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## Whose Rights? A Critique of the "Givens" in Human Rights Discourse

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We seem to be entering a twilight zone in the history of human consciousness—marked both by accelerating threats to human diversity and survival, and by new assertions of the human spirit from a variety of vantage points. Theoretical assumptions and categories through which human reality has been comprehended and shaped with such confidence have not only become obsolete, but have become stumbling blocks in any attempt to restructure our world.

—Rajni Kothari

Above all, the process of working toward a just world peace involves a struggle to articulate new conceptions of what it can now mean to have solidarity with other human beings.

—R. B. J. Walker

We live at the juncture of systemic transformations, in a "twilight zone" marked by cumulative dangers and emergent opportunities. How can we achieve the global solidarity required for a just world peace? How can we construct a normative order that encompasses the world's diversity without eliminating it? From the twilight zone, how can we move to a sustainable peace rather than the eternal darkness of global catastrophe?

A just world peace will not happen "by accident." Moving toward world peace requires conscious and critical articulation of a moral philosophy congruent with global solidarity—a moral philosophy adequate to global transformation. This paper takes as starting points the urgency

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of articulating such a moral philosophy and the centrality of human rights discourse as the moral philosophy currently operative at the global level. Perhaps more than any other, human rights discourse structures the space within which we converse, internationally, about constructing a moral order of global scope.

As a contribution to articulating a moral philosophy adequate for a just world order, this paper examines the “givens” of human rights discourse. Particular models of human nature underlie our moral philosophies and structure our understanding of moral agents. In seeking to resolve moral dilemmas, we confront and become conscious of the limiting *and* enabling contours implicit in our models of human nature. We discover the fundamental assumptions shaping the normative order we promote and, in varying degrees, practice. The model of human nature implicit in human rights discourse is thus central to our understanding of contemporary norms and practices at the global level.

But the significance of the model is not limited to consequences we identify as “normative.” Because it constitutes the “deep structure” of our world views—the underlying, most taken-for-granted assumptions—the model of human nature shapes our understanding of reality more generally. Our political, economic, and social theories are congruent with particular models; they presuppose specific assumptions about human nature or the ontology of the individual and “self-other” relations. Thus, an examination of the model of human nature embedded in human rights discourse has significance not only for our understanding of global normative issues—although this alone would warrant the endeavor—but also, to the extent that the model is presupposed in other discourses, the undertaking is valuable in two additional ways.

First, it reveals the underlying premises rarely acknowledged but always of consequence in, for example, the discourse and practice of politics, economics, and international relations. Second, exposing the implicit assumptions shared by these disciplines enables us to see linkages among them that are otherwise obscured. Thus, a model presupposing atomistic individuals with equal potential for rationality is congruent with the autonomous moral agent of Kantian justice, the self-interested actor of the marketplace, and the empirical scientist of technological development. To the extent that such a model is culturally and historically particular (not universal), accepting its presuppositions as ahistorical and universal distorts our understanding of moral theories, production and exchange relations, and the status of scientific knowledge claims. In addition, the distortions themselves are *linked* through their shared assumptions about human nature; examining these linkages permits more accurate—and therefore more adequate (and potentially emancipatory)—understanding of moral theories, economic relations, and “ways of knowing.” Thus, becoming conscious of deep structure

assumptions enables us to recognize and critically examine patterns at the surface level of concrete manifestations.

A moral philosophy adequate to global transformation requires that we reach deeply in order to understand most comprehensively. It requires that we become conscious of our deepest assumptions—our most taken-for-granted “givens”—in order to critically reflect upon them.

Liberalism is no longer suitable as the principal philosophical foundation for human rights thinking.

—Christian Bay

Violence against women—including assault, mutilation, murder, infanticide, rape and cruel neglect—is perhaps the most pervasive yet least recognized human rights issue in the world.

—Lori Heise

The essence of feminism is the radical reinterpretation of tradition.

—Gita Sen

Human rights are gender specific. This is established empirically by reference to gender-differentiated human rights practices, and conceptually by reference to the model of human nature underpinning the rights tradition.<sup>1</sup> Both in application and in theory, human rights are based on the male as the norm.

Although the principle of equality is enshrined in the drawing up of human rights instruments, in practice women's rights are relegated. Documentation and analysis of this subordination of women's human rights is now extensive; systematic exposure of this double standard is a necessary step toward eliminating it. Yet the discourse and practice of international human rights retains a male-as-norm orientation that persists in treating women's rights as secondary.

International human rights conventions specifically reject the principle of nonintervention when violation of rights occur. Yet systematic violence against women is treated as “customary” or a “private matter,” and thus immune to international condemnation. “If a person is murdered because of his or her politics, the world justifiably responds with outrage. But if a person is beaten or allowed to die because she is female, the world dismisses it as ‘cultural tradition.’”<sup>2</sup>

Where is the outrage at female sexual slavery and “sex tourism”? At “dowry deaths,” “bride burning,” and genital mutilation? At the restriction of women's activities, the regulation of their reproduction, and their deaths through female infanticide? Most extensive yet least acknowledged is the structural violence against females: poorer nutrition, health care, and education; limited access to material and symbolic resources;

less compensation for yet a disproportionate share of socially necessary labor; systemic wife beating, rape, and other forms of emotional and physical assault. How is it that violence against women—and the perpetuation of male domination more generally—is rendered an acceptable aspect of the global normative order? What permits us to simply “accommodate” the segregation of women when segregation by race or ethnicity produces outrage?<sup>3</sup>

I believe that we cannot answer these questions, nor address this violence, until we take seriously the androcentrism of our theory and practice. In examining the givens of human rights discourse, this paper illuminates a variety of ways in which the presumption of male-as-norm shapes our construction of reality. The objective of this analysis is not simply to confirm the exclusion of women’s experience but to provide valuable resources for reconstructing our models and their manifestations. Systematic critiques presuppose and prefigure alternative understandings. The following critique should contribute not only to clarity in regard to the assumptions in place but also to commitment in regard to alternatives.

The feminist critique of human rights practices reminds us that good intentions and liberal commitments are not in themselves sufficient. Although the liberal rights tradition (admirably) serves to minimize the incidence of direct violence, it stops short of challenging structural violence.<sup>4</sup> In one sense, the relegation of women’s rights is simply indicative of the “acceptance” more generally of structural violence within the reigning normative order. But in other—and, I believe, more significant—senses, the relegation of women’s rights is directly entailed by the domination dynamic embedded in our world view and its moral philosophy.

The feminist critique of theoretical foundations reveals a masculinist ontology—an understanding of human nature imposed by taking the standpoint of men (more specifically, elite, white men) as generic. Elaboration of this claim occupies the remainder of this paper. I note here the most important implication: we are not without resources once we expose the limitations of androcentrism—that is, the critique is also constructive. The model of human nature currently presupposed is inadequate for eliminating structural violence (because that model presupposes domination), but it is also decisively inaccurate as a model of human nature. The world’s majority (*all* who are “marginalized”) are excluded from this model; their experiences provide alternative models; and these alternatives must be acknowledged and drawn upon if we are to achieve global solidarity and a just world order. Stated simply, human rights *are* gender specific; a moral philosophy for the planet cannot afford to be.

The first step to the understanding of men is the bringing to consciousness of the model or models that dominate and penetrate their thought and action. Like all attempts to make men aware of the categories in which they think, it is a difficult and sometimes painful activity, likely to produce deeply disquieting results.

—Isaiah Berlin

For we would recognize that it is not a matter of choosing between objectivity and distortion, but rather between different strategies for constituting “reality” in thought so as to deal with it in different ways, each of which has its own ethical implications.

—Hayden White

Argumentation in moral philosophy can be seen to presuppose a definition of “humans as they *are*” (a model of “untutored” human nature); a description of “humans as they *could* (presumably ‘ought to’) be”; and an operative world view—our understanding of reality such that the transition from what “is” to what “ought to be” is both possible and desirable.<sup>5</sup> These components are in actuality mutually constituted: our world view constructs our definition of human nature and vice versa, whereas any preferred state necessarily derives from the givens and aspirations embedded in our understanding of the nature of reality and the range of what is possible.

I assume in this paper that contemporary human rights discourse can be mapped onto this general form. The model of human nature—the “is”—currently predominating is characterized as “Western,” “liberal,” and “individualist.”<sup>6</sup> The preferred state of human affairs—the “ought”—is identified with the normative objectives of international human rights discourse. The operative world view is identified as (implicitly) positivist.<sup>7</sup> Recognizing the mutual constitution of these components provides the impetus for the present inquiry.

Contemporary philosophers of science pose formidable challenges to the positivist world view. These challenges in turn have significant implications for both the “is” and the “ought” presupposed in human rights discourse. Yet the human rights literature rarely addresses ontological and epistemological problems generated by the need to move beyond positivism. I believe that a continued reliance on positivist understanding impairs our struggles for global solidarity. Rather, we must address the challenges as well as opportunities raised by postpositivism. But what of feminism?

Although women’s rights are included in the human rights literature, postpositivist feminist critiques challenge the rights tradition itself as well as its construction of particular models of human nature. Feminist schol-

ars have generated a body of literature criticizing Western and androcentric constructions of the individual, human nature, and rationality. These critiques also have significant implications for our constructions of moral philosophy and must be addressed in our struggles for global solidarity.

Therefore, in this paper I undertake a postpositivist feminist critique of the model of human nature—the “is”—presupposed in human rights discourse.<sup>8</sup> Consistent with the postpositivist philosophy of social science, I argue that an examination of the presuppositions underlying the human nature model is crucial to both the theoretical *and* practical understanding of the entire edifice of human rights.<sup>9</sup> Raising to consciousness otherwise unexamined premises enables us to critically evaluate the assumptions being made and to assess their accuracy and coherence. The understanding gained is then available for guiding the directions that reconstruction might, or even must, take.

As noted above, I have characterized the model of human nature underlying human rights discourse as Western, liberal, and individualist. I begin this paper with criticisms of the model as expressed in contemporary discourse: the critiques already articulated within the discourse. Surveying these criticisms provides context and illuminates assumptions implicit in the model. Criticisms from a postpositivist feminist perspective are then applied to each component of the model. Because this literature is less familiar to human rights scholars, I provide extensive references. I hope thereby to demonstrate the well-documented inadequacies of the contemporary model and to introduce literature that, I believe, is essential to addressing those inadequacies.

### Contemporary Critiques of the Dominant Model of Human Nature

#### *The “Western” Component*

The influence of Western political philosophy on the formation of international human rights theory and practice establishes the “Western pedigree” of the model.<sup>10</sup> Positing *human* rights implies a model of universal human nature and experience; to the extent that the model actually presupposes a particular (e.g., Western) human nature, its universality is compromised.

Criticisms of Western bias—especially the presumed universality of the Western “modernization” experience—are prominent in the contemporary literature.

It should be recognized that the Western notion of human rights evolved historically, under a particular set of circumstances, in the most

highly industrialized and developed areas of the world—areas that subsequently have dominated the remainder of the world. While espousing and to a great extent implementing human rights doctrines domestically, the Western industrial states nonetheless denied them to peoples they controlled for generations. . . . Discussion of the issue of human rights should begin with the differing historical and contemporary circumstances of non-Western societies. . . . What was a “natural” evolution in the West may not appear so “natural” in the Third World.<sup>11</sup>

“Traditional” cultures (including pre-modern Western culture) conceive of the individual not as an autonomous agent but as “an integral part of a greater whole, of a ‘group’ within which one had a defined role and status.”<sup>12</sup> The Western notion of “inalienable rights” was antithetical to the interests of the colonial powers who, therefore, were slow to promote the notion among the colonized. With independence, the “notion of the primacy of the group and the submission of the individual to the group persisted, although the confines and boundaries of the group had changed to become coterminous with the state.”<sup>13</sup> Indeed, the state replaced the kinship system or local community as the source of legitimate authority. This is quite different from perceptions of the state in Western liberal theory. Rather than posing a primary threat to individual liberties, the postcolonial state is understood to be the repository and dispenser of individual rights.

At the same time, the Western social Darwinist equation of modernization and moral development established the ideological framework within which newly independent states fashioned their nationalism.

The colonial experience of economic exploitation gave credence to the notion of human dignity as consisting of economic rights rather than civil or political rights. Freedom from want, from hunger, and from economic deprivation necessitated limiting political liberties. . . . In this context human rights were . . . directly related to the attainment of self-sufficiency, which in turn was a function of the state.<sup>14</sup>

Emphasizing the role of the state in guaranteeing welfare is only one—and not the most prevalent—explication of non-Western approaches to human rights. It is *not* meant to justify abuses by the state or to romanticize traditional societies. It is meant to focus our attention on two aspects of non-Western experience generating fundamentally different notions of what constitutes “being human.” First, non-Western societies, having experienced a dramatically different modernization process than Western societies, have a dramatically different concept of the individual. Specifically, the individual remains more “an integral part of a greater whole.” Consequently, nontraditional assumptions of autonomy and rights held inalienably are less compelling in this world view.

Second, what is compelling from the non-Western modernization experience is the primacy of economic development. Human dignity—the traditional notion of human rights—is to be achieved through economic security; that is, the provision by the group (the state) of secure, material well-being. Here, achieving concrete, substantive rights is paramount over the Western preoccupation with formal rights.<sup>15</sup>

In sum, to the extent that human rights discourse aspires to universality, it must acknowledge and take seriously the historically differing experiences, and world views, of non-Western societies. Of particular relevance are differences in regard to state building, processes of industrialization, and structural positions within the world system.

#### *The "Liberal" Component*

The second element in the model of human nature has been characterized as liberal, referring to the related assumptions that (1) all humans share an equal potential for reason, and (2) both the natural order and normative order are explicable by and conformable to the critical capacity of reason.<sup>16</sup> Individuals purposefully and instrumentally pursue private, intrinsic desires, or goals that are not subject to public critique. "Rationality" then "applies only to the choice of means, not to the choice of ends."<sup>17</sup> Individual autonomy—freedom from interference with one's private judgment or actions—is paramount.

In what follows, I assume that readers have a degree of familiarity with the numerous critiques of the liberal model. I focus on criticisms specific to the abstract, rationalist premises of liberalism that are relevant to a consideration of the human rights model.

The liberal world view, consistent with its positivist orientation, promotes dualistic categorizations and a privileging of "universal" formalism over "particular" contingency. An obvious price of privileging the abstract, formal side of concepts is the difficulty of addressing the complexity of concrete experience. The more encompassing and/or abstract the formal principle, the more it is emptied of content and unable to provide a guide to decisionmaking in practical, contingent circumstances.<sup>18</sup>

One aspect of privileging formal over substantive rights is the frequently criticized neglect of economic rights—those necessary for material well-being. The considerable literature promoting "second generation" or "positive rights" is relevant here.<sup>19</sup> Of particular note is H. Shue's persuasive case for the inclusion of "subsistence rights" in the group of basic rights (those without which no further rights can be enjoyed). Shue observes that "subsistence rights seem strange" because "Western liberalism has had a blind spot for severe economic need."<sup>20</sup>

A standard assumption in liberal theory is that there is only moderate scarcity. This has the effect of assuming that everyone's subsistence is taken care of. You must have your subsistence guaranteed in order to be admitted into the domain of the theory. Today this excludes from the scope of liberal theory no fewer than 1,000,000,000 people.<sup>21</sup>

Briefly, this selective critique of the liberal component argues that emphasizing abstract, procedural rights distorts important concrete realities; that economic (even subsistence) needs are frequently subordinated to procedural political rights; and that preoccupation with protecting private, individual interests distracts us from recognizing the severity of scarcity.

#### *The "Individualist" Component*

The third element has been characterized as individualist, referring to the presupposition of human beings as atomistic, autonomous, rationally maximizing agents.

Liberal contract theorists have assumed human beings to be bourgeois by nature—that is, to be individualist maximizers, always looking out for themselves and their families. . . . And it is assumed that these are facts of human nature, not of history: that people will always tend to remain acquisitive and possessive individualists, preoccupied with their own immediate wants, not with the needs of others.<sup>22</sup>

Positing individuals as atomistic (entities prior to and comprising social groups) generates an understanding of social relations as necessarily extrinsic and accidental; psychology is seen as more basic than sociology; and groups appear inherently unstable because the interests of their members are unstable.<sup>23</sup> Instability then requires the "rule of law," actualized through the state, which maintains social order in the absence of traditional group identities. At the same time, this concentration of legitimate power in the state necessitates safeguards against state/political interference in the private lives and decisionmaking of individuals.

This individualist model has also been the target of numerous critiques. Again, I will focus on criticisms particularly relevant to human rights discourse, specifically the atomistic and autonomous aspects of the individualist component.

Marx (and Hegel before him) articulated what remains a compelling critique of individualist premises. He argued that "the so-called *rights of man*, as distinguished from the *rights of the citizen*, are simply the rights of a member of civil [market] society, that is, of egoistic man, of man separated from other men and from the community."<sup>24</sup> The "right of man to free-

dom" is based upon the atomistic separation of "man from man."

The right of property is, therefore, the right to enjoy one's fortune and dispose of it as one will; without regard for other men and independent of society. It is the right of self-interest. This individual liberty, and its application, form the basis of civil society. It leads every man to see in other men, not the realization, but rather the limitation of his own liberty.<sup>25</sup>

Marx argued that the liberal (bourgeois) assumption of "egoistic man" and "his individual rights" was not only inadequate in satisfying the species-need for community, but in fact rationalized a "sanctification of property rights" that entailed sacrificing the concept of justice.<sup>26</sup> For Marx, bourgeois rights to pursue unconstrained self-interest necessarily mandated a society of alienated individuals, competitively striving to enhance their private property, with no possibility of realizing authentic freedom within a community.<sup>27</sup>

Clearly, the antagonism between individual and state (constituted by liberal, individualist premises) differs dramatically from the non-Western appreciation of group-based identity. The individual as atomistic and competitive is a social construction of the capitalist era. This historically specific characterization then constrains our sociomoral understanding: if individuals are the basic and only constituents of the society, *all* social phenomena are to be explained by reference to facts about or actions of individuals—the whole is only the sum of its parts.<sup>28</sup> If all understanding of social phenomena is in terms of the attributes of individuals, the group, or whole, can never be the source of values, nor of explanations of interactive processes.

In sum, the literature criticizing the individualist component of the human nature model challenges the depiction of atomistic, competitive individuals as the primary unit of social explanation. Reducing social reality to such units is inadequate for either our theoretical or practical resolution of sociomoral problematques.

### Postpositivist Feminist Critiques of the Model

Scientific developments of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries profoundly affected liberal thought and practice, as is generally acknowledged: "human nature" as articulated in the liberal tradition assumed the Cartesian mind-body (reason-nature) dualism and the ontological priority of (atomistic) individuals to social "wholes."<sup>29</sup> In challenging the foundations of prevailing world views, postpositivist feminist research provides some of the richest insights on and resources for the transfor-

mative work required in our pursuit of a just world order. As noted above, postpositivists argue that the more conscious we are of fundamental premises, the more likely it is that the accuracy and adequacy of our understanding will improve. Feminists apply this insight to the givens of Western philosophy, exposing androcentric (male-as-norm) biases as systematic distortions of lived experience and sociopolitical understanding.

### The "Western" Component

Earlier, I criticized the human rights model for generalizing the historically *specific* Western experience (of political and economic development) as universally applicable. That is, universalizing the Western experience significantly distorts our understanding of *actual* non-Western experience. In this section, I criticize two additional aspects of the Western component.

The first is a methodological point. From a postpositivist perspective, universalizing the Western model of human nature can be seen as an example of "abstract universality": the concept of "an unchanging abstract form, separated from a variable concrete substance."<sup>30</sup> In this case there is not only an error in generalizing what is in fact contingent and historically specific (concrete, lived) experience, but also a methodological error in positing an abstract, universal "human."

The problem, of course, is how one identifies the properties for a category that professes to be abstract and universal. The tendency is to adopt as essential those transhistorical or universally human properties that are, in fact, historical and contingent. The claim of abstract universality then masks the inescapable particularity and contingency of the properties assumed. This brings me to the second point.

I have already criticized the model of human nature as nonuniversal because of its Western bias. Yet the bias is even deeper and more pervasive, silencing as it does not only the non-Western experience, but that of the female half of humanity, both Western and non-Western.

The criterion of abstract universality, in actual philosophical practice, turns out to choose those properties as essentially and universally human which the philosophers themselves have either explicitly identified as male properties, or which were associated with roles and functions in which males predominated.<sup>31</sup>

Simply stated, I am claiming that the model of human nature presupposed in human rights discourse suffers from Western bias in three related ways. First, generalizing what is specifically Western historical experience distorts our understanding of non-Western experience. Second, Western postulation of abstract universality in its definition of

“human” masks the particular interests served by any such categorization. Third, the prevailing model privileges not only Western but specifically *male* experience and interests.

My argument in support of these claims is postpositivist (insisting that all categorizations are social constructions, not “natural” or “essential” givens) and feminist (exposing the pervasiveness of male-as-norm bias and distortion). With a focus on how androcentrism affects human rights discourse, I pursue the following two questions. First, are women and women’s activities in fact excluded from the dominant model? Second, are women’s and men’s lived realities in fact so different that the exclusion of women’s experience significantly distorts the model? Obviously, to the extent that women’s and men’s realities differ, the distortions generated by retaining androcentrism are magnified and the accuracy of universality is correspondingly compromised.

*Are Women Excluded?* The accumulation of two decades of feminist scholarship has decisively established the exclusion of women from Western constructions of “human.” Particularly well documented is the androcentric conception of “human” in philosophical and sociopolitical discourse. I refer specifically to (Western) articulations of human nature, the moral agent, the rational being, and the political animal.<sup>32</sup> In her extensive review of Western political theorists, S. Okin concludes that “‘Human nature’ . . . as described and discovered by philosophers such as Aristotle, Aquinas, Machiavelli, Locke, Rousseau, Hegel, and many others, is intended to refer only to male human nature.”<sup>33</sup> Similarly, in examining Kant’s model of moral agents as necessarily “rational beings,” we discover that women “lack these humanly essential characteristics.”<sup>34</sup> Rather than think, women react and emote. “They do something only because it pleases them. . . . I hardly believe that the fair sex is capable of principles.”<sup>35</sup>

The well-documented pattern is that of generalizing men’s experience at the implicit, and often explicit, exclusion of women’s. This discrimination has been effectuated by defining women as only “partial males,” or exclusively in terms of men, or as lacking an essential element for moral or rational agency. Especially significant is the pattern in the liberal tradition of identifying only male heads of household as “individuals.” The recurrent, underlying notion is a “naturalization” of women’s subordination to male authority, “necessitated” by women’s reproductive function. Women’s unique biological potential is repeatedly rendered as a liability that establishes women’s inferiority to and dependence upon men (who are rendered as naturally superior).

In other words, a woman’s capacity for *biological* reproduction

becomes essentialized as her nature; the “givenness” of this capacity is then extended to the entire process of *social* reproduction, thereby consigning women to a restricted “family” domain. Gender differences are reified in establishing a set of social dichotomies. Men are seen as “fully human,” that is, rational, self-interested individuals who participate in the public, political world. Women are dependents—lesser individuals consigned “naturally” to the realm of familial, private, and apolitical affairs.<sup>36</sup> References to equality among individuals in fact refer to (propertied) males only, as heads of families.<sup>37</sup>

Establishing a hierarchical dichotomy between public and private spheres has profoundly shaped Western thought and practice; the public-private distinction remains a fundamental ordering principle of Western culture. However, this dichotomy is increasingly under attack for its methodological weakness as well as its political consequences. Postpositivists deny the dualistic metaphysics presupposed by reference to this and other hierarchical dichotomies. Feminists expose the “naturalization” of gender hierarchy imposed by identifying men with the rational, fully human, political sphere of the public and women with the devalued, affective, apolitical sphere of the private. Similarly revealed are the power relations within the private sphere, the exploitation of women’s productive and reproductive labor, and the inseparability of the political from the personal.

One consequence of the gendered public-private dichotomy is that only activities pertaining to the public sphere are accorded social and, especially, political significance. And those activities are, by definition, *men’s*. A number of consequences follow from the primacy of the political and its exclusion of those activities associated with women and the day-to-day maintenance of family life. Some of these will be the focus of subsequent discussion; here the point is simply that women and the activities assigned to the private sphere are denied relevance and representation in articulations of social and, especially, political reality. Thus, the public-private dichotomy masks the androcentric bias pervading sociopolitical theory, including its models of human nature.

In adopting the mind-body dualism and coupling it with public-private dichotomization, Western (especially, liberal) thought has systematically ignored what would seem on the face of it crucial elements of the constitution of sociopolitical reality. The failure to address our sexuality, procreation, childrearing, and socialization practices as definitively human problematemes reflects a male-as-norm standpoint. Representations of “human” reality are those “devised by men about the male world of the public domain and about the family as . . . seen by those men.”<sup>38</sup>

Perhaps the most irrefutable evidence of androcentrism in the depic-

tion of the human condition is the almost total absence of reproduction as a central topic in sociomoral and political philosophy.<sup>39</sup>

Reproduction is the whole process from conception, through birth, to the point of personal independence of the child. It includes the “reproductive labour” of directly nurturing and socializing children. This labour, unlike other forms of labour essential to the continuation of society, has not been assumed to have any theoretical significance. . . . Traditional political theory assumes that women bear some unique relation to reproductive labour itself, and not just to the *biological* process, such that it is seen to fall naturally to them to perform it. . . . Women, *qua* women are excluded from the public, political, and economic spheres.<sup>40</sup>

No less striking is the virtually total failure of economists to acknowledge the value of “women’s work.”<sup>41</sup> Marxists and non-Marxists alike have participated in rendering this labor invisible. These are issues treated in greater detail below. I mention them here simply as additional indicators of how unconsciously and pervasively we take the experience and standpoint of men as given, as the norm. Women’s experiences and activities are deemed “natural” and not significant for theorizing. Transformations in labor markets have complicated the equation of men:public and women:private, whereas patriarchal relations have simply been institutionalized on the job site. In spite of dramatic changes in economic and political relations, the ideology of gender hierarchy has not been eliminated but simply modernized.

Women *continue* to be defined primarily through an androcentric lens that “essentializes” them in functionalist terms—as mother, nurturer, caretaker, helpmate—and locates these functions within patriarchal structures. Evidence abounds in the social science literature,<sup>42</sup> the treatment of women in the courts,<sup>43</sup> and the treatment of women vis-à-vis human rights.<sup>44</sup> The United States is currently experiencing a promotion of “the American family” that repeats the “essentializing” arguments for “woman’s place,” that is, within a patriarchal home/family. To the extent that the nuclear family retains media preeminence—despite its empirically low incidence—the essentializing of women is implicitly promoted.<sup>45</sup>

In sum, the exclusion of women from the model of human nature is well documented. The exclusion is effectuated by defining woman’s nature as other than man’s (e.g., defined exclusively in terms of reproductive function) and/or less than man’s (e.g., as being “incapable of moral reasoning”). Historically, and continuing today, human attributes are in actuality those ascribed to men (especially white propertied men).

*Does the Exclusion of Women Make a Difference?* One could argue that

even if women have been excluded, the implications for defining human nature are serious only to the extent that the exclusion radically distorts social reality: Do women occupy such radically different lifeworlds than men? A growing chorus answers “yes.”<sup>46</sup> Just as universalization of the Western modernization experience blinds us to the differences of lived reality in non-Western contexts, male-as-norm assumptions mask the differing lifeworlds of men and women. And, reflecting similar structural relationships, the lack of men’s awareness of the differences reflects their privileged position: the dominant culture both generates and is able to remain ignorant of and impervious to the differences in lived reality.

Imagine two people looking at a statue, one from the front, the other from the back, and imagine that the one in front thinks the one in back must be seeing exactly what he is seeing. He cannot fathom how the other can come up with a description so different from his own. It is as though women are assumed to be robots hooked up to the senses of men—not using senses of our own, not authoring perception, not having and generating a point of view. And then they cannot fathom how we must be wired inside, that we could produce the output we produce from the input they assume to be identical with their own. The hypothesis that we are seeing from a different point of view, and hence simply seeing something he cannot see, is not available to a man, is not in his repertoire, so long as his total conception of the situation includes a conception of women as not authoritative perceivers like himself, that is, so long as he does not count women as men. And no wonder such a man finds women incomprehensible.<sup>47</sup>

The dominant culture’s representation of (their) lived reality is the “official” version—the norm—in terms of which all others are assessed, generating an A<sub>s</sub>/Not-A model.<sup>48</sup> Deviations from the norm may be seen as punishable, annoying, amusing, or irrelevant, but they are rarely accorded mutual respect. Most frequent in Western androcentrism are versions of disdain: the view of the “other” is simply “not taken seriously.”<sup>49</sup> Not being taken seriously is manifested materially (in lower—or no—paychecks and unsafe contraception) and symbolically (through language, gestures, and images). From a postpositivist understanding of social reality—as *constituted* by “systems of shared meaning”—the power and, therefore, the politics of symbol manipulation take on new significance.<sup>50</sup> An increasingly acknowledged resource, almost exclusively under the control of the dominant culture, is simply the power of *naming*: defining social reality in one’s chosen image. Both As and Not-As are familiar with the A’s representation of their own culture; however, the Not-A culture is effectively silenced by the dominance of A’s cultural representations.

How many of you have seen films or read novels about men's experience in war? How many have seen or read at least four such works? How many of you have seen films and read novels that deal with women's experience in pregnancy and childbirth? (I do not count Lamaze and other childbirth training films any more than I count combat training films.) My contention is that of those people who have not borne children, more have identified imaginatively with Lassie than with a pregnant woman.<sup>51</sup>

As members of the dominant culture, men can choose to what extent they become familiar with the differences between men's and women's experiences. But those "marginalized" in any social system have—by virtue of their weaker position vis-à-vis resources, of whatever kind—a greater need to understand both their own and the dominant culture, including an awareness of the differences.<sup>52</sup> To the extent that the voices of the marginalized find or are permitted expression, the articulation of different realities emerge.<sup>53</sup> This process is clearly underway in regard to women's experiences within male-defined reality.

Women's lives vary tremendously in terms of class, sexual orientation, race, age, and ethnicity, as well as other factors. If we additionally take seriously the *global* variation in women's lives, we cannot help but question the legitimacy of generalizing about women. Although I recognize the dangers of collapsing such diversity by referring to "women's lives," I consider the risks worth taking in this paper.

My primary justification is based upon the objectives of the task at hand: to illuminate the biases and inadequacies of the model of human nature presupposed in human rights discourse. My objective is both deconstructive (revealing falsehoods and exposing contradictions) and reconstructive (attending to the alternatives implied by the critique). I argue that the model's givens have served to defer, silence, or render invisible alternative understandings of moral philosophy. Elaborating the non-Western, nonmale experience demonstrates not only the bias (errors) imposed by taking Western and male experience as givens, it also establishes the concrete reality of *alternative* experiences, with implications for constructing alternative models, world views, and moral philosophies.

Employing generalizations of women's experience does not imply a common viewpoint among women nor posit homogeneity (any more than non-Western experience is presumed univocal and/or homogeneous). It does presuppose that patriarchal social relations have systematic social consequences and that mapping such consequences is valuable for corrective as well as constructive purposes.

Additionally, the generalizations offered by reference to women's experience are not those targeted in the above critique of abstract uni-

versality. I am not universalizing an abstract quality of "womanness" (compare liberal theory's universalizing of a transhistorical, essential "rationality"), but identifying patterns in the concrete, lived experiences of women as their lives are shaped within (historically specific) patriarchal relations.

Although there are numerous ways in which men's and women's realities differ, I focus here, first, on the well-documented gender differentiation institutionalized by the dichotomization of public and private spheres and, second, some of the literature on gender identity formation.

*Gender Differentiation and the Public-Private Dichotomy.* I noted earlier the liberal tendency to dichotomize the private sphere as serving personal concerns—"needs for intimacy, affection, sexuality," and various kinds of emotional support—in contrast to the public sphere where personal/private interests are excluded in favor of collective concerns, that is, where "political man" finds expression. Whereas men are permitted a dual nature—living in both the private realm of "man's animality" and the public realm of "man's humanity"—women are defined in terms of and expected to realize themselves within a single nature, identified only with the private domain.<sup>54</sup>

In its contemporary form, this does not mean women have no existence outside the family or private sphere: "*Woman's place is not a separate sphere or domain of existence but a position within social existence generally.* It is a subordinate position, and it supports our social institutions at the same time that it serves and services men."<sup>55</sup> Liberal mystifications of "free and equal individuals" have masked the perpetuation of patriarchy as it has taken different forms: from "father patriarchy" to "husband patriarchy" to "public patriarchy": the "transference of gender roles from the home to the work world."<sup>56</sup>

In elaborating how women's lived realities differ from men's, I begin with four patterns engendered by "the division of labor": specifically, what can we learn from looking at the "servicing" work that women do?<sup>57</sup>

First, women's work involves "personal service." Women are the caretakers, the nurturers, the counselors—those who assume responsibility for maintenance of interpersonal relationships. Women are largely responsible for not only childcare but care of the ill and elderly as well. This work, especially when engaging sophisticated social skills, is intimate and emotionally demanding, requiring what is best described by the "ideologically loaded term 'love.' . . . For without love, without close interpersonal relationships, human beings, and it would seem especially small human beings, cannot survive. . . . The production of people is thus qualitatively different from the production of things."<sup>58</sup>

Second, the servicing work that women do is defined by its specific

serving of the interests of men as men identify those interests, including the bearing and rearing of children. Women's control over and decisionmaking about reproductive choices is everywhere constrained by men's interests. Women and their bodies are frequently and extensively rendered as objects of male-defined desirability and sources of male-defined pleasure.

Whether in lower, middle or upper-class home or work situations, women's service work always includes personal service (the work of maids, butlers, cooks, personal secretaries), sexual service (including provision for his genital sexual needs and bearing his children, but also including 'being nice,' 'being attractive for him,' etc.), and ego service (encouragement, support, praise, attention).<sup>59</sup>

Third, women's servicing work tends to be concrete, particular, and repetitive. Whether cleaning, nursing, washing, preparing food, or changing diapers, women's activities are in "contact with material necessity" and involve daily maintenance to a greater extent than men's. There are, of course, dramatic class and cultural variations in how removed from materiality men are in their paid work. However, it remains the case that few men return home to the tasks of food preparation, cleaning, and daily maintenance. Whether or not women also work outside the domestic unit, they remain primarily responsible for maintaining the household.

Indeed, women's securing of material necessity, tending to bodily needs, and ensuring physical maintenance frees men for participating in other activities, whether recreational, intellectual, or political. By abdicating responsibility for the socially necessary labor of the household, men are "free" to focus their attention elsewhere and, specifically, to participate in the ideologically valued cultural activities of the public sphere.<sup>60</sup> Given the systematic differences generated by experiences in these different spheres, "it is easy to see how men, at least men of a certain class, would be likely to place supreme value on 'mental' activity and to ignore the fact that such activity would be impossible without the daily physical labor necessary for survival, especially the physical labor of women."<sup>61</sup>

The more successful women are in mediating the world of concrete particulars so that men do not have to become engaged with (and therefore conscious of) that world as a condition to their abstract activities, the more complete man's absorption in it, the more effective the authority of that world and the more total women's subservience to it. And also the more complete the dichotomy between the two worlds, and the estrangement between them.<sup>62</sup>

Fourth, lived reality for many women includes biological experiences of pregnancy, childbirth, and lactation. Under patriarchy, mothers are assigned the tasks of intensive, nurturant care during the long period of infant and child dependency. Women's responsibility for childrearing and their interaction with infants and children involves them in "a unity of reflection, judgment, and emotion" that S. Ruddick names "maternal thinking."<sup>63</sup> A positive sense of humility (from recognizing one's limitations and the unpredictability of events), a particular appreciation of change (observing and incorporating the changes as children and interactions with them develop), and self-conscious attention to others (needing to know "what are *you* going through?") are some aspects Ruddick (and others) identify as "maternal thinking."<sup>64</sup>

Noteworthy here is that men are distanced not only from the concrete experience of childcare but from the particular experience of primary responsibility for *enabling* the growth and well-being of dependent others. As a generalization, men's experiences of power tend to involve "power over" rather than the nurturing process of promoting "power to" capabilities.

"Men's work" is here depicted as generally distanced from emotional sharing, nurturing, household maintenance, and concrete activities. If this characterizes their lived experience, it helps explain how men more readily embrace abstract and atomistic world views that obscure rather than illuminate the pervasiveness of human interdependence. If we take seriously the fact that human biology *necessitates* human interdependence, cooperation becomes less the problematique and more the given. If we are seeking concrete observations about human nature, the biological necessity for cooperation warrants our consideration.

Taking seriously the pervasive gender differentiation in work activities, we begin to see patterns in men's and women's lived experience. In subsequent sections, I will return to several of the themes introduced here. At this point I turn to feminist theories of gender identity formation for additional insights on women's and men's differently experienced realities.

*Gender Identity Formation.* There are several reasons for including the feminist psychoanalytic literature in our examination of gender-differentiated worlds. First, this literature demonstrates the importance of early childhood experience in our constructions of self-identities. Second, it clarifies how our identities—under patriarchal relations—are necessarily gendered, that is, are constructed within a heterosexist model of male-female duality. Third, to the extent that our understanding of self-identity formation is inextricable from our theories of "the individual," "moral agent," "rational actor," etc., issues raised in this literature have

relevance to problematiqués of moral philosophy more generally.

I consider this literature crucial for understanding how gender differentiation and hierarchy are reproduced and why we have such difficulty imagining alternative orientations. Again, I note that these gendered identities are not essentially derived but historically specific to patriarchal relations; they are *social constructions*. Our tendency to perceive them as universal and/or transhistorical is a function of positivist and androcentric biases that fail to problematize the construction of sexual identity.<sup>65</sup>

There is a considerable body of feminist literature examining the psychological construction of gendered identities. Feminist psychoanalytic orientations draw upon and revise Freudian theories of ego formation and psychosexual development, acknowledging the significance of early childhood while avoiding Freud's androcentric distortions.<sup>66</sup> As an example of this orientation, I focus here on C. Gilligan's work because it is particularly relevant to constructions of moral philosophy.

Gilligan's *In a Different Voice* examines the distinction between male and female modes of thinking as they relate to Kohlberg's stages of moral development. Although she states that "the different voice I describe is characterized not by gender but theme,"<sup>67</sup> the overwhelming response has been to see in her research a confirmation of gender differentiated moral development. In contrast to the studies by Kohlberg (an excellent example of universalizing from a gender-specific, i.e., all-male, sample), Gilligan begins with the study of women and derives a moral conception different from that attributed to men. The male sense of self as discrete and autonomous is associated with the moral concept of right; the female "relational" self, with that of responsibility.

Gilligan draws upon the psychological work of Chodorow to explain some of the observed gender differences in moral development. I undertake only a brief summary of these theories of personality and identity formation here. To begin with, patriarchal relations establish both the salience of gender differentiation as a fundamental ordering principle and the assignment of females as primary caretakers/mothers. The formation of gender identity is a process virtually completed within the first years of infantile experience; it involves developing a sense of self in separation from the caretaker; that self is gendered/sexed as a consequence of patriarchal insistence on sexual differentiation. Given the predominance of women as infant caretakers, the experience of identity formation is systematically different for girls and boys.

Girls, identifying with a same-sexed primary caretaker, "experience themselves as like their mothers," emerging from the experience "with a basis for 'empathy'" and a "stronger basis for experiencing another's

needs or feelings as one's own." For boys, the experience of "separating" from their mothers is critical, resulting in a curtailment of "their primary love and sense of empathic tie." Issues of differentiation have, for boys, greater emotional investment, leading to greater need for "separation and individuation," and probable fear of attachment (in contrast to the female's greater fear of separation).<sup>68</sup> One consequence is a construction and experience of manhood/maleness/masculinity as autonomous, detached, and control oriented. Such construction is in contrast to and implies a denigration of what constitutes womanhood/femaleness/femininity.

Because of the different psychological and social experiences of boys and girls, the moral judgments they evidence are seen by Gilligan to reflect differing but complementary modes, that is, rights and responsibilities. Her data suggest that women's mode of reasoning diverges from men's without being inferior, and thus constitute a rejection of Kohlberg's scale of moral development as a universal standard. (On Kohlberg's six-stage scale women's contextual reasoning is "less advanced" than men's abstract universalizing.)

"Just as the language of responsibilities provides a weblike imagery of relationships . . . so the language of rights underlines the importance of including in the network of care not only the other but also the self."<sup>69</sup> Gilligan's work exposes the androcentrism of Kohlberg's developmental stages. It also suggests how ego or selfhood formation under patriarchal relations constitutes differing male and female psychosocial environments. In Gilligan's work, these different environments engender contrasting moral orientations as a consequence of contrasting gender experiences.<sup>70</sup>

I review and conclude this section by noting that our usage of "human" in human rights is often, and significantly, less than universal in its referent. Women have been excluded in constructions of the individual, moral agent, and human as elaborated by Western philosophers. Additionally, the liberal-patriarchal world view has ensured that women and women's life activities continue to be primarily defined through an androcentric lens. This male-as-norm perspective both perpetuates gender-differentiated lives and masks the extent of those differences, particularly the "contradiction between civil equality and social, especially familial, subjection."<sup>71</sup> Similarly, identity formation under patriarchal relations is necessarily gender differentiated, with systemic consequences for the lived experiences of "men" and "women." Thus, the reigning model of human nature and moral philosophy it underpins are flawed by their exclusion of the lived realities of those marginalized by both the (Western) modernization experience and our long history of patriarchy.

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### *The "Liberal" Component*

In an earlier section, the liberal component was criticized for promoting abstract, formal equality (allegedly secured through political rights), at the expense of concrete subsistence or economic rights. The liberal propensity to dualistic categorization was noted in this privileging of abstract over concrete, reason over nature, and public/political over private/apolitical.

Postpositivist and feminist perspectives extend and deepen the critique of liberal dichotomizations and abstractions. Postpositivism rejects the fact-value dichotomy, insisting instead that *all* knowledge claims are embedded in socially constructed systems of shared meaning and shaped by social and political context. Thus, there is not, nor can there be, any completely value-free or Archimedean vantage point. Feminists join those contemporary philosophers of science, calling for a reconstruction of social theory encompassing postpositivist, interpretive, and critical orientations.<sup>72</sup> But feminists are often more rigorous than other postpositivists in their examination of givens, exposing the male-as-norm bias retained in much of the postpositivist literature. What feminist research discovers is the complex interrelatedness of positivism and patriarchal social relations. Eliminating the weaknesses and distortions of the former requires developing a deeper awareness—and rejection—of the latter.

The liberal world view shares the metaphysics presupposed by positivism and expressed in the hierarchical dualities of mind over body, culture over nature, subject over object. It extends the dichotomies to include public over private, and rational decisionmaking in the political sphere over affective caretaking in the realm of necessity. This metaphysics (of ontological dualism) is also presupposed in patriarchal social relations. Here the foundational duality of male over female is privileged. Thus, patriarchy, liberalism, and positivism share a metaphysics. It is this metaphysics that is undermined by postpositivist feminist rejections of essentialized identities and hierarchical dualities.

What are the implications of postpositivist feminist understanding in regard to liberal privileging of the abstractions "rationality" and "objectivity"? I consider this question by reference, first, to the abstractions employed in liberal constructions of the moral self, and second, to feminist critiques of rationality and objectivity as presupposed in positivist science.

### *The Moral Self as Disembodied and Disembedded Being*

The autonomous self is disembedded and disembodied; moral impartiality is learning to recognize the claims of the other who is just like oneself;

fairness is public justice; a public system of rights and duties is the best way to arbitrate conflict, to distribute rewards and to establish claims.

Yet this is a strange world; it is one in which individuals are grown up before they have been born; in which boys are men before they have been children; a world where neither mother, nor sister, nor wife exist.<sup>73</sup>

Having posited autonomous individuals and their equal capacity for reason, liberals reject any institutional interference in the determination of individual preferences. This separation of "neutral rationality" from social and contingent reality generates a problem for liberal theory: without some prior conception of what constitutes individuals, rationality, or the "good," it is not possible to derive any moral code. The notion of decontextualized (i.e., abstract) individuals is perhaps one of the most striking examples of the interweaving of positivist and androcentric presuppositions. On the one hand, positivist dichotomizing of mind-body and assumptions of methodological individualism obscure the *mutual constitution* of individual and collectivity. On the other hand, androcentric privileging of male experience obscures the necessarily concrete and socially cooperative basis of human survival.

From a postpositivist feminist perspective abstract individualism—supposing individuals as prior to or outside of a social context—is radically incoherent. At the biological level of requiring nurturant infant care, there can be no question of survival outside of a community. At the level of human cognition/consciousness requiring attentive interaction, there can be no question of atomistic or autonomous individuals.

Liberal theory fails to acknowledge the influence of childhood experience on the development of rationality, to say nothing of preference formation, by disregarding the following evidence. First, infant and childhood studies increasingly confirm the influence of early social environment on the development of identity formation, language ability, interests, and desires. Second, the "ability to reason is dependent upon intersubjectivity; it is a social rather than purely individual achievement."<sup>74</sup> If we acknowledge the social construction of meaning—that our capacity for consciousness is a function of our capacity for language, which in turn *requires* social interaction—we are compelled to acknowledge social context. In short, only by ignoring our physiologically mandated dependency and our linguistically mandated inter-subjectivity can the notion of abstract individualism be sustained.

In terms of moral agency, if the meaning of "good" is necessarily a social construction, the liberal insistence on "the thinnest possible theory of the good, itself begins to seem irrational."<sup>75</sup> It appears that in attempting to free moral and political theory from historical contingency—"particular" influences deemed undesirable—the grounds for establishing a moral viewpoint were sacrificed as well.

*Feminist Critiques of Positivist Rationality.* It is not simply that liberal premises tend to devalue the concrete and the collectivity. Liberal "abstraction" takes a particular form as a consequence of its historical context. A look at the powerful role of science in the modern era especially reveals the mutual constitution of positivist, liberal-capitalist, and patriarchal world views. However, the central tenets of science—objectivity and rationality—are positivist and liberal abstractions whose privileged status is no longer secure. I believe that we have hardly begun to comprehend the significance of the postpositivist critique of objectivity and rationality, and that our failure to do so is exacerbated by retaining the presuppositions of the third of these mutually constituted world views: patriarchy.

The accumulative effect of postpositivist critiques, coupled with fractures in the facade of science and the entire modern project with which it is identified, appears to have conclusively undermined—but not routed—the primacy of positivist rationality. Recognition of the need to restructure social theory continues to expand, but there is little evidence (outside of feminist scholarship) of challenges to one traditional "given": the androcentric bias. "Questions concerning the nature and source of knowledge and the validity of knowledge claims have been a staple of feminist analysis."<sup>76</sup> Feminist critiques of science are now well developed; in the following, I draw especially on the work of Evelyn Fox Keller.<sup>77</sup>

Pointing out that the issue is *not* simply the relative absence of women in science, Keller proceeds to document in various ways the persistence and power of the associations masculine:objective:scientific:asexual. The "asexual" aspect is the corollary of dichotomizing science over nature—nature "being viewed so ubiquitously as female"—and associating female:nature:sexual. Having divided the world into the knower (i.e., mind:subject) and the knowable (i.e., nature:object), scientific ideology further specifies the relation "between knower and known [as] one of distance and separation." Objectivity then presupposes a scientific mind and modes of knowing rigidly set apart from what is to be known, that is, nature. Masculine, by association, comes to connote autonomy, separation, and distance: "a radical rejection of any commingling of subject and object, which are, it now appears, quite consistently identified as male and female."<sup>78</sup>

Like rationality, objectivity is less a property one is born with than a skill "acquired as an inextricable part" of the learning process of "delineating subject from object." Psychological theories of gender formation suggest linkages between male gender-identity formation<sup>79</sup> (extreme separation, individuation, autonomy) and "a set of cultural values which simultaneously elevates what is defined as scientific and what is defined as masculine." Given the prestige accorded science and objectivity, an

important consequence of the masculine:objective:scientific association is a powerful and pervasive devaluation of the feminine:subjective:empathic. Keller argues that these associations result in "extra validation" of a distorted scientific methodology (overly objectivist) and simultaneously a devaluation of "what is called feminine—be it a branch of knowledge, a way of thinking, or woman herself."<sup>80</sup>

This analysis has implications for moving beyond the confines of positivist knowledge claims. Postpositivist critiques, in their recognition of social reality as intersubjectively constructed, cannot help but acknowledge and insist on incorporating the subjective (self-reflection) as integral to adequate social theory. However, to the extent that androcentrism prevails, those forms of knowledge associated with feminine:subjective are devalued and their incorporation as valid knowledge is resisted—that is, taking postpositivism seriously requires taking feminist critiques seriously as well.

The modern era has been characterized as a shift from the authority of the church/faith to the authority of science/reason. In our search for ways to ground knowledge claims, we embraced a version of rationality (and objectivity) that scientists themselves now regard as inadequate. There is no "neutral method" nor "perspectiveless gaze." The point is not to throw out systematic inquiry or simply reject all reason(s). Rather, we must be critically aware of the mutual constitution of subject and object, observer and observed, knower and known.

Taking postpositivism and feminism seriously requires a shift in world view of systemic proportions. It requires rethinking our givens. As an exercise in reflecting on shibboleths, I include here H. Hein's analysis of "reason as an instrument of tyranny" that is used against "inferiors."<sup>81</sup>

Men tend to overlook the coercive violence of reason itself. Since rationality demands self-restraint, it is assumed that it cannot be a form of constraint upon others, but this is an error. What it ignores is the power context within which rationality is normally employed. We learn the mechanisms of rationality from a position of inferiority first with respect to our parents, and then from our (adult) teachers. Thus the users of reason are known to us as authority figures independently of the cogency of their argument. Their reason, offered as a substitute for arbitrary violence nonetheless demands unconditional surrender. Irrationality at least can be met with irrationality of equal and opposite force—and no one is more adept than a child in its utilization; but rationality is an acquired skill, a mark of learning and of assumed superiority, and he who does not win must lose—abject capitulation. What is more, he must sign a confession affirming that he has lost honorably, acquiescent in defeat. In the conceit of his modulated self-control, the user of "gentle persuasion" is unconscious of the humiliation he

imposes and the rage he engenders. And if that rage should show itself, . . . it will only reaffirm the superiority of reason.<sup>82</sup>

The prestige and power of reason and objectivity pose daunting obstacles to the nonetheless imperative task of incorporating—while not being overwhelmed by—subjectivity in our reconstruction of social thought. If we accept, as I believe we must, the postpositivist understanding that all shared systems of meaning are social constructions, we are compelled to surrender the “ease” and efficiency of dualistic reductionism. Self-reflective participants must be incorporated as both constituting and being constituted by their interaction with each other and with their material environments. Continuing to privilege formal, neutral systems of abstraction obscures the embeddedness of all abstractions in historical, concrete social relations, thereby precluding the possibility of emancipatory critique.

Moving beyond the limitations of positivist rationality requires accepting the complexity of postpositivist understanding and the necessity of ongoing critique. Finally, to the extent that positivism and patriarchy are entwined, the movement beyond positivist rationality cannot be isolated from the feminist critique.

#### *The “Individualist” Component*

Postpositivist feminist critiques of individualism were foreshadowed in much of the preceding discussion, especially the rejection of liberalism’s abstract individualism. I begin this section with a discussion of “relational” renderings of the individual, then turn to critiques of the individualist component in terms of (1) atomistic renderings and (2) concepts of “agency.”

Women’s lived experience—posed in contrast to men’s—renders a world view most frequently named “relational”: not the dualistic opposition of self and others, but the “self-other *relation*.”<sup>83</sup> As argued in the preceding section and reflected in the feminist literature cited here, women perceive their lives as differing from men’s. And one of the most frequently articulated differences is the relational quality of women’s lives.

The term “relational” expresses the idea that women not only place primary value on relationships but that the egos and personalities of women are themselves constructed in terms of relations. This mode is distinct from the ego structure of men which is constructed in terms of objects.<sup>84</sup>

The reasons cited for this “connectedness” vary considerably: women’s sense of the world as an organic whole; constructions of feminine gen-

der identity; the intensity of child rearing and other caretaking roles; the sensitizing necessitated by marginal status; the birthing experience; a special closeness to nature; maternal thinking; grounding in concrete, day-to-day labor; and consciousness of human and nature interdependencies. Although the explanations vary, the rejection of hostile, oppositional categorizations is a recurrent theme. “Women experience others and themselves along a continuum whose dimensions . . . can be defined ‘neither as me or as not-me.’”<sup>85</sup>

It is this profoundly different image of the individual that surfaces most strikingly and consistently in the literature by and about women. For those readers reluctant to accept this description of reality, I merely reiterate: this is a description of reality surfacing again and again when women speak, and it is especially at variance with androcentric concepts of the individual. I turn then to a discussion of two ways in which feminist concepts of the individual differ from the predominant masculinist version. They are, of course, interrelated, and begin to suggest an alternative, feminist rendering of social relations—a vision of community not accessible through an androcentric lens.

*Atomistic Agents.* First, as adumbrated in the preceding discussion, women’s experience renders the notion of atomistic, “pre-societal” human beings—individuals in abstraction from all social context—radically untenable. Feminists are not just rejecting “naive abstract individualism”—a model many agree is indefensible. They are articulating an understanding of human beings that challenges the orthodox model at a deeper level. One example is their development of a postpositivist critique of the notion of a “homogeneous individual.” Coward argues that psychoanalytic theory has demonstrated that “the idea of a coherent subject is a fantasy.”<sup>86</sup> Because “any aspect of behaviour or desire will only ever be a moment in a process,” “identity” is only a construct—and one that is “continuously and precariously reconstructed.”<sup>87</sup> N. Scheman also challenges the taken-for-granted assumption that the self is so readily distinguishable from its social context.<sup>88</sup> The atomistic model assumes that mental states attach to individuals, but the complexity of identifying who/what the individual *or* the mental state is remains problematic. Treating ourselves as “psychologically detachable units” fails to address the question of intersubjective meaning implicit in all assimilation.

What is at issue here is the problematic nature of social interaction: that meaning is simultaneously mutually constituted by participants. There is no way of determining a “correct” version (I think you are defensive; you think I am projecting); there is instead the processual “social web of interpretation” within which we mutually interact, drawing upon and reconstituting that web as we continually redefine/reconstitute each

other and our selves. For Scheman, the question is “how to characterize the connections between how we really are and how we are seen.”<sup>89</sup> Without social context, individuals, mental states, and meaning are unintelligible categories. The postpositivist emphasis on recognizing the dialectic of action and structure is relevant here: we must pursue neither a psychologistic nor sociologistic perspective, but an understanding of their interaction.<sup>90</sup>

*Autonomy and Agency.* The second aspect of feminist perspectives on individualism concerns the notion of “agency” in androcentric discourse. According to liberal theory, the autonomy (freedom from socio-institutional influence) of individuals must be ensured so that moral or prudential choices rely on private judgment, uncoerced and unindoctrinated. Freedom and individuality consist in being the agent of one’s actions. In what follows, I identify three ways in which this rendering of agency or autonomy is challenged by women’s lived experience.

First, members of subordinated cultures experience a *lack* of autonomy vis-à-vis both material and conceptual control over the dominant culture.<sup>91</sup> Therefore, to the extent that “agency operates by way of mastery and control,”<sup>92</sup> it is less characteristic of subordinated cultures. One of the frequent criticisms of positivist (or instrumental) rationality is its propensity for getting “out of control”: having—through its claim to value-neutrality—secured an unassailable position, there is no one to hold accountable for its abuses. Women often make this criticism of men’s notions of autonomy. In both cases, concrete social relations are neglected in favor of privileging abstractions; in both cases, the issue of *responsibility* for consequences is obscured.

Second, the preoccupation with individual agency denigrates cooperative efforts; it “relegates the experience of combined action, either on behalf of or in solidarity with others, to a morally inferior position. Any combined action is assumed to compromise the autonomous agency of the participants.”<sup>93</sup> But we have seen how this assumption of abstract, individual action is an illusion: both abstract individuals and a moral code separable from all social relations are impossibilities. The glorification of individual agency makes collective action seem less glamorous and less authentic, and thereby renders it much less likely. Cooperative action is then associated with utopian projects, or devalued as activities in the private sphere, not applicable to the real world of politics.

To view essential moral human nature as separable from social relations is a priori to relegate social relations to a lesser moral status and is to view society as only a collection of autonomous agents. . . . In this way, community, often the expressed goal of moral theories, is contradicted in the social theory and assumptions which many ethicists employ.<sup>94</sup>

Third, the concept of agency is historically interwoven with Western practices of mastery and domination over nature and over “uncivilized” people; that is, its expression has been concretized as “power over” rather than “power to.” Women, and other marginalized people, have more often been the objects than the agents of this mastery; their assessment of it correspondingly differs. Not only do women question the “tendency toward domination” embedded in the masculinist use of the concept, they speak of a very different experience of agency. Paralleling the characterization of women’s experience as relational, a recurrent theme of “mutuality” exists—the “formation of individuality in a context of interdependency and the recognition of other agents as part of one’s own agency.”<sup>95</sup>

Here the notion of agency recognizes “the import of daily life as represented in the notion of care, a daily life organized around not only ego relations but the substantive requirements of life necessary to sustain relations at all.”<sup>96</sup> Whitbeck names it the “mutual realization of people”: a self-other(s) *relation*, not opposition, where the starting point is a “relation between beings who are in some respects analogous, and the scope and limits of that analogy . . . are something to be explored in each case.”<sup>97</sup> D. Smith describes women as “active participants,” but in *response to*, rather than as originators of, externally generated activities and events. In this type of relation, the consciousness required of women is one that subordinates attentiveness to self, demanding instead a “focus on others, . . . an openness and attentiveness to cues and indications of others’ needs.”<sup>98</sup>

The model of human beings rendered in the above discussion—the person as a “historical being whose history is fundamentally a history of relationships to other people”<sup>99</sup>—suggests an ethics at variance with the liberal model of rights. The rights view of ethics posits a moral right as the fundamental moral notion, with people viewed atomistically, related to each other only as competitors or on the basis of some contract. Whitbeck posits a “responsibilities view” of ethics, “which takes the moral responsibilities arising out of a relationship as the fundamental moral notion, and regards people as beings who can . . . act for moral reasons, and who come to this status through relationships with other people.”<sup>100</sup>

To summarize this section, I have argued that (under patriarchal relations) women experience a lived reality differing systematically from that of men. That difference in experience generates a different world view, including a different understanding of the individual, or what constitutes human nature. As reconstructed from a postpositivist feminist perspective, human beings enter the world through a gestational process of nurturance and interaction prior to parturition. Although at this point infant dependency can be addressed by others than the mother, under

patriarchy women are the primary caretakers for the early, and in many senses, for the entire period of dependency. The social relations of patriarchy are both private (within the family) and public (the replication of gender hierarchy outside the family), so that women and women's activities are disproportionately structured by external events, generating a greater sense of women's lives and identities as relational. Experiences of agency, for women, reflect this relational mode and less often involve the oppositional stance of domination or "power over." Instead, women develop (or are required to develop) attentiveness to others and the ability to respond—a variation of the responsibility mode that interaction among recognizably interdependent persons requires. Responsibility, emotionally and physically, for childcare and maintenance of the domestic sphere has the consequence of embedding women in concrete activities to a greater extent than men. Thus, more of women's time is absorbed in necessary but repetitive activities of being available in response to others' physical and emotional needs and concretely being engaged in routine maintenance tasks.

The model of human nature generated from this experience recognizes mutual interaction as constitutive of social reality: "We not only come to know ourselves in relation to others but . . . we come *to be* in relation to others."<sup>101</sup> Because relationships are seen as ontologically prior, the concept of abstract individuals is rendered incoherent, and any static image of homogeneous subjects yields to consciousness of historically constructed and ever-changing self-other(s) relations.

One becomes a person in and through relationships with other people; being a person requires that one have a history of relationships with other people, and the realization of the self can be achieved only in and through relationships and practices. The fundamental moral notion is that of the responsibility for (some aspect of) another's welfare arising from one's relationship to that person. Responsibilities are mutual, although the parties to a relationship may have different responsibilities.<sup>102</sup>

### Conclusion

The implications of the postpositivist feminist critique are too extensive to be developed here. I offer instead only a brief, suggestive summary of points surfacing through the critique.

In terms of the Western component, we can recognize the need to avoid universalizing either the Western model of modernization, the white male concept of progress or property rights, or a white feminist version of lived reality. Each of these (and countless others) reflects only

a partial experience.

In terms of the liberal component, the privileging of abstract rationality or procedural justice obscures concrete inequalities, not only in the sense of failing to address concrete needs and lived realities, but in the structural sense of liberalism *constituting* those very inequalities. The objectivity of science, the neutrality of the marketplace, and the rationality of liberal morality share the same delusion—of being able to transcend our material particularity, and of disregarding our embodiment as social beings. The concrete costs of this delusion are beyond our reckoning and correction as long as we continue the mystified search for ultimate truth or reality.

In terms of individualism, the dualistic rendering of individual versus collective perpetuates a false but powerful image of their opposition rather than their mutual constitution. Privileging of the autonomous individual agent occurs at the expense of acknowledging mutuality—as historical reality in biological and social reproduction, and as realizable future in an ethics of responsibility based upon intersubjectivity as the inescapable web of social meaning.

If any, a universal aspect of human nature is our species' capacity for the social construction of meaning through language, which by definition can be only a social and not an individual activity. Although the capacity may be seen as universal, its actualization is necessarily particular: we cannot abstract the meaning we intersubjectively construct from its historically specific context. Therefore, the ahistoricity of abstract universals must be rejected in favor of a concrete or interactive "universalism."

Interactive universalism acknowledges the plurality of modes of being human, and differences among humans, without endorsing all these pluralities and differences as morally and politically valid . . . [It] regards difference as a starting-point for reflection and action. In this sense "universality" is a regulative ideal that does not deny our embodied and embedded identity, but aims at developing moral attitudes and encouraging political transformations that can yield a point of view acceptable to all. Universality is not the ideal consensus of fictitiously defined selves, but the concrete process in politics and morals of the struggle of concrete, embodied selves.<sup>103</sup>

The message of postpositivist feminist understanding is that oppositional world views are not simply incapable of but antithetical to the transformative project required to generate *human* community—in terms of global solidarity without structural violence. Dualistic thinking facilitates efficiency and control—attributes admirably (and not surprisingly) suited to positivist, capitalist, and patriarchal world views. However, the price of this efficiency and "realpolitik" is extraordinarily high, arguably posing

the current greatest threat to global survival. Postpositivist understanding of social reality presents us with complexities obscured by dualistic thought, but these complexities are neither avoidable nor cause for despair. Feminist scholarship provides not only critique but alternative models and therefore valuable resources. The twilight deepens. We must embrace postpositivist and feminist insights and struggle creatively toward a global moral philosophy—before “eternal night” falls.

## NOTES

1. On the division of women's rights from international human rights, see the special issue, “Symposium: Women and International Human Rights,” *Human Rights Quarterly* 3(Spring 1981), including a bibliography; N. K. Hevener, *International Law and the Status of Women* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1983); H. B. Holmes, “A Feminist Analysis of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,” in C. Gould, ed., *Beyond Domination* (Totowa, N.J.: Rowman and Allanheld, 1983). See also, L. Heise, “Crimes of Gender,” *Worldwatch* (March–April 1989):12–21; R. Eisler, “Human Rights: The Unfinished Struggle,” *International Journal of Women's Studies* 6(September/October 1983):326–335; and “Human Rights: Toward an Integrated Theory for Action,” *Feminist Issues* 7(Spring 1987):25–46; F. Hosken, *The Hosken Report: Genital and Sexual Mutilation of Females* (Lexington, Mass.: Women's International Network, 1982, 1984); K. Barry, *Female Sexual Slavery* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1979); K. Barry, C. Bunch, and S. Castley, eds., *International Feminism: Networking Against Female Sexual Slavery* (New York: International Women's Tribune Centre, 1984); G. Ashworth, “Of Violence and Violation: Women and Human Rights,” *Change* (London, 1986); and M. Schuler, ed., *Empowerment and the Law: Strategies of Third World Women* (Washington, D.C.: Overseas Education Fund, 1986).

2. L. Heise, note 1, p. 13.

3. See especially Eisler, note 1, “Toward an Integrated Theory.”

4. I do not offer this critique in order to dismiss or denigrate the symbolic value and/or positive political consequences of protecting individuals (and groups) from abuses of their rights. It is all too easy to imagine global conditions far worse than the tenuous security that human rights affords (some of) us, and I applaud the commitment and courage of people worldwide on behalf of protecting human rights. But however emancipatory in origination, I believe that the rights tradition is deeply flawed as a foundation for a just world order today. Without curtailing humane responses to emergency situations (protecting human rights, distributing famine relief), we must understand how the systems in place themselves generate crises and produce “victims.”

5. Adapted from A. MacIntyre, *After Virtue* (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1981), pp. 50–51.

6. In an earlier, lengthier version of this paper I detail my justification of this characterization. See V. S. Peterson, “Re-Constructing the ‘Individual’ in ‘Human Rights,’” paper presented to the International Studies Association Convention, Washington, D.C., 1987. I am not claiming that this characterization is uniquely accurate or necessarily comprehensive; the model can be ordered along any number of dimensions. Rather, I employ these categorizations to organize a critique that stands on its own: it applies to the human rights model of

human nature to whatever extent that model is accurately characterized as “Western,” “liberal,” and “individualist,” which need not be total.

7. Briefly, by “positivist” I refer to the “empiricist orthodoxy” that assumes “theory-free” (value-neutral) observation of events in the tangible (“real”) world; categorical fact-value, subject-object, theory-practice distinctions; and the pursuit of causal generalizations with the aim of prediction and control. (I understand “naturalism” and “objectivism” to refer to similar foundational presuppositions.) I consider positivism to have been shown decisively inadequate in addressing social science concerns; this paper attempts to demonstrate the continued dominance of the positivist model, expose its weaknesses, and suggest some directions more adequate, comprehensive alternatives must take. I assume a familiarity with the philosophy of science literature and will not further address these issues here. For postpositivist perspectives, see, for example, R. Bernstein, *The Restructuring of Social and Political Theory* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1978), and *Beyond Objectivism and Relativism: Science, Hermeneutics, and Praxis* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1983); F. Dallmayr and T. A. McCarthy, eds., *Understanding and Social Inquiry* (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1977); P. Rabinow and W. Sullivan, eds., *Interpretive Social Science* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979); and T. Ball, ed., *Idioms of Inquiry* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1987).

8. This paper is not focused on “what humans could be,” that is, the “ought” element. Postpositivist understanding denies a transcendent model of human nature and rejects the categorical distinction between “is” and “ought” or between empirical and normative theory. “Indeed, the so-called normative theories of the past may now be viewed as methodological prescriptions, because what they prescribe is that we view man and society in certain ways and not in others” (T. Ball, “Is There Progress in Political Science?” in T. Ball, ed., *Idioms of Inquiry* [Albany: State University of New York Press, 1987], p. 35). The focus in the present paper is on “deconstructing” the reigning model of “man” as a necessary but not sufficient condition of constructing more adequate moral philosophy.

9. In rejecting categorical distinctions between “is”-“ought” and theory-practice, postpositivists argue that “the relation of theory to practice is not a contingent or instrumental one but is, rather, a conceptual and constitutive relation between belief and action” (T. Ball, “Contradiction and Critique,” in J. S. Nelson, ed., *What Should Political Theory Be Now?* [Albany: State University of New York Press, 1983], p. 128). See also B. Fay, “How People Change Themselves: The Relationship between Critical Theory and its Audience,” in T. Ball, ed., *Political Theory and Praxis* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1977); and B. Fay, *Social Theory and Political Practice* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1975).

10. Although controversy exists over the extent to which the contemporary non-Western world finds relevant and/or embraces human rights, there is considerable agreement that human rights had its origin in and continues to perpetuate the Western liberal, democratic tradition, and specifically the dominating influence of that tradition in the early formulation of international human rights documents. See, for example, A. Pollis and P. Schwab, “Human Rights: A Western Construct with Limited Applicability,” and M. Lazreg, “Human Rights, State and Ideology: An Historical Perspective,” both in A. Pollis and P. Schwab, eds., *Human Rights* (New York: Praeger, 1979); A. Michalska, “Evolution of Codifications of International Human Rights and of the Doctrinal Foundations of These Codifications,” *Polish Yearbook of International Law*, 11(1981–82):11–14; S. Marks, “Emerging Human Rights: A New Generation for the 1980s?” in R. Falk, F. Kratochwil, and S. Mendlovitz, eds., *International Law: A Contemporary*

*Perspective* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1985), p. 503; and L. Henkin, *The Rights of Man Today* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1978), pp. 3–30.

11. Pollis and Schwab, note 10, "Human Rights," p. 14. I draw upon their examples and analysis throughout this section.

12. Pollis and Schwab, note 10, "Human Rights," p. 8.

13. Pollis and Schwab, note 10, "Human Rights," p. 9.

14. Pollis and Schwab, note 10, "Human Rights," p. 12.

15. F. Ajami, "Human Rights and World Order Politics," in R. Falk, S. S. Kim, and S. Mendlovitz, eds., *Toward a Just World Order* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1982).

16. My characterization of "liberal" draws upon D. Heinrich and D. S. Pacini, "The Contexts of Autonomy: Some Presuppositions of the Comprehensibility of Human Rights," *Daedalus* 112(Fall 1983):255–277; J. Dunn, *Western Political Theory in the Face of the Future* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), pp. 28–36; J. Donnelly and R. Howard, "Human Rights, Human Dignity, and Political Regimes: Liberal and Illiberal Societies and the Standard of Human Rights," paper prepared for the Annual Conference of the International Studies Association, Washington, D.C., March 5–9, 1985; and R. Dworkin, "Liberalism," in S. Hampshire, ed., *Public and Private Morality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), pp. 113–126.

17. R. P. Wolff, "There's Nobody Here But Us Persons," in C. Gould and M. W. Wartofsky, eds., *Women and Philosophy* (New York: Capricorn Books, 1976), p. 129.

18. R. Schweder, "Liberalism as Destiny," *Contemporary Psychology*, 27(1982):422–423. See also A. MacIntyre, *A Short History of Ethics* (New York: Macmillan Company, 1966), p. 96.

19. For a thorough and persuasive debunking of the dichotomy between "positive" and "negative" rights, and especially the attribution of greater moral significance to the latter, see H. Shue, "Rights in the Light of Duties," in P. G. Brown and D. MacLean, eds., *Human Rights and U.S. Foreign Policy* (Lexington, Mass.: Lexington Books, 1979), and *Basic Rights: Subsistence, Affluence, and U.S. Foreign Policy* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1980). See also B. H. Weston, "Human Rights," *Human Rights Quarterly*, 6(August 1984):264–269; Marks, note 10, pp. 503–504; and Ajami, note 15.

20. Shue, note 19, *Basic Rights*, p. 27.

21. Shue, note 19, *Basic Rights*, p. 183(n18). Similarly: "It was not by chance that the liberal rights-tradition had its initial moorings in the theory of the social contract, which gave priority to the demands and interests of members of a rising new class; not to the needs of the most oppressed classes, which remained oppressed, if in new ways, in the new capitalist socio-economic order" (C. Bay, "Toward a Postliberal World Order of Human Rights," revised version of paper prepared for Seventeenth World Congress of Philosophy, Montreal, August 21–27, 1983, p. 3).

22. Bay, note 21, p. 12.

23. Wolff, note 17, p. 131; and R. M. Unger, *Knowledge and Politics* (New York: The Free Press, 1975), pp. 81–83.

24. K. Marx, "On the Jewish Question," in R. C. Tucker, ed. *The Marx-Engels Reader* (New York: Norton, 1972), p. 40. (In this and all subsequent quotations, emphasis in original.)

25. Marx, note 24, p. 40.

26. C. Bay, "From Contract to Community: Thoughts on Liberalism and Postindustrial Society," in F. R. Dallmayr, ed., *From Contract to Community: Political Theory at the Crossroads* (New York: Marcel Dekker, Inc., 1978), p. 40. See also E.

Kamenka, "Public/Private in Marxist Theory and Marxist Practice," in S. I. Benn and G. F. Gaus, eds., *Public and Private in Social Life* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1983), pp. 271–275. Compare the discussion of Marxism in J. Donnelly, *The Concept of Human Rights* (London: Croom Helm, 1985), pp. 73–77.

27. Marx's disdain for the "rights of man" did not entail dismissing their utility within bourgeois society. See L. Kolakowski, "Marxism and Human Rights," *Daedalus* 112(Fall 1983):85; and Donnelly, note 26, pp. 76–77. Dunn, citing Marx's *Critique of the Gotha Programme*, suggests that the future envisaged by Marx was one "in which rights would somehow be rendered irrelevant, unnecessary—in which they would be not negated but surpassed" (Dunn, note 16, p. 38).

28. Dunn, note 16, pp. 32–33; Unger, note 23, pp. 81–83.

29. Explanation of the interrelatedness of intellectual, social, economic, and political development has generated a vast literature, approached differently from the various disciplinary perspectives. The current discussions regarding how knowledge is constructed and institutionalized acknowledge the historical nexus of positivist and liberal premises, without agreeing on lines of causality or on evaluations of the implications. For relevant citations see Dunn, note 16, p. 34(n11).

30. Unger, note 23, p. 134. See also C. Gould, "The Woman Question: Philosophy of Liberation and the Liberation of Philosophy," in C. Gould and M. Wartofsky, eds., *Women and Philosophy* (New York: Capricorn Books, 1976), p. 42(n37); S. Benhabib, "The Generalized and the Concrete Other," in S. Benhabib and D. Cornell, eds., *Feminism as Critique* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987); and Lynne S. Arnault, "The Radical Future of a Classic Moral Theory," in A. Jaggar and S. Bordo, eds., *Gender/Body/Knowledge* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1989).

31. Gould, note 30, p. 17.

32. See the extensive bibliography and individual articles criticizing androcentrism in Plato, Locke, Rousseau, Hume, Hegel, Marx, and Nietzsche, in L. Clark and L. Lange, eds., *The Sexism of Social and Political Theory: Women and Reproduction from Plato to Nietzsche* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1979), pp. 135–141. See also M. B. Mahowald, ed., *Philosophy of Woman: Classical to Current Concepts* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1978); P. Allen, *The Concept of Woman* (Montreal: Eden Press, 1985); D. Coole, *Women in Political Theory* (Sussex: Wheatsheaf, 1988); G. Lloyd, *The Man of Reason* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984); C. Whitbeck, "Theories of Sex Difference," in C. Gould and M. Wartofsky, eds., *Women and Philosophy* (New York: Capricorn Books, 1976); C. Battersby, "An Enquiry Concerning the Humean Woman," *Philosophy* 56(1981):303–312; S. Okin, *Women in Western Political Thought* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1979); J. B. Elshtain, ed., *The Family in Political Thought* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1982), especially R. Krouse's "Patriarchal Liberalism and Beyond" therein; and S. Harding and B. Hintikka, eds., *Discovering Reality* (Dordrecht, Holland: D. Reidel Publishing Co., 1983), especially the articles by L. Lange, E. V. Spelman, and J. H. Stiehm (all on Aristotle).

33. S. Okin, note 32, pp. 6–7.

34. Gould, note 30, p. 18. See also L. Blum, "Kant's and Hegel's Moral Rationalism: A Feminist Perspective," *Canadian Journal of Philosophy* 12(June 1982):287–302 on Kant's and Hegel's characterization of women as "incapable of fully realizing the moral capacities inherent in humanity [sic]."

35. Gould, note 30, p. 18, quoting I. Kant, *Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and the Sublime*, trans. by J. Goldthwait (Berkeley: University of

California Press, 1960), p. 81. Gould documents a "similar prejudice" in Fichte, Rousseau, and Schopenhauer (Gould, note 30, pp. 18–44).

36. See, especially, Okin, note 32, for documentation of the functionalist treatment of women—and its implicit assumption of inequality—in our "philosophical heritage." Locke's attack on patriarchy did *not* extend to the domestic sphere, where the "rule" must "naturally" fall to the father as the "abler and stronger." For substantiation of Hobbes's and Locke's acceptance of patriarchal assertions about women, see T. Brennan and C. Pateman, "Mere Auxiliaries to the Commonwealth: Women and the Origins of Liberalism," *Political Studies* 27(1979):183–200; L. Clark, "Women and Locke: Who Owns the Apples in the Garden of Eden?" in L. Clark and L. Lange, eds., *The Sexism of Social and Political Theory* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1979), pp. 16–40; and Krouse, note 32. For the "reconciliation" of liberalism and patriarchalism "through the answer given by the contract theorists...of who counted as free and equal individuals," see C. Pateman, "Feminist Critiques of the Public/Private Dichotomy," in S. I. Benn and G. F. Gaus, eds., *Public and Private in Social Life* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1983), pp. 281–303, and her powerful critique of liberal premises in C. Pateman, *The Sexual Contract* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1988).

37. "A natural subordinate cannot at the same time be free and equal. Thus women (wives) are excluded from the status of 'individual' and so from participating in the public world of equality, consent and convention" (Pateman, note 36, p. 284). "Implicit within the paradigm is a concept of persons which admits into the privileges of full personhood . . . only those individuals who hold dual statuses as both public and private persons [men] and denies such personhood to those individuals with a single private status [women]" (J. B. Elshtain, "Moral Woman and Immoral Man," *Politics and Society* 4[1975]:472–473).

38. M. Stacey, "Social Sciences and the State: Fighting Like a Woman," in E. Gamarnik, D. Morgan, J. Purvis, and D. Taylorson, eds., *The Public and the Private* (London: Heinemann, 1983), p. 7. K. P. Parsons argues that the "main bias in moral philosophy for two millennia" has been that "the moral-social world has been taken to be the world as men know it. A meaningful (or a 'good life') has been a life seen from the perspective of males and open only to males—and in fact, only to higher-class white adult males, so that the bias is classist and racist as well as sexist" (K. P. Parsons, "Moral Revolution," in J. A. Sherman and E. T. Beck, eds., *The Prism of Sex* [Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1979], p. 192).

39. S. Ketchum, "Female Culture, Womanculture and Conceptual Change," *Social Theory and Practice*, 6(Summer 1980):158–159; C. Whitbeck, "The Moral Implications of Regarding Women as People," in W. B. Bondeson, H. T. Engelhardt, Jr., S. F. Spicker, and D. Winship, eds., *Abortion and the Status of the Fetus* (Dordrecht, Holland: D. Reidel Publishing Co., 1983), passim; and H. Rose, "Hand, Brain, and Heart," *Signs* 9(1983):82. Although arguably one of the most central and enduring sociopolitical structures, patriarchy—as "male authority over females"—is virtually unacknowledged in the political science and comparative politics literature. See B. Carroll, "Review Essay: Political Science II," *Signs* 5(1980):453. For a devastating critique of the exclusion of reproduction from political theory, see L. Clark, "The Rights of Women: The Theory and Practice of the Ideology of Male Supremacy," in W. Shea and J. King-Farlow, eds., *Contemporary Issues in Political Philosophy* (New York: Neale Watson, 1976), pp. 49–65.

40. Clark and Lange, "Introduction" in Clark & Lange, eds., note 32, pp. vii–viii.

41. M. Barrat Brown, *Models in Political Economy* (Boulder, Colo.: Lynne

Rienner Publishers, 1984). The explosion of "women in development" literature documents the distortions imposed by "ignoring" women's productive and reproductive labor. See for example citations in note 57.

42. See, for example, Sherman and Beck, eds., note 38; M. Millman and R. M. Kanter, eds., *Another Voice* (New York: Anchor Books, 1975), especially T. McCormack, "Toward a Nonsexist Perspective on Social and Political Change" therein; and C. Bernard, "My Four Revolutions," *American Journal of Sociology* 78(1973):773–791.

43. See Okin, note 32, pp. 247–304, passim; and R. Tong, *Women, Sex, and the Law* (Totowa, N.J.: Rowman & Allanheld, 1984). See also C. Pateman, "Women and Consent," *Political Theory* 8(May 1980):156: "In certain areas of the law where 'consent' is central, notably in the law concerning rape, social reluctance to recognize women as 'free and equal individuals' denies in practice what the law proclaims in principle."

44. See Holmes, note 1; and Hevener, note 1.

45. In 1975, U.S. Department of Labor statistics indicated that only 29.4 percent of husband-wife-children families had "husband as only earner." See J. Bernard, *The Female World* (New York: The Free Press, 1982), pp. 108–110. This is not to argue the absence of benefits for some women within the nuclear family model but to insist on a critical understanding of the social relations implied by the model, historically and currently. The glorification of heterosexual households assuming a male breadwinner and female childrearer is necessarily at the expense of the many more numerous women participating in other forms of committed relationships.

46. "The premise of this book . . . is that we all live in single-sex worlds and that most of what we know . . . deals with the male world. What we do know about the female world from male research is how it impinges on the male world." With these words, J. Bernard launches into a 556-page, wide-ranging, comprehensive, cross-cultural documentation of the "premise of two single-sex worlds" (J. Bernard, note 45, p. 1). In J. Bernard, *The Female World from a Global Perspective* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987), Bernard acknowledges the diversity of women's experiences while retaining a systematic distinction between women's and men's "life courses." See also T. McCormack, note 42. It is extremely important to note that the systematic differences identified in this paper are *socially* constructed. Pregnancy and lactation in and of themselves constitute only a small—for some women negligible or nonexistent—part of their lived realities. Patriarchal social relations engender "single-sex worlds"—*not* women's reproductive capacity. Complex ontological and epistemological issues are raised by, on the one hand, identifying commonalities in women's concrete experiences (in order to critique androcentrism as profoundly biased) and, on the other hand, rejecting the reification of oppositional dualisms (in order to critique positivism's abstract universalisms and ahistoricality). It is not possible to adequately address these issues here, but I wish to make it clear that distinguishing men's realities from women's realities is not to essentialize those differences (i.e., treat them as ontologically derived). Or simply, as long as gender hierarchy—or racism, anti-Semitism, homophobia, and other discrimination systems—remain socially significant dynamics, the life experiences of men and women—or those dominating and those dominated—will systematically differ. In an excellent article, S. Harding addresses, among other important issues, the difficulties of our being "forced to think and exist within the very dichotomizing we criticize" (S. Harding, "The Instability of the Analytical Categories of Feminist Theory," *Signs* 11[1986]:662). See also

L. Alcoff's "Cultural Feminism versus Post-Structuralism: The Identity Crisis in Feminist Theory," *Signs*, 13, 1988 and S. Benhabib and D. Cornell, eds., *Feminism as Critique* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987).

47. M. Frye, *The Politics of Reality* (Trumansburg, N.Y.: Crossing Press, 1983), pp. 165-166. "As women, we have been told by men not only *what* to think, but also how to perceive ourselves" (J. A. Sherman and E. T. Beck, "Introduction" in Sherman and Beck, eds., note 38).

48. The A/Not-A model has different implications for the Not-A's experience of "otherness" than, for instance, an A/B or A<sub>1</sub>/A<sub>2</sub> model. N. Jay makes the point that it is easy "to understand why almost any ideology based on A/Not-A dichotomy is effective in resisting change. Those whose understanding of society is ruled by such ideology find it very hard to conceive of the possibility of alternative forms of social order. . . . Within such thinking, the only alternative to the *one* order is disorder" (N. Jay, "Gender and Dichotomy," *Feminist Studies* 7[Spring 1981]:54).

49. "It is difficult to characterize the tone of an article, the patronizing implications of a remark, the ramifications of some accepted practice, and it is even more difficult to describe what it is like to be bombarded ten or a hundred times daily with these only half-submerged weapons of a sexist system" (S. Bartky, "Toward a Phenomenology of Feminist Consciousness," in M. Vetterling-Braggin, F. Elliston, and J. English, eds., *Feminism and Philosophy* [Littlefield, Adams & Co., 1978], p. 28).

50. "Power is exercised in our society not by the literal control of one group by another. There are different distributions of power . . . according to different practices. The practices need not be as tangible as literal economic advantage, power can be exercised by the form of language, the ability to control or manipulate situations, to exclude and marginalise groups" (R. Coward, *Patriarchal Precedents* [London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1983], p. 284). For a discussion of politics as "all deliberate efforts to control systems of shared meaning," and the implications of this perspective, see P. Sederberg, *The Politics of Meaning: Power and Explanation in the Construction of Social Reality* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1984).

51. C. Whitbeck, note 39, pp. 248-249, wherein it is also stated: "The implication is that although women may figure importantly in people's experience, as do horses and automobiles, there is nothing in *women's experience* that merits attention."

52. "Women *notice*; men can afford not to" (R. Morgan, *Anatomy of Freedom: Feminism, Physics, and Global Politics* [Garden City, N.Y.: Anchor Books, 1984], p. 143). There is an extensive literature on women as "marginalized"; I use quotation marks around this term to indicate its misleading quality, especially vis-à-vis women: "It is inconceivable for anything ever to have taken place in the world in which women were not involved" (G. Lerner, *The Creation of Patriarchy* [New York: Oxford University Press, 1986], p. 228).

53. "Most of what we have formerly known as the study of society is only the male study of male society. . . . Feminist critiques have shown us how social science has been defined by models representing a world dominated by white males, and so our studies of the social world have been limited by the particular interests, perspectives, and experiences of that one group. As new groups challenge the structure of power and attain new roles and opportunities, new models of society arise" (Millman and Kanter, "Introduction" in Millman and Kanter, note 42, p. viii). This process, vividly illustrated within feminist scholarship as the predominant voice of "white, privileged" women, is challenged for presuming to

speaking for all women. (I note the vulnerability of the present author and paper to such critique.) In struggling to address these issues, I believe feminist scholarship/activism provides valuable insights in regard to totalizing tendencies in other discourses. See, especially, M. Lugones and E. Spelman, "Have We Got a Theory for You! Feminist Theory, Cultural Imperialism and the Demand for 'The Woman's Voice,'" *Women's Studies International Forum* 6(1983):573-581; and B. Hooks, *Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center* (Boston: South End Press, 1984).

54. M. O'Brien, "Feminist Theory and Dialectical Logic," in N. Keohane et al., eds., *Feminist Theory* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), p. 102; see also Blum, note 34, pp. 290-291.

55. J. Kelly, *Women, History and Theory* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), p. 57.

56. L. Nicholson, "Feminist Theory," in C. Gould, ed., *Beyond Domination* (Totowa, N.J.: Rowman and Allanheld, 1983), p. 224. On "public patriarchy," see also C. Brown, "Mothers, Fathers, and Children: From Private to Public Patriarchy," in L. Sargent, ed., *Women and Revolution* (Boston: South End Press, 1981); and A. Ferguson, "Patriarchy, Sexual Identity, and the Sexual Revolution," *Signs* 7(1981):158-199.

57. I have drawn primarily from Western sources; however, the "women in development" literature documents global patterns in gender hierarchy. See, for example, M. Mies, V. Bennholdt-Thomsen, and C. von Werlhof, *Women: The Last Colony* (London: Zed Books, 1988); B. Rogers, *The Domestication of Women: Discrimination in Developing Societies* (London: Tavistock, 1980); L. Beneria, ed., *Women and Development: The Sexual Division of Labor in Rural Societies* (New York: Praeger, 1982); G. Sen and C. Grown, eds., *Development, Crises, and Alternative Visions: Third World Women's Perspectives* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1987); S. Mitter, *Common Fate, Common Bond: Women in the Global Economy* (London: Pluto Press, 1986); and K. Young, C. Wolkowitz, and R. McCullagh, eds., *Of Marriage and the Market: Women's Subordination Internationally and Its Lessons* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1984).

58. Rose, note 39, p. 83. See also L. Balbo, "The Servicing Work of Women and the Capitalist State," in M. Zeitlin, ed., *Political Power and Social Theory*, Vol. 3 (Greenwich, Conn.: JAI Press, 1982).

59. Frye, note 47, p. 9.

60. D. Smith, "Women's Perspective as a Radical Critique of Sociology," *Sociological Inquiry* 44(1974):9-10. The "double workday" for women is well-documented in First, Second, and Third World contexts.

61. A. Jaggar, *Feminist Politics and Human Nature* (Totowa, N.J.: Rowman and Allanheld, 1983), p. 46.

62. Smith, note 60, p. 10.

63. S. Ruddick, "Maternal Thinking," in J. Trebilcock, ed., *Mothing: Essays in Feminist Theory* (Totowa, N.J.: Rowman and Allanheld, 1983), p. 214.

64. S. Ruddick, "Maternal Thinking," note 63, pp. 217-224. See also C. Whitbeck, "Maternal Instinct," and J. F. Smith, "Parenting and Property," in J. Trebilcock, ed., *Mothing: Essays in Feminist Theory* (Totowa, N.J.: Rowman and Allanheld, 1983).

65. Postpositivists reject ahistorical, transcendent claims, for example, for "essences" or abstract universals. Feminists specifically target the essentializing/naturalizing of male-female sexual identities as, in fact, historical constructions embedded in particular social formations. State formation is particularly relevant for understanding the process of establishing male-female sexual identities as essentialized givens. See V. S. Peterson, "An Archeology of Domination:

Historicizing Gender and Class in Early State Formation" (Ph.D. dissertation, American University, 1988); C. W. Gailey, *Kinship to Kingship* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1987); and Z. Eisenstein, *The Radical Future of Liberalism* (New York: Longman, 1981).

66. For the landmark texts, see D. Dinnerstein, *The Mermaid and the Minotaur* (New York: Harper Colophon, 1976); N. Chodorow, *The Reproduction of Mothering* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978); and C. Gilligan, *In a Different Voice* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1982). This literature is rightly faulted for its Western and heterosexist biases; however, its insights on the socially embedded process of gender identity formation are, I believe, extremely valuable and generally applicable to the construction of gender identity under patriarchal relations. My emphasis here on *gendered* identity is *not* to suggest homogeneity among women's subjectivities nor gender as the most salient identity in all contexts. For a summary of the approaches and ensuing debates, see R. Tong, *Feminist Thought* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1989), especially chapter 5 and her bibliography; and M. R. Malson et al., eds., *Feminist Theory in Practice and Process* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989).

67. Gilligan, note 66, p. 2.

68. Quotations in this paragraph are from Gilligan, note 66, p. 8. For an elaboration of Chodorow's theory and its application as feminist-psychoanalytic interpretations of Plato, Descartes, Hobbes, and Rousseau, see J. Flax, "Political Philosophy and the Patriarchal Unconscious: A Psychoanalytic Perspective on Epistemology and Metaphysics," in S. Harding and B. Hintikka, eds., *Discovering Reality* (Dordrecht, Holland: D. Reidel Publishing Co., 1983).

69. Gilligan, note 66, p. 173.

70. For criticisms of Gilligan, see J. Auerbach, L. Blum, V. Smith, and C. Williams, "Commentary," *Feminist Studies* 11 (Spring 1985):149-161; S. Benhabib, "The Generalized and the Concrete Other," in S. Benhabib and D. Cornell, eds., *Feminism as Critique* (Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1987); Tong, note 66, pp. 161-168; and Shweder, "Liberalism as Destiny." For an empirical study supportive of Gilligan's "modes of self-definition and moral judgment," see N. P. Lyons, "Two Perspectives: On Self, Relationships, and Morality," *Harvard Educational Review* 53 (May 1983):125-145.

71. Pateman, note 36, p. 292. Similarly: "Feminists argue, however, that the system of priorities developed by liberal political thought is belied by the inequality and hierarchy at the root of the dichotomies it so cherishes. For example, the public conception of the self as the equal and abstract bearer of rights from which liberalism proceeds, is belied by the inequality, asymmetry and domination permeating the private identity of this self as a gendered subject. The conception of society as a system of mutually advantageous arrangements has never been extended in liberal political thought to subsume the family; the family has always remained a precontractual institution, still located in the 'state of nature'" (S. Benhabib and D. Cornell, note 46, p. 10).

72. See, for example, R. Bernstein, note 7, *The Restructuring of Social and Political Theory*. A. S. Runyan and V. S. Peterson, "The Radical Future of Realism: Feminist Subversions of IR Theory." A paper presented at the annual meeting of the International Studies Association, Washington, D.C., 1990.

73. Benhabib, note 70, p. 85.

74. J. Flax, "Critical Theory as a Vocation," *Politics and Society* 8 (1978):218. The debate over what constitutes "rationality" cannot adequately be addressed here; for present purposes I am simply making the moderate claim that rationality, like English, Chinese, and mathematics, is a potential capacity that requires social

interaction for its actualization.

75. Jaggar, note 61, pp. 41-42. See also MacIntyre, note 5, pp. 48-59; and Dunn, note 16, pp. 44-54.

76. M. Hawkesworth, "Feminist Epistemology," *Women and Politics* 7 (Fall 1987):115.

77. E. F. Keller, "Gender and Science," *Psychoanalysis and Contemporary Thought* 1 (1978). See also E. F. Keller, *Reflections on Gender and Science* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985); S. Harding, "Is Gender a Variable in Conceptions of Rationality?" *Dialectica* 36 (1982):225-242, and *The Science Question in Feminism* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1986); and S. Harding, ed., *Feminism and Methodology* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987).

78. Consider our extensive use of "hard" and "soft" metaphors: soft always associated with feelings or "less factual"; the "harder" sciences as well as the 'harder' branches of any profession consistently characterized as more masculine." And: "A woman thinking scientifically or objectively is thinking 'like a man.'" Quotations from Keller, note 77, "Gender and Science," pp. 188-191.

79. Especially the work of Chodorow; see the previous discussion of Gilligan (note 66).

80. Quotations in this paragraph are from Keller, note 77, "Gender and Science," pp. 192, 199, and 202.

81. H. Hein, "On Reaction and the Women's Movement," in C. Gould and M. Wartofsky, eds., *Women and Philosophy* (New York: Capricorn Books, 1976), pp. 258-259. See also R. Rorty's discussion of "objectivity" as nothing more than "agreement," and the resistance to acknowledging this, in R. Rorty, *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979), pp. 333-342.

82. Hein, note 81, pp. 258-259.

83. C. Whitbeck, "A Different Reality," in C. Gould, ed., *Beyond Domination* (Totowa, N.J.: Rowman and Allanheld, 1983), p. 64. Again I must acknowledge my reliance on primarily white, Western sources. I have attempted to emphasize systematic differences that presumably cut across the cultural, class, race, and age lines differentiating women's experience. My hope is that the insights gained by focusing on the difference between men's and women's lives justifies, in this instance, the (over)generalizing of women's experiences.

84. R. L. Smith, "Feminism and the Moral Subject," in B. H. Andolsen, C. E. Gudorf, and M. D. Pellauer, eds., *Women's Consciousness and Women's Conscience* (Minneapolis: Winston Press, 1985), p. 243.

85. N. Hartsock, "The Feminist Standpoint," in S. Harding and B. Hintikka, eds., *Discovering Reality* (Dordrecht, Holland: D. Reidel Publishing Co., 1983), p. 298; quoting A. Rich, *Of Woman Born: Motherhood as Experience and Institution* (Toronto: Bantam, 1976) p. 64.

86. Coward, note 50, p. 265. For criticisms of the individual as "inherently competitive and acquisitive," see N. Hartsock, *Money, Sex, and Power* (New York: Longman, 1983), especially chapters 2 and 5.

87. Coward, note 50, p. 265. See also R. L. Smith, note 84, pp. 245-247.

88. N. Scheman, "Individualism and the Objects of Psychology," in S. Harding and B. Hintikka, eds., *Discovering Reality* (Dordrecht, Holland: D. Reidel Publishing Co., 1983).

89. N. Scheman, "Anger and the Politics of Naming," in S. McConnell-Ginet, R. Borker, and N. Furman, eds., *Women and Language in Literature and Society* (New York: Praeger, 1980), pp. 180-181.

90. See, for example, B. J. Risman, "A Theoretical Note on Gender: Toward a

Structuralist Perspective on Intimate Relationships," paper presented at the American Sociology Association Meetings, Washington, D.C., 1985.

91. Ketchum, note 39, p. 153.

92. Bernard, note 42, p. 23.

93. R. L. Smith and D. M. Valenze, "Mutuality and Marginality," p. 4. Unpublished ms.

94. R. L. Smith, note 84, p. 247.

95. Smith and Valenze, note 93, p. 3.

96. Smith and Valenze, note 93, p. 28.

97. Whitbeck, note 83, p. 75.

98. D. Smith, "A Sociology for Women," in *The Prism of Sex: Essays in the Sociology of Knowledge* (J. A. Sherman and E. T. Beck, eds., note 47), Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1979, p. 152. In acknowledging this attentiveness to others as an aspect of women's experience, I do not wish to uncritically accept it as the basis for an alternative ethics. Such "caring" activities may simply reflect "a survival mechanism for women or others who are dealing with oppressive conditions" (J. Tronto, "Women and Caring," in A. Jaggar and S. Bordo, eds., *Gender/Body/Knowledge* [New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1989], p. 184). On feminist approaches to an ethic of care, see also Gilligan, note 66; J. Tronto, "Beyond Gender Difference to a Theory of Care," *Signs* 12 (Summer 1987); B. Fisher and J. Tronto, "Toward a Feminist Theory of Caring," in E. Abel and M. Nelson, eds., *Circles of Caring* (Albany: State University of New York Press, forthcoming); and S. Ruddick, *Maternal Thinking* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1989).

99. Whitbeck, note 83, p. 77.

100. Whitbeck, note 83, p. 79. See also J. F. Smith, note 64, for a discussion of the male, property model of parenting (emphasizing rights) and the female model emphasizing responsibilities.

101. Smith, note 84, p. 246.

102. Whitbeck, note 83, p. 82.

103. Benhabib, note 70, p. 81.

## Initiatives for Deepening Democracy in the Middle East

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The effects of the changes now sweeping through Eastern Europe are bound to spill over beyond the region. In fact, they will probably prove to be the farthest-reaching since the end of World War II. It is imperative therefore to try to visualize what the world will look like after things settle down, with the aim not so much to forecast the future as to probe the extent to which our project on the Coming Global Civilization<sup>1</sup> can offer relevant options for a preferred new world order.

One of the most critical conceptual difficulties facing the project is to ensure that it articulates not only the opportunities now existing to improve East-West relations but also (so that it may be genuinely universal) whatever opportunities may exist to improve North-South relations. Obviously, one cannot claim to adopt a universal approach when that approach does not take account of the South as a distinct actor, if only because it represents over two-thirds of humanity. But how to avoid excluding the South in a world based on "decoupling," where the process of development in the world is becoming more and more uneven? How to ensure that not only the economic but also the social, institutional, and cultural dimensions are taken into consideration in trying to institute balance and evenness in development and progress worldwide?

One critical challenge is to determine the minimum the South is to be offered to ensure its participation in the establishment of this new world order. I shall focus on a particularly sensitive area of critical strategic importance, the Middle East.

### General Principles

I shall investigate the problematic of democracy in the Middle East, that is, the specificity of this issue in a region of unparalleled historical depth

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