory and liberalism generally, too. By seeking only the purely formal institutional arrangements for a society Rawls posits an autonomous, rational and self-interested person. He or she is seen as agreeing upon these institutions as, Rawls argues, they are to be thought of and indeed think of themselves as equal in interests and abilities. In saying that justice is a political formulation rather than a substantive claim about the truth Rawls (1980) is able to relegate as superfluous to politics a deep theory of the self.\textsuperscript{51} In fact Sandel (1982) critiques Rawls for being more concerned with establishing the priority of the right over the good than with grounding a theory of justice in the needs of people.

Rather than allowing the self to be self-determining, Rawls (1985) maintains the tradition of introducing a 'standard political conception' of the person in liberal democratic politics. It is also claimed that this person's intuitions about justice as fairness correspond to those of a person living in an industrial democratic society (Ibid.). This conception of the person is an example of what was referred to earlier by Foucault as the modern soul, and what

\textsuperscript{50} In short, therefore, autonomy as reflexivity, choice, rationality, strength of will, and authenticity, an account given by Archard (1992).

\textsuperscript{51} This does not mean, however, that the self in its own right is irrelevant. Rawls (1985, p. 545) posits a public self as discussed, as well as a private self who has "...attachments and loves that (we) believe (we) would not, or could not, stand apart from,...(Indeed, people) regard it as unthinkable...to view themselves without certain religious and philosophical convictions and commitments".
we called the publicly defined person. That is, he (for he corresponds, as we will see, to the masculine) is both defined by liberal contractarian discourse and assumed to be the user of reason. If one does not conform to this norm then either one is excluded from the institutional structures that he supports, or one tries to change his domination of the definition of a person. Below, in chapters three and four, we will examine him as the possessor of reason, as well as feminism’s attempts to demonstrate this.

The defining self and communitarianism

We have seen Foucault’s thesis discussing the disciplinary forces that constitute the modern person. It was argued that the shape of these forces in modernity have resembled an ontological subject akin to that described by Rawls. Foucault is thus sceptical about the potential in modernity for a self-defining subject though for Taylor (1989a, pp. 285-294) it is the opposite. Hence the formation of self-identity takes place within a small circle of people, and this modern phenomenon is largely the result of several tendencies that have come to distinguish modernity. Taylor (1992) claims that of vital importance to today’s private conception of selfhood was the development at the end of the eighteenth century of an individualised identity based upon a view of persons endowed with a moral sense - an intuitive feeling for what is right and wrong. Gradually this occurrence gave rise to the principles of autonomy and self-examination, aided at one level by the articulations of philosophy. As for the origins of modern notions of private self-definition Taylor (1989a, pp. 285-294) cites four broad movements in the early culture of modernity.

Firstly, during the eighteenth century value was placed on commercial activity and
money-making. Taylor uses the decline of the aristocratic honour ethic - stressing glory won in military pursuits - as evidence of this change. In its place arose the bourgeois life of production, or the ordering of life and the quest for peace. Secondly, this aspect of ordinary life received further affirmation in the rise of the modern novel. Authors like Defoe, Richardson and Fielding not only reinforced the egalitarian ordinariness of bourgeois life, but they also switched to narrations of the particular person instead of the more classical renditions of the general and universal. A third aspect of the culture of early modernity that reiterated the importance of this new form of ordinary life was marriage. Based on affection and the ideals of companionship it demanded a higher degree of personal and emotional commitment. It also acted as another means for individuation as the role of parents and/or the community in deciding the destiny of two people declined. Marriage thus took on the new role as the realm of privacy and personal autonomy, or, as Taylor (1989a,p.292) says, it became "...a haven in the heartless world (of modernity)". The final, fourth cultural change was in the emphasis placed upon the sentiments of love, concern and affection. These were the new spiritual characteristics of the private self and assumed the significance of determining a worthy life, expressed primarily in the devotion to one’s spouse and family but also in the return to the simplicity of nature. In Beyond Good and Evil Nietzsche (1954,pp.351-352) described these cultural transformations that materialised in the shape of individuality as a new calling: "To translate man back into nature; to become master over the many vain and overly enthusiastic interpretations and connotations that have so far been scrawled...over...homo natura:...(We must be) deaf to the siren songs of old metaphysical bird catchers who have been piping at (us) all too long, ‘you are more, you are higher, you are of a different origin!’ - that may be a strange and insane task, but it is a task - ...".

We now need to look into the definition of the private self in modernity. Whereas for
Rawls and arguably liberalism too the self was neglected due to the demands of foundational political philosophy, we find that ontological assumptions are much more prominent in communitarian theories. This is partly due to the different opinions about the role of philosophy - substantive versus foundational - but also because of the communitarian view that the self and the community are inextricably related. Sandel (1982, p.150), for instance, prefers to see the self as embedded in a community where identity is constituted in virtue of being a member thereof. This self, however, ends up by being no more than an instance of its community, to the extent that the self is the community (Ibid., pp.148-152). Sandel is aware of this "...radically situated self..." who is potentially "...drowning in a sea of circumstance,..." but he does not attempt to resolve this (Ibid., p.57). Ironically, therefore, Sandels’ conception of the self is no more free in being self-defining than the public person discussed above; Alford (1991, p.11) writes: "For the Rawlsian self so abstract that it becomes invisible, Sandel substitutes a self that is not so much abstract as contentless".

MacIntyre (1981, pp.201-209) elaborates a more sophisticated version of the self as embedded, claiming each self develops in the context of a set of narrative histories wherein we are both the actor and author. Each self is the main character in its own personal narrative and a subordinate in the narratives of others too, all of which take place upon a stage we did not design nor have a part in shaping. We cannot, therefore, ask what we should do until we discover what narratives we are a part of. This narrative concept of the self involves two components; the correlative, which allows us to ask others for a description of our identity (for which we are responsible), and the historical and social contingencies which we are born in to and what, as reasoning beings, we must try to make sense of. MacIntyre argues that making sense of our embeddedness entails a quest for a final telos, and it is embarked upon with a preconceived telos drawn from attempts to transcend virtues available only in and
through practice. It is in the course of this quest that the self develops via the education of that which is sought.\textsuperscript{52}

As we have seen, Taylor argued how important moral frameworks have become to us in defining selfhood. Questions like "Who am I?", Taylor says, can only be answered in terms of an understanding of what is crucially important to us. Personal identity thus depends on our commitments and identifications as representative of a framework, whether religious, national, political or familial (1989a,p.27) Selves, then, are beings of requisite depth and complexity, and are constituted only because certain issues matter.\textsuperscript{53} Taylor (1991,p.33) therefore says that the self is formed dialogically, that is, we "...become full human agents, capable of understanding ourselves, and hence of defining an identity, through our acquisition of rich human languages of expression". He uses language here in a broad sense to incorporate, for example, words, art, gestures, and love, with our identity defined in dialogues with, and sometimes against, the identities of those close or significant to us.

These conceptions of the private self, from Sandel to MacIntyre and Taylor, envisage a self existing in and being defined by those it is close to, whether in the form of a narrative quest or dialogically through language. Sources for a moral framework are to be drawn from this process of learned selfhood, although at times as in the case of Sandel the framework threatens to engulf the self. Still, in the works of MacIntyre and Taylor the intention is to construct a sense of meaning in a community by having it reflect the values of its members. In contrast the liberal response to a loss of meaning was instead to allow each person to

\textsuperscript{52}For a critique of MacIntyre see Hinchman (1989).

\textsuperscript{53}"What I am as a self, my identity, is essentially defined by the way things have significance for me...(and is worked at) through a language of interpretation. To ask what a person is, in abstraction from his or her self-interpretations, is to ask a fundamentally misguided question,..." (Taylor,1989a,p.34).
flourish in his or her own world of meaning. To do this, however, it was necessary to construct a set of institutions that fostered, in comparison to premodernity, ontological separatism, or, we might say, protected each person’s right to elaborate his or her sense of meaning. But this was only possible if the person was assumed to be what we called a public person. As a consequence, the institutions that have arisen to encourage this individual conception of meaning end up by constricting the realm of freedom for those who do not conform to this notion of the person. Most notably in modern societies these people have been women, and their futile struggle for meaning and its potential as located in a community or through the exercising of personal freedom within a ‘neutral’ framework, will be the subject of the next two chapters.
CHAPTER THREE

The ontological dichotomy in traditional political philosophy - a feminist critique

The issue that must concern us here is an evaluation of the frameworks discussed in the previous chapter in terms of their ontologies. In particular, there is an assumption common to modern political philosophy of the subject as the possessor of reason. On this understanding it becomes possible to see the subject as essentially autonomous, or "... epistemologically and morally prior to the collectivity" (West, 1988). However, in using these assumptions to construct the institutions of modernity, masculinity neglected to see that the female's biological constraints made it impossible for her to be the person these masculine frameworks presuppose. In addition, these biological factors were seen as a justification of men's reason and evidence of women's difference to him. Friedman (1987) writes, for example, that we have today a division of moral labour, the rationale for which lies in the historic developments pertaining to the family, state and economy. Evidence for this is to be seen in men's dominance of the regulation, ordering and managing of social and public institutions, and women's tasks of sustaining privatised personal relationships that "... have been imposed on, or left to, (them)" (Ibid.,p.94). It seems plausible to suggest, therefore, that reason, on one level at least, has oppressed the female through the synthesis of the biological into the cultural, which has culminated in men's production of the feminine. As MacKinnon in Feminism Unmodified argues, "...what a women 'is' is what you have made women be" (quoted in Haslanger,1993,p.104).
Although one could approach an ontological evaluation from a variety of perspectives - for example, class, race, economic, or ethnic - we will instead adopt the approach of gender, and for several reasons. For instance, Bryson (1993, p. 192) argues feminism (as the primary mode of gender discourse) is unlike modern political philosophy as it "...provides a way of looking at the world that sees women's situation and the inequalities between men and women as central political issues; as such, it provides a fundamental challenge to dominant assumptions about the scope and nature of politics". Further, feminist arguments against the above two projects are primarily on behalf of women and the alleviation of their oppression.\footnote{Women constitute half the world's population, perform nearly two thirds of its work hours, receive one tenth of the world's income, and own less than one hundredth of the world's property" (United Nations Report-1980, quoted in Bryson, 1993, p. 192).} In the discussion that follows, oppression will be looked at in terms of reason as having been the requirement for political personhood, a requirement that women have been deliberately excluded from because of their confinement by the masculine to the private sphere, and which has been justified on women's supposed affinity with, and similarity to, nature. Secondly, in chapter four we will critically examine both the masculine conception of the political person that has appeared most prominently in the liberal tradition, as well as the frameworks this reasoning person provided the foundation for, and how they exacerbated women's confinement to the private realm.

More specifically, the critique of the reasoning subject is indicative of what is sometimes called cultural feminism. It has significantly more amorphous boundaries than liberal feminism, and is characterised by its rejection of the 'malestream'\footnote{Malestream' is a term that was first used by O'Brien (1981) to characterise the mainstream of philosophy as masculine oriented.} view within political philosophy of the atomised subject. Further, it is suspicious of the 'maleness' of...
reason (Lloyd, 1993) and its attendant Cartesian epistemology, of the malestream's preoccupation with market contractarianism, and of their notion of the existence of an impartial justice. Cultural feminism arguably derives its impetus from Irigaray (1985), who bases her indictment of phallocentrism on women's multiple, indeterminate and varying experiences of sexual pleasure, or *jouissance*. Unique to women, Irigaray says it makes their ways of knowing different and superior to the sexually unitary, quantitative and limited experience of men, whence reason. A female epistemology therefore "...diverts the linearity of a project, undermines the target-object of a desire, explodes the polarisation of desire on only one pleasure, and disconcerts fidelity to one discourse" (Ibid., p.30).

**Feminism in context**

The development of feminism as a coherent and organised mode of theorising is a relatively recent phenomenon. If we want to understand it as the collective, singular, conscious or half-conscious resistance by women of subordination, as Jaggar (1983, p.2) suggests, then feminism has always existed. On this account feminism, according to Fox-Genovese (1991, p.2), becomes less "...the cause of the unsettling changes in our world than their symptom, (and embodies) a variety of dissatisfactions with things-as-they-are and a variety of visions about how they could be improved". As a theoretical discourse, however, feminism is very much a product of modernity, and Eisenstein (1983, pp.xiii-xix) argues that it grows out of the liberal project which feminism seeks to explode and transcend.\(^56\) Specifically, the notion of

\(^{56}\)The brand of feminism portrayed by Eisenstein (1983) was, as she claims, a product of the liberal project, or what Barret and Phillips (1992, p.2) call "...an instantiation of the 'modernist' impulse". By implication they see a distinction between what Eisenstein and many other early 1980s feminists wrote about, and 1990s feminism which does not share the same
instrumental freedom is the basis of this claim and feminists seek it as a means to ontological self-determination in the realms of politics, economics and sexuality.

Historically, organised feminism as we conceive of it in the west started in the great economic and political transformations of the seventeenth century. These changes had drastic effects upon the feudal family, with aristocratic women losing their political clout with the rise of the nation-state and the institutionalisation of politics, while peasant women were stripped of their economic power upon the advent of the factory system (Ferguson, 1985). Women were no longer in their ‘natural’ positions after these changes had taken effect, and as a result they became ‘a question’, with feminism materialising as an attempt at answering it (Jaggar, 1983, pp.3-4).

Perhaps, as Bryson (1993) argues, the initiation of modern feminism is to be found in Mary Wollstonecroft’s 1792 publication, the Vindication of the Rights of Women. There are, of course, several other sources too, including the utopian socialists of the early nineteenth century and later Karl Marx, who implied that the family and sexual relationships were products of a particular stage of economic development (Ibid.). This theme came to fruition in Engels’ The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State, which was published in 1884, fifteen years after the solitary Anglo-American voice of John Stuart Mill produced The Subjection of Women. This is not to say that the subject of women was the exception in eighteenth and nineteenth century political philosophy. Mahowald (1978) argues that from the classical political philosophers through to those of the premodern era the issue of women was explicitly addressed, although in what is now seen as a derogatory manner. The same is true of modern philosophers who generally viewed women in terms of emotional power, aesthetic

heritage - see Barret and Phillips (Ibid.), who attempt to define this new heritage.
sensibility and familial concerns. Unfortunately a lot of contemporary political philosophy is silent about women, either because it assumes there to be no differences of relevance to the field, or simply due to the assumption that women are not part of the subject matter of political philosophy. It is arguably out of this silence that feminism has emerged as a distinct academic discipline.

Of crucial significance to feminism and indeed its raison d'être is its undeniable claim of the oppression of women by men. Jaggar (1983, p.5) sees the etymological origin of oppression (from the Latin verb 'to press down or against') as important, as it suggests the oppressed suffer from a restriction upon their freedom. Although freedom is indicative of modernity and thus threatens her above claim of the historically continuous oppression of women, Jaggar (Ibid., p.6) nonetheless writes that oppression "...is the imposition of constraints; it suggests the problem is not the result of bad luck, ignorance or prejudice, but is caused by one group actively subordinating another group to its own interests". As such feminism becomes "...an analysis of women’s subordination for the purpose of figuring out how to change it" (Gordon, 1979, p.107).

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57Rousseau thought women should be trained to submit to the will of men lest their sexual power would lead both to disaster (Elshtain, 1986, pp.39-40). Kant saw women as incapable of achieving full moral personhood, besides which they would lose their charm by engaging in rational pursuits (Ibid., pp.26-27). And Hegel admired women’s moral concern for their families so long as it was kept in its proper place and could not thwart the universal aims of men (Ibid., pp.72-77).

58The exact form of this oppression, however, is a difficult issue, and the lack of agreement about it by feminists is arguably what separates them into numerous 'schools'.

59In The Concept of Dread Kierkegaard spoke of freedom not as a given phenomenon, but rather as originating from the ontological understanding of external reality and personal identity (cited in Giddens, 1991, pp.47-48). Hence existential Angst is the intuition of the possibility of freedom (Ibid.), and is thus ahistorical which brings into question Jaggar’s claim of the eternal oppression of women (when defined as the search for freedom).
Possibly the most important difference between post 1960s feminism and what came before it is the concept of patriarchy. During the interwar years many countries had enfranchised women, and this resulted in the call for state welfare to promote their sex-specific needs and attributes as wives and mothers (Bryson, 1993, pp. 196-197). At the end of the Second World War women were content to return to ‘normalcy’, that is, back into the family after having been economically active during it. This transition was facilitated by women’s recently acquired legal and political rights, and it was not until Simone de Beauvoir’s *The Second Sex* that the myth of a woman’s ‘natural’ role of femininity and domesticity were shattered. In *The Second Sex* (1972), she argued from a philosophical, psychological, anthropological and historical viewpoint that it is not biology which constrains a woman’s freedom, nor her economic or socio-political situation, but rather the manufacture of the ‘feminine’ by civilisation.  

Patriarchy is historically seen as the mode of civilisation that has imposed the feminine upon the female. Undoubtedly patriarchy has also imposed the masculine upon the male, yet relative to the feminine his existence within patriarchal civilisation has been significantly easier, if not incomparably so. Beechey (1979) argues that ‘patriarchy’ was retrieved from early modern philosophy and was first used in the works of Virginia Woolf, although it was not until Millet’s publication of *Sexual Politics* in 1970 that it was put into the context of women’s oppression. Following the tradition of de Beauvoir we might see patriarchy as a form of ‘social mythology’, wherein the persistence of the myth of an essentially private role for women leads

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60 Hence, as de Beauvoir (1972, p. 296) famously claimed: "One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman. No biological, psychological, or economic fate determines the figure that the human female presents in society; it is civilisation as a whole that produces this creature, intermediate between male and eunuch, which is described as feminine". Specifically, we might understand this as masculine civilisation, erected upon men’s reason.
to a discrepancy of power between the sexes (Janeway, 1971). More generally speaking, Rich (1976, pp. 57-58) says patriarchy "...is the power of the fathers: a familial-social, ideological, political system in which men - by force, direct pressure, or through ritual, tradition, law and language, customs, etiquette, education and the division of labour, determine what part women shall or shall not play, and in which the female is everywhere subsumed under the male... .

Under patriarchy...I (women) have access only to so much privilege or influence as the patriarchy is willing to accord me, and only for so long as I will pay the price for male approval".

With this new understanding and perspective on women's oppression feminism moved from a concern with rights and equality to an examination of the concepts of oppression and liberation (Jaggar, 1983, p. 5). This shift in critical emphasis was led by the marxist-socialist and radical feminists, and became known as the 'second wave' (Coole, 1988, p. 234). Feminist philosophers and theorists began to explore "...the possibility of applying existing political categories to domains of human existence that hitherto (had) been considered to lie beyond the sphere of politics" (Jaggar, 1983, p. 7). Typically, feminism in the 1970s focused upon the socially constructed differences between the sexes as the chief source of female oppression (Eisenstein, 1983, pp. ii-vi). To do this necessitated the theoretical distinction between gender and sex and an analysis of the latter as a form of control.

As a result several features new to political discourse arose, including women and the female as not only worthwhile objects of theory and research but as conceptually men's equals as well. Through this analysis of sex roles women were encouraged to overcome their defects of conditioning. Gross (1986) argues that one avenue open to feminists in this respect was to seek entry into the spheres whence they had previously been excluded. This meant working within the traditional patriarchal paradigm, and the main thrust of the feminist demand was
for that of equal recognition. However, in failing to question the basic ontological and epistemological frameworks and assumptions of patriarchy, feminists came up against numerous difficulties. For instance, in accepting the description of the feminine as irrational, egalitarian feminists claimed it was an artificial imposition and that women were in fact as rational as men. In effect, therefore, Coole (1993, p.201) says women were left with two choices; "...to acquire the masculine qualities consonant with humanity and citizenship but to be derided as aberrant because unfeminine, or to accede to the feminine norm patriarchy decrees for women, only to be judged unsuited for public life".

Subordination was hence seen by liberal feminists as rooted in customary and legal constraints which assumed women to be less intellectually and physically capable than men (Tong, 1989, pp.2-5). Similarly, marxist feminists argued that the traditional capitalist system was responsible for women's oppression, with the introduction of private property having obliterated the natural equality of the community (Ibid.). These two strands of feminist thought both used existing masculine theories and simply applied them to women (Bryson, 1993, p.193). However, as Okin (1980, p.286) argues, "...it is by no means a simple matter to integrate the female half of the human race into (the western) tradition of political theory".

Radical feminism had also developed during this period but largely outside of the traditional theoretical categories. Some of its writers called for an end to the polarities of masculinity and femininity to the extent of advocating androgyny, as in Firestone's The Dialectic of Sex, or Millet's Sexual Politics (Eisenstein, 1983). The second wave of feminist writers that followed, however, began to adopt a more gynocentric view to counter patriarchal phallocentrism. The idea of sexual difference - an often neglected strand of thought from the
Suffragette movement - was now seen as the path to liberation.\textsuperscript{61} Gynocentrism thus sought to negate patriarchy's definition of feminine virtues as ones of nurturance, emotion, and gentleness (Tong, 1989, pp. 5-7). Femininity, they argued, should not be interpreted as that which deviates from masculinity. Instead, gynocentric feminism aims to extrapolate specific virtues from the historical and psychological experiences of women which can then serve as a blueprint for social change (Eisenstein, 1983, p. xiii, Bryson, 1993, pp. 203-204, concurs).\textsuperscript{62}

Broadly speaking, therefore, feminist theory "...has moved from an emphasis on the elimination of gender difference to a celebration of that difference as a source of moral value" (Eisenstein, 1983, p. xviii). In parallel to this development has been the diversification of feminism in both its premises and conclusions, with its breadth of discourse being larger than most other disciplines through feminism's incorporation of them too (Kymlicka, 1990, p. 238). In fact, Shuliman (1982) discerns no less than nine varieties of feminism,\textsuperscript{63} although the dominant 'schools' appear to be liberal, marxist-socialist, and radical feminism.\textsuperscript{64}

Of relevance to our discussion, however, is the unanimity of critique across this

\textsuperscript{61}The Suffragettes were the 'foremothers' of modern feminism, as they emphasised enfranchisement for one of three reasons: for equality; to allow the different voices of women to be represented; and for simple protection as in Christabel Pankhurst's slogan 'Votes For Women: Chastity For Men' (Bryson, 1993, p. 196).

\textsuperscript{62}In this exclusionary way radical feminism comes closest to meeting the initial English definition of 'feminism'. Originally a French word, it was introduced in the early twentieth century to America and referred to a group of women's rights activists who stressed the uniqueness of women, their mystical experience of motherhood, and the special purity of the female (Jaggar, 1983, pp. 4-5). Interestingly, this tendency was (patronisingly) labelled 'sexual romanticism', whereas today it is (vindictively) called 'radical feminism'.

\textsuperscript{63}Shuliman (1982) sees in theory and practice the following types of feminism: bourgeois; socialist; conservative; radical; lesbian-separatist; the feminism of women's culture; the women's studies movement; the women's health movement; and the reproductive rights movement.

\textsuperscript{64}This is the characterisation to be found in Bryson (1993), Eisenstein (1983), Jaggar (1983), Kymlicka (1990), and Tong (1989).
feminist spectrum directed at the ontological and epistemological assumptions of modern political philosophy. Jaggar and Bordo (1989, p. 2) reiterate this when they mention the growing tendency toward unity within feminism of the last decade, which is the result of an "...emerging feminist challenge to conceptions of knowledge and reality that have dominated the western intellectual tradition at least since the seventeenth century". No doubt this is indicative of the increasingly sophisticated discourse of feminism which has moved, as Eisenstein (1983) argues above, to celebrating difference and feminine individuality. Barret and Phillips (1992, p. 2) argue that this new orientation does not have to represent a theoretical breakdown in consensus between 1970s and 1990s feminism, and that it "...should not be regarded as a symptom of underdevelopment - a 'prehistory' now well transcended in the sophistication of contemporary thought,...". In a more sympathetic tone Gross (1986, pp. 192-193) claims that the egalitarian slant of feminism in the 1970s "...served as a political, and perhaps as an experimental, prerequisite to the more far reaching struggles directed towards female autonomy". As a consequence conceptions of identity and subjectivity - whether as a self or person - become imperative, and from this arises a challenge to the modern ontological framework of political philosophy.

Raison as - and nature as not - d'Être

Two themes emerge from the above description which will from the basis of the critique of modern political philosophy's ontology: reason as the means to being and nature as its antithesis. In order to overcome essentialism65 or, more broadly speaking, early

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65See Giligan and her critics below.
feminism's tendency to gynocentrism, the second wave turned their attention to deconstructing the culturally erected categories of the masculine and feminine. In particular, the person in the former category was seen as the possessor of reason, whilst the person in the latter displayed anything but such a faculty due to her embeddedness in nature. An exploration of this dichotomy is thus of paramount importance if we are to understand the perceived intellectual capabilities of each gender.

Each gender's capabilities were, according to classical political philosophy, derivative from the biological attributes of each sex. Historically, these 'capabilities' date back to ancient Greece and in particular Aristotle, who provided "...a comprehensive framework for... sex-polarity... . (He) explicitly argued for the logical implications of metaphysical distinctions between the sexes - from the philosophy of nature - and of epistemological arguments for ethics" (Allen, 1985, pp.119-120). Based on this assertion the differences in gender could not logically be topics for moral or political concern. It is only by exposing this dichotomy as engendered rather than biological that feminism has been able to threaten the core ontological assumptions of modern political philosophy. This is because it avoids the path of essentialism, in addition to revealing the contingency of patriarchalism. Grimshaw (1988), for example, citing Daly (1979), Millet (1977) and Frye (1983), characterises ontological essentialism as a belief in the existence of a true, objective subject, who is latent and waiting for deliverance from the clutches of men. This feminine subject is authentic, harmonious and unitary - a female 'Spirit-Self' - with any splits or barriers in her psyche being the result of patriarchal conditioning. However, as Coole (1988, pp.276-277) says, if feminists' "...contribution is defined in terms of an essential female corporeality and psychology...the opportunity to emancipate women while redefining the world in which they live, will be lost". One way of avoiding this implicit form of matriarchy simply replacing patriarchy is to demonstrate how patriarchy was
intentionally (or otherwise) erected upon a gender specific conception of the person, rather than what was thought to be a person of universal relevance. To show this masculine orientation we will look at how being, for the patriarchal public person, was defined through reason. However, prior to this we will examine the historical definition of the feminine as synonymous with nature, and nature as indicative of non-being vis-a-vis the masculine.

Porter (1991, pp.54-58) distinguishes two philosophical definitions of women's nature which influence the ideals of subjectivity, both of which have their origins in Judeo-Christian theology. One view envisages women as different but complementary, and is based on a dichotomy to be located in the nature of the sexes: the conscious, active subject displaying rationality, autonomy and judgement, in contrast to the passive, irrational subject. Unfortunately, the sense of complementarity disappears when the male sex as rational assumes primacy over the female as irrational. The second view sees women as partial helpmates to men and comes from the second account of the creation in the bible. Having created man, God pondered and then mused: "It is not good that man should be alone; I will make a helper fit for him" (Genesis 2:18, quoted in Ibid., p.53). A woman is thus defined in terms of men's needs, or desires for pleasure, utility or offspring, in contrast to other accounts in the bible which state that both male and female were created in the image of God.

Perhaps the origins of the 'natural' inequalities between the sexes can be traced back even further to Aristotle. Christian theologians and philosophers certainly based their works on the bible. Saint Augustine, for example, portrayed both genders as equal in marriage only, as it is possible therein to see the woman, through her husband, as being in the image of God. He thus tried to reconcile the differing biblical accounts of the sexes but was only able to succeed in making women a 'partial being' (Ibid.). When she is alone, therefore, and despite having a capacity to reason equal to that of a man, a woman loses this formal equality as
without her husband her chief form of identity becomes her body. The body, being linked to
the sensuous, is in turn subordinated to reason as the authority.\textsuperscript{66} An unmarried woman must
thus be seen in terms of subordination due to the inclinations of her body, rather than
through a husband who would affirm her image as in that of God. Okin (1989a,p.57) has
succinctly summed up Saint Augustine's view as follows: "In the City of God, woman and
man are equal, but in the City of Man woman is man's subject and properly restricted to the
domestic...and celibacy". These assumptions of the 'natural' division between body and mind
can also be found in Aquinas, who argued that a female was the defective human form
resulting from an accident to the sperm, wherein lies the perfect human form of the male \textit{in potentia} (Porter,1991,p.57).

Both Saint Augustine and Aquinas based their conclusions on Aristotle's metabiology.
In the \textit{Generation of Animals} and the \textit{History of Animals}, Aristotle provides us with the first
systematic scientific explanation of the sexes (Tuana,1993,p.18). His core assumption was that
heat is the fundamental principle in the perfection of animals. By concocting matter, Aristotle
believed that heat enabled animals to develop. Using this assumption, Aristotle was able to
posit women as colder or the primary opposite of men, and this enabled him to allege that she
had inferior physiological and psychological characteristics to him. Her heat deficiency, for
example, was responsible for her smaller brain, which explained 'defects' like jealousy, the

\textsuperscript{66}Saint Augustine's understanding of the body and soul is extremely complex, certainly
more so than what is discussed in Porter (1991) although her point remains nonetheless valid.
Briefly, the soul is the intermediary between the immortality of God and the mortality of the
body, so that the body's temptation of the soul is lamentable only insofar as the soul turns
toward mortality and away from God (and immortality). In our context the immortality of
the soul might be said to constitute meaning, whilst the body's mortality does not. In a \textit{Letter
to Secundinus}, for instance, Saint Augustine wrote that: "...when what is more (the soul) leans
towards what is less (the body), it is not the second but the first of these realities that falls (in
relation to God)..." (quoted in Brunn,1988,pp.50-51). See Brunn (Ibid., pp.49-55), and Meagher
(1978,ch.4, paras.8 and 10).
absence of a sense of shame, her tendency to quarrel, or to sometimes be vindictive (Ibid., pp.18-21).

Although we can but marvel at Aristotle’s imaginative inquisitiveness, the proof of his theory, whilst implausible today, is nonetheless illustrative of biology - albeit badly misinterpreted - as having provided the foundations for philosophy (or lack of it in the case of women). In observing the men and women around him, Aristotle noticed the development at puberty of a bodily secretion, and its subsequent cessation with old age. The disparity in colour and fluidity between the male’s semen and the female’s menstrual discharge was, Aristotle thought, related to the level of heat in each body. Hence, both secretions originate in the blood, yet the male’s semen is transformed to white and is thicker due to his higher level of heat generation, whereas the female’s menstrual discharge is barely altered from whence it originates (Allen, 1985, pp.93-103).

It was upon this biology that the dichotomy between the male as rational and the female as irrational was established, and what we today call the public-private distinction. This is not necessarily to say we should reject Aristotle. Whilst his metaboliology leaves a lot to be desired, Homiak (1993) thinks Aristotle’s ideal of rationality and the rational life can be acceptable to feminists, as they do not exclude the ‘irrational’ aspects like emotion and care. Indeed, if the latter are not to be oppressive, she says they ought to be incorporated and exist within the rational life (of politics). Homiak bases her claim on Aristotle’s conception of a virtuous person, whose proper development relied upon the non-rational side as a constraint and limit upon the rational. Rather than suppressing the emotions, sexuality or the appetites, Aristotle’s virtuous person instead necessitates them, whilst at the same time structuring them hierarchically. Similarly, Jaggar (1989) says the rational-emotional dichotomy was not as strong in Greece as it has become in modernity, and she cites Plato’s *Phaedrus* as an example wherein
the charioteer (reason) controls, but does not subordinate, his horses (the irrational urges). Homiak (1993, p.9) writes that "...reason, by itself, cannot create these feelings; nor can reason, by itself, destroy them". Whilst not an apology on Aristotle's behalf, Homiak, as a feminist, is perhaps missing the point by seeking to 'rehabilitate' him. The consequences of Aristotle's ontological separation of the genders is more invidious to women than Homiak realises, and is not limited to the 'rational' world only.

Held (1989) provides an ingenious example of the dominance of the masculine in this respect. The public realm has throughout much of the masculine philosophic tradition been linked to honour and patriotism, a cause, if you will, worth dying for. In contrast the private was the realm of nature and reproduction, a biological given. As a consequence, Held argues that we now perceive birth as less important than death, as it is 'merely' biological, versus death's perception as human. She relates the notion of human to choice, so that death's eminence has lain in a man's choice of how and what to die for, including, for example, to overcome fear, to display courage, for noble or heroic causes, or for future generations and humanity. Increasingly, women are exercising choice too in the realm of reproduction, from the choice of partner (now a question of death as well), age of conception, and method of birth and birth control, to the issue of the foetus' right to life. We should, Held therefore concludes, raise the status of reproduction to the human as well, to a level synonymous with death.67

The treatment in modernity of the sexual dichotomy between the man as rational and the woman as irrational has been somewhat different to that of the premodern era. Although more blatantly discriminatory against women, the employment of reason as the

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67 Okin (1989a, p.56f) makes a related, historical point by saying a woman giving birth risks her life as much as a man when he goes to war.
epistemological paradigm of political philosophy has occurred in a different context, namely that of meaninglessness. That is to say, because of the socio-economic and cultural-political transformations of the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries, new institutions became imperative as a replacement for the premodern cosmological order. These institutions were erected upon a conception of the subject as the possessor of reason. Unfortunately, however, this subject and its faculty of reason was assumed - arguably imposed - to be universally applicable, yet as will become evident, it is rather that this characterisation was gender specific to men and hence exclusionary to women.

Haslanger (1993) has discerned two forms of feminist resistance to the ideal of reason as universal to all subjects. Firstly, to give it prominence necessitates leaving out what is viewed as the personification of its opposite, the feminine. Reason is thus not inherently objectionable but in giving it priority the masculine dominates. One resolution would be to integrate the feminist perspectives contrasted with reason into the paradigm of political philosophy, a type of gender equality within an understanding of complementarity. Ruddick (1980), for example, is representative of this view when she talks about the non-biological feminine traditions and practices that constitute 'maternal thought'. Arising out of social practices, maternal thought would complement abstract reason, and comprises "...the intellectual capacities she (the mother, because she was also once a daughter) develops, the judgements she makes, the metaphysical attitudes she assumes, (and) the values she affirms" (Ibid., pp.346-347).

A second form of feminist resistance is less conciliatory, and implicates reason as women's oppressor. To adopt the perspective of reason, it is argued, is synonymous with a stance of domination, as reason serves to reinforce existing and historical power relations between the genders. Pargetter and Prior (1986) describe this as the 'new view' within
feminism. Those who adopt this position deny, they say, the "...thesis implicit (where not explicit) in the earlier feminist writing, that domestic activities do not involve the use of reason and intellect whilst public realm activities do" (Ibid., p.107). The ‘new view’ ranges across a broad spectrum, from French feminists who concede rationality is in fact masculine and so much the worse off because of it, to those who argue reason is not sufficient for personhood the way it is presently conceived of, and if it were correctly conceived then women could, at the least, be men’s equals. Haslanger (1993, p.92) sums up the dilemma for women who face reason as the mode of being - raison as d’être - when she writes: "The reification of the masculine ideals as human ideals ensures that one’s efforts to be feminine will consistently undermine one’s efforts to realize the ideal for persons (and similarly the ideals for morality and knowledge). Women face an impossible choice that carries censure either way: be a good person but fail as a woman, or be a good woman and fail as a person".

Lloyd (1993) has written one of the more cogent and considered accounts of the masculinisation of reason. Drawing on Derrida and Ricoeur, she contends that what is really at stake in the maleness of reason is philosophical metaphor. It has, Lloyd (Ibid., p.viii) says, "...been constitutive of ways of thinking of reason which have deep repercussions in ways of thinking of ourselves as male or female". Similarly, Rooney (1991) says reason, in alliance with its bedmates of truth and knowledge, has been regularly conceived and understood in terms of images, metaphors and allegories. These implicitly or explicitly involve an exclusion or denigration of a ‘feminine’ element like body, nature, passion, instinct, sense or emotion, and they have, Rooney continues, been as damaging to women as the literal Cartesian duality (Ibid., p.77).

This understanding of maleness belongs neither with sex or gender, but with concepts and principles that emphasise the male-female distinction rather than the socially produced
concepts of masculinity and femininity. Lloyd further argues that contemporary political philosophy is deeply concerned with the challenges posed to the ideals of rationality by cultural relativism, yet feminism, in questioning the objectivity and universality of our canons of rational belief, indicates that it may be unable to even transcend our sexual differences. By exposing the philosophical metaphor that perpetuates the maleness of reason, Lloyd (Ibid., p.xviii) attempts to challenge the very core of our philosophical heritage wherein "...lies the aspiration to a Reason common to all, transcending the contingent historical circumstances which differentiate minds from one another".

To illustrate her thesis Lloyd draws a contrast between the premodern use of reason, and its subsequent usage in modernity. In ancient Greece, for instance, a women’s ability to conceive was connected with the fertility of nature. Aristotle’s theory of generation, for example, understood procreation as the imparting by the male of the motion or form of the child, and the provision by the female of the passive, indeterminate matter (Rooney, 1991, p.79-80). This provided the basis for the Pythagorean table of the opposites where form is construed as superior to formlessness, or male to female (Allen, 1985, pp.20-28). Medieval philosophy continued with the metaphor of maleness. As we saw above, Saint Augustine conceded to women spiritual equality with men, but what she is as a rational spirit is not what she symbolises in her bodily difference. Hence, because rational man rules over the irrational, he also rules corporeally over the woman (Lloyd, 1993, p.29). The same may be said of Aquinas. He distinguished, in a first sense, an intellectual nature common to both sexes. In a second sense, however, men are the beginning and end of women, just as God is for every creature.

68The Pythagorean table of the opposites included contrasts between male-female, rest-motion, straight-curved, light-darkness, and good-bad. Rooney (1991) claims it associated the forces of unreason with the earth goddesses, who represented dark forces with mysterious subterranean powers.
including the first creature, man. There is, for Aquinas, a distinction to be made in all creatures between 'vital functions' and 'generation', and in the human species men's purpose is intellectual and women's the generation of the species (Ibid., pp.34-35). For the Greek and medieval philosophers, reason's use was a means to access the objective structure or order of reality. It was seen as intrinsically natural and therefore moral, in contrast to modernity where nature and morality become separated (Jaggar, 1989, p.145).

In modernity nature has been stripped of value and "...reconceptualised as an inanimate mechanism of no intrinsic worth" (Ibid., p.146). Lloyd (1993, p.11) argues Francis Bacon, in The Refutation of Philosophies, typifies this new mode of thinking. Rejecting the Greek view that formlessness was not knowable nor relevant to the cultivation of knowledge, Bacon claimed a new scientific knowledge that would henceforth control nature. The use of sexual metaphor once again arises, with Bacon's analogy between nature and the female as both knowable encapsulated in his proclamation: "Let us establish a chaste and lawful marriage between mind and nature" (quoted in Ibid.). Value was therefore relocated in human beings and rooted in their preferences and emotional responses. Without nature as the non-contingent benchmark of value, the necessity arose for an abstract form of constancy - or meaning - to render trustworthy insight into the new reality. Descartes was the philosopher who provided the new method of evaluation. He rejected the premodern idea of the soul, divided between the higher (intellect and reason) and the lower (sense and desire), and replaced it with the mind-body distinction, or rational-irrational.

Reason emerges, therefore, as modernity's new faith, and it involved a reconceptualisation of emotion, too. It came to be seen as a non-rational urge that sweeps the body, a 'passion', signifying a suffering rather than a choice (Jaggar, 1989, pp.146-149). Nonetheless these transformations occurred in "...the context of associations already existing
between gender and Reason,...(and the) new emphasis on the privacy of the mind’s natural operations, promised to make knowledge accessible to all, even to women" (Lloyd, 1993, p.45). Unfortunately, however, reason as a particular way of thinking was an achievement, and required a formal education to which few people had access. In a letter to Descartes, Princess Elizabeth summed up a woman’s (and undoubtedly many men’s too) predicament: "...the life I am constrained to lead does not allow me enough free time to acquire a habit of meditation in accordance with your rules. Sometimes the interests of my household, which I must not neglect, sometimes conversations and civilities I cannot eschew, so thoroughly deject this weak mind with annoyances or boredom that it remains, for a long time afterward, useless for anything" (quoted in Tuana, 1993, p.63). Atherton (1993) argues that several of Descartes’ contemporaries were women philosophers who employed reason and rationality as synonymous with thinking, rather than a particular mode of thinking unique to men. The dichotomy is thus, Atherton says, reason versus mechanical or instinctual thought, and not reason-male versus emotion-female. However, the issue is not so much to do with reasoning as specific to men and another way of knowing - maternal thought - as specific to women. Rather, it is a question of who has access to reason as an achievement, and to what ends it is subsequently put. An answer to these questions is best understood in the context of the change from premodernity to modernity.

Ruth (1979) has argued that feminism is incompatible with philosophy. Her conclusion is drawn from the high degree of specialisation that occurs in philosophy, its universal scope, and its aspiration to incorporate all of ‘mankind’. Feminism, in contrast, is contingent and transient versus philosophy’s transcendence of time and place, and feminism is equally concerned with the social, political and anthropological fields, areas in which, Ruth suggests, no philosophical questions are asked. The cause of the gender bias in philosophy stems from
the historical exclusion of women, and there is, as a result, an embedded distortion within philosophy. This distortion, Ruth (Ibid., p. 50) says, makes philosophy unacceptable to women, as there is a "...sexism in philosophy (that) has become philosophical sexism, metasexism, (and which is)... epistemological, permeating philosophy to its roots".

While philosophy might well be sexist, it does not necessarily follow that it should therefore be unacceptable to women. Political philosophy, for instance, addresses concerns relevant to all, including, and most notably in our argument, that of a moral framework. Undoubtedly until now this framework has been gender biased due to the masculine ontology which underscores it. By looking at the context in which this framework arose, however, we can begin to see that just as the masculine was imposed, so it now becomes possible and arguably a necessity to dethrone it. Nonetheless, the issue philosophy was confronting - that of a framework - still remains relevant, but only if it is to include other ontological conceptions too, or literally all of 'mankind'.

The emergence of modernity in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries can, with the only perfect human science of hindsight, be seen as having traumatised the intellectual world. Particularly bad food crises, wars, plagues and indescribable poverty were rife across Europe\(^69\), and conjured up the Baconian image of nature as an unruly and malevolent virago which needed to be tamed (Bordo, 1986). A world where the subject could feel nourished by a sense of oneness, of continuity between all creatures, had been replaced by a new, indifferent order. MacIntyre (1981, pp. 50-51) reiterates this sense of oneness, arguing that there was a structure unique to the Aristotelean-Christian world view of morality. This structure provided a definition of the subject, that is, man-as-he-ought-to-be and of man-as-he-is, and articulated a

\(^{69}\)For example, the Beubonic plague or the Thirty Years War.
set of rules that could lead man-as-he-is to man-as-he-ought-to-be. Notwithstanding the relevance to MacIntyre of Hegel's critique of Kantian morality, that is, ought seldom becomes is, just relations were, in premodernity, governed by rules embedded in a concept of the good. Benhabib (1987, p.159) depicts this good as the telos of humanity, which was "...defined ontologically with reference to man's place in the cosmos at large". However, the transition from humanity as teleologically defined to the modern era of teleological subjectivity was not a smooth one, and Bordo (1986, p.448) writes that it involved "...a kind of protracted birth - from which the human being emerges as a decisively separate entity, no longer continuous with the universe with which it had once shared a soul,...".

Scholars from the late medieval period through to the Renaissance were thus victims of the 'inwardness of mental life', and a sense of isolation developed for the subject who withdrew into the enclosure of its skin. A new conception of the subject developed, primarily as "...a reaction formation to the loss of being-one-with-the-world brought about by the disintegration of the organic, centred cosmos (of premodernity)" (Ibid., p.451). In an effort to tame the indifference of nature, empirical science and rationalism launched what Bordo calls an aggressive assault and violation of 'her' secrets, or nature as a feminine metaphor. This assault upon the ancient and medieval teleological conceptions of nature was facilitated by medieval nominalism, the decline of the papacy and its loss of legitimacy, the emergence of national consciousnesses, the "...will of ordinary men to live under...universal right...which may permit of enforcement equally upon all,..." and new economic relations of exchange (Laski,1936, pp.644-645). Benhabib (1987,pp.1158-158), for example, argues that early capitalism divided the premodern social structure into the economy, the polity, civil associations, and the domestic-intimate sphere. Combined with the crumbling moral framework, these socio-economic transformations emancipated morality from cosmology and its all encompassing...
Weltanschauung that had normatively limited man’s relation to nature (Ibid.). On the modern understanding that nature’s ultimate purposes were unknown, a philosophical neutralisation of ‘her’ vitality was embarked upon. This was done primarily through detachment; from the emotional world, from the particulars of time and place, from the object itself, between the subject as the knower and reality as the known (Bordo, 1986, p.451), and between morality and a telos, with the subject’s privacy and autonomy defended by the scientific and philosophical spheres of free thought (Benhabib, 1987, p.159).

In Rules for the Direction of Mind, for instance, Descartes proposed a method designed to provide certain knowledge of the nature of the universe. He believed that in order to perceive what is simple and self-evident in the world, we are required to break down complex beliefs and experiences into their basic constitutive elements. To do this and to obtain incontrovertible knowledge, Descartes said we should limit our reason to that which, through the use of our rational powers, can be clearly known (Tuana, 1993, pp.59-64). Implicit in this method were two assumptions, one which saw the logic of reason as mirroring the structure of reality,71 and another that presumed clear and distinct ideas were a source of truth about reality (Ibid.). Descartes based these assumptions on the existence of God, who, he posited, had structured the mind independently of the world. To ensure the objectivity of reason, Descartes distinguished it as a source of certainty from the subjective faculties of sense

70Francis Bacon’s narrator in The Masculine Birth of Time was hence able to euphorically forecast a new vision: "...what I purpose is to unite you with things themselves (that is, nature) in a chaste, holy and legal wedlock; and from this association you will secure an increase beyond all the hopes and prayers of ordinary marriages, to wit, a blessed race of Heroes and Supermen who will overcome the immeasurable helplessness and poverty of the human race,..." (quoted in Lloyd, 1993, p.12).

71Rorty (1979, p.9), for example, argues the seventeenth century ideal of a perfectly mirrored nature represented an attempted intellectual escape from history, culture and human finitude.
and imagination. In so doing he ignored, if indeed he had ever had the intention to see them as such, the body as a source of knowledge and the emotions as rational.

There is, however, an instability or dark underside to this rationalist vision. Bordo (1986, p.440) claims that in the first two Meditations there is a sense "...of reality founded on uncertainty,..." and that Descartes never satisfactorily overcomes this except via his resorption to God. For instance, in volume one of the Meditations, Descartes wrote "...our continued existence is causally dependent on God, (and) God is required to provide continuity and unity to our inner lives as well" (quoted in Ibid., p.442). Even Descartes’ critics were sceptical about his doubt, and the intellectual heirs of this tradition hence remain trapped in a ‘Cartesian anxiety’. That is to say, by neglecting the epistemological insecurity of the first two Meditations, Descartes, Bordo argues, bequeathed to us an anxiety over the separation from the female universe of premodernity. Cartesian objectivism, therefore, is "...a defensive response to that separation anxiety, an aggressive intellectual ‘flight from the feminine’... (that leads to a) Cartesian re-birthing and re-imaging of knowledge and the world as masculine" (Ibid., p.441).

This re-birthing entailed a dynamic of reason-unreason which in turn draws upon a male-female dynamic (Rooney, 1991). There are, Rooney (Ibid., pp.90-91) suggests, four characteristics to this dynamic: firstly, a male node aligned with reason, and a female node with unreason; secondly, when reason operates correctly then the male node is the locus of activity, and a ‘proper’ relation to the female node is established; thirdly, if there is a lapse in reason, or unreason surfaces, the female node may be said to be active; and fourthly, the activity of reason almost always includes some form of denigration, domination or control of the female node. This thesis enables Rooney (Ibid., p.98) to concur with Bordo (above): "Despite reason’s articulated stance of separation from emotion and imagination, it has
embedded itself in an emotional and imaginative substructure characterised largely by fear of, or aversion to, the 'feminine'”.

Hegel’s political philosophy personifies the modern aversion to nature that reason is believed to require, and in so doing he provides an example of the early origins of a social science replacing traditional politics (Benhabib, 1991). In its emergence from nature, Geist transforms (or relegates) nature into a secondary world. The primary world is now comprised of the human, historical world of tradition, institutions, laws and practices - of objective Geist. Through rational self-reflection, knowing and acting subjects labour upon and within the objective Geist, the fruits of which are embodied in the arts, work, and philosophy, or absolute Geist (Ibid.). Benhabib argues Hegel’s formulation relies upon a rationalist ontology which associates women with particularity, immediacy, naturalness, and substantiality, and men with universality, mediacy, freedom, and subjectivity. We can find evidence for this in Hegel’s (1991, p.206) discussion of the family in Elements of the Philosophy of Right, where he wrote: "The one [sex] is therefore spirituality which divides itself into personal self-sufficiency with being for itself and the knowledge and volition of free universality.... And the other is spirituality which maintains itself in unity as knowledge and volition of the substantial in the form of concrete individuality [Einzelheit] and feeling [Empfindung]. In its external relations, the former is powerful and active, the latter passive and subjective". Unlike his predecessors, however, Hegel does not explicitly locate these differences in nature, but in the Volksgeist which, Benhabib (Ibid.,p.133) argues, was the monogamous sexual practice of the European nuclear family in which the woman was confined to the private sphere.72

72Benhabib (1991) cites several passages from Hegel which suggest he was aware of the cultural, as opposed to 'natural', conditioning of the sexes. In the Philosophy of World History, for instance, Hegel pondered the various bodily positions that have historically been adopted whilst urinating; for example, a woman’s standing position in ancient Egypt, or her
The power of reason in what Rooney (above) called its 'dynamic' is in its ability to objectify. Haslanger (1993) argues objectification takes place by an objectifier who posits each object with a nature, which allows him or her to be satisfied by the illusion of objectification. In the western philosophical tradition, for example, objectification involves three processes, and starts with the assumption that all objects have a nature. This nature then determines what is normal for the object, and its nature is further assumed to be essential to it. Hence, Haslanger (Ibid., p.103) writes that "...in objectifying something one views it as having a nature which makes it desirable in the ways one desires it, and which enables it to satisfy that desire". Men, for instance, view women as objects with a special nature, and whereas the reverse may also be true, the difference lies in the employment of reason as the method of objectification. That is, the supposed objective, neutral standpoint of the method of reason which is seen as independent of the masculine biases of the objectifier.

The illusion of successful objectification lies not so much in the obvious consequences, namely that women who have been forced to submit do in fact do so. Instead, "...the illusion is in, so to speak, the modality of such claims - women submit by nature" (Ibid., pp.103-104). Harding (1979) has developed a similar theme in respect of the power and function of reason. She distinguishes empiricist theory - that which shows how the environment influences or sets limits on behaviour - from empiricist meta-theory, which discredits all empirical theories about social life except ones assuming the independence of the mind. In so doing empiricist meta-theory restricts that which constitutes the environment, and what counts as scientifically explainable human action. There is, as a result, a bias towards perceptions which can only be revealed via empirical observation, and Harding argues this method gives a report about the squat position in China (Ibid., pp.130-131). Martin (1987) makes a related point about the cultural influences on a woman's positioning whilst giving birth.
object of inquiry, the ‘me’, but not of the subject, the ‘I’, and his or her characteristics. Implicit within empiricist meta-theory, therefore, is the masculine stereotype who initiates and maintains active investigation, and an explicit view of women as victims of environmental stimuli. By assuming that mental life is restricted to the control of nature, women, whose mind is distinguished by its lack of autonomy and immersion in nature, are denied access to the public realm. As a consequence, Harding is able to illustrate yet another social function reason performs, namely the control of women based on their perceived inability to attain full, albeit masculine, personhood.
Chapter Four

A feminist critique of the ontology of liberalism and communitarianism

Our task in chapter two was to show how the subject's existential Angst has manifested itself in modernity in the shape of the public person and the private self. Using these ontological assumptions the politics of liberalism and communitarianism have sought to recapture meaning through autonomous and communal methods of being. In responding to the need for meaning, therefore, both conceptions of politics that derive from these assumptions have had to reconstruct a framework for affirmation. There is a striking analogy between this project and Nietzsche's understanding of our task in modernity.

In *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* the prophetic announcement that 'God is dead' signifies Nietzsche's rejection of Christian theism and the cosmological framework of order and meaning that accompanied it (Nietzsche, 1954, prologue, sec.2). Arguably, this corresponds with Foucault and Taylor's theses of meaning for the subject in the Renaissance and classical epistemes, and the age of belief, respectively. By spurning supernatural guidance Nietzsche (1954, p.285), in *The Gay Science*, argues we need to acquire the strength to live without God and what was concomitant in the form of the imposed and extraneous morality of 'Thou shalt'. We must, then, "...invent new tablets of what is good (and) become what we are - human beings who create themselves" (Ibid., p.335).

Liberalism and communitarianism have arguably been attempts at reconstructing meaning - new tablets - though not always to the extent of rejecting the premodern framework
in its entirety. Indeed we might suggest both have evolved from this framework: liberalism as a continuation of the subject's paranoia of its uncertain existence, which is enshrined in the right to one's own conception of meaning in tandem with the obligation not to question another's; and communitarianism as prolonging the idea of locating meaning in a common whole - tentatively in the appeal to a Zeitgeist, and sometimes more assertively by reference to a Volksgeist.

He is not me - the liberal subject and feminism

The liberal tradition portrayed in chapter two has, as one of its core values, a particular vision of the subject which oscillates between two poles. On a more positive reading of the value of freedom and its benefits to society is Mill's idea of individuality,\(^{73}\) while at the other extreme is Hobbes' radical nominalism which reduces every complex whole to its simplest components, and what Lukes has termed 'methodological individualism' (quoted in Elshtain, 1981, p.108). Both of these accounts have implicit within them the idea of separation from others, which can also be interpreted as being free of others. Being apart in this way has an instrumental use too, as, being "...separate from you, my ends, my life, my path, my goals (become) necessarily my own" (West, 1992, p.571), and are thereby autonomously conceived.

In his book The Poverty of Liberalism, R.P.Wolff contends that methodological

\(^{73}\)In On Liberty, Mill (1991, p.63) wrote: "That mankind are not infallible; that their truths, for the most part, are only half-truths; that unity of opinion, unless regulating from the fullest and freest comparison of opposite opinions, is not desirable, and diversity not an evil, but a good, until mankind are much more capable than at present of recognising all sides of the truth, are principles applicable to men's modes of action, not less than to their opinions. ...It is desirable, in short, that in things which do not primarily concern others, individuality should assert itself".
individualism is the one factor that unifies the liberal tradition, as it attaches moral value to
the subject rather than the community, with each subject choosing his or her own moral
subjectivity (quoted in Porter, 1991, p. 123). Because private morals cannot be amalgamated, it
then becomes imperative that right has priority over the good, and hence the book's title
which indicates liberalism's lack of appreciation of the intersubjective dimensions of moral
subjectivity. It is this conception of the subject which is ahistorical, with people seen to have
certain essential characteristics which proceed from their species. Called 'natural rights', they
include being rational, having an ability to choose, and therefore being able to enter into
contracts and agreements (Frazer and Lacey, 1993, pp. 44-45). Further, in virtue of their
personality being transcendentally derived from species characteristics, this view of the subject
involves the negation of the body and its relevance to the moral and political realms.

Hence, if subjects own and are not identified by their bodies, then gender
caracteristics like emotion or the sexual imperatives of nature, for example reproduction, are
excluded from moral and political consideration. Practically speaking, this entails the exclusion
of women as bearers of certain characteristics. For instance, in conceptions of modern justice
women have historically played a negative role - that of the juxtaposed other - as "...their
essential disorderliness, their enslavement to nature, their private and particularist inclinations,
or their oedipal development, (are viewed as making them) incapable of developing a sense of
justice" (Okin, 1987, p. 43). From these assumptions it is but a small jump to a situation where
those with fewer biological contingencies, namely, men (relative to women), can preoccupy
themselves with the mental gymnastics of reason, and the control of the cultural
superstructure, especially if they have a guaranteed domestic base that supports them.

Alternatively, accepting the person as constituted by both the body and mind raises
numerous difficulties for modern political philosophy. For example, would Rawls' original
position constitute an agreement as, rather than persons, there are only disembodied individuals who occupy this hypothetical construct? By assuming these individuals have the same motivations from a position of choice, as well as the means to make these choices through the use of reason to reach a reflective equilibrium, Rawls effectively imposes a specific conception of the person upon all subjects. Hence, if embodiment and gender are excluded from the original position then the choices Rawls says are made from it must, instead of reflecting the preferences of all people, rather conform to a more specific group, that of white, middle-class men (Frazer and Lacey, 1992, pp. 53-55). In addition, these men are assumed to be heads of families whose "...sex is one of those morally irrelevant contingencies,..." and Okin (1987, pp. 46-47) argues by neglecting to make the family a concern for justice Rawls actually endorses the traditional view of the head as a man.

Another way of looking at the assumed gender neutrality of the original position is in its use as the starting point for reflection about a just society. It is thus assumed that people not only choose options and elaborate their preferences non-contingently, but also have an understanding of them. In the real social world, however, people have bodies which allow them only so many choices. These choices are, to exacerbate this bodily fact, historically determined and comprehensible in the intellectual context in which they occur. Somewhat conservatively yet still relevant, Taylor in Hegel and Modern Society expresses reservation about being free to reason in this ahistorical manner: "The self which has arrived at freedom

74Interestingly, Rawls’ account of the person as disembodied departs from that of Kant, who saw the body "...in its togetherness with the self (as constituting) the person" (Kant, Lectures on Ethics, quoted in Herman, 1993, p. 55). This presented Kant’s noumenally derived conception of morality with several difficulties. In questions concerning sexuality, for example, sexual lust (in contrast to human love in the sanctity of marriage) "...is a degradation of human nature (the self); for as soon as a person becomes an Object of appetite for another, all motives of moral relationship (between noumenal, transcendental selves) cease to function, because as an Object...a person becomes a thing and can be treated and used as such by every one" (Ibid.).
(as justice as fairness in our argument) by setting aside all external obstacles and impingements is characterless, and hence without defined purpose" (quoted in Kymlicka, 1990, p. 208).

Rawls has, to be sure, refined his position, but only in response to traditional concerns. The original position does, he argues (1980), assume a specific rather than universal conception of the subject who is neither transcendent nor prior to its ends. As such the original position is political and not metaphysical (Rawls, 1985), and the political or public person therein would, Rawls (1987) claims, emphasise the priority of just institutions extrapolated from an 'overlapping consensus' to be found in real societies. Thus, the "...idea of an overlapping consensus enables us to understand how a constitutional regime characterised by the fact of pluralism might despite its deep divisions, achieve stability and social unity by the public recognition of a reasonable political conception of justice" (Ibid., p. 2). There is, therefore, room for private persons to exist, and Rawls (1980, p. 545) says they "...have attachments and loves that (they) believe (they) would not, or could not, stand apart from,... (Indeed, people) regard it as unthinkable... to view themselves without certain religious and philosophical convictions and commitments".

Despite these modifications there still exists within Rawls' work and the liberal tradition generally a pervasive sense of the masculine. This is evident on two levels, namely that of the subject's personal development as the basis for a masculine specific conception of morality, and the way he employs reason as the determinant of being. Gilligan (1977) has provided one of the more influential criticisms of this lurking masculine moral subject posing as the universal within modern political philosophy, even if her suggested alternatives confuse the culturally constructed attributes of femininity with the biological givens of the female.

Gilligan (Ibid.) starts by locating the traditional thesis of the psychological understanding of personal development in Piaget (1965), Erikson (1968), and Kohlberg and
Kramer (1969). They claim we proceed from theory to fact, defining, as Gilligan (Ibid.,p.481) says, "...both the self and the moral autonomously, that is, apart from the identification and conventions that had compromised the particulars of...childhood...". Theorists interested in the psychological development of the subject from Freud onwards have, Gilligan claims, been prone to dismiss the differences in outcomes between females and males as indicative of the former being at variance with the latter (norm). In contrast, Gilligan argues it is rather the traits held up as feminine - tact, gentleness, tenderness, a need for security - and not the female herself, that have been synonymous with a deficient moral development. This, she argues, is problematic insofar as given formal rights (and thus the option to exercise choice) women are brought into conflict with the conventions of femininity which equate morality with self-sacrifice, not self-fulfilment (through choosing).

We have then, from Gilligan's description, a problem unique to the feminine subject who intuitively defines herself in relation to others. This intuitive definition of the self is a biological necessity drawn from the experiences of women during pregnancy, and Gilligan (Ibid.,p.515) claims it is due to the feminine subject developing in a relationship with an other. Hence, each transition in identity during pregnancy involves "...a critical reinterpretation of the moral conflict between selfishness and responsibility" (Ibid.). This understanding of female development is drawn from empirical studies of women's attitudes to pregnancy and abortion, and encapsulates two transitions.

Initially, the woman reorientates herself away from what we might call basic existence

75Freud, for example could not "...evade the notion (though I hesitate to give it expression) that for women the level of what is ethically normal is different from what it is for men. Their superego is never so inexorable, so impersonal, so independent of its emotional origins as we require it to be in men" (Sigmund Freud, Some psychical consequences of the anatomical distinction between the sexes, quoted in Gilligan,1977:p.484).
to a level of individual survival, because the as yet undefined subject wishes to act upon an unwanted pregnancy, but she does not have the means. The feminine subject then moves from a position of selfishness, that is, have an abortion, to one of keeping the baby and responsibility, which enhances the feeling of self-worth at the same time. The feminine person is now at the second level where goodness is seen as self-sacrifice - the baby's life instead of the mother's well-being. A second transition then occurs from goodness to truth, or an assessment of the morality of the action, that is, keeping the baby, in terms of the intentions and consequences of the act. Finally, the feminine person reaches the third stage of the morality of non-violence which allows her to evaluate herself vis-a-vis others, to claim the power to choose, and to accept responsibility for the choices made (Ibid., pp.492-509).

Conversely for the male this problem of the other is overcome in his assertion of absolute freedom to reach what Hirschmann (1989) calls 'reactive autonomy'. This is the process by which the male child leaves infancy and defines himself as not-mother. Freedom hence becomes associated for masculinity with being not-mother nor not-feminine. Later, this false sense of freedom is reinforced socially in, for example, gender divisions in schools or via language, thereby perpetuating the masculine sense of personhood as in opposition to the mother. By extension, Hirschmann argues we arrive at theories like the social contract, which is the cultural embodiment of the reaction against the mother.76

Lyons (1983) lends support to this notion of gendered persons, arguing that when a person defines itself in relationships to others, it does so in one of two ways. Either as a separate-objective person who understands relationships as reciprocal and mediated by rules of fairness, which are grounded in roles that come from duties of obligation and commitment.

76This account, however, is challenged by Sinopoli (1991) for its inadequate psychological, 'quasi-Freudian' assumptions.
Or, alternatively, as a connected-subjective person where relationships are a response to others in terms of their well-being, and are mediated by activities of care. This sense of care sustains connection in relationships that are grounded in interdependence, which in turn comes from the recognition of the interdependence between people themselves.

Hobbes provides an example of how a reaction against the female acts as the basis for the construction of society. Di Stefano (1983) makes this point, arguing that knowledge is materially situated in particular ways of life, and that it cannot be divorced from the history and life of the knower. Hobbes is not, as Elshtain (1981, pp.107-110) contends, necessarily representative of Di Stefano’s view of knowledge generation, as he obtained knowledge of the subject not from systematic, categorical exploration, or empirical observation, but via the acquisition of the right definition of names. Human reason is therefore purely instrumental and is reduced to nothing but the reckoning about names (Ibid.). Di Stefano’s thesis, however, remains valid if we remember Ruth’s (1979) point that it has always been men who have done the naming of things; in addition, reckoning is legitimised because it is arrived at via reason, and not some other form of epistemology.

Bearing in mind that Hobbes could not escape from the contingencies of his day, his method as representative of a masculinist ideology can only be understood by looking at the subtext behind his empiricism. This, Di Stefano argues, is a subtext of masculinity as indicative of a turn away from the mother. The rejection of the mother occurs in the context of patriarchy, that is, the male’s attempt to overthrow the female’s control of reproduction.77 For example, Hobbes presents us with a view of the passions where desire and motivation are

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77 Pateman (1991) criticises this understanding of patriarchy. It is not a question of the father’s right over the mother, but rather of the precontractual "...right of sexual access to women, which, in its major institutional form in modern society, is exercised as conjugal right" (Ibid.,p.56).
self-originating and self-contained, and derived from a person's will asocially. Based on this account of human nature, Hobbes is able to offer us a state of chaos and war, or the option of civil society which preserves the person's *a priori* characteristics (Ibid.,1983). In effect Hobbes, by strictly differentiating the subject from others, and by conceiving identity in isolationist terms, confirms the factors that are materially grounded in the experiential process of securing a masculine identity by means of a struggle against a maternal female. This demonstrates, Di Stefano (Ibid.,p.637) says, that the "...masculine dimension of Hobbes's atomistic egoism is powerfully underscored in his state of nature, which is effectively built on the foundations of denied maternity".

Elsewhere, Gilligan (1982) has elaborated a moral framework reliant on the ontological differences between the genders, and talks about the contextual development of the feminine versus the abstract thought patterns of the masculine. These differences are biologically and socially accounted for, as boys develop "...a self defined through separation,...a self measured against an abstract ideal of perfection,..." in contrast to a girl's "...self delineated through connection,...a self assessed through particular activities of care" (Ibid.,p.35). As a consequence we have a masculine ethic of justice of objective, rational principles, and a feminine ethic of care of the personal and immediate within responsibility. Gilligan argues this dichotomy, most notably the masculine ethic of justice, is personified in the social sciences which pride themselves on being a detached, analytic discipline.

There are, however, several problems involved with these psycho-cultural conceptions of the subject, and the implications that flow from him or her. Greeno and Maccoby (1986,p.315) argue Gilligan's research is flawed, especially in the light of recent reports which

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78A similar line of argument can be found in Harding (1983).
reveal gender attitudes to reasoning as more related to education than biology, and hence we "...need to know whether what is being said is distinctively female, or simply human". Z.H. Eisenstein (1984, pp. 217-219) counters Gilligan's thesis about the social sciences, saying that if they do in fact represent the masculine then Gilligan is no more justified in seeking to replace this (detached, analytic) paradigm with her new, post-liberal concept of a social science of care, as each is to be understood contextually and thus as no more legitimate than the other. Finally, Farganis (1986, pp. 157-158) sees implicit in Gilligan's argument - women as embodying certain values - the intimation that women can offer liberal society something it desperately needs, and in so doing it becomes an agenda of ahistoricity on the one hand, and a perpetuation of the feminine stereotype on the other.

The view of the personal development of the masculine person just discussed, together with its moral framework of masculine assumptions, is manifested somewhat more hegemonically in society in the form of rationalist accounts of morality. Ben-Zeev (1982) suggests that many moral theories posit as their basic unit the rational agent and, as 'rational theories of morality', they assume rationality to be a status-attribute. This, Ben-Zeev argues, is something we have in virtue of the fulfilment of some basic yet necessary conditions, like species characteristics, in contrast to attainment-attributes which are gained by achievement and the continued affirmation of it thereafter. Whilst Ben-Zeev is reluctant to describe rationality as a status-attribute - as liberalism does - and critiques those theories which assume it is, his argument highlights how, in our context, moral rationalism appropriates certain characteristics as universal.

The latter phrase, 'moral rationalism', is used by Blum (1982). He sees as one of the tasks of moral philosophy an articulation of the qualities of character or virtues a morally good person should have. Central to moral rationalism are the characteristics of reason and
rationality. The person who displays these is, Blum argues, identifiable by the defining qualities of self-control, a strength of will, consistency, the adherence to duty and obligation, and a motivation from universal principles. In the event of these defining qualities being absent, the person becomes defined as an other, and shows the amoral qualities of sympathy, compassion, kindness, a caring for others, a human concern and an emotional responsiveness. Historically, these characteristics have been constitutive of the masculine and feminine respectively, and Blum cites Hegel and Kant as moral rationalists who have emphasised these gender differences as a way of perpetuating a masculine oriented view of social reality.

Kant has been described by Baier (1993,p.50) as "...the modern moral philosopher feminists find most objectionable". He argued that for actions to be counted as moral, they need to be motivated by a universal law of morality. Morality is therefore in terms of one's duty to the categorical imperative, and cannot originate in inclination because, even if it were at this level to accord with one's duty, one's moral action must be divorced from the contingencies of inclination to be universally applicable. On Kant's understanding moral persons must be distanced from their emotions and desires; in fact, Blum goes so far as to suggest Kant thought they were insignificant, and a hindrance to a moral agent seeking clear thought, knowledge of right and wrong, and a consistent, principled mode of conduct. In setting these stringent conditions, Kant sought a noumenal basis for motivation where each person would be moved not just by laws of nature, but by the laws of freedom too. Sedgwick (1990) claims this is necessary if we are to avoid morality becoming a chimera. Thus, if pure reason is to have a practical use, then it must be as the issuer of laws that are determining for my phenomenal nature without themselves being laws of nature (Ibid.).

Sedgwick (Ibid.,p.62) anticipates the feminist aversion to Kant's morality in recognising that the noumenal requirement of duty often conflicts with phenomenal inclination, yet she
writes that "...duty requires...something that can never be integrated into my nature as a phenomenal subject". For those feminists who see an empirical (feminine) subject in subordination to a (masculine) noumenal one, Sedgwick (Ibid., pp. 63-64) queries whether it is in fact a question of subordination. Rather, she argues, it is a necessity that the particular needs and interests that define us as people submit to those of the community, of the will of all. Further, as we determine most of our actions intuitively, morality requires a reasoned basis to remind us to recognise ourselves as members of the human community. Apart from the obvious traditional concerns with this view - who defines the 'will of all'?, who is to be excluded from participation in it?, how is the 'will' determined? - Sedgwick does not, it might be argued, adequately address feminist concerns. She makes no mention, for instance, of the political dichotomy of the private and public spheres moral rationalism depends upon, nor of the deliberate gender construction along noumenal-phenomenal distinctions.

Elshtain (1974), for example, says the failure to get to the heart of gender inequality lies in the inadequate analysis of the public-private split. She argues the public sphere, as the realm in which men have traditionally sought to realise moral goodness, is reliant upon a political private sphere of women. In the former, political debate between morally free persons occurs whilst the latter is dominated by one standard of morality, that of the family. A woman is thus unable to enter the public sphere other than as a private person, primarily because she does not possess the qualifications of political personhood. These qualifications include, for example, rationality, responsibility, and the employment of judgement according to a known set of rules and standards (Ibid., p. 472). Men, on the other hand, are able to descend into the private realm at will, and Elshtain (Ibid., p. 462) characterises this dichotomy as separate but equal; that is, as occurring "...in some lofty realm beyond ordinary
understandings: meta-equality". As a consequence, Sedgwick and liberal feminism fail to see that our "...ideas and ideals of maleness and femaleness have been formed within structures of dominance - of superiority and inferiority, ‘norms’ and ‘difference’,...‘essential’ and the ‘complementary’,...to the extent that the gender dichotomy has effectively become an expression of value" (Lloyd, 1993, p. 101).

If, hypothetically, we were to accept moral rationalism as a plausible framework in which the modern, feminine person as the possessor of freedom could exist, she would still face the explicit views of Kant and Hegel as problematic for her. In evaluating Kant and Hegel from a postmodern perspective we should be aware of the context in which they lived, of their search for meaning, stability, order and peace, rather than simply applying an equally contingent perception about what they may or may not have intended vis-a-vis women. Nonetheless, it is difficult to reconcile their conceptions of feminity with the contemporary moral climate other than through excusing it as constrained and thus reflective of an eighteenth century patriarchal Zeitgeist.

Hegel (1991) envisaged the third realm of Sittlichkeit, represented by the state, as at its maturest when Geist is actualised via reason in public institutions. The medium through which reason actualises Geist is the masculine; through his participation in labour, civil society and public life, his self-consciousness develops and is expressed morally by the realisation of autonomy, rationality and universality in human life. However, this masculine subject is

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79 Although she does not retract this argument or its point, Elshtain (1986, p.4) qualifies the tone, saying it was expressed in a "...context in which feelings ran high and determination to peg those ‘responsible’ for the historic oppression of women was a first order theoretical and political priority".

80 A less sympathetic reading of Kant and Hegel might well argue they were not so much constrained by or reflective of this Zeitgeist, but rather supportive and thus indicative of it.
possible only for as long as we are prepared to accept Hegel’s position on women. That is to say, a view which sees women’s nature as expressing the Sittlichkeit of the family, of an immediate and sensory consciousness immersed in love and unity with her offspring. In short, a woman’s place is determined by her primary virtue of familial piety. Hegel (1991, pp. 206-207) supports this view by drawing on the ideal Sophocles’ Antigone presents, where "...this quality (of familial pity)...is declared to be primarily the law of women,...as the law of the ancient gods and...as an eternal law of which no one knows whence it came,...".

The same problem of exclusion for women can be found in Kant. Arguing reason was for men only, Kant (1960), in Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and the Sublime, believed the genders had complementary natures in virtue of their faculties of understanding. Men, for example, have knowledge of general principles, of science, mathematics and the nature of the sublime, whereas "...the fair sex has just as much understanding as the male, but it is a beautiful understanding" (Ibid., p. 76). The subject of a woman’s understanding must thus be that which pleases and adorns, and which charms, is docile in respect of, and obedient to, men. Kant (Ibid., p. 81) sees in this conception of women the embodiment of a "...beautiful virtue...(where) women...avoid the wicked not because it is unright, but because it is ugly; and virtuous actions mean to them such as are morally beautiful. Nothing of duty, nothing of compulsion, nothing of obligation". This picture of the feminine subject, coupled with Hegel’s, is the backbone of moral rationalism. Central to its scheme of virtues are masculine qualities of character, and Blum (1982) points to the absence of a framework for the expression of feminine qualities. As a result, moral rationalism reflects a male-dominated society that effectively sanctions masculine superiority.

One way of understanding the enforcement of this sanction is to look upon reason as a form of coercion. Sandel (1982) defines what we have so far called ‘moral rationalism’ in
terms of its moral obligations. Because they are elaborated without any reference to a theory of the good, Sandel (Ibid., pp. 14-16) therefore labels this political framework deontological liberalism.\textsuperscript{81} Within deontological theory there is assumed to be a neutral, moral point of view due to the existence of what Young (1986a) says is an impartial, detached method of reason. This interpretation of reason is not tantamount to seeing it as giving an account of something, nor of it showing our motivations for acting. Instead, reason is a rationale which reduces its objects to a common measure within a structure of universal laws. Citing Adorno's \textit{Negative Dialectics}, Young (Ibid., p. 384) describes this notion of reason as akin to a 'logic of identity', "...an unrelenting urge to think things together, in a unity, to formulate a representation of the whole, a totality".

The logic of identity constructs total systems that engulf the alterity of things within a unity of thought, and represents an attempt at control through the elimination of uncertainty and unpredictability. Deontological liberalism, through reason, expresses the logic of identity by eliminating otherness in two ways. In its desire to see an irreducible specificity in all situations, impartial reason treats all situations according to the same rules. Taking Kantian morality as one manifestation, Young (Ibid., p. 385) says the problem with it is the lack of opportunity "...for one's feelings, interests, or inclinations to enter into the making of moral judgements". Secondly, by appearing as impartial reason does not need to take into account an other's perspective. The ideal of universal citizenship, for example, is to extend equality to all. Young (1989), however, claims this ideal is blind to individual and group

\textsuperscript{81}It is debatable whether 'pure' deontology is actually possible. For example, Dworkin (1973) sees implicit within Rawls (as Sandel's example of deontological liberalism) a fundamental right to equal respect and consideration for people in the design of the institutions that govern them. Similarly, Scanlon (1973) sees a 'deep' theory of Rawls' as the social ideal of the subject as an autonomous chooser.
differences because universality is so general that it can only characterise citizens by what it is believed they have in common, resulting in equality being no more than 'sameness'. Despite, or perhaps because of, the logic of identity's striving for a unity of thought, it ends up, Young (1986a) argues, faced with a dichotomy between the same and other, or masculine and feminine.

They are not us - communitarian frameworks and feminism

In an attempt to defend liberalism by exploring the weaknesses of those who criticise it, Holmes (1989) refers to the haunted history and hidden intolerance of the permanent structures that symbolise alternatives to it. Several authors, Holmes (Ibid., pp.228-229) argues, "...invoke an indescribable community..." that is deliberately ahistorical to avoid an association with the anti-Semitic propaganda that attacked Jewish people as 'uprooted'. Similarly, Herzog (1986) questions the false historical accounts of 'republican revisionism'. He says they imply an uninterrupted tradition of civic republicanism that starts with Machiavelli, continues in seventeenth century England, and eventually comes to fruition in eighteenth century America.

In addition, 'republican revisionists' are guilty of misinterpreting there icons, whether they be MacIntyre's (1981) use of Aristotle, or Sandel's (1984b) referral to Jefferson. These inconsistencies are important, and Herzog argues this is not only because they are highly contentious claims, but because the past for communitarians is so central to the shaping of the present that an account of it must be accurate. Hence, as Holmes (1989,p.227) suggests, communities are "...stylized, even sanitized, genealog(ies) for their (the communitarians') central ideas,...". From the modern standpoint Holmes adopts, communitarians ignore certain
historical aspects like the association with militarism and fascism. From the feminist perspective these views undoubtedly matter, yet central is the concern with communitarianism’s apparent indifference to the historical and by implication contemporary plight of women. This indifference can be seen in the continued attempt by communitarians to retrieve traditions, values and communities that have historically denied political personhood to women, have denigrated the feminine as the ‘other’, and subordinated them to their ‘natural’ roles, despite feminist evidence that suggests women were oppressed within these structures.

Unlike Rawls’ consistent argument for justice as the primary value of public institutions, communitarians advance several different values, and Gardbaum (1992) uses these values to classify communitarianism into three categories. Firstly, there is antiatomism communitarianism which is a descriptive argument about the constitution of identity, with the community being a causal factor in it. 82 Secondly, Gardbaum talks of metaethical communitarianism, where the source of value is located in the community rather than in just institutions. This second category is further divided into those theorists who reject modernity’s metanarratives, 83 and those who argue that because universal values have no self-executing authority, they require affirmation by the specific political community in question. 84 And thirdly, there are strong communitarians who advance a political claim about what is valuable, namely the particular community a theorist refers to, and on this basis Gardbaum talks of

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82 Antiatomism communitarians include Raz (1986), Sandel (1984a), and Taylor (1985).

83 In particular, Habermas (1974) and Rorty (1983).

84 Examples of what we might call wavering postmodern communitarians include Oakeshott (1991) and Walzer (1983).
conservative, republican, and communistic communitarianism. Interestingly, Gardbaum argues that antiatomism and metaethical communitarianism are postmodern critiques of modernity. This is insofar as they are radically sceptical about the rationality of the human subject, and in virtue of their rejection of foundationalist and universalistic arguments in favour of a discourse of ethics, hermeneutic understanding, and contextualism. It is only the strong communitarians, Gardbaum claims, who, by expressing an antimodern or premodern criticism, spurn liberal society.

There has, historically, been a large degree of antagonism in modernity between liberals and communitarians. Starting with Hegel’s critique of Kant, it continued with Sir James Stephens’ scepticism about Mill’s conception of individuality, and resurfaced once again when Sir Patrick Devlin’s paternalistic tendencies provoked the criticism of H.L.A. Hart. In response, liberals traditionally reject four features of the communitarian’s armoury. These are, Dworkin (1989) argues, the association of the community as a symbol of a political grouping with a democratic majority, which often exercises the right to use the law to enforce its vision of ethical decency. This political grouping is given more substance by assuming each citizen has a shared and distinct responsibility for others, so that political power may actually be used to reform those whose defective practices threaten the community. A liberal therefore repudiates this use of political power as indicative of paternalism, and Waldron (1989), for instance, comes out strongly against a community’s entitlement to uphold and enforce its own distinctive mores, norms and standards. Finally, by saying people require a community as a

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85 See, for example, MacIntyre (1988).
86 Compare Arendt (1958) and Bellah et al. (1985).
87 Sandel (1982) also falls into this category.
way of serving their needs and defining their existence, communitarians are forced to discard the liberal notion of tolerance. This, they believe, undermines a community’s cohesion, and draws an illegitimate distinction between the subject’s life and that of the community. At this level, liberals are essentially rejecting the community as an entity in its own right, or conversely, as having an independent and prior existence to that of the subject.

From the feminist perspective, however, the liberal-communitarian debate personifies the masculine slant of political philosophy. In this respect feminism is outside of or external to the discourse liberals and communitarians engage in. Indeed, it can be argued that these two schools of thought have, of late, converged. Thus, Caney (1992) argues that of the three claims communitarians make against liberals, namely descriptive, normative and metaethical, the former two are in fact accepted by liberals whilst the latter is untenable. Still others characterise communitarians as being extremely vague and at times contradictory, yet they are willing to accept the contribution of communitarianism and to envisage an eventual marriage between the opposing theories (Buchanan, 1989). Or, because Sandel and MacIntyre are incapable of undermining liberal politics, Gutmann (1985) says their contributions instead provide a framework within which liberal justice may be improved upon. And at the ontological level, Dworkin (1992) concedes the subject has a need to identify with, and understand itself as derivative from, the community, whilst Kymlicka (1989) asks whether the communal bonds and relationships existing between people must necessarily be political?

Even Walzer (1990, p.21) portrays liberalism and communitarianism as existing in a symbiotic relationship, and "...insofar as liberalism tends towards instability and dissociation, it requires periodic communitarian correction". And for Taylor (1989b, p.163), "...misconstruals occur (between liberals and communitarians) because there has been widespread insensitivity to the difference between...two kinds of issue". On the one hand, there are ontological issues
which are used as factors to account for social life, and on the other hand, advocacy issues that illustrate the moral stand or policy one might adopt. At one level these two issues are distinct yet at another the ontology one proposes can form the background to the view one advocates.

It is from this simultaneous distinctness and connection that the two camps of liberals and communitarians arise. Taylor suggests we move away from the view that taking ontological position ‘A’, for example, subjects are socially constituted, necessarily commits us to advocate position ‘B’, that is in this example, a community as a source of value. Only by scrapping the portmanteau terms ‘liberal’ and ‘communitarian’ will we be able to synthesise the issues (Ibid., p.163).

For a feminist, therefore, the central issue of the above debate - what is the source of justice? - does not address nor engage with women. Wallach (1987), for instance, argues that the liberal-communitarian debate does not advance the political understanding of the causes of social justice, as the former is an attempt at adjudicating moral and political conflict whilst the latter simply looks to the social practices of communities in building an understanding of justice. As a result, they fail to look into the structures of power and the limits placed on public discourse in political communities. Hence, we have seen, in the preceding section, the failure of liberalism to engage with women at the ontological level. Communitarians, in contrast, share a not dissimilar view to feminism of a socially constituted subject. Yet, the community that constitutes it has historically excluded, denigrated, and subordinated women, and continues today in the works of strong communitarians to be indifferent to women and their (our) concerns.

88Therefore, a "...stand on the atomism-holism debate (the opposite poles of the ontological issue) can be combined with either stand on the individualist-collectivist question (the two extremes of the advocacy issue)" (Taylor, 1989b, p.163).
There is an uncanny resemblance, Fox-Genovese (1991) claims, between Tönnies’ famous distinction between Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft, and the nineteenth century dichotomy between the private-female and public-male spheres. The organic, traditional relationships in Gemeinschaft included affectivity, particularism, tradition and family, whilst Gesellschaft entailed the consequences of individualism, instrumentalism and contractarianism. Of concern to Tönnies was a Gesellschaft that displayed neutrality, universality, specificity and rationality (Ibid., pp.32-35). Fox-Genovese is thus sceptical about theorists who talk of the virtues of community, as they often ignore its foundations in legal and political relations of subordination and oppression.

One of the core problems Fox-Genovese (Ibid., pp.40-41) demonstrates with her thesis of the resemblance of Gemeinschaft-Gesellschaft to that of the private-public split, is the way an important tendency in "...feminist theory has resolutely championed women’s rights as individuals - their absolute right to break free of the legal and political domination of communities". Having broken free from Gemeinschaft, however, women have historically faced little protection or support within Gesellschaft, and this has sometimes led them to embrace communities, even though they attack specific manifestations of them. Kittay and Meyer (1987, p.8), for instance, talk of the (liberal) justice perspective’s "...solid and well known canon of ethical doctrine,..." and how the (traditional) "...alternatives to a deductive, calculative approach to moral decision-making..." have focused upon the concept of virtue rather than justice. Through her analogy Fox-Genovese is able to highlight the pitfalls of modern political philosophy for feminists, and she does this by pointing to the similarities that exist across the philosophical spectrum, namely institutional indifference to women.

The problem for women (and other traditionally excluded groups), therefore, is that in appealing to traditions and shared understandings, strong communitarians are incapable of
dealing with the effects of social domination. The nostalgia for old communities and their traditions includes those of the Canadian maritimes (Taylor, 1985, pp. 314-317), the Jeffersonian town council (Sandel, 1984b), or the Aristotelean polis (MacIntyre, 1981, ch. 11). The latter theorist has in particular been criticised, and Okin (1989a) argues MacIntyre says we need to immerse ourselves in tradition to achieve a sound reasoning about justice. MacIntyre initially refers to the Homeric tradition, yet Okin is quick to illustrate how socially hierarchical it was, with those at home ignored. It was in this tradition, too, that a woman’s virtues were defined in opposition to a man’s, and she was expected to display beauty and fidelity. Also, because each gender’s nature was seen as different, there was no possibility for public equality or friendship either. Another tradition MacIntyre venerates is the Christian-Aristotelean Weltanschauung, where a teleological view of human nature advocated the good as the realisation of one’s true nature. Identity was thus a priori, and for women this meant fulfilling domestic roles. In so doing, the political community ignored the role of the family as the provider of citizens, and as the impediment to women of the pursuit of the good life. The family was nonetheless an important part of the polis, but only insofar as it fitted into an institutional hierarchy that freed men from domestic and manual work, enabling them to engage in their nature’s desire of political and intellectual activity.

Okin (Ibid., ch. 3) therefore makes three critiques of MacIntyre. Like most contemporary political philosophers, his language is conducted for the most part from the perspective of ‘men and women’, but displays a false sense of gender neutrality. Whether referring to Athenian (male) citizens, or the Christian philosophers’ conception of Eve as to blame for Adam’s fall, MacIntyre ignores sex-difference as having been the fundamental and determining feature that has justified the subordination of women. Secondly, MacIntyre claims traditions are best tested in the face of an epistemological crisis or challenge, and his failure
to acknowledge feminism in this respect simply illustrates for Okin (Ibid., p. 46) "...the extent to which 'our' theories and traditions are deeply infused with patriarchalism". Finally, MacIntyre says we evaluate a tradition's rationality and sense of justice historically by understanding its values contextually, and from within the tradition itself. The starting point for this evaluation will depend upon who you are and how you understand yourself, which is an identity achieved by acknowledging which rival traditions best explain and account for your identity. What tradition, Okin (Ibid., p. 72) demands, will give a woman an adequate identity, particularly when communitarian "...contextually based theories, building on the prevailing ideologies of the male elites, lack moral force because their neglect of domination leaves the rest of us deprived of a voice in the construction of morality"?

The primary institution neglected in communitarian works is the family, and this is essentially Okin's point above and elsewhere (Okin, 1989b). It is an important omission too, as Engels (1984) was perceptive enough to realise over a century ago. The monogamous family was, he argued, the first form of the institution of the family to be based on economic rather than natural conditions. In this sense the monogamous family was a victory of private property over communal ownership, and the Greeks, for instance, frowned upon monogamy as a dutiful burden whose purpose was to propagate heirs for the male head of household (Ibid., p. 129). Two forms of oppression therefore arose in the transition to the monogamous family. In old, communal households of multiple couples and children, the woman's management of the household was a public function on a par with the man's procurement of food. With the rise of the patriarchal, monogamous family the woman's status lost its public
character and became a private service (Ibid., p.131). Secondly, the monogamous family was founded upon masculine supremacy to ensure a heir for the father's property; originally, in fact, conjugal infidelity was allowed for the man and was enshrined in the Code Napoléan. Monogamy was thus essentially meant to apply to the woman, leading Engels (Ibid., p.129) to describe the monogamous family as "...the presence of young, beautiful slaves belonging unreservedly to the man,...".

Interestingly, Elshtain (1982) rejects radical feminism's idea of the family as the perpetuator of capitalism, or as the realm in which women are subservient or imprisoned. Echoing several communitarians, she argues the family incorporates values that challenge corporate powers. Further, because it is based on a morality of the social compact and sustained by suasion, rather than a contract and coercion, it forms a locus where the 'I' is always a 'We'. Elshtain's main concern is to avoid women simply disowning the tradition of the family as they inevitably end up being co-opted into the masculine, public realm. In this respect Elshtain personifies Fox-Genovese's thesis, especially when she argues that the family is a source of value, of rootedness, and non-instrumentalism. However, whilst Elshtain's intention is valid - to upgrade the downtrodden feminine virtues - she seems to believe it possible that the historical legacy of monogamous misogyny can simply be forgotten. This legacy, Sypnowich (1993) has shown, included conformism as a prerequisite for nurturance, the branding of women who challenged the familial community as subversives or outsiders,

89 We might understand the communal household and family as a literary device used by Engels to account for the first historic division of labour, that between men and women for the production of children. Feminists do not yearn for a return to this presocietal construct, and perhaps their aversion to this hypothesis is due to women having belonged to all men of the community, in which case the monogamous family would have been a marginal improvement in heralding the ownership of a woman by one man only! It is, therefore, this second aspect of domination, that is the monogamous family, that communitarians imply in seeking to retrieve traditions. See Gutmann (1985, esp. pp.318-319) regarding this last point.
and their discardment from the community on the supposition that they were traitors, whores, or witches. Elshtain is, unlike masculine traditionalists, at least explicit about the legacy of the family and the tradition of which it is a part, but for some the tradition is simply too badly tarnished.

This tarnishing is most evident in the way the tradition invoked by communitarians, and which the family is a core part of, has excluded and oppressed women. It is this exclusion, Kymlicka (1990) suggests, that is consistently neglected in the works of those seduced by the romanticism of premodernity, where legitimacy came from the effective pursuit of shared ends. The institutions that realised these ends were more often than not specific about the qualifications for entry into them, and the only "...way in which legitimacy was ensured amongst all members was to exclude some (usually women) from membership" (Ibid., p.226). Kymlicka argues that communitarians like Sandel and MacIntyre believe it is possible to now include those who were previously excluded. But in wanting to do this, they fail to realise that exclusion had a purpose, namely, the ends pursued served only the interests of white, heterosexual men, and to now include women is tantamount to asking them to assume a masculine identity (Ibid.). It is because of the traditional specificity of these institutional practices that contemporary political structures are increasingly losing their legitimacy and exacerbating the marginalisation of previously excluded groups. As Kymlicka (Ibid., p.227) says, "...just such a loss of legitimacy seems to be occurring among many elements of American society - blacks, gays, single mothers, non-Christians - as the right wing tries to implement its agenda on the Christian, patriarchal family".

In a similar vein Hirsch (1986) refers to relatively peripheral groups who are challenging traditional constitutional theory in a bid to secure legal rights into the community. The problems they face, however, are confounded by the lack of an account of the conditions
necessary to create or maintain a community. This, Hirsch claims, is a deliberate ploy by
communitarian theorists, because central to the creation of a community is its limited size and
social differentiation, whilst to maintain it requires (a potentially indoctrinating) moral
education and strong homogeneity. Hirsch (Ibid.,p.424) therefore writes that "...the longing
for community is a chimera - romantic, naive, and, in the end, illiberal and dangerous".90

A partial attempt at reconciling feminism with the traditions and practices of
communitarianism has been made by Friedman (1989). Initially, she is cautious about
communitarian philosophy, which is "...a perilous ally for feminist theory..." because the
families, neighbourhoods and nations it praises have been based on social roles and structures
that were oppressive to women (Ibid.,p.227). Friedman argues that three aspects of
communitarianism are particularly unacceptable to feminists. Most importantly, a metaphysical
conception of the subject is juxtaposed by communitarians with the liberal subject, and the
latter is rejected due to its failure to acknowledge the subject as social. Communitarians are
not, therefore, necessarily saying the autonomous, independent and separate liberal subject is
morally inferior, rather that it is inaccurate vis-a-vis the encumbered subject. For feminists,
however, the liberal subject, because it is inaccurate, is morally inferior to the feminine subject
of connection, sociality, inclusion, care and nurturance. Communitarianism and its
metaphysical subject thus become "...largely irrelevant to the array of normative tasks which
many feminist thinkers have set for a conception of the self" (Ibid.,p.280). Additionally, the
communities advocated are of no benefit to women. Whether the governmental community
that constitutes our civic and national identities, or the local community based around the

90Unfortunately Hirsch’s alternative of a liberal society, where membership is determined
by status-attributes like social and psychological identifications, or attainment-attributes such
as political citizenship, is an equally hostile tradition for women to adopt.
family and neighbourhood, they have historically made illegitimate moral claims on women linked to hierarchies of domination, and have been characterised by exclusion and oppression. Friedman does, nonetheless, say we should retain the communitarian insights about the contribution of community and social relationships to self-identity. Where she differs from and seeks to improve on communitarian visions is in her belief that modern subjects have no \textit{a priori} loyalties to any community. Further, she advocates communities of friendship and urban relationships based exclusively on voluntariness.

To a large extent, communitarians simply change the spatial metaphor from height to depth in seeking a vantage point for value (Downing and Thigpen, 1986). That is, unlike liberals who ascend to some hypothetical, universal perspective, communitarians base their principles of justice on values extrapolated from shared traditions and understandings. Friedman, it might argued, in associating membership of a community with voluntary association, is inverting the spatial metaphor. By allowing subjects to hover above various communities, she implies that they can then choose which ones to join. Apart from sounding distinctly contractual, this type of modern community is, as Fox-Genovese (1991, pp.43-44) argues, no more than the illusion of personal commitment and non-market bonds - a community, in short, cannot be voluntary if it is to survive and flourish. Fox-Genovese makes a lucid analogy between marriage as traditionally enforced by communal, legal and religious sanctions, and modern contract marriage which is no longer permanently binding. Hence, modern love, and by analogy contract marriage and voluntary communities, provides "...the comforting illusion of choice, loyalty, and perhaps even continuity - who dares any more to mention permanence? - to gloss over the fragility of the temporary alliance of interest of two individuals" (Ibid., p.44).

Explicit in Taylor (1989b) above, and implicitly with Fox-Genovese too, is the idea
that the liberal-communitarian debate exists within the same paradigm, that of modern political philosophy. An appropriation of all or part of the values that underlie it must thus be done carefully, as indeed Friedman has attempted to do. As we saw in the preceding section, Young (1986a) is dissatisfied with liberalism because of the logic of identity’s totalising effects upon the subject. Similarly, Young (1986b) is sceptical about theorists who, dissatisfied with capitalist patriarchal society, evoke rather than articulate a sense of community as an alternative. These theorists, Young (Ibid.,p.1) adds, are only united insofar as they "...share a critique of liberal individualist social ontology". By applying the same technique or method of critique to communitarians, Young illustrates how, in another sense, liberals and communitarians fall within the same paradigm.

Young (Ibid.) is concerned with communitarianism’s metaphysics and it denial of the potential for difference. This occurs because the ideal of community presupposes subjects who are not only present to themselves, but who understand one another as they understand themselves. A failure to understand another would therefore cause them to be excluded as an other - as has historically been the case for women in their exclusion from political communities. Young, following Derrida, says a (language) sign signifies and has meaning by its place in the chain of signs and by differing from other signs. The sign is further understood in virtue of having a multiplicity of meanings and directions of interpretation. A metaphysics of presence which, Young argues, is characteristic of the ideal of community, therefore tries to detemporalise and despatialise this signifying process by inventing the illusion of pure present meaning. This leads to the elimination of the sign’s referential point in the chain of

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91By grouping communitarians together like this Young herself is arguably guilty of totalising them. See Gardbaum (1992) or Taylor (1989b) above who suggest communitarians can not be simply grouped into one coherent ‘school’.
signs. The project of elimination is embarked upon by communitarian metaphysics which conceives of the being and truth of things as lying outside of time and change. Liberal ontologies and communitarian frameworks, therefore, are not acceptable for feminists as they both belong in what Young (Ibid.,p.6) calls the bourgeois patriarchal culture.

Hekman (1992) restates the similarities existent within this debate of modern political philosophy. She says communitarian critiques attempt no more than a synthesis between the individualism of modernity and the values of community. By including freedom and equality in their communities, ‘dialectical communitarians’\(^\text{92}\) reconcile the social subject with the abstract subject to acknowledge "...a concept of community in which individuality and commonality are intertwined" (Ibid.,p.1106). Still, this new dialectical subject is reliant upon the existence of separate autonomous and communal spheres for affirmation, or a public-private dichotomy, and as such "...does nothing to alleviate the polarity of the terms or to forge a discourse that displaces that polarity" (Ibid.,p.1107). On the other hand, Hekman argues ‘premodern communitarianism’\(^\text{93}\) does no better in simply reproducing patriarchal discourse. They may recognise the differences between and the essential contributions of each gender, but in reality difference amounts to inferiority, not equality, and a woman’s contribution is in terms of reproduction and nurturance. Any attempt, therefore, at amalgamating these two brands of communitarianism will reveal little of benefit for women. Not even the more modern notion of dialectical communitarianism is acceptable to feminism, as it shares a strong affinity with fraternity. And fraternity, Hekman continues, indicates

\(^{92}\)‘Dialectical communitarians’ bear a strong resemblance to Gardbaum’s ‘antiatomism communitarians’ above.

\(^{93}\)‘Premodern communitarians’ are similar to the ‘strong communitarians’ of Gardbaum above.
rational individuals bound together by their mutual search for autonomy and freedom; or, put another way, brothers who sign a social contract whose aim is to secure sexual access to women.

Fraternity, therefore, might be seen as the dominant form of community that has oppressed women. It has implicitly co-existed with and at times been overwhelmed by notions of liberty and equality, but fraternity has played an important role of complementing the liberal public person. Existing within the liberal framework, the community of fraternity arises from the social contract, which is a "...fraternal pact that constitutes civil society as a patriarchal or masculine order" (Pateman, 1988, p.101). It provides for liberalism, Pateman (Ibid., p.103) argues, a more sociologically adequate account of the abstract subject; a sense of meaning, if you will, clung to out of desperation in the transformation from premodernity to modernity. In fact, Pateman (1991) writes modernity is distinguished by patriarchy as fraternal right, from patriarchy as paternal authority in premodernity. Thus, the political authority of kings in premodernity and the obedience of those they ruled was derived from a father's familial rule over his son. Modernity as fraternity, however, arose when the social contractarians rejected the parallel between paternal and political rule by arguing that the familial and political realms are distinct (Pateman, 1988, pp.104-105). What underlies both paternal and fraternal patriarchal communities, though, is conjugal right. Hence, the contractualists, in defeating the father-son dimension of patriarchy, simply perpetuated the subordination of women by replacing it with the masculine dimension of patriarchy, that of a husband's rule over his wife. This feat, Pateman claims, was facilitated by the unanimity
within modern political philosophy concerning the naturalness of masculine supremacy.94

As we have already seen in the discussion of liberalism and feminism above, the social contractors or political persons were men. They did not contract as fathers, however, as this right was defeated by the contract theorists. Instead, they contracted as husbands on equal terms, as brothers, and it "...is no accident that fraternity appears historically hand in hand with liberty and equality, nor that it means exactly what it says: brotherhood" (Ibid.,p.109).

Drawing on Freud and Filmer, Pateman (Ibid.,pp.112-115) argues sexual right originates with the sons' murder of the women-hoarding father. Thereafter, the sons agree to share the women between themselves, initially in the shape of exogamy, and later in modernity in the form of the monogamous family.95 Alternatively, Adam's right of domination over Eve is paternal right, or the right to demand sexual access to her body for the production of (male) heirs. The community of fraternity, Pateman concludes, cannot be a home for women as it rests upon the sex right of the male and manifests in its laws everything women are seen to lack - rational justice. The dilemma for women, therefore, is whether they can accept these misogynist communities, from the institution of monogamous marriage, the traditional family or intercourse, to the romantic yearnings for ancient traditions of virtue and community. Politically, this dilemma relates to what Dworkin (1987,pp.123-124) sees as the fundamental question of feminism and freedom: "can an occupied people (women) - physically occupied

94"The contract theorists' aim was theoretical parricide, not the overthrow of the sexual right of men and husbands. Both sides (that is, the fraternal and paternal patriarchs) agreed, first, that women (wives), unlike sons, were born and remained naturally subject to men (husbands); and, second, that the right of men over women was not political" (Pateman,1988,p.107).

95Dworkin (1987) argues male sex right in modernity is not only limited to the family. Rather, it is exercised through intercourse generally, a situation where "...thrusting is persistent invasion. She is opened up, split down the center. She is occupied - physically, internally in her privacy" (Ibid.,p.122).
inside, internally invaded - be free: can those with a metaphysically compromised privacy have self-determination; can those without a biologically-based physical integrity have self-respect?
Conclusion

To a large extent the thrust of the preceding discussion has been historical. Three epochs were distinguished, premodernity, modernity, and postmodernity, and they were examined from two perspectives. Metaphorically, this was from the twin perspectives of below and above, or through an evaluation of the ontological assumptions that provide the foundations for a politico-moral framework. In premodernity, variously portrayed as the Renaissance episteme (Foucault) or the existential predicament of the fear of condemnation (Taylor), the subject was essentially related to and a part of others in virtue of belonging within a great chain of being (Benhabib). One’s meaning or purpose was divine, and this conception of the subject found expression in Christian philosophy (Saint Augustine). The shift to modernity that occurred between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries was characterised in a number of ways, including the analogy, with reference to the subject, of a traumatic, protracted re-birthing (Bordo), or as the discovery of ‘man’ in ‘his’ finitude (Foucault), or as the age of moral pluralism and receding moral horizons (Taylor), or the triumph of subjective particularity (Hegel). Common to these accounts was the realisation that ‘man’, in modernity, was alone and no longer obligated to a cosmological framework of meaning.

As a reaction to this men, we might argue, engaged in a quest for meaning by asserting their newly claimed right to be free. The masculine subject based this claim initially on what were understood as natural distinctions between the sexes. The female was inherently and inescapably biological and to be identified by her bodily functions, a conception arrived at in premodernity through a tradition starting with Aristotle and continuing in Saint Augustine
and Aquinas. The moderns, especially Descartes, Kant, Hegel and the liberal contractualists, elided this supposedly natural fact into the existential context of modernity. That is to say, faced with the pressing need to restore or reinvent meaningful politico-moral frameworks, they separated the natural-body-female, or the ‘feminine’, from the rational-mind-male, or the ‘masculine’, and created institutions for the latter in the guise of a public person, while confining the former to the private. Hence, being has been associated with reason (*raison as d'être*) and non-being with biological contingency, or women (*nature as not d'être*). And it was within the public realm that liberal, Enlightenment values matured, allowing formally equal and free men to pursue their own particular meanings. Ontologically, therefore, the modern man’s purpose was the realisation of freedom. Conversely, the question of a framework was addressed insofar as it allowed freedom to flourish, and we have seen how this has been typified as fraternal in character (Pateman and Hekman).

Analytically, the person was the form of the subject used to justify modernity. Here, we followed the contractualist tradition which conceived of the person as asocial, independent, and as the possessor of reason. These characteristics corresponded to the opposite of modernity’s chaotic, malevolent virago (Bacon), nature, and through metaphor (Lloyd) and analogy (Rooney), the ‘feminine’. The contractualists thus posited the masculine person in opposition to the feminine, and similarly meaning - as rational institutions - in contrast to natural randomness. Although this liberal tradition has been dominant, the search for a common rather than particular form of meaning has always been prevalent. Communitarians have oscillated in this search for wholeness between retrieving premodern traditions (MacIntyre and Sandel), and illucidating culturally specific and modern values (Rorty, Oakeshott and Taylor). In so doing, however, communitarianism does not seek to refute the subject’s right to be particular (Friedman). Instead, it provides periodic correction (Sandel) to
a subject’s existential Angst - inevitable in view of ‘his’ premodern origins. As such, fraternity as the dominant form of community was suggested, and is arguably a logical soulmate to liberalism (Taylor, Gutmann, Dworkin and Walzer). Within this tradition of modern political philosophy, therefore, is the masculine person who is the cornerstone of our public institutions, as well as the masculine self who seeks to define himself in the privacy of the private sphere.

Unfortunately, this conception of the subject and his concomitant framework of patriarchy is untenable. In particular, if western societies are to accord equal respect to all human beings (Taylor), never mind the more difficult issue of societal equality, then far reaching cultural and societal reform is needed. Far reaching, we might say, in virtue of modernity’s masculine project having been so thoroughly invidious to women. Examples of this which were discussed range from the disparities in our conceptions of birth and death (Held), or the denigration of women in even her apparently natural, familial role (Okin), to the sexual objectification of women (Rooney, Haslanger) and the invasion of her body for political purposes (Engels, Pateman). Implicit in several accounts, too, was the intimation of a lack of women’s awareness of their subtle oppression (MacKinnon), but which results in the possibility of a reverse form of discrimination through the advocation of essentialist arguments (Gilligan, Irigaray).

The question then arises of how to forge this transformation in socio-cultural and politico-moral attitudes and institutions. In this respect, feminists who desire this change experience a sense of intellectual purgatory. Having exposed the core ontological assumptions of modernity as masculine specific, they have also brought into question the patriarchal framework he supports. Whether in premodernity or modernity, however, a universal ontological theory, notwithstanding what we now see as having been its gender bias, always
formed the basis for a politico-moral framework. But today, in a postmodern Weltanschauung, the erection of a framework is, at best, seen as impossible due to moral subjectivity, and at worst, homogenising and oppressive. Nonetheless, women require a post-patriarchal framework to realise their freedom and our notion of equal respect, yet upon what conception of the subject can it be constructed, if at all? Ontologically, therefore, feminism remains in the modern paradigm which seeks to posit some universal notion of subjecthood, while at the level of a politico-moral framework, feminism tends towards postmodern ideas of moral and political subjectivity. This ontological and politico-moral dilemma, therefore, is the realm - purgatory - in which we find the feminine subject caught between modernity and postmodernity.
Bibliography


