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Rationality and gender

Linda J. Nicholson

School of Education, State University of New York, Albany, New York

ABSTRACT
The issue of gender poses a particular problem for social theory. Gender ascription, which goes beyond the biological differentiation of the species, Is both fundamental and culturally pervasive. When, however, we try to make specific those non-biological universals of gender of our own society or try to establish any non-biological universals of gender which apply cross-culturally, we encounter innumerable difficulties. One possibility of something persistent is a universality in the devaluation of women's activities and roles amidst their diversity. I would like to explore this constant devaluation of women amidst a variety of forms by examining certain changes in the idea of rationality in western society which possess the interesting characteristic of being consistently in conflict with 'femininity' however that too is defined. A second thesis I wish to develop is that there exists a very curious relation between how women's minds are perceived and women's assigned place in the sexual division of labour.

The issue of gender poses a particular problem for social theory. Gender ascription, which goes beyond the biological differentiation of the species, Is both fundamental and culturally pervasive. When, however, we try to make specific those non-biological universals of gender of our own society or try to establish any non-biological universals of gender which apply cross-culturally, we encounter innumerable difficulties. Cross-culturally, the varieties of gender-linked personality traits and behaviour patterns are endless; within our own society there is no specific trait or pattern which applies to all women and no man or all men and no woman. Yet in spite of such diversity there remains a suspicion that something persistent is at stake, that lying behind this 'endless variety' is something 'monotonously similar.'[1] Michelle Zimbalist Rosaldo as suggested one possibility of what this might be, a universality in the devaluation of women's activities and roles amidst their diversity.

> We find in some parts of New Guinea, for example, that women grow sweet potatoes and men grow yams, and yams are the prestige food, the food one distributes at feasts. Or again, in the Philippine society I studied, men hunted in groups while women gardened (for the most part) individually; and although a woman's rice became the food supply of her immediate family, its dietary staple, meat was always shared by the community and was the most highly valued food. The same pattern obtains in other hunting societies, where women may help on the hunt but the catch is the men's to distribute, and meat, unlike the nutritious grubs and nuts a woman gathers, is socially valued and shared ... Still another form of cultural subordination is revealed in the linguistic practices of women of the Merina tribe in Madagascar (Keenan, 1974). There it is felt that in order to be cultured, sophisticated, and respectable, men are masters of an allusive, formal style in public speech. Women, on the contrary, are said not to know the subtleties of polite language. They are, in effect, cultural idiots, who are expected to blurt out what they mean. And so again, in the public ideology women are inferior.[2]

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I would like to further explore this constant devaluation of women amidst a variety of forms in a context closer to home. I would like to examine certain changes in the idea of rationality in western society which possess the interesting characteristic of being consistently in conflict with 'femininity' however that too is defined. Thus within a certain period of history in western society, in the face of diversity in definitions of both rationality and femininity, the two emerge continually in opposition. In particular I wish to compare the concepts of 'femininity' and 'rationality' as they are used in classical Greek society with that of modern western society. The point is that while both concepts had a very different meaning in classical Greek society from that which they have had in modern society, in both societies 'rationality' and 'femininity' have been seen as incompatible attributes.

A second thesis I wish to develop is that there exists a very curious relation between how women's minds are perceived and women's assigned place in the sexual division of labour. At a given time, the irrationality which is ascribed to women may seem to follow consistently from their assigned tasks. What is noteworthy, however, is how this ascribed irrationality clings to women in the face of different assignments in the sexual division of labour. In other words, while it might appear that negative conceptions of women's minds are a function of women's roles or prescribed tasks, a consistent social inferiority accompanies very different womanly roles.

I would like to begin illustrating these theses by first looking at the situation of women in classical Athens. The division of labour between the sexes in this society appears quite unambiguous: the place of women was in the oikos or household. While this assignment, like its nineteenth century western counterpart, was often bridged by those who had neither the wealth nor the social standing with which to comply, the model was important in constructing an ideal. The role of the ideal citizen wife was to produce legitimate heirs.[3] Her work was "the care of young children, the nursing of sick slaves, the fabrication of clothing and the preparation of food."[4] Poor women, even citizens, pursued similar occupations outside the home, such as washing clothes, selling the products of home spinning or food production or working for others as nurses of children and midwives.[5] This work was, however, considered demeaning, for true womanliness was correlated with public invisibility. This exclusion of women from all public space was reflected in the fact that women did not even go to market for food: "That feeling that purchase or exchange was a financial transaction too complex for women, as well as the wish to protect women from the eyes of strangers and from intimate dealings with shopkeepers, contributed to classifying marketing as a man's occupation."[6] This isolation of women from public life was also manifested in the total exclusion of women from government. Not only could a woman not vote, she could not hold office or serve as juror.[7] "Athenian law of all periods tended to regard the wife as a veritable child, having the legal status of a minor in comparison to her husband. Although males came of age at eighteen, females never did; the childbearing wife was really a child herself."[8]

The exclusion of Athenian women, as well as slaves, from the 'great democracy' that was Greece is poorly understood if considered an accidental aberration. The exclusion of women from the polis followed from deep structural features of the society. The separation between the realm of the oikos, or household, and pol is, or political realm, was for the Greeks absolute. It had first of all historical significance, for as Hannah Arendt has noted it was a simple historical fact that the foundation of the pol is was preceded by the destruction of all organized units resting on kinship, such as the phratria and the phyle.[9] This historical antagonism was perceived by the Greeks as representing an antagonism between nature and civilization with women associated with the former and men with the latter. As Marilyn Arthur states, this association of women with that which represents a threat to civilization is expressed in Greek literature from Hesiod to Aeschylus:

> Hesiod's model for the evolution of the cosmos and the birth of civilization thus involves a progression from a world dominated by the generative powers of the female to one overseen by the moral authority of the male .... This mythological scheme applies also to the conflict underlying the foundation of the Greek city state (polis). The Oresteia of Aeschylus celebrates the birth of civil society and the triumph of the rule of law over the more primitive forms of tribal justice and represents this victory as a divine vindication of Oreste's murder of his mother Clytemnestra.[10]

What was perceived at issue in the conflict between oikos and polls was, most fundamentally, a division between two forms of existence. The realm of the oikos, the realm of slaves and women, was concerned with the physical production and reproduction of life. It therefore expressed those aspects of human existence which were in greatest similarity with the existence of animals. Its workers, as bound by labour, whether it be the labour of the slave or the labour of the woman, were necessarily unfree and thus deserving of rule by others. The polis, on the other hand, represented the arena for the expression of that which was distinctly human. Here men could prove their worth; here men could achieve immortality. To be sure, political life had as its concern the practical legislative matters involved in the governance of Athens. However, even such activities were regarded only as means for the furtherance of higher ends

> The public realm, in other words, was reserved for individuality; it was the only place where men could show who they really and inexchangeably were. It was for the sake of this chance, and out of love for a body politic that made it possible to them all, that each was more or less willing to share in the burden of jurisdiction, defense, and administration of public affairs.[11]

This opposition between oikos and polis, between the realm of the natural and practical and the realm of the distinctly human and free, had its manifestations in the Greek view of the intellect. Aristotle's distinction between tile scientific faculty and the deliberative or calculative faculty is illustrative. Whereas the former contemplates "the kind of things whose originative causes are invariable," the latter contemplates "variable things."[12] included in the latter are both "things made and things done"[13] corresponding to the respective intellectual virtues of techne or art and phronesis or practical wisdom. This view of Aristotle which distinguishes practical knowledge from contemplation of the non-contingent and evaluates the former below the latter is also to be found in Plato. It is represented in Plato's distinction between episteme (knowledge) and doxa (opinion). Whereas opinion has as object the world of sight and of things seen, knowledge has as its object the world of mind and of things thought.[14]

In a society in which activities related to "things made and things done" were regarded as less worthy than those which had no such practical import, it is not surprising to find theories of the intellect which reflect this evaluative ordering. What is also not surprising are both Aristotle and Plato's characterizations of women's minds within this ordering. Aristotle endows women with the deliberative, though not with the scientific faculty, though even in the case of the former, only in a limited form: "For the slave has no deliberative faculty at all; the woman has but it is without authority, and the child has, but it is immature."[15]

For Aristotle, the inferiority of women and women's minds to men's parallels the inferiority of the body to the soul and of the passionate to the rational.

> And it is clear that the rule of the soul over the body, and of the mind and the rational element over the passionate is natural and expedient; whereas the equality of the two or the rule of the Inferior is always hurtful. The same hold good of animals in relation to men; for tame animals have a better nature than wild, and all tame animals are better off when they are ruled by man, for then they are preserved. Again, 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.[16]

Plato has acquired a better reputation on women than Aristotle. This reputation derives from the fact that in *The Republic* Plato allows for the possibility of philosopher-queens. What needs to be stressed, however, is that what separates Plato from Aristotle is not so much a different evaluation of women as a greater willingness to admit of exception.[17] While Plato does al low tor the possibility of individual exceptions to the general condition of womanhood, he shares the classical Greek position on their overall inferiority. As Susan Okin has pointed out, even in *The Republic* before Plato introduces the idea of including women as guardians, he argues that impressionable young guardians are to be prevented from imitating the female sex in their characteristic traits.[18] As she also notes, Plato's account of the origins of the human race in *The Timaeus* presents a hierarchy of goodness and rationality in which women are placed midway between man and beasts.[19] In sum, the general estimation of women and their intellect in classical Athens is reflected in the philosophers' accounts.

I would like to compare this perception of women in classical Athens with what may in some ways appear a very similar perception of women and women's minds in modern western society. The argument I would like to make is that while in both societies, women are viewed as less 'rational' than men, the meaning of rationality is importantly different. Moreover, while the irrationality which is ascribed to women in both societies seems to follow naturally from their place within the social division of labour, this ascription persists in the face of important differences in gender assignment within the social division of labour.

To understand the differences in the sexual al location of labour between modern western society and that of classical Athens, I would like to turn briefly to the sixteenth century and the emergence of the modern 'family'. Philippe Aries' *Centuries of Childhood* was important in drawing attention to the fact that the concept of the 'family' as we know it is modern.[20] With its connotation of intimacy and privacy, there is no Greek equivalent.[21] Prior to modernity, the biological unit of husband, wife and children was only an unimportant subgroup within a more extended familial network linking those sharing a common ancestry. One consequence of the breakdown of feudalism and particularly of the feudal manor, was the emergence of the independent commodity-producing farm headed by the 'paterfamilias' and housing the 'family'. What gradually emerged was an ideology of the family as a unit of emotional significance in conjunction with a new ideology of labour:

> The family had been scorned in medieval society, as the realm of both production and sexuality. The Catholic Church, anti-sexual and savagely anti-female had sanctioned family life only reluctantly, as the alternative to damnation, and had forbidden it to the clergy. The right of the clergy to marry had been a basic issue during the Reformation. In seventeenth century England, Puritanism, with its acceptance of the life of material necessity embraced the married life state and exalted the family as part of the natural (i.e. Godgiven) order of productive and spiritual activity ... In contrast to the pre-capitalist divorce of spiritual and economic life, human meaning and purpose was now to be sought in the mundane world of production and the family.[22]

An important development in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was the rise of domestic industry. Here the family worked together as a productive unit, but under the head of the capitalist employer, not the patertamilias.[23] This form of industrialization was short-lived, giving rise to the factory production that was to become dominant by the nineteenth century. The rise of large scale factory production had important consequences for the family. The latter ceased being a unit of production. While remaining as an economic unit, it became increasingly a unit of consumption rather than production.

Other activities of the family, such as reproduction ang chi ld-rearing assumed priority as definitive of the functions of the family. In sum, what emerged by the nineteenth century, was an important separation between what came to be considered the 'private' realm of the home and family and the public world which now included industry.

The separation between family and production had as one consequence a relegation of women to the home almost as complete as the relegation of Athenian women to the oikos. This extreme demarcation of sexual spheres is clearly illustrated in nineteenth century America. While poorer women did work in the new factories, these women were by and large unmarried.[24] As in Athens, nineteenth century American women were assumed to be publicly invisible. There were strong moral injunctions, for example, against women speaking in public. As many of the women active in the Abolitionist movement soon discovered, tor a woman to speak in public against slavery was itself a political act demanding its own political movement. Also similarly to Athens, women, particularly when married, had no independent status within the law. Women, with many classes of men, could not vote or serve as jurors. They also, when married, could not sign a contract, had no title to earnings either earned or inherited, and had no rights to children in the case of legal separation from their husbands.[25] in short, a married woman in nineteenth century America was, like her Athenian counterpart, legally a child.

Such similarities between nineteenth century American women and fourth century B.C. Athenian citizen wives must, however, be superficial. There exists too important a difference between the Athenian oikos and the modern home. The Greek household was the centre of those activities we would today label economic. Not surprisingly, our English term 'economy' derives from the Greek 'oikos.' As we have seen in the above, an important phenomenon in the development of the western home and family has been the removal of such activities from the interior of the home to the exterior of the public world. The consequences of this movement have been immense:

> The laboring activity, though under all circumstances connected with the life process in its most elementary, biological sense remained stationary for thousands of years, imprisoned in the eternal recurrence of the life process to which it was tied. The admission of labour to public stature, ... liberated the process from its circular monotonous recurrence and transformed it into a swiftly progressing development whose results have in a few centuries totally changed the whole inhabited world.[26]

On such change, allied, though not in any simple way, with the increased publicity of labour has been a transformation in the modern view of knowledge. This transformation has been described by Arendt as a reversal in the hierarchical order between what she has called the vita contemplativa and the vita activa:

> However that may be, the fundamental experience behind the reversal of contemplation and action was precisely that man's thirst for knowledge could be assuaged only after he had put his trust into the ingenuity of his hands. The point was not that truth and knowledge were no longer important, but that they could be won only by 'action' and not by contemplation. …Nothing indeed could be less trustworthy for acquiring knowledge and approaching truth than passive observation or mere contemplation. In order to be certain one had to make sure, and in order to know one had to do .... Since then, scientific and philosophic truth have parted company.[27]

Arendt cautions against misunderstanding this transformation as merely representing a reversal between doing and contemplating:

> The reversal of the modern age consisted then not in raising doing to the rank of contemplating as the highest state of which human beings are capable, as though henceforth doing was the ultimate meaning for the sake of which contemplation was to be performed, just as, up to that time, all activities of the vita activa had been judged and justified to the extent that they made the vita contemplativa possible. The reversal concerned only thinking, which from then on was the handmaiden of doing as it had been the ancilla theologiae, the handmaiden of contemplating divine truth in medieval philosophy and the handmaiden of contemplating the truth of Being in ancient philosophy. Contemplation itself became altogether meaningless.[28]

The transformation Arendt described can alternatively be viewed as the replacement of philosophy by science. Indeed, it seems not too rash to claim that science has replaced philosophy in the modern era as representing both the apex of knowledge and in providing criteria for the ascription of rationality. For many the label 'unscientific' has become synonymous with 'irrational, Many of the assumed defining characteristics of science, such as its emphasis on procedures and evidence which are public and shareable or its lack of passion are also associated in the modern world with rationality. To be idiosyncratic and particularistic in one's thinking or to be emotional is on the contrary to be irrational. What is most noteworthy for the purposes of this study is the association of these latter aspects of the irrational with the female mind. To understand this latter connection we need to turn back to the home.

As earlier noted, the movement of labour from within to outside of the home brought about a redefinition of the home. This redefinition is illustrated in a particularly striking manner in the northeast of the United States in the first half of the nineteenth century. In 1800 this area was predominantly agricultural. Its households were self-sufficient entities concerned with such activities as the processing and preserving of food, candlemaking, soapmaking, spinning, weaving, shoemaking, quilting, rug-making and other such activities.[29] By the middle of the century industrialization had greatly transformed the economy of the area, bringing into effect as one consequence the 'middle-class' home. One significant aspect of such homes was the reduction or even elimination of many of the above activities. Thus Ann Douglas notes that the mid-nineteenth century north-eastern middle-class woman was more concerned with the buying of cloth than with the making of it.[30] What she also notes, however, was that even to the extent that such a woman was productive, her activity itself became viewed in a different light:

> The mid -nineteenth century middle-class lady I will be discussing was not necessarily as idle as her various critics and admirers on occasion painted her … It is rather that the lady's leisure, whether hypothetical or actual, was increasingly treated as the most interesting and significant thing about her; her function was obscured and intended to be so, ...[31]

What Douglas is pointing to here and further elaborates is a trend which was to spread beyond the northeast and beyond this particular class of women, a concept of femininity which was equated with powerlessness. This equation is illustrated in many of the concepts by which femininity came to be defined, in concepts such as 'silly', 'dependent', 'decorative' and 'sentimental'.

The transformation that was involved in so defining women is illustrated in a story Douglas relates of a conversation between an Eastern 'lady', Eliza Farnham and a western farmer. When Farnham refers to the wife of the farmer as a 'bird', the westerner insists that he was "not sheltering a delicate creature weaker and more sensitive than himself; indeed, he crassly compares his wife's physical strength to that of several of his beasts of burden. His clinching line is the edged remark: 'I don't know what you Yankees call a 'bird' but I call her a woman.'"[32]

This equation and even celebration of femininity with lack of power certainly had its antecedents in pre-bourgeois aristocratic circles. What was new was its adoption by a culture which prided itself on being industrious and anti-aristocratic. What it signified must be understood carefully. While the nineteenth century American woman was being characterized as 'frivolous', she was also being given more responsibility in certain areas such as childrearing and consumption. The cult of motherhood which flourished in the nineteenth century was tied to a real increase in the authority of women over children.[33] The American woman's new role as definitive consumer was equally tied to greater activity and control in consumption. However, what is noteworthy about these new forms of activity is that they occurred outside of the productive sphere and were thus in a very complex way seen as 'unimportant'. The complex 'unimportance' of women's tasks is clearly illustrated in her new role as moral guardian. As the home itself came to be viewed as a refuge against the cold and public world, so too did women come to be seen as the guardians of those moral virtues the public world ignored. She and the home thus became viewed as a necessary antidote to the evil and disease of the external world.[34] Moreover, not only did she and the home thus provide an invaluable function, it was for the sake of her and the home that men laboured and thus that the public world existed.[35] She was thus not only the necessary anti dote but also the raison d'etre for the disease. Nevertheless, in spite of such functions, or perhaps ironically because of them, her stature diminished. While she increased her authority as guardian of morality. morality itself took on secondary status to the rules of public life. While she continued to exist as protector of love and intimacy, the raison d'etre of public labour, public labour itself increasingly required less need of justification. In sum, the nineteenth century American woman's gain in influence in some spheres was accompanied by the loss of importance of these very spheres. The declining status or 'seriousness' given to such spheres was in turn reflected in the equation of women and 'femininity' with triviality.

This trivialization of women is reflected in culturally dominant perceptions of the female intellect. At the most general level it was widely assumed that the male and female minds were inevitably different. Thus as prominent an educator as President Eliot of Harvard could make the following statement: "The male and female minds are not alike. Sex penetrates the mind and the affections and penetrates deeply and powerfully."[36] What was widely believed was not only that the female mind was incapable of serious thought, but that 'femininity' and serious intellectual activity were in fact contradictory phenomena. Thus it was held that to the extent a young woman engaged in such activity, she courted the danger of becoming 'unsexed'.[37] Edward Clark, again of Harvard College, in 1873 published Sex in Education in which he argued that "higher education would destroy the ability of American women to bear children, by overtaxing them at a critical stage in their adolescent development."[38]

There is nothing particularly new in this low regard for the power of the female mind. As we have seen, women in classical Athens were also not highly respected for their intellects. Nor is there anything new in the assumption that the inferior status of women's minds is directly I inked to the very nature of 'womanliness' or 'femininity' itself. What is new, however, and what distinguishes the nineteenth century disdain of the female intel feet is the specific form this disdain took, a form related to the modern concept of 'femininity.'

As I have noted, the removal l of production from the home brought about a redefinition of the functions of the home and women's tasks within it. Woman now became mother, shopper and guardian of virtue. An additional task was to satisfy certain needs not taken care of through commodity consumption, as for intimacy, nurturance and the sharing of feeling and emotion. The emergent 'housewife' became the appropriate tender of such needs; their identification and satisfaction became her speciality. Associated with this latter role was the identification of the female mind with certain characteristics; it became seen as 'particularistic' and 'emotional', governed by association as opposed to logic. The female mind became viewed as 'subjective' both in its procedures and in the objects of its concern, the latter including 'feelings' and the 'inner life.' Al l such characteristics distinguished it from the attributes of science. Science was supposedly 'objective.' It was governed by procedures which were repeatable by any competent scientist. It relied upon evidence and produced results which were public. In short, the gender identified separation between the 'private' realm of home and family and the public world of business and government was accompanied by a distinction between two conceptions of mental processes, also gender identified. On the one hand appeared the female intellect: particularistic, private, emotional and concerned with the 'inner life.' On the other hand stood science: non-emotional, public and concerned with external reality. The latter in turn was associated with both masculinity and rationality.

What is highly striking in the above set of distinctions and in particular this characterization of the female intellect is the contrast with that of classical Greece. To review earlier material: the Greeks' disdain of the female mind was related to the association of women with labour. Because of women's place in the oikos, the sphere in which the physical necessities of life were attended to, women's concerns were with the natural and the practical. Their minds were thus believed to operate on a lower level than the minds of men free to engage in philosophical discourse. Women as more like 'beasts of burden' than at least free citizen males had comparably inferior intellects. What is ironically different, however, about the disdain for women's minds in the United States in the nineteenth century is that it followed from almost an exactly opposite conception of womanliness and a very different role of women in the sexual division of labour. Whereas women and their minds were disparaged in classical Athens because women worked, an activity believed antithetical to the attainment of wisdom, the disdain which existed for female minds in nineteenth century America seems allied with the fact that women did not work. Women's minds in the nineteenth century were considered inferior, not because women were like 'beasts of burden,' but because they were so unlike 'beasts of burden.' Women's minds., like women themselves, were believed to be small, weak and 'flighty.' Such minds were believed capable only of dealing with matters outside of the serious concerns of life, with the emotions and with feelings. They were minds useless to matters practical, themselves appropriately tackled through the methods of science.

What had of course changed in the intervening period between fourth century B.C. Athens and nineteenth century America was the respect given to labour. Whereas those activities necessary for producing food, clothing, and housing were viewed by the Greeks as representing the lowest aspects of humanity, such activities had by the seventeenth century begun to acquire a new respect ability. Given this difference, and women's roles within these two societies, then the differing content of the disdain for women and their minds is highly understandable.

What is still left unanswered is the big question: why is it that in both societies women's roles placed them on the outside of what was considered worthy and Important? I do not believe we can generate any answers to this question from the above. Serious attention to this question requires an examination of a broader scope of history than has been provided here. Nevertheless the above can minimally serve as a reminder to keep this big question in mind. It is a question that does not often get asked. Frequently it is assumed that once we have located women's Inferior status in their social roles, the job of analysis is over. The only task then left is the more practical one of changing these roles. In our own time many have become aware of the inferiority of women's status as resulting from their exclusion from the public realm. Thus what seems almost commonsensical is the dictum many years ago suggested by Frederick Engels; "Get thee to the workplace."[39] Thus in our own time changing women's role as homemaker is frequently seen as a sufficient condition for eliminating women's inferior status.

What the above analysis might suggest, however, is that attention to social roles may be insufficient to account for women's ascribed inferiority, that such ascribed inferiority is highly tenacious and compatible with a diversity of functions in the sexual division of labour. What this may mean is that a mere change in such functions may not be a sufficient condition for ending this ascription. One dangerous possibility for our own time is that women's a scribed inferiority may follow them into the public world, creating a gender identified separation in jobs smaller to the gender identified separation between public and private. The evidence for this possibility is already apparent in the sex-role stereotyping that has marked women's past and continued participation in the work world. Women have been and continue to enter such sex-stereotyped jobs as secretary, waitress, sales-woman, nurse, dental assistant, and lower level school teacher. In such jobs they replicate the traditional subordination of women which has existed within the private sphere. It has thus been suggested that the change in women's situation in twentieth century America can be characterized as the transformation from private to public patriarchy.[40] if this Is the case, then the maxim ' Get thee to the workplace' may not be sufficient advice, though clearly still necessary. What would need additional attention are the gender identified separations which appear as able to exist within the public world as between the public and the private. As we have seen, such separations, and the consequences they have for the status of women, are easily capable of transmutation and on that account not easily destroyed.

Notes

1. Gayle Rubin originally referred to the oppression of women "in Its endless variety and monotonous similarity" in (1975) "The Traffic of Women," In Toward an Anthropology of Women. ed. Rayna R. Reiter (New York: Monthly Review Press), 160. I would like to thank Alison Jaggar for drawing my attention to this phrase and its usefulness in articulating the contemporary methodological difficulty of feminist theory.
2. Michelle Zimbalist Roasaldo (1974) "Woman, Culture and Society: A Theoretical Overview," in Women, Culture and Society, ed. Michelle Zimbalist Roasldo and Louise Lamphere (Stanford: Stanford University Press) 20. While Rosa I do has in her recent paper "The Use and Abuse of Anthropology: Reflections on Feminism and Cross-Cultural Understanding" (Signs, Vol. 5, No. 3, 389-417) argued for a greater attention to historical specificity in gender theory, and has criticized contemporary feminist theory and her earlier work for insufficient attention to this specificity, she even here admits to the apparently universal subordination of women. See 394-395.
3. Sarah B. Pomeroy (1975) Goddesses, Whores, Wives and Slaves: Women in Antiquity (New York: Schocken Books) 60.

4. Pomeroy, 72.
5. Pomeroy, 73.
6. Pomeroy, 74.
7. Pomeroy, 74.
8. Pomeroy, 74.
9. Hannah Arendt (1958) The Human Condition (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press) 24.
10. Marilyn Arthur (1977) " 'Liberated' Women: The Classical Era," in (eds.) Renata Bridenthal and Claudia Koonz Becoming Visible: Women in European History (Boston: Houghton Mifflin) 63.
11. Arendt, 41.
12. Nichomachean Ethics, 1139a in (ed.) Richard McKean (1941) The Basic Works of Aristotle, (New York: Random House) 1023.
13. Nichomachean Ethics, 1140a McKeon, I 025,
14. The Republic, 508E-510A in Great Dialogues of Plato, trans. W.H.D. Rouse, (ed.) Erick Warmington and Philip G. Rouse (New York: The New American Library, 1956) 309.
15. Politics, 1260 in McKean, 1144.
16. Politics, 1254b in McKean, 1132.
17. The Republic, 454B-456A in Warmington and Rouse, 253.
18. Susan Moller Okin (1979) Women in Western Political Thought (Princeton: Princeton University Press) 23.
19. Okin, 26.
20. Philippe Aries (1962) Centuries of Childhood: A Social History of Family Life, trans. Robert Baldick (New York: Alfred A. Knopf)
21. Arendt, 59.
22. Eli Zaretsky (1976) Capitalism, the Family and Personal Life (New York: Harper and Row) 40- 41. This book has been very important to me in providing a framework within which to understand the situation of women in modern western society. A basic part of the argument of this paper would not have been possible without this book.
23. Zaretsky, 46.
24. Ellen Dubois (1975) "The Radicalism of the Woman Suffrage Movement: Notes Toward the Reconstruction of Nineteenth Century Feminism," Feminist Studies, 3, 64. Dubois' work has also been extremely important to me in showing the usefulness of the public/private distinction as a structure for understanding the situation of women in nineteenth century America.
25. Eleanor Flexner (1975) Centuries of Struggle; The Woman's Rights Movement in the United States, (rpt. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University) 8.
26. Arendt, 46-37.
27. Arendt, 290.
28. Arendt, 291 - 292.
29. Ann Douglas (1977) The Feminization of American Culture (New York: Alfred A. Knopf) 50.
30. Douglas, 51.
31. Douglas, 55.
32. Douglas, 56.
33. Douglas, 74.

34. Nancy F. Cott (1977) The Bonds of Womanhood: ‘Woman’s Sphere’ in New England, 1780-1835 (New Haven: Yale University) 67.
35. Douglas, 60.
36. Thomas Woody, (1929) A History of Women’s Education In the United States In Two Volumes (New York: The Science Press) I, 88. 11
37. Phyllis H. Stock (1978) Better Than Rubies: A History of Women’s Education (New York: G.P. Putnam’s Sons) 191.
38. Edward Clark, Sex in Education (no other reference provided)
39. Frederick Engels, (1972) The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State, ed. Eleanor Burke Leacock (New York: International Publishers) 137-138.
40. The transformation of ‘private’ to ‘public’ patriarch is explored by Carol A. Brown in an unpublished paper “The Political Economy of Women’s Liberation.”