Tracing the Misogynous: An Exploration into the Foundations of Philosophy

…the equity of practical judgements and the objectivity of theoretical knowledge…. all these categories are formally generically human, but are infact masculine in terms of their actual historical formation. If we call ideas that claims absolute validity objectivity binding, then it is a fact that in the historical life of our species there operates the equation: objective = male (Cited in Lewis 1977: 873)

In this chapter we propose to highlight the endemic misogyny inherent in male philosophers by noting the ways in which philosophy disregarded the inclusion of women in the category of rational subjects, citizens or as moral agent and characterized ways in which women were devalued by making them seem inferior. The history of sexism and misogyny has largely been ignored by the academic philosophical mainstream; often dismissed as unimportant, ‘a kind of local accident’ whose recognition does not affect philosophical discussion and theorizing.

Concerned with the apathy extended to issues relating to women, feminist found it crucial to make a critical analysis of philosophy moving on to investigate the overt and covert ways in which the devaluation of the women was found to be inherent in the most enduring ideals, the central concepts, and the dominant theories of philosophy. They begun by examining if there was any justification for the ideals of reason and virtue to be considered as ‘masculine’ whether there are any underlying motives which regard the content of philosophical theories as ‘masculine’; can philosophy be seen as ‘gendered’ even in cases where such things as the nature of women and men is not apparently under discussion? The analysis of this kind of ‘masculinity’ goes much deeper than merely cataloguing or analyzing overt instances of misogyny or sexism.
In examining the history of philosophy, feminists make sure not to replicate that history. Their purpose was to understand its character and to listen to its ‘reason’ not in order to reproduce it but in order to challenge the undertones and the silences of philosophy. Both, the contents and its inevitable ramification were taken note of. In other words, they are studied, not always for what is said but also for what is deliberately not said or what cannot be openly stated. It examines why certain concepts and their contents are privileged and certain others treated with denigration. Feminists involved in such projects claim that philosophy may not be able to tell us a great deal about men and male desire. The desire, for example which underlies the work of Descartes, for a unified and universally appropriate truth, is itself in need of examination.

Women are clearly omitted from mainstream philosophizing, and if at all present, they inhabit the margins yet philosophical texts do inscribe the nature of woman. Sometimes the philosopher speaks directly about woman, prescribing her role, making claims about her abilities and inabilities, stating her desires. At other times the message is indirect – a passing remark hinting at the drawbacks, their emotionality, irrationality, unreliability etc. thus condemning them.

The process of delineation often occurs in far more subtle ways when the central concepts of philosophy – reason and justice; characteristics that are taken to chiefly define human beings – are associated with traits historically identified with masculinity leaving femininity empty.

Feminist philosophers critically examined canonized texts of philosophy concluding that the discourses of philosophy are not gender-neutral. Philosophical narratives do not offer a universal perspective, but rather
privilege some experiences and beliefs over others. These experiences and beliefs permeate entire philosophical discourse whether they be aesthetic, epistemological, moral or metaphysical. Yet this fact has mostly been neglected by male philosophers. Given the history of canon formation in western philosophy, the perspective most likely to be privileged is that of upper class white males. To be vigilant to the impact of this privilege it becomes imperative that feminists re-read the cannon with attention weeding out philosopher’s assumptions concerning gender deeply embedded in their theories.

G. Loloyd identifies a gendered reason/emotion dualism going back to the Greeks, though she also registers the particular contribution of Descartes to modern entrenchment of this dichotomy. However, she adds, ‘his influential dualism (mind and body) has interacted with and reinforced the effects of the symbolic opposition between male and female’ (Lloyd 1993: XIV).

There is no doubt about ways in which male philosophers have devalued women, believed them to be inferior or held them in contempt. The history of misogyny has been a dreary one. It is absolutely bewildering as to how such claims could be made and more pertinently sustained in the annals of philosophy. To quote a few representative philosophers:

“As between male and female, the former is by nature superior and ruler, the latter inferior and subject” (Aristotle ‘Politics’).

“Women are directly fitted for acting as the nurses and teachers of our early childhood by the fact that they are themselves childish, frivolous and short-sighted; in a word, they are big children all their lifelong” (Schopenhauer ‘On Women’).

“Here at its origin we grasp one of the most fundamental tendencies of human reality – the tendency to fill … A good part of our life is passed in plugging in holes, in filling empty places, in realising and symbolically establishing a plenitude…. It is
only from this standpoint that we can pass only to sexuality. The obscenity of the feminine sex is that of everything which ‘gapes open’’” – (Sartre ‘Being and Nothingness’).

The most useful starting point, I think, is to consider the ways in which women have been excluded by many philosophers from philosophical ideal of such things as human nature and morality. And to look at the inconsistencies and problems this may generate in their theories.

Such apparent misogyny is said to have traces in Greek philosophy permeated deep into the systems of thought and in effect gendering the cannon. One of its manifestations appears in the form of association between “male”: and “rational” and “female” and “emotional”. The idea that the rational is in one way or the other associated with masculinity goes back to the Greeks, the founding father of rationality Aristotle stated that woman was “as it were an impotent male, for it is through certain incapacity that the female is female” (Aristotle 727a, 15). This intrinsic female incapacity was a lack in the “principle of soul” (ibid: Book II, Ch. 3, 737a, 25) and hence associated with an incapacity for rationality. Aristotle claimed that women do have a rational faculty, but they have it in an inferior fainter way, just enough to distinguish them from at best animals. They are not equal to man, somehow lesser men, lesser in respect to all important things.

Before the eighteenth century it was acknowledged that men and women are unequal by nature and that women are designed naturally inferior to men. Aristotle makes such a claim in his work, Politics:

“It is thus clear that there are by nature freemen and slaves, and that servitude is agreeable and just for the latter …. Equally, the relation of the male to the female is by nature such that one is superior and the other inferior, one dominates and the other is
dominated …. With the barbarians, of course, the female and the dominated have the same rank. This is because they do not possess a naturally dominating element…. This is why the poets say, ‘it is just that Greeks rule over barbarians’ because the barbarians and slaves are by nature the same’ (Aristotle, 1959).

Aristotle equates women and slave and ascribe them quality ‘servitude’ as natural. This implies that inequality between men and women is precisely because of the inherent nature of two sexes. Thus declaring that by nature women deserve servitude and men mastery. Aristotle held that since men are superior to women, so they must dominate over women, thus allocating to women a position of inferiority.

Aristotle characterized women as barbarians, equated them with slaves aspiring or deserving no freedom, and condemned them to remain under the domination of man. Following this logic, Aristotle ordained that inequality between men and women being based on nature cannot be dispensed with. Several other thinkers of antiquity the Christian Middle Ages and of modern times in acceptance with Aristotle’s position assumed the natural hierarchy between men and women.

Another instance of a similar kind is to be located in the Greek distinguishing between the different domains of life for men and women. In classical Athens, Greeks made a distinction between polis or political community and the Okios or household. This distinction between polis and okios followed by the Greeks was comparable to the contract between public and private spheres (Nicholson 1981: 85-95). The domain of household was concerned with what was necessary for physical survival and greatly similar to the existence of animals. Thus, within the realm of the household, slaves and
women accordingly, laboured to satisfy the demands of natural existence. The polis, on the other hand, provided the space for the expression and exploration for that which was more distinctly human; a space reserved for men was confined under no boundaries, a man could discover and explore utilizing his creativity and achieve immortality. Hannah Arendt presents this view in the following words:

“For the polis was for the Greeks, as the res publica was for the Roman, first of all their guarantee against the futility of individual life, the space protected against this futility and reserved for the relative permanence, if not immortality of mortals (Arendt 1958: 56).

The polis of Greeks or res publica of Romans was the realm of specifically created for men and the okios was where slaves and women engaged in the critical physical production and reproduction of life. Writing about the transformation of the political from classical Greece to the modern era, Arendt points out that the Greek opposition between okios and polis has been replaced by the modern distinction between the private and public.

Much of Aristotle’s philosophy is based on the assumption that every existing thing can be seen as existing for a purpose. The function of a thing needs to be identified to make sense of the purpose. And since the function resides in its nature and since in turn nature distinguishes it from other things and makes it the sort of thing that it is Aristotle assumes that, just as the individual parts of the human body have a function, or just as the harp player has a function, so too the human beings have a function to perform, which is to develop their special talent or attribute.
Other attributes and functions such as nurturing and growth, sensations and experiencing are shared by other living beings too but what distinguishes human beings is their faculty of reason. Hence, he concludes that the function of human beings is to exercise their non-corporeal faculties or ‘soul’ in accordance with a ‘principle of reason’. And central to the capacity for reason is the faculty of speech. So, he says, in the Politics:

“Nature, as we say, does nothing without some purpose, and she has endowed humans alone among animals with the power of speech. Speech is something different from voice, which is possessed by other animals also and used by them to express pain or pleasure, for their nature does indeed enable them not only to feel pleasure and pain but to communicate their feelings to each other. Speech, on the other hand, serves to indicate what is useful and what is harmful, and so also what is just and what is unjust. For the real difference between humans and animals is that humans alone have perceptions of good and evil, just and unjust” (Aristotle Politics: 60).

The distinguishing mark of human beings thus lies in their power of reasoning, which is related to the faculty of speech. It is ‘according to Nature’; that it is consonant with the function or special mark of humanness that the body should be ruled by the soul:

“The living creature consist in the first place of mind and body, and of these the former is ruled by nature, the latter … It is clear that it is both natural and expedient for the body to be ruled by the soul, and for the emotional part of our Nature to be ruled by the mind, the part which possesses Reason” (Aristotle Politics: 68).

Ironically enough there were according to Aristotle, certain classes of human beings who were excluded from the full exercise of human reason; namely, slaves and women for he regarded slaves as basically a form of property: ‘Any piece of property can be regarded as a tool enabling a man to live, and his property is an assemblage of such tools; a slave is a sort of living
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piece of property, and like any other servant is a tool in charge of other tools’ (Aristotle Politics: 64). The life of a slave is simply a means to an end that enables the master to pursue a life of freedom and virtue among other male citizens of a city state or polis. The life of a woman was similarly a collection of functions. The wife of a male citizen was required to produce heirs and, much like slaves, to be the means in providing the necessities of life to the man. Aristotle also held that the family or household (to which women and slaves were confined), existed ‘for the sake of’ the polis. It was an inferior though necessary form of association, whose rationale lay in its belief that it is ‘natural’ for the rational part of the soul to rule over the irrational. This generates an anomaly in Aristotle’s philosophy on account of the assumptions that lead to it. The anomaly has been discussed in detail by Elizabeth Spelman (1983). Aristotle compared the rule of the mind over the body the rule of the master over the slave. He believed that there was a class of ‘natural rulers’ (those whom nature had intended to rule). But he did not believe that everyone who was born into this natural ruling class necessarily possessed the qualities of mind and character to equip them for this task. There were free males who did not possess the rational aspect of the soul and so could not rule. In this situation Aristotle found it in order that the rational should rule the irrational. This however was not applicable to women and slaves who possessed rationality for it would blur the distinctions he had drawn. Spelman suggests, this would be tantamount, to saying that women are by nature unnatural. What Aristotle does is to offer a general theory of human nature and then simply excluded certain classes of human beings from ‘human nature’ in ways which cannot be explained at all within the theory.
Aristotle’s entire political philosophy rests on providing the means for free males to live a life devoted to intellectual and political pursuits. Now, here arises a question, to which Aristotle recognized and answered as well. Women and slaves are, after all, human beings. They do not lack speech, and the adequate performance of their functions will surely require capacities for reason, and perhaps certain virtues. Here is how he expresses the problem:

About slaves, the first question to be asked is whether, in addition to their virtues as tools or servants, they have another and more valuable one. Can they possess restraint, courage, justice and every other condition of that kind, or have they in fact nothing but the serviceable quality of their persons? The question may be answered in either of two ways, but both present a difficulty. If we say that slaves have these virtues, how then will they differ from free man? If we say that they have not, the position is anomalous, since they are human beings and share in reason. Roughly the same question can be put in relation to wife and child. (Aristotle Politics: 94).

Aristotle’s solution to this problem is to argue that the type of knowledge possessed by slaves (and presumably, women) was a special type. The fully rational part of the soul, the ‘deliberately faculty’ was not present at all in slaves and was ineffective in females. The knowledge and virtue of slaves and women consisted in knowing how to be ruled and how to perform their allotted tasks, and this did not qualify as fully rational.

Now this view of women and slaves, combined with Aristotle’s assumption that one class of human beings – namely free males should lead a life of self-justification or as lived for its own sake, and others should lead a life that is merely a means to it. And he consistently regards women as defective, inferior beings, almost as a degenerate form of human life. This comes out very clearly in his understanding of biology. Aristotle believed that
the female supplied the ‘matter’ in conception, and he thought this to consist of the menstrual fluid. The male, on the other hand, supplied the ‘form’ or ‘soul’, via the emission of semen. He believed the male to be superior in possessing more ‘vital heat’ than the female; semen, he thought, was a concoction of the blood which was superior in all respects. Females were inferior because of their inability to ‘concoct’ semen. Female embryos were inferior to males ones; if a girl child was born, it was an indication of the inferiority of the state of the uterus. Aristotle regarded the female state as being a sort of deformity, although one which occurred in the ordinary course of nature. Aristotle, of course, did not have access to modern biological knowledge about conception. But the assumption of the inferiority of the female in no way follows from his purely biological assumptions.

In Book X of the *Metaphysics*, Aristotle stated that male and female mutual contraries. Further he claimed that in a pair of contraries, one must always be the privation of the other. Subsequently, the female was interpreted as the privation of the male.

“For every contrariety involves, as one of its term, a privation, but not all cases are alike” (Aristotle X 41055b:16)

Privation was an inability or incapacity that prevented one contrary from becoming its opposite. Aristotle used a Greek word ‘*steresis*’ for privation, which implied an emptiness, or total passivity.

Now we distinguish matter and privation, and hold that one of these, namely the matter, is not-being only in virtue of an attribute which it has, while the privation in its own nature is not being… but they make it one” (Aristotle 192a: 3-10).
Aristotle in separating privation from matter suggested that while privation has no identity at all, matter had to have a specified nature; pure matter cannot exist independent of form.

For the one which persists is a joint cause, with the form, of what comes to be - a mother, as it were. But the negative part of the contrariety may often seem, if you concentrate your attention on it as an evil agent, not to exist at all (Aristotle 192a: 12-15).

Since the concept of privation involves a negative valuation, it follows that this description of the female as the privation of the male provided the metaphysical framework for sex polarity. In fact, Aristotle concluded, that the female is inferior to the male, the female became identified with the properties of matter, with passivity, and with the lowest of elements. The male, correspondingly, became identified with the properties of form, with activity, and with elements of higher order.

In Book X of the *Metaphysics*, Aristotle devoted an entire chapter to considering the way in which male and female were contraries. One of the central issues he discussed was how women and men are different. He argued that the difference in attributes like skin color do not lead to the difference in species because colour was contrariety in matter and not in form. Contrariety led to a difference in species only when the form of one thing was contrary to the form of another. He therefore concluded that the contrariety of male and female was a contrariety, not of form, but of matter:

But male and female, while they are not modifications peculiar to “animal”, are not so in virtue of its essence but in the matter, i.e., the body. That is why the same seed becomes female or male by being acted on in a certain way. We have stated, then, what it is to be other in species, and why some things differ in species and others do not”. (Aristotle 1058b: 22-25).
In *Metaphysics*, Aristotle further argued that whenever there is a pair of contraries, one is to be considered the privation of the other. Privation, then, determines the characteristics of the two contraries, since privation was complete non-being, with no identity of its own, it could only be found in something that had a nature. Therefore, matter was interpreted as the privation of form, and the female as the privation of male. Matter, privation and the female, were integrated into the foundation of Aristotle’s metaphysics of sex polarity.

It is also noteworthy that Aristotle believed that the sexes were differentiated precisely by their respective relation to matter and form in the process of generation:

> The female always provides the material, the male that which fashions the material into shape; this, in our view, is the specific characteristic of each sex (Aristotle 738b: 20-25).

Aristotle believed that when the difference between the function of two things was stipulated, this difference constituted the basis for a distinction in nature, the presence of a rational faculty differentiated human beings from other kinds of animals, and the relation to matter and form differentiated women from man:

> We may safely set down as the chief principles of generation the male (factor) and the female (factor): the male as possessing the principle of movement and generation, the female as possessing that of matter” (Aristotle 1937: 761a: 6-10).

Just as form activated matter and gave it a certain shape, so the male becomes the source of movement and shape for the female. By a further process of association, man initiated a relationship with woman, and man attempted to develop the identity of the woman to conform to his own ideas. Just as matter
itself was lifeless and unformed, so woman by herself needed a man to be awakened i.e. the matter (woman) needed to be shaped by form (man) to become what it had the potential to achieve.

One of the most far-reaching consequences of the Aristotelian thought regarding woman in relation to man was the association of the female with passivity and the male with activity. To interpret matter as passivity implied a separation between matter and form in which matter was in no way dynamic, while form was fully active. On the other hand, the concept of matter as potential implied an existent in motion, a dynamic energy in natural things.

Now of course the female, *qua* female, is passive, and the male, *qua* male, is active – it is that whence the principle of movement comes. Taking, then, the widest formulation of each of these two opposites, viz., regarding the male *qua* active and causing movement, and the female *qua* passive and being set in movement, we see that the one thing which is formed *from them* only in the sense in which a bedstead is formed form the carpenter and the wood, or a bull from the wax and the form. (Aristotle 729b: 15-20).

Aristotle applying his metaphysical distinctions to the question of generation elaborates that women and men were characterized by their specific relation to the opposites hot and cold. The private opposite, cold was more present in female. While the superior opposite, hot was more present in the male. As a consequence, the mother provided only material to generation, while the father provided form. The lack of heat in the female made her unable to concoct the seed that contained the form of the child; Aristotle described woman as infertile, imperfect, deformed, and containing a basic inability:

The male and the female are distinguished by a certain ability and inability. Male is that which is able to concoct, to cause to take shape, and to discharge semen possessing the “principle” of the “form”… Female is that which receives the semen but is
unable to cause semen to take shape or to discharge it” (Aristotle 765b: 10-18).

Aristotle continues by offering two examples of relationship. The female was compared to wood and wax, the male to carpenter and form. In both examples, the property of passivity in the female is emphasized. Wood and Wax, as examples of specific matter awaiting the carpenter or the form to shape them; the male being the activating and shaping agent and the woman as passive in every aspect of her identity. In subsequent thought for centuries to come, this sense of female \textit{qua} female, or male \textit{qua} male, retained its meaning and application.

Another philosopher worth mentioning in this context is Plato. In \textit{Symposium}, Plato imagines the ‘Eros’ which is personified with the characteristics of both male and female; Eros being a figure that Plato adopted from traditional mythology, which regarded Eros as a masculine god of love. In Plato’s text Eros is both a lover and a philosopher. But despite his male nature, Eros also manifests female functions, such as pregnancy and giving birth. Thus he represents something ‘complete’, a being without the sexual limitations inherent in each man and woman. In other words, he is not entirely divine, but rather a being halfway between god and man. Eros transcends sexual difference, not because he lacks gender, but because he embraces both male and female sexuality.

This exposes a fundamental ambiguity in Plato’s notion of sexual difference. On the one hand, since sexual differences are purely bodily in nature and thus of no consequence in the realm of forms, they could be characterized as insignificant for Platonic philosophy. But in describing Eros as
a masculine being of androgynous sexuality, Plato has effectively absorbed the feminine into the masculine, and thereby forfeited any position of neutrality with regard to gender. The apparent gender neutrality of Plato’s philosophy in fact entails the negation of the feminine.

Furthermore, in the Republic (BK II + III) Plato’s ideal state consists of three distinct social groups: the workers, the guardians and the rulers. Strictly speaking, the discussion of usual equality in Book V of the Republic is concerned only with equality within the ruling class. Also, Socrates argument refers repeatedly to the functions of the guardians, and the way it does so is, noteworthy. Like the workers and the rulers, the guardians also have a special virtue i.e. courage, or rather manliness, which is a more literal translation of Greek word andreia (from aner, meaning ‘man’). And therefore courage and manliness were regarded as masculine virtues, and when Plato has Socrates advocate that the ‘best of all the women’ (Republic, 456e) should participate in governing the state, he is in fact speaking of the most masculine of women.

As Vigdis Songe points out in yet another aspect worth noting is that in the very passage where he claims that women and men are fundamentally the same, Socrates indirectly betrays an assumption of their essential difference. Whereas the male guardians are characterized as the best citizens (politai), the female guardians are described quite simply as the best women (gynaikes). In other words, man belongs to a political community, which adds to his definition and his nature as a human being whereas a woman is quite simply her sex. In this context, ‘the best women’ means paradoxically the woman that have most successfully overcome their sex, a sex which is wrought with
limitations. Thus, what Book V of *The Republic* does not propose an equal empowerment of sexes, but rather is an attempt to cultivate masculine qualities within the ruling class.

Thus for Plato, the ideal person happens to be one who is guided in all activities by *logos*, or reason and is masculine in character. Since a woman and the feminine are seem to be representing the body that ideality becomes inaccessible. Also in *Timaeus* the relation between immaterial realm of forms and the material world is compared with the relation between the father and the mother (*Timaeus*, 50). Often in *The Republic*, women are mentioned in the same sense as children and slaves, which mean that they are equated with people whose capacity for reason is regarded as inferior.

Plato, in regarding man as the true representative of human nature and the woman as something of qualitatively inferior, was echoing the prevalent attitude of his times. Plato’s attempt to include women amongst the potential rulers was not to provide women an equal footing with men, for she would have to overcome her feminine attributes and become like a man to gain that status. Her entitlement to be called a human being was also on account of the resemblances she shared with men.

**Augustine** one of the most influential Christian theologian of the Middle Ages. He was equally reluctant in privileging women with rationality. As he writes in *The Confessions*:

> And finally we see man, made in your image and likeness, ruling over all the irrational animals for the very reason that he was made in your image and resembles you, that is because he has the power of reason and understanding. And just as in man’s soul there are two forces: one which is dominant because it
deliberates and one which obeys because it is subject to such guidance, in the same way in the physical sense, woman has been made for man. In her mind and her rational intelligence she has a nature the equal of man’s, but in sex she is physically subject to him in the same way as our natural impulses need to be subjected to the reasoning power of the mind, in order that the actions to which they lead may be inspired by the principles of good conduct. (Augustine: 344).

Yet another such observation reinforces the subjugation reflecting clear remarks of woman to man:

Then you took man’s mind, which is subject to none but you and needs to imitate no human authority, and renewed it in your own image and likeness. You made rational action subject to the rule of the intellect, as woman is subject to man (Augustine: 345).

Being rational, woman ought to share a common nature with man and hence, to be equal to him. Augustine drew a hierarchy within rational faculty by differentiating between two different modes of rationality; a dominant and a passive mode. The relationships between the two modes are akin to the relationship between man and woman. These tensions surrounding woman’s status as a rational being surfaced during the Renaissance debating the question as to whether the term mankind include woman.

Further, great emphasis was laid on different virtues, especially chastity, which was to be for women the central virtue around which all others revolved. The principal justification for bothering with the education of women at all was to focus on chastity as their highest ideal. The social and economic factors too contributed to the subordination of women. The fact that women were the property of someone who therefore had special rights over them, ensured that women remained subject to a different array of moral restraints, obligations and correlative virtues. It was by no means critically assumed at this time that the dignity of man meant the dignity of males only. But the prolonged debate on
the nature and rationality of women was of little consequence for sexual equality. Much of the ‘sex’ debate during the Renaissance was conducted on theological grounds and therefore in accordance with theological interpretation woman’s status was made legitimate as man’s companion and helpmate and hence subject to his rule.

Hobbes, Locke and Rousseau were classical representative of this school of thought they assumed that before the existence of civil society lived in a sort of pre-social state, called the state of nature, and by virtue of a contract and consent among themselves, society came into existence. For example, John Locke assumed that there were patriarchal families in the state of nature and argued that fathers of families entered the social contract; wives were concluded by their husbands. In Locke’s conjectural history of the state of nature, fathers became monarch with the ‘scarce avoidable’ and tacit consent of their adult sons. One thing of our concern here is that Locke does not mention mothers in this context, but tacit assumption is that the wife and mother also give their consent to their husbands. Locke agreed with Filmer that a wife’s subjection to her husband had ‘a Foundation in Nature’ and that the will of a husband should ‘take place before that of his wife in all things of their common concernment’ (Locke, 1967, II: 75-16, I: 47-48). This means that women are excluded from the status of ‘individual’. If a wife’s subjection to her husband has a natural foundation, she cannot also be seen as a naturally ‘free and equal individual’.

In chapter 7 of Second treatise of Government Locke clearly mentions that when disagreements arise between husband and wife, the man “as the abler
and stronger is the ruler”. The ‘social contract’ and ‘consent’ theorists assumed that all individual are “naturally free and equal”, or are born free and equal to each other. It was imagined that in order to preserve their freedom and equality, free and equal individuals voluntarily consented to enter such relationship and their contract created the society. These consent theorists adopted two deliberate strategies to support their arguments: One, they turned to hypothetical voluntarism (Pateman 1972) and two, they excluded certain individuals i.e. women and social relationship (men-women relations) from the scope of consent.

In social consent and contract theory, women and relationship between the sexes are of no special relevance. The consent theorists declare that women are among the individuals who are incapable of consenting. And therefore, they excluded women from the category of individuals (man) who created the society through consent and contract. Also woman’s consent was always understood as given, even if they express their non-consent (or refuse to consent); it has been treated as irrelevant or has been interpreted as ‘consent’.

John Locke for example, used the metaphor of ‘tacit consent’: the consent of future generations can always be said to be given if individuals are going peacefully about their daily lives, even though there are “no Expressions of it at all” (Locke 1967: 119).

Another consent and contract theorist, Hobbes argues that all authority relations are based on consent, even between parent and infant. The parents’ domination over child derives not from procreation but from ‘consent, either expressed, or by other sufficient arguments declared’ (Hobbes, 1968: 253-254).
For Hobbes, overwhelming power is sufficient argument. His concept of consent merely interprets the fact, of power and submission. What is noteworthy in all such assumptions is that the consent was his (man’s) consent, her (woman’s) consent was never placed on the same footing as men.

Rousseau advocated that women must be excluded from the participatory, voluntarist political order because of their ‘natural weak’ moral characters and their deleterious influence upon the morals and civic virtues of men. It was these assumptions which led Rousseau to divide women into the good and the dissolute or whore.

For Rousseau women can remain good only if they remain under men’s perpetual vigil and control and stay within the shelter of domestic life. He pleaded for sexual segregation; the sexes were allowed to come together only where it was proper for them to do so. This is the plan of nature, which gives different tastes to the two sexes, so that they live apart each in his way’ (Rousseau 1968: 107). Women, Rousseau declares, ‘must be trained to bear the yoke from the first…. And to submit themselves to the will of others’ (Rousseau 1911: 332), and that ‘will of others’, is the will of men. The influence of women, even good women, always corrupts men, because women are ‘naturally’ incapable of attaining the status of free and equal individuals or citizens. The successive transformation of human consciousness or ‘nature’, which Rousseau depicts in the Discourse on Inequality and the Social Contract are actually the transformation of male consciousness and not of female. Note that in Rousseau’s ‘true’ state of nature, the sexes are equal in their ability to protect themselves but in his conjectural state of nature, he suddenly asserts
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that in the ‘happy epoch’, the ‘first difference was established in the way of life of the two sexes’, a difference that demands the future subordination of women (Rousseau 1964: 147).

Regarding sexual relationships, per se, Rousseau holds that ‘consent’ of women is all-important. However, their consent can always be assumed to be given - even though apparently it is being refused. According to Rousseau, men are ‘natural’ sexual aggressors and women are ‘destined to resist’, Rousseau (Rousseau 1968: 847) first ask: ‘what would become of human species if the order of attack and defense were changed’? He then, answers: Modesty and chastity are the preeminent virtues, but because women are also creatures of passion, they must use their natural skills of duplicity and dissemblance to maintain their modesty. In particular, they must always say ‘no’ even when they desire to say ‘yes’. Apparent refusal of consent can never, in a woman, be taken at face value. A quote from Rousseau confirms this explanation:

‘Why do you consult their words when it is not their mouths that speak?.... the lips always say ‘No’ and rightly so; but the tone is not always the same, and that cannot lie… Must her modesty condemn her to misery? Does she not require a means of indicating her inclinations without open expression? (Rousseau 1968: 348)

Having so said, Rousseau proceeds to advise men to learn to interpret a woman’s ‘consent’ in civil society:

To win this silent consent is to make use of all the violence permitted in love. To read it in the eyes, to see it in the ways inspite of the mouth’s denial …. If he then completes his happiness he is not brutal, he is decent. He does not insult chasteness; he respects it; he serves it. He leans it the honour of still defending what it would have perhaps abandoned’ (Rousseau 1968: 85).

Rousseau also appears to document rational incapability of woman:
The quest for abstract and speculative truths, principles and axioms in the sciences for everything that tend to generalize ideas, is not within the competence of women... Nor do women have sufficient precision and attention to succeed at the exact sciences. Woman, who is weak and who sees nothing outside the house, estimates and judges the forces she can put to work to make up for her weakness, and those forces are men’s passions. (Rousseau 1979: 386-7).

Rousseau did not stop here; he even recommended that ‘the education of women should always be relative to that of men’, for they ‘are specially made to please men.

This was not enough, even noted philosopher Immanual Kant decreed that the dependents have ‘no civil personality’ and includes ‘women in general’ in this category. Independence, he observes, ‘is conventionally demonstrated by ownership of property and only independent individuals have a property of their person’. Being considered dependent and devoid of civil personality, women have rarely be seen as owning their persons (Kant 1971: 139).

In Anthropology Kant describes that understanding the human nature of man is the necessary foundation for ethics even if it is that very nature that moral man must transcend. The ability to deny passion and to act from rationality determined dispassionate will is not given by nature. But it must be acquired. With a resolve or decision a man can become a man of “character”, capable of resisting passion and objects that arouse passion. Although this change in man has minimal requirement of rationality and can be achieved by the “ordinary human mind” there are many for whom it is difficult or impossible, like poets, clergyman but women are completely disqualified.

Women, said Kant, have principle, but these principles are “hard to relate with character in the narrow sense of the word” (Kant 1978: 222). They
have character, but in the sense that a natural kind has character. They have principles, but these are the result not of autonomous reasoning but of maxims like “what is generally believed is true” or what people generally do is good”. Women have a character, a character given by nature, a character ordained by biology (Ibid.)

Kant held that the reason why clergymen and poets cannot achieve moral maturity is social. While the reason why women cannot achieve moral maturity is “nature’s design”. Nature requires, Kant explained, that the species propagate. For that purpose union between men and women is necessary. For such a union to be stable “one person must subject himself to the other, and, alternately one must be superior to the other in something so he can dominate or rule” (Kant 1978: 216). If man and woman are identical there will be conflict. Nature’s solution is to make men superior in reason, strength and courage, and to give women a compensatory power to say no to men’s sexual desires.

People make fun of a woman’s loquacity, timidity, quarrelsomeness, and childishness, but, said Kant, these traits are no joke. They are the key to a woman’s power. They allow her to attract and entice men and then hold out for marriage. In this way a woman ensures not only procreation but support for herself and her children. As he writes in Anthropology:

Feminine traits are called weaknesses. People joke about them; fools ridicule them; but reasonable person see very well that those traits are just tools for the management of men, and for the use of men for female designs. (Kant 1978: 227).
Women, claims Kant are not suited to be intellectual companions. Here he echoed the educational policies of Rousseau. “As for scholarly women”, said Kant, “they use their books somewhat like a watch, that is, they wear the watch so it can be noticed that they have it on, although it is usually broken or does not show the time” (Kant 1978: 221). After extended remarks on women’s nature, Kant go on to speak about women. For him, consorting with women is a necessary evil, at least for some men, so that the species continue. If possible, however, it is better to avoid close contact with women. By the final statement, of his ethics in the Metaphysis of Morals, notes Andrea Nye that sex has become a source of degradation.

Such misogynous remarks make Kant an obvious target for feminist critics. Feminist philosophers cited Kant’s contempt for women’s intelligence and ethical capability, his defense of a “patriarchal” law of marriage in which a woman has no legal rights. They condemned his relegation of women to a biological function.

This is a clear paradox. Although the individualistic idea is grounded in the conception of individual freedom and equality, it is only for male individuals. The social contract theorists, thus, denied women individuality and believed that they are naturally subordinate to, and dependent upon, father and husband. Here these ideas are in complete consonance with patriarchalists.

The political and productive spheres were then obviously identified as the natural sphere of men. Women were then allotted the separate or private sphere due to the assumption of their natural subordination. Although the eighteenth century and onwards regarded independence as the fundamental
criterion for citizenship. While the dependents, claims Immanuel Kant have “no civil personality” and in that he includes “women in general” (Kant 1971: 139) that is to say, according to Kant, women being dependent have no civil personality.

Thus, such theorists relegated women to slaves, for legally and socially a wife was seen as the property of her husband; she could be legally imprisoned in the matrimonial house and could be beaten. John Stuart Mill (1869) commenting, on such situation of woman writes:

That although he was “far from pretending that wives are in general no better treated than slaves …. no slave is a slave to the same lengths, in so full a sense of the word as a wife is … A husband can claim from her and enforce the lowest degradation of a human being, that of being made the instrument of an animal function contrary to her inclinations” (Mill 1970: 159-60).

And such tendency persists even today (though in different form).

In summary, woman is excluded from the category of ‘individual’. She is considered not worthy of consenting, her consent and her inclinations have no meaning. She has been accorded the lowest degradation as a human being, even worst than slaves. She was treated as property, a non-person, having none or considered not worthy for any civil rights. The custom and social practices conspire together to deny her whatever and wherever freedom and individuality are given to her in law.

Later during the 17th century the predominance of the category of reason and associated with it the Man of Reason as a character ideal came to the fore. The development of a rather different situation in the relationship between philosophical thought and the socio-political was witnessed.
Another striking change that 17th century brought to ‘reason’ was the attempt to encapsulate it within the confines of a systematic method for attaining certainty. Cartesian *Regulae*, the Rule for the Direction of the Mind (1628) is paradigmatic to this approach to reason. Much of what makes modern philosophy unwelcoming to women has been the dualist-metaphysics, worked out by Descartes, that became instrumental in handing over the mastering and control of the natural world to man. He drove a wedge between feeling and knowing, creating a masculinist illusion of absolute truth. Cartesian ideals of objectivity, rationality, mechanistic approach and control became the hallmark of philosophy’s masculinist identity. The acquisition of knowledge became a matter of a systematic pursuit of an orderly method. The essence of the method was to break down the complex operations involved in reasoning into their most basic constituents and to render the mind adept in performing the simple operations of *intuition* and *deduction*; intuition being the undoubting conception of an unclouded and attentive mind produced through the light of reason alone and deduction the process by which we extend knowledge beyond intuitions by connecting them logically. These are the only mental operations that Descartes admit into his method. A proper understanding and use of these two yield all that lies within the province of knowledge and anything beyond else that would be an impediment to knowledge. He writes:

Nothing can be added to the pure light of reason which does not in some way obscure it (Descartes 1968a: 10).

His method was to be universally applicable, regardless of any difference in subject matter:

We must not fancy that one kind of knowledge is more obscure than another, since all knowledge is of the same nature
throughout, and consists solely in combining what is self evident.
(Descartes 1968a, Rule XIII: 47).

This universality of Cartesian method was emphasized in the *Discourse on Method* published in 1637:

> Provided only that we abstain from receiving anything as true which is not so, and always retain the order which is necessary in order to deduce the one conclusion from the other, there can be nothing so remote that we cannot reach to it, nor so recondite that we cannot discover it. (Descartes 1637: Part II: 92).

All knowledge for Descartes consists in self evident intuition and necessary deduction. Therefore the right method would be for him to break down the complex and obscure into what is simple and self evident then combine the resultant units in an orderly manner. In order to know he must isolate the “simple natures”, the objects of intuition; and “scrutinize them separately with steadfast mental gaze”. This is then combined in chains of deductions. And thus, the whole of human knowledge consists in a distinct perception of the way in which these simple natures combine in order to build up other objects (Rules for the Direction of Mind, Rule XII: 47).

Descartes developed an isomorphism between reason and reality which he based on a veracious God. This isomorphism according to Descartes made reason into a quasi divine character where reason is God imbued; the divine spark in man. The 17th century version of the treatment of man’s rational faculty now became the godhead, as that in virtue of which man is made in God’s image.

Another crucial feature of Cartesian reason is its connection with his antithesis between mind and matter. The basic units of Descartes’ method are
sharp edged and self contained mental items. The vehicles of knowledge are clear, precise, mental states, sharply separated from one another:

The distinct is that which is so precise and different from all other objects that it contains within itself nothing but what is clear (Descartes 1637 vol. II: 32).

The delineated character of the units of knowledge is grounded in Descartes’ distinction between mind and matter. His method is therefore, essentially a matter of forming the “habit of distinguishing intellectual from corporeal matters” i.e. mind from body.

This search for the “clear and distinct”, not only separates the emotional. The sensuous, the imaginative but also functions as a catalyst in the polarization of previously existing contrasts. The contrasts like intellect versus the emotions, reason versus imagination; mind versus matter. The historically preserved fact that women are somehow lacking in rationality, that they are more impulsive, more emotional, than men found reinforcement in Cartesian treatment of reason. The association of Cartesian downgrading of the sensuous with the use of the mind-matter (body) distinction sets in the polarization that previously did not exist.

As a consequence of the separation between that which pertains to the intellect and that which is not, a separate education for women was justified. Women were excluded from training which required reason and thereby from the acquisition of a rational method. And since this training of learning to exclude one’s emotions, imagination, etc. in the acquisition of true knowledge, there emerged a new dimension to the idea that women who are essentially more emotional or more impulsive lack the ability to handle rationality.
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Woman was confined to the areas of sensuousness, matter, body etc. thus restricted from any intellectual activity.

A very clear resonance of Cartesian views was noticeable in Rousseau’s ideas on the education of women in *Emile*.

To be pleasing in his sight, to win his respect and love, to train him in childhood, to tend him in manhood, to council and console, to make his life pleasant and happy, these are the duties of woman for all time, and this is what she should be taught while she is young. (Rousseau 1911: 328).

Seventeenth century thus culminated into separation of functions supported by Descartes theory of mind. Given an already existing situation of sexual inequality, reason – the god like, the spark of the divine in man was assigned to the male and emotions, imagination and the sensuous assigned to women. This bifurcation existed before the onset of Cartesianism but now a different training was imparted to men and to women fixing different life styles for them.

Descartes and later Kant became instrumental in the highlighting of ‘reason’ as the logical cognitive faculty of the mind, which gives rise to knowledge. As a consequence emotion, along with embodiedness and the passions, was pushed into the realm of irrationality, from which ‘knowledge’ could never accrue. This development was carried on by the French Enlightenment writers in particular who used the French Revolution as an opportunity to sweep away not only the old Feudal hierarchical political, social and economic order, but also all authority based on tradition, prejudice and irrationality, and to replace all such ‘prejudice’ with an all powerful cognitive universal reason, divorced from the context of body and emotional ties.
Hobbes and other contract theorists too represent a threshold, with which reason and emotion were regarded as radically divorced. The split between reason and emotion persisted throughout the nineteenth and well into the twentieth century. The basic oppositions of mind/body and nature/culture provided fundamental philosophical and social evaluation for man/woman, reason/emotion, sex/gender, self/other, subject/object, justice/care and so on.

Further too in Spinoza’s Ethics the attainment of rational control over passions has the purpose of freeing oneself from the bondage of inadequate ideas (emotions) to become a Man of Reason which has its goal in the attainment of eternity of the mind:

The ignorant man is not only distracted in various ways by external causes without ever gaining the true acquiescence of his spirit, but moreover lives, as it were unwilling of himself, and of God, and of things, and as soon as he ceases to suffer ceases also to be.

Whereas the wise man, in so far as he is regarded as such, is scarcely at all disturbed in spirit, but, being conscious of himself, and of God, and of things, by a certain eternal necessity, never ceases to be, but always possesses true acquiescence of his spirit. (Spinoza 1955: 270).

A detailed study of Spinoza’s reason lies beyond the subject of this chapter so the focus will be rather on his treatment of the relationship between reason and emotion. Spinoza’s Man of Reason is subjected to the task of understanding emotions (not to ignore them) thereby treating its passivities as active rational emotions. He writes in his ‘the Ethics’:

An emotion, which is a passion, ceases to be a passion, as soon as we form a clear and distinct idea thereof (Spinoza 1955 Part V, prop. III: 248).

Also he clarifies:
An emotion therefore becomes more under our control, and the mind is less passive in respect of it, in proportion as it is more known to us (Spinoza 1955: Part V, prop. III: 248).

According to Spinoza emotions in their original state (passions) are confused modes of perception of reality which tend to blur the reality. And when this confusion is replaced by clear and distinct perception the emotion cease to be passions. This process is tied up with the understanding of the causality of our passions and hence, for Spinoza, with the recognition of necessities. And this recognition of necessity is at the same time the means of attaining freedom. The transition from passion to active, intellectual emotion through the understanding of necessities is the transition to individual autonomy. This achievement of individuality is at the cost of a detachment form the particular, the specific, the transient, in order to turn one’s attention to the general, the universal, the unchanging, to what is common to all:

An emotion which springs from season is necessarily referred to the common properties of things, … which we always regard as present (for there can be nothing to exclude their present existence) and which we always conceive in the same manner. Wherefore an emotion of this kind always remains the same. (Spinoza 1955, Part V, Prop. VII: 251).

Spinoza’s ‘Man of Reason’ endeavours to transcend the distortion of his own self centered perceptions to perceive things as they really are. But if Spinoza’s “strong man” recognizes the particular objects of his hate as seeming hateful only because of his own inadequate ideas, the same goes for the objects of his love. As Reason acquires dominance, changeable transient objects of affection are gradually set aside:

Spiritual unhealthiness and misfortunes can generally be traced to excessive love for something which is subject to many variations, and which we never become masters of. For none is solicitous or anxious about anything, unless he loves it; neither
do wrongs, suspicious, enmities, etc. arise, except in regard to things whereof no one can be really master. (Spinoza 1955, Part V, Prop. XX, p. 258).

Spinoza goes on to write:

Something else the Man of Reason sheds along the way is pity. Pity in a man who lives under the guidance of season is in itself bad and useless. (Spinoza 1955: Part IV, Prop.).

In another section Spinoza described pity as “womanish” (Spinoza 1955: 213). The ideal, again is masculine. The ultimate horror for Spinoza’s Man of Reason is to be “womanish”, which is equated with being under the sway of passions, untransformed by reason.

Although the cultivation of reason is the means by which we attain freedom; the motivating force for this effort is self interest, the desire to persist in one’s being. According to Spinoza, the essence of man resides in his endeavour to persist in his being. And, as a thinking being, his overriding self-interest is in preserving the coherence and continuity of his own thought against the flow of unconnected (fragmentary) ideas that result from his limited individual standpoint within the order of things. The more active his thought processes the less he is at the mercy of the impingement of what is not himself, including, as we have seen, the demands of pity and the ravages of “meretricious” love.

Spinoza’s view no doubt gives to the Ethics a life affirming character and an emphasis on individuality which cannot be underestimated but it is achieved at the cost of a detachment form changeable, from passions from emotions, from pity that are womanish. In other words, what remains with us as the character ideal expressed in his Man of Reason is mainly the negative detachment from all that gives warmth and compassion to human existence, i.e.
his ultimate detachment from the impingement of all that is not himself, that which is womanly.

Thus, Spinoza’s Man of Reason, as we have seen, sheds not merely selfish, obsessive love, but also individuals as proper object’s of live along with his repudiation of “womanish” pity, passion, emotion. Given that a woman is lacking in rationality. Spinoza’s account of ethics not only reaffirms exclusion but also degrades her as a hurdle in the way of acquisition of knowledge (which is acquired only by liberating oneself from the bondage of passion). The dangerous consequence of Spinoza’s ethical view is that a man must do away with woman, who as a passion is a bondage a Man of Reason needs to overcome in order to acquire right, unalluded knowledge.

The eighteenth century also brought revaluation of the emotions. In the seventeenth century the passions were characteristically seen as a source of disorder and falsehood. Thought was the essence of the mind and passions were seen as intruding distractions and disturbances resulting from the mind’s union with the body. They were seen as threats to the purity and clarity of thought and at best, as confused modes of thought itself. They were to be either transcended and kept in subjugation by reason or else transformed by reason into higher modes of thought. During eighteenth century, passions and the non-rational in general became assured of their own reality. By the nineteenth century, with the Romantic Movement, the reevaluation of passions and exaltation of imagination and feeling lead to a renewed evaluation of women along with the qualities associated with women. The Man of Reason, stayed intact surviving the challenge of Romanticism, however now in search of his
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opposite to complete or complements his own existence. The dichotomy between reason and emotion was preserved and in fact endorsed by the challenge of Romanticism.

In tracing the historical development by which patriarchy emerged as the dominant form of societal order, it becomes more than apparent the ways in which it gradually institutionalized the power and rights of men to control and appropriate the sexual and reproductive services of women. This form of dominance made way for other forms of dominance such as slavery. Once established as a complex of hierarchical relationships, patriarchy transformed sexual, social, economic relations and ruled them all. The establishment of patriarchy majority influenced thought systems which explain and order Western civilization. The structure of these systems incorporated unstated assumption about gender which in turn became the instruments of forging gender bias. When these thought systems were put to use the trickle down effect was evident.

Even the metaphors of gender constructed the male as the norm and the female as deviant; the male as whole and powerful; the female as deviant; the male as whole and powerful; the female as unfinished, physically mutilated and emotionally dependent.

General assumptions of the dominant thought system can be summarized as follows:

Men and women are essentially different creatures, not only in their biological equipment, but in their needs, capacities and functions. Men and
women also differ in the way they were created and in the social function assigned to them by God.

Men are “naturally” superior, stronger and more rational therefore designed to be dominant. From this follows that men are political citizens and responsible for and representing the polity. Women are “naturally” weaker, inferior in intellect and rational capacities, unstable emotionally and therefore incapable of political participation, their position being outside the polity.

Men, by the use of their rationality, explain and order the world. Women by their nurturant function sustain daily life and the continuity of the species. While both functions are essential, that of men is superior to that of women. Another way of saying this is that men are engaged in “transcendent” activities and women are engaged in “immanent” activities.

Men have an inherent right to control the sexuality and the reproductive functions of women, while women have no such right over men.

Men mediate between humans and God. Women reach God through the mediation of men.

These unproven, unprovable assumptions are not laws of either nature or society, although they have often been so regarded and have been operative at different levels, in different forms and with different intensity during various periods of history.

From feminist’s perspectives a critical reading of philosophy has been approached in two ways. One, which sees both the method of framework of philosophy and its concrete content as antithetical to feminist aims and the
second as characterized by seeing the content only as oppressive to women. Since, it is generally claimed that philosophy as a discipline and as a method of inquiry is entirely neutral with regard to sex, this neutrality had to be put under rigorous examination. Feminists, concluded that the history of philosophy is an evidence of male domination and sought to transform philosophy from a male-dominated enterprise into a human enterprise.

The early feminists critical assessment of philosophy concerning the neutrality of philosophical frameworks, the invisibility of women both as the objects of philosophical discourse and as the subjects of philosophical discourse, and the process by which philosophy legitimates itself creates the understanding of the situation where one can raise meaningful response questioning the philosophical paradigms and their affects on women question. And it is this approach which by demonstrating the lacunae in philosophical concepts made themselves visible both as philosophers and as women and provided alternate to the situation. By making themselves visible feminists in turn throw into question the legitimacy of claims and assumptions in philosophy that have been taken as axiomatic. In doing so (questioning the very foundation and status of philosophy) it also reveals the deeply rooted bias and misogyny in the nodal concepts of philosophy. It does this by demonstrating not only what is excluded from philosophy but also why it is crucial for the very existence of the philosophy to exclude it.

Furthermore, women have not only been excluded through educational deprivation from the process of making mental constructs, it has also been the case that the mental constructs explaining the world have been andocentric,
partial and distorted. Women have been defined out and marginalized in every philosophical system and have therefore had to struggle not only against exclusion but against a content which defines them as subhuman and deviant. It was argued that the deprivation has formed the female psyche over the centuries in such a way as to make women tools in creating and recreating the system which oppressed them.

Besides, very obvious questions were raised as to why should one man rule over another? Why should one man be a master and another be a slave? Aristotle reasoned that some men are born to rule, others to be ruled. He illustrated this principle by drawing an analogy between soul and body – the soul is superior to the body and therefore must rule it. Similarly, rational mind is superior to passion and so must rule it. And “the male is by nature superior, and the female inferior, and the one rules and the other is ruled; this principle, of necessity extends to all mankind. The subordination of women is assumed as a given, likened to a natural condition, and so the philosopher uses the marital relationship as an explanatory metaphor to justify slavery.

By denying and ignoring the need to explain the subordination of women, as well as by the kind of biological explanation Aristotle offered he had fixed status of women as a being who is less than human. The remarkable fact about Aristotelian misogynist construction is that his assumptions remained virtually unchallenged and endlessly repeated for nearly two thousand years. They were reinforced by Old Testament restrictions on women and their exclusion from the covenant community, by the misogynist teachings of the church fathers and by the continuing emphasis in the church era on
charging Eve and with all women, with moral guilt for the Fall of humankind. Oppression therefore brought with it the hegemony of the thought and ideas of the dominant, thus women’s oppression has meant that much of their mental product and creation has been lost forever.