NEW FRONTIERS OF FEMINIST EDUCATION: CHALLENGING THE
PRESUMPTIONS OF EPISTEMOLOGICAL AND RATIONALIST
PATRIARCHY IN THE CONTEXT OF
EMANCIPATORY PEDAGOGY

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DECLARATION

This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference has been made in the text. I give consent to this copy of my thesis, when deposited in the University Library**, being made available for loan and photocopying subject to the provisions of the Copyright Act 1968.

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DEDICATION

In loving memory of my grandmother
Joyce Rachel Buchanan
(1917-2005)

For you were always the (reluctant) political feminist and you would have passionately argued with me about all of this.
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This study builds on and contributes to work in the area of educational epistemology and feminist theory. The aim of this thesis is to provide a deeper perception of the potential role which feminist thought can continue to play within the educational context. To advance this critical exploration, I endeavour to provide a tolerably coherent account of the dominant epistemological framework within which many feminist presumptions have emerged. Given that it is popularly believed that the goals of feminism have been met and thus that feminism, especially in the educational context, is no longer such a pressing issue, I seek to demonstrate why such considerations are still applicable in the so-called ‘post-feminist’ era. One of my central objectives in this thesis will be to urge strongly that this is a temptation to be resisted, and I try to show why we should do so. Although the feminist movement has done a great deal to advance the cause of the emancipation of women, a close examination reveals that the lives of women (and, indeed, men) remain textured by oppressive structures and practices which limit the expression of their full personhood. Within the framework of these structural impediments, I endeavour to establish, by appeal to a variety of philosophical case studies, that women continue to suffer considerable disadvantage compared to their male counterparts. Although various scholars have suggested that the current educational context is presupposed by the epistemic values of power and control (Laura & Cotton, 1999; Laura & Marchant, 2002, Marchant, 2006; Laura, Marchant & Smith, 2008) there has not been an investigation in to the implications of Laura’s Epistemology of Power theory for feminist education. I argue that unless knowledge is reconceptualised the goals of feminist education are unlikely to be well served within the current educational paradigm.
INTRODUCTION

The aim of this thesis is to provide a deeper perception of the potential role which feminist thought can continue to play within the educational context. To advance this critical exploration, I endeavour to provide a tolerably coherent account of the dominant epistemological framework within which many feminist presumptions have emerged. Given that it is popularly believed that the goals of feminism have been met and thus that feminism, especially in the educational context, is no longer such a pressing issue, I seek to demonstrate why such considerations are still applicable in the so-called ‘post-feminist’ era (Maushart, 2005; McRobbie, 2009). Moreover, a number of educational researchers argue that feminism and the resultant feminisation of schooling is causing considerable disadvantage to boys (See, Farrell, 1993; Biddulph, 1997, 2002). Much of current educational debate is preoccupied with the perceived underachievement of boys, and as such, the temptation has been to dismiss persistent feminist enquiry within the context of educational pedagogy as jaded (See, for example, Arndt, 2001; Hoff Sommers, 2001; Ruse 2002). One of my central objectives in this thesis will be to urge strongly that this is a temptation to be resisted, and I try to show why we should do so. Although the feminist movement has done a great deal to advance the cause of the emancipation of women, a close
examination reveals that the lives of women (and, indeed, men) remain textured by oppressive structures and practices which limit the expression of their full personhood. Within the framework of these structural impediments, I endeavour to establish, by appeal to a variety of philosophical case studies, that women continue to suffer considerable disadvantage compared to their male counterparts. At a deeper level, the salient goal of what I term ‘neo-feminism’ can be brought into bold relief; the goal here is not so much a discourse about women *per se*, as it is about ‘non-gendered personhood’, as I shall call it, and the educational development of a form of spiritual consciousness which could plausibly serve to nurture it.

I shall in what follows begin my examination with an explication of certain aspects of the history of feminism, contrasting the gains made by the feminist movement, with the limits that have been experienced in the context of its progression. For example, although marriage is no longer an overtly patriarchal institution, research into modern marriage suggests that it continues to extend more benefits to men than to women. Tasks considered to be ‘women’s work’ (such as housekeeping and childrearing) remain unremunerated, through the responsibility for this work resides for the most part with women – thereby negating a number of the gains made by women in entering the workforce. Although women have made great strides both in redefining marriage and in workforce participation, the continued burden of ‘Second Shift’ domestic responsibilities demonstrates that in some areas, women are still regarded as objects of subjugation and exploitation – an insight that becomes even clearer when global economic patterns are examined.

The first half of the thesis documents in detail that while feminism has done much to advance the goal of legal equality for women, the more challenging goal of reconceptualising the logical character of ‘gender’ itself has yet to be achieved. This being so, the spiritual foundation upon which the dynamic relationship between males and females
unfolds in socio-cultural terms has yet to be adequately understood. If the changes that have occurred and are yet to occur within this framework are in the long term to be rendered as little more than cosmetic, it is imperative that this conceptual limitation be rectified. The thesis seeks to show that the aetiology of the problem of gender differentiation lay in comprehending the way in which what I have termed ‘epistemological patriarchy’ has limited the development of spiritual consciousness required to establish an educational feminism motivated by the vision of non-gendered personhood. In this sense the emancipation provided by the concept of non-gendered personhood frees, not only women, but also men, to their true potential.

In the second half of the thesis I have set myself the task of showing that the goal of socio-cultural empowerment for women is a far more subtle matter than might at first be supposed. The subtlety relates to the philosophical presumptions of power and dominance which define the socio-cultural structures by way of which women and nature continue to be identified. I shall argue that by committing ourselves to a patriarchal epistemology driven by our cultural thirst for power and control, we unwittingly embrace a framework of value within which men and particularly women are systematically marginalised and exploited, though in different ways. In the case of women at present, appeals to injustices against them have thus far achieved only a legal measure of social justice, largely because the resolution emphasises the discourse of legal restitution, not the ‘failure of morality’ which prompts such social injustices in the first place. Appreciation of this point also helps to explain why it is that men caught up in the ‘power-struggle’ for women’s rights can sometimes themselves be victimised by antagonist reliance on the misuse of legal power yielded by women. As a consequence, the legal sanctions fail to address the deeper dimensions of the problem, because the very system to which the appeal is made is itself grounded in a patriarchal discourse which, by its very nature, is morally divisive, leading to more, not less social injustice. The rub is that the very system, to which one appeals for moral and political
redress, is by virtue of the epistemologically entrenched value discriminations enshrined within it, bound covertly to conceptualise women in ways which continue to reinforce the very injustices the appeal was ostensibly meant to extirpate. Let me now commence this challenging philosophical journey into the domain of educational presumption and hidden agenda.

Chapter One: The Worth of Women: Challenging the role played by Epistemological Patriarchy in the continuing subjugation of women

The first chapter of this thesis will begin with an examination of the history of feminism. It was not so long ago that women in this culture were considered to be of little worth in comparison to their male counterparts. They were denied the right, for example, to vote, to inherit property, to be formally educated, to publish under their own name, and in some cases they were bought and sold as common chattel, commercially traded at the whims of the men who surrounded them. Chapter one will provide a basic account of women’s struggle for equality within western society – a struggle that subsequent chapters will show has not yet been resolved. In order to keep this thesis within manageable bounds I shall confine myself to an examination of some of the major contributions made by feminism to the understanding and resolution of this problem. In particular I shall be concerned to examine the potential contribution feminism is capable of making by challenging the socially entrenched patriarchal presuppositions which characterise our most basic modalities of human reflection.

The first chapter of this thesis will highlight some of the key events in women’s struggle for equality with men, with the aim of affording the reader at least a rudimentary sketch of the history of feminism. Rather than rehearsing all the details, I shall describe the emergence of feminism in stages that I have termed ‘articulation’, ‘formalisation’ and ‘participation’, detailing the major goals of first and second wave feminists, as well as briefly scrutinizing
contemporary perceptions of feminism. At this point conventional wisdom suggests that feminism is outdated and has no place in today’s post-modern world. Women are considered to be of equal worth to their male counterparts and in addition women’s interests are protected by the weight of the law which ensures that they have the same rights as those accorded to men. Issues such as childcare and family tax arrangements garner a lot of media attention and potential political spin, but there is a general feeling that women and their ‘issues’ are no longer in a state of desperate need and that Australian society and educational academia should focus on more pressing concerns such as the state of boys education and national literacy levels. While chapter one will show that women have indeed come a long way (and the fight which they have had to achieve these gains is itself a commentary on the inherent patriarchal bias of our society) it will be a further concern of the thesis’ first chapter to demonstrate that women are still not in any meaningful sense, the equal of men. I shall be concerned to show that the work of feminism has indeed, not been completed and its promise not yet been met.

The second half of chapter one will be concerned to show in some detail that economically and socially women are still not worth as much as men. There are several subtle processes at work which ensure continued economic disparity between the sexes and it will be a further burden of chapter one to demonstrate these. Women, it will be shown, on average, still earn less than their male counterparts when working the same jobs. In addition, in a process that has been termed ‘the pink ghetto’ (Peterson, 1994) women are over represented in poorly paid, less prestigious occupations, as they are crowded into jobs such as retail and clerical work. I shall also describe the process known as the ‘Second Shift’. While women have been granted the right to an equal wage in the workforce they are still performing the vast majority of the housework. I shall detail the cultural expectation that women still perform the majority of society’s unpaid labour and that certain types of work constitutes
women’s work. For this reason tasks such as child rearing and housekeeping are not considered for the most part to be worthy of remuneration.

Chapter Two: Woman as “Other”: Examining Institutions of Patriarchal Control

It will be the burden of chapter two to elucidate some of the more subtle manifestations of the patriarchal bias against women that continue to exist within our society. In order to make visible some of the inherent bias against women that prevails within western society I shall firstly turn my attention to the history of marriage as practised in the West, the Christian Church, and the feminist critiques of western science and the medical system.

The history of western marriage, it will be shown, has its basis in the explicitly patriarchal practices of the ancient Greeks and Hebrews. Although marriage is no longer predicated on an economic transaction between a groom and the bride’s father, recent research suggests that marriage continues to extend more benefits to men than women. In addition as the state is now the primary regulatory authority governing marriage, marriage continues to order society hierarchically by extending status and privilege to wedded heterosexual unions.

The second philosophical case study to be presented in chapter two will address the continued bias against women that still exists within the Christian Church. In order to achieve this aim, I shall endeavour to show that time after time women have been systematically excluded from positions of power and authority within the Church. Church discrimination of gender continues to take place, as instanced by the fact that very few Churches allow the ordination of women. In the few denominations that do permit women to be priests, almost without exception, women are not permitted to become bishops.

In the second chapter I shall also describe the historical context from which the Christian Church emerged and the impact of Jesus’ actions and words upon a society that was highly
patriarchal and misogynistic. Jesus taught women and men alike and he advocated an egalitarian way of life. Within the patriarchal society of his day his example was quite radical, and the history of the early Church reveals that imitation of this example could not be maintained. I shall also look at the Monastic movement of the Middle Ages to illustrate that under Church patriarchy the experiences of monks and nuns were dramatically different. This will lead us to a consideration of the elements of Christian theology which blame women for the entrance of sin into the world. I shall argue that out of this theology arise the association between women and evil, as represented by the figure of the Devil, which eventually manifested in the witch hunt craze which swept through Europe and America. My intention will be to show how these patriarchal presumptions of theology lead to the current theological arguments used by Churches to justify the continued denial of women to the priesthood and any access to positions of power and authority. Attention will be paid in this context to the document released on Papal authority by the Catholic Church in August 2004, *Letter to the Bishops of the Catholic Church on the Collaboration of Men and Women in the Church and the World* (Ratzinger & Amato, 2004). This document refers to the different roles men and women are meant to play in the life of the Church. The roles described, continue to deny women almost complete access to all roles of power and authority within the Catholic Church.

I argue that science emerged from the medieval Christian mindset and the underlying dualistic tendencies of Christianity remain inherent within the scientific paradigm. I shall use the example of Rachel Carson to show how her book *Silent Spring*, was perceived to threaten the western scientific project and the criticisms levelled at her reveal the ideology underpinning the modern quest for scientific knowledge. In addition I shall examine how male and female bodies are conceived of and treated differently by the medical establishment. The western medical system, it will be shown, has at its basis the male body as the norm - with women’s physiology considered to be an aberrant ‘other’. This means,
that on the one hand many medical treatments are developed using only male bodies as the basis, while their results are cavalierly and unreflectingly extrapolated to women. On the other hand, normal healthy female processes such as menstruation, pregnancy, birth and menopause are viewed as flawed events in need of medical management. These claims will be examined in the light of various studies which demonstrate the patriarchal bias that continues to exist in the medical system (Stout & McPhail, 1998).

Chapter Three: Global Patterns of Inequality and Further Challenges for Feminism

In chapter three, I will turn my attention to the plight of women worldwide. The inequality experienced by women becomes even more obvious when we examine the global picture. Women bear an uneven share of the world’s labour, performing the majority of the world’s unpaid labour. As in the situation in the West, women worldwide perform most of the unpaid nurturing tasks, taking care of children, the infirmed and the elderly. In addition, third world women are the major producers of the world’s food. For example, within Africa women and their children produce 70% of the nation’s food. Remarkably only 5% of Africa’s women are described as being employed (Salleh, 1998).

In a world where the rich are getting richer and the poor are getting poorer, women remain the poorest of the poor. This phenomenon has been termed ‘the feminisation of poverty’ (Peterson, 1994) and I shall tease out its important implications for women in many parts of the world. Chapter three will present several other salient examples which demonstrate the patriarchal bias against women, which result in women bearing more than their fair share of the world’s suffering. One such example is the global sex trade, with its components of sex tourism and the trafficking of women and children as sex slaves. I shall show that the bodies of women are literally traded as commodities, while the vast profits from this enterprise flow to men who control the trade and the related Internet transactions.
Within this context of patriarchal commercialisation of women’s bodies for sex I shall also discuss the HIV/AIDS crisis. In the vast humanitarian response to this global pandemic it appears that there exists a bias against women. Contrary to general expectation the rates of infection and mortality are higher for women than for men, while conversely the rates of treatment are higher for men.

Chapter Four: An Exploration of the Nexus Between Knowledge and Reason as Patriarchal Constructs

In chapter four I shall turn my attention to one of the main points of the thesis. I will argue that educational epistemology depends upon a patriarchal way of knowing the world whose very rationale is based on a lust for power and control. The most comprehensive explanation of this process is provided by R.S. Laura (See Laura and Cotton, 1999 for details; also see Laura, Marchant & Smith, 2008; Laura and Marchant, 2002; Laura and Ashton, 1998). In order to expound this thesis I shall in chapter four rehearse Laura’s theory of the Epistemology of Power as it relates to the subjugation of women in order to make clear that the system of patriarchal rationality embraced by the West is undergirded by a patriarchal epistemological framework, whose rationale is based upon an lust for power and control. That is to say, that which is considered to be knowledge within our culture is that which gives us control over the world around us by dominating it. It is the argument of this thesis that rationality, the form of reasoning employed by western society, is itself a tool designed to shape our minds into ways of thinking which facilitate our control over the world and everything in it. Within chapter four I shall more fully elaborate Laura’s Epistemology of Power theory and its implications for western knowledge and learning.

To achieve this task I shall be concerned to extrapolate Laura’s existing theoretical framework to show that the form of rationality we have come to embrace is, not unlike the epistemic presumptions from which it derives, an expression of power and fervent desire to
dominate and gain maximum control over the world around us. I shall argue that one of the ways in which this form of rationalism exerts socio-structural control over women is through the pernicious dualism to which it gives rise. I shall argue, that is to say, that the dualistic or binary process of reasoning which conditions how we think about the world is itself a pedagogic dimension of the patriarchal hierarchy which continues to define western culture. This recognition has important implications for all human relationships, but affords a special insight into the way in which women have been accorded a lower status than men in many cultures, in different places and at different times. The rise in the status of western women and decline in the status of the women of developing nations will be contrasted, with special emphasis upon the patriarchal hierarchies of value which continue to define them. With this theoretical schema in mind I shall try to show that the conflation of the epistemology of power and as I shall hereafter call it, ‘Patriarchal Rationalism’ have a monumental impact upon the socio-cultural determinations of the roles played by women, especially with regard to the limitations such roles place upon the realisation of the feminist principle and female potential.

In addition to elaborating Laura’s Epistemology of Power theory, within the bounds of chapter four, I shall also describe some of the more subtle features of western patriarchal rationalism. This form of rationality is a dualistic or binary process of reasoning which conditions how we think about the world as it presupposes the dualistic hierarchies of value into which it is divided. It is these value hierarchies as they have elsewhere been called (Plumwood, 1991, 1993) which determine the status accorded to a particular thing within our culture. As women and nature fall on the negative side of the value hierarchy, they are not only seen as having less worth than that accorded to men and culture but they are given the status of resources subject to subjugation and expropriation. Western reason and the epistemology of power become mutually reinforcing and complicit in shaping and maintaining a worldview which is destructive of personhood and the natural environment.
Within chapter four I shall also trace the history of patriarchal rationality as it has developed in the West in order to show how the claims that I make with regard to reason and the epistemology of power can be substantiated. In the space available to me in this chapter sketch I can only offer a rudimentary outline of the model of reason which has come to dominate our cultural mindset, though I shall of course develop this sketch further in the context of chapter four. Reason as an ideal has been with us for well over two millennia. In addition to the importance of reason in the Egyptian culture, a number of Greek philosophers defined reason (*logos*) as the key characteristic of man, such that reason was a virtue which separated man from the animals. It was believed that reasoning and rational action led to the greatest good. The Greeks had a dualistic way of seeing the world and identified reason – that is rational thinking, with masculine thinking and irrationality and emotion with feminine thinking. Values which were held in esteem were identified with maleness, culture, order, the mind, and values which were defined as the opposite were identified with femaleness, nature, chaos, and the body. Not only have we inherited from the Greek philosophers this dualistic framework from which to view the world but the elevation of reason in the work of Descartes ensured its primary role in the patriarchal paradigm which still functions to shape our worldview.

Even the theology of the Christian Church maintained a dualistic vision of the world, albeit with a slightly different emphasis. The world itself is viewed in dualist terms, such that salvation is reached through belief in and obedience to a saving God who is all good, while corruption and evil stems from the devil who is all bad. The Christian Churches also inherited from the Greeks a belief in the value of reason and ‘simply narrowed the meaning to justify their received truths’ (Ralston Saul, 1992, p.14). An appeal to ‘Reason’ was used against the Churches and against the monarchies of Europe in the struggle against arbitrary power as the means of control over the population. Since the dawning of the “Age of
Reason” the Churches have lost much of the hold which they had over the population, as have the European monarchies. The type of reasoning which forms the presuppositions of our cultural mindset was developed in this time by thinkers such as Bacon and Descartes. While Bacon and Descartes had differing conceptualisations, both used reason as the basis for their arguments and as the primary tool by which one could reach the ‘truth’. The conceptualisations which they used will be more fully described within the context of chapter four, suffice to say here that the earth had been until this time regarded as a wholesome mother.

A change in social attitudes towards women was conceptually linked with the radically different concept of nature ushered in by the scientific revolution of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Descartes saw the universe as a machine, not unlike a giant clock. He believed that if the laws governing the machinations of the universe were worked out, the world could be made to run the way that man wished it to run. While Bacon employed a language descriptive of nature which was in itself tantamount to a political instrument designed to reduce nature into a sexualised female; a resource for economic production and reproduction. It was no accident that Bacon referred to nature as a woman whose secrets must be penetrated, and the treasures from her womb expropriated to man’s advantage to reveal the ‘hard facts’ (Merchant, 1980). With the advent of Bacon’s writings the orthodox concept of science as the ‘servant of nature’ was supplanted with a radically different concept of science as the master subjugator of nature.

Ralston Saul (1992) argues that since the Industrial Revolution women have been the symbol of the irrational. (I contend that this symbolism has been in existence at least since the time of the ancient Greeks). That this symbol underpins the form of reasoning embraced by western society means that within the culture generated by western society women will inevitably be conceived of as lesser persons than men. While feminism has been successful
in raising awareness of the inequality and injustices borne by women, feminists have been largely advocating for change within a flawed system, biased by its very nature against women. The concept of rationality which is a presupposition of the western mode of thinking generates conditions in which women, and women’s way of being, are considered to be inferior, in error and in need of being corrected. In this way, women can be exploited and subjugated because by their very nature, as they are regarded as being irrational and in need of control. In essence they are ascribed the status of perpetual children, always under man’s control.

By examining the history of reason in light of Laura’s theory of Knowledge as power we are able to see that just as rationality has been developed our capacity for control over the earth and everything upon it has increased. Scientific developments (or ‘progress’ as it has been termed) have brought us to the point where we have the capacity to destroy every living thing on the planet. Likewise the way in which we reason gives us control over the minds of those doing the reasoning. That is to say dualistic reasoning shapes the way in which we think. Further in the thesis I shall examine this insight more determinately as I turn my attention to its educational implications.

Chapter Five: Patriarchal Corporeality and Epistemological Patriarchy

This section of the thesis comprises of a more determined look at gender - a category of analysis that functions in different ways. As Holter (1997, 2003) reminds us it is important to separate the different ways in which gender operates. Gender can function as a form of social relations, or as structural inequality – the two are contiguous, rather than synonymous. It is my argument that these two processes, social relations and structural inequality, work in a related fashion and are separate dimensions of an overarching framework which serves, through underlying presuppositions to hierarchically order the world and the people within it, ensuring that some people are always seen as less human than others, and can therefore be
treated as resources for expropriation and subjugation. This chapter will analyse social
relations, and the intersection of gender and patriarchy in order to make clear the way in
which the present cultural constructions of gender create societal ideas about masculinity
and femininity which uphold and reinforce the values of patriarchy. The school setting will
be examined as a site in which patriarchal notions of gender are maintained. I shall explain
the way in which gender operates to place men and women differently within the socio-
economic context and in particular the way in which gender is both embodied and socially
constructed in ways that can be understood to go hand in hand with patriarchal
epistemology.

With Plato, and subsequently the type of rationality embraced by the West, bifurcating
existence into the mental and physical realms, our experience of the world is through the
mind (knowledge) or through corporeal experience – the two experiences, mind and body,
being considered mutually exclusive. The world of the mental realm is dominated by
epistemological patriarchy which not only conditions how the world is understood, but how
the physical world operates. Epistemological patriarchy means that the world is thought
about and understood in male dominated ways, i.e., through patriarchal rationalism.
Correspondingly, the physical realm is dominated by a physical order that I term ‘patriarchal
corporeality’. Within this system epistemological patriarchy and patriarchal corporeality
form two sides to the same coin. Epistemology is dominated by a masculine way of knowing
the world and the physical realm is dominated by a particular way of being that rewards and
values physical strength and domination. The values enshrined within epistemological
patriarchy thus perpetuate an understanding of the world in which rewards and privileges
flow to men. (Although not in the form of a global domination of men over women, as will
be further examined, the world is understood hierarchically with intersecting hierarchies of
privilege, in which some masculinities are subordinated to more dominant forms).
I contend that mirroring the way in which masculine knowledge, that is patriarchal epistemology, establishes itself as the dominant form of knowledge by negating what it terms feminine knowledges, - or what Foucault refers to as ‘subjugated knowledges’ (Danaher, Schirato, & Webb, 2000) - patriarchal corporeality imposes a ‘gender regime’ (to borrow a term coined by others, see Kessler, Ashenden, Connell, & Dowsett, 1985), within which masculinity creates itself through the constant repudiation and negation of what it defines as the feminine. I attest that patriarchal epistemology is the mental expression of humanity and at the same time patriarchal corporeality is the bodily expression of society. These two exist at the same time as mutually reinforcing expressions of the bifurcation of human experience into the mind/body dualism. On the one hand patriarchal epistemology limits the expression of human understanding to a male dominated definition of rationality. On the other hand, patriarchal corporeality bifurcates human behaviour into masculine and feminine and limits the expression of these.

It is the purpose of chapter five to demonstrate how the system of patriarchal corporeality shapes social relations in the physical world through heteronormality. In addition, the educational implications will be explored. Schools can be understood, on the one hand, as sites where patriarchal epistemological is taught (this point will be more determinately addressed in chapter six) and successive generations are inculcated in the values of the epistemology of power (see Laura & Cotton, 1999). On the other hand, schools are also prime contexts for the enactment of patriarchal corporeality. Patriarchal epistemology is transmitted in the classroom and patriarchal corporeality, it could be argued, is transmitted in the schoolyard. A portion of the chapter will look at the way in which the dominant expressions of masculinity – (termed by Connell hegemonic and complicit masculinities, see Connell, 1985, 1990, 1995) are harmful and dehumanising to men and limit the expression of their full humanity. I shall also examine the realm of human sexuality and the way in
which dominant expression of sexual culture reinforces the dominance of patriarchal corporeality as the only way to understand and experience human physicality.

Chapter Six: Challenging the Presumptions of Epistemological and Rationalist Patriarchy in the context of Emancipatory Pedagogy

Inasmuch as the theory of knowledge we have embraced is designed to maximise power and control over our world, it is the obsession with power which in the end informs the posture and direction of educational epistemology; for we begin reasoning about the world predominantly in ways which express our preoccupation with domination. Educational epistemology impacts upon the socio-cultural determinations of the roles played by women; especially with regard to the limitations they place upon the realisation of the female potential. At this point in the thesis it will be clear that I am asserting that rationality and the dominant epistemology of power from which it derives are mutually reinforcing and complicit, in both the degradation of nature and the subjugation of women. Just as Laura and Cotton make clear, in their 1999 work *Empathetic Education*, the environment goals of education cannot be met as the form of knowledge that is propagated within schools encourages a philosophy of nature that is inimical to ecological integrity. I shall endeavour to show that the personal and social goals of feminism will likewise not be met within an educative system which propagates a form of knowledge that is morally divisive of human personhood. I shall try to establish within chapter six that by propagating patriarchal rationality as the basis of our way of thinking about the world, our educative system has inadvertently entrenched an ideology whose dominant presumption is that women are lesser persons than men.

The value of a woman is determined by how well she can imitate the virtues of being a man. To redress this conceptual imbalance of hierarchical value, I shall endeavour to reconceptualise the epistemological foundations upon which it is based. The Epistemology
of power represents only one possible form of knowledge from amongst a number of contenders. I shall try to establish within chapter six that patriarchal rationality has been unreflectingly endorsed as the only way in which to come to know the world around us. I shall show that this is not in fact the only way to come to know the world cogently and insightfully. While indigenous ways of understanding are available to us, within this chapter I shall endorse ways of knowing the world, based not upon detachment, but upon the values of connectivity and empathy.

Within chapter six I call for a revision of epistemic values, for values of power and control to be replaced with an epistemology of empathy and concomitantly to understand knowledge as empathetic connectivity. As our dominant epistemology is informed by a particular concept of rationality, we perpetuate hierarchical divisions of Cartesian dualism and thus we are continually striving for change in a system that cannot not hierarchically order the world. I argue that if education is to be truly liberating of men as well as women, then the intellect needs to be emancipated in order to transcend the boundaries of bias, discrimination, and prejudice that, through education, have come to circumscribe it. I seek the development of emancipatory freedom through participatory consciousness and to nurture notions of personhood, rather than gender, as the basis of identity and seek to usher in forms of pedagogy in which the gender divide (and attendant gender debates) no longer make sense as the conceptual value systems which underpin such divides have been dismantled. By ushering in the notion of non-gendered personhood we embrace a richer concept of what a person is in terms of the infinite potential of self expression, guided by a new moral sensibility – a moral sensibility underpinned by participatory consciousness.

Before I commence this philosophical inquiry let me draw your attention to the fact that throughout this paper, generic terms such as 'man' and 'mankind' are employed. This is consciously done. In a British act of parliament in the eighteenth century these terms were
enshrined in a law which dictated the correct way to write (Stout & McPhail, 1998). The author has chosen deliberately to conform in this paper to this convention. As my criticisms are directed primarily at the patriarchal dispositions of western society I prefer to use the masculine terms when describing the actions that have adversely affected both women and the environment. This being so, it is not men, per se, against whom I am inveighing but against males and females alike who willingly encourage and benefit from the western patriarchal consciousness.

In addition it should also be noted that my exploration of patriarchy is restricted to patriarchy in its western institutional guise. The patriarchal consciousness that has shaped the western worldview is resolutely anti-women and anti-nature, militaristic and atomistic. Not all patriarchal societies are like this. For example, China has had a long tradition of patriarchy which has not been sponsored on the assumption that nature needs to be dominated and oppressed (Li, 1993). Disclaimers aside let us now turn to the task at hand.
CHAPTER ONE

THE WORTH OF A WOMAN: CHALLENGING THE ROLE PLAYED BY
EPISTEMOLOGICAL PATRIARCHY IN THE CONTINUING SUBJUGATION OF
WOMEN

WIFE FOR SALE

Gentlemen, I have to offer to your notice my wife, Mary Anne Thompson otherwise
Williams, whom I mean to sell to the highest and fairest bidder. Gentlemen, it is her
wish as well as mine to part forever. She has been to me only a born serpent. I
therefore offer her with all perfections and imperfections, for the sum of fifty
shillings.

After waiting about an hour, Thompson knocked down the lot to one Henry Mears, for
twenty shillings and a Newfoundland dog; they then parted in perfectly good temper -
Mears and the woman going one way, Thompson and the dog the other.

Quoted from THE ANNUAL REGISTER for 1832, (Scutt, 1994, p. 59)

What is a woman worth? According to the quote above, in 1832 in Australia, a woman was
worth the grand sum of twenty shilling and a Newfoundland dog. I commence this discourse
with the above quotation to bring to bold relief that the buying and selling of women is,
historically speaking, not so distant a social reality as many might like to believe. The
human auction depicted here occurred less than two hundred years ago in Australia and
represents a pernicious example of patriarchal dehumanisation. Lamentably, the flesh-trade
which treats women, especially young women and girls, as chattel to be bought and sold
continues to thrive, even in Christocentric cultures which ostensibly profess their moral
disgust for such acts. Research into the sex trade reveals that of the 2-4 million or so people
currently estimated to be trafficked each year, the majority are women and children
(Flowers, 1994, 2001) who are being traded in the sex industry (Goodey, 2004; Maltzahn,
2002). Those trafficked are sent to large cities, tourist destinations (Wonders &
Michalowski, 2001), and military bases in areas such as Asia, the Middle East, Western
Europe and North America (Goodey, 2004; Maltzahn, 2002; Tzvetkova, 2002).

Epistemological Patriarchy
My aim in this paper is to argue that despite impressive advances in women’s liberation the
value presumptions inherent in what I shall here call ‘epistemological patriarchy’ remain
firmly entrenched, even in developed countries of putative moral conscience. In what
follows I shall argue that the persistent persuasion of epistemological patriarchy stands as an
impediment to a deeper and more comprehensive emancipation for women than has yet been
achieved. I use the term ‘epistemological patriarchy’ to refer to the ascendency and socio-
cultural entrenchment of one particular form of knowledge whose institutional dominance
provides the pretext for its superiority over other plausible ways of coming to know the
world. The monopoly it enjoys amongst other contenders for the accolade of knowledge
ensures that the role they might otherwise play in expanding a salutary community
consciousness of different perspectives of cognitive insight is marginalised and suppressed.
What conditions the epistemological presumption as ‘patriarchal’ is that the concept of
knowledge deployed is motivated and ‘valuationally’ informed by the obsession with power
and control, subjugation and dominance. Given this preoccupation with power, I shall
endeavour to establish that ‘knowledge’ is neither ‘value-free,’ nor for that matter, ‘socio-culturally neutral’, and thus that the concept of knowledge cannot be understood independently of the value presumptions which serve to motivate and characterise it. This being so, I contend that until the epistemological patriarchy which continues to condition the covert value hierarchy of institutional structures is explicitly challenged, the deprecation, denigration and abuse of women will continue. Moreover, because the dehumanising socio-cultural mechanisms to which we allude are epistemologically enshrined within the hidden agenda of seemingly innocent processes, they easily go unnoticed. This is precisely why their existence is all the more dangerous and their social consequences, all the more pernicious. Let us now turn to the task at hand.

Patriarchy

Patriarchy as a system is historical: it has a beginning in history. If that is so, it can be ended by historical process (Lerner, 1986, p. 228).

Patriarchy is an ancient word, meaning in Greek “the rule of the father” (LeGates, 2001). A differently nuanced meaning of patriarchy comes to us from the Judeo-Christian heritage. Abraham of the Old Testament, for example, is referred to as the ‘Patriarch’, the father of the Jewish and Christian nations. Echoes of this meaning are also to be found in the Greek Orthodox Church, which has at its head the Archbishop of Constantinople, who is popularly referred to as the Church’s ‘Patriarch’. Another rendition of the term ‘patriarchy’ can refer to the legal powers and authority that a man has over his family. According to Bennett, (2006) this meaning was popularised in the seventeenth century by Robert Filmer’s book *Patriarcha*, a political theory where the domestic meaning of patriarchy was extended to the king, who ruled over his country as a father ruled over his household. This permutation of
the meaning of the word patriarchy is argued to be more accurately expressed by the terms ‘patriarchalism’ or ‘paternalism’ (Bennett).

While there exists a degree of scholarly ambiguity as to the socio-cultural origins of patriarchy (LeGates, 2001), an examination of certain of the myths of the ancient world reveals that there were places and times when patriarchy was not ideologically embedded. Stories such as the *Epic of Gilgamesh*, Hesiod’s *Theogony* and *Works and Days*, and the creation stories of the Hebrews, to name only a few, illustrate that the emergence of patriarchy coincided with the birth of a new mythology which decimated the epistemic value system within which the very concept of the goddess found its expression. By devaluing the gifts of the divine feminine it became increasingly easier to elevate the concept of a male god whose remit is largely confined to the ‘virtues’ of conquest, protection, judgement and retributive punishment. The diminution of the divine feminine is especially well illustrated in the case of the eventual attribution to Zeus on the ability to ‘give birth’ directly from his head, thereby marginalizing the otherwise unique capacity of the goddess for reproduction (ie, the birthing of gods, half gods, humans, etc) on the one hand, and her generative role in general creation (ie, the creation of the cosmos or of nature itself) on the other. The mythology of the male-god thus establishes a conceptual framework within which the male god is reconceptualised as a being whose ‘powers’ now usurp those of the goddess. Consequently, the male god takes over her role, not only, as creator, as a deity who nurtures, nourishes, loves unconditionally and even forgives. In this way the male god becomes conceptually transformed into a supreme being (ultimately the one and only) who acquires and assimilates the powers and attributes of every deity unto himself. Thus, the male god becomes omnipotent, omniscient and omnibenevolent. From the vantage of patriarchy, it is important to understand the extent to which these multifarious divine attributes are expressed unequivocally and mediated through his maleness. This new supreme god is
uniquely male. There is nothing he cannot do, nothing he does not know, and no form of
good that is not, in some sense or other, of his doing or a reflection of his universal
beneficence.

As early as the late 1980s, scholars such as Lerner (1986), and Eisler (1987) acknowledged
that an unabashedly male mythology began to provide the primary socio-cultural medium
for the establishment and promulgation of patriarchy over not only matriarchy, but even over
egalitarian societies some 7–11 thousand years ago. Notwithstanding tedious debate about
the exact details of the chronological socio-cultural dynamic which most accurately portrays
the relationship between patriarchy and matriarchy, it is incontestable that the
reconceptualisation of the male-god within cultural mythology played an enormously
important role in the growing dominance of patriarchal epistemology.

**Feminist Foundations of Epistemological Patriarchy**

Older than feminism and indeed inspiring it, patriarchy has been a prime characteristic
of Western civilisation. Political and cultural invisibility, intellectual restrictions,
sexual vulnerability, and economic exploitation, all justified in the name of nature and
God, shaped women’s lives, both stimulating and hindering the development of
feminism and feminist thought (LeGates, 2001, p. 23).

It is also important to make clear that patriarchy has a meaning derived from feminist
critiques of male power. An example of this differently nuanced meaning of the term is
provided by Adrienne Rich who describes patriarchy as:

a familial-social, ideological, political system in which men – by force, direct
pressure, or through ritual, tradition, law, and language, customs, etiquette, education,
and the division of labour, determine what part women shall or shall not play, and in which the female is everywhere subsumed under the male (Rich, 1977, p. 57).

As far as can be discerned, the term ‘patriarchy’ was first employed in this way - to describe male domination over women - by Kate Millet in Sexual Politics first published in 1970 (LeGates, 2001). In this seminal work one of Millett’s primary concerns was to awaken women to the fact that:

our society, like all other historical civilisations, is a patriarchy. The fact is evident if one recalls that the military, industry, technology, universities, science, political office, and finance – in short, every avenue of power within the society, including the coercive force of the police, is entirely in male hands

(Millett, 1970, p. 25).

Admittedly, this depiction is nearly forty years old and is in certain respects perhaps, understandably jaded. Given that women have in the intervening years made significant inroads by way of gaining employment within traditional masculine or male dominated occupations, for instance, it would seem somewhat overzealous to describe every facet of power within our culture as being entirely within male hands. Nonetheless, I urge here that it is of the utmost importance to recognise that epistemological hierarchy by way of which patriarchal discrimination is covertly sustained represents a potent determining factor in the continuing suppression of women. This is why an institution, business or organisation might in fact be staffed entirely by women and yet not have become any less patriarchal for the predominant presence or specific number of women in them.

Moreover, the argument I advance here is intended to establish that even if such institutions were staffed entirely by women, the ‘worth of a woman’ will in moral terms remain marginalised until the value-hierarchy of epistemological patriarchy that underpins the
relevant institutional structures is itself overthrown. According to the view I proffer here, it is not men, per se, and thus, not even the number of men working in an institution that makes the values it enshrines patriarchal. This is why the benefits which flow from such institutions will inevitably favour men, however many or few there are, both inside and outside them. While patriarchy is a system of societal organisation such that the primary opportunities and benefits flow to men, it is the epistemological presumption of the value of men over women which ensures that the institutional structures created within the system are patriarchal. If the very epistemic processes by way of which we come to know the world are driven and defined by an insatiable appetite for power, dominance, and control, there will always be someone or something subjugated by the system (see Laura & Cotton, 1999). Under the aegis of epistemological patriarchy women are systemically dehumanised by being reduced to and categorised in terms of their gender, whose lesser value within the system encourages the covert perception that women are, not unlike any resource of nature, to be used, exploited, and subjugated. By epistemically defining the concept of a woman in terms of her gender, any particular woman may be covertly and sometimes overtly devalued and accordingly, treated as a resource for subjugation and expropriation. Within this patriarchal framework the rich talents of women and thus their labour, be it reproductive, intellectual or manual, may be marginalised with impunity. In short, regardless of the gender of the persons exercising power within patriarchal institutions, the question is whether the people, both the women and men working in such institutions are morally regarded as persons rather than things. This is a crucial point, for while epistemic patriarchy implicitly favours men with institutional benefits, it can do so in a way that dehumanises and depersonalises them, as well as women.

While patriarchy primarily rewards men, the concept of patriarchal epistemology is far more complex than can be conveyed by the popular idea that there exists a power struggle
between men and women. The benefits of patriarchy, for example, also flow to some men more than others, and it is clear that some women benefit from institutional epistemological patriarchy more than some men. Within the intersecting value hierarchies which make up the western patriarchal socio-cultural system (Warren, 1998) race and class can supersede gender. This is why poor black men can be more disadvantaged than middle class white women. Similarly, homosexual men have, within the domain of epistemological patriarchy, have all too often suffered from the dehumanisation of patriarchal misogyny, just as much as women (Bennett, 2006). Although one meaning of patriarchy is expressed by the rule of the father, it is erroneous to assume that all men benefit from patriarchy, and similarly, that all women do not. According to Bennett ‘women have not been innocent of collusion with patriarchal subjugation; indeed, some have supported it, some have benefited from it, and most have raised their daughters and sons to conform to it’ (2006, p. 56). Bennett gives the example of medieval business women being advised to employ women over men, as this would cost them less from their purse. A more contemporary instance of women colluding with and benefiting from patriarchy can be found when female film producers within the porn industry unashamedly make money from the blatant sexual objectification of women’s bodies. The same is true of brothels, traditionally run by a Madame who reaps the financial benefits of patriarchy by trading for money the flesh of her gender.

The term ‘epistemological patriarchy’ is employed to convey a deeper meaning than that conventionally conveyed by the term patriarchy. By epistemological patriarchy I refer to the epistemological underpinnings of western society’s theory of knowledge. As described by Laura and Cotton (1999) western epistemology is driven by a thirst for power. Far from being ‘value-free’ or ‘neutral’ independently of how we use knowledge it is clear that knowledge enshrines a complex set of presuppositions which either explicitly deny or implicitly marginalise the intrinsic value not only of nature but of women, transforms both into objects of desire to be manipulated by the will of men or those in power. Such a form
of knowledge which is itself motivated by the lust for power in turn engenders technologies of power, themselves defined by a preoccupation with domination, subjugation and expropriation. The way in which technologies of power achieve control depends upon their capacity to recast the face and the things of the earth into a form which makes the behaviour of those things predictable in ways which allegedly suit man’s needs and desires.

The process by way of which technology achieves this measure of control depends upon what we shall here call ‘transformative subjugation’. (For a full account of this theory see Laura & Cotton, 1999, pp. 48-69). The technological process of control through transformative subjugation involves manipulating the animate and inanimate things of nature by converting them into commodities or fabricated ‘things’ to be bought or sold in the economic marketplace, as indeed women still are (see, chapter three, pp. 127-133). In essence, technology gives us power over nature by systematically synthesising and reconstructing it into things of our own making, and what better way for a man to control a women than by fabricating institutional structures which make her into just another of the ‘things’ he has subdued, this time by virtue of the impoverished social role ascribed to women.

‘Epistemological patriarchy’ is employed as it makes salient the fact that this system of knowledge remains subtly patriarchal. Although explicitly patriarchal in its development (see chapter four for more detail) I contend that while women had achieved some measure of success towards reordering what was a patriarchal society – but owing to the depths of the epistemological underpinnings, while women have managed to elevate their status within western society, the binary hierarchal ordering of society and epistemology remains insufficiently challenged. These ideas will be more fully developed in chapter four; so here a brief sketch will suffice. What is considered to be knowledge has at its heart a bifurcation of the world – dividing the world into dualistic categories such as male/female, order/chaos,
reason/emotion, objective/subjective rational/irrational and culture/nature (See, Plumwood, 1991, 1993; Grosz, 1990, 1993, 1994). These categories are hierarchically ordered with greater value attached to the first of each pairing. In the search for knowledge, the second of each pairings has been negated and subject to expropriation and subjugation. For example women have traditionally been defined as closer to nature, chaos, and emotion while men have been viewed as rational, ordered, intellectual – these later categories are valued over the former. Women have long been excluded from intellectual pursuits while nature has been subject to investigation and manipulation with the goal of bringing “her” to order.

I contend that although men no longer solely control all the means of power within western societies, the epistemological values underpinning the western pursuit of knowledge remain fundamentally unchanged. Thus even though society is no longer unequivocally explicitly patriarchal, the values underpinning the existing epistemological remain unchanged – hence ‘epistemological patriarchy’ highlights the masculine values which underpin the western project. That is, while the external trappings of a patriarchal society are diminished, the power driven form of epistemology underpinning society remains firmly entrenched. Let me now make this clearer by describing the achievements of feminism and then contrasting the ‘worth’ of women and men. Although women have made remarkable progress in their struggle for equity, (the long and continuing fight of feminism is in itself an implicit acknowledgement of the strength of patriarchal entrenchment), the situation remains that women are not yet, in any meaningful sense, the equal of their male counterparts.

The Historical Development of Western Feminism
Within the brief history of feminism provided, I term various stages of the emergence of feminism ‘articulation’, ‘formalisation’, and ‘participation’ to denote the development that
was taking place prior to the coining of the term ‘feminism’ in the late nineteenth century. It should also be borne in mind that feminism is not a monolithic movement, and nor was it confined to the West. While the achievements of western feminists are depicted here, feminism also manifested itself differently in different regions and nations all over the world (Freedman, 2002). As we are here exploring the epistemology the western worldview, the focus is necessarily on the development of feminism and the status of women in western nations. Due to the limits of space, I have confined myself to a brief picture of the history of feminism and can only describe the emerging stages, and not note every feminist victory, or the every contribution of each dedicated woman along the way. (For a more detail account of the developments of feminisms in the global context, see Freedman, 2002).

**Status of Women, circa. 1750**

It was not so long ago that women in this culture were considered to be of little worth in comparison to their male counterparts. They were denied the right to vote, to inherit property, to be formally educated, to publish under their own name, to work in professional occupations and in some cases to be bought and sold as common chattel, and traded at the whims of the men who held power, physical or otherwise, over them. While a woman had some rights under English law, her husband upon marriage subsumed these rights. As described by English campaigner Barbara Leigh Smith Bodichon in 1854:

A man and wife are one person in law; the wife loses all her rights as a single woman, her existence is entirely absorbed in that of her husband. He is civilly responsible for her acts; she lives under his protection or cover, and her condition is called coverture.

A woman’s body belongs to her husband; she is in his custody, and he can enforce his right by a writ of habeas corpus.

What was her personal property before marriage, such as money in hand, money at the bank, jewels, household goods, clothes, &c., becomes absolutely her husband’s, and
he may assign or dispose of them at his pleasure whether he or his wife live together or not…

Neither the Courts of Common Law nor Equity have any direct power to oblige a man to support his wife…

Money earned by a married woman belongs absolutely to her husband; that and all sources of income, excepting those mentioned above, are included in the term father, the mother has no rights over her children, except a limited power over infants, and the father may take them from her and dispose of them as he thinks fit.

From 1854 pamphlet “Married Women and the Law” (in LeGates, 2001, p. 18)

Within European society women were little more than the property of their male keepers, their fathers or husbands, and they served little more cultural function than to produce children. The emphasis on male authority was a reflection of the structured order of society itself, as traditional Europe was both patriarchal, and hierarchical. Just as the monarch was an absolute ruler and the apex of society, a man ruled has household as God ruled the church or the king his kingdom. The husband was “the Prince of the household, the domesticall [sic] King” (from William Whately’s 1619 publication A Bride-Bush: Or, A Direction for Married Persons, in Hausknect, 2001, p. 89) and as such were commonly described as king or god by preachers, philosophers, and jurists. This submission was symbolised in the medieval marriage ceremony by the bride prostrating herself at the feet of her husband. Furthermore, the elevated status of a husband was reflected by the laws of pre-industrial governments such as those of England, Normandy, and Sicily that characterised husband killing as a form of treason rather than murder. The act of killing one’s husband was regarded as so heinous a crime against the structures of authority that it was punishable by burning at the stake (Coontz, 2005).
According to LeGates (2001) the lives of most women of this time were characterised by the following hallmarks of a patriarchal society; political and cultural invisibility, intellectual restrictions, sexual vulnerability and economic exploitation. Admittedly, there were of course exceptions to the general rule of subjugation. Monarchs such as Queen Elizabeth, and religious women such as Joan of Arc and Hildergard of Bingen were able to reach positions of power and gain some measure of intellectual authority, but largely in terms that suited and served the vested interests of epistemological patriarchy. Indeed, that women such as these are described as exceptions is itself a powerful commentary on the strength and pervasiveness of the patriarchal subjugation of women. Women such as these were considered, that is to say, to be the exception which proves the rule, for they were successful despite being female, not because of it. They were ‘intellectual transvestites’ (LeGates, p. 59) and characterised as being successful because they were successful at imitating men. Cassandra Fedele, the Venetian prodigy, was called ‘the miracle of the age’; for a male soul had been born in one of the female sex (King, 1980). Queen Elizabeth I described herself, in 1588, thus: ‘I know I have the body of a weak and feeble women, but I have the heart and stomach of a king’ (cited in Richardson, 2006, p. 135). In this way, then as now, a woman becomes successful by taking on the persona of a man and in effect thus suppressing her femininity. Likewise, religious women, such as Hildergard, and Bridget of Sweden were equally self-effacing, believing that God spoke through them because they were a suitably weak and humble vessel (Bynum, 1987).

Feminism Emerging: ‘Articulation’

Prior to the late eighteenth century women were attempting to find a voice in a culture that was previously audible only when the voice was male. I term this phase of feminism the ‘articulation’ phase because it is here that women were first beginning to speak out and voice their concerns regarding the ill treatment women as a group received from their society. Until this time, women who held positions of power and authority seldom spoke
about society’s unfair treatment of women. To speak out as a woman (as opposed to speaking as a statesman, or as a vessel for God) was a dangerous act. It was an act that contravened the Bible’s direct injunction ‘Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence’ (Tim 2:11-12). In addition woman’s speech had a sexual connotation (King & Rabil, 1996). The serpent had spoken to Eve in the Garden of Eden in order to seduce her and she in turn had spoken in this way to Adam – in this sense conversation thus played a salient role in original sin. In biblical terminology, to know a woman meant to know her sexually.

In The Book of the Courtier (1528), an influential description of Italian court society written by Baldesar Castiglione in the form of conversations between elite women and men of the time, conversazione conveys both social and sexual connotations, not unlike the English word intercourse. Women who spoke in public or engaged in public discourse through writing threatened epistemological patriarchy by transgressing the norms of their sex which committed them to chastity and silence. Any activity that took women from their home and family was understood as public, which is why women actors and musicians were often accused of being courtesans (LeGates, 2001). While the phase public man is a reference to a man as a citizen, the phase public woman means prostitute (LeGates). Thus women who began publicly speaking in opposition to the ill treatment of their sex were engaged in a dangerous act, and were subject to ridicule and humiliation for daring to go against the norms associated with their gender. And now we turn our attention to these brave women.

Women who began speaking out against gender discrimination were motivated by religion, education (or its lack) or participation in the literacy debate known as the querelle des femmes, (the woman question). The woman question, prompted women’s recognition of themselves as a social group and thus bridged the gap between individual protest and feminist theory. Though it inspired those such as Corneluis Agrippa and Modesta di Pozzo
di Forzi in the sixteenth century, and Marie le Jars do Gournay, Anne Bradstreet and Poulain de la Barra in the seventeenth century (Schneir, 1994), to speak out against discrimination and disparagement, they did not endeavour to effect change in institutions. The institutions against which they would be inveighing were seen as being of divine origin and therefore unalterable. Christine de Pizan who published Book of the City of Ladies as early as 1405 wrote in response to a literary tradition of misogyny which she firmly rejects. She uses allegory -with the female characters of Justice, Reason and Rectitude guiding her on her metaphorical journey- and cites worthy historical figures such as Minerva, Hortensia, Florence and Ghismonda to demonstrate that women are not as useless as suggested by such works as Matheolus’s Lamentations (a diatribe against marriage) (King & Rabil, 1996). Her work extols the virtues of godly and chaste women and affords to her readers a vision of an ideal community populated by worthy women. Although her work is a firm rejection of the literary misogynistic tradition which preceded it, she does not explicitly challenge the roles of women in her society, but urges women to behave virtuously: ‘all women - whether noble, bourgeois, or lower class – be well-informed in all things and cautious in defending your honour and chastity against your enemies!’ (de Pizan, 1405/1994, p. 207).

During the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries women privileged by their high class standing had access to education for the first time in centuries, as men of the intellectual elite began to entertain the belief that it was indeed possible that women and men could both benefit from the same education. However, only a handful of elite women managed to benefit from this newly emerging Renaissance ideal (Freedman, 2002).

Further development of Feminism: ‘Formalisation’

The English, French and American revolutions that took place at this time did much to undermine the belief in the divine right of the monarchs to rule over the people. In a similar way the Reformation changed people’s beliefs about the institution of the Church and the
arbitrary control that it had over the people. The power of the Catholic Church was
diminished by the fact that several countries became Protestant, and the development of
sects with alternative beliefs and power structures gave women the opportunity to preach
(LeGates, 2001). More generally, the invention of the printing press gave people direct
access to the word of God, written in the local vernacular, which as such, no longer had to be
mediated via a Latin speaking priest.

Political, social and religious developments of the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries
triggered the realisation that society’s institutions were of human rather than divine origin.
Thus women began to demand institutional changes in order to accommodate women’s
increasing desire to participate in society. I term this stage of development within feminism
as the ‘formalisation’ stage, in the sense that this period represents the stage at which
women’s ideas were crystallising into a political understanding of their situation. This
second stage marks the transition between the time when women began to speak on their on
own behalf and the development of organised feminist movements (LeGates, 2001). At the
‘formalisation’ stage women began to develop the political vocabulary and analytical tools
to understand the adverse effects upon them of the institutions which dominated their lives.
Beyond merely articulating the need for a change in the status of women, their political ideas
expressed the belief that institutions could and would have to be changed in order to end the
centuries of subordination and intellectual neglect. Tracts such as Mary Wollstonecraft’s
*Vindication of the Rights of Women* published in 1792 developed ideas about the equality of
women and how they should be justly treated by society (Schneir, 1994). Wollstonecraft
was echoing the sentiments that were shared by the French playwright Olympe de Gouges
who in 1791 called upon women to discover their rights, for education and in marriage
(Freedman, 2002). De Gouges’ aspirations were too radical for the French Revolution of
which she was a part and she died by the guillotine. Clearly, the concepts of “liberty,
equality and fraternity” so avidly being sought in the Revolution did not extend to women,
though it was ironically the working women of France who had marched on Versailles with their demand for bread (Freedman). Nonetheless, the events of the French and American revolutions showed that institutions could be toppled and that change could be implemented. This being so, there is little doubt that these events provided inspiration to women on both sides of the Atlantic.

In the United States of America, Abigail Adams, wife of the second US President and the mother of the sixth US president, provides an example of the paradoxes of the time. Her situation demonstrates the status of women in the newly forming country. The daughter of a prominent Massachusetts minister, she never attended school but was able to see the need to address the status of women in the Constitution being drafted by her husband John Adams (Schneir, 1994). In a letter to him, dated 31 March 1776, she wrote

> in the new code of laws which I suppose it will be necessary for you to make, I desire you would remember the ladies and be more generous and favourable to them than your ancestors. Do not put such unlimited power into the hands of the husbands, (in Schneir, 1994, p. 2)

At this time the existing social order was being re-created with a new emphasis on individuality and equality for free white men. The women supporting the architects of the changes began to wonder why they should not themselves be included in the radical reordering that was taking place.

**Organised Women’s Movement Feminism’s ‘Participation’ Stage**

The development of the organised feminism of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries is commonly linked to nineteenth century intellectual and economic developments, specifically liberalism and the Industrial Revolution. According to LeGates, ‘Many studies agree that liberalism generated the idea of feminism while the Industrial Revolution, by taking work out of the home and giving middle class women leisure, created the opportunity to put the
idea into action’ (2001, p. 9). I have termed this stage the ‘participation’ stage of feminism, as for the first time women across different countries and continents were working together, in a critical mass, to advance the cause of women.

The organised feminist movements began with educated women holding meetings in each other’s homes, thus reflecting the natural continuation of the salons of the 1700s being held in France, Italy, Germany and England (Freedman, 2002). The salons started with women comparing literary taste and using their newfound literary abilities to write and to translate historical and contemporary auspicious works. However, the failure of the women of the eighteenth century successfully to challenge the institutions of society motivated nineteenth century women to become more political, organised and direct in their goals and demands. Specific groups and committees were created, in order to garner support and momentum for specific purposes, such as education and suffrage for women. (For example, the Married Women’s Property Committee formed in 1855 and their political agitation led to the passing of the Married Women’s Property Act in 1882; Other groups included the Women’s Christian Temperance Union, the Woman Suffrage Association, the Women’s Freedom League, the Women’s Franchise League and the National Union of Women’s Suffrage Societies).

In America the feminist movement developed out of the anti-slavery campaigns when women realised that they had fewer rights than those that they were seeking for slaves. In an anti-slavery conference in London in 1840 women who had travelled from the United States were told that they were not able to participate on account of being women. The injustice of this situation triggered the realisation of the lowly status of women, and led Elizabeth Cady Stanton to organise the first conference on women’s rights. Held in Seneca Falls, New York in 1848, the Women’s Rights Conference included a draft bill of rights for women and brought women, not only from all over the United States, but also from Europe as well. This
event inspired women in Europe to their own projects and to make their own demands. The friendships that then developed amongst Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B Anthony and Lucretia Mott were pivotal in shaping the developing women’s movement in the United States (Sigerman, 2001). The early stages of the organised Feminist Movement were characterised by the many different women’s groups campaigning for differing objectives, such as social purity and temperance (Freedman, 2002). But towards the end of the nineteenth century the failure of those campaigning for suffrage led to a coalescing of the different groups, united around the issue of suffrage. This campaign all but subsumed feminism until the advent of the First World War. When suffrage was variously achieved it seemed as though the women’s movement petered out. Schneir (1994) posits that the decline of feminism at this time was partly due to the concentration of the women’s movement on to the issue of suffrage. This almost exclusive focus upon the issue had consumed the energies and imaginations of the many campaigners and women did not really know what to do with themselves once the fight was over. Some campaigners continued to work with various causes, attempting to get women elected to parliament, for example, or working with the newly formed UN to get women’s issues included on the public agenda. Other goals included working for the rights of the local aboriginal populations (Street, 2004), but the women’s movement largely disappeared from the public view and imagination until it re-emerged as the ‘Women’s Liberation Movement’ in the late 1960s and early 1970s. After World War II triggered a focus upon nation building, along with a baby boom, women were both raising children and participating in the workforce in unprecedented numbers. It was not until the emergence of works like Betty Friedman’s *The Feminine Mystique* (1963), Kate Millett’s *Sexual Politics* (1970) and Germaine Greer’s *The Female Eunuch* (1970) that women *en masse* once more developed a political conscience and began campaigning on the streets to address the injustices that they perceived. We shall now turn our attention to the demands of the first and second wave feminists in order to determine in further detail the nature of the goals these courageous women were seeking.
Demands of the First Wave Feminists

The demands of the first wave feminists were varied in the different countries in which women’s campaigns were being waged. Better working conditions, wage parity and access to a wider range of vocations for women, martial rights and security, education for women and girls, freedom from the excesses of alcohol and a focus on redressing society’s ills, such as bringing an end to slavery, were among the many goals towards which feminists laboured. For some feminists marriage was seen as being primary to women’s oppression and these women worked towards helping women to achieve ‘self-hood’ and freedom from their economic dependence upon men (Schneir, 1994). This was a time when most women and girls relied on the goodwill of a man for their very survival (Trethewey, 2007). Other feminists sought the reformation of unjust laws in order to affect the breakdown of barriers to educational and vocational advancement (Schneir, 1994). These women and men realised that without the vote they lacked the power to make the changes to the laws that they desired. Thus, feminists such as Harriet Taylor and John Stuart Mill, and later Emmeline and Christobel Pankhurst and Millicett Garrett Fawcett, in England and Elizabeth Cady, Susan B. Anthony and Lucretia Mott in the United States worked for many years towards the goal of suffrage for women (Schneir). There were feminists such as Harriett Beecher who, while strongly campaigning for education for girls, believed that women should not get the vote as it took them from the home. During this time some of the tensions which characterises feminist thought were beginning to become apparent. On the one hand, women such as Elizabeth Cady Stanton passionately felt that women should be entitled, without exception, to the all the rights and privileges accorded to men (Sigerman, 2001). On the other hand, women such as Harriet Beecher believed that women’s place was the home and men belonged in the public sphere (Stowe & Stowe, 2005). Harriet believed that while the status and education of women should be improved, women did not need to concern
themselves which such things that ought to remain the prerogative of men, with their more public role within society (Stowe & Stowe).

**The Second Wave: Women’s Liberation**

The women’s liberation movement stemmed from the dissatisfaction felt by women who perceived that society allowed them very little role to play other than that of wife and mother. Although women had equal citizenship rights, such as the right to vote and to be elected as a representative of the people, it was felt that women did not have the cultural space, freedom, and public recognition that men were accorded (Bulbeck, 1997; Freedman, 2002). Various women writers captured the dissatisfaction felt by many women. Kate Millett in *Sexual Politics* (1970) advanced feminist analysis by naming and defining patriarchy as the causative factor in a culture that trapped women into the role of wife, mother, and sex object.

In 1966 National Organisation of Women (NOW) was formed. Dow (2004) argues that the ‘Women’s Liberation Movement’ first began to emerge into public consciousness in 1968 with the protest by feminists at Miss America pageant in Atlantic City, - while no bras were burnt at this event it is from the media coverage of this protest that feminists were given the epitaph of being ‘bra-burning’ (Whelehan, 1995). In 1969 the Women’s Movement was given coverage in both ‘Life’ and ‘Time’ magazines, followed in 1970 by stories in five other magazines, and the August 26 1970 evening news broadcast on three networks carried the story about the ‘Women’s Strike for Equality’ - the huge marches by thousands of women in New York and several other American cities for equal pay, child care and abortion rights (Dow, 2004). Prior to 1970 media coverage of the women’s movement had been treated with ridicule, reported about with attitudes ranging from humour to scorn (Dow). It was felt by women with in the industry that the emerging movement required
straightforward coverage to change the evolution which had been from invisibility to trivialisation (Dow).

The 1970s and early 1980s were heady times for feminists, who were striving to improve working conditions and improve women’s representation within government (Lake, 1999). Within schools educational policies and strategies were being developed to improve the educational and post-education outcomes for girls. From the 1980s feminism has been perceived to have lost some of its cohesiveness, and the death of feminism has been reoccurring media trope (Faludi, 1991). While feminism is certainly not ‘dead’, there is no single issue upon which most women or feminists rally around the way that suffrage was a consuming issue prior to women being given the vote. Contemporary feminism is described in various terms, such as post-feminism, post-modern feminism, third wave or fourth wave feminism (Peay, 2005, McRobbie, 2009). Feminism in the twenty first century is a multicultural, multiracial movement, made up of grassroots activists, academics, mothers, lesbians, working women, single women, and allied men. In short, feminism is a still a vibrant movement made up of people from all over the world (Freedman, 2002). Although it should be noted - as first theorised by Faludi (1991) – that there has been a continuing cyclical cultural backlash against feminism, to the extent that many contemporary young women are ambivalent, or even hostile, towards feminism (See McRobbie, 2009). The attitude of modern young women suggests that there is no longer a generalised perception that women hold a subservient and subordinated place within society. (See, McRobbie, 2009, for an analysis of the way in which feminist vocabulary, such as the term ‘empowerment’ has been appropriated by popular culture as a means of reinforcing consumeristic values).
Early feminist success and the establishment of mass education

When describing the efforts of feminism to improve women’s status in society, it is salutary to remind ourselves that education has been one area of early feminist success (Theobald, 1996), even while it is being held accountable for some of feminism’s perceived failures (Hoff Sommers, 1995). As noted above, it was the elite women who had access to education in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, and who through this access became aware of the systemic disadvantages faced by their sex and the advantages afforded by education. For example, writing in 1799 Mary Robinson urges women to train their minds rather than their bodies and to receive a classical education:

O! my enlightened country-women! Read, and profit, by the admonition of Reason. Shake off the trifling glittering shackles which debase you. Resist those fascinating spells, which, like the petrifying torpedo, fasten on your mental faculties. Be less the slaves of vanity, and more the converts of reflection. Nature has endowed you with personal attractions: she has also given you the mind capable of expansion (in Perry & Rossington, 1994, p. 3).

A growing belief in the ability of women to learn and in the benefits of education crystallised in some sections of society. Subsequently, women engaged in a ‘continuous effort to move from the periphery to the mainstream in both formal institutions and informal opportunities’ (Eisenmann, 1998, p. xi). Eisenmann describes the two-pronged approach taken by women. Because female students were believed to be intellectually, emotionally and physically unsuited to the rigours of a rational education they were not welcome in schools or universities. Thus, in addition to the battle to allow women to be admitted into the formal educational institutions of the day, women also took advantage of the informal power available to them in the domestic sphere and thus educated themselves in the domestic, familial and religious domains. As some of the examples noted earlier demonstrate, through the utilisation of informal networks and the formation of common interest groups in the
religious and domestic arenas determined women were able to achieve much in the anti-
slavery, temperance, and suffrage movements.

By the nineteenth century the discourse around the separate spheres had coalesced with
feminist demands for the education of girls and women with a resultant justification for the
education of females that varied from that of the males. (This also reflects the growing
influence of Rousseau’s beliefs about the necessity of separate educations for men and
women, see Perry & Rossington, 1994). Rather than being justified on scholastic terms, it
was believed that the education for young girls was to be based around ‘appropriate’
accomplishments that would complement their believed delicate natures; an education that
would prepare them for their future roles of wives and mothers. As prior to the establishment
of state based and sectarian schooling within the colonies of Australia and the United States
most children were being educated at home, it was considered important for mothers to be
equipped to provide their children with the basis of a sound education. In the United States,
this was known as ‘Republican Motherhood’ – women, while being described as being
submissive, pure, pious, and domestic, were expected to keep the home pure as men moved
from the home into the economic and political spheres and the economic power of the home
decayed (Eisenmann, 1996). Due to nineteenth century understandings about the need to
exercise the muscle of the brain, and the belief that the female brain was not robust, complex
delineations were made to make clear what forms of learning would be most appropriate for
the female mind. Theobald describes the logic of the times:

Consequent upon her delicacy of brain, woman’s mode of knowing was
characterised as intuitive and therefore not amenable to the rigorous, rational
thought if the male mode. Untrammelled by rational thought processes, a woman
had quicker perceptions, readier sympathies, livelier imagination, greater
dependence upon her emotions and a natural affinity with moral truths. Woman’s
intuitive faculty was the basis of her selfless devotion to the needs of her husband

As well as an education that would prepare her to educate her own children, a nineteenth
century women’s education was expected to ‘adorn’ her mind with that which would
demonstrate her cultural refinement. Her education was not expected to shape her mind for
her survival in the rational public world. It was believed that too rigorous an education
would not only damage her mind, but cause her womb to be misshapen as well, therefore
rendering her unable to fulfil her future role as wife and mother. The ‘accomplishment
education’ is summed up for Theobald in the image of the woman at the piano, refined and
delicate she is a symbol of the cultural achievements of the time, achievements that reflected
well on the men who had the means to provide her with such an education.

‘Accomplishment’ signified more than an area of study, a method of study, an
attitude to study, or a standard of achievement, although it owed something to each;
it symbolised the appropriate use of women’s intellect in man’s society. The
accomplished woman did not appropriate knowledge in order to enhance self-
esteeem, moral authority or economic independence. Knowledge-as-accomplishment
did not confer autonomy and hence did not affront patriarchal notions of woman’s
place (Theobald, 1996, p. 22).

Theobald (1996) attests that the accomplishment education was an education that signified
woman as the civilising cultural force. She disputes the position taken by feminist
philosophers such as Elizabeth Grosz (1994) who argues that women’s oppression stems
from the male=culture/woman=nature binary. For Theobald the appropriately educated and
accomplished woman belongs ‘unequivocally’ on the side of the culture side of the
dichotomy. The accomplished woman ‘was the embodiment of a private morality which
atoned for otherwise intolerable moral contradictions in the public world of capitalist man’
(1996, p. 19). While Theobald’s analysis of the accomplishment education is correct in noting that it places these accomplished women on the culture side of the dichotomy she does not make explicit the hierarchical nature of the culture/nature split. Privileged upper and middle class women with access to this education were differentiated by their accomplishments from ‘Other’ women (working class, indigenous, women of colour, slave or convict women) who remained firmly located in the nature side of the divide. The hierarchical values underpinning the culture/nature dualism means that rather than men exercising a global domination over all women, some women were privileged over other women and some men, even while being educated in a fashion that emphasised their secondary and subservient nature. Thus, the accomplishment curriculum functioned as a means of indicating class, serving to separate some women from those who remained firmly identified with nature. (It should be borne in mind too, that these educated women were not receiving the same education as educated men - as their brains were not considered suitable for such rational pursuits - thus, men remained still more firmly identified with rational cultural than even the educated woman).

The appeal of the accomplishment curriculum across various western nations ensured that not only were thousands of girls educated in this manner, but many women were able to secure employment as teachers in a time when there were very few options for ‘respectable’ women to find work. The popularity of this form of education for girls is attested to by the fact that between 1806-1845 there were at least 77 elementary schools for the daughters of gentility in NSW (Theobald, 1996).

Theobald affirms the enduring influence of the nineteenth century ideas about the female brain upon modern educational practices:

> With the benefit of hindsight we are in a position to note that with the rise of the accomplishments curriculum in the nineteenth century we are witnessing the
translation into mass educational practice of the enduring and oppressive myth that there is a natural affinity between the humanities and the female mind - with its equally enduring and oppressive implication that there is a natural affinity between science and the male mind. Patriarchal social formations have proved remarkably resilient in periods of rapid economic social changes such as those set in motion by the rise of industrial capitalism (Theobald, 1996, p. 26).

This analysis is supported by the findings of Teese and Polesel (2003) who examined the continuing inequities in the Australian education system. They have found that girls, especially those from working class backgrounds, remain under-represented in high school subjects such as mathematics and science. Even in the twenty first century, subject selection (important for future career and educational opportunities) continues to be influenced by nineteenth century prejudices. Girls remain over-represented in humanities subjects and boys tended to be concentrated into a smaller pool of science, maths, and vocation-based subjects (Teese & Polesel, 2003).

Contrary to popular perceptions about the modern Women’s Liberation Movement, women were admitted into universities gradually from as early as 1848 (Eisenmann, 1998). Within Australia and United States the state universities proceeded slowly becoming co-educational in the late 1800s. Often women’s education was not the same as men’s - female students were herded into ladies departments or were taught in teacher training colleges which had shorter programs and less rigorous degrees (Eisenmann). At the end of the nineteenth century and beginning of the twentieth, rapid economic expansion saw institutions of all types grew - businesses consolidated and expanded, school systems formalised, government agencies proliferated, professions coalesced, civic organisations burgeoned. This era represented the high point for women with educational participation rates not matched until the 1980s. In the US, for example, female participation rates in elementary school matched their proportion of the general population and exceeded them in high school; by 1920, 47
percent of college students were women. The result of these high levels of female participation in education was that certain occupations become female dominated areas. For example, women made up two thirds of those working as librarians, nurses and social workers by 1930. The feminisation of teaching was effected early – by 1880, 80 percent of schoolteachers were women, but as with librarianship, nursing and social work most of those working in the managerial and leadership roles, including principals and superintendents, were men (Eisenmann, 1998). For Theobald, the figure of the female teacher working under the masculine authority of a male principal reflects the patriarchal relations of the state. She attests

when the state colonised the family as teaching labour, it also colonised the subjectivity of the family, a crucial mechanism which allowed it in subsequent decades to translate the patriarchal authority of the father into the patriarchal authority of the state, constructing a teaching force which placed men in authority over women (Theobald, 1996, p. 191).

(This dynamic still operates today, with the ‘glass elevator’ taking men from the classrooms and into administrative and managerial positions, see Mills, Martino, Lingard, 2004, 2007; Collard, 2003). That occupations such as nursing and teaching became seen as particularly suitable occupations for women reflects the enduring influence of maternalism, an ideology in which women’s ‘natural’ maternal attributes were used to legitimise certain public roles (Ailwood, 2007). It can be seen that while girls’ education was lauded as an achievement for the cause of women, with the development of mass schooling systems in the beginning of the twentieth century, boys as well as girls were subject to an institute of masculine dominion:

The most striking features of this new technology of the school were rationality, order, military precision, and emotional distance, characteristics which placed it within the domain of the masculine (Theobald, 1996, p. 195).
While girls and women have been admitted into mass education systems since at least the beginning of the twentieth century, these educational gains have not translated into equivalent success beyond school (Mills, Martino & Lingard, 2007). Is it not unsurprising that the educational outcomes for female students have remained less than hoped for if the system that they are educated in has been founded on outmoded patriarchal ideas about the feminine brain and female learning areas? We shall now turn our attention to other ways in which gains towards the emancipation of women have not led to parity with men.

Querying of the Achievements of Feminism

In a mere two hundred and fifty years the position of women in western society has undergone remarkable changes. From the times when a wife had no legal standing and was considered to be the exclusive property of her husband - whom he could beat, rape, desert, take custody of her children or sign them over to another, with the sanction of the law - some measure of legal restitution has been made. Her husband had the rights to any of her earnings and the right to dispose of any property that she may have brought to the marriage, but marital law have changed such that the male and female partners now have equal standing. Women also have the same political rights as men, and have the freedom to work in any occupation with the principle of equal pay for equal work enshrined in law (although the application of this principle continues to be problematic). Girls and women are no excluded from formal educational institutions, and girls in fact, have better retention rates in senior high school than boys (Teese & Polesel, 2003). With all this taken into consideration it is easy to grow complacent in regards to women’s quest for equality with men. I wish to inveigh against this tendency to dismiss feminist educational concern as being no longer necessary – for while we have made great strides we have not yet moved far enough in the right direction.
While I am not the first to suggest that feminism has not yet fulfilled its promise (see Lake, 1999; and Kaplan, 1996, who have examined in depth the achievements of feminism in the Australian context - a ‘meagre harvest’ in Kaplan’s summation), in the view I proffer, the goal of equality is itself problematic. On the one hand, the achievement of economic parity engenders a complacency which distracts us from the fact that the real goal was never parochial, the real aims of feminism were not the liberation of a particular demographic – those privileged by race, class and location. The conspicuous successes of feminism in some areas serve to blinds us to the fact that not everyone has access to these successes, for example, globally women remain at considerable disadvantage to their male counterparts and remain over-represented in the bottom of economic and health outcomes (Dux & Simic, 2008; see chapter three for a more detailed analysis of the situation of women globally). The radical changes in marital and political law that have been achieved also make it harder to discern that while many aspects of the socio-cultural context have dramatically improved for women, equality has still not been achieved (as I shall strive to establish below).

On the other hand, even if ‘equality’ was achieved, if men and women were equal in the various measures of worth and value, at a another level, feminism would still not have fulfilled its promise because the measures themselves are biased by patriarchal presumptions of value and such measures represent only cosmetic redress of the deeper issues that are at stake. I contend that true emancipation will only come when we open our hearts to a new vision of personhood, one in which a person’s ‘worth’ is not determined by their gender or their economic status. It is the development of a new vision of personhood that I labour towards (see chapters five and six) but at this point in the thesis I shall establish that, even as far as women have come, the goal of equality is far from achieved.
**Continued Economic Disparity**

Despite the impressive progress made by the Feminist movement, even a cursory examination reveals that as far as equal opportunity goes, women are still socially disadvantaged and subordinated. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) provides an international report which includes the Gender Related Development Index (GDI). The GDI includes indices for measuring the gender differences in the share of earned income, life expectancy, adult literacy and school enrolment. The GDI reveals that of as late as 2008 no society in the world treated its women as well as it treated its men (UNDP, 2007/2008). Sweetman (2002) reports that the economic inequality of women is a global phenomenon. This process, which has been termed the ‘feminisation of poverty’ (Dholakia, 2003) occurs whenever there are insufficient efforts to reduce poverty, either through labour market or social welfare policies and where single motherhood is sufficiently widespread. This process is pronounced in the United States (Goldberg & Kremen, 1997; Pressman, 2003; Rowlands, 2002), but the feminisation of poverty occurs worldwide (Goldberg & Kremen, 1997; Pressman, 2003; Sweetman, 2002). Within the United States nearly one fifth of families are headed by a single mother, but women are accorded neither a fair wage nor decent social support (Goldberg & Kremen, 1997). Nearly half of all single mother families are poor and these families comprise three fifths of all poor families (Goldberg & Kremen).

Women are at considerable economic disadvantage in comparison to men. It has been estimated that women undertake 65% of the world’s work (here we refer to all work undertaken, both paid and unpaid) (Salleh, 1997), and women along with their children produce over 50% percent of the world’s food (Warren, 1998) and yet receive only ten percent of the world’s income (Kelly, 1997). Moreover, women receive less than one percent of the aid distributed by the UN and own less than one percent of the world’s property (Salleh, 1998), despite the fact that females make up over fifty percent of the world’s population. The economic disadvantage experienced by women can by partly
explained by the fact that women’s contributions to the economy have all too often been
blatantly ignored, both by way of social recognition and by way of pay. Given the dominant
paradigm of epistemological patriarchy, much of the work performed by women is
‘invisible’. A dramatic example of the invisible work performed by women comes from
Africa, where women and their children produce 70% of the nation’s food. Yet, only 5% of
Africa’s women are described as being employed (Salleh, 1998).

Education has been used as a means by which women can achieve equality with men; by
having access to the same employment opportunities women should have access to the same
level of employment and therefore economic opportunities. Examination of the statistics
reveals that women’s earnings are still not on par with that of men’s. The wage gap is the
statistical indicator often used to express the differences between men’s and women’s
earnings in the paid labour force (Stout & McPhail, 1998). The gap is generally expressed
as a percentage, which is obtained by dividing the median annual earnings for women by the
median annual earnings for men. In the United States, in 1955 women’s earnings
represented 64% of that accrued by men (Peterson, 1994). By the mid 1970’s this had
slipped to 59% and by the end of the 1980’s it had increased to 68% (Peterson). In 1993 the
wage gap was 72% (Peterson).

While some of the difference between the wages of men and women can be attributed to
differences in experience, education or other legitimate contributions, this only accounts for
between one third and one half of the wage gap (Freedman, 2002; Stout & McPhail, 1998).
Presently within Australia, the wage gap means that it takes the average woman 14 months
to earn what the average man earns in a year, and women retire with half the amount of
savings of Australian men (Hawley, 2009). This is an indictment of not only the wage gap,
but also the continued cultural expectation that women will take time out of their career to
raise children, while few men expect to have their careers interrupted by to the same degree
by their parental responsibilities. Thus we see that while a person’s worth is sometimes
measured by their earnings, women (on average) are never going to earn as much - and
therefore be worth as much - as men while housework and child raising are both seen as
women’s work and viewed as unworthy of remuneration.

One factor influencing this wage disparity is the fact that women are segregated
occupationally from men – they are clustered into a small group of occupations such as retail
sales, light assembly, clerical work, childcare, nursing and primary school teaching
(Freedman, 2002; Peterson, 1994). The result of this is that males and females do not
compete in the same labour market, inasmuch as women are instead said to be “crowding” in
lower paid jobs (Freedman, 2002). These occupations offer low wages, few benefits and
little advancement opportunities. These low status jobs have been termed ‘Pink Ghettos’ or
‘Pink Collar’ occupations (Peterson, 1994; Stout & McPhail, 1998).

In addition to the foregoing inequities women are concentrated into the lower paid, low
status jobs within as well as across occupations. Within firms men and women seldom work
together, according to Peterson (1994), and if they are performing the same kind of work
they often have different job titles, with the women’s jobs being the lower paid. When
women enter male dominated sectors, they are still highly segregated into the lower status
jobs (Stout & McPhail, 1998). One example of this is found in the medical profession in
which men dominate the higher status and best paying areas of cardiology and neurosurgery,
while women physicians tend to be clustered into family practice positions (Stout &
McPhail). (For a comprehensive examination of the ways in which women’s increased
participation rates in the workforce over the course of the twentieth century resulted in the
reproduction of existing patterns of inequality see Katz, Stern and Fader, 2005).
The Burden of the Second Shift

When women are officially included in the economy through participation in the workforce, they continue within developed countries, to perform an estimated 70 hours of housework per week (Warren, 1998). This is in addition to the hours spent in the workforce, and represents approximately twice the average working week. Women are neither paid nor acknowledged for this work, which has been estimated to represent between 25-33% of the GNP (Kelly, 1997). In Australia in 1997, this unpaid housework was worth $237 billion and amounted to about 44% of the GNP for that year ("Wageless workers a $261b boon," 2000).

This process has been termed 'The Second Shift'; after a shift in the daily workforce, women arrive home to perform a second shift working in the domestic sphere (Peterson, 1994). According to Peterson, the problem of the second shift is not being properly addressed by social institutes. She feels that the expectation that women will do this work unpaid and unacknowledged, simply by virtue of their gender, has yet to be recognised as the serious moral and social problem it is. That women’s increased participation in the workforce is not accompanied by a redistribution of work within the home is, in Peterson’s view, a result of social rigidity and prejudice. Attempts at justifying so glaring a form of exploitation reduce pathetically to labelling it strictly a private matter.

Conclusion

The above examples serve to demonstrate that equal educational opportunities and processes have not translated into equality in economic and employment terms. While women have made many advances into achieving equality with men, the above examples highlight that there is still much work to be done even at the level of equal opportunity as a measure of authentic equity. Although women’s opportunities have increased over the past few decades, the strength of gender based role expectations in the current socio-cultural context suggest
that it is very hard to overcome the notion that man are the main providers. In Australia, for instance, 2002 census data indicates that only 5 percent of families have a female main breadwinner (Unreich, 2009). As I intimated earlier, there is a deeper issue which requires something more than ensuring equity for women, as valuable and momentous a goal that may be. In the light of my analysis it should be clear that although women have been provided with opportunities to enter the current socio/cultural context with greater equity than ever before, there has been insufficient appreciation of the extent to which that cultural context remains determinately, yet subtly, patriarchal. When all is said and the question is asked, ‘What is a Woman Worth?’ the answer must still be lamentably proffered, ‘far less than she should be’
Chapter two will be an exploration of some the mechanisms by way of which western society has traditionally sought to bring women under patriarchal control. The first example to be elucidated will be the institution of marriage. Following on from the examination of marriage I shall describe in the second example how the Church has used theological constructions which serve to render women different to men in the eyes of God. The third and final example to be described in chapter two will be drawn from the domain of science. Science, it will be argued, has at its heart a masculine ideology and particular branches of science, such as reproductive health and mental health have historically been used to control both women’s minds and bodies.

Marriage: Historical Perspectives and Modern Research

An examination of the history of marriage as practiced in the West reveals that marriage has traditionally been an institution in which women have been treated as the property of men. I shall start by detailing the explicitly patriarchal models of marriage that existed in the ancient Greek and Roman times and describe Christian and biblical perspectives on marriage. I shall also describe feminist reforms to marriage before examining modern research into marriage that reveals that as practiced today marriage remains an institution that hierarchically orders society and continues in subtle ways to extend more benefits to men than women.
While marriage is almost universal across time and cultures its origins are the source of much scholarly debate. There are those that argue that marriage originated to protect women, that women traded sex in order to secure protection and food in order raise their offspring in safety (Coontz, 2005). The argument of the opposing camp is that men forced women into marriage to exploit female labour - both reproductive and productive (Lerner, 1986). Regardless of its exact origins, as marriage developed it functions to meet the needs of the community - as through marriage cooperative relations are extended and networks of kin and in-laws are created (Coontz, 2005; Cott, 2000). As societies increased in wealth and became more stratified and complex, the role of marriage changed from creating networks of kin and in-laws that involved reciprocal relationships of sharing, to a role in which family wealth was safeguarded through the creation of legitimate heirs (Coontz, 2005). Marriage would generate dowry, bride wealth, and tribute and was used to shut out the illegitimate, and as such marriage represented a major economic investment (Coontz). Among the wealthy, marriage was usually arranged, - the union created for the political and economic benefit of the families involved. From ancient times marriages were a means of sealing treaties and uniting countries and regions. Due to its economic and political implications, marriage was considered to be too important a decision to be left to the discretion of the parties involved (Coontz).

The ancient Greeks were highly organised, with marriage functioning as a form of governance. The male was the head of the household and represented the interests of his household both politically and economically (Lyons, 2003). Within Greek society this principle meant that, unlike their Roman counterparts, the activities of Greek wives were quite limited, and they were not allowed to own property or to enter the city except on certain feast days. The role of the Greek wife was the production of heirs to carry on the family name, and ensure that property stayed within the legitimate family line. Within
Greek culture women were perceived to be a threat to society that had to be contained within the confines of marriage (Lyons). The Romans considered the primary purpose of marriage being to legitimise descendents to whom property, status, and family honour could be handed down. Marriage was also seen as being in accordance with both natural and divine law (Grubbs, 2002). Roman society was stratified and hierarchically organised, and marriage was governed by canonical law that curtailed women’s legal capacity and determined who could marry whom - remaining records indicate that marriage and the associated economic transactions were highly regulated (Grubbs, 2002). Women generally married as young as twelve, often to men several years older than them and their role was to procreate and replenish the state.

The Old Testament presents a complex picture of the place of marriage in ancient Judaic culture. The stories of the lives of Israel’s founders suggest congenial and companionable marriage was a laudable goal. The relationships depicted between Abraham and Sarah, or Isaac and Rebekah, demonstrate the emphasis placed upon marriage and procreation in Judaic culture (Instone-Brewer, 2002).

An examination of further stories in the Old Testament seem to indicate that within the Judeo- Christian tradition marriage originated as a patriarchal economic contract conducted between two men, the bride’s father, and her future husband. The rules governing these transactions are found in Deuternomy chapter 22. Under the heading of ‘Laws concerning Sexual Purity’, the lawful way in which women can be exchanged is detailed in verses 13 to 30. Other examples of how women were conceptualised as resources at the disposal of man exists elsewhere. (For examples of women being conceptualised as being the property of their fathers and husbands see Genesis 12:10-20, 19, 20:1-14, 26:1-14; Numbers 31:17-19,32-35; Deuteronomy 20:13-15 & Judges 19). Such a culture served to bring into existence and legitimate the social structures by way of which women could not only be sold
as slaves, concubines and wives but also captured as the spoils of war and given in sexual service (Eisler, 1987).

The Christian Church and Marriage

The history of the Christian Church also demonstrates conflict in regards to its ideas about marriage. The letters of St Paul and subsequent views of some of the early Church Fathers, such as Augustine, Tertullian, and Origen, demonstrate ‘a deep ambivalence’ towards corporeal matters, and female sexuality and marriage were in some instances abhorred, at best seen as a lesser evil than the alternative of fornication (Denike, 2003, p.23). Not all theologians shared this repudiation of marriage, some indulged in it themselves and as a consequence clerical marriage was a practice that the Second Council of the Lateran of 1139 fought to stamp out (Coontz, 2005).

It was during the Counter Reformation, that the Catholic Church declared marriage a sacrament. Thus from the 1545 Council of Trent, in order for a marriage to be considered valid the banns had to be published prior to the wedding, and the marriage needed to be presided over by a priest with two witnesses present (Coontz, 2005). From this time, marriage was formally conceptualised as being a relationship sanctified by God, mirroring the relationship between God and his Church. Marriage was considered to be a lifelong, monogamous union, with the man the head of his house, just as God is the head of the Church (Ratzinger & Amato, 2004).

Changing attitudes towards marriage

Marriage norms have not remained stable over time, and research reflects the changing conceptualisations and expectations about marriage. In her work 2005 work *Marriage, a history* Stephanie Coontz describes the ‘love revolution’ that has impacted upon societal beliefs about marriage. Throughout much of history, passionate love and marriage were not
thought to be compatible. Marriage was undertaken for much more pragmatic reasons, such as survival, and practical aspects such as economic implications were the primary indicator of the suitability of a given marriage. The two parties to the marriage usually had little say as to whom they would be marrying as this decision was made by those around them, with family, prominent community members, and even neighbours all having a say in the suitability of a particular match.

In England the celebration of the love match began to be seen from the 1760s and 1770s. In France “marriage by fascination” developed in the mid 1800s. For working class families these new norms were established by the twentieth century. Coontz (2005) identifies the tipping point from pragmatic coupling to romantic union as occurring in the eighteenth century. From this time popular discourse records the idealisation of wives, and the word spinster began taking on negative connotations. By the nineteenth century, it was the wife beaters rather than the female scolds of medieval times becoming the target of the community shaming rituals.

Both economically and philosophically there was a weakening of the political model (single wage earning headed household) upon which marriage was based; yet paradoxically the state increased its control over marriage. 1753 marks the year when custom shifted to law and English courts attempted to regulate and officially determine what constituted a legal marriage (Probert, 2005). The dawning of the nineteenth century saw the emergence of the rhetoric of separate spheres (also prevalent at this time in the discourse regarding women’s education, see pp. 46-53) and, in the name of protection, husbands’ control over wives increased (Coontz, 2005; Stasser, 2004). Women’s exclusion from politics was proffered as a sign of respect, and there was an emphasis on the differing natures of men and women which made them dependent upon each other for married bliss. Women were becoming further reliant upon men due to the development of the male breadwinner model marriage.
During the twentieth century the rejection of extended family ties and close same sex friendships so prevalent in the previous century reflected the growing primacy of ‘the couple’ in people’s range of commitments (Coontz, 2005). Within western nations in the first three decades of the twentieth century the age for marrying lowered for both men and women and the proportion of men and women who remained single declined. Marriage rates increased among all social classes and ethnic groups and a patina of tradition grew around the male breadwinner, nuclear family marriage (Brook, 2007; Coontz, 2005).

Marriage as a Patriarchal institution and Feminist Reform

Marriage involves a relationship, not just between the couple involved in the union but with society at large. If two people were stuck on a deserted island together and became involved in an intimate relationship, this relationship would not be considered marriage as it is not subject to external validation (Potts & Short, 1999). Families, kin and community, either secular or religious, bestow ‘marriage status’ on a given relationship in the way that they regulate, sanctify and legitimate the relationship (Potts & Short, 1999; Coontz, 2005; Cott, 2000). As can be seen from the sweeping history of marriage detailed above, the dynamics of marriage have evolved. Initially marriage was policed by immediate kin, the family and clan groups. As communities settled, neighbours and community members would govern and regulate marriage.

With the Reformation and Counter Reformation, the Catholic Church and state competed for control over marriage. The state now regulates and defines marriage and has a vested interest in the marriages of its citizens (Brook, 2007; Cott, 2000). Marriage is one of the ways in which the state decides who is considered to be a part of the nation (Brook, 2007; Cott, 2000). From the beginning of the twentieth century people have been choosing not to involve the state in their relationships and the number of de facto relationships has been
increasing (Brook, 2007; MacKay, 2007), yet interestingly, de facto relationships are under increased state scrutiny and regulation. Illegitimacy, once a powerful tool of social organisation, has lost much of its stigma and is no longer considered to be a meaningful category (Brook, 2007).

As observed earlier, from the ancient Greek and Roman traditions, and throughout the Middle Ages, marriage was explicitly predicated on a patriarchal society. Within marriage, the male father/husband was the head of the house, and as such, he represented the members of his household economically and politically. Through marriage he subsumed his wife’s legal identity, and thus each household was represented by the husband. Within this model of marriage, the family functioned as a microcosm of the larger political framework, with the husband acting as the ‘king’ of his household.

So too, during the Middle Ages both secular and religious rules governing marriage had a patriarchal bias (Coontz, 2005; Freedman, 2002; LeGates, 2001). Women’s identities were absorbed by those of their husbands upon marriage. Guidelines from the Church emphatically upheld St Paul’s injunction that wives must submit to their husbands (Ephesians 5:22; Colossians 3:18; Titus 2:5). Secular law was little better with its rule of thumb by which a man could discipline his wife by beating her with a switch no thicker than his thumb (Finlay, 2005). English common law contained within it the principle of coverture which maintained that upon marriage a man and his wife became one flesh and that flesh is represented by the husband. He had the right to vote, to dispose of any property that she brought to the marriage and control of any of her earnings, and he had the right to dispose of their children without her consent (LeGates, 2001). Husband killing was regarded as a form of treason in England, Normandy and Sicily and was a crime against the king, punishable by death (Coontz, 2005; LeGates, 2001).
Feminist agitation and political campaigning resulted in the passage in 1882 of the Married Women’s Property Act, which removed most of the traces of coverture and gave women the right to maintain control of their property and wages upon marriage. In the early years of the twentieth century women in most western countries succeeded in their long campaign for suffrage and were given the right to vote (Freedman, 2002; LeGates, 2001). These two seminal events have forever changed the landscape of marriage. The patriarchal model, upon which marriage was for thousands of years predicated, no longer holds true. Theoretically, at least, man and woman enter marriage as potential economic and political equals, able to control their own property and participate individually in the economic and political processes.

**Further changes to Marriage**

Marriage remains the site where women are most likely to experience various forms of abuse, and this also holds true for intimate co-habitative relationships (Brook, 2007; Kenney, 2006). Such de facto relationships have risen in popularity, and at present most couples who marry in Australia have lived together prior to the wedding (MacKay, 2007). As co-habitation is a viable alternative to marriage, marriage is now a more freely chosen status, although it remains the preferred living arrangement for those raising children (Cherlin, 2005; Meezan & Rauch, 2005). With the state the primary regulatory authority of marriage, marriage is accorded a preferential status over other living arrangements. A US study found that marriage was privileged in over 1000 acts and statutes and forms of legislation (Cott, 2000). De facto relationships count as marriage, but without the declaration or ‘performative utterance’ (Brook, 2007) that occurs in the wedding proceedings such relationships have to prove themselves over the long term. Marriage and co-habitation have been described as being a ‘distinction without a difference’ (Brooks, 2007, p.163), unless of course the co-habiting couple are of the same sex. Although political debate surrounding marriage describes it as both natural and unchanging, politicians have been able to change laws to
determine who shall marry whom, (the ban on interracial marriage in Australia and the US being a case in point, see for discussion Brook, 2007; Haider-Markel & Joslyn, 2005; Josephson, 2005). Marriage laws have an almost exclusive heteronormative focus (Blackwood, 2005; Josephson, 2005). The Australian government is currently attempting to create a non-marital status for same sex unions that would remove the existing discriminations. Yet the shifts in the landscape that have taken place in regard to marriage have the potential to be inclusive of this type of relationship. Research in values and attitudes in the US suggests that there is reason to be hopeful for legal recognition of same sex marriage and civil unions (Haider-Markel & Joslyn, 2005). As ultimately the state determines what type of relationship counts as marriage (Cott, 2000), and with marriage no longer predicated on the model of a single wage earning political participant as the head of the house, it is opened up for more egalitarian and inclusive relationships. Yet marriage remains an institution by which the state deems which relationships are privileged. No longer an explicit means of patriarchal control, marriage remains a means of policing ‘heteronormality’ (Brook, 2007).

Modern Research into Marriage

Societal ideas and mores relating to marriage have evolved and it is generally accepted that marriage is no longer solely about procreation and sex (Borneman, 2005). Advances in technology and the education of women have effectively separated procreation from sex (Borneman, 2005; Goldin & Katz, 2000) and form a significant factor in the changes experienced in patterns of marriage. The widespread use of the pill, for example, has increased women’s age at first marriage and increased their investment in education and career (Goldin, 2004; Goldin & Katz, 2000). This increasing career investment may be reflected in women’s changing patterns of surname retention upon marriage. In the 1970’s only between two and four percent of women kept their surnames upon marriage, whereas
presently close to twenty percent of women retain their surnames when they wed (Goldin & Shim, 2004).

Research by Burgess, Propper and Aassve (2003) indicates that for young women, high income earning capacity decreases the probability of marriage and has no impact upon divorce probability and yet for men high income earning capacity increases the probability of marriage and decreases the probability of divorce (Burgess et al., 2003; Lefgren & McIntyre, 2006). Sweeney (2002) speculates that the costs of child raising and increased standard of living have meant that male earnings have remained an important factor for marriage formation. She also notes the increasing importance of men’s and women’s non-economic contributions to the household and believes that this will affect the desirability of marriage for future women (Sweeney, 2002). This contrasts to Goldscheider and Waite who state ‘it seems increasingly clear that the road to ‘new families’ will lead through men, who must decide whether they want homes, families, and children enough to share responsibility for them’ (1991, p. 195). This sentiment is echoed in the more recent research of Wilcox and Nock (2006) who suggest that men’s marital emotional work is critical to women’s ratings of their marital quality. In the Australian context research by Ken Dempsey (2002) notes that men are still getting the ‘better deal’ out of married life. Thus recent research upon marriage seems to reflect a pre-eminence of the role of men in both marital formation and satisfaction.

While it is clear that an explicitly patriarchal political model no longer defines marriage, I attest that men remain the primary beneficiaries of marriage in its more modern manifestations. Ferguson (2000) provides a summary of the body of research on marriage that seems to indicate that men derive more benefits from marriage than women. For example married men that have lower mortality rates than their never married counterparts, (perhaps because single men are more likely to engage in risky behaviours, such as
excessive drinking, than married men), while conversely research suggests that women who have never been married enjoy greater mental and physical health than other women (Ferguson). Being married seems to boost men’s career opportunities with married men being more likely to be hired and promoted and married men receive a wage premium compared to the wages of single men. Conversely never married women are viewed as being more committed to their careers, and married women suffer a wage penalty compared to single women, thus the costs and benefits of marriage differ between the genders and reflects the continuing patriarchal benefits still extended to husbands (Cherry, 1998; Ferguson, 2000). Although men receive more benefits within marriage than women, it remains incontestable that marriage does benefit women, through the provision of things such as financial and/or emotional security, or status. These benefits may go some way in explaining the enduring popularity of marriage - Bureau of Statistics data indicates that the marriage rate in Australia is at a 20 year high (‘More Aussies get hitched, fewer ditched’, 2009).

The rise in the divorce rate over the last twenty years has been cited as one of the biggest, and most negatively perceived changes in American society (Bedard & Deschenes, 2005; Cherlin, 2005; Nock, 2005; Sanchez, Nock, Wright, & Gager, 2002). Nock (2005) suggests that although a wide range of cultural and social factors is responsible for the decline in marriage most of the reforms aimed at strengthening marriage attempt to change individuals and do not address either culture or society. Current statistics indicate that 33 percent of marriages end in either separation or divorce within the first 10 years (Bedard & Deschenes, 2005). Marriages are less likely to continue following the birth of a girl rather than a boy – the rate of divorce is four percent higher for women whose firstborn child is female (Bedard & Deschenes, 2005), perhaps indicating the presence of a continued cultural preference for first-born sons. The presence of preschool children has a stabilising effect on marriage, but this effect lessens as the children get older (Steele, Kallis, Goldstein, & Joshi, 2005).
From as long ago as twenty years, researchers have been documenting the adverse economic impact that divorce has upon women (Arendell, 1987). Post-divorce, women experience a drop in income and an increase in living expenses and Arendell states that except in the case of remarriage few divorced women recover from the economic decline brought upon by the divorce process. This contrasts with the research of Bedard and Deschenes which suggests that divorced women live in households with higher income per person than women who have never been divorced (2005). Smock, Manning and Gupta note in their review of the literature that there is a large body of research documenting the economic decline experienced by women who undergo marital dissolution (1999). They note that women’s vulnerability outside of marriage is ‘ubiquitous’ (Smock et al., 1999). Zagorsky’s (2005) work with longitudinal data has found that while both men and women experience a ‘wealth drop’ after divorce, in percentage terms women experience the greater economic decline.

Research in the health effects of divorce upon women shows that in the years immediately after divorce women reported significantly higher levels of psychological distress but no difference in the levels of physical illness (Lorenz, Wickrama, Conger, & Elder Jr., 2006). Ten years after their divorce, women reported higher levels of psychological illness and depressive symptoms, (Lorenz et al.). Williams and Umberson (2004) suggests that rather than reflecting a health benefit of marriage differences in health status between marriage and divorce is instead a reflection of the strain of marital dissolution.

I contend that marriage remains more favourable to men than women. This conclusion is supported by research into marriage which presents a picture of an institution that although no longer explicitly patriarchal - due to changes in law, custom, societal norms and mores - still extends more benefits to men than women. Not only are men financially and emotionally better off within marriage than women the lack of resolution of the burden of
the second shift represents an ongoing injustice that continues to adversely affect women (see chapter one, p. 53). In addition, marriage continues to order society hierarchically by extending status and privilege to those in wedded heterosexual unions. As to one possible source of the conceptualisation of women as the property of men, an understanding somewhat diluted in modern times but still discernable in marriage patterns, I shall turn my attention now the Christian church and examine two millennia of teaching on women.

Theological Perspectives on Women
Attempts to understand the philosophical presumptions which have motivated society's conceptualisation of women as a natural resource to be exploited as any other resource of nature, have led to a wide variety of sociological and philosophical explorations. Among such explorations, the Judeo-Christian tradition has been cited as a potentially rich source of socio-cultural prejudice against women. In what follows it will be argued that although it is to be admitted that there exists considerable exegetical ambiguity as to the Bible's view of women in the hierarchy of the created world, there is sufficient conceptual evidence to indicate that at least some interpretive devaluations of women do have a biblical basis. Women, it will be argued, are conceptualised as being resources, not unlike nature, created by God in order to be controlled and subdued by man. Firstly, it shall be argued that a biblical pretext exists for conceiving of nature as being created under man’s dominion. The second task will be to explore the extent to which certain biblical passages can be plausibly interpreted to show that women are similarly conceptualised. Having demonstrated a biblical basis for the conceptualisation of women as the resources of men, I shall examine the Church’s treatment of women in the early church, in their vocation as nuns and in the modern day denial of women not only (in the majority of cases) to the priesthood, but also any access to positions of power and authority.
The Biblical view of nature

In 1967 Lynn White Jr. claimed that ‘our daily habits of action…are dominated by an implicit faith in perpetual progress which was unknown either to Greco-Roman antiquity or to the Orient. It is rooted in, and is indefensible apart from, Judeo-Christian teleology’ (White, 1967/1973, p. 110). According to White, at the time when Judaism was developed, it was the most anthropocentric of the world’s spiritualities. The basic presumptions which serve to provide the conceptual framework by way of which Christians define their relation to the environment differ markedly from other religious conceptual schemes. For example, in contrast to many mythologies that contain a cyclical notion of time - thus no beginning or end - Christianity imported from Judaism a concept of time as being non-repetitive and linear. Along with this notion of time Christianity also borrowed from Judaism a creation story that located not only God but man above and beyond the natural realm. On successive days God creates the world: day and night; the sky; the oceans, the earth, and the plants; the sun, the moon, and the stars; the fish and the birds; the animals of the earth, and finally, the ultimate corporeal exemplification of his greatness, man. Only man was made in God’s image and it was man to whom God gave the instruction: (Genesis 1:28) ‘Have many children, so that your descendants will live all over the earth and bring it under control. I am putting you in charge of the fish, the birds, and all the wild animals’. This message is reiterated after the Flood when God says to Noah (Genesis 9:1-2) ‘Have many children, so that your descendants will live all over the earth. All the animals, birds, and fish will live in fear of you. They are all placed under your power’. These passages are of seminal significance for White, inasmuch as they have for many people provided a foundational vision in respect of which man’s relationship to all of nature is defined. By way of his technological power man thereby established his dominance over the animal world; by naming them he manifests one form of his authority and power over them. Genesis has

1 All Bible quotes sourced from the New Revised Standard Version
conveyed to many people that the earth was created by God for man’s benefit. Although man was made from clay he is not just simply a part of nature, for he is made in God's image.

On White's view the anthropomorphic ramifications of these beliefs are clear: 'Despite Darwin, we are not, in our hearts, part of the natural process. We are superior to nature, contemptuous of it, willing to use it for our slightest whim' (White, 1967/1973, p. 111). In contrast to virtually every major ancient religion Christianity separates man and nature, while justifying man's subjugation of nature by reference to a framework of interpretation within which it is God's will and command that man exploit nature for his ends. By virtue of having located man outside of nature, Christianity also provides man with a divine rationale, for the exploitation and subjugation of nature without conscience. Reinforcing the Genesis disposition towards the domination of nature, was - according to White the mentality of the thirteenth century Latin West, where natural theology was sanctioned by the belief that nature was man’s to do with as he pleased. During this time, scientific learning was initially being developed by monks who believed that understanding how the natural world worked would reveal the blueprint of God's creative plan. This being so, it is easier to appreciate why from the thirteenth to the eighteenth century virtually every scientist was under the auspices of the Church and motivated primarily by a religious quest to comprehend how God operated, by discerning the laws of nature. Insofar as the conceptual orientation of contemporary scientific learning and technology emerged from this peculiar anthropocentric culture, that same culture enshrines within it certain of the presumptions of Judeo-Christian theology. (For a more recent articulation of this argument see Stark, 2003). Inasmuch as science has its origins in the ideas generated by those who were seeking to know God's mind through the workings of creation, 'modern western science [is] cast in a matrix of Christian theology' (White, 1967/1973, p. 110; Stark, 2003). The result of this conflation, is that there
exists within western science and the technologies to which it gives rise, a conceptual
pennant towards the systematic exploitation and dominion of man over nature.

The views White expounded in his 1967 paper have sparked much debate on the ethical and
teological aspects of environmentalism and his ideas have been described as being
fundamental in the twenty five years of debate following their original publication. There is
no doubt that White's provocative ideas did much to generate a re-examination of the
ecological stance of the Judeo-Christian traditions and of the traditional interpretation of the
relevant Genesis passages. A number of interpreters from the earliest Christians to modern
day theologians have maintained that the Hebrew Scriptures have 'endorsed a suspicion of
nature' (Tucker, 1997, p. 3). Others have set out to demonstrate that the Scriptures contain
more of an appreciation for nature than has previously been credited. Debate has often
focused on Genesis 1:28, the verse in which God gives man dominion over the animals. Yet
this verse does not reveal unambiguously whether God was intending to give man
stewardship over nature or authorisation to exploit and subjugate. If God were giving man
stewardship over nature this would commit man to a nurturing caretaker role within nature, a
role in which man would be accountable to God for his actions towards the earth. In
contrast, if God were giving man authority to exploit nature, man would be able to do to the
earth what he pleased without concern or conscience.

According to some scholars (Laura & Ashton, 1991; 1998; 2006), the creation story
establishes a hierarchy: God; man, his steward; and then the rest of nature. While human
beings are God’s creatures they, unlike the rest of nature, are created in God’s image and
therefore 'are the pinnacle of the pyramid, able to view the rest of the world at some distance’
(Tucker, 1997, p. 7). Some of the ways in which nature was viewed from the top of the
pyramid are problematic. For example, the land that is considered worthwhile within the
Scriptures is the arable land – the desert is viewed as wasteland and man is encouraged to
transform this land into cultivated land. Consistent with this principle, the animals that fill the stories of the Hebrew testaments are largely the domesticated animals, such as the mules, horses and oxen - all viewed as having being created for the service of man. Coupled with this utilitarian teleology is the fear of wild animals that is well-documented throughout the Bible, as expressed in Amos 3:8 'Where a lion roars who cannot help being afraid?’ This distrust of wild animals in the Bible is demonstrated by allusions to a perfect future in which wild animals need not be feared. One example is the apocalyptic vision contained in Isaiah 11:6 which includes the belief that 'Wolves and sheep will live together in peace/ and leopards will lie down with young goats’.

A further issue arises which has to do with limits to the human use of nature. For example the Hebrew laws (Exodus 23:10-12, Leviticus 25 & Deuteronomy 15:1-18, 23:19-20, that require that the land be left fallow every seven years, to protect the land from being over worked in a fragile eco-system (Cooper, 1990). It is made clear that although man has enormous power over nature, God has not given man complete authority over all of the earth. God remains the ultimate authority over the land, as when he asks man (Job 38:4) 'were you there when I made the world?’ It can be seen that God is continually reminding man that the earth is God’s and to him belongs all understanding and authority.

It can be seen that there are many differing perspectives threading through the Bible which in various ways affirm human dominion over nature. With technology, humanity has the ability to impact deeply and positively upon the environment, by cultivating the deserts for example. But with this dominion comes responsibility and detrimental consequences if the limits of man’s authority are breached. A hierarchy is established – God talks to man in a way he does not talk to nature, but humanity is often reminded of its connection with the rest of nature.
Women’s Place in the Hierarchy

Differing threads of interpretation found in the Scriptures demonstrate the interesting array of internal inconsistencies which exist in the Bible. Rhiane Eisler explains that these internal inconsistencies are the result of the reworking of the ancient Hebrew texts by different authors and editors, one being a group of Hebrew Priests in the period around 400B.C.E. (Eisler, 1987). Scholars refer to these priests as the priestly or 'P' school and they are thought to be responsible for adding the second story of creation found within Genesis in chapters 2 and 3 (Eisler). This second version of creation, believed by scholars to be the older story (Westerman, 1987), is the tale of Adam and Eve and it effectively changes the hierarchy of creation from God; mankind; nature; to God; man; woman; nature. The original creation story found in Genesis describes how on the sixth day God created mankind in his image, made them male and female, and blessed them (see Genesis 1:27-28). In contrast to this the Priestly school's addition of Genesis 2:7-25 and 3:1-24 details the story of Adam and Eve and establishes God’s sanction of man’s dominion of women. Adam was created by God from the dust of the earth and Eve was created from his rib. Thus, not only was man created before woman but woman was created from man. In addition to this chronology and physiological aetiology woman is blamed for humankind’s fall from grace. It was Eve who was tempted by the serpent and ate of the fruit from the forbidden tree of knowledge and then 'caused' her husband to do the same. As a result of her disobedience and corrupting influence, she was told by God (Genesis 3:16) 'I will increase your trouble in pregnancy and your pain in giving birth. In spite of this, you will still have desire for your husband, yet you will be subject to him'.

Adam is told by God (Gen. 3:17-19) that because

You listened to your wife…the ground will be under a curse. You will have to work hard all your life to make it produce enough food for you. It will produce weeds and
thorns, and you will have to eat wild plants. You will have to work hard and sweat to produce anything, until you go back to the soil from which you were formed.

While the rebuke that Eve received firmly places her under her husband’s authority, Adam’s reprimand alienates him from the earth and reinforces the scriptural idea of man’s separateness from nature. The earth and man are no longer deemed to work together, in unison or collaboration, to bring to fruition the harvest of the soil. After the Fall, the earth becomes resistant to the will of men and is reckoned as a force in opposition to his dominion. This being so, the concept evolves of man having to battle against the forces of nature in order to achieve supremacy.

Although feminist scholars such as Phyllis Trible and others (Bird, 1974; Higgins, 1976; Trible, 1973a, 1973b, 1978) have demonstrated that the creation stories of Genesis can be interpreted in other (non-patriarchal) ways the dominant interpretation is that the world exists according to a divinely ordered hierarchy: God/man/woman/animals (Walsh, 1977). According to Christopher Witcombe, the story is ‘so deeply rooted in the socio-religious psyche of Western civilization that attempts to discredit it, or dismiss it, or simply ignore it as self-serving patriarchal fiction and myth-making have met with little success’ (Witcombe, 2000, p. na). Or, as expressed by Pamela Milne: ‘Genesis 2-3 remains the major proof text for those who believe that women are, by divine design, inferior to men and that, therefore they ought to be kept properly subordinated to men’ (1989, p. 20).

**Woman as Economic Property**

In the context of the story of the Garden of Eden the final outcome suggests that man is alienated from nature, while woman is alienated from man and ordained by God to become subject to man. Through their shared alienation from God, nature and women become conceptualised as resources at the disposal of man. For example, Numbers 31:32-35 details the booty captured by Moses’ soldiers after the Holy War against Midian; ‘675 000 sheep
and goats, 72,000 cattle, 61,000 donkeys, and 32,000 virgins’. The women are spoils of war, not unlike nature’s other booty such as sheep, goats, cattle and donkeys. God’s instructions to his people concerning warfare left the Hebrews with a mandate to kill every man, woman, and child they captured, except for the girls and women who were virgins (Numbers 31:17-19; Deuteronomy 20:13-15). Such a culture served to bring into existence and legitimate the social structures by way of which women could be sold as slaves, concubines and wives, making clear that within the ancient Judaic tradition women were valued as nothing more than economic resources that could be traded at whim (Eisler, 1987).

Two dramatic examples of this ‘woman-as-property’ attitude, which is morally sanctioned in the scriptures, are found in Genesis and Judges. Genesis 19 describes two men visiting Lot in Sodom. The men of Sodom surround Lot’s house and demand that Lot bring out his visitors, as they wanted to have sex with them (Genesis 19:5). Lot instead offers the rabble his daughters saying, (19:7-8)

I beg you, my brothers, do not act so wickedly. Look I have two daughters who have not yet known a man; let me bring them out to you, and do to them as you please; only do nothing to these men, for they have come under the shelter of my roof.

In this story Lot is shown to have a stronger duty to protect his male guests, who are strangers to him, than he does a duty to protect his own daughters and a similar story found in Judges.

A Levite, his servant, and his concubine were staying with an old man in Gibeah. Again the men of the town surrounded the house and demanded that the old man bring out his guest. Instead the old man’s guest persuaded them to take his concubine. The Scriptures tell us that (Judges 19:25) ‘They wantonly raped her, and abused her all through the night until the morning’. When the man was leaving that morning, he found her dead body and went home.
In Eisler’s words the regard for women in this society was so low that within the 'sacred text ostensibly setting forth divine law…we may read that one half of humanity could be legally be handed over by their own fathers and husbands to be raped, beaten, tortured, or killed without any fear of punishment- or even moral disapproval' (1987, p. 100). Gur-Klein (2003) suggests that these stories and those found in Genesis 12:10-20, 20:1-14, 26:1-14, 34; Judges 11:30-40, 39 & 40; Esther 1; hark back to ancient practices of sexual hospitality and sacred sex rites the purpose of which was to guarantee the fecundity of the land and the fertility of the tribe. She argues that the stories of women’s sexual agency have been obliterated in patriarchal retellings. For Gur-Klein these stories attest to residual templates in which women behave like a community conducting a (sub)culture and initiate independent customs, rites, and activities outside the patriarchal hegemony. Male dominance marginalizes, sexually and/or violently overshadows, disrupts, transects, discards, undermines, oppresses or manipulates it (Gur-Klein, 2003, p. na).

The extent to which women were regarded as mere economic commodities, property to be traded between fathers and husbands is further spelled out in chapter twenty two of Deuteronomy. Under the heading of 'Laws concerning Sexual Purity' the lawful way in which women can be exchanged is detailed in verses thirteen to thirty. These rules state that if a man marries a woman and then tries to rid himself of her by claiming that she was not a virgin, the parents must prove that she was by taking the blood-stained wedding-bed sheets to the town leaders. If they are successful, the husband is then to be beaten, whereupon he is

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2 These verses include stories of wives being passed off as the sisters and given to more powerful men in an order to protect their husband’s lives, a virgin daughter sacrificed to ensure military victory, a queen killed by her husband for refusing to appear before him and his subsequent deflowering of the country’s virgins.

3 Ironically, verses of this chapter are also used by some commentators as examples which allegedly demonstrate God’s pronouncement of an environmental ethic (Cooper, 1990; Tucker, 1997). The oft-quoted verse six, for example, states that If you happen to find a bird’s nest in a tree or on the ground with the mother bird sitting either on the eggs or with her young, you are not to take the mother bird. One interpretation of the verse is that God was instructing his people to behave in a way that would not threaten the survival of his creatures. A mere seven verses later are instructions in the trading of women.
obliged to give the girl’s father one hundred pieces of silver for bringing disgrace on an
Israelite girl. Furthermore, he can never divorce her as long as he lives. But if there is no
proof that the girl was a virgin when she married, she is to be stoned to death for having
(Deuteronomy 22:21) ‘done a shameful thing among our people’. Alternatively, if a man is
captured raping a girl his punishment is defined as having to pay her father the bride price,
while the girl has to become his wife, with the provision that he will not divorce her as long
as he lives (Deuteronomy 22:28-29).

It has been argued that the primary purpose of these laws is to protect economic transactions
between two men (Eisler, 1987). By falsely accusing a girl of losing her virginity prior to
marriage, the husband was in essence slandering her father as an honest merchant and hence,
the fine was paid to him. By stoning her to death if the accusations were found to be true,
the husband was simply disposing of what was now an economically worthless asset.
Payment of the bride price to a father if you raped his daughter stops men taking your assets
without paying for them. Similarly, if a couple were caught having adultery, then the
Scriptures maintain that they both be killed (Deuteronomy 22:22). In this way you were
disposing of a damaged asset and providing for the punishment of a thief- the man who had
‘stolen’ another’s property. Because the Hebrews were not so ‘crass’ to speak about women
in purely economic terms, the rules were dressed up as divine ordinances from God, thereby
legitimising horrific social practices by way of God’s sanction (Eisler, 1987).

The Redemption offered by Jesus

The extent to which women were excluded from God’s grace in Hebrew society is
demonstrated in the purification laws which declared them ritually unclean during
menstruation and after childbirth. These laws found in Leviticus reinforced women’s
separateness from God and man through the taboos which prevented them from touching
anyone or going to the temple during menstruation (see Leviticus 12:1-8, 15:19-33, and
According to some scholars, (Eisler, 1987; Ruether, 1992; 1998; Schussler Fiorenza, 2000) Jesus came to set the Jewish people free from the rules such as this that bound their lives to inhuman treatment, liberating all people, including the women, from the bondage of oppressive laws. The most dramatic example of this came when Jesus healed the woman who was haemorrhaging from her womb. The woman had been bleeding for twelve years and she believed that touching Jesus’ cloak would heal her. When she did so (Matthew 9:18-23) ‘Jesus turned around and saw her, and said “Courage, my daughter! Your faith has made you well.” At that very moment the woman became well’ (see also Mark 5:21-43; Luke 8:40-56). This woman was ritually unclean at this time yet Jesus still healed her, a wonderful example to show that law, not even the Jewish law of the time, should take precedence over an act of love. Jesus’ rejection of the conventional separation of men and women is well documented throughout the New Testament. He violated custom by talking to women, as is illustrated in his communication with a Samaritan woman, an interaction which shocked even his disciples (John 4:7-27). He counted women amongst his closest friends and companions. In fact he praises his friend Mary in contrast to her sister Martha for transcending her domestic role and participating in scriptural learning (Luke 10:38-42). In this action he rejects the notion of women’s separation from God which traditionally kept women from learning the Scriptures.

Jesus’ life provides a model for others about a new way to treat women, with respect and as equals. His rejection of the Jewish rules that separate men and women, and women from God is demonstrated by his actions, as when he saves an adulterous woman from being stoned to death (John 8:1-11). Women were also an important part of his ministry and were to receive the gifts of the spirit alongside the men. Acts 2:17 informs us that God says 'I will pour out my Spirit on Everyone/ Your sons and daughters will proclaim my message'. Jesus’ ministry demonstrated that women were no longer to be viewed as an economic resource. They were to be partners with men, sharing together in God’s spirit and similarly
proclaiming his message. Jesus’ message represented a revolutionary departure from the traditional Hebrew conceptualisation of women as the property of men, but the deeply entrenched prejudices against women were not so easily overthrown.

The Pauline Tradition and the Position of Women

After Jesus’ death his disciples were left to carry on his ministry. Paul became a leader in the newly formed Church and his letters to various Christian outposts have long been used as models for good Christian behaviour. Paul’s realisation of Jesus’ message of equality is demonstrated in Galatians 3:28: ‘So there is no differences between Jews and Gentiles, between slaves and free men, between men and women: you are all one in union with Christ Jesus’. According to Rosemary Ruether, the ‘tentative beginnings of an egalitarian view of male-female relations in early Christianity were quickly overwhelmed’ (Ruether, 1992, p. 140). While the verse from Galatians demonstrates a continuation of Christ’s model of equality between the sexes, further readings of Paul’s letters demonstrate that Paul, or those writing in his name, was not so able to realise these ideals.

Several of his letters to women insist that wives submit to their husbands (Ephesians 5:22; Colossians 3:18; Titus 2:5). Reinforcing the devaluation of women, Paul refers to Eve’s actions in the Garden of Eden as justification for these instructions (1Timothy 2:11-15):

   Let a woman learn in silence with full submission. I permit no woman to teach or to have authority over a man; she is to keep silent. For Adam was formed first, then Eve; and Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor. Yet she will be saved through childbearing, provided they continue in faith and love and holiness, with modesty.

While the direct admonishment of women is not the only interpretation of these verses (see Waters Sr, 2004) this message that women are to keep silent, is reiterated in Corinthians 14:33-35:
As in all the churches of the saints, women should be silent in the churches. For they are not permitted to speak, but should be subordinate, as the law also says. If there is anything they desire to know let them ask their husbands at home. For it is shameful for a woman to speak in church.

This is in direct contrast to Jesus’ affirmation of Mary’s involvement in Scriptural learning.

Jesus’ actions provide a blueprint for equality within male-female relationships, but as the above verses demonstrate, this model represented too radical a departure from the Jewish model of male-female relations. According to Ruether (1992; 1998), the egalitarian model glimpsed in the New Testament was overpowered by the pervasiveness of Hebrew traditions. The continued influence which Paul’s words have had upon the modern world are noted by feminist scholars (Fraser, 2003; Stout & McPhail, 1998) who remind us that women who are beaten by their husbands are often told by their pastors and priests that they must submit to their husbands.

We have here examined one modality of exegetical justification for the view that women and nature exist as resources for the benefit of men. It was shown that the notion of woman-as-resource can be found in the Old Testament of the Judeo-Christian scriptures. Here too can be found the idea that the earth exists for purely for man's domination. The Judeo-Christian creation stories, in particular, have fostered beliefs instrumental in the institutionalisation of patriarchy, which have in turn engendered social structures which have led to the exploitation of both women and the environment. Within some areas of the texts the connection between women and nature is clearly demonstrated - both were viewed as being man's property to dominate, exploit and trade. It was found that although this was one of several ways that women and nature were viewed within the Bible, and that certain ambiguity exists concerning the way to treat both, justification for the exploitation and subjugation of women and nature can be found within the Judeo-Christian scriptures.
This interpretation of a god who is understood to have fashioned the world hierarchically
Laura has elsewhere termed ‘patriarchal theism’ (Laura & Chalender, in press). Patriarchal
theism refers to the conceptualisation of a God who reflects a patriarchal understanding and
ordering of the world. The stories described above betray a biblical basis for patriarchal
theism. This dominant interpretation has had ongoing influence in the history of the Church.
It is the historical manifestations of patriarchal theism that shall now be examined. The first
egregious example to be considered is the way in which Eve was cast as the entry point of
evil into the world and how this conceptualisation was used against all women. (While this
section is concerned to show the negative impacts of patriarchal theism on the lives of
women, see Gelfer, 2009, for an analysis of the way in which patriarchal religion negatively
affects men).

Bad Women: Eve, Mother of All, and Witches, Accomplices of Satan
Margaret Denike (2003) traces the genealogy of evil as a political economy that generates
‘truths’ about women that justify their subsequent treatment as the scapegoats of society.
She uses genealogy in the sense hinted at by Michel Foucault (1989). While Foucault was
concerned with the ‘truth games’ used in the production of subjects such as the
‘homosexual’ by institutions such as the Church, the judiciary, psychiatric hospitals, prisons,
and schools – each of which has a stake in defining and producing official discourse about
the ‘deviant’ figure (Foucault, 1989), Denike appropriates Foucault’s insights to examine the
figure of the ‘heretic-witch’ persecuted in Europe up until the late seventeenth century
(Denike, 2003). She seeks to understand ‘a phenomenon as formidable and consequential
as a church and state based campaign of violence against women, particularly against those
who were elderly, feeble, ailing, poverty-stricken, and socially ostracised’ (Denike, 2003, p.
13).
For Denike (2003) the Adam and Eve creation story plays a pivotal role, as Eve is deemed to be responsible for the entry of evil into the world. This interpretation which places blame on Eve is included in the New Testament (2 Cor. 11:3, 1 Tim.2:9-15, 1 Pet.3:1-7) but it was in the work of the early Church Fathers that the theology of woman as evil and the source of evil, and of woman as secondary and inferior began to take shape in a more significant way. This interpretation began to be normative and is seen in the writings of Philo (born 20BC), Augustine (born 354), Aquinas (born 1225), in the *Malleus Maleficarum* (circa 1600) its continued influenced and be traced in the writings of Luther, Calvin, Knox and in papal encyclicals through to the present century (Milne, 1989; Ruether, 1998).

The Hebrew concept of evil, as being present in the world in many shapes and forms (Denike, 2003), becomes changed in the developing Christian theology of the first four centuries and evil becomes understood as the fault of Satan, the ‘Enemy of God’ who has at his services a minion of devils which plague the ‘fallen’ world. This understanding of evil is necessitated by a belief in a God that is wholly good; this conceptualisation of God allows no room for an understanding that would make this God responsible for bringing evil into existence. Thus an alternative explanation for evil is necessary and found in the figure of Satan. Denike outlines the theological process used to construe ‘woman’ as ‘evil’. Firstly, the second creation story in Genesis is used to establish Eve as being responsible for bringing evil into the world. This evil was conceptualised in terms associated with the feminine– chaos, darkness, sexual insatiability, and pollution. As Eve was tempted by the serpent and was responsible for the fallen nature of the world, all women stand condemned as ‘daughters of Eve’. Woman is cast as Satan’s helper, the ‘devil’s gateway’ and ‘first deserter of divine law’ as Tertullian (born ca. 160AD) terms her (Denike, 2003, p. 17). Like, Eve, all women are construed as the ‘weaker sex’ more liable to sin and capable of making pacts with the devil to further his work of bringing trouble to a fallen creation. This association of woman with evil became so strong that Michelangelo’s depiction of the *The
*Fall* (ca. 1508-1512) on the ceiling of the Sistine chapel has the serpent painted with the head and torso of a woman (Witcombe, 2000). From this development of ‘woman as evil’ comes ‘woman as witch’. Saint Augustine developed a theological construction which rendered pagan practices the heretical actions of those deluded by Satan. Pagan symbols were imbrued with evil meanings by the Christian forefathers and goddess worshippers were cast as witches deceived (as Eve was deceived) by Satan, tricked into thinking they were worshiping deities such as Diana, but really doing the work of the devil. Described not as pagans but as heretics so-called witches could be punitively investigated by the Church.

Although women were understood legally to be incapacitated, the seriousness of witchcraft – treason against the majesty of God - necessitated torture and death in order to extirpate the pollution of Satan from the Church. Witches were believed to have done deals with the devil and to have sealed the pact with carnal practices, thus as the ‘enemies of God’ and ‘servants of Satan’ they had be removed from the body of Christ, both in order to keep the church pure and to safeguard the people from the evil that witches were believed capable of doing – affecting the weather, harming others, causing babies to die. Women were described in paradoxical terms, they were understood to have extraordinary weakness which made them prone to being deceived, once so deceived they became powerful figures capable of inflicting much misery on those around them (Denike, 2003).

Its peculiar construction of evil, embodied as a pact with the devil, and its self-endowed power to identify, punish, and extirpate it were essential to the Church’s expansion and to the extension of its power to communities that did not embrace its beliefs. (Denike, 2003, p. 30).

So successful were the architects of this understanding of evil, that innumerable women throughout the Middle Ages and Early Modern Europe were arrested, tried and killed for the crime of witchcraft.
It should be noted here, that while not universal, the figure of the witch is found in many and varied cultures in differing times and places. Ronald Hutton explains that the witch figure serves to explain the problem of apparently mysterious misfortunes. His examination of cross-cultural data has led him to propose a five characteristic model of the witch figure (Hutton, 2004). The characteristics not common to his model, he explains are context specific variables which change with each specific society and culture. Hutton notes that the European conception of witches and their behaviours is the only case in which the gatherings are regarded as rites dedicated to a rival religion to the norm, which reflects the special characteristics of medieval and early modern Latin Christianity thought. It is also unusual in that the most prominent anti-social activity associated with the gatherings of medieval witches is sexual promiscuity, while for other regions of the world the most prominent activity associated with witches is the eating of corpse flesh (Hutton, 2004).

There is some dispute in the literature as to how many people were killed in the witch crazes which swept through Europe in the early modern era. Gaskill (2007) and Stark (2003) believe that scholarly interest in the witch hunts has led to exaggerated estimates of the death toll; they believe that in the order of tens of thousands of women were killed between the thirteenth and seventeenth centuries; whereas Denike (2003) puts the figure at over one hundred thousand witches killed, while Oster (2004) suggests that as many as one million people were executed for the crime of witchcraft from the time of the Catholic Inquisition in the thirteenth century, to end of the seventeenth century. Paradoxically the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries are regarded as the ‘Golden Age of Man’, yet this was a time characterised by deeply misogynist campaigns launched by the church and state during man’s “renaissance” which relied on the demonisation of female sexuality, and which specifically and ruthlessly aimed to bring a brutal, punitive and regulative machinery to bear directly on women (Denike, 2003, p.12).
Regardless of the exact figure, suffice to say that a significant number of people were killed - the over-whelming majority of whom were women, especially midwives and healers, the poor and the widowed, or those suspected of moral deviance (Oster, 2004; Levack, 1980, 1995). Levack (1980) notes that when examining the data it is ‘striking’ how many women accused fit the stereotype of the old, poor woman. Reed (2007) states that the women accused of witchcraft were often women out of place in the social order – either poor or homeless, or conversely, women who as a consequence of being without brothers had inherited property.

Various suggestions have been put forward to explain the witch crazes. Historically unique circumstances have been used to explain specific examples. Brian Levack (1980) examines the restoration of King Charles II as a potential catalyst for the Great Scottish witch hunt of 1661-1662. This event ‘brought nothing, save torture and destruction to the unfortunate old women, or witches of Scotland’ in the words of one seventeenth century commentator (cited in Levack, 1980, p.91). But while this explanation may identify one catalyst it fails to explain the widespread instances of witch hunting taking places through out much of Europe. Another factor may have been the self-creating and self-sustaining methodology of the witch hunt; the use of extraordinary judicial procedures employed because of the believed seriousness of threat that witchcraft posed to the Church - treason against the majesty of God. The use of torture to extract confessions and the inclusion of the witness of children and women (not generally allowed) perpetuated a cycle of accusations and trials. Another proposed explanation is that a worsening of economic conditions triggered witch hunts (Levack, 1980; 1995; Oster, 2004; Reed, 2007). Gaskill (2007) suggests that a little explored factor that might have acted as a trigger for the witch hunts was political discord. The political turbulence of the early modern era served as a backdrop to the witch trials taking place. This was the period of the Reformation and the Counter Reformation in which there was a battle for control over the populace taking place between the ecclesiastic and
secular authorities. Although initially the Churches hunted witches on heretical grounds, later witch hunts were the domain of the secular court authorities. This suggests that judicial wrangling was a part of a larger patriarchal re-ordering of society – ultimately won by the state authority and paid for in the lives of women.

The witch trials which took place in the far flung colony of Salem, Massachusetts were examined by Isaac Reed (2007). He states that the three most common explanations for witch hunting - it was caused by the advancement of capitalism, it was a state making project of the elite who were attempting to bring village life under increased control, or that the persecution were socially functional, - fail to account for the central social fact of witchcraft: gender (Reed). In the case of the Salem seventy eight percent of the accused were female. Reed identifies three symbolic formations present in Salem which functioned to allow the witch hunt to take place. Firstly, there was a set of understandings concerning the nature of women. Secondly, the world was understood in binary terms around the oppositional terms male/female. This resulted in thirdly, a gendered epistemology of the supernatural affected by a causative relationship between the visible and invisible world. In this era women were held in deep suspicion as descendents of Eve, liable to fall from grace and attempt to gain both economic and sexual advantage. Gaskill (2007) describes how the past is used to shape opinions in the present, and emotive symbols – specifically images of demonic depravity - are culturally embedded in one generation only to re-emerge in the next. Thus, in the case of the witch hunts the ideas articulated by the Early Church Fathers are seen to re-emerge throughout the Middle Ages and Early Modern Era with devastating consequences for thousands of women, who were scapegoats for the unfortunate events taking place across Europe at this time.
Good Women: Mary, the Mother of God and Nuns, Brides of Christ

Counter balancing the figure of Eve in Christian theology, is the Virgin Mary, Mother of God – she is the ‘New Eve’ redeemer of women by showing them that they can overcome the carnality of their fallen natures and redeem themselves through motherhood. The Scriptures mandate motherhood as the way that women are to be saved from their own depravity: 1 Tim. 2:14 and 15 ‘it was the woman who was deceived and broke God’s law. Yet she will be saved through childbearing’. Thus in the patriarchal order established within Christian patriarchal theism it is women’s role to give birth and while this may save her (from her own sinful and depraved nature) it continually reinforces the punishment given to her by God – ‘I will increase your trouble in pregnancy and your pain in giving birth’ (Gen 3:16). Childbirth and menstruation symbolised women’s connection to fallen nature, to the polluted and chaotic world that man was struggling to overcome. Thomas Aquinas in his *Summa Theologica* confines women to the Law of Nature while men are to abide by the higher Law of Reason (Paul, 1999). For Aquinas women’s connection to nature precludes them from participation in the Law of Reason, a privilege reserved for men. With the Church’s devaluation of women’s bodies and the exaltation of motherhood as women’s divine and natural calling, religious discourse not only organised and legitimised women’s regulation to the home, but was also functions as a powerful tool for the control of women’s sexuality (Rosado-Nunes, 2003).

The Virgin Mary, as Holy Mother, was held up to women as the one that they such aspire to for in the words of St Jerome ‘Now the chain of the curse is broken. Death came through Eve, but life has come through Mary’ (Baring & Cashford, 1993, p. 537). It has been argued that by her very perfection she was an ambiguous symbol for women (Clark, 2002; Warner, 1976). As Marina Warner expresses it:

> Every facet of the Virgin had been systematically developed to diminish, not increase her likeness to the female condition. Her freedom from sex, painful
delivery, age, death, and all sin exalted her ipso facto above ordinary women and showed them up as inferior. (Warner, 1976, p. 153).

In her groundbreaking 1976 work Alone of her Sex Marina Warner suggests that rather than appealing to mothers, Mary was an object of devotion to Nuns and priests (for an exploration of Mary as a symbol of priesthood and her sacerdotal role also see Clark, 2002). For mothers Mary may have served to alienate them as she reinforced their fallen natures. As the eternal virgin she had been spared Eve’s punishment. Rather than serve as a symbol of motherhood Mary, with her virginity intact symbolised the wholeness equated with holiness. She was elevated above the fear and loathing of female body functions, as expressed by Jerome and Augustine, and had transcended the identification of evil with the flesh and flesh with the woman. The fathers of the Church had taught that virginal life reduced the penalties of the fall in women and was therefore holy. Warner states that the virginal state was exploited by ‘purposeful’ women who understood that the virginal state gave them a special claim on Christian society and used it to improve conditions for other women (Warner, 1976). For example, notable advances in the worlds of teaching, nursing and social work were achieved by women like Teresa of Avila (d.1582), who reformed the Carmelite order, Angela Merici (d.1540), who founded the Ursulines, Jeanne de Chantal (d.1641), who set up the Sisters of the Visitation, and in England Mary Ward (d.1645), who fought the Papacy in order to be able to educate women.

As long as a woman is for birth and children, she is different from man as body is from soul. But when she wishes to serve Christ more than the world, then she will cease to be a woman, and will be called a man. (Warner, 1976, p. 73).

Religious life enabled some, mostly members of the elite early modern women to achieve a certain amount of freedom, within significant limits (Schlau, 2002). According to Hollywood, ‘submission of one’s own will to that of the divine was the precondition for women’s agency within the religious sphere’ (2004, p. 514). The complete loss of will is
often explicitly gendered. Not only is the soul understood as feminine in relationship to a male divinity, but woman’s perceived passivity and malleability was believed to render them particularly suitable vessels of God - Hollywood’s work focuses on the example of Mechthild of Magdeburg who accentuates her humility, even abjection, as female in order to become the site of divine agency on earth and concludes that ‘Mechthild explicitly grounds her authority on a rhetoric of femininty that both constrains and empowers her’ (Hollywood, 2004, p. 516). Nuns projected themselves as a ‘third gender’ (Schlau, 2002 p. 288). Considered neither men nor women (vows of poverty produced amenorrhea – a sign of their liberation from womanhood), they lived lives less circumscribed than those of most secular women. Women religious were required to transcend their ‘womanness’, while religious men were not required to transcend they manliness (Schlau, 2002). Many spiritually charismatic medieval women were well educated, but they typically downplayed their knowledge. Instead they worked by inversion, speaking for God who used the weak and foolish to overcome the strong and the wise (Furey, 2004). They projected themselves as humble and weak, suitable vessels for Christ, to do his will. In order to achieve respect and authority they had to negate their own femininity either by emphasising their power as virgins – like Mary, holy and separate from the world, or by emphasising their frailty and humility, or through a physical denial of their femininity.

History shows that although some individual nuns used these strategies successfully, nuns were subject to regulations and surveillance that was not applied to monks and friars on account of their gender. Nuns as a group were not able to overcome the Church’s conceptualisation of women being more prone to sin than men. In Marina Warner’s words: ‘the nun’s state is a typical Christian conundrum, oppressive and liberating at once, founded in contempt of, yet inspiring respect for, the female sex’ (1976, p. 77).
During the great age of (western) monasticism, from the eighth to the twelfth centuries, monks vastly outnumbered nuns, yet this began to change over the course of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries (Bynum, 1987; Little, 2002). Prior to the thirteenth century nuns had relative parity to monks and friars, but as the number of women in the monastic orders began to increase the Church sought more control over the activities of nuns. Nuns formed the majority of religious cloistered by the fifteenth century. The double monasteries over which women had ruled were gone by the thirteenth century. By the late fourteenth and fifteenth centuries women appear more isolated and male controlled, subjected to increasing male scrutiny and greater danger of being charged with heresy or witchcraft. In 1563 the Council of Trent approved a reform program that prescribed strict cloister rules for all female convents in the Catholic world (Evangelisti, 2003). This enclosure was aimed a redefinition of the role of nuns, and the reform was directed exclusively to female convents (Evangelisti, 2003). The key principles of the reform presented a disciplinary program inspired by the early monastic model: poverty, chastity and obedience to male superiors were its chief aims (Evangelisti, 2003). Regulations restricting entrance to, and exit from, the convent had existed since early monastism, and while prescriptions were extended to monks as well as nuns historically there was a greater emphasis on strict cloistering in female religious houses which reflected the widespread misogynous belief that women were not only incapable of governing themselves, but that female nature was weak and frail and more naturally inclined to sin. Caroline Bynum (1978) contends that this program of mandatory supervision and sequestration was evidence of a conservative patriarchal backlash – that the ecclesiastical policies were at least somewhat reactive to the quest for greater independence that many women religious had undertaken so successfully in the Late Middle Ages. Ulrike Strasser (2004) seeks to demonstrate that the large scale reforms were representative of the reconfiguration of institutions in early modern society, and a part of the large scale project of institutional homogenisation and centralisation – a movement that had counterparts in secular society such as the increased control that husbands had over their wives and the
secular trials of women accused of witchcraft. For Stasser, the convent reforms reflect the constitutive function of gender in the reorganisation of politics during the transition from the early modern to the modern period. In both the ecclesiastical and secular arenas there is the same move towards male-headed households – which were considered part of the public sphere in this period. The laws by which the state strengthened the position of the patriarchal head of house, meaning that the men were able to be held publicly accountable for the actions of their dependents, were echoed in the monastic reforms whereby every religious house was now subordinate to a male bishop.

The Reformation had a great impact upon nuns as the nations which rejected Catholicism closed down monasteries. State authorities perceived that the Reformation offered the possibility of increased control over women and their sexuality - a significant motivation to embrace Protestantism (Roper, 1989). The appeal of the Protestant Reformation hinged in on two formulations: first, the notion that sex was a human drive akin to the need for sleep or food and best met within marriage; and second, the conviction that divinely ordered gender hierarchies were the basis of social order. Understood together, in Roper’s analysis, these two Protestant concepts facilitated the ‘domestication’ of women in patriarchal households headed by publicly accountable men. Forcing women to embrace marriage and motherhood as their sole vocations, Protestant authorities subsequently attempted to erase alternate spaces for female lives – such as the convents and brothels - from the institutional landscape. Patriarchal households with heterosexual married couples at the centre became the primary socio-political system (Roper, 1989). Thus with the overthrow of Catholicism in Protestant states, women’s lives remained under patriarchal control, but always under the auspices of marriage rather than convent.

Modern Women and the Modern Church

Not to tell a story of human degradation done in the name of humanity is to invite it
to happen again. And that is bad enough. But the fact is that, in this case, the story is not finished, the story never ends, the ideas are completely changed, the assumptions upon which the exploitation of women have long been based are yet to be discarded (Paul, 1999, p. 1).

Patriarchal theism has operated historically to limit women’s opportunities. As nuns, women were more strictly regulated and supervised than their male counterparts, and secular women lived, for the most part, highly circumscribed lives. In the modern era patriarchal theism continues to function within the churches. The Catholic Church maintains its denial of ordination to women, and in the churches which do permit women to the priesthood a ‘stained glass ceiling’ remains in place (Sullins, 2000).

At a doctrinal level, Christian discourse is contradictory when it affirms that all human beings have equal rights to salvation but excludes women from the positions of authority which dispense salvation (Rosado-Nunes, 2003). Anne O’Brien refers to the contradiction that ‘women used a theology of equality and inclusion to empower themselves in an institution that depicted them as a secondary sex’ (O’Brien, 2005, p.13). The church has expected women to repress their sexuality, control their reproductive life, valorised them as mothers while offering no other role in which to express their spirituality and expected them to do the dirty and menial tasks. Yet at the same time church life for many women has been a vehicle for autonomy, sisterhood and been a fundamental part of movements such as temperance, female suffrage, social purity and Indigenous rights – the intrinsic dualism of theology has played out in women’s lived experiences of church life (Ecklund, 2003; O’Brien, 2005). On the one hand subordinated daughters of Eve, on the other saved by the blood of Christ and offered equal redemption. O’Brien’s work details the lived experiences of women as God’s Willing Workers (O’Brien, 2005). Why do women disproportionately invest in an institution that systematically devalues them? Ozorak’s (1996) study found that although women identified some inequalities in the church, they chose to deal with it
through ‘cognitive restructuring’ – reinterpreting their environment and adjusting their responses to it. Such a tactic allowed women to maintain their self-esteem without having to abandon their religious beliefs (Ozorak, 1996).

‘If religions are so oppressive for women, why are women their most faithful adherents?’ asks Rosado-Nunes (2003, p. 86). Woodhead (2002) maintains that even while it subordinates women, religion allows women to the opportunity to articulate and realise their desires. ‘It is crucial to remember that, in spite of the misogyny that underpins the Christian religion, it offered women a revolution, as long as they subscribed to its precepts’ (Warner, 1976, p. 72). Concrete analysis of the ways in which religion functions in different societies at different times shows that under specific historical circumstances religion can act as a catalyst to raise women’s consciousness of their social and religious exclusion (Rosado-Nunes, 2003). This is illustrated by the fact that the National Organisation of Women (NOW) includes religious women among its founders, including Sister Joel Read, a Catholic nun (Braude, 2004).

Agitation by committed Catholic women over the past forty years has not resulted in a dramatic change of doctrine and the 2004 publication *Letter to the Bishops of the Catholic Church in the Collaboration of Men and Women in the Church and the World* released by the Office of Rome makes the Church’s contemporary position on the issue clear. The Catholic Church emphasises the difference between men and women and uses this difference as justification for the ‘the reservation of priestly ordination solely to men’ (Ratzinger & Amato, 2004, p. na). This letter characterises feminism as being a movement of antagonism which instructs women to ‘make themselves the adversaries of men’, ‘to seek power’ (Ratzinger & Amato, 2004, p. na). The letter, with recourse to the Adam and Eve story in Genesis explains that ‘woman, in her deepest and original being, exists “for the other”’ (Ratzinger & Amato, 2004, p. na). Woman has a ‘mystical’ identity, she is like
Mary – embodying the virtues of ‘listening, welcoming, humility, faithful [sic], praise and waiting’ (Ratzinger & Amato, 2004, p. na). Women are cautioned to remember their role within the Church and the family and not be seduced by modern movements which place men and women in opposition and encourage women to seek authority. For:

In the Church, women as “sign” is more than ever central and faithful, following as it does from the very identity of the Church, as received from God and accepted in faith. It is the “mystical” identity, profound and essential, which needs to be kept in mind when reflecting on the respective roles on men and women in the Church (Ratzinger & Amato, 2004, p. na).

Christian churches of other denominations do allow the ordination of women, but research from the United States suggest that within the priestly roles women remain subordinated to their male counterparts. Women constitute ten percent of American religious leaders (Olson, Crawford, & Guth, 2000). Women clergy are over-represented in subordinate positions and in those having lower status – this inequality is remarkably constant and undiminished over time throughout the clerical career (Olson et al., 2000; Sullins, 2000).

As can been seen from the examples drawn from Genesis through to the present day Christian theology has been premised on underlying dualisms which hierarchically order the world, while problematic due to the paradox of women been subordinated to men, yet equal in reception of redemption. Once the implicit dualistic presumptions of patriarchal theism are made explicit, it is easier to recognise that the linguistic connections between nature and women are inextricably linked to the descriptive and conceptual stereotypes which have come to identify these. These connections reveal a covert commitment to an epistemology of power that depicts women and nature in ways that are distinctly male biased. An examination of the modern church elucidates the dualistic epistemology at the heart of Christian theology that continues to shape it even today. As has been argued by White
(1967/1973) and Stark (2003) the world view developed by the Christian Church underlies the modern scientific project and it is that to which we now turn.

Science and the Feminine

‘Progress is nothing else than the giving up of female gender by changing into the male.’ Philo of Judeus writing in the first century (in Block, 1991, p.107).

That western science has developed out of the Christian mindset has been argued by Lynn White Jr (White, 1967/1973) and more recently articulated by Rodney Stark (Stark, 2003). Out of this mindset developed the science that has been lauded as being responsible for the tremendous progress, scientific, technological and medical, that western culture has undergone. One glimpses a watershed in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. During this time nuns were cloistered, husbands were given increased control over and responsibilities for their wives and children in their households, and women were being tried and executed for the crime of witchcraft. The beginning of the seventeenth century signalled the dawning of the modern era and a time when science was moving away from the control of the church. During this time state control was increasing over the populace independent of the Churches which had undergone the Reformation and Counter Reformation. The rhetoric used to describe science changed from seeking to understand the mind of God, to one of having nature reveal her secrets.

Feminists have revealed the extent that science is not neutral and objective but instead is based on dualistic understanding of the world. Science is based on the masculine values of a world that is understood in binary terms (Bordo, 1993; Haraway, 1988; Harding, 1991). Salient examples, which illustrate some of the ways in which science manifests an ideology
of control over women, will be detailed in this chapter, including medical processes which treat women as a deviant ‘other’ which must be controlled, not unlike the chaos of nature. In the fields of gynaecology and obstetrics, women are put under increasing surveillance and subject to increasing interventions in order that doctors are able to correct the deficiencies of nature’s imperfect design. In the area of mental health women are treated differently to men and their treatment demonstrates the masculine way that personhood, autonomy and agency are perceived. I proffer the example of Rachel Carson to show that the way that she was treated by her fellow scientists reveals that her femininity was perceived to be a direct threat to the masculine pursuits of scientific progress.

It has been argued by scholars (Griffin, 1978; Plumwood, 1991; Ruether, 1975) that the historical connections between women and nature can be traced from the values of dualism and patriarchal rationalism, which developed from Greek philosophy and then influenced Christian theology. The process of dualism divides the fundamental elements of the world into two opposing and mutually exclusive categories, with a superior value attached to one of the two categories. This is evident in the conceptual basis found in sex-gender differences - masculinity is viewed as the norm, while femininity is viewed as being the passive other. In turn, dualisms such as these become entrenched as paradigmatic exemplars that are uncritically oriented towards the western and masculine way of experiencing the world (Collard & Conrucci, 1988). The masculine disposition defines the male mindset as rational and objective, while the female mindset is characterised as subjective and steeped in emotion. Given its preoccupation with objectivity, it has been argued that science thus becomes the socially endorsed institutional expression of the male psyche (Laura & Cotton, 1999). Within the resultant philosophical framework of dualisms the Greeks – and later, Francis Bacon, the father of modern science, deemed man, armed with his with the superior tools of technology and reason, to be the master of both women and nature. As Frith explains,
Through this ideological conflation of ‘Woman’ and ‘Nature’, women could be effectively excluded from mankind, posited as ‘additional part of the Species, another (and an ‘Other’) territory to be explored, investigated, penetrated, ‘revealed’, mastered, an object of Knowledge, rather than its producer (Frith, 1994, p. 101, see also Schiebinger, 1993).

With the advent of Bacon’s writings the orthodox concept of science as the ‘servant of nature’ was supplanted with a radically different concept of science as the master subjugator of nature. It would be presumptuous to suggest that Bacon alone can be held responsible for the consequent devaluation and progressive exploitation of nature. Nonetheless, his writings have done much to establish in institutional terms the patriarchal presumptions which reinforce the accepted social view of women as objects of exploitation, consonant with his patriarchal perceptions of nature as a female object of expropriation. His work provides an example of the scientific mindset of the early seventeenth century. In this new perception of nature the earth was no longer viewed as a benign benefactor, but as a contrary female in need of being tamed and subdued. By ‘unearthing’ her inner secrets, it would become possible, Bacon assumed, to ensure the advancement of mankind’s control over nature without insuperable resistance from its forces (Merchant, 1980). Thus emerged a contrasting image of nature as a wild female - irrational and capable of mass destruction in the form of droughts, earthquakes and floods, to name only a few of her disruptive manifestations. This being so, the organic methods of gentle interaction with nature gave way to mechanistic methods of scientific technology, methods with the power to impact upon nature profoundly. Inasmuch as nature was described by Bacon on the model of a machine, the sense of moral conscience that would otherwise be invoked when manipulating and violating her was thereby diminishing.
Rachel Carson and Masculine Science

Rachel Carson was an accomplished scientist and author whose 1962 book *Silent Spring* was foundational in the development of the environmental movement. She eloquently and eruditely described the damage that insecticides and pesticides were doing to ‘the balance of nature’ and through her work brought awareness to many about the damaging aspects of the scientific paradigm. Michael Smith (2001) analyses the gendered nature of the criticisms levelled at Carson, which serve to illuminate the agenda of those working within the auspices of science. Carson’s work made her the target of the petrochemical industries, the United States Department of Agriculture and research universities and these entities set out to denounce her in a nefarious public relations exercise (Smith, 2001).

*Silent Spring* was published in an abridged serial form in the summer of 1962 in the *New Yorker* and while Carson received an outpouring of support she was also attacked and denigrated by the institutions that she criticised. Smith writes

> Carson was also threatening because she was a woman, an independent scholar whose sex and lack of institutional ties placed her outside the nexus of the production and application of conventional scientific knowledge (2001, p.734).

Although a respected government researcher who had published best selling books on ocean biology she was attacked for her science and her training. She was called an ‘amateur’, a mere ‘scientific journalist’, whilst her writing was described as ‘emotional’ (and lacking the rationality and objectivity of real scientific work). It was implied that she dabbled in the ‘soft’ science of biology, rather than the ‘hard’ sciences of chemistry, it was said that her work was based on ‘sentimentality’ rather than ‘reality’ (Smith). In the writings of her critics, we see a defence of the ideology of modern science. According to William Darcy in his October 1962 review of *Silent Spring*, entitled ‘Silence, Miss Carson!’ (bringing to mind St Paul’s injunction that women are to keep silent) Carson’s work threatened
the end of human progress, reversion to a passive social state devoid of technology, scientific medicine, agriculture, sanitation, or education. It means disease, epidemics, starvation, misery, and suffering incomparable and intolerable to modern man. Indeed, social educational, and scientific development is prefaced on the conviction that man’s lot will be and is being improved by greater understanding of and thereby increased ability to control or mould [sic] those forces responsible for man’s suffering, misery and deprivation (cited in Smith, 2001, p.738).

Smith reports that *Time* magazine found her writing to be ‘patently unsound’; ‘hysterically emphatic’, ‘an emotional outburst’ (Smith, 2001, p. 741). *Time* sought to correct Carson on her use of the metaphor ‘the balance of nature’ by informing its readers:

scientists realistically point out that the balance of nature was upset thousands of years ago when man’s invention of weapons made him king of the beasts. The balance has never recovered its equilibrium; man is the dominant species on his planet, and as his fields, pastures and cities spread across the land, lesser species are extirpated, pushed into refuge areas, or domesticated. (Smith, 2001, p. 741).

*Life* magazine also discredited Carson in a piece purported to be a balanced assessment of the issues, the article concluding that ‘Hurricane Rachel’ would be endured, becalmed and ‘the real dangers to public health [could] be evaluated, and then controlled by skilled medical men’ (Smith, 2001, p. 742). Rachel Carson’s work was a political statement which critiqued the carelessness of the path of a science, and the reaction to her work highlights the gendered assumptions which underpin the scientific project.

**Feminist critiques of masculine science**

These ideologies expressed in the critiques of Rachel Carson are the subject of Sandra Harding’s work. She critiques science as being a political and social activity with unexamined agendas. Harding queries wherever science can advance global equality, based as it is on Western, European, white, patriarchal values and she calls for a re-examination of
the scientific project, one that illuminates both the positives and regressive elements of
science (Harding, 1991, 2002). Critiques have questioned the feasibility of science as a
neutral endeavour and noted that the standpoint of scientists influences scientific practices
and products (Harding, 1991, 2002). Kourany states that ‘science has done more to
perpetuate and add to the problems women confront that to solve them’ (cited in Koertge,
2004, p. 868; see also Rolin, 2004). While it can be argued that feminist critiques of science
have in some ways changed science (Schiebinger, 2000), at its core its epistemology remains
unchanged (see chapter four for a more explicit enunciation for the epistemology of science).
Women are no longer excluded from scientific work, for example a woman has held the
position of chief scientist at NASA and another has been the president of the foremost
association of Japanese physicists (Schiebinger). It has been argued then that gender based
exclusions have been removed from science and there has been recognition that ‘baseless
paradigms’ in medicine and behavioural sciences have been pretexts for the subordination of
women (Schiebinger). The western medical system has at its basis the male body as the
norm - with women’s physiology considered to be an aberrant ‘other’. This means, that on
the one hand many medical treatments are developed using only male bodies as the basis,
while their results are cavalierly and unreflectingly extrapolated to women. On the other
hand, feminist scholars have long observed that normal healthy female processes such as
menstruation, pregnancy, birth and menopause are viewed as flawed events in need of
medical management (Griffin, 1978; Plumwood, 1991; Ruether, 1975; Stout & McPhail,
1998). One way in which feminism has changed the practice of science has come as a result
of the feminist remonstrations about egregious instances of using the male body to represent
the norm such as the influential medical studies which omitted women completely.

The 1982 ‘Physicians Heath Study of Aspirin and Cardiovascular Disease’ had 22 071 male
participants and the ‘Multiple Risk Factor Intervention Trial’ which studied heart disease in
15 000 men, neither study had any women participants (Schiebinger). The absence of
women from these trials is especially ironic as heart disease is the leading cause of death in women, claiming more lives each year than all forms of cancers combined (Stout & McPhail, 1998). The feminist outcry at instances such as these has led to major health research reforms in the US (occurring in 1997, Grace, 2007) and elsewhere designed to ensure medical research includes women where appropriate (Schiebinger, 2000). As encouraging as these initiatives are feminist reform has not occurred evenly across all branches of science, and a continued ‘lack of gender neutrality can be documented in the social, medical, and life sciences, where research objects are sexed or easily imagined to have sex and gender’ (Schiebinger, 2000, p. 1173). A recent example would be the latest evolutionary psychology study reported in the Sunday Times which purports to ‘scientifically’ prove that increased male partner income results in higher frequently orgasms in women (Leake & Watt, 2009). Koertge (2004) notes that the continued lack of neutrality in science operates not only against women, but also against those from non-dominant races and classes.

The documented lack of neutrality in science is the subject of considerable feminist scholarship; Elizabeth Anderson (2010) describes the five ways in which feminists critique scientific practices. Firstly they seek to demonstrate the ways in which scientists women are excluded or marginalised, and how this impedes scientific progress. Rachel Carson’s story detailed above represents one instance of this practice. Secondly, feminists seek to demonstrate the ways in which applications of science and technology disadvantage women and other vulnerable groups. Eugenics is a salient example of this process, as is economic development policies which only offer resources to men, thereby reinforcing western gender hierarchies (See chapter 3). Thirdly, feminist critiques of science seek to correct instances where science has ignored women and gender and that incorporating understanding of gender may necessitate the revision of accepted theories; the field of archaeology abounds with examples (Anderson, 2010). Fourthly, feminist critiques of science have demonstrated
that an insistence on ‘masculine’ cognitive styles – for example seeking theoretical models of centralised, hierarchical control models of causation, rather than ‘feminine’ diffused, interactive, contextual models have in some instances impeded the progress of scientific understanding. Fifthly, Feminist critiques of scientific practice seek to highlight the ways in which research in sex differences reinforces sexist stereotypes and perpetuates essentialist beliefs about the ‘natural’ differences between men and women (See for example Fine’s 2010 work on how neuroscience is being used to reinforce sexist ideas about the difference in brain functioning of men and women, often on the basis of research found not be suitably rigorous). Such studies also serve to marginalise and render invisible those who do not fit into the male/female binary (the intersexed, for example).

Feminist epistemological theorists suggest that critiques of science must go deeper than highlighting and correcting instances of sexist practice. Arguing that science is biased on a dualistic epistemology (Tuana, 1992) they seek a non-dual perspective for science (Grace, 2007). For Grace, the emerging quest for gender specific medicine highlights why dualism within science needs to be overcome. For her, one problematic aspect of dualism is that within a given binary one term is dominant and the other is, by definition, subordinate. In the case of scientific medicine, for example, men are taken as the norm and women the subordinate ‘other’. Women were excluded from medical trials on the basis that their hormones would confound results, but (as in the case described above) the results were extrapolated to the general population (which would, presumably include women). While the new emphasis within medical science upon gender specific medicine would hopefully preclude such practices, Grace is concerned that with the dualistic epistemology of science remaining intact, gender specific medicine will serve to reinforce the dichotomising and essentialising of biological sex. A further problem that Grace identifies is that ‘we will remain bound to reductionism of the statistical basis of the normal and the pathological, and
the hierarchy intrinsic to dualism will continue to sustain’ (2007, p. 7) the subordination of the body to the mind, nurture to nature and the environment to the gene.

Reproductive Science and the Control of Women

One way in which feminist scholars critique science is to demonstrate the ways in which applications of science and technology disadvantage women and other vulnerable groups. For the past twenty years various feminist authors have argued that reproductive technologies are an example of masculine science being applied to ‘aberrant’ female bodies and thus, in some ways, disadvantage women, and it is to these arguments that I now turn. Feminist analysis of such scientific research and technological applications suggests that reproductive sciences and technologies reinforce unequal power relations (Bordo, 1993; Lowry, 2004). Technoscience is both reinforced and imbued with the predominant worldviews, desires, and fears of the society in which they are generated (Gould, 1981; Harding, 1991; Laura & Cotton, 1999; Laura & Marchant, 2002; Taubes, 1998).

Researchers argue that how scientific problems are defined, which questions are posed, who is awarded expert status, which machines and measurements are employed, are anything but neutral, automatic decisions (Latour, 1987; Laura & Cotton, 1999; Laura & Marchant, 2002). It is now expected that ‘good’ mothers will undergo a routine series of tests during pregnancy (Lowry, 2004). This subtle form of eugenics that is maintained through accessibility and marketing of reproductive technologies has been questioned by scholars (Laura & Cotton, 1999; Lowry, 2004). Feminist critiques of the use of the science in reproductive technologies have been made on the following grounds. Firstly, they promote essential ideas about women as foetal containers through the promotion of the image of the foetus as autonomous and independent of the mother (Maher, 2002). Secondly, reproductive technologies maintain and reinforce disparities according to class and race (Whitney, 1999). Thirdly, they perpetuate social requirements of a ‘normal, healthy’ foetus and increase the responsibility and culpability of the expectant mother (Blank, 1993; Lowry, 2004).
Fourthly, these technologies remove power and autonomy from the expectant mother and promote increased social control through the increased surveillance opportunities (Blank, 1993; Lowry, 2004). For Lowry the use of technologies such as the sonogram creates images of the foetus that appear independent of the pregnant women in an image of ‘abstraction [that] can be understood as a form of fetishism promoted by the objectifying qualities of surveillance (Lowry, 2004, p. 364). In critiquing the ‘surveillant assemblage’ of reproductive technologies Lowry notes if

the surveillance, abstraction, fetishism, and risk discourse imbued in reproductive technologies are also key characteristics of contemporary technologies and technological society generally, attempts to change reproductive power relations cannot be mechanistically approached (2004, p. 366).

Lowry maintains that no matter how potentially transformative the latest technologies are, they simultaneously reinforce traditional social norms and power relations and that this aspects of the technological imperative needs to be addressed. Janelle Taylor (2000) argues that such technologies have reduced the status of embryos and foetus’ to the status of commodities and reproduction itself has been constructed as a matter of consumption. For example, the developing foetus is understood in one sense to be the food the mother consumes – with the attendant pressure on the mother to consume only what is good and healthy for the children. In addition, pregnancy is viewed as being a time to spend on consumer goods for the baby and ultrasounds allow parents to shop more accurately knowing their baby’s gender. The resulting ideology surrounding the birth is now that of a consumer’s choice – a woman can purchase a particular kind of pregnancy experience (holistic or technological) and with this she ‘demonstrates her powers and her talents as a consumer, and engages in the construction of her identity, by the manner in which she consumes her pregnancy and birth’ (Taylor, 2000, p. 406). (Also see Mardorossian, 2003, who argues that contemporary birthing practices uphold patriarchal social relations even
while giving the illusion of choice). The ultrasound objectifies the foetus which allows the mother to consume it in other ways – she receives a photo of her unborn child as a keepsake of the ultrasound experience that she can show other people (Taylor).

Mental Health and Masculine Science

Mental health is another area where feminists have shown a continuing bias exists against women (Stout & McPhail, 1998). Historically diagnoses of hysteria occurred in epidemic proportions during times of cultural change leading feminist historians to wonder whether is was being used as a way of keeping women in the home (Briggs, 2000). So pervasive was hysteria that nineteenth century physician George Beard wrote a seventy-five page catalogue of symptoms (Briggs). In her examination of the discourse of the nineteenth century Laura Briggs argues that the cultural use of ‘hysteria’ was not only a way of controlling gender but had a racial dimension also. She documents how late nineteenth century gynaecological and obstetrical literature not only opposed white women’s political struggles by insisting that contraceptive use, abortion, education and professional work could cause nervous illness, but this was contrasted with breeding strength and constitutional hardiness of non-white women (Briggs, 2000). For Briggs, ‘by insisting that white women were becoming sterile and weak while non-white women remained fertile and strong, it encoded women’s transgressive behaviour as a danger to the future of “the race” ’ (Briggs, 2000, p. 250). Regina Morantz-Sanchez also examined nineteenth century gynaecology and found in her examination of doctor patient relationships of the time that accounting for women’s suffering by reference to their reproductive system underscored women’s difference from men, which would serve to reinforce the notion of separate spheres. Nicole Moulding examined health worker attitudes to eating disorders and found that discourse in this area is profoundly gendered, a process termed ‘the feminisation of deficient identity’ (Moulding, 2003). There is a belief by feminist researchers that current psychological explanations for
anorexia nervosa reproduce mind body dualisms which are argued to be central in sustaining anorexic practices (Moulding). For as Heywood states:

If, as an inheritor of the canonical Western tradition, she internalises a worldview that is male, a view spelled out clearly in Plato, Descartes, Hegel and Freud among others, a woman almost cannot do otherwise that develop a preoccupation with body, since that body has made her the negative side of culture (Heywood, p. 268).

Andrea Nicki examines the link between trauma and psychiatric disability, as many people suffering from mental illness are survivors of childhood abuse (Nicki, 2001). Nicki is concerned that norms of mental health remain different for men and women. She notes that society’s rejection of physically disabled people is based on cultural insistence on the control of the body, likewise society’s rejection of mentally ill people stems from cultural insistence on control of the mind. She also notes that feminists have noted that the construction of mental illness has been used as means of social control, an egregious example would be the fact that it was only relatively recently, in 1973, that homosexuality was removed from the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (the official register of psychopathologies) as a mental illness (Nicki, 2001). Feminist theory of physical disability focuses on society’s oppression of the body, of alternative bodily states of the physically disabled. Similarly, feminist theory of psychiatric disability concerns the oppression of the mind by a society that rejects and despises the alternate mental states found in the psychiatrically disabled. They note that much of what is disabling is a consequence of social arrangements (Wendell, 1989). That is to say, although physical and mental illness and disability can be debilitating in and of themselves, social arrangements that suit only a norm (i.e., carry an implicit presumption of an abled body and ‘sound’ mind) exacerbate suffering by their being very few mechanisms and allowances made in society that those that do not fit the default position. Historically the default person, is not just physically fit and of sound mind and body, but is represented by a white, privileged male body. Feminist philosophers
of science are concerned that science remains an area in which certain constructions of the body (white, male, able, etc) remain privileged and are normalised by the epistemic values that have come to define science, while those who are ‘Othered’ are either marginalised and rendered invisible or subject to invasive treatments.

Conclusion

The dissemination of discourses on witches…in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, like those on the hysteric in the nineteenth century, bear witness to certain economies of truth and power about women that are, at once specific patriarchal struggles for autonomy and aggressive campaigns to repudiate and extirpate the feminine, and/or to implement systems of regulation and control (Denike, 2003, p.14).

I have attested within this chapter that various western institutions have traditionally been sites of control over and regulation of women. The history of marriage, as practiced in the West, shows that for millennia women were treated as the property of their fathers and husbands and had their rights and activities curtailed by means physical, financial, and legal. Although on paper women and men now have the same rights when entering marriage, marriage remains a site by which the state can exercise control over the populace and where patriarchal benefits are still extended to men, partly through the continued burden on women of the second shift responsibilities.

The history of the Church shows, how quite explicitly, the Bible is used to ‘prove’ that women are more prone to sin and depravity than men, and that men are closer to God in the theological hierarchy established within patriarchal theism. Historically, this conceptualisation has meant that nuns were subject to more control and scrutiny than their
male counterparts, subject to the authority of a male bishop, in a manner that mirrored the way secular women were subject to the authority of their fathers and husbands. Over the centuries, women not under the authority of a husband or bishop could be punitively tried under the suspicion of witchcraft. This view of women, as inherently more sinful than men, has also resulted in an almost complete denial to women of any positions of authority within the Church, a denial that while rescinded in some denominations remains in place within the Catholic Church.

Likewise, within the scientific realm, a masculine paradigm which developed out of the mindset of the Christian Church, women have been subjected to different regimes of medical control from men, as it was believed that the male body is the norm while the female physiology represents an abhorrent ‘other’. Thus the mechanisms of control and subjugation levelled at women have become increasingly subtle, sophisticated and technologically based, yet with pervasiveness of medical and science aegis they remain ever present. For example women’s normal bodily functions, such as menstruation, pregnancy and menopause are treated as deviant medical conditions requiring scrutiny and treatment (Stout & McPhail, 1998). It was argued that no matter how potentially transformative the latest technologies are, they can be understood as simultaneously reinforcing traditional social norms and power relations. Thus, an epistemological thread can be traced through the tradition ideas surrounding marriage, within Christian theology and notions of scientific progress which establishes an ideology of a ‘male-headed’ realm. Man is the head of the household, the head of the church, and according to scientific ideology, ‘man is the dominant species on his planet, and as his fields, pastures and cities spread across the land, lesser species are extirpated, pushed into refuge areas, or domesticated’ (in Smith, 2001, p.741). ‘Domestication’ then, is an apt metaphor for the control and subjugation that women have historically been subject to, within marriage, by the church and through some of the interventions of medical science.
This epistemological thread can be further discerned when attention is turned to the global situation. When the situation of women worldwide is considered mechanisms of control and gendered power relations can be seen to be embedded in further hierarchies of race, place, ethnicity and economics, and it is to these that we now turn.
And this is where feminism should come in, forcing society to admit that when half of the population experiences systematic injustice, we all suffer.

(Dux & Simic, 2008, p. 207).

As can be seen in the examples proffered in chapter two, women of the western nations are conceptualised differently to their male counterparts. Through marriage, religion, and the scientific worldview women have been conceptualised as being resources in need of male control and domination. While two and a half centuries of feminist agitation have changed the position of women in western societies in profound ways, the examples elucidated in the previous chapters serve to demonstrate that women and men are still far from being equally regarded within western society. It is the aim of this chapter to show that when the gaze is expanded to include the situation of women worldwide, the asymmetry between the social positioning of males and females becomes even more pronounced. Women bear an uneven share of the world’s labour, performing the majority of the world’s unpaid labour. As in the situation in the West, women worldwide perform most of the unpaid nurturing tasks, taking care of children and the infirm and elderly. In addition to this third world women are the major producers of the world’s food. For example within Africa women and their children produce 70% of the continent’s food (Salleh, 1998).

In a world where the rich are getting richer and the poor are getting poorer, women remain the poorest of the poor. This phenomenon has been termed ‘the feminisation of poverty’ and
it is this that shall be examined in some detail within the context of chapter three. The United Nations reports that women now comprise 70 percent of the world’s 1.3 billion poor (Jaggar, 2001). I will here present several other salient examples which demonstrate the patriarchal bias against women, which result in women bearing more than their fair share of the world’s suffering. One such example is the global sex trade, with its components of sex tourism and the trafficking of women and children to become sex slaves. Within the global sex industry, the bodies of women are literally traded as commodities, while the vast profits from this enterprise flow to the men who control the trade and the Internet transactions. Another case in point which will be presented in detail in chapter three is the HIV/AIDS crisis. We shall see that in the vast humanitarian response to this global pandemic the sexist bias in the rates of morbidity and treatment allotted to women. Contrary to general expectation the rates of infection and mortality are higher for women than for men, while conversely the rates of treatment are higher for men.

Global Economic systems and the Impact upon Women

An examination of the global picture reveals that the success experienced by some women within the nations of the West stands in stark contrast to the experiences of women and men of the rest of the world. A perusal of the work of feminist geographers and economists reveals the enormous disparity of wealth around the world and the way in which the labour performed falls unevenly upon the shoulders of the world’s poorest women. It becomes clear that almost universally certain kinds of work are considered to be ‘women’s work’, that is, work not considered worthy of remuneration. On top of this, globally, women are in demand as the ‘ideal’ worker in the modern flexible workplace. I shall examine patterns of women’s work across the globe in order to show how, it can be understood that women worldwide are conceptualised as resources available to for subjugation and exploitation, as
the values underlying the economic system are those generated by epistemological patriarchy (see chapter one). Within this economic system women’s labour is defined as worthless, that is socially and economically without value, and therefore not worthy of equitable remuneration or regulatory protection (Mills, 2003). In addition to the highly gendered patterns visible in the global workforce, the economic inequities exacerbate existing racial, ethnic and geographic inequalities.

**Women’s Work**

Women around the world are at considerable economic disadvantage in comparison to men. It has been estimated that women undertake 65% of the world’s work (here referring to all work undertaken, both paid and unpaid) (Salleh, 1997), and women along with their children produce over 50% percent of the world’s food (Warren, 1998) and yet receive only ten percent of the world’s income (Kelly, 1997). Moreover, women receive less than one percent of the aid distributed by the UN and own less than one percent of the world’s property (Salleh, 1998), despite the fact that females make up over fifty percent of the world’s population. The economic disadvantage experienced by women can be partly explained by the fact that their contributions to the economy have all too often been ignored, both by way of social recognition and by way of pay. Given the dominant paradigm of epistemological patriarchy, much of the work performed by women is ‘invisible’. A dramatic example of this invisible work comes from Africa, where women and their children produce 70% of the continent’s food, contributing the bulk of the labour in subsistence agriculture (Pearson, 2000). Remarkably over 5% of Africa’s women are described as being employed (Salleh, 1998).

Feminist economist Marilyn Waring (2003) notes that even the most complex and inclusive systems of accounting employed to quantify the amount of labour performed all over the planet fail to account for all of the work that is performed without pay, and it is women who
perform the bulk of this uncounted work. The sophisticated system employed by the United
Nations System of National Accounts (UNSNA) fails to account for the vast amount of work
that is performed by women for household consumption or unpaid work in the informal
economy. According to Waring, activities not ‘counted’ as work but performed everyday by
millions, include, but is not limited to:

- cleaning, decoration and maintenance of the dwelling occupied by the household;
- cleaning, servicing and repair of household goods; the preparation and serving of
  meals; the care, training and instruction of children; the care of the sick, infirm of old
  people; and the transportation of members of the household or their goods (Waring,
  2003, pp.35-36).

This unpaid work forms the unacknowledged foundation of the paid economy, for without
this work, families would remain unfed, children uncared for and the basic necessities
essential for life would not be done. This work remains invisible and unacknowledged and
when women do enter the paid workforce they are expected to ensure that this unremitting
and unremunerated work continues to be done.

Women workers in the Neo-liberal Global Economy

Where women do participate in the paid economy they are clustered into the worst paying,
unregulated forms of employment. Contemporary globalisation has witnessed a rise in so-
called “flexible” working conditions – part-time, casual, home-based employment and jobs
in the informal sector – all employment forms in which women are over represented
(Pearson, 2000). Women form the majority of the work force in the new sectors, churning
out consumption goods for the voracious global markets, producing clothing, sportswear,
and electronics. They work in call-centres and data entry facilities, in fruit orchards and
flower farms cheaply producing goods in one spot that then travel around the globe to be
sold in another, producing a contrast of third world labourer with first world consumer. The
labour of the latter is the basis of the leisure consumption of the former. There is an increasing reliance on women to do the lower level work in conditions that are ever more exploitive (Taylor, 2001). As expressed by Ruth Pearson, women have become the:

ideal ‘flexible’ workers in the new global economy, in the sense that their widespread incorporation into global labour markets has given them little security or bargaining power in relation to wages, working conditions, and entitlements to non-wage benefits and publicly provided reproductive services such as child care, elderly care or unemployment benefits (Pearson, 2000, p.13).

Through common financial and economic pressures the experiences of women across the world, but particularly in what is referred to as the global South, are not as disparate as one might expect given the cultural and geographic diversity. The feminisation of poverty, first described in the US, is now acknowledged to be a global phenomenon (Jaggar, 2001). Women all over the world experience economic hardship and pressure which has resulted in specific and particular occupations – Pyle’s (2001, p. 55) “maids, sex workers and export processors”, - being available to millions of women, as well their doing the vast majority of the world’s unpaid labour (Waring, 2003). In addition to the occupational communalities experienced by women across the planet, women are bearing the brunt of the global economic restructuring forced upon the developing nations by economic entities such as the IMF, the World Trade Organisation and the World Bank.

Although neoliberal globalisation is making the lives of many women better, it is making the lives of even more women worse. The lives of many of the world’s poorest and most marginalised women in both the global South and the global North are deteriorating relative to the lives of better-off women and of men and even deteriorating absolutely (Jaggar, 2001, pp.301-302).
Globalisation is an umbrella term, covering many things, but here I refer primarily to the economic processes which are resulting in the increased interconnectivity and interdependence of the world’s financial markets (Jaggar, 2001; Pearson, 2001). As Alison Jaggar explains,

‘globalisation’ is currently used to refer to the rapidly accelerating integration of many local and national economies in a single global market, regulated by the World Trade Organisation, and to the political and cultural corollaries of the process (Jaggar, 2001, p.298).

It refers to a freedom of movement of capital, persons and trade. In the process of the increasing levels of globalisation that have taken place since the end of communism in 1989 nations have lost their sovereignty and there has been documented downward pressure on labour conditions as transnational corporations seek to locate in ever cheaper labour markets, a process facilitated by free trade agreements. Feminist social scientists have documented the resultant deteriorating conditions for women in this process.

A growing body of research has documented the effect of neoliberal globalisation on the lives of women, and the fact that women and children are disproportionately affected by neoliberal economic policies. Lisa Meyer’s (2003) analysis of the affects of economic globalisation on occupational sex segregation and occupational inequality has led her to conclude that global economic restructuring is a gendered process that transforms and builds upon existing gender inequalities. Restructuring is ‘embedded in and exacerbating unequal power relations based on gender, as well as race, ethnicity and class’ (Meyer, 2003, p.353). Or as expressed by Viviene Taylor, globalisation ‘reinforces existing patterns of exclusion, deepens poverty, increases inequality and creates new social problems for others’ (2001, p.51). Taylor further asserts that economic globalisation has led to the globalisation of other
problems such as the cross border trade in sex workers, and the exploitation of women and children.

On one level increased free trade has led to an increased demand for female labour, as female workers are considered to be more docile, and better at repetitive, dexterous work and well as being cheaper through lower educational levels and felt to be more suited to the increased flexibility of the modern labour market (Collins, 2002; Hu-Dehart, 2003; Meyer, 2003; Pearson, 2000; Pyle, 2001). This increased demand for female workers has been described with different ideological descriptors, each betraying an inherent sexism which justifies the payment to women of low wages in deplorable working conditions. For example, women’s ‘natural dexterity’ is proffered as justification for their mass employment in electronic manufacturing, an industry with a range of documented health (including reproductive) hazards (Pearson, 2000).

A further way in which neoliberal economic policies have worsened life for women is through the legislation of Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) that have been forced onto Southern nations as they have sought to borrow money or re-service existing debts with the IMF or the World Bank. These SAP policies involve a theoretical stabilisation of a nation’s economy through a strict tightening of spending and a lifting of price controls, the removal of barriers to free trade and the deregulation and privatisation of key industries, especially banking and agriculture. The rhetoric of integration into the world economy betrays the reality that the country is being opened up to exporters and investors from the North (Taylor, 2001). Under the SAPs, governments have been forced to cut back spending in areas such as health, education, basic services, job creation and infra-structure development, yet increased levels of public spending on military services has been allowed. Feminists point out that where these structural adjustment programs have taken place, women have been disproportionally affected as, due to their responsibilities as primary
caregivers, the diminished services in areas such as health and education have meant that women have had to provide these services themselves (Jaggar, 2001; Taylor, 2001).

The fall of the Eastern European economies and the collapse of the Soviet Union affected women more than men as many women were laid off and the social services that they depended upon collapsed. Women suffered disproportionately from the massive unemployment following the collapse of the socialist economies and the decline of social services (Jaggar, 2001). For example, it has been estimated that women comprise up to eighty percent of those fired in recent years in Russia and the newly established states due to downsizing and economic shifts, and while women account for two thirds of the unemployed nationwide in Russia, this figure goes up to ninety percent in some regions (Macklin, 2003).

Some 98 percent of women are literate, and many are university educated, but sexual harassment is endemic and employment discrimination condoned. About seventy percent of women graduates report that they cannot find gainful employment. Social services such as daycare, preschool, maternity leave and public health care have collapsed with the transition to a market economy, leaving even professional women with no work and no recourse to private or public support (Macklin, 2003, p.467).

Worldwide economic restructuring has resulted in the development of Export Processing Zones (EPZ) throughout the world. These EPZs offer manufacturers readily sources of cheap labour as workers rights are not as tightly regulated as elsewhere in the world (Pyle, 2001). In 1976, there were EPZ in 24 countries. Since then EPZs have become ubiquitous - there are now over 850 EPZs in over 93 countries (Pyle), employing some 50 million people (Pearson, 2000). Within EPZs female workers are the preferred sources of labour, as they are considered to be diligent, dexterous workers who are less likely to resist unfavourable circumstances or to organise unions and yet paid less than men (Collins, 2002; Hu-Dehart,
EPZs tend to be extremely gendered environments, where women do the majority of the production jobs, while men fill the supervisory, technical and managerial roles (Pyle, 2001). Within the textiles, garments and electronics assembly sectors the proportion of workers that are women is as high as ninety percent (Pyle). Within Taiwan 85 percent of EPZ employees are female, within the Philippines the percentage is 87, 88 percent in Sri Lanka, 80 percent in Mexico and women form 83 percent of the EPZ workforce in Malaysia (Pyle).

Jane Collins (2002) examines the gendered discourse which is proffered to justify corporations search for low wage labour. She uses the example of the US apparel industry which relocated and subcontracted its sewing operation into low wage regions with the claims that women in the US were losing their sewing skills – and that these skills could be sought in areas where women were not yet participating in the paid workforce. Collins notes that the description of sewing as a “naturally occurring” skill is used as justification for finding workers without labour market experience and therefore without the protection of unions. Collins described the discourse of skill as a code used by manufacturers to justify the use of inexperienced workers from the world’s poorer regions. Collins further notes that the discourse of skill has historically been used by male workers to justify higher wages – but in this case ‘naturally occurring’ skills are the justification for the move to areas where the wages are less than 10 percent of US levels.

Mary Beth Mills (2003) finds it a ‘remarkably consistent’ phenomena that employers from industrial nations set up factories in countries from Malaysia to Mexico, Israel to India, seeking out the desired workforce: young, “nimble fingered”, deferential female workers. In country after country hierarchically organised factories are predominantly bottom heavy with low paid female workers being supervised and managed by higher paid, higher ranked male workers. Mills believes that this pattern of a highly gendered workforce has become
crucial to the accumulation of global capital. For Evelyn Hu-Dehart (2003) the ideologically constructed “myth of nimble fingers” is not just a rationalisation for the low wages paid to third world women but it also functions to perpetuates the myth of the inferiority of the intellect of third women and reinforces the race, class and nationality hierarchy which operates on a global level (see He-Duhart, 2003, p.252).

The World Trade Organisation (WTO) was created in 1995 and is described by Alison Jaggar (2001) as being a supranational organisation whose rules supersede the national laws of its signatory nations in issues of trade. Angela Hale provides a case study which exemplifies the way in which the WTO operates. In her examination of the WTO’s impact on the garment industry and its increased control over world business Angela Hale (2002) asks who benefits from process. The WTO is seeking to phase out the Multifibre Arrangement which has shaped trade in textiles and garments since 1974. This phase-out is believed to benefit developing countries but Hale’s analysis leads her to conclude that the beneficiaries will be the Northern-based companies that will profit from fewer restrictions on their global operation. She notes that trade liberalisation has led to downward pressure on labour standards as corporations can dominate the industry without being subject to government regulation. Hale notes that China is predicted to become to the major supplier of the world market as it is seen to have an almost endless supply of cheap labour.

For workers this means not only minimal wages but also a highly disciplined and intensive work schedule. In garment factories that are supplying the world market it is normal for notices to be posted up listing fines and physical punishments for such offences as speaking or drinking water during working hours, sitting or resting, and going to the toilet too often (Hale, 2002, p. 40).

The ready supply of cheap labour in China puts downward pressure on working conditions elsewhere as the increased competition brings insecurity and the threat of deteriorating
conditions of work. The globalised economy enables profits and benefits to be stored in one region, while sacrifices made to create those profits are concentrated in another (Hale, 2002).

Jean Pyle (2001) investigates the role of women in the restructured global economy, and notes that increasing numbers of women become sex workers, maids or employees in the export productions networks. These occupations share the features of low wages, no benefits, long hours, harassment, health hazards and a lack of rights or legal recourse. Her investigations into these three occupations, in locations across the world, have led her to conclude that women had been increasingly forced into these jobs and that many governments have been pushed into adopting strategies that foster these occupations. Women’s bodies are viewed as being one of the resources of a nation and government strategies for wealth often rely on the exploitation of this resource (Pyle). For example, the promotion of a country as a tourist destination often leads to the development or expansion of a sex industry which operates as the icing on the tourism cake. Attempts by governments to attract foreign investment lead to the establishment of export processing zones and open up many jobs for women as export process workers. In addition the exportation of “surplus labour” sees thousands of women leaving countries such as India, Russia, Malaysia and the Philippines as mail order brides, or domestic servants. Strategies such as these start out as temporary solutions and become entrenched institutionalised economic patterns (Pyle, 2001).

Third world working conditions in first world countries

The women who move to other countries as sources of exported labour often end up working as maids or domestics, taking care of the second shift responsibilities of their First World counterparts (Hu-Dehart, 2003), or working in sweat shops within their destination countries as the ‘feminisation of global labour is not limited to third world sites of export oriented industry or agriculture’ (Mills, 2003, p. 46). Low skilled and low cost female labour now
proliferates in the global core and is no longer confined to the periphery. It can be found across the US from the garment sweat shops of southern California to New York’s Chinatowns and garment districts (Mills, 2003). As Heather Mills (2003) notes, there is a link between the sweatshop produced wedding gown industry and the reproduction of patriarchal heteronormality and hegemonic femininity.

In addition to manufacturing, electronics production and sweatshop labour, immigrant female workers from Asia and Latin America are desired in the global core for what has been termed ‘social reproductive labour’ (Mills, 2003, p. 46). Mills reveals that work by Third World immigrant women as; domestics, janitors, cleaners, waitresses, aged care nurses, nannies, prostitutes, sex workers or mail/internet ordered brides, is not just work that is low skilled, low status and low paid but it also relieves First World professional women of their previously unremunerated second shift responsibilities. By industrialising this social reproductive labour this type of work continues to be debased and devalued by being transferred to racially and socially subordinate women. As Mills explains;

this commodification of reproductive labour frees female employers to enter or maintain professional occupations, thereby challenging some gender barriers in their own societies but without a radical reworking of gender responsibilities in the domestic realm. Instead these duties are displaced onto ethnically and legally marginalised women in a complex entanglement of gender, class, racial and ethnic hierarchies that stretch across the globe’ (Mills, 2003, p.46).

While female labour force participation has been lauded as a way of overcoming the inequities between the genders, the increased demand for female labour has not been shown to be a good thing. It has been described as women trading one master for another, as they are freed from dependence on fatherly authority to being employed in draconian conditions, wherein they are subject to excessive supervision and restrictive conditions (Jaggar, 2001).
At the micro level women’s lives have been made harder by difficult working conditions and ideologies that demean them as people and as workers. Restrictive and isolated working arrangements make it impossible for women to organise or join unions (Hale, 2002). The occupations opened up to women are those in which they are subject to dangerous conditions and long hours for little pay.

On a macro level neoliberal economic policies undermine states sovereignty and set nation against nation in a race for lower working conditions, as the regions with the cheapest labour attracts foreign business and investment. In addition, in order to borrow foreign capital nations have to abide by strict SAPs which deteriorate the existing social services of the nation making life more difficult for its citizens. While neoliberal globalisation promises prosperity for all, in the times of its most rampant employment the gap between rich and poor between and amongst nations has increased considerably. Lesley Doyal (2002) notes that while globalisation has had positive impacts in some parts of the world through increased trade and development of economic growth, this not matched in other settings which have experienced increasing inequality ‘both within and between communities, as well as an increase in the overall numbers in poverty’ (p.235).

Population Movement

Paradoxically, while globalisation is premised on the freedom of movement between countries of capital, labour, and money, the flow of people is not premised on the same freedom. Entrepreneurs from the wealthy areas of the world expect to be given unfettered access to the peoples and resources of the developing nations in order to secure and ensure further economic growth. However the movement of people in the other direction from the developing nations, to the developed nations, is very much subject to scrutiny and
regulation, and the movement of people from places of poverty in a search for a better life is severely restricted. I shall now turn my attention to two aspects of population movement, human trafficking and the situation that refugees find themselves and it can be seen that in both cases international responses to the problem continue to be predicated on paternalistic patterns.

**Trafficking of People**

The trafficking of people is perceived as a growing problem and a heinous human rights violation. It is often conflated with the separate problem of people smuggling, but as Shelia Jeffreys (2002, 2009) makes clear, people smuggling is a crime against the state, and a mutual arrangement between the smuggled and the smuggler, but trafficking harms the person/s being trafficked. Much of the literature and public discussion of trafficking revolves around a perception that human trafficking is usually for the purposes of sexual exploitation. While this is a factor in many of the thousands of cases of trafficking in persons that take place each year, it is only a part of a wider problem and research suggests that more persons are trafficked for the purposes of forced labour (see Feingold, 2005).

Although slavery was outlawed in the nineteenth century, modern forms of slavery have emerged. The problem of sex trafficking has tended to dominate public discourse about trafficking. On the one hand, in the attempts to stem off the tide of human traffic, women’s bodies have become the loci of control, and been subject to demands and scrutiny that violates their human right to mobility. On the other hand, the fact that the majority of human trafficking is for the purposes of forced labour is blatantly ignored and downplayed, as the implications of this understanding have ramifications perhaps too unsavoury to contemplate regarding a global financial marketplace in which human beings are fodder in the production of ever cheaper goods and domestic service.
The extent of the problem

Due to the illegal and underground nature of human trafficking there is a wide range of differing estimates in the number of people affected. The US government estimates that 800 000 are trafficked across international borders annually (Lusk & Lucas, 2009), but this number does not include the millions that are trafficked within nations (US State Department, 2008). When all forms of trafficking (including forced child labour, bonded labour and sexual labour) are incorporated, the UN estimates that there are 4 million trafficked workers in the world (Roby, Turley, & Cloward, 2008). But the number could be as high as 27 million (Lusk & Lucas, 2009). The US State Department report ‘Trafficking in Persons’ (2008) cites the International Labour Organisation’s figure of 12.3 million people. An approximate 17 000 people are trafficked annually into the US (Roby, Turley & Cloward, 2008). Of the 800 000 people who are trafficked across borders each year, it is estimated that up to 80% of these are women and children (Lusk & Lucas, 2009). Jini Roby (2005) believes that 1.2 million of those trafficked each year are funnelled into the sex industry. Jeffreys (2002) suggests that most of the 700 000 to 2 million women and children trafficked internationally every year are smuggled into the sex industry.

On the other hand, according to David Feingold (2005), trafficking for the purposes of forced labour is more widespread than that for the sex industry. People are trafficked for a wide variety of services including sweatshop labour and agriculture (Doezma, 2002). An International Labour Organisation reports states that less than 10% of forced labour in Asia was found to be for the purposes of commercial sexual purposes, and worldwide less than half of those trafficked were trafficked for the sex industry (Feingold, 2005). Those trafficked for the purposes of forced labour have been made vulnerable through extreme poverty, often come from areas with a high population density and high unemployment or from places where war, and or, natural disasters have undermined existing social support networks (Lusk & Lucas, 2009). Pamela Shifman (2003) believes that women and girls are
especially vulnerable as increased economic inequality has a discriminatory impact on them. People are trafficked into forced labour situations through false contracts, chattel slavery and war slavery – for example, has been estimated that 100 000 of the world’s 300 000 child soldiers are girls (Plan International, 2008).

While intransigent poverty has created a supply of people vulnerable to exploitation, demand for those trafficked comes from the sex tourism industry, armed conflicts, and the voracious demand for ever cheaper labour engendered by global economic factors (Lusk & Lucas, 2009, Shifman, 2003). This labour can be found in developing nations that have policies which do not offer a minimum wage, allow child labour and offer no protection for workers. For Pamela Shifman, “globalisation has, in short, encouraged new routes and new methods to exploit women and children for profit” (2003, p.125). Poverty and vulnerability mean that across the globe people are enslaved through force or false contracts, alternatively they indenture themselves, or make deals with job brokers, or sell themselves or their children (Lusk & Lucas, 2009). Shifman (2003) details the work that women and girls desperate for their very survival are exploited for - women from Ethiopia are trafficked to Lebanon for domestic work, girls from Nepal are sent to the brothels of Mumbai, and women from Russia are trafficked to the red light districts of Amsterdam. The US State Department (2008) offers further examples of the forced labour that is being used all over the globe; shrimp processed in Thailand and Bangladesh, cotton harvested in Uzbekistan, cocoa harvested in Ghana and Cote d’Ivoire, apparel made in Bangladesh, India, Jordan and Malaysia, sugar cane grown for ethanol in Brazil, par-boiled rice produced in India, bricks made in India, China and Pakistan, and pig-iron produced in Brazil. David Feingold (2005) describes how East African girls are sent as indentured domestic workers to the Middle East and Cambodian and Burmese boys are forced to work on deep sea fishing boats, ten percent of whom never return.
The International Response

Trafficking of persons whether for sexual exploitation or for forced labour is abhorrent. Victims are often trapped in their place of work, under servile conditions with no way of escaping, and are often subject to physical abuse and rape (US State Department, 2008). Roby, Turley and Cloward describe the exploitation that greets ‘victims in sweatshops, orchards, farms, restaurants, bars and brothels; [it is] often accompanied by cruel and inhumane treatment, abuse, extortion, physical and psychological abuse, and severe limitations on personal freedom’ (2008, p. 522). The international response to the problem has seen the United Nations develop a protocol (Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children) in 2000 which defines trafficking as

the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation

(…) exploitation shall include…the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs. From the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC, 2006).

This definition has been ratified by 111 countries (Roby, Turley & Cloward, 2008). In addition to ratifying this UN protocol, the US Congress passed Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act of 2000 (TVPA). This Act addresses three aspects of trafficking. The first is the provision of protection and assistance for victims. The second aspect deals with the prosecution of criminals for trafficking. The third concerns US effort to prevent
human trafficking in other countries (Roby, Turley & Cloward, 2008). As a part of this third agenda the US State Department puts out an annual report on the Trafficking in Persons which ranks other nations according to how co-operative they are in the effort to eradicate trafficking and whether they are a country of origin, destination or transit for those that are trafficked. Countries considered to be on the third tier could be subject to sanctions as a way of forcing them to do more to combat the problem of human trafficking (US State Department, 2008). Currently Algeria, Burma, Cuba, Fiji, Iran, Kuwait Moldova, North Korea, Oman, Papua New Guinea, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Sudan and Syria are considered third tier countries (US State Department, 2008). The report foregrounds sex trafficking over other forms of human trafficking.

Sex trafficking comprises a significant portion of overall trafficking and the majority of transnational modern day slavery. Sex trafficking would not exist without the demand for commercial sex flourishing around the world. The US Government adopted a strong position against prostitution in a December 2002 policy decision, which notes that prostitution is inherently harmful and dehumanising, and fuels trafficking in persons (US State Department, 2008, p.23).

The position of the US government has been criticised for the pressure being exercised on nations all over the world to increase their efforts to eradicate sex trafficking. The conflation of trafficking and sex trafficking and the belief that prostitution is always sexual exploitation expressed within the US legislation, means that any country that supports directly or indirectly supports prostitution could be classified by the US as aiding and abetting human trafficking (Kempadoo, 2007). The US attitude has been blamed for being instrumental in the creation of a global moral panic (Kempadoo, 2007; Milivojevic & Pickering, 2008), which has seen an increase in punitive approaches to women who are considered especially vulnerable and a tightening of border controls for specific groups (Milivojevic & Pickering, 2008; Doezma, 2000). Jo Doezma (2002) notes that historically laws implemented to
improve conditions for prostitutes neither ended prostitution or improved women’s lives. Doezma states ‘if there is one lesson that we can learn from history, it is that increased state power to repress prostitution ends up being used against prostitutes themselves’ (2002, p.24). Likewise, international measures to protect women from other forms of sexual exploitation have been used against women themselves. The result of the global moral panic around sex trafficking is that regions such as the Caribbean, Romania, Nepal, Burma and Bangladesh have not only tightened border controls and surveillance, but also imposed restrictions on young women travelling (Feingold, 2005; Jana, Bondyopadhyay, Dutta & Saha, 2002; Kempadoo, 2007, 2004; Milivojevic & Pickering, 2008). This not only restricts the free movement of women, (for example in the case of Bangladesh, single women are not allowed to cross the border), it increases the vulnerability of women to exploitation, as they must depend upon illicit means offered by traffickers (Feingold, 2005; Jana et al., 2002).

Beyond the simple discrimination against women and the violation of their rights to mobility these laws obscure the deeper causes of oppression and exploitation (Jana et al., 2002; Kempadoo, 2007). As Jana et al. ask ‘is it not the lack of appropriate work environment and conditions in formal and informal sectors, such as the garments industry and the sex trade, that facilitates perpetual exploitation of the most vulnerable groups?’ (2002, p. 73).

In the international response to the global problem of human trafficking a pattern of paternalistic control of women becomes evident. Rather than an examination of the deeper causes of oppression and exploitation, and international debates on the implementation of universal working conditions, we see a tightening of border controls and increased scrutiny directed at particular groups of women. While sex trafficking is arguably the minority of human trafficking there is not the same focus on those being trafficked for the purposes of forced labour.
Dennis (2008) employs world-systems theory as a means of explaining why so much of the discourse on human trafficking ignores the plights of the thousands of men and boys trafficked. In world-system theory the colonial powers of Western Europe and their auxiliaries (the US, Australia, New Zealand and Canada) form the core states (see Wallerstein, 2004). The core states dominated almost the entire population of the world for nearly 500 years and maintain dominance in mass media, politics, economics and technology. The periphery, consisting of Saharan Africa, the Middle East and East and South Asia, provided the capital for the core, and continue to provide human capital – in the form of low-wage workers (Wallerstein, 2004). Dennis notes that

one of the most pervasive of the ideologies, protocols, and social practices developed to maintain and justify the core’s exploitation of the periphery was Orientalism, the Western depiction of the colonised “native” as soft, passive, savage and childlike, requiring surveillance and supervision (2008, p.16).

Orientalism constructs the European/American as male exerting control over the ‘coded female native’ (Dennis, 2008, p.16). For Dennis, the lack of acknowledgement of the male victims of trafficking may represent this gendered aspect of Orientalism – there is an inherent presumption that the trafficked person, generally from a periphery state, is by definition female. In the same way the focus on the sexual exploitation within human trafficking and the obscuring of the myriad of other forms of exploitation that take place as human beings are trafficked over borders and within nations to serve as labourers, domestic servants, agricultural workers, garment manufacturers, and slaves, may stem from Orientalism. The ‘native’ is defined as a sexual female under the male controlling gaze, and this lens of Orientalism renders the other (non-sexual) forms of exploitation invisible.
Refugees

The plight of refugees demonstrates that for all the sophisticated technology and information systems and the integrated financial markets which have arisen out of globalisation, the world is still unable to solve the problem of resettling the millions whose lives and social support structures have been decimated by war or natural disaster. Refugees are people out of place, for many of whom no accommodation will ever be found. Hundreds of thousands of people live in “temporary” refugee camps on the margins of conflict and disaster zones in third world countries. While a small fraction of these will be admitted into first world countries, and many more will be admitted into a further third world country, thousands will remain stuck in the limbo of refugee camps which have continued to grows for years, even generations – the unsolved remnant of a growing social problem (Louis, Duck, Terry & Schuller, 2007).

At the end of 2007 the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR) was concerned about some 31.7 million persons, including 11.4 million refugees, and some 2.9 million stateless persons (UNHCR, 2007). Of the world’s 11.4 million refugees 9.3 million (or 82 percent of the global refugee population) were being hosted by developing nations. Children and adolescents represent the majority of people of concern in Africa and Asia. For the second consecutive year the number of people uprooted by armed conflict rose (UNHCR, 2007). Louis, Duck, Terry and Schuller (2007) have documented a decreasing level of acceptance towards refugees in industrialised nations in the past decade. They note that while the needs of refugees have become more acute in this time attitudes and legislation have become less favourable toward them. Worldwide fewer refugees are being officially recognised under the 1951 Refugee Convention and permanent protection has been increasingly replaced by temporary protection, leading Voutira and Dona to dub refugees ‘an endangered species’ (2007, p. 163). Refugees face multiple barriers to gaining entry into industrialised nations. They face unprofessionalism and disparities within the application process (Ramji-Nogales,
Schoenholtz, & Schrag, 2007), dehumanisation and unfavourable social attitudes in the host nations, (Esses, Veenvliet, Hodson, & Mikic, 2008) and refugee women are often more vulnerable to domestic violence (Rees & Pease, 2007).

The problems faced by refugees are many. Firstly after surviving the war or natural disaster that caused them to be displaced, they then face the problems of life within the refugee camp and the rigours of attempting to gain admittance into another country. If successful, and there are few guarantees, refugees face the struggle of trying to build a new life in an often-hostile nation. These struggles often fall disproportionately on women as women and children make up eighty percent of refugees dislocated by war (Jaggar, 2001). Research by Saba Gul Khattak (2007) and Elizabeth Ferris (2007) exemplifies further ways in which women refugees are subject to problems arising from deeper existing patriarchal structures that make life even harder for them.

Saba Gul Khattak (2007) has examined the plight of the millions of Afghani women fleeing the Soviet conflict in Afghanistan to Pakistan in the 1980s and 1990s. These women were accepted by the Pakistani government on the basis of no forcible return, but Khattak argues that this was for political rather than altruistic reasons. Acceptance into the refugee camps was contingent on signing allegiance with one of the right wing Pakistani religious groups waging war in Afghanistan. The Afghan refugee men were expected to accept training and join these groups in their jihad against the Soviets, leaving the women and children confined in the refugee camps. In addition, registration in the camps took place in family groups, which while expediting the processing of refugees made the camps difficult to access for those travelling without a male relative. Widows were often forced to remarry in order to be eligible to register in the camps. Khattak discusses the disruption of refugee women’s lives through war, rape, forced sex work and incarceration and violence in a camp situation where welfare is predicated on their disempowerment and subordination.
Refugee women, whether from rural or urban backgrounds, whether educated or uneducated, and whether rich or poor – in short, across the board - have suffered in multiple contexts. Refugee men have had to contend with an intensified view of masculinity that involves permission to perpetrate violence against other men and women. As a result, women have had to bear physical seclusion, restrictions on their mobility, and the trauma of losing their loved ones and of having their situations created by state politics and reinforced by the actions of the international community over which they have no control (Khattak, 2007, p. 597).

The Afghan example is not the only egregious incidence of patriarchal abuse levelled at refugee women. Elizabeth Ferris’ (2007) examination of the situation of women and children in refugee camps reveals systemic abuses of power and states that the sexual abuse of women and girls is rife within refugee camps. Poverty and vulnerability of the refugee population have combined to create situations where people are exploited in their very struggle to survive. Ferris notes that the international community has been aware of the vulnerability to violence of refugee women and children for many years. Because sexual violence is so often used as a weapon of war, women and children often flee their communities. Threats come from warlords, soldiers, gangs and border guards. In the social break down that has occurred with the natural or war disaster that the refugees are fleeing, they are vulnerable in their movements without the protection of a functioning community. Refugees suffer from deprivation and poverty and often because humanitarian relief, food and other daily necessities are insufficient for their needs, women turn to prostitution. Research into the situation of refugees has found that:

not only was sexual exploitation widespread, it was also perpetrated by aid workers, peacekeepers, and community leaders. Humanitarian workers traded food and relief items for sexual favours. Teachers in schools in the camps exploited children in exchange for passing grades. Medical care and medicines were given in return for
sex. Some forty two agencies and sixty-seven individuals were implicated in this behaviour. Parents pressured their children to enter sexually exploitative relationships in order to secure relief items for the family (Ferris, 2007, p.589).

For Ferris, these problems occur because of the fundamental power disparity between humanitarian workers and refugees, and while refugees have no control over access to basic necessities the abuse of power by those who control those things is not only possible but likely. As Ferris observes ‘as long as the international humanitarian community is not able to mobilise sufficient resources for the people entrusted to its care, young girls will trade sex for a handful of peanuts’ (Ferris, 2007, p.590).

Women’s bodies as commodities

An examination into various aspects of the global sex trade – sex trafficking, prostitution, mail-order brides and sex-tourism attest to a persistent and remaining asymmetry in the treatment of male and female bodies. Not only are women’s bodies not regarded as workers’ bodies and can therefore underpaid for their labour, but their bodies continue to be regarded as property that can be traded, bought, sold, smuggled over borders and over the internet. While some boys and men are involved in the sex industry it appears that the vast majority of those traded like chattel remain women.

Globalisation is a very gendered process: an ever-growing proportion of migrant people looking for work are female. However, beyond a simple feminisation of migration we notice that women’s labour is being sexualised, that is to say, global processes actually address women directly in their sexuality. The world wide migration of women into the sex industry or more specifically the burgeoning
trafficking in women can be read as a structural part of pancapitalism (Biemann, 2002, p. 76).

The international response reveals a paternalistic mindset, determined to control and regulate women and to ignore the structural inequalities which would bring women willingly to the sex industry. First women are dehumanised by being seen as just being bodies, they are then further dehumanised by the assumption that they have no agency. Sex workers are conceptualised as being vectors of disease and as morally corrupting agents – there is little attention on the men who pay for sex or who benefit from the sex industry. Two problems are rendered invisible by the international response, firstly the structural inequality driving women to sex work and, secondly, the men who pay for sex making the industry lucrative for those who control it.

**Sex Trafficking and Prostitution**

The trafficking of women and children into prostitution is an extreme form of a range of highly tolerated gender indiscretions…To reduce the voracious global appetite for exploitative sex, we need to decommodify women altogether (Haberman, 2002, p. 100).

Lamentably, the flesh-trade which treats women, especially, young women and girls, as chattel to be bought and sold continues to thrive (see Jeffreys, 2009). Research into the sex trade reveals that of the 2-4 million or so people currently estimated to be trafficked each year, the majority are women and children (Flowers, 1994, 2001) who are being traded in the sex industry (Goodey, 2004; Maltzahn, 2002). Those trafficked are sent to large cities, tourist destinations (Wonders & Michalowski, 2001), and military bases in areas such as, not only Asia and the Middle East but also Western Europe and North America (Goodey, 2004; Maltzahn, 2002; Tzvetkova, 2002). In Europe, Interpol estimates that each trafficked sex
worker can bring between $75 000 and $250 000 a year in profits with a purchase investment of as little as $1500 for a slave imported from Moldova, Ukraine, Belarus, Russia (Lusk & Lucas, 2009).

While sex trafficking does occur, as we have seen from the previous section its prevalence is overstated and over-estimated in public discourse, such as the US Trafficking in Persons Report and US legislation (for analysis of the over-reporting and moral panic in regards to sex trafficking see Milivojevic & Pickering, 2008). The conflation of sex trafficking with all forms of prostitution denies many women agency and obscures the economic disadvantages and structural inequalities which make prostitution an elected career choice. For example, it is estimated that prostitutes in Thailand can earn up to 25 times the wages of many other occupations available to women, and that this accounts for the reasons as to why between an estimated 6.2 and 8.7 of all females in Thailand are sex workers (Flowers, 2001).

Goodyear and Cusick (2007) report that standardised mortality rates for sex workers are six times that of the general population and the rate for murder is 18 times that of the general population. Ethical analysis of prostitution is obscured by links with other emotive issues including trafficking, underage sexuality, substance abuse, sexually transmitted diseases and organised crime. Legal remedies are neither appropriate nor effective in enforcing moral norms or resolving social issues (Goodyear & Cusick, 2007). Gangoli (2002) notes that prostitutes are subject to control, surveillance and the salacious gaze of the law and legal analysis as well as in the health sector. Historically these new laws neither ended prostitution nor improved prostitutes’ working conditions: rather these laws were used against prostitutes themselves (Doezma, 2002). Gould conducted an in-depth study into the sex work industry in Cape Town which calls into question allegations that there is large scale trafficking in the sex work industry and suggests that a law enforcement approach may not be the most appropriate way to counter the problem. ‘It doesn’t help to make policies to
end trafficking that ignore the very reasons why people are vulnerable to abuse in the first place’ (Gould, 2007, p. 8). Her survey of ten percent of Cape Town’s sex workers revealed that very few women had been trafficked, rather that:

the majority of sex workers enter the profession to meet their immediate and pressing financial needs and obligations and because if offers them more flexibility and better returns than would many other jobs (Gould, 2007, pp.8-9).

The extent of the problem of trafficking is overstated which conveys the impression that the majority of prostitutes work against their wills, and as a result the underlying economic conditions that lead women to willing choose a profession in the sex work industry remain unexamined. Julia O’Connell Davidson (2002) discusses the feminist debate surrounding prostitution and argues that what is wrong with much contemporary feminist debate on prostitution is that ‘it disallows the possibility of supporting the rights of those who work in prostitution as workers, but remains critical of the social and political inequalities that underpin market relations in general, and prostitution in particular’ (p.85). According to O’Connell Davidson within India, a country with a per capita GDP of US$383, there are some 2.3 million females are estimated to be in prostitution, and a quarter of whom are minors; and in Burma, a country with a per capita GDP of just US$69, an estimated 20 00 to 30 000 women and girls are exported to work in prostitution in Thailand while several thousand more cross the border into China to sell sex. While some of these women and children have been forced into prostitution by a third party, for most it is economic compulsion that drives many of them into sex work, just as in America (a country with a per capita GDP of US $21 558), many women and girls “elect” to prostitute themselves rather than join the 35 percent of the female workforce earning poverty-level wages. As noted by Bernadette Barton (2002) there are very few jobs available to non professional women where they can earn $1000 - $1500 per day as can be earnt by sex workers or exotic dancers.
Sex Tourism

Sara Andrews examined the US domestic response to the growing phenomenon of ‘Sex Tourism’, which she defines as the ‘commercial sexual exploitation of minors by international tourists’ (2004, p. 415). From her research Andrews notes that billions of dollars are brought into the host countries economies from tourists from nations such as the US, Germany, France, Britain, Japan and Australia for whom buying sex forms ‘an integral part of the travel experience’ (Andrews, 2004, p.418; Flowers, 2001). The imbalance of power reflected in the disparity of wealth between the western countries and the host countries gives the tourists increased access to children and provides a strong disincentive for the local authorities to prevent the industry. There is little chance of repercussion for the perpetrators, is more likely that the victims will be punished (Andrews, 2004). The power imbalance between the visiting and host cultures is further reflected in the fact that many sex industry sites at located around US military installations. Andrews pinpoints the US military presence in South East Asia from the latter half of last century as being instrumental in the development of Thailand becoming the sexual playground of the western world. In 1967, the US government formalised the arrangement by signing an agreement with Thailand to promote the country and its services to meet the relaxation and recuperation needs of US soldiers. UNICEF estimates that there one up to one million child prostitutes in Asia (cited by Andrews, 2004). Poverty lies at the heart of the problem, enormous profit can be made by those exploiting the young prostitutes, who are always in demand for their perceived purity. The children from poor rural areas can earn enough to support their entire family through their work in prostitution, while others are lured into the industry with offers of legitimate employment in other areas.

While paedophilia forms a part of the problem (Andrews, 2004), many tourists choose minors to have sex with from a racist ideology that perceives children from other cultures as being ‘naturally’ more highly sexualised than western children. This ideology stems from
‘Orientalism’ – ‘the Western depiction of the colonised “native” as soft, passive, savage, and childlike’ (Dennis, 2008, p. 16), and, in the case of sex tourism, sexually available. The gendered and racialised patterns found in sex tourism have been characterised as wealthy, privileged men playing out their cultural fantasies on poor women of colour (Wonders & Michalowski, 2001). For example Thailand, a prime sex tourism destination, has been described thus: ‘Thailand is like a stage where men from around the world come to perform their role of male supremacy over women and their white supremacy over Thai people’ (cited in Wonders & Michalowski, 2001, p. 550).

This international demand for purity has led to increased market for sex with minors and the UN estimates that more that fifty percent of new HIV infections worldwide occur in people aged between fifteen and twenty four, and ten percent of new infections occur in children under the age of fifteen (Andrews, 2004). In Thailand it is estimated that 50 percent of girl prostitutes are HIV infected (Flowers, 2001). In areas which are known as sex tourism destinations up to one in five prostitutes is under the age of 18 (Flowers, 2001).

Mail-order Brides

Any casual perusal of websites or magazines advertising mail-order marriage or sex work by East European and Asian women will graphically illustrate the ways in which Asian women are marketed as exotic, docile, sexually servile and childlike. East European women are not presented as docile, but they are promoted as domestic, sexually available – and white (Macklin, 2003, p. 471).

The phenomenon of mail order brides demonstrates a conflation of women’s role of domestic servant and sex worker. It reveals the persistence of centuries old ideas and practices that women can be traded for the purposes of marriage. While western nations have putatively egalitarian marriage practices, the fact that women are ordered over the internet and brought into countries such as Australia and the US reveals the continuing
existence of sexist and racist beliefs and practices concerning women and marriage.
Research reveals that countries such as the Philippines encourage the migration of ‘surplus labour’ through strategies such as the internet ordered bride (Pyle, 2001). The fact that men are not catalogued, advertised and sold as husbands demonstrates not only the asymmetry in the treatment of men and women, but a particular ideas about what a ‘wife’ is.

Sex trafficking, mail order brides, prostitution and sex-tourism are each arenas in which not only is men’s power over some women is displayed, but also the intersecting hierarchies of gender, class, race and location. Women’s bodies are treated as commodities and this betrays the structural inequalities faced not just by women, but by some nations in comparison to others. The vast amounts of money involved mean that activities such as sex tourism are hard to eradicate, as sex tourism is a lucrative growing industry actively encouraged by some governments. The international response demonstrates a punitive mentality aimed at punishing women - while ignoring the male clients, and a wilful refusal to examine the economic inequities that would compel women to prostitute themselves, or compel nations to consider the bodies of their populace as export commodities or tourist attractions that bring in the foreign dollar. Thus, an examination of prostitution and related industries highlights not only the economic imbalance between men and women and the asymmetry in the treatment of their bodies, but also the power and economic imbalance between various nations.

The HIV/AIDS Pandemic
A disease of modernity and global population movement, AIDS has struck with particular severity in communities struggling under the burdens of poverty, inequality, economic crisis and war. Many people who know about the dangers of
sexual transmission, especially many girls and women, cannot avoid becoming infected because they cannot control the relations of power that put their lives at risk. The pandemic is much more than a series of personal and family tragedies. AIDS deaths have depleted the workforce, lowered life expectations, raised dependency ratios, and are likely to shred the already torn social fabric of numerous countries (Schoepf, 2001, p.336).

In addition to suffering disproportionate poverty in the developing world, women are also affected from attendant, but often readily preventable, health problems, for example, an estimated 2 million women suffer from untreated fistula, and 100 000 more develop the condition each year (Dux & Simic, 2008). The AIDS/HIV pandemic has emerged as a surprising area in which it has become evident that men and women continue to be treated differently. In the vast humanitarian response to this global pandemic there exists a sexist bias in the rates of morbidity and treatment allotted to women. Contrary to general expectation, the rates of infection and mortality are higher for women than for men, while conversely the rates of treatment are higher for men.

**HIV/AIDS: The Global Picture**

Of all the adults of reproductive age in the world, one in every hundred is infected with HIV (Berer, 2003). AIDS ranks as the fourth leading cause of death worldwide, and the first in sub-Saharan Africa (Population Reference Bureau, 2007). Approximately 25 million people are estimated to have died from AIDS and a further 33.2 million are infected with HIV (Izumi, 2008; Kallings, 2008). The continent of Africa holds more than two thirds of the world’s HIV infected population (Kallings, 2008) with 40% of men and women, or one in six adults in Botswana, Nambia, South Africa, Swaziland, Zambia and Zimbabwe infected (Berer, 2003). Within sub-Saharan Africa 22.5 million people are infected, (Kallings, 2008; Talbott, 2007). Africa accounts for 10% of the population of the world and yet holds 70% of
the world’s AIDS population, which has reversed thirty years of social progress (Cohen & Linton, 2000; Piot, 2000). In 2000 more than five million people worldwide became newly infected with HIV at a rate of 15,000 people a day, or 11 new infections per minute (Poku, 2002; 2001).

As it strikes people in the prime of their lives, young adults, it impacts upon the economy through its effects on productivity lost through workers’ illness (Kallings, 2008; Piot, 2000). This is further exacerbated by the fact that HIV/AIDS, unlike many illnesses also affects the educated and skilled workers as well (Kallings, 2008; Piot, 2000). Nana Poku (2002) characterises AIDS as a disease of poverty; while is not confined to the poor, the poorest are over represented. For example, within the US – the world’s wealthiest nation - some 20% of the population live in poverty. ‘African Americans who comprise roughly 12% of the US population made up more than 26% of the country’s poor and accounted for 37% of all reported cases of AIDS’ (Poku, 2002). The number of people living with HIV in western and central Europe and North America reached approx 2.1 million in 2007 (Kallings, 2008; Talbott, 2007). The 32,000 people that died of AIDS and 78,000 new infections fade into insignificance in comparison with the numbers from other regions, but are still alarming after more than twenty years of intensive information and ten years of highly active anti-retroviral therapy, and both new infections and deaths are on the increase (Kallings, 2008).

The developing world accounts for up to 95% of the cases of HIV/AIDS with Africa and African women being particularly vulnerable (Poku, 2002). While almost half of the population infected of AIDS being female, this figures rises to 60% in sub-Saharan Africa where the prevalence may be up to 25 times higher in girls than in boys (Braga, Cardoso, & Segurado, 2007; Kallings, 2008). Poku (2002) discusses the role of poverty as driving women to engage in commercial sex work in order to support themselves and their dependents. In her words
The effects of these behaviours on HIV infection in women are only too evident, and in part account for the much higher infection rates in young women, who are increasingly unable to sustain themselves by other work in either the formal or informal sectors (Poku, 2002, p.286).

The reality of the effects of poverty on women is also reflected in the work of Ohshige, et al., (2000) who examine the Cambodian context. They conclude that the spread of HIV in Cambodia is primarily through sexual transmission and that female sex workers represent the group most at risk of contracting HIV. Although prostitution is illegal in Cambodia, the fact that it is the simplest way for poor Cambodian women to get money makes it difficult to eradicate (Ohshige, et al, 2000). Research from India, second only to South Africa in terms of the numbers of people infected with AIDS, also suggests that female sex workers (FSW) are particularly at risk of infection. The primary mode of transmission within India is sexual intercourse (Nag, 2001). In the mid 1990s a quarter or more of FSW tested positive for HIV in the cities of New Delhi, Hyderabad, Pune, Tripura and Vellore (Nag). In Mumbai rates of HIV were as high as 40% among FSW. FSW are usually extremely poor and powerless, economically and otherwise to go against the wishes of their clients who argue that they do not get full pleasure when safe sex is practised (Nag).

In China HIV/AIDS is a growing threat to women, as there are gender-specific variables that contribute to women in China being especially vulnerable (Renwick, 2002). These variables include the continued practice of polygamy, gender-based and domestic violence; the existence of Confucian based patriarchal constructions of ‘husband’s authority’, the uneven gender ratio of 120:100, which rises to 140:100 in rural areas. Some men will not find brides; others resort to measures such as mail-order, kidnapping, trafficking, gangs, increasing commodification of women in China and an estimated 4-10 million women involved in the sex industry. China is the only country in the world with higher rates of reported suicide for women than for men. Renwick concludes his research by remarking...
that the continuing gender constructions, structural violence and China being a
‘hypermasculinised’ state account for Chinese women’s especial vulnerability to HIV.

Yet HIV/AIDS is not simply a disease of poverty, anthropological research by Brooke Schoepf (2001) reveals the intersections of ‘global inequalities of class, gender, and ethnicity are revealed, as poverty, powerlessness and stigma propel the spread of HIV’ (Schoepf, 2001, p.335). Since the late 1970s an estimated 19 million people have died of AIDS, and there are approximately 36 million people currently infected. Jon Cohen (2000) notes that while cheap therapies are available, these are not always applied. He gives the example of nevirapine, a $4 regimen used in preventing the transmission of HIV from mother to baby. Four years after it had become available it was still not being offered in any African nation, where between 25% - 35% of babies born to HIV infected mothers become infected themselves (Cohen, 2000). Five years later, in 2005, less than 9% of pregnant women had received this treatment (Kallings, 2008). Of the approximately 22 million people living with HIV infection in 2005 only 60 000 received treatment (Kallings, 2008).

Schoepf describes the responses to AIDS as ‘moralising and ‘stigmatising’ (2001, p.338). She describes the ‘othering’ process that has taken place in public discourse, a process that avoids taking responsibility for the sufferers.

Accused witches, lepers, and other people who are assigned the status of ‘dangerous others’ in various times and places are believed to be morally contagious and often sexually polluting. The results are broadly similar: Such people may be consigned to limbo and to social or corporeal death (Schoepf, 2001, p.340, see also Kallings, 2008).

The process has meant that homosexual men, Haitians and Africans have all at various times been stigmatised as ‘promiscuous’ – ‘a notion so imprecise and value-laden that it cannot be used scientifically’ (Schoepf, 2001, p.340). In the United States Haitians were subject to
testing before being allowed to enter the country and denied housing and fired from jobs, in Europe Africans were similarly targeted (Schoepf).

Sweeping statements were made about a special ‘African sexuality’, based on traditional marriage patterns different from those of Europe and Asia. Culture was designated as the culprit of HIV spread. Blaming cultural differences for situations clearly linked to inequality supports the status quo (Schoepf, 2001, p.340).

**AIDS and Globalisation**

That AIDS has gone from a disease unknown to the global community to an epidemic infecting 50 million people and killing 19 million to date worldwide offers a clearer lesson on globalisation and the interconnectivity of the world than does any media report on the global economy (Piot, 2000, p.2177).

For Msimang (2003) there is a clear connection, a “collusion” between the spread of HIV/AIDS and the process of globalisation.

As human bodies move across borders in search of new economic and educational opportunities, or in search of lives free from political conflict and violence, they bring with them dreams and aspirations. Sometimes, they carry the virus that causes AIDS, and often, they meet the virus at their destinations (Msimang, 2003, p.109).

Across the globe, structural violence displaces people from their homes. This can set the stage for sex with multiple partners, gender violence, and wide dissemination of STIs, including HIV. Schoef (2001) gives the example of the construction of a hydroelectric dam funded by USAID which has driven peasants from their lands, resulting in greater poverty, migration in search of livelihoods, and the increased risk of AIDS as landless peasants resort to prostitution. Anthropologists have shown how strategies adopted for survival by the world’s poor and exacerbate sexual risk. AIDS has spread along trade and migration routes,
as had infectious diseases in the colonial past. “Gender rapidly emerged as a significant concern in the representations of AIDS and in vulnerability to infection” (p.344). Structures of inequality frame the contexts of women’s risk.

AIDS and Women

In several countries, “free women”, living without male protection, were scapegoated, rounded up and deported to rural areas where they were unable to make a living or were imprisoned and raped. Women whose HIV/AIDS was known or suspected were evicted from their homes and deprived of livelihoods and children. Some accused as witches, were killed (Schoef, 2001, p. 342).

Women are becoming infected at faster rates than men in many countries and regions. That difference is to a certain extent due to biology (in part because women can become infected more easily during vaginal intercourse than men), but also it is due to structural causes, in particular women’s almost universally unequal access to social and economic resources, which often leads to powerlessness, greater poverty and inequality, and their consequences (eg. Sexual violence, resorting to sex work for income, and so on) (Dowsett, 2003, see also Braga, Cardoso & Segurado, 2007).

Schatz and Ogunmefun (2007) discuss the further implications of the HIV/AIDS epidemic. Beyond the epidemic proportions, the lengthy duration of the disease deepen the ramifications upon individuals, families and communities. Their research suggests that the pension program in South Africa has become an important survival tool in communities devastated by AIDS, as it replaces income lost through death or illness, by the working parents and grandparents who have taken over looking after children who have been orphaned through the disease (Schatz & Ogunmefun, 2007).
Pettifor, Hudgens, Levandowski, Rees and Cohen (2007) examine the rates on HIV infection of young women in South Africa. They observe that rates of 4% among 15 and 16 year olds rise to 30% among 21 year olds in the absence of risky sexual behaviour. They conclude that the probability of HIV transmission from men to women must be higher than previously appreciated. Gangoli (2002) notes that women in general – whether sex workers or not – are more liable to be infected by HIV then they are to infect men during intercourse. According to Izumi, (2008) young women account for 76 percent of new cases in sub-Saharan Africa. Donna Clifton (2009) postulates that the higher infection rates in younger in sub-Saharan Africa might be accounted for by the cross-generational sex “Sugar Daddy syndrome”, which is a pattern of sexual behaviour between young women - in most cases of cross-generational sex, the women are 15 to 19 and unmarried with partners who are at least ten years older. Although most cross-generational sex is based on the exchange of favours or material goods, it differs from commercial sex and carries increased health risks for young women (Clifton, 2009). For Msimang (2003) “there is a myth of coping that pervades the development discourse on AIDS. What it really means is that women will do it. What it translates into is that families split up, for hook for money and food, and a vicious cycle is born” (2003, p.111).

Braga, Cardosa and Segurdo (2007) in their clinical study of the gender differences in survival of HIV/AIDS note that the reasons remain unclear as to why women benefit less from care and have a lower survival rate, though admitted to the clinic at earlier stages of HIV disease and offered standardised therapeutic interventions.

Sisonke Msimang is concerned about the responses to the AIDS crisis that are emerging. We are beginning to see dangerous patriarchal responses to the epidemic – from virginity tests to decrees about female chastity from leaders. In part this is simply an extension of deeply rooted myths about female sexuality. However, with
HIV/AIDS, it can also be attributed to the fact that in many cases women are the first to receive news of their sero-positive status. This is often during pre-natal screening, or when babies are born sick. Bringing home the ‘news’ that there is HIV in the family often means being identified as the person who caused the infection in the first place. We know that, in the vast majority of cases, this is simply not true (Msimang, 2003, p.112).

Chapoto, Jayne and Mason (2007) examined further aspects of the AIDS crisis, including widows access to land and noted the following points, the percentage of households headed by widows is rising, that in the first three years following the deaths of their husbands widows controlled 35% (on average) less land than they had controlled when their husbands were still living, younger widows were more vulnerable to land loss, as were relatively wealthy widows, widows in patrilineal and matrilineal villages were equally likely to lose their rights to land. In one region in Namibia 44 percent of widows and orphans lost cattle, 30 percent lost small livestock and 39 percent lost farm equipment after their husbands and parents had died (Izumi, 2008). A study from Zambia found that 34 percent of female headed households with people living with HIV and orphans had experienced property grabbing and 30 percent of widows experienced more than 50% of land size reductions after their husbands had died (Izumi, 2008). Izumi describes the situation thus:

   Especially younger widows without established social networks are vulnerable to evictions. They have not many choices but to return to natal homes, move to urban slums or to go on the street for sex work. In this way, the chain of HIV and AIDS, poverty and re-infection continues (2008, p. na).

It is evident in the examination of the HIV/AIDS pandemic that women are, contrary to commonsense understandings of the disease, quite severely affected and have higher rates of infection and death, while males have higher rates of treatment and survival. In addition,
HIV/AIDS is affecting women in adverse ways that tend to exacerbate existing gender inequalities.

Conclusion

After detailing aspects of the history of women’s struggle for equality in western society in chapter one, it becomes apparent that women have made massive gains in a few short generations. But as was shown, contrary to the popular opinion that we live in a ‘post-feminist’ world (Maushart, 2005), there is still a real and urgent need to address the concerns raised by feminists. The examples elucidated in chapters one and two show that, contrary to what is generally supposed, women are not in any meaningful sense the equal of men.

Within chapter one we saw that women have come a long way since the times when women were unable to vote, inherit property and the many other rights that women have gained in recent history. Women have achieved in many cases spectacular success both economically, (for example the author J.K. Rowling is one of the richest people in the world) and politically (for example, Angela Merkel is the political leader of Germany; Hillary Clinton and Madeleine Albright have held the office of US Secretary of State, one of the highest positions in the US political system; and Helen Clarke is the ex-Prime Minister of New Zealand and current head of the United Nations Development Program). Yet, this success for the fortunate few stands in sharp contrast to the situation that the majority of women find themselves (as can be clearly seen in the multifarious examples outlined in this chapter).

Why have some women in some countries enjoyed great success - particularly economic-yet, globally, poverty still falls disproportionally on women and children? In the view expounded by this thesis, these are not unrelated phenomena, but reflect two sides to the same coin.
In our examination of global economics a paradox becomes evident - the challenging of the
gender and patriarchal based expectations in one context can result in the deepening of the
same in other contexts. This, it goes without saying was never the intention of western
feminists, but as can be seen in the example of ‘women’s work’ – housekeeping and
childrearing – rather than the overthrown of gender based distribution of social reproduction
labour, this work has become sub-contracted out to those that are racially, ethnically or
socio-economically subordinate. On a macro scale, while much has been done to address
inequalities and discrimination within western nations, whole nations and regions of the
world have become the bases for cheap labour and natural resources consumed by the West.
The disadvantages and lesser status once experienced by western women are now evident as
being experienced by the people of the periphery countries in the global context. On the one
hand, sexism is at play – as we have seen evidenced in reoccurring beliefs about women’s
work in play out in global contexts; sexist, racism and naturalist tropes are employed which
justify the exploitation of racially subordinated women and create economic conditions in
which women’s bodies viewed as commodities. On the other hand, men in the global South
are also trafficked as labourers and traded in the sex trade. As Dennis (2008) suggests, the
peoples of the periphery nations are coded as feminine and seen as being available for sexual
and labour exploitation and their plight is rendered invisible. Thus, the ‘native’ is defined as
a sexual female under the male controlling gaze, and this lens of Orientalism renders the
other (non-sexual) forms of exploitation invisible.

The conspicuous success of some women in comparison to their Southern counterparts
seems incongruous, but I attest that these phenomena are not unrelated but reflect the over
arching systems of patriarchal presumption. Many women of the western nations have been
educated within western education systems and inculcated into the epistemic values
contained therein. They have in fact, been taught to think and act in ways which render them
indistinguishable from their male counterparts, ways that reflect the hierarchical
presumptions of value that are being mediated educationally (a point that will be further
developed in the next chapter). These hierarchical systems of value work on principles of
patriarchal presumption, whereby success is measured in economic terms. Within the West,
the value that we as a culture place on our fellow human beings remains textured by
patriarchal presumptions of value discrimination. Even if men and women obtained full
‘equality’ in the various social measures of worth, we would still not necessarily have
achieved authentic equity, as the very measures of gender worth endorsed by our society
reflect the epistemically preoccupation with power, dominance and masculine control. This
being the case, women’s success has come at the cost of the adoption and uncritical
acceptance of an almost imperceptible socio-cultural framework of patriarchal pedagogy,
along with its attendant value hierarchy of discrimination. With an adoption of this mindset
she is not succeeding as a woman, but as someone privileged at the apex of hierarchy that
serves to ensure that there will always be ‘Others’ on the bottom of the hierarchy who can be
used without moral conscience in the pursuit of success. The dehumanising effects of
epistemological patriarchy need to be overcome, as the values and attitudes of western
women may make them equal to western men, but they are equal in a world which is still a
man’s world.
CHAPTER FOUR:
AN EXPLORATION OF THE NEXUS BETWEEN KNOWLEDGE AND REASON AS PATRIARCHAL CONSTRUCTS

In chapter four we shall turn our attention to one of the main points of the thesis. I argue that educational epistemology depends upon a patriarchal way of knowing the world whose very rationale is based on a lust for power and control. The most comprehensive explanation of this process is provided by R.S. Laura (see Laura and Cotton, 1999 for details; also see Laura and Marchant, 2002; Laura, Marchant & Smith, 2008). In order to expound this thesis I shall rehearse Laura’s Epistemology of Power theory in order to make clear that the system of rationality embraced by the West is undergirded by an epistemological framework whose rationale is based upon a lust for power and control. That is to say, that which is considered to be knowledge within our culture is that which can give us some measure of control over the world around us. It is the argument of this thesis that patriarchal rationalism, the form of reasoning employed by western society, is itself a tool designed to shape our minds, into ways of thinking which facilitate our control over the world and everything in it; and I shall describe the implications of this insight for western knowledge and learning. I argue that there is a conflation between the epistemology of power and patriarchal rationalism. I shall elaborate this theory further in order to explore how it complements and extends existing feminist analysis. I shall start by tracing the history of rationality within western society in order to substantiate the claims that I make regarding Laura’s epistemology of power theory and show how it can be collaborated with regards to the development of a particular form of reason – that is, patriarchal rationalism - in the West, and show how this form of reason has been so detrimental to the interests of women.
I shall also within the bounds of this chapter describe some of the more subtle and
pernicious features of western rationality. Rationality is a dualistic or binary process of
reasoning which conditions how we think about the world as it presupposes the dualistic
hierarchies of value into which it is divided. It is these value hierarchies as they have
elsewhere been called (See Plumwood, 1991, 1993) determine the status accorded to a
particular thing within our culture. As women and nature fall on the negative side of the
value hierarchy they are not only see as having less worth than that accorded to men and
culture they are given the status of resources subject to subjugation and expropriation. This
insight has significant value in terms of the development of an understanding as to why the
goals of feminism have not yet been met after more than 250 years of feminist agitation.

A Brief History of Reason

The binarisation of the sexes, the dichtomisation of the world and of knowledge has
been effected already at the threshold of Western reason.

(Grosz, 1994, p. 5)

In the space available to me here I shall offer a brief historical overview, a genealogy if you
will, of the model of reason which has come to dominate our cultural mindset. Reason as an
ideal has been with us for well over two millennia. The importance of reason in the
Egyptian culture is reflected in the esteem accorded to the goddess Maat and the god Thoth.
These deities can be understood as being the embodiment of reason. Maat represented the
rational order that held the universe together; she represented truth, justice and order and
was seen to be the expression of divine wisdom, akin to Plato’s concept of logos (Armour,
2001; Lipson, 2004; Hird, 2006). A dualistic concept of reason, more fully developed later
by the some of the Greek philosophers, is evident in Maat’s role as keeper of order: ‘Without
Maat there is darkness, discord, loss of life force, poverty, illness, destruction and death’ (Mancini, 2004, p. 65). Thoth was Maat’s male counterpart and likewise is thought of as being akin to the platonic concept of logos (Armour, 2001). Thoth was attributed with the development of writing and alphabets, the invention of science, and was credited as being the author of all works of philosophy, science and religion, as well as being the mind and tongue of God (Armour, 2001; Hird, 2006). According to Mancini (2004), reason in the form of Maat and Thoth was equated with truth and the harmony that held the world together, and with the right speech and order that flows through humanity. In the accomplishments attributed to Thoth one can see that reason was understood as being the basis for human intellectual achievement. In Maat’s role of preventing darkness, discord death and chaos, one can see that reason is beginning to be defined by what it excludes, a process further enhanced by various Greek philosophers, and it is to them and the development of reason in their philosophies, that we now turn.

**Ancient Greek Philosophy and Reason**

It turns out that the western philosophical tradition has to a considerable degree defined reason in opposition to sensual, sexual impulses and behaviour. In the dominant tradition of ascetic idealism, sexuality is devalued at the same time as rationality is purified and idealised. The outcome is not only a deep gravitational pull towards asceticism but also a skewed conception of reason (West, 2005, p. 3).

A number of Greek philosophers defined reason (*logos*) as the key characteristic of man, such that reason was a virtue which separated man from the animals (West, 2005). It was believed that reasoning and rational action led to the greatest good. The exalted position given to reason can be seen in this formulation by one of the Stoics: ‘The rational is superior to the irrational. But nothing is superior to the world. Therefore the world is rational’ (Sextus, *Against the Professors*, IX 104, In Barnes, 2003, p. 26). The Sophists were aware
that reason could be used to shape human experience through the creation of culture, laws and institutions and were pioneers in reflection upon the power of logos (Broadie, 2003). Their dualistic understanding of the world was reflected in the fact that much ‘sophistic debate over the meaning and authority of human institutions was framed in terms of the contrast of physis (nature) with nomos (law, custom, convention, established practice’ (Broadie, 2003, p. 84). The Stoics and the Sophists were not the only group to extol the virtues of reason. Reason was accorded pre-eminence over custom and trust in the works of not only the pre-Socratics and post-Socratics, but also the Platonists, Peripatetics, pagans and the Christians (Barnes, 2003).

Reason was valued and understood as the basis for philosophy - the correct way to study the world. But the form of reason developed and endorsed by these ancient thinkers, was presupposed by a dualistic worldview (Ruether, 1975; Griffin, 1978; Plumwood, 1991). In the same way that the much lauded Athenian ideal of democracy for the male citizens was supported by the unacknowledged negation, curtailment and exploitation of the Athenian women and slaves (Songe-Møller, 1999), the notion of reason developed at this time was based on the exclusion of the feminine, of nature and of the body (Grosz, 1990). Reason was understand as the virtue that separate man from the animals, reason was that which established man’s humanity. This however, the type of reasoning being developed (of the many possible types of reason available) was inherently dualistic and based upon opposing binaries which included: male/female, reason/emotion, spirit (mind)/body, culture/nature. As Val Plumwood explains, the basing of reason on these dualisms was to have profound and long lasting consequences ‘because what is involved in the construction of this dualistic conception of the human is the rejection of those parts of the human character identified as feminine – also identified as less than human – giving the masculine conception of what is it to be human’ (1991, p. 11). Through this process humanity becomes defines ‘oppositionally to both nature and the feminine’ (1991, p. 11). The binary logic that emerges from this
dualistic model of reason ‘always, by definition, articulates a dominant and subordinate term’ (Grace, 2007, p. 2). Thus within the logic that emerged at this time, ‘female’ becomes defined by her difference to male, emotion from its difference to reason, body from its difference to mind and nature from its difference to culture; the former of the terms being subordinate to the latter. Within the matrix created by these dualisms, female becomes associated with emotion, nature, the body and is understood as being the lack of the qualities on the other side of the binary: male, reason, culture and the spirit or mind (See also Warren, 1998).

As this model of reason was being developed and its virtues extolled one half of humanity was being excluded from the endeavour. As Grosz notes:

The birth of philosophy somewhere between the works attributed to Homer and Plato’s writings already bears traces (and anticipations) of misogynistic philosophies. Long before Plato, - in, for example, the work of the Ionians in the sixth century BC – philosophy is already deeply marked with openly misogynistic statements and rationalisations justifying patriarchal power relations (1990, p. 153). Grosz (1990) presents a list of philosophical concepts introduced by the Pythagorians: limited/unlimited, odd/even, one/many, right/left, male/female, rest/motion, straight/curved, light/dark, good/bad, square/oblong. Grosz explains that these binary pairs are mutually exclusive and exhaustive and that the first of the paired terms, in addition to being positively valued – as it contributes to the harmony and form of the universe – is associated with masculinity. In her analysis the second term of the pairs is not only associated with femininity, but is characterised as being the negative or lack of the first and represents things that threaten the stability and order of the universe. In her words:

This ancient list of oppositions remains even today one of the most succinct summaries of the values philosophy espouses. It is rare to find philosophical texts which refuse these conceptions (even reductionism - whereby one term is seen to be
“really” a form of the other – which is dominant today, affirms these binary terms).
The oppositional structure is still among the more insidious procedures we have inherited from the pre-Socratics. The earliest philosophical texts are already hostile to women. Their exclusions are not accidents, or based on individual ignorance but are constitutive of the discipline of philosophy. The advent of philosophy coincides with the exclusion of women and its developments and refinements constitute increasingly sophisticated modes of control over women’s rights to self-definition (Grosz, 1990, pp. 154-155).

In Grosz’s summation, by the third century BC many of the major tendencies of philosophy had already become firmly entrenched. Already women were excluded from positions of authority and knowledge, and knowledge was defined by the extent that it excluded what was considered to be feminine. ‘Women and femininity are associated with qualities that reason, truth and knowledge, validity, virtue etc, must expel. Implicitly and explicitly, women are disqualified from philosophical activities’ (Grosz, 1990, p. 156). (It should be borne in mind that, for Plato, philosophy was regarded as the basis for the pursuit of all knowledge, and the ideal ruling class would be philosopher-kings. Thus, the exclusion of women from philosophical activities represents an exclusion from positions of both knowledge and authority). Grosz argues that philosophy developed as ‘a form of rationality, only through the disavowal of the body, specifically the male body, and the corresponding elevation of mind as a disembodied term’ (Grosz, 1994, p. 4). This particular form of rationality, rationality as a disembodied, masculine-based form of reasoning I have termed ‘patriarchal rationalism’ on account of its overt patriarchal origins, and to make explicit the connection between the long-held patriarchal values contained within the modern form of reasoning employed in the West. Although patriarchal rationalism is evident in the thought of various ancient Greek scholarly groups, such as the Pythagorians, the Stoics and the Sophists, it is Plato who has left a most clear record of this form of rationality in his corpus.
For instance, as Grosz (1994) notes, one can see in Plato’s claim that the word body (soma) was introduced by the Orphic priests due to their belief that man was a non-corporeal spiritual entity trapped (as within a dungeon – sema) within the body, a repudiation of corporeal existence and materiality. Plato believed that matter was an imperfect degraded version of the Idea. Within his doctrine of Forms, Plato makes it clear that the body is a prison for the soul, reason or mind (Grosz). Because reason was perfect, he believed that reason should rule the body. The elevation of reason at the expense of and devaluation of the body and sensual pleasure is clearly evident in his Republic:

Therefore, isn’t it appropriate for the rational part to rule, since it is really wise and exercises foresight on behalf of the whole soul, and for the spirited part to obey it and be its ally? (Plato, In West, 2005, p.14).

The fact that he regards men as being more pure than women is demonstrated in Timaeus, where Plato states:

According to our likely account, all male-born humans who lived lives of cowardice or injustice were reborn in the second generation as women. And this explains why at that time the gods fashioned the desire for sexual union by constructing one ensouled living thing in us as well another one in women (Plato, In West, 2005, p.16)

For Grosz, philosophy is not the value neutral endeavour it purports to be ‘in spite of its aspirations to a pure, neutral, unmotivated, and disinterested reason’, as from its very origins, ‘[w]oman and femininity serve as the unacknowledged supports or foundations of a patriarchal and masculine body of knowledge’ (Grosz, 1990, p. 148). Philosophy from the outset has defined women as subservient, secondary, dependent, peripheral, irrational and bound to both nature and the body, in contrast to men who are defined as being central, in control and bound to the eternal realm of culture and knowledge. Grosz’s conclusions are similar to those of Songe-Møller (1999) who argues that the ancient Greek philosophers, from the Pythagorians, to Plato, Aristotle and Socrates wished for a world without women;
A world where sexual reproduction would be redundant and where man was freed from the prison of the body and free to dwell in his soul in the eternal realm of pure reason. Songe-Møller (1999) traces the commonalities between the ancient Greek philosophers. From the philosophies of Pythogoreans, Parmenides, Plato and Aristotle similar binary conceptualisations of the world can be traced. Women represented the body, death, nature and decay, whereas men were associated with the mind, the eternal and culture. She notes that with higher values attached to the male categories these became the norm. She states:

Since the time of Plato and Aristotle much philosophy has been permeated by what we can call a one-sex model: in reality there exists only one-sex, the man, who constitutes the norm of all human life. Within this model, the specifically female could only be defined negatively. Woman was characterised primarily in terms of what she is not (or what she does not have). These developments have also had implications for how we define differences between people in general. Difference of any kind came to be regarded as aberration from the norm (Songe-Møller, 1999, p.75).

Songe-Møller’s analysis of Plato’s work demonstrates Plato’s repudiation of women and femininity and his desire for freedom from the appetitive yearnings of the body.

Throughout his works, Plato tends to associate the female with the body, and heterosexuality with an enslavement to the body, its urges and to reproduction. Consequently, the only kind of love capable of overcoming physical desire and reproduction and of attaining fulfilment on the purely spiritual level is homosexual (Songe-Møller, 1999, p. 87).

Plato’s writings indicate that for him, the ideal person is the one guided in all things by reason. This person is male in body and masculine in character. Women are, in his depiction, by their very nature associated with the body, with decay and with dependence, and therefore represent the antithesis of the ideal person. Plato, with not only the Republic but in
his other dialogues frequently mentions women with slaves and children, betraying his belief that their capacity for reason is not fully developed. For Songe-Møller, Plato’s elevation of man as the ideal, and woman as inferior, was a reflection of the attitude of his time, an attitude that due to its incorporation into the type of reasoning still employed today, remains with us. The ongoing use of patriarchal rationalism can be identified, not only in the ongoing scientific project, but also in the work of modern philosophers. As Songe-Møller notes:

When Sartre, for example, describes slime and mucus as symbols of the feminine, or of that aspect of the world from which we must dissociate ourselves in order to achieve authentic life, he locates himself firmly in a metaphysical tradition that stretches back to Aristotle, and which defines the fundamental principles of existence in sexual terms. Aristotle refers explicitly to matter, potentiality and passively as feminine principles, whereas form, actuality and activity are for him masculine principles (Songe-Møller, 1999, p. 80).

For Songe-Møller (1999), the desire for a world populated by one sex is a continuation of the hierarchical thinking that underpins much of ancient Greek philosophy. Within this schema man represented the highest level, that is, man is the true human and woman was either a negation of the man (Plato) or a defective man (Aristotle). Thus, Songe-Møller asserts that even the putatively egalitarian elements found in the Greek texts demonstrate a profound devaluation of women. She closely examines Socrates words and attests:

in the very passage where he claims that women and men are fundamentally the same, Socrates indirectly betrays an assumption of their essential difference. Whereas the male guardians are characterised as the best citizens (politi), the female guardians are described quite simply as the best women (gynai). In other words, the man belongs to the political community – which is what defines his nature as a human being – whereas belongs to her sex. In this context, ‘the best women’ means paradoxically – the women that have most successfully overcome
the fact that they belong to their sex. Thus what we find in Book V of the *Republic* is not a proposal for equal empowerment of the sexes, as is often claimed, but rather an attempt to cultivate masculine qualities within the ruling class (1999, p. 91).

Feminist theorists have long contended that the historical connections between women and nature can be traced from the values of dualism and rationality, which sprang from Greek philosophy (see, for example, Griffin, 1978; Plumwood, 1991; Ruether, 1975). The process of dualism divides the fundamental elements of the world into two opposing and mutually exclusive categories, with a superior value attached to one of the two categories. This is evident in the conceptual basis found in sex-gender differences—masculinity is viewed as the norm, while femininity is viewed as being the passive other. In turn dualisms such as these become entrenched as paradigmatic exemplars that are uncritically oriented towards the western and masculine way of experiencing the world (Collard, 1988). The masculine disposition defines the male mindset as rational and objective, while the female mindset is characterised as subjective and steeped in emotion. Rationality itself becomes defined against the feminine (Gaten, 2003). Thus, the characteristics that are taken to define us human, such as reason and justice, are identified with masculinity, subtly positioning women as being less than human (Bordo, 1999). Given its preoccupation with objectivity, it has been argued that modern science thus becomes the socially endorsed institutional expression of the male psyche (Laura & Cotton, 1999). Within the resultant philosophical framework of dualisms the Greeks deemed man, armed with his superior tools of technology and reason, to be the master of both women and nature. West notes that the prevailing Greek attitudes towards the body and women ‘informed and perhaps deformed the dominant conception of reason in the western intellectual tradition’ (2005, p. 18). We shall now turn our attention to Christian theology and explore how the incorporation of Platonic and Aristotelian ideas into Christianity ensured the continuation of patriarchal rationalism in the West.
Christian theology and the incorporation of Reason

The rationalist, idealist and at least tendentially ascetic treatment of sexuality in the thought of Plato and Aristotle represents a decisive formative moment in the genealogy of a constellation of reason, sexuality and the self that is then consolidated, if not petrified, and propagated by Christianity in the West (West, 2005, p. 9).

The Christian Churches inherited from the Greeks a belief in the value of reason and ‘simply narrowed the meaning to justify their received truths’ (Ralston Saul, 1992, p.14). The theology of the Christian Church maintained a dualistic vision of the world, albeit with a slightly different emphasis. The world itself is viewed in dualistic terms, such that salvation is reached through belief in and obedience to a saving God who is all good, while corruption and evil stem from the devil who is all bad. Thus through Eve’s eating of the fruit of the Tree of knowledge in the Garden all women in all times become responsible for the entrance of sin into the world. This being so, feminine sexuality represents sin and decay, whereas masculine piety, represented by the figure of Jesus, represents salvation and purity. The distinction between women as the carriers of sin and men as the saviours still exists in many of the Christian Churches today and is the justification for the continued denial to women to positions of authority and priesthood. Although theologically the world was understood differently to the way in which the Greek philosophers had understood it, Plato’s concept of Reason had a direct influence. ‘The meta-physical foundations for Christianity’s suspicion of the body and sexuality are supplied by Plato’s determined elevation of soul, reason, and ‘Platonic’ love above body, desire and lust’ (West, 2005, p. 17). Platonic ideas were particularly influential in the first three centuries of the Christian Church when the dominant Christian traditions were being established. These ideas were introduced in the teachings of St Paul and then further developed in the work of St Augustine of Hippo.
Augustine’s repudiation of the appetites of the body and his portrayal of women as evil helped establish in theological terms a dualistic understanding of the world that the Church has yet to overcome. In addition, the hierarchical thinking so evident in Plato’s work was also incorporated into the developing Christian theology. The interpretation of a male god who is understood to have fashioned the world hierarchically Laura has termed ‘patriarchal theism’ (Laura & Chalender, in press). Patriarchal theism refers to the conceptualisation of a God who reflects a patriarchal understanding and ordering of the world. One egregious example of the manifestation of patriarchal theism is the way in which Eve was cast as the entry point of evil into the world and how this conceptualisation was subsequently used against all women.

Denike (2003) traces the binary understandings of evil as a political economy that generates ‘truths’ about women that justify their subsequent treatment as the scapegoats of society. For Denike, the Adam and Eve creation story plays a pivotal role, as Eve is deemed to be responsible for the entry of evil into the world. This interpretation which places blame on Eve is included in the New Testament (2 Cor. 11:3, 1 Tim.2:9-15, 1 Pet.3:1-7) but it was in the work of the early church fathers that the theology of woman as evil and the source of evil, and of woman as secondary and inferior began to take shape in a more significant way. This interpretation began to be normative and is seen in the writings of Philo (born 20BC), Augustine (born 354), Aquinas (born 1225), in the Malleus Maleficarum (circa 1600) its continued influenced can be traced in the writings of Luther, Calvin, Knox and in papal encyclicals through to the present century (Milne, 1989; Ruether, 1998).

The binary understanding of a good God versus an evil being is extended to incorporate dualistic interpretations of the relations between men and women. Firstly the second creation story in Genesis is used to establish Eve as being responsible for bringing evil
into the world. This evil was conceptualised in terms associated with the feminine–
chaos, darkness, sexual insatiability, and pollution. As Eve was tempted by the serpent
and was responsible for the fallen nature of the world, all women stand condemned as
‘daughters of Eve’. Woman is cast as Satan’s helper, the ‘devil’s gateway’ and ‘first
deserter of divine law’ as Tertullian (born ca. 160AD) terms her (Denike, 2003, p. 17).
Like, Eve, all women are construed as the ‘weaker sex’ more liable to sin and capable of
making pacts with the devil to further his work of bringing trouble to a fallen creation.
This association of woman with evil became so strong that Michelangelo’s depiction of
the The Fall (ca. 1508-1512) on the ceiling of the Sistine chapel has the serpent painted
with the head and torso of a woman (Witcombe, 2000). So successful were the architects
of this understanding of evil, that innumerable women throughout the Middle Ages and
Early Modern Europe were arrested, tried and killed for the crime of witchcraft.

Reed (2007) identifies three symbolic formations which functioned to allow the witch
hunts to take place. Firstly, there was a set of understandings concerning the nature of
women. Secondly, the world was understood in binary terms around the oppositional
terms male/female. This resulted in thirdly, a gendered epistemology of the supernatural
affected by a causative relationship between the visible and invisible world. In this era
women were held in deep suspicion as descendents of Eve, liable to fall from grace and
attempt to gain both economic and sexual advantage. Gaskill (2007) describes how the
past is used to shape opinions in the present, and emotive symbols – specifically images
of demonic depravity - are culturally embedded in one generation only to re-emerge in the
next. Thus, in the case of the witch hunts the ideas articulated by the Early Church
Fathers are seen to re-emerge throughout the Middle Ages and Early Modern Era with
devastating consequences for thousands of women, who were scapegoats for the
unfortunate events taking place across Europe at this time.
Counter balancing the figure of Eve in Christian theology, is the Virgin Mary, Mother of God – she is the ‘New Eve’ redeemer of women by showing them that they can overcome the carnality of their fallen natures and redeem themselves through motherhood. The Scriptures mandate motherhood as the way that women are to be saved from their own depravity: 1 Tim. 2:14 and 15 ‘it was the woman who was deceived and broke God’s law. Yet she will be saved through childbearing’. Thus in the patriarchal order established within Christian patriarchal theism it is women’s role to give birth and while this may save her (from her own sinful and depraved nature) it continually reinforces the punishment given to her by God – ‘I will increase your trouble in pregnancy and your pain in giving birth’ (Gen 3:16). Childbirth and menstruation symbolised women’s connection to fallen nature, to the polluted and chaotic world that man was struggling to overcome. Thomas Aquinas in his *Summa Theologica* confines women to the Law of Nature while men are to abide by the higher Law of Reason (Paul, 1999). For Aquinas women’s connection to nature precludes them from participation in the Law of Reason, a privilege reserved for men. Reason is of the highest value ‘the intellectual nature is alone requisite for its own sake in the universe, and all others for its sake’ (Aquinas, 1976, p. 56), thus women are excluded from the endeavours which are most highly valued. Aquinas’ ideas are further explication of patriarchal rationalism and are clearly discernible as following from the ideas developed by Aristotle and christianised by Augustine.

The ongoing influence of this particular form of logic is still being felt today and the 2004 publication *Letter to the Bishops of the Catholic Church on the Collaboration of Men and Women in the Church and the World* released by the Office of Rome articulates the Church’s contemporary position. The Catholic Church emphasises the difference between men and women and uses this difference as justification for the ‘the reservation of priestly ordination solely to men’ (Ratzinger & Amato, 2004, p. na). The letter, with
recourse to the Adam and Eve story in Genesis explains that ‘woman, in her deepest and original being, exists “for the other”’ (Ratzinger & Amato, 2004, p. na).

As can been seen from the examples drawn from Genesis through to the present day, Christian theology has been premised on underlying dualisms which hierarchically order the world, while problematic due to the paradox of women been subordinated to men, yet equal in reception of redemption. (This parallels the ambivalence towards women evident in Plato’s work. Women are human because they resemble man, but as women they are of a lower status than men, Songe-Møller, 1999). Once the implicit presumptions of patriarchal rationalism are made explicit, it is easier to recognise that women and nature have been similarly valued and connected through a pernicious form of logic which locates them below man and further from God in a universe that is understood hierarchically. These connections reveal a covert commitment to an epistemology of power that depicts women and nature in ways that are distinctly male biased. An examination of the modern church elucidates the dualistic epistemology at the heart of Christian theology that continues to shape it even today. As has been argued by White (1967/1973) and Stark (2003) the worldview developed by the Christian Church underlies the modern scientific project and it is that to which we now turn.

Reason and the emergence of the scientific worldview

In 1967 Lynn White Jr. claimed that ‘our daily habits of action…are dominated by an implicit faith in perpetual progress which was unknown either to Greco-Roman antiquity or to the Orient. It is rooted in, and is indefensible apart from, Judeo-Christian teleology’ (White, 1967/1973, p. 110). According to White, at the time when Judaism was developed, it was the most anthropocentric of the world’s spiritualities. The basic presumptions which serve to provide the conceptual framework by way of which Christians define their relation to the environment differ markedly from other religious conceptual schemes. For example,
in contrast to many mythologies that contain a cyclical notion of time - thus no beginning or end - Christianity imported from Judaism a concept of time as being non-repetitive and linear. Along with this notion of time Christianity also borrowed from Judaism a creation story that located not only God but man above and beyond the natural realm, (See Genesis 1: 28; 9: 1-2).

In contrast to virtually every major ancient religion Christianity separates man and nature, while justifying man's subjugation of nature by reference to a framework of interpretation within which it is God's will and command that man exploit nature for his ends (Stark , 2003). By virtue of having located man outside of nature, Christianity also provides man with a divine rationale, for the exploitation and subjugation of nature without conscience. Reinforcing the Genesis disposition towards the domination of nature was - according to White the mentality of the thirteenth century Latin West, where natural theology was sanctioned by the belief that nature was man’s to do with as he pleased. During this time, scientific learning was initially being developed by monks who believed that understanding how the natural world worked would reveal the blueprint of God's creative plan. This being so, it is easier to appreciate why from the thirteenth to the eighteenth century virtually every scientist was under the auspices of the Church and motivated primarily by a religious quest to comprehend how God operated, by discerning the laws of nature. Insofar as the conceptual orientation of contemporary scientific learning and technology emerged from this peculiar anthropocentric culture, that same culture enshrines within it certain of the presumptions of Judeo-Christian theology (Stark, 2003). Inasmuch as science has its origins in the ideas generated by those who were seeking to know God's mind through the workings of creation, 'modern western science [is] cast in a matrix of Christian theology' (White, 1967/1973, p. 110; Stark, 2003). The result of this conflation, is that there exists within patriarchal rationalism, western science and the technologies to which it gives rise, a conceptual penchant towards the systematic exploitation and dominion of man over nature.
The Enlightenment: The ‘Age of Reason’

An appeal to ‘Reason’ was used against the Churches and against the monarchies of Europe in the struggle against arbitrary power as the means of control over the population. Since the dawning of the ‘Age of Reason’ the Churches have lost much of the hold which they had over the population, as have the European monarchies. The type of reasoning which forms the presuppositions of our cultural mindset was developed in this time by thinkers such as Bacon and Descartes. (While Descartes and Bacon cannot, obviously, be held solely responsible for the indiscretions of modern science, their writings did much to establish in institutional terms that science was a masculine endeavour which acted upon the body of a female nature – see Figlio, 2000, and Schiebinger, 1993, for further explication of science as the masculine domination of nature). While Bacon and Descartes had differing conceptualisations, both used reason as the basis for their arguments and as the primary tool by which one could reach the ‘truth’. A change in social attitudes towards women was conceptually linked with the radically different concept of nature ushered in by the scientific revolution of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

‘Reason’ allied to and manifest in, scientific procedures and techniques, was

…pursued institutionally, and figured rhetorically, as the exploration by ‘masculine’ science of the feminised body of nature (Frith, 1994, p. 99-101, see also Schiebinger, 1993).

It was the writings of Francis Bacon (1561-1626), which did much to discredit the guardianship view of nature and the rules by way of which human interaction with ‘her’ were guided on the other. Bacon was an early figure in the promotion of a culture of systematic exploration of believing that ‘the secrets of nature reveal themselves more readily under the vexations of art then when they go their own way’ (Bacon, 1620, Bk 1, Aphorism XCVIII). Bacon was highly skilled in his redescriptions of Mother Nature as a resource to be
exploited rather than the source of all resources (Merchant, 1980). To achieve his aim he cleverly employed a language descriptive of nature which was in itself tantamount to a political instrument designed to reduce nature into a sexualised female; a resource for economic production and reproduction. It was no accident that Bacon referred to nature as a woman whose secrets must be penetrated, and the treasures from her womb expropriated to man’s advantage to reveal the 'hard facts' (Merchant, 1980). Warren (1998) writes that within language women are firstly neutralised, while nature is feminised thereby distracting us from the deeper truth that feminisation equates to neutralisation. In reality, both women and nature are dominated and debased. Women are often referred to as animals- chicks, bitches, broads- i.e. a pregnant cow. On the other hand, nature is sexualised as when we talk of nature as a woman whose ‘Virgin’ timber is felled; whose ‘fertile’ soil is ploughed; whose land does not yield and is thus ‘barren’; whose secrets are ‘penetrated’ by science, and her ‘womb’ mined by technology (Warren, 1998, p. 268). With the advent of Bacon’s writings the orthodox concept of science as the ‘servant of nature’ was supplanted with a radically different concept of science as the master subjugator of nature.

It would be presumptuous to suggest that Bacon alone can be held responsible for the consequent devaluation and progressive exploitation of nature. Nonetheless, his writings have done much to establish in institutional terms the patriarchal presumptions which reinforce the accepted social view of women as objects of exploitation, consonant with his patriarchal perceptions of nature as a female object of expropriation. In the new perception of nature the earth was no longer viewed as a benign benefactor, but as a contrary female in need of being tamed and subdued. By ‘unearthing’ her inner secrets, it would become possible, Bacon assumed, to ensure the advancement of mankind’s control of nature without insuperable resistance from its forces (Merchant, 1980). Thus emerged a contrasting image of nature as a wild female- irrational and capable of mass destruction in the form of droughts, earthquakes and floods, to name only a few of her disruptive manifestations. This
being so, the organic methods of gentle interaction with nature gave way to mechanistic
methods of scientific technology, methods with the power to impact upon nature profoundly.
Inasmuch as nature was described by Bacon on the model of a machine, the sense of moral
conscience that would otherwise be invoked when manipulating and violating her was
thereby diminishing.

In addition to this highly mechanistic characterisation of nature, Bacon further denigrated
women through his clever orchestration of the language of the courtroom. Inasmuch as
witch trials were taking place in Bacon’s society at this time, Bacon availed himself of the
opportunity to compare nature to a witch on trial. Through Bacon’s portrayal of nature in
feminine terms, coupled with this highly prejudicial language of the courtroom, he thereby
adumbrated the presumptions by way of which the rape and exploitation of nature could be
culturally sanctioned (Merchant, 1980). Bacon’s descriptions were often couched in
metaphors likening nature to the witches of the time on trial; where mechanical inventions
and technologies were cast as interrogators dragging forth her most intimate confessions and
guarded secrets (Collard, 1988). By describing nature in the feminine terms which
characterised the acceptable social exploitation of women, and vice versa, the processes of
the culturally sanctioned rape of nature by science and the social rape of women by men was
elevated to a whole new level.

While Bacon, described Nature in overtly feminine terms, Descartes removed the life from
‘Mother’ nature and characterised nature as lifeless, inert matter. Rene Descartes (1596 -
1650) saw the universe as a machine, like a giant clock; he believed that if the laws
governing the machinations of the universe were worked out, the world could be made to
run the way that man wished it to run. Descartes’ vision of the universe removed the moral
inhibitions that surrounded one’s dealings with the earth, for if the earth was a machine and
not ‘a kindly beneficent female who provided for the needs of mankind’ (Merchant, 1980, p.
2) then it did not matter how one treated the earth. Prior to the industrial revolution Nature was regarded as a wholesome organic mother, providing mankind with everything required for the sustenance of life. The solemn regard in which nature was held thus encouraged a view of nature as something to be protected, a view which accordingly did much to prevent the mindless and wholesale destruction of nature. The existing cultural restrictions associated with the concept of ‘mother earth’, the source of all life weighed heavily against its deliberate degradation.

Descartes’ philosophy reaffirmed the mind/body split articulated by Plato, and gave rise to its specifically modern articulation (Peters, 2004). For Peters, the mind/body split is problematic as it

Historically has developed as an instrument of “othering”: of separating boys from girls, reason form emotion, minorities from the dominant culture, and classes from each other. It nests within a family of related dualisms...and remains one of the most trenchant and resistant problems of education in post-modernity (Peters, 2004, p. 14).

A notion reiterated by Bordo (1987) who laments that with Descartes the mind and body become defined in mutually exclusive terms, and Heywood (1999) who states that:

‘Descartes inaugurates an unbridgeable split between the conscious mind and the mere matter of the body’ (p. 268); A split that has been reverberating through philosophy, science and medicine since the Enlightenment (Tuana, 1992; Grace, 2007).

Like Plato, Descartes saw the two as fundamentally different and prioritises the realm of the mind. His elevation of mind over matter is clearly outlined in his Discourse on Method:

I thence concluded that I was a substance whose whole essence or nature consists only in thinking, and which, that it may exist, has need of no place, nor is dependent on any material thing; so that “I”, that is to say, the mind by which I am what I am,
is wholly distinct from the body, and is even more easily known than the latter, and is such, that although the latter were not, it would still continue to be all that it is (Descartes, 1637/2004, p. 34).

Descartes believed that the world was logically arranged and that through the use of reason one could work out the way in which the world operated.

The long chains of simple and easy reasonings by means of which geometers are accustomed to reach their conclusions of their most difficult demonstrations, has led me to imagine that all things, to the knowledge of which man is competent, are mutually connected in the same way, and that there is nothing so far removed from us as to be beyond our reach, or so hidden that we cannot discover it (Descartes, 1637/2004, p. 12).

By separating mind from matter or removing the idea of consciousness from the earth, Descartes ensured that the world could be manipulated at will in order to perfect the machinations of the earth, or to bring it to an order which more suited man’s desires.

Rouche (1998) notes that during the time of the Industrial Revolution the French government developed an academy for scientists, reflecting the belief that scientists were the best type of citizen. Thus, we see an evolution from the elevation of philosophers in Plato’s time to the elevation of scientists from the Industrial Revolution onwards; One commonality being that those who wielded a particular type of reasoning – patriarchal rationalism – were honoured as the ‘best’ citizens in their quest to uncover new knowledge about the world.

Ralston Saul (1992) argues that since the Industrial Revolution women have been the symbol of the irrational. (I argue that the symbolism has been in place at least since the time of the ancient Greek philosophers). Ralston Saul notes that this symbol is not just literary, but the image of nature as a woman was widespread during the Industrial Revolution in the paintings and statuary celebrating the new era being ushered in by the advances of science.

The 1899 statue *Nature Uncovering Herself before Science*, by the French artist Louis
Ernest Barrias is an exemplar par excellence of the way in which nature was portrayed in those times of rapid scientific advancement.

There she is in the great hall of fetes in the Orsay Museum in Paris, a voluptuous, life size woman sculpted out of marble, onyx, lapis lazuli and malachite. Her wonderful shoulders and breasts are bare. A scarab beetle at her waist holds together with its claws the drapery which hides the rest of her. The scarab is knowledge. No doubt the beetle would release the cloth, revealing as it slipped away, the most secret and intimate parts; that knowledge could and would reveal all secrets, if we befriended it. With the help of knowledge, men would penetrate the secrets of nature and the world (in Ralston Saul, 1992, p. 302).

Ironically, as the image of woman as nature revealing her secrets was being celebrated and the new era of enlightenment and scientific progress was being ushered in, thousands of women all over Europe were being persecuted and killed for the crime of witchcraft. Intriguingly, this was not the first time in history when a new level of societal learning was accompanied by wholesale violence and restrictions aimed at women. Schlain (1998) documents the connection between the rise of literacy in various cultures and a narrowing of the choices available to women. He attests that the rise of literacy in a society is always accompanied by a widespread reactionary anti-feminine attitude.

That this symbol - woman as irrational nature - underpins the form of reasoning embraced by western society means that within the culture generated by western society women will inevitably be conceived of as lesser persons than men. While feminism has been successful in raising awareness of the inequality and injustices borne by women, feminists have been largely advocating for change within a flawed system, biased by its very nature against women. ‘Post-modern feminists argue that sexism is inherent in a dualistic epistemology since the basic dualism that informs all polarities of Enlightenment thought is that of the masculine/feminine’ (Tuana, p. 103). The concept of rationality which is a presupposition of
the western mode of thinking generates conditions in which women, and women’s way of being, are considered to be inferior, in error and in need of being corrected. In this way, women can be exploited and subjugated because by their very nature, they are irrational and in need of being controlled; they are ascribed the status of perpetual children. Let me clarify the connection between women and nature that has been identified as being a key presupposition underlying patriarchal rationalism and make clear how this connection has impacted upon the lives of women.

Women and Reason

Once the universal is shown to be a guise for the masculine and knowledges are shown to occupy only one pole of a (sexual) spectrum instead of its entirety, the possibility of feminine discourses and knowledges – is revealed (Grosz, 1993, p. 204).

As can be seen through the exploration of the model of reason that has been with us for over the last two thousand years, women and nature have long been similarly identified. From the overtly patriarchal dualistic model of reason postulated by Plato, through to the medieval monks’ quest to know the mind of God, and the polemists seeking to overthrow the shackles of arbitrary authority held by the Church and various European monarchies – irrationality was understood to be female. For the Greeks, irrationality was associated with the forces that threatened the stability of the universe – death, decay and disorder – and to allow women to have access to authority and knowledge would be to court chaos. For the early Church fathers, reason, order, maleness and authority were associated with God. Fallen humanity
(and, indeed, the Fall itself) was associated with femaleness, with evil, with the body and with sexual temptation. For those describing the scientific endeavours emerging from the Enlightenment and the Industrial Revolution, irrationality and Nature were women – women that needed to be brought to order by masculine science, through the reasoned, rational, endeavour of objective scientific knowledge.

In the genealogy of reason described above, one can see that although different permutations of reason emerged in the differing epochs described, within the Greek philosophical tradition, Christian theology and western science common presuppositions underpinned each variation. The concept of Reason embraced by the West is based on a binary conception, yet the world is understood in not just binary but also hierarchal terms. That is to say our dominant theory of rationality is also conditioned by patriarchal presumptions of value. The dualistic or binary process of reasoning which conditions how we think about the world is itself a pedagogic dimension of the patriarchal hierarchy which continues to define western culture.

Patriarchal rationalism organises the world into two opposing spheres, and relegated what is deemed to be feminine into the sphere connected with irrationality. In the pursuit of knowledge, only what is associated with maleness and rationality is considered to be ‘real’, or objective. Other alternative or subjugated knowledges are understood as being tainted with emotionality or subjectivity and are therefore not considered, within the system of patriarchal presumption of value, to be worthwhile. In addition, we see how those employing patriarchal rationalism in the pursuit of knowledge have been honoured, considered to be the best type of citizen. On the other side of the coin, women have only in recent times been considered to be any kind of citizen at all. We shall now turn our attention to the lives of women and examine the ways in which the long-standing connection between women and nature has affected women’s lived experiences.
The Ecofeminist Insight

In recent decades the socio-philosophical movement known as ‘ecofeminism’ has accumulated a considerable literature. One salient facet of the ecofeminist perspective attributes the current environmental and global crisis to the educational, political and institutional dispositions of a patriarchal society. Consistent with the ecofeminist presumption is the corollary view that the rape of nature and the rape of women are parallel socio-cultural manifestations of the patriarchal ‘psyche’ which conditions the way in which both nature and women have traditionally been valued and treated in western society. As expressed by Val Plumwood, ‘the supremacy accorded an oppositionally constructed reason is the key to the anthropocentricism of the Western tradition’ (1991, p. 6). Within western society man's relationship with women and nature has been characterised by domination. Women and nature have been conceived as being a resource which exists purely for the benefit of those men in power and treated accordingly. Without moral concern the things of nature have been expropriated, mined, ploughed, hunted, fished, forced to yield, experimented upon, blown up, poisoned, and often to the point of extinction. In a similar manner women have been bought, sold, traded, exchanged, oppressed, intimidated, battered, raped and murdered. While the notion that women and nature exist as the property of men - as resources with only utilitarian value - has been shown to be a social construct used to justify the treatment that they have received, the joint oppression shared by women and nature at the hands of the men in power is a reality. Ecofeminism offers an analysis which posits that the domination and oppression experienced by nature and women stems from this logic of domination (see Plumwood, 1991, 1993; Warren, 1998). Women and nature, it is argued, are similarly valued as resources available for expropriation and subjugation by man in his quest to know and control the world around him (Figlio, 1994). The argument evinced by the Ecofeminists is that the rape of women and the rape of the earth stem from the same paternalistic disposition, of which science is the socially endorsed expression.
In patriarchy, nature, animals and women are objectified, hunted, invaded, owned, consumed, and forced to yield and to produce (or not). This violation of the integrity of the wild spontaneous Being is rape. It is motivated by a fear and rejection of life and it allows the oppressor the illusion of control, of power, of being alive. As with women as a class, nature and animals have been kept in a state of inferiority and powerlessness in order to enable men as a class to believe and act upon their 'natural' superiority/dominance (1988, Collard & Contrucci, p.i.).

Warren (1998) argues that the historical connections between nature and women are inextricably linked to the conceptual connections which have come to identify them. These conceptual connections reveal a covert commitment to structures of domination that depict women and nature in ways that are distinctly male biased. One example of this process can be found in the value dualisms that stem from Greek philosophy as intimated earlier. The values of women and nature are conceptualised in such a way that they are viewed as being inferior to the masculine and more dominant values of culture, namely, rationality and reason (Warren, 1998; Collard, 1988). According to Warren, value dualisms are the structural components of value hierarchies, (see Warren, 1998, p. 266). Value dualisms represent normative categories of judgmental discernment, making them an invidious tool for the continued marginalisation of women and nature.

For Warren (1998) it is the existence of this oppressive hierarchical framework which generates an allegedly moral premise designed to justify the domination of one group over another. Within the categories of hierarchical thinking one social group or gender can be valued above another, by way of which power and privilege can in turn be granted to a favoured group and denied to those groups located at a lower level on the hierarchy. Within this context of thinking emerges a bizarre logic of domination, as Warren calls it, which is used to justify the power and privilege of those best positioned on the hierarchy. In this
sense society is guided by a patriarchal conceptual framework which not only explains and justifies, but also maintains the social and institutional structures which determine relationships of subordination and domination of men over women and nature (Warren, 1998). From the genealogy of reason given above it becomes apparent that the type of reasoning embraced by western society – presupposed as it is by a pernicious dualism that limits women - forms the basis of the logic of domination described and identified by Warren. This form of thinking, patriarchal rationalism has been shown to have been influential for well over two thousand years and has threaded its way through philosophy, theology and scientific knowledge. Women, like some of the animals of nature, have traditionally been conceptualised in ways that justify their subjugation and control; they have been subject to various mechanisms of domestication in an effort to keep them tethered to the private sphere.

History demonstrates that historically women’s lives have been circumscribed and their choices restricted in some ways that man’s have not. The ubiquitousness of patriarchal rationalism has meant that men and women have been valued differently and accordingly treated differently and accorded differing socio-cultural opportunities. It was argued in chapter two that various institutes of western society have traditionally conceived women as being different to men in ways that justify different treatment of them. For example, marriage was traditionally organised as an exchange of property between men. Initially, women were treated as any other resource of nature – chattel to be traded at the whims of the men who controlled them, their fathers, husbands and brothers. Economic and political responsibility rested with elite males and the husband/father represented the household. Although in recent history the rights accorded women has changed dramatically, and women are no longer seen to be the property of their husbands, recent research into marriages’ more modern incarnations suggests that there are still some patriarchal hangovers – as marriage still extends more benefits to men than women.
Chapter two also explored the way the Christian Church accorded men more value than women, situating men as closer to God and women as closer to nature. This theological understanding has resulted in very few denominations allowing women to become priests, and in the variants that do ordain women, women remain under-represented overall and over-represented in the lower paying, low status positions. Western science, it was argued in the context of chapter two, has posited science as a masculine domain in which women have little place. As Frith notes,

> The ‘Light of Reason’ fell squarely upon women in the eighteenth century, producing ‘knowledges’ about their bodies, their behaviours, and their ‘nature’, ‘knowledges’ which actually constructed the reality they purported to describe, while simultaneously naturalising those constructions (1994, p. 101).

Women’s bodies have been considered an aberration from the norm and seen as little more than their reproductive parts. Chapter two also noted the ways in which diagnoses such as hysteria have been to control women, and that women’s scientific endeavours have been ridiculed on account of their gender.

Chapter three explored the way in which global economic patterns, while in some ways detrimental and destructive on many people, particularly affect women of developing nations in negative ways. It was also established that due to the values inherent in the globalisation, peoples of developing nations are often coded as feminine and are therefore seen as objects for expropriation and exploitation. Entire nations are seen as resources for economic exploitation – and government policies encourage a view where women are exported as surplus labour, and where holiday spots are marketed as sex tourism destinations, meaning that the bodies of various nations’ women are seen as resources that can attract foreign trade and foreign dollars, akin to natural resources like minerals or forests. Thus the subtle systems of valuation in which women are seen as being resources of
nature are made overt through policies that encourage foreign investment in both local labour and local bodies.

The ‘Woman/Nature’ Question

Just as the ‘querelle des femmes’ (the woman question) occupied the literate elite in the 1700s currently the feminist movement is still grappling with the woman and nature question. That is, how to respond to the fact that historically women’s connection with nature has been the basis of much of the denigration and devaluation levelled at their sex and the justification for denying women to positions of authority, for denying women an education and for much for the revulsion directed at women in the traditional literary canon (see, Millett, 1970). The visceral attacks (see Biehl, 1991, for example) levelled at ecofeminists by some feminists for embracing rather than attempting to transcend the connections between women and nature suggests that even among feminists the question is a vexed one. The insight that women’s subordination is based upon the identification of them with nature has led many feminists to attempt to overcome or negate their femininity in order to join men in the task of reordering the world in man’s image (Laura & Cotton, 1999). While in some ways successful, this strategy has not successfully challenged the hierarchically ordered nature of the world and has in some ways led to the further subjugation of some women – such as those that are racially, ethnically or class subordinated within the hierarchy established by the logic of patriarchal rationalism. For example, some women in the western nations may have freed themselves from the ‘drudgery’ of housekeeping and childminding by employing other women to do these tasks, but their subsequent success and involvement in the workforce does little to address the devaluation of those tasks that are considered to be women’s work. The gendered responsibility of this type of work was not successfully challenged but, it could be argued, further devalued and degraded by virtue of it being optional for those that have the means to employ others to do it. As was made clear in chapter three, some of the problems initially identified by feminists
have become associated with developing nations. For example, to some extent, labour reforms in developed nations have resulted in (in principle) equal wages for equal work between men and women. But this has led to large multinational corporations moving their operations to regions in the world where labour is not as tightly regulated and where racist and sexist myths (such as the myth of the ‘nimble-fingered woman’) can be invoked to justify exploitative labour conditions. Thus, we see that challenging patriarchal and gender-based expectations in one context can result in the deepening, in other contexts, of the very systems of value one was attempting to overcome.

One way around the impasse presented by the woman/nature question is to be found in Laura’s understanding of the epistemology of power. He posits a theory suggesting that what is considered to be knowledge within western culture is that which offers a measure of control over the world. He has argued that the environmental destruction and devastation being levelled at the planet leading to the current global environmental crisis can be understood as a result of this epistemology of power (Laura & Cotton, 1999). Given the connections between women and nature, and the ways in which women have all too often been valued as just another resource of nature to be expropriated and subjugated, it is a central contention of this thesis that Laura’s theory can be applied to the situation of women in order to generate new feminist understandings about potential methods of transcending the woman/nature conceptualisation, and to offer a new expression to feminist analysis.

Reason and the Epistemology of Power

If reason is an effect not of reason itself but of something unreasonable (ie, power), the adhering to even an altered, modified reason is no solution (Elizabeth Grosz, 1993, p. 207).
Let us now turn to the task of synthesising the above insights into a comprehensive epistemology. Extending Laura’s epistemology of power hypothesis, I argue that not unlike the dominant theory of knowledge which characterises western culture, patriarchal rationalism defines the primary presuppositional modalities of reason itself, largely because of the measure of social control it appears to secure for those who are its guardians. By virtue of propagating a particular brand of rationality as the fundamental discourse of objective interpretation of the world, the pretence is that we can best achieve control of the world around us by objectifying it. In reference to the conventional epistemic process challenged by Laura (see Laura & Cotton, 1999), the very process of viewing the world objectively in the required sense, detaches us from the subject matter under investigation. The traditional assumption here is that detachment gives us the ‘neutral perspective’ required to measure and observe accurately the things and phenomena of the world. Observation in turn serves as the instrument of measurement, and it is measurement which is the instrument of prediction. Through our observation, we are thus able to predict the actions or behaviour of the phenomena under investigation. Predictability, itself, thus becomes a primary measure and form of control. The more predictable the character of a thing is, the more control we are likely to have over it. Inasmuch as the theory of knowledge we have embraced is designed to maximise power and control over our world, it is the obsession with power which in the end informs the posture and direction of educational epistemology; for we begin reasoning about the world predominantly in ways which express our preoccupation with domination. In this sense patriarchal rationalism reduces to a modality of reasoning which is itself corrupted into a tool of power over the world and everything in it. Rationality is thus elevated to the status of a patriarchal dogma, inasmuch as we are led to believe that the only way to examine things objectively (and dare I say, as a man would examine them) is to employ a form of reason which bifurcates the whole of nature into hierarchical value structures.
Epistemology of Power

Here I shall provide more details concerning the epistemology of power, in order to clarify what Laura and his colleagues mean when they invoke this concept (Laura & Cotton, 1999; Laura & Marchant, 2002: Laura, Marchant, & Smith, 2008). Utilising the work of Wittgenstein and Quine, Laura argues that knowledge has in built biases that shape the way in which we come to know the world.

What we regard as fact is itself determined by the language in which it is expressed as a fact. There is no undiluted observation independent of language; is there only observations reported in observation languages. The very language in which our observations are reported is in turn conditioned by prior theories. In this respect there are no raw or uninterpreted data. Even mensuration and the numerical values it licences depend upon theoretical assumptions more comprehensive than the procedure of measurement incorporated in them (Laura & Cotton, 1999, p. 42).

Thus, the concept of knowledge embraced by western science is theory-laden, even when it purports to be theory-free. Laura goes on to establish that knowledge is also value-laden and states that ‘it is the value-ladenness of knowledge which exerts the greatest influence on the institution of education and the social structures that arise out of and support it’ (Laura & Cotton, 1999, p. 47). Arguing that

Common to the various categories of knowledge formulated by western institutions of education is a value which both motivates and defines knowledge, and this is the value we place upon knowledge as a form of power. According to the view to be advanced here, knowledge enshrines the values which prompt and motivate its discovery. Inasmuch as knowledge is motivated by our insatiable appetite for power, the search for knowledge recapitulates the preoccupation with power which holds our culture captive. What we have in western culture come to accept as knowledge, in other words, is determined presuppositionally by whether what is known provides some advantage to the knower (p. 48).
Their argument is that the primary epistemological paradigm which serves to characterise western education is gratuitously selective in a way that favours power and control. The problem is that, the particular form of knowledge propagated in our educational institutions is one from amongst a wide array of possible forms. The institutional priority given to this form of knowledge is less a function of its endemic logical character than the fact that our dominant educational epistemology is motivated by society’s insatiable appetite for power. To put the point more strongly, the form of educational knowledge which monopolises the mind-set of our teaching institutions is conditioned and informed by the obsession with power as a primary means of control: control of the earth and control of every non-living and living thing on it.

This particular form of knowledge that we have institutionalised is conditioned by our preoccupation to dominate and control the destiny of every living and non-living thing on this planet. Our insatiable appetite for power drives us to a form of knowledge which covertly stipulates that the only knowledge worth having is that which allows to re-order the world and our relationship to each other in ways that suit our own ends and presumed interests, no matter how selfish or destructive those ends and interests are (Laura, Marchant, & Smith, 2008, p. 6).

As Laura and his colleagues have argued there are many forms of knowledge available to us by which to know the world insightfully, beyond those endorsed ‘by the highly empiricist canons of science by which our society judges what is to be regarded as known and not known. Outside of its monopoly, and the vested interests that have been fostered to protect it, scientific knowledge is just one possible form of knowledge among many’ (Laura, Marchant, & Smith, 2008, p. 6).

Far from being ‘value-free’ or ‘neutral’ independently of how we use knowledge it is clear that knowledge enshrines a complex set of presuppositions which either explicitly deny or
implicitly marginalise the intrinsic value not only of nature but of women, transforms both into objects of desire to be manipulated by the will of men or those in power. As has been argued elsewhere, rather than being value-neutral, each piece of information that is considered knowledge is designed covertly to provide some measure of control over some aspect of our lives (Marchant, 2006). Due to the power presumption as the primary motivation factor in determining what is accepted as knowledge, it is argued that that is a built-in bias within knowledge, as Laura, Marchant, and Smith make plain:

the philosophical idea that what makes knowledge good or bad depends simply on how one uses it, betrays a conceptual distortion of a far subtler truth. Deeper reflection reveals that when knowledge is itself substantively defined by the preoccupation with power, dominance and control, the resultant form of knowledge will enshrine as a fundamental value the obsession with power and control which motivates it. This being so, every application of that form of knowledge will serve the aim of knowing only in so far as it guarantees some measure of control (2008, p. 9).

Such a form of knowledge which is itself motivated by the lust for power in turn engenders technologies of power, themselves defined by a preoccupation with domination, subjugation and expropriation. From the examples proffered in chapter three it can be seen that global economics operates as one such technology of power. Within global economics, morality is reduced to profit motivate and therefore the earth, its people and their labour can be, without conscience, exploited and expropriated.

According to some economic theorists, the underlying ideology behind the expropriation of the resources of the natural environment was first expounded by John Locke in the seventeenth century (Rifkin, 1992). For Locke, mankind has only one purpose, to increase and protect the material wealth of its members. In Locke’s view God has bequeathed the earth to man expressly for the material benefit of mankind. 'So that God, by commanding to
subdue, gave authority so far to appropriate. And the condition of human life, which
requires labour and materials to work on necessarily introduces private possessions' (Locke,
1690/1960, p. 310). In Locke’s philosophy anyone appropriating God’s land and making it
their own property and through their labour 'does not lessen but increases the common stock
of mankind' (Locke, p. 312). Locke saw each individual as having a right to own property,
along with a duty to generate wealth. Indeed, as he goes on to urge, this was a God given
mandate, 'God and his reason commanded him to subdue the earth, ie improve it for the
benefit of life' (Locke, pp. 308-9). It was his belief then that wealth was generated from
expropriating not only the land, but all the resources from it. For him 'land that is left
wholly to nature...is called, as indeed it is, waste' (Locke, p. 315). Locke sees the
establishment of the state necessary only to facilitate the wealth creation of its members.
Rifkin declares that 'from Locke’s time to our own, the social role of the State has been to
promote the subjugation of nature so that people might acquire the material prosperity
necessary for fulfilment' (Rifkin, 1992, p. 25).

Adam Smith, considered to be the father of capitalism (Rifkin, 1992), shared Locke’s view
that material self interest is the primary basis of human activity and he formulated an
economic theory which would facilitate this (Smith, 1776/1970). Smith believed that market
forces would ensure the most efficient and fairest economy, and so he believed that there
should be no government regulation within the economy. In short he endorsed Laissez-faire
as the right method of economical organisation. In his words:

  All systems either of preference or of restraint, therefore, being thus completely
taken away, the obvious and simple system of natural liberty establishes itself of its
own accord. Every man … is left perfectly free to pursue his own interests in his

According to Smith, any attempt to impose morality on this system would be tantamount to
a violation of the natural law which regulates the economic process. In Smith's view,
economics should be an ever expanding market. This being so, anything which promotes
growth is therefore laudable. Furthermore, Smith did not believe that there were any ethical
decisions to be made about this; there were only utilitarian judgements that each individual
would make in their self-interested pursuit of material wealth. According to Rifkin (1992),
the methodologies articulated by Smith and Locke continue to operate in a number of subtle
and not-so-subtle ways. Not only is nature subjugated in accordance with the economic laws
devised by Smith and Locke, but women too, as enunciated in chapter three, are
disenfranchised and devalued in the pursuit of economic wealth.

Transformative Subjugation
The way in which technologies of power achieve control depends upon their capacity to
recast the face and the things of the earth into a form which makes the behaviour of those
things predictable in ways which allegedly suit man’s needs and desires. The process by
way of which technology achieves this measure of control depends upon what has been
termed ‘transformative subjugation’. (For a full account of this theory see Laura & Cotton,
1999). The technological process of control through transformative subjugation involves
manipulating the animate and inanimate things of nature by converting them into
commodities or fabricated ‘things’ to be bought or sold in the economic marketplace, as
indeed women still are. In essence, technology gives us power over nature by systematically
synthesising and reconstructing it into things of our own making, and what better way for a
man to control a woman than by fabricating institutional structures which make her into just
another of the ‘things’ he has subdued, this time by virtue of the impoverished social role
ascribed to women.

Under the aegis of transformative subjugation the living things of nature have been
transformed into inert, lifeless, chemicalised and fabricated dead things without moral
conscience. Our drive for power and control, reflecting our drive to make the world
predictable and secure has blinded us to the harm rendered by our technological interventions. Notwithstanding the tedious debate surrounding the effects or realities of anthropogenic global warming, it is clear that in our relentless quest to commodify the things of the world we are harming the planet through processes such as acid rain, deforestation, toxic waste and the pollution being added to our air and waterways. Through our interactions with nature we have caused environmental degradation to the point of global ecological crisis.

Let us consider this process more determinately. Our technological interventions are designed predominantly to gain us control over nature by extracting the resources which we find in nature and then transforming them into highly synthesised products to be traded to the highest bidder. To put the point of transformative subjugation in theological terms, one might say that technology is driven by a deep desire within the human psyche to re-order God’s creation in such a way that the resultant world is a world of man’s creation. The face of God is thus recast definitely not in God’s image (however that might be construed theologically) and certainly not in the face of man (as perverse as that might be) but rather in the image of man’s technology, in the image of things which become controllable by having become lifeless and inert. We have committed ourselves, that is to say, to a form of technology, sustained by an epistemology of power, whose remit it is to transform all of living nature and the natural environment into an increasingly synthetic and artificial one, over which we are presumed to have great control. Man thus literally surrounds himself with the lifeless objects of his institutional or technological making, without realising that the measure of control he has over them is conditioned upon their being lifeless. Man gladly embraces the things he manufactures along with the machines he has made to manufacture those things. Consistent with this theme, he far too readily tolerates the chemically toxic by-products of the industries that produce the artefacts which adorn the artificial environment he has synthesised for himself.
Technology achieves its promise of control and subjugation by taking the living things of nature and transforming them, without conscience, into inert, chemicalised lifeless things of man’s own fabrication. Technology is driven to do this, because the less alive something is, the more predictable and controllable it is. This is the sense in which technological transformations are tantamount to subjugations. The more chemically inert a thing is, the easier it becomes to subsume that thing under the aegis of mathematical and scientific laws designed to quantify its behaviour in the countless circumstances of our interactions with it both personally and by way of our machines. The more alive and conscious something is, the more incalculable its behavioural outcomes. This being so, the world of technological control determines that the world be reconstituted by things which have by way of technology, had the very life within them systematically withdrawn from them. Technology has, at one level of comprehension indeed made us powerful, but the world over which it has bequeathed us power is a world of increasingly dead and inert things.

One particular ramification of transformative subjugation which is of special relevance to the feminist thesis is sponsored on the assumption that the more lifeless and inert something becomes, the less moral responsibility that needs to be exercised when such things are exploited, manipulated, or for that matter violated. In this regard, the technological transformation of the world is not only mechanical, but also institutional. Consistent with our all-consuming preoccupation with power, we create and sustain institutional structures, that is to say, which transform people by disempowering them; by depriving them of their autonomy, their rights, their hope. The less control we have over our lives, the less alive we are and the easier we are to control. Our predictability represents a fundamental condition of our lifelessness.
It is easier to appreciate the extent to which this sense of 'transformative disempowerment' or institutional degradation of personhood is an endogenous feature of our educational epistemology by making its methodological configuration explicit. The methodology by way of which transformative subjugation provides increasing measures of control through predictable or probabilistic outcomes is reductionism in the service of mechanical or institutional technologisation. The most efficient way to secure power over nature, on this view, is to ensure its fragmentation by taking things which are found as integrated wholes and breaking them down into their constituent parts. The methodological transformation becomes subjugative by virtue of the fact that the qualitative dimensions of nature are discarded from the quantitative associations of which they form a part. The more quantitative we can make the objects of our investigation, the less difficult it is to predict the outcome of our interaction with them and their interactions with each other. What the methodology of 'qualitative extirpation', as it has elsewhere been called, (See Laura & Cotton, 1999, p.102) depends upon is the reconceptualisation of nature as a machine made up of smaller and smaller parts, down to its most basic elemental parts, each of which is governed by a physical law of concatenation. This being so, the idea is that the specification of these logical relations is tantamount to a decipherable blueprint of the thing in itself. The role to be played by the methodology of this power-based epistemology is thus to analyse and reduce the things of nature in such a way that what remains is simply a collection of quantifiable, inert, lifeless or chemicalised components, devoid of intrinsic value or purpose. The more inert or lifeless a thing is, the less relevant are moral considerations in respect our manipulations and exploitation of it. Transformative subjugation renders women as inert and lifeless by reducing their intrinsic value as persons to their utilitarian value as women: as objects, that is, of pleasure, reproduction, or as a source of labour. The value women have is thus recast in the reductionist methodology as utilitarian, not endogenous.
This level of power has been achieved through various means such as transformative subjugation, the process by which the living things of nature have been systemically transformed into inert, chemicalised, death things. Although we have furthered our control over the planet, as Laura and Cotton (1999) make clear, it is an increasingly inert and dead world. One aspect of this process that they maintain has not been given due attention is the way in which reductionism and objective detachment have served as a means by which we manipulate the world – this methodology serves us to detach us rather than connect us with the object being studied and makes it easier to manipulate the objects under investigation in ways that further our own interests, without moral conscience. Because of the success of its methodology science becomes the most socially exalted form of knowledge, and this exaltation is betrayed by the priority given to the sciences in the education curriculum.

Because the epistemic goal of science is to make the world as predictable as possible, the world is stripped of its qualitative dimensions so that only the more predictable quantitative aspects remain. The more quantitative a domain, the more readily can its subject matter be subsumed within the laws of science. The more amenable a subject matter is to scientific laws which ensure predictability, the more objective, so the argument goes, is the investigation undertaken. What is not amenable to quantification becomes regarded as subjective and outside the province of scientific knowledge. Simply put, the quantitative issues fall within the aegis of science, while qualitative issues become those of the arts (Laura, Marchant, & Smith, 2008, p. 10).

**Educational Implications**

According to Laura and Cotton (1999), however education is defined, it at least involves the transmission of knowledge, but they question whether the knowledge that is transmitted within the framework of the western education system is ‘really worth knowing and thus truly worth transmitting’ (1999, p.1). It is their argument that the knowledge transmitted
within this framework is a form of knowledge that is inimical to the environmental aims of education, and I would hasten to add, to the aims of feminist education. They argue that the values of the patriarchal capitalist society of the West are mediated educationally. Because the concept of knowledge underpinning our education system is driven by a preoccupation with power and control, the form of knowledge transmitted through this system will therefore be 'antithetical to environmental goals of respect for, and cultivation of, the living earth' (Laura and Cotton, 1999, p.49). The education propagation of the presumption of knowledge as power instils and inculcates not only a receptivity to competitive consumer values but also to the 'throw away' ethos in which nature is represented on the one hand as an infinite reservoir of wealth and as an infinite sink for the collection of our rubbish on the other. I argue that, likewise, within a system where values of power and control are mediated educationally the social goals of feminism are not likely to met. Within this framework of consumerism, women are treated as having no intrinsic value save as a utilitarian resource - as objects of pleasure to be traded or as an exploitable source of labour.

Within this educational framework economics, a technology developed with the implicit values of power and control, is not just a subject that is taught but is a mind-set being mediated through the educational process. The education system 'continues to function as a propagator and maintainer of industrial consumer values' necessary to our economic system, but it also prepares students for their role in this system by operating as scaled down versions of the industrial workplace (Laura & Cotton, 1999, p.130). Children are the raw material that are processed by the workers/teachers within the factory like environment of the school, and here they are taught that they will need to produce in order to consume and facilitate unlimited growth. In this way they learn the role they must fill in capitalist society. At the next level of education, the tertiary sector, there are constant attempts to refine this process by making education more efficient and cost-effective. Within chapter five an examination of research into masculinity suggests that consumerism and consumption, once
thought to be the role of women in society – an one of the means through which their objectification is effected - is now also incorporating masculinity, and men are marketed to and treated as objects, in addition to being expected to demonstrate their masculinity through the consumption of appropriate products.

A further way in which the education system functions to propagate the economic imperatives of vested interest is the way in which computers have been proffered as the panacea to all of education’s woes. The mindless embrace of the latest technology is not only a means by which governments demonstrate the modernness of the state, but it also serves to train students for the needs of the future workforce – they are being prepared for their roles in the knowledge economy (Buchanan & Chapman, 2009); a development that reflects an increasingly impoverished view of the role and purpose of education. Laura and Cotton offer a warning in regards to the use of computers in classrooms:

What seems not to be acknowledged about this recent development in knowledge skills and acquisition is that just as all the computers are the same on the outside, there is an important educational sense in which they are all the same on the inside. To put this less provocatively, there are a limited number of computer learning programs available in schools…who reflect a particular, dare we say, technological way of seeing the world and thus of organising human experience (1999, p. 67).

Computers in classroom are just one more insistence of the way in which we have embraced technologies of power and mediate these educationally, and one more means of making education a process of conformity (See, Gatto 2005 for a critique of the conformity espoused within modern educational practices). One of the characteristics of technologies developed from the epistemology of power is the penchant for conformity, as conformity is an endemic feature of predictability – and the more predictable something is more controllable is it.
Thinking in the context of the computer is in essence a binary process of reasoning and one kind of reasoning among many kinds of reasoning. Just as education has revealed its bias in favour of promulgating a particular form of knowledge (an act of conformism in itself), so it is by way of its commitment to universal computer-learning betraying a bias in favour of the promulgation of a particular form of reasoning, an act of educational conformism no less pernicious that the commitment to knowledge as power and control (Laura & Cotton, p. 67).

Binary logic in which all information is reduced to either a ‘0’ or a ‘1’ could, in a bizarre sense, be understood as the ultimate expression of patriarchal rationality – in which all the earth is bifurcated into a dualistic hierarchy. Let us now turn our investigation to observe more closely the dynamic between patriarchal rationality and the epistemology of power.

**Epistemology of Power and Patriarchal Rationalism**

I contend that patriarchal rationalism and the epistemology of power are mutually reinforcing and complicit in the continued devaluation of women. Patriarchal rationalism refers to a specialised form of reason that can be discerned in the work of the ancient Greek philosophers, through the model of reason embraced by the Christian Church, in the formulations of Bacon and Descartes and remains with us still, in the contemporary philosophy of science. Predicated on binary dualisms which hierarchically order the world into opposing categories, the logic espoused by patriarchal rationalism, is still keenly felt in the failure of post-modernism to overcome the mind/body split (Peters, 2004; Grace, 2007).

Within patriarchal rationalism that which is associated with femininity is considered to be of lesser value than that associated with masculinity. Thus, in order to achieve a measure of success women have to transcend their femininity (and men have to repudiate that which is considered to be feminine). The epistemology of power also operates to ensure that we achieve a measure of domination and control over the world around us. As women (through the logic of patriarchal rationalism) have been considered closer to nature and the world (as
opposed to the realm of logic, reason and culture) they have all too often been considered a resource for expropriate, exploitation and subjugation.

On the view I shall propose here, patriarchal rationalism and the dominant epistemology of power from which it derives, become conceptually parasitic and mutually reinforcing. Coupled with our insatiable desire for power and control over the world, the dualism of reason becomes the handmaiden of knowledge. The only way to know the world is to think rationally about it, and to think rationally about it is to presuppose the dualistic hierarchies of value into which it is divided. Patriarchal rationalism, not unlike the concept of knowledge to which it is married, is in a peculiar sense deemed to be beyond critique for it is considered to be the only basis for any critique worth making. Dualistic reason has come to be regarded, that is to say, as a precondition of patriarchal rationality. One of the primary objectives of the present thesis is to show that this view is not only conceptually myopic, but also highly problematic.

Within the context of patriarchal rationalism and epistemology the value of a woman is determined by how well she can imitate the virtues associated with being a male. The value a woman is accorded depends upon how well she can pose as a man. To redress this conceptual imbalance of hierarchical value, I shall endeavour, in chapter six, to reconceptualise the patriarchal presumptions upon which it is based. The epistemology of power represents only one possible form of knowledge from amongst a number of contenders and that reason, as defined in the tradition of patriarchy, is not the only form of thinking available to us by way of which to examine the world. Patriarchal rationalism is in fact a highly specialised form of thinking, and not the only way of coming to know the world insightfully and cogently. I attest that the prevalence of the belief that patriarchal rationalism is the right and only way of reasoning about and then knowing the world reflects the extent to which western educational philosophy has become mired in a dogma of
patriarchal prejudice. Just as our dominant theory of knowledge and the technologies to which it gives rise have been treated as value-free, so, rationalism, which shapes the fundamental conceptual character of western education, is also treated as if the process of reason were correspondingly value neutral, when in fact it is not. Patriarchal rationalism is thus propagated as the fundamental discourse of objective interpretation of the world, while other approaches are treated as subjective and of lesser value.

Patriarchal rationalism is itself an ideological facet of the patriarchal paradigm within which what is rational is ‘good’ and what is not rational is either ‘bad’ or ‘of lesser value’ and to be eschewed. This conceptual bifurcation is embedded as an endemic a feature of rationalism, and implicitly guarantees that the distinction between what is rational and irrational is an exclusive and exhaustive disjunction. One is either rational (man-like) or irrational (woman-like) and there is nothing in between. Thus, to accept rationalism unreflectively is, I affirm, to endorse a discourse which covertly connects what is male with what is rational, while relegating what is female to the realm of the irrational. Because women were by nature more emotional than men, so they had to be socially guided, if not controlled, to ensure that they acted in their own interest. By propagating patriarchal rationalism as the basis of our way of thinking about and interacting with the world, we have inadvertently entrenched an ideology whose dominant presumption is that women are inevitably of lesser value than men because they are lesser persons than men. Thus, imposition of patriarchal rationalism is itself a way of controlling women. That storms and other natural disasters are still almost exclusively identified in female terms and equated with disorder and the irrational is a commentary on how deeply entrenched the patriarchal hierarchy of value is. Patriarchal rationalism becomes the handmaiden of technological power by way of which we both deconstruct nature on the one hand and reconstruct her on the other to bring control and give her order.
The Search for Emancipatory Pedagogy

If we are to reclaim the body and recode the systems of logic, the abstract registers we work within, in ways that are integrative rather than exclusionary, we need a pedagogy that has a safe place for the non-linear as well as the linear, the literal as well as the figurative, the personal and emotional as well as the abstract, and the feminine as well as the masculine. We need a pedagogy that values both modes of discourse and that allows persons of both sexes to articulate both in peaceful conversation (Heywood, 1999, pp. 276-277).

This thesis is an explication of the ways in which women’s lives remain textured by oppressive patriarchal structures and presumptions of value. The educative system is implicated in the transmission of an epistemology of power, which owing to the mutual reciprocal relation it shares with patriarchal rationalism is implicitly patriarchal in character. Patriarchal rationalism, married as it is, to the epistemology of power is mediated educationally – thus, it is not enough to educate people to the social injustices that are being perpetuated, as the education system itself propagates and institutionalises the over arching framework of patriarchal value which is implicated in the economic and environmental injustices that continue unabated. How is the education system to be challenged when, as was shown, two and half centuries of feminist agitation and the opening of mass schooling systems to the presence of female students has not delivered emancipation for women? It turns out that women’s liberation depends less on how they are educated, but more on how they are conceptualised with the educative system. One way forward is the reconceptualisation of the knowledge propagated by our schools. Laura and Cotton (1999) proffer the vision of an ‘Epistemology of Empathy’; they suggest that by basing knowledge on the values of empathy and connectivity rather than power and control we would no longer be inculcating successive generations in the values of masculine dominance, and we would
be free to educate the hearts and bodies of students rather than just education through appeal to the rational mind.

The aim is not to exploit human consciousness to achieve control but rather to achieve connection, relationship and balance through consciousness. Empathetic knowing involves seeing the fundamental interrelationships which express the character of the whole. We must learn to discern how our participation in the dynamical process of indivisible unity represents an investment in the future rather than an extractive lien on the past (Laura & Cotton, p. 144).

A reconceptualisation of the concept of knowledge which underpins our educative system would potentially open the mind to envisage the world in new ways. An epistemology based on connectivity, rather than control, would free us from having to limit learning about the world by way of patriarchal rationalism. We could explore the world in ways other than cold, detached, objective, observation and manipulation – methods that have served to separate us from the objects of our investigation. Empathetic education opens up new ways of understanding the world based on connectivity rather than detachment, thus, making it morally harder for us to act upon the earth in ways that damage the ecological integrity of a delicately balanced system of which we are a part. It would also serve to connect us in our shared humanity.

Conclusion
To endeavour to liberate women from the bonds of institutional oppression is not, as has generally been supposed, a matter primarily of educating men and women to the ideals of justice and morality by way of which equal consideration of interest can be extended. The paradox is that the very system of education to which one appeals for such edification is by its very nature biased in favour of a patriarchal framework which devalues women. What is
needed is a reconceptualisation of the concept of knowledge which defines education. One way forward is to substitute epistemologies of power for epistemologies of empathy; to seek to connect rather than control, and to participate in nature rather than to separate ourselves from it (see chapter six). The liberation of women perhaps depends less upon how education describes them than upon how it conceptualises them.
This section of the thesis comprises of a more determined look at gender - a category of analysis that functions in different ways. As Holter (1997, 2003) reminds us it is important to separate the different ways in which gender operates. Gender can function as a form of social relations or as structural inequality – the two are contiguous, rather than synonymous. It is my argument that these two processes, social relations and structural inequality, work in a related fashion and are separate dimensions of an overarching framework which serves, through underlying presuppositions to hierarchically order the world and the people within it, ensuring that some people are always seen as less human than others, and can therefore be treated as resources for expropriation and subjugation. This chapter will analyse social relations, and the intersection of gender and patriarchy in order to make clear the way in which the present cultural constructions of gender create societal ideas about masculinity and femininity which uphold and reinforce the values of patriarchy. The school setting will be examined as a site in which patriarchal notions of gender are maintained. I shall explain the way in which gender operates to place men and women differently within the socio-economic context and in particular the way in which gender is both embodied and socially constructed in ways that can be understood to go hand in hand with epistemological patriarchy.

Gender as a site of analysis of structural inequality was examined in the previous chapters. Chapter one was a structural analysis of the ways in which gender operated differently for men and women in terms of economics and was an examination of the gains made and the limitations experienced by feminists in their fight for equality. Chapter two detailed further
structural inequalities and described the ways in which, through mechanisms such as patriarchal theism, institutions have historically controlled women and restricted their choices. Chapter three explored the gendered relations in global economics that views the poorer nations of the world as resources for expropriation and subjugation.

Chapter one described the epistemological patriarchy – the presuppositions underpinning the knowledge systems of western culture. It is my contention that while this form of epistemology remains firmly entrenched feminist gains will be limited as the very system to which they appeal for redress is biased by its very nature against women. An example of this process can be seen in chapter three – the gains of western feminists (status, material, economic and cultural), it can be argued, have come at the expense of the world’s poorest and most disadvantaged. The economic actions of the core states have been to dominate the periphery states and to expropriate the labour and resources of the world’s poor. It can be argued that the lifestyles of the people in western nations are based on the underpaid labour of the poor of the world (see, for example, Wallerstein, 2004). It is my contention that epistemological patriarchy creates a mindset that makes it hard to comprehend the ways in which people are connected and thus makes us blind to the hardships faced by those far removed from us.

The Mind/Body Split:

Epistemological Patriarchy and Patriarchal Corporeality

One way to analyse gender is to understand that in a continuation of the dualistic values underpinning epistemology patriarchy, the world is split into two realms, the mental and the physical. A gendered conceptualisation is embedded as though men embody the first of these categories and women the second. That is, masculinity is believed to represent rationality, objectivity, and reason and is associated with order, light, life, day and knowledge; whilst femininity is believed to represent powerlessness, emotion, and nature
and is associated with chaos, darkness, night, death and ignorance. These epistemological divisions are treated as though they form an exhaustive and exclusive disjunction. The conceptual split between mind and body is set up as though, as described by Plato, the world is split between the mental and the physical. Within both these ontological categories that which is associated with the masculine creates and maintains itself through the negation of that which is defined as feminine. One can see in Plato’s works a clear division between the eternal realm of ideas, knowledge and reason – that is the realm of the mind, and the ephemeral world of nature, reproduction and death - the realm of the body. He stated:

If a man has seriously devoted himself to the love of learning and to true wisdom, if he has exercised these aspects of himself above all, then there is absolutely no way that his thoughts can fail to be immortal and divine, should truth come within his grasp. And to the extent that human nature can partake of immortality, he can in no way fail to achieve this: constantly caring for his divine part within him, he must indeed be supremely happy (Plato, 1997, Complete works, ‘Timaeus’, p. 1289, SS90b-c).

Such is Plato’s influence that over two millennia later philosophy is still influenced by the principles espoused by Plato (This point is more determinately addressed in chapter four, see pp. 172-195, for more details), that the world is divided in the eternal realm of ideas and the fleeting physical world. This dualistic conceptualisation was reaffirmed in the work of Descartes, who writes in A Discourse on Method:

I thence concluded that I was a substance whose whole essence or nature consists only in thinking, and which, that it may exist, has need of no place, nor is dependent on any material thing; so that “I”, that is to say, the mind by which I am what I am, is wholly distinct from the body, and is even more easily known than the latter, and is such, that although the latter were not, it would still continue to be all that it is (Descartes, 1637/2004, p.12).
Within the mental realm, which contains ideas and knowledge and is considered to be more real, that is more lasting and meaningful, than the physical realm, the particular form of knowledge that has been selected from a range of available forms of knowledge is that which has been termed epistemological patriarchy. As articulated by Grosz:

It could be argued that philosophy as we know it has established itself as a form of knowing, a form of rationality, only through the disavowal of the body, specifically the male body, and the corresponding elevation of mind as disembodied term (1994, p. 4).

This particular form of knowledge was described in chapter four as being driven by the value that we as a culture place on power. That is to say, what is considered to be knowledge is that which gives us a measure of control over the some aspect of the world. This form of knowledge is mutually complicit with the dominant form of reason – patriarchal rationalism. Patriarchal rationalism is in fact a highly specialised form of thinking, and is not the only way of coming to know the world insightfully and cogently. But being the dominant form of reasoning the belief is maintained that the only way to know the world is to think rationally about it, and to think rationally about it is to presuppose the dualistic hierarchies of value into which it is divided. Patriarchal rationalism, not unlike the concept of knowledge to which it is married – that is epistemological patriarchy, is in a peculiar sense deemed to be beyond critique for it is considered to be the only basis for any critique worth making.

Dualistic reason has come to be regarded, that is to say, as a precondition of patriarchal rationalism.

With Plato, and subsequently the type of rationality embraced by the West, bifurcating existence into the mental and physical realms, our experience of the world is through the mind (knowledge) or through corporeal experience – the two experiences, mind and body, being considered mutually exclusive. The world of the mental realm is dominated by epistemological patriarchy which not only conditions how the world is understood, but our
beliefs about how the physical world operates. Epistemological patriarchy means that the
world is thought about and understood in male dominated ways, i.e., through patriarchal
rationalism. Correspondingly, the physical realm is dominated by a physical order that I
term ‘patriarchal corporeality’. Within this system epistemological patriarchy and
patriarchal corporeality form two sides to the same coin. Epistemology is dominated by a
masculine way of knowing the world and the physical realm is dominated by a particular
way of being that rewards and values physical strength and domination. The values
enshrined within epistemological patriarchy thus perpetuate an understanding of the world in
which rewards and privileges flow to men. (Although not in the form of a global domination
of men over women, as will be further examined, the world is understood hierarchically with
intersecting hierarchies of privilege, in which some masculinities are subordinated to more
dominant forms).

I contend that mirroring the way in which masculine knowledge establishes itself as the
dominant form of knowledge by negating what it terms feminine knowledges, - or what
Foucault refers to as ‘subjugated knowledges’ (Danaher, Schirato, & Webb, 2000) -
patriarchal corporeality imposes a ‘gender regime’ (to borrow a term coined by others, see
Kessler, Ashenden, Connell, & Dowsett, 1985), within which masculinity creates itself
through the constant repudiation and negation of what it defines as the feminine. I attest that
epistemological patriarchy is the mental expression of humanity and at the same time
patriarchal corporeality is the bodily expression of society. These two exist at the same time
as mutually reinforcing expressions of the bifurcation of human experience into the
mind/body dualism. On the one hand patriarchal epistemology limits the expression of
human understanding to a male dominated definition of rationality. On the other hand,
patriarchal corporeality bifurcates human traits into masculine and feminine and limits the
expression of these.
Anthropological studies have amply demonstrated there are many ways in which societies can organise relations between the genders, and not all societies are limited to two genders. I contend that within cultures influenced by epistemological patriarchy, patriarchal corporeality is established as the dominant gender regime. Patriarchal corporeality creates a system whereby a person’s biological sex determines their corresponding gender which then determines their sexuality – which is a culturally normative heterosexuality. The particular form of sexual relations that has been culturally endorsed is that in which heterosexual relationships are exalted as being the normal, or true form of sexual experience, and these particular relations are the basis of patriarchal economic and familial institutions. This form of sexual relations has been termed by Judith Butler, the ‘heterosexual matrix’ (1990).

Within which males (in terms of biological sex) are masculine men (in terms of gender) and their sexuality is one that fits into the cultural script of normal heterosexual relations. Within this system, social relations are organised so that cultural benefits flow to men over women and heterosexual unions are privileged over homosexual unions (marriage being a case in point, see chapter two, for details of how even which modern companionate marriage, benefits still flow to men more than women and marriage itself operates as a mechanism for the legitimisation of heterosexual relationships).

Men are deemed to be not only intellectually dominant, but physically dominant as well and this twin domination (in the two realms the mental and the physical) becomes the self evident justification for men’s subordination of women in the physical realm and their historical exclusion from the mental realm. Within the mental realm rationality is defined as being a masculine way of being, and the knowledge generated by epistemological patriarchy is that which negates feminine knowledge and ways of being. Within the physical realm social relations are maintained in which benefits flow to men more than women. I shall look more determinately at the sex-gender-sexuality script maintained within patriarchal corporeality, noting that it varies in time and place according to the prevailing socio-cultural
conditions. Patriarchal corporeality both influences and is influenced by these socio-cultural conditions.

As the system of patriarchal corporeality extends more benefits to men than women, and was for a time predicated on women’s exclusion from public life, women in general and feminists in particular have had worked in creating new norms for women so that they are no longer excluded from the intellectual pursuits or excluded from participating in society economically and politically. This has been the project for feminism for at least the last two and a half centuries. While successful in allowing women a fuller role in society, feminism has not yet comprehensively challenged this form of entrenched epistemology. What feminism has achieved for women is the undermining of society’s script that dictates that women are the property of men, their intellectual inferior, and are dependent upon them for their survival. The harm that patriarchy does to women has been revealed by feminist investigation and agitation. What is less clear is the harm that patriarchy does to men. While there is a growing awareness of the toxic effects of patriarchy upon men, there has not been the same concerted effort to create new societal roles for men, although this has been changing in recent times (Connell, 2005).

Patriarchy corporeality maintains a gendered understanding of the world and a hierarchical gendered order within society. It maintains that sex determines gender which determines sexuality. While the work of anthropologists, feminists, queer theorists and gay rights activists has done much to demonstrate that this simplistic understanding of the world fails to accommodate the variety of humanity in all its expression, patriarchal corporeality remains the dominant understanding and expression of human societal relations within western culture.
It is the purpose of this chapter to establish how the system of patriarchal corporeality shapes social relations in the physical world through heteronormality. In addition, the educational implications will be explored. Schools can be understood, on the one hand, as sites where the power driven form of knowledge are mediated educationally - where successive generations are inculcated with the epistemology of power (see Laura & Cotton, 1999). On the other hand, schools are also prime contexts for the enactment of patriarchal corporeality. An epistemology of power is transmitted in the classroom and patriarchal corporeality, it could be argued, is transmitted in the schoolyard. A portion of the chapter will look at the way in which the dominant expressions of masculinity – (termed by Connell hegemonic and complicit masculinities, see Connell, 1985, 1990, 1995) are harmful and dehumanising to men and limit the expression of their full humanity. I shall also examine the realm of human sexuality and the way in which dominant expression of sexual culture reinforces the dominance of patriarchal corporeality as the only way to understand and experience human physicality.

**Patriarchal Corporeality: The Sex/Gender/Heteronormality Order**

As is currently understood through the work of post structural analysis one’s ‘sex’ refers to whether one is biologically/physiologically male or female. Within the gender regime established within patriarchal corporeality biological bodies are ‘sexed’ into exclusive categories of male and female and these biological sexes are understood to embody particular corresponding dichotomous, mutually exclusive traits, that is, male bodies are masculine and female bodies are feminine. Humanity, in all its variety, could be understood as existing upon a continuum; but, rather, under patriarchal corporeality it exists in strictly binary terms. Although this dichotomy seems natural, reflection upon the experience of the intersexed (those who used to be known as hermaphrodites and whose bodies - for reasons of deformity, hormonal imbalance or chromosomal disorder – defy straight forward male/female categorisation) reveals that the sex binary is artificial. Cadwallader (2009) notes
that some 1.7 percent of live births are of babies who are intersexed and it is on these bodies that the male/female dichotomy is maintained at knifepoint. Some of these babies will go up with hormonal or chromosomal abnormalities that may never be detected, while others have abnormal shaped or sized genitals that mark them as other than ‘normal’ boys or girls. Many infants born intersexed are surgically altered into order to maintain the notion that sex is a natural binary. The disciplining of these bodies by the medical establishment reveals that the very category of sex, upon which patriarchal corporeality rests, is a false one and that some not insignificant proportion of the population would exist outside of this binary, if it were not for the ubiquitous power of the medical establishment working to maintain these normative categories.

### The Gender Agenda: Masculinity, femininity and patriarchal corporeality

Gender is an overarching category – a major social status that organises almost all aspects of social life. Therefore bodies and sexualities are gendered; biology, physiology, and sexuality, in contrast, do not add up to gender, which is a social institution that establishes patterns of expectations, for individuals, orders the social processes of everyday life, is built into the major social organisations of society, such as the economy, ideology, the family, and politics, and is also an entity in and of itself (Lorber, 1996, p. 146).

Within the gender regime established by patriarchal corporeality one’s biological sex determines one’s corresponding gender. Gender is the cultural beliefs about the appropriate attributes of a male or a female. That is, gender refers to the cultural construction of masculinity and femininity. Alexander (2003) provides a definition of a gender ideal as being formed by ‘the shared beliefs or models of gender that a majority of society accepts as appropriate masculinity or femininity,’ and gender display is ‘the variety of ways in which we reveal, through our verbal and nonverbal demeanour, that we fit in with masculine and feminine ideas’ (p. 537). For Ridgeway and Correll (2004), ‘gender is an institutionalised
system of social practices for constituting people as two significantly different categories, men and women, and organising social relations of inequality on the basis of difference’ (p. 510). As with other hierarchical systems, such as class and race, gender is maintained through cultural beliefs and practices which serve to distribute resources at the macro level, (chapter three detailed ways in which gender functions as an organising principle in global economics) and affects both patterns of behaviour and organisational practices as the interactional level and beliefs and identities at the level of the individual (Ridgeway & Correll). As an example of individual practice, Ridgeway and Correll state that ‘knowing that they will be categorised in this way, most people carefully construct their appearance according to cultural gender rules to ensure that others reliably categorise them as belonging to the sex category that claim for themselves’ (2004, p. 515). They claim that while most people resist hegemonic gender beliefs in small ways ‘most people most of the time largely and often unwittingly comply with the pressure of gender-based expectations in the bulk of their behaviour’ (2004, p. 519). They note the ubiquity of gender, from the ‘segregation of jobs, to the gender differentiation of voluntary organisations, gender acts as a fundamental principle of organising social relations in virtually all spheres of social life’ (p. 521). Within the gender regime imposed by patriarchal corporeality the particular forms of masculinity and femininity that are culturally exalted are those that ensure continued male dominance. Masculinity defines itself through the constant repudiation of what it defines as feminine, ensuring through this process of repudiation that masculinity is more highly valued.

What is interesting about the age old gender system in Western society is not that it never changes but that it sustains itself by continually redefining who men and women are and what they do while preserving the fundamental assumption that whatever the differences are, on balance, they imply that men are rightly more powerful (Ridgeway & Correll, 2004, p. 522).

It should be noted that people are more complex than simple representation through gender and associated gender norms suggests. Research suggests that people’s experience of gender
do not always match up to cultural expectations (Simon & Nath, 2004). Janet Shibley Hyde, for example, advances a gender similarities hypothesis based on a review of 46 meta-analyses (2005). She argues that gender differences are vastly over stated and that on most psychological variables males and females are more similar than they are different.

Post structural analysis suggests that of sex and gender, gender is the more stable category against which people are judged (Nye, 2005; although see Dozier 2005, her study with female-to-male transitioned trans gendered men calls this into dispute). Technological and medical advances of the last fifty years have made trans sexual operations possible for those who can come to believe that there true gender is trapped in the wrong body (that is in itself a telling commentary on the rigidity of gender expectations, that people feel that their sex must be altered in order to match their preferred gender expression).

The art of the cosmetic surgeon now permits the external markers of the body’s sex to be enlarged, suppressed, reshaped, or spectacularly invigorated by drugs. As a consequence, we now think of sex as infinitely malleable, as an unreliable indicator of sexual orientation and as a signifier of gender rather than the other way around (Nye, 2005, p. 1937).

The work of Judith Butler, in particular, has done much to deconstruct the notion that gender is a natural category flowing from sex. For Butler, ‘there is no gender identity behind the expressions of gender; that identity is performatively constituted by the very “expressions” that are said to be the results’ (Butler, 1990, p. 25). That is, the gender expressions that a person enacts bring into existence the very gender that they are ‘doing’. While her work suggests that gender ontology is an epistemological impossibility (Nayak & Kehily, 2006), patriarchal corporeality brings into existence a gender regime in which gender categories appear real, natural, inevitable and unassailable.
Compulsory heterosexuality: Judith Butler’s Heterosexual matrix

Fundamental to the regulatory regimes of heterosexual or heterosexist hegemony, then, is a complex matrix of power relations. Constructing normative sexualities means not only essentialising and absolutising gender and sexual difference, but also sustaining gender and sexual inequalities (Renold, 2006, p. 494).

Within the presuppositions embedded in patriarchal corporeality it is believed that males are masculine and females are feminine and masculinity and femininity are composed of complementary traits necessitating a sexual dependency of men on women and women upon men. That is to say, one’s sex determines one’s gender, which determines one’s sexuality - generally a culturally normative form of heterosexuality in which men and women are dependent upon one another. Within this process Judith Butler argues that heterosexuality is so thoroughly normalised that it becomes invisible. That is everyone is assumed to be heterosexual, unless something about their gender or sexuality performance calls it into question. Building on the work of Adrienne Rich’s (1983) notion of compulsory heterosexuality and Monique Wittig’s (1992) ‘heterosexual contract’ Butler (1990) argues that gender ideals are produced through a ‘heterosexual matrix’ in which expressions of masculinity and femininity are only considered authentic or ‘real’ if they are heterosexual, what Butler refers to a gender ‘intelligibility’. Thus heterosexuality enforces a hegemonic heteronormality which is used to define people’s gender performance. Butler (1990, 1993, 2004) argues that gender and heterosexuality are fundamentally intertwined and interdependent, such that deviations from normative masculinities and femininities can throw heterosexuality into doubt. Dominant masculinities and femininities maintain hegemonic heterosexual performances through the policing and shaming of ‘abnormal’ of ‘other’ sexual and gender performances. For Butler (1993) heterosexuality maintains its domination through its repudiation of homosexuality. Homosexuality exists as the ‘Other’ by which heterosexuality constitutes itself as normal and natural. Butler understands this as an implication of the pre-eminence of homosexuality, as heterosexuality depends upon the
existence of homosexuality for its own establishment and maintenance. Butler’s work has led to an understanding of how alternative gender/sexuality displays that defy social norms serve to reinscribe existing norms by functioning as the exception that proves the rule. For example, the figure of the flamboyant homosexual man is more socially palatable than a homosexual man who appears to be the typical working class ‘bloke’. The flamboyant, lisping stereotypical homosexual character reaffirms that the homosexual is ‘Other’ - a readily identifiable, deviant figure.

With the heterosexual matrix, homosexuality functions to establish the normality of heterosexuality which in turn functions to maintain patriarchal economic and familial institutions. In the intertwining relationship between gender social relations and structural inequalities we see that these feed back upon one another, reinforcing the normality and ‘naturalness’ of certain forms of inequality. For example, marriage although no longer predicated on an overtly patriarchal model, still functions to extend more benefits to men than women, and certain heterosexual scripts reinforce the notion that marriage is the ultimate expression, or inevitable outcome of male/female sexual relations. Within this model certain key gender norms centred around the male breadwinner - female housekeeper/child carer gender roles are maintained and reinforced, continuing the benefits to the economy of unpaid women’s work (see Waring, 2003). Thus, we can see in this example how gender social relations are complicit in the continuation of structural inequalities.

Gender in Education and Gender Education
We shall now turn our gender to the intersection of gender and education. One of the points to be made is that gender education revolves around the maintenance of patriarchal
corporeality – that is maintaining sexual and genders norms that continue to uphold patriarchal power relations. This section will also examine the literature around gender and education, with an appraisal of what Marcus Weaver Hightower (2003) has termed the ‘Boy Turn’ in educational research and discourse. It will be argued that debate around the ‘Boy Turn’ provides an example of the way in which a particular form of masculinity is essentialised and perceived to be beleagued within a ‘feminised’ educative system. The moral panic within the debate demonstrates that what is at stake is the privilege accorded to a particular form of masculinity (see Smith, 2003). In addition to examination of the debates around gender and education I will examine the way in which patriarchal corporeality functions as a ‘hidden curriculum’ within the school system as teachers treat boys and girls differently and through their interactions with students reinforce prevailing gender relations. I shall also consider the way in which peer interactions in the school setting form ways in which boys and girls enact and are enacted upon in order to reproduce gender – thus, playground interactions form a site in which children create and assert their masculinities and femininities. The school setting can be understood as a microcosm of the world at large. The curriculum serves to inculcate an epistemology of power and the hidden curriculum can be understood to reinforce patriarchal corporeality.

The “Boy Turn”: The Gender debate in Education

Marcus Weaver-Hightower (2003) examines educational discourse and analyses reasons for what he terms the ‘Boy Turn’ in research on gender and education. He starts by noting that until recently most policy, research and practice in the areas of gender and education had a focus on girls and girls’ issues. He states ‘this is as it should be, for in every society women as a group relative to men are disadvantaged socially, culturally, politically, and economically’ (p. 471). He documents the change in agenda that has developed since the mid-1990s that has been centred on the sentiment “What about the boys?” Primarily recent debate around gender in education has changed from a focus on gender equity to a focus on
the suggestion that schools are failing boys (Smith, 2003). The reasoning behind this ‘Boy Turn’ is that feminist concern with the underachievement of female students from the 1970s to the 1990s has led to initiatives that combined with a perceived feminisation of the school environment (particularly primary schools) has resulted in a neglect of boys needs and their subsequent underachievement (See Arndt, 2001; Hoff Sommers, 2001; Ruse, 2002). That the ‘Boy Turn’ debate - with the accompanying journal articles, conferences and policy development aimed at addressing the underachievement of male students – has raged for at least 15 years, is a demonstration of the privilege accorded to males that is believed to be at stake. The underachievement hypothesis arises from the fact that in some Higher School Certificate [HSC] subject area results female students are doing better than their male counterparts, and female undergraduate enrolments now outnumber male enrolments in university courses (Mills, Martino & Lingard, 2007). What many of those advocating radical solutions to male underachievement do not take into account is that these educational advantages for female students, have yet to be translated into sustainable benefits outside of the educational setting. As was demonstrated in chapter one, women lag behind men in economic and other measures of societal success. In addition, most of the debate centres on an uncritical acceptance of normative roles. Many solutions reinforce essentialist notions about male and female behaviour and prescribe solutions that reinforce the very form of masculinity that alienates boys from education in the first place (Mills, Martino & Lingard). (See Martino, 1995, for an account of the ways in which hegemonic masculinity is detrimental to both boys and girls in schools). Doubt has been expressed about the ability of using gender as a category to solve the problems of education (Devos & Rasmussen, 2008). In any case, the see-sawing debates about girls and boys educational outcomes is conceptually myopic and blinds educators to the fact that, at a deeper level, education has become mired in a form of epistemology that is morally divisive of all students (a point that will be further developed in chapter six).
Teachers and expectations of Gender

A growing body of research suggests that school is a site in which teachers’ expectations of their students form a powerful socialising agent. We shall explore some of this research in order to illuminate the ways in which teacher practices not only shape students gender identities but also reinforces the norms required for the maintenance of patriarchal corporeality. Some of these practices have emerged in the discourse centred on improving educational outcomes for boys. Martino, Mills and Lingard (2005) in their investigation into single sex classrooms found that teachers tended to modify their pedagogical practices and the curriculum to suit stereotypical constructions about boys’ and girls’ supposed oppositional orientations to learning. They concluded that teacher knowledges and assumptions about gender play an important role in the execution of their pedagogies in the single sex classroom. The single sex classroom has been advocated as one way of addressing the educational needs of boys in spite of research that suggests that this strategy does not necessarily enhance boys’ social or educational outcomes (Martino, Mills & Lingard, 2005).

Martino, Mills and Lingard argue that ‘structural reform in the absence of good pedagogies and requisite teacher threshold knowledges about gender runs the risk of maintaining and even reinforcing particular orientations to learning considered to be the domain of either boys or girls’ (p. 238). They seek to highlight how particular assumptions about boys lead to the reinforcement of gendered pedagogies that are in the business of reinscribing traditional masculinities, rather than challenging them. They note that the single-sex strategy caters to certain types of boys who exhibit particular ways of being male, the teaching strategies employed reinforced specific understandings about being a boy and how boys learn – practices which reinforce what Connell (1995) has termed ‘hegemonic masculinity’. They conclude that

[u]nless coeducational schools that implement boys-only classes to address a perceived educational need for boys encourage boys to critically reflect on gender,
privilege and power, it is unlikely that these boys, or the girls they share the school
space with, are going to benefit from this structural reform’ (p. 250).

Mills, Martino and Lingard (2004) also investigated the recruitment of more male teachers
as a strategy to address the perceived recent ‘feminisation’ of the education system. (As
noted in chapter one, primary schools have been a predominately female work arena since
1880, so the current debate is ahistorical). They critique the notion that the re-
masculinisation of the education system through the presence of more male teachers who act
as role model for male students would serve as a panacea for the under achievement of male
students. Mills, Marino and Lingard argue that the ‘dominant constructions of masculinity
implied within calls for more male role models for boys potentially denigrate the work being
done in schools by female teachers, and may be harmful to girls in schools and to gender
relations in general’ (p. 356). The position espoused by Mills, Martino and Lingard is that
‘men should take greater responsibility in caring and teaching children and young people
across the schooling cycle’ (p. 356). They examine why teaching, particularly early
childhood and primary is not an attractive career for men. Part of the reason, they maintain,
is that

such work is constructed within patriarchal societies as women’s work and is
devalued. The consequences of this that men who want to teach young children risk
being positioned as deviant, abnormal, or lacking. That is, they are risk of being seen
as gay, ‘effeminate’ or a paedophile’ (2004, pp. 359-60).

Jones and Myhill (2004) note the gendered expectations of students in terms of achievement.
Teacher perceptions saw underachieving boys and high achieving girls conforming to gender
expectations, high-achieving boys were seen to challenge gender norms and underachieving
girls were largely overlooked. The perceived characteristics of the high achieving girl were
presented as describing all girls. They note that it appears to be a tendency to associate boys with underachievement and girls with high achievement.

Underachieving boys have been the focus of attention in the underachievement debate so persistently and for so long that they have taken on at identity, a set of teaching strategies, and a whole branch of research all to themselves. By contrast, the underachieving girl remains a shadowy figure, almost invisible...The apparent tendency to associate *all* boys with underachievement and *all* girls with high achievement does little service to the complex needs of individuals, not least the troublesome girls and compliant boys (Jones & Myhill, 2004, p. 560).

Teacher practices reinscribe not only gender norms, but also, reinforce stereotypes around class, ethnicity and race. Morris (2005), drawing on Bourdieu’s notions of ‘cultural capital’ and Foucaultian notions of bodily discipline examines the intersection of race, gender and class in a particular school, noted during the course of his ethnographic study, that bodily discipline differed for different groups. African American girls were viewed as being unlady like and disciplined in ways that would bring their dress and manners into line with more gender appropriate behaviours. Latino boys were viewed as being particularly threatening and received the more punitive punishments and Asian Americans were punished less strictly due to a perception that they behaviour was gender appropriate and non-threatening. Morris states ‘although many school officials viewed this discipline as a way of teaching valuable social skills, it appeared instead to reinforce race, class, and gender stereotypes and had the potential to alienate many students from schooling’ (2005, p. 25).

**Students and the enactment of masculinity, femininity and heterosexuality**

Research emerging from schools suggests that students themselves create, maintain, and interpret various aspects of patriarchal corporeality as they enact their own forms of masculinity and femininity – one way in which patriarchal corporeality is maintained is
through the marginalisation of students who display alternate gender and/or sexual identities. For example, the common playground boyfriend/girlfriend games demonstrate the ubiquity of the heterosexual matrix, as does the dominant forms of sex education taking place within school settings. Renold’s (2006) work describes the sexual education programs in which heterosexual relationships are promoted and non-heterosexual sexualities are invisible or only brought up as negative discourses in terms of homophobia or bullying, for example. Alternative sexual identities are deemed to constitute ‘inappropriate’ knowledge that is not to be discussed with students (see also Chambers, van Loon, & Tincknell, 2004). Butler describes this process as being as a hegemonic heterosexual matrix (1990, 1993), and her work has been influential in exposing the ways in which ‘children’s normative gender identities are inextricably embedded and produced within hegemonic representations of heterosexuality’ (Renold, 2006, p. 491).

Research by Jon Swain (2004) explores the various strategies that young boys use in the classroom to construct their masculine identities. Swain argues that acquisition of peer group status is ‘inextricably linked’ to boys’ construction of masculinity. Work in the area of masculinities has established that there are hierarchies of masculinities and that each setting (such as a school) will have its own ascendant, or hegemonic, form to which boys have to fit in with (Swain, 2004). ‘Although it may be contested, and is often underwritten by the threat of violence, it is characterised by consent’ (p. 169). Each school sustains its own practices in terms of power and prestige as each setting defines its own gender regime (Kessler, Ashenden, Connell & Dowsett, 1985). Swain maintains that pupil to pupil relations is an important part of boys masculine identity formation, as pupils are themselves agents of masculinity (2004).

The boys’ notion of status comes from having a certain position within the peer group hierarchy which becomes relevant when it is seen in relation to others. It is not something that is given, but is often the outcome of intricate and intense
manoeuvring, and has to be earned through negotiation and sustained through performance, sometimes on an almost daily basis (Swain, 2004, p. 171).

Although various resources may be valued, such as intellectual, economic, social and linguistic, or cultural, the most consistently exalted resource was sporting prowess (Swain).

Thus the primary strategy that boys draw upon is the use of sport, particularly football ‘in the formation of dominant masculine identities, and establishing oneself as a good footballer went a long way in helping to establish one as a ‘real’ boy’ (Swain, 2003, p. 303; Skelton, 2000, 2001; Renold, 1997; Swain, 2000). While Connell (2000) points out that rule breaking is used by boys who have less resources as a strategy to form their masculinity Swain (2004) asserts that rule breaking is one of a number of strategies available.

Carolyn Jackson (2003) suggests that ‘laddish’ behaviours in the school context may be prompted by both a fear of academic failure and a fear of the ‘feminine’. From her interviews with 50 boys she concludes that laddish behaviour serves a dual purpose. Firstly it allows boys to act in ways that are consistent with hegemonic forms of masculinity, and it provides an excuse for their academic failure. It has been suggested that boys’ difficulties at school stem from their response to male culture in which it is macho to reject the value of education (Mac an Ghaill, 1994). Similarly, Sanford and Madill (2006) studied male video game users and concluded that video game play was used to resist institutional authority, hegemonic masculinity, and femininity. For the young men in the study, videogame play offered them a safe place to resist authority, which was often limited to small acts of adolescent defiance that could limit their future ability to engage thoughtfully and critically in the world. This resistance shaped and reinforced their identity formation and supported their resistance to traditional literacy practices they considered feminine.

Nakay and Kehily (2006) examined the way in which aspects of student culture such as name-calling and sexual jibes formed an organising of peer-group relations in school. Their
research revealed that these forms of sexual imagining defined the ‘appropriate’ from the ‘inappropriate’, the ‘normal’ from the ‘deviant’, the ‘moral’ from the ‘immoral’. Through these processes the students produced complex and dynamic heterosexual hierarchies in which the lives of subordinate males, girls and young women were most open to sexual scrutiny from their peers, but students are able to overturn and resist the meanings being put upon them. In discussions with young men they found that heterosexual masculinity was an impossible ideal that was struggled over, negotiated and reconstructed anew in the effort to make it appear natural and normal. They also found that young men’s resistance to pedagogy lies in part with the powerful identifications they are making with masculine heterosexuality. They conclude that:

This compulsion to perform straight masculinity is collectively imposed, yet taken up with relish by the young men we spoke with. In Foucaultian terms, it would appear that the individual is both an effect of power and the element of its articulation (p. 465).

Emma Renold examines how the ‘ubiquitous heterosexual matrix’ regulates boy/girl friendship in the school context (2006). She attempts to highlight the diverse ways in which students use discourses of heterosexual romance and sexual innocence in their role as ‘girlfriends’ and ‘boyfriends’ and how particular gendered subject positions (e.g. tomboy) offer an escape route from coercive and frequently compulsory heterosexual positioning. She found that gendered and sexualised bullying and harassment were often the primary means by which children created and consolidated gender and sexual norms. Renold notes that one third of the children in her study:

routinely positioned and positioned themselves as Other to hegemonic heterogendered scripts with all of them reporting being systematically teased, excluded and humiliated for choosing not to invest in and project (this directly
challenge and resist) normative forms of age-appropriate heterofemininity and heteromasculinity (p. 499).

Her study revealed the ways in which children actively policed and maintained the heterosexual matrix by socially punishing (through isolation or harassment) those who worked against the heterosexual grain either by stepping outside of normative heterogender boundaries or explicitly rejecting or deferring their participation in their local school-based boyfriend-girlfriend cultures.

In terms of examining gender and how it is formed in the schooling context, it can be seen that children actively construct their masculinities and femininities, police one another’s sexualities and construct their gender identities in ways that fit into the norms established within patriarchal corporeality. I have highlighted some of the ways in which these practices feed into patriarchal corporeality and constitute a gender regime which serves to uphold patriarchal power relations, with the aim, within education, of finding ways to subvert and dismantle the overarching system. For Judith Butler ‘any radical pedagogy has to think its plans in light of that overriding need to provide a sustainable life for an emerging and dependent person…how does one stay in the matrix of rules enough to survive, and how does one bend and redirect those rules in order to breathe and live?’ (2006, p. 533), as ‘what is at stake are the activities through which gender is instituted and, then, stands a chance of being de-instituted or instituted differently’ (p. 529). In Butler’s view existing gender regimes are not assured, and explorations of the ways students negotiate these suggest that there are fissures that can be explored and exploited in the development of alternatives.

Butler’s conclusions about the open-endedness of the ways in which gender is instituted apply also to the studies of masculinity to which I now turn. It is my contention the patriarchal corporeality is predicated on the ascendency of particular forms of masculinity, and we shall now examine studies of masculinity which serve to demonstrate that although
Masculinity and patriarchal norms are harmful to men as well as women, these toxic elements are not inevitable.

Masculinity

Men are no longer the invisible, unmarked gender, the Archimedean point from which all norms, laws and rights flow; men are themselves the objects to the gaze of women, of other men, and of a new critical scholarship (Nye, 2005, p. 1938).

We shall now turn our attention to an examination of a body of research which suggests that masculinity is not an essential or natural trait rather it is created and maintained under a variety of circumstances. Within the system maintained by patriarchal corporeality certain norms (such as male aggression and assertiveness, for example) must be upheld in order to ensure that cultural benefits continue to flow primarily to men. One can see in the research documented below that masculinity takes work to maintain, that not all men enjoy the role thrust upon them, that within the system of patriarchal corporeality men are constrained as much as their female counterparts. Particular attention shall be given to R.W. Connell’s notion of hegemonic masculinity as it provides a useful way to analyse the dynamic in which different forms of masculinity are exalted in different contexts, and yet why masculinity remains culturally exalted over femininity.

Masculinity in crisis

There is a growing body of work that reflects the belief that modern men are suffering under current societal conditions (Faludi, 1999). For example, Biddulph (2002) is emblematic of a growing number of commentators who believe that we are in the midst of a crisis of masculinity; for him some of the ‘facts’ about being a man demonstrate that contemporary
men are worse off than women. He cites statistics - such as the fact that men live, on average six years less than women, perform over 90 percent of convicted violent acts, 70 percent of these against other men, in schools 90 percent of the children with behavioural problems are boys and over 70 percent of those with learning problems, men make up over 90 percent of the prison population and the leading cause of death among men aged between 12 and 60 is self inflicted death - to demonstrate that men are struggling under the yoke of modern society (Biddulph, 2002). For Biddulph is the problem is that boys and young men in our society are horrendously under-fathered and are not given the processes or the mentor figures to help their growth into mature men. With no deep training in masculinity, boys’ bodies still turn into men’s bodies, but they are not given the inner knowledge and skills to match (2002, p. 6).

He advocates raising boys in particular ways that nurture their essential maleness (1997, 1998, 2002). One of the problems with texts such as Biddulph’s is that it fails to adequately define masculinity, relying instead on essentialist notions of what it is to be a man and a variety of cultural myths and legends are plundered in order to bolster the proffered visions of masculinity. Essentialist beliefs about masculinity reinforce ideas about aggression and dominance being natural male traits. If this the behavioural expectations levelled at men, it is any wonder that they are over-represented in violent crimes and violent deaths? Rather than seeing that such statistics are indicative of a patriarchal system of value in which men are conceived as disposable cannon fodder in times of war – and are therefore dehumanised in this conception - Biddulph, and other scholars of his ilk, suggest that the answer lies in more, not less, development in masculinity, without seeing that the very point of viewing people’s identity as being dependent upon their gender is the deeper issue. Biddulph’s work falls within the popular psychology end of a growing corpus of research on masculinity. Some of this work on masculinity, spearheaded by the work of sociologist R.W. Connell (1987, 1995) has now steeped into feminist research. Thus, some feminist researchers, such as Susan Faludi (1999) argue that women’s emancipation can only be truly achieved if men too are
freed from restrictive roles and stereotypes that limit the expression of personhood. Connell (2000) notes the growing interest in work on masculinity:

Concern with issues about masculinity has not only spread to many countries, but also into many fields. Health services are noticing the relevance of men’s gender to problems such as road accidents, industrial injuries, diet, heart disease and, of course, sexually transmitted diseases. Educators are discussing not just the ideas of programs for boys, but also the practical details of how to run them. Criminologists have begun to explore why boys and men dominate the crime statistics, and violence prevention programs are taking increasing notice of gender issues (p. 4).

Connell’s (1987, 1995) concepts of hegemonic and complicit masculinities have proved instrumental in analysing different forms of masculinities and the contexts in which they appear, and it is to these concepts that we now turn.

**Hegemonic masculinity**

Connell argues that there is no one ‘true’ masculinity and that masculinity varies across time and place (1995, 1998, 2000, 2005; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). The differing forms of masculinity are not equal; there are hierarchical relations within which some forms of masculinity are marginalised and others are dominant. The most esteemed in a particular context is the hegemonic form, through not necessarily the most common form. ‘To say that a particular form of masculinity is hegemonic means that it is culturally exalted and that its exaltation stabilises the gender order as a whole’ (2000, p. 84). For Connell, masculinities ‘are actively produced, using the resources and strategies available in a given social setting’ (2000, p. 12). Masculinities are not static, they change and much work has been done to explore that way different masculinities operate in different contexts and in different times (Baron, 1991; Horowitz, 2001; Oldenziel, 2001; Suzik, 2001; Register, 2001; Anderson, 2005).
Connell defines hegemonic masculinity as

the configuration of gender practice which embodies the currently accepted answer
to the problem of the legitimacy of patriarchy, which guarantees (or is taken to
guarantee) the dominant position of men and the subordination of women’ (Connell, 1995, p. 77).

That is to say, hegemonic masculinity is composed of specific social practices and
structures that maintain men’s privilege. Connell makes clear that hegemonic is not a
universal form of masculinity, but rather is ‘the most honoured or desired in a particular
context’ (Connell, 1995, p. 77). For example, Sylvester Stallone’s Rambo character could
be understood as a portrayal of a particular form of hegemonic masculinity, however
different forms dominate different contexts; other examples would be the international
businessman, or the sporting hero. Connell’s work insists that masculinity is a plurality
reflecting differences in race, sect, class and sexual orientation and Connell seeks to trace the
ways in which the variety of masculinities relate to hegemonic ideal celebrated by a given
society. It is noted in the literature that subordinated races and classes often have aspects of
their masculinity appropriated by the dominant culture, in order to market new masculine
ideals (Connell & Messerschidmt, 2005). For example, African American ghetto culture has
proved to be a rich source of inspiration for the music industry, with little of the profits from
the marketing of these masculine images flowing back to the communities from which they
emerged.

Connell notes that a minority of men may enact hegemonic masculinity, without embodying
a strong version of masculine dominance, and yet who still receive the benefits of patriarchy
could be regarded as showing what Connell has termed a ‘complicit masculinity’ (1995).
Kiesling (2005) notes that ‘hegemonic masculinity’ has begun to lose the meaning that made
it a valuable way of analysing masculinity as researchers have begun to use it as a shorthand
way of saying ‘masculinity’ or ‘patriarchy’ rather than using it to understand masculinity as
a fluid and contested form of masculinity, one among a variety of available forms. For Connell & Messerschimdt (2005) twenty years of research in the concept of hegemonic masculinity has demonstrated the usefulness of understanding the dynamic of a hierarchy of masculinities with the dominant form being maintained through a pattern of hegemony. By Connell’s definition, masculinity is not a fixed or static form that is ‘embedded in the body or personality traits of individuals. ‘Masculinities are configurations of practice that are accomplished in social action and therefore, can differ according to gender relations in a particular setting’ (Connell & Messerschimdt, 2005, p. 836). Holter (1997, 2003) has critiqued the concept of hegemonic masculinity on the basis that it constructs power from the direct experience of women rather that the basis of the structural subordination experienced by women (see Chapters, one, two and three for examples of structural inequalities experienced by women). For Holter, it is important to distinguish between “patriarchy” – the long term structure of the subordination of women, and “gender” a specific system of exchange that has arisen in the context of modern capitalism. The conception of patriarchal epistemology/patriarchal corporeality can be seen as one way of addressing this issue. On the one hand, patriarchal epistemology sets up a system of logic in which (due to the underlying value hierarchies) structural inequalities can be justified by way of the different conceptualisations and different values accorded men and women (the Church’s treatment of women, or marriage, are being cases in point, see chapter two). On the other hand, patriarchal corporeality sets up gender relations in which masculinity is valued over femininity and heterosexuality over homosexuality. I suggest that patriarchal epistemology and patriarchal corporeality function hand in hand to ensure a hierarchically ordered world, dominated by masculine values.

Connell and Messerschimdt (2005) reject the assertion that hegemonic masculine has become shorthand for negative characteristics, and is simply viewed as an assemblage of toxic traits which excludes positive aspects that would serve the interests of women. They
maintain that most accounts of hegemonic masculinity do include such positive traits such as earning a wage, maintaining sexual relationships and being a father. However the linkage between these traits and the maintenance of patriarchal economic systems has been little explored in Connell’s research. The aspects that are lauded as positive are those that maintain not only patriarchal economic and sexual relationships and reinforce the dynamic between patriarchal epistemology (ways of thinking and corresponding value judgements) and corporeality (ways of living). Connell and Messerschimdt (2005) urge that the research around the concept be sophisticated in order to capture the diverse practices that are ‘generated from common cultural templates’ (p. 841). For them the power of the concept of hegemonic masculinity is that it ‘is a means of grasping a certain dynamic within the social process’ (p. 841) as it refers to multiple incarnations which differ between context, race, and geographical locations. (See Hooper, 2001, for an exploration of masculinities in the international context).

**Masculinity Studies: Real men and the repudiation of the feminine**

Alexander (2003) notes that ideas about masculinity change rapidly - even over the course of one’s lifetime. What seems to be constant is the way in which masculinity allows men to maintain hegemony over women. As noted by Ridgeway & Correll this is achieved by ‘preserving the fundamental assumption that whatever the differences [between men and women] are, on balance, they imply that men are rightly more powerful’ (Ridgeway & Correll, 2004, p. 522). One of the ways in which masculinity maintains that it is more powerful than femininity is by defining itself as not being feminine, and by defining femininity as lesser and weak. Research into hegemonic masculinity has taken into account the policing of heterosexuality that occurs within dominant enactments of masculine behaviours. That is hegemonic masculinity often occurs as a form of masculinity which bases itself on the exclusion of homosexual men; another way of examining this dynamic would be to describe the role of hegemonic masculinity in the policing of the heterosexual
matrix. Thus hegemonic masculinity can be a useful concept to highlight the clear link between rigid constructions of gender, dominant forms of masculinity, and the maintenance of heteronormality within patriarchal corporeality.

Kimmel suggests ‘Homophobia is a central organising principle of our cultural definition of manhood’ (2001, p. 35). That is, masculinity is created from a fear of being perceived as a sissy, or feminine or queer - anything less than a man (Alexander, 2003). Thus we can see how within patriarchal corporeality masculinity defines itself through the repudiation of the feminine, and through doing so, ensures its continued valuation over the feminine.

Describing gay bashing as a rite of passage, van der Meer (2003) notes that within most nations of the West violence is perpetuated against gay men by 15 to 22 year old male youths. Analysis of interviews with perpetrators has lead van der Merr to posit that gay bashing functions as way for these youths to assert themselves as ‘strong’ and allows them to attain power by participating in group gay bashing. Van der Meer concludes ‘adolescent boys use the strategy of undermining each other’s sexual and gender status by calling one another queers, fags or sissies. Although often dealt with as just a nuisance, I consider this as functional behaviour’ (van der Meer, 2004, p. 163). The function of such behaviour is for young men to assert their own masculinity while policing the masculinity of those around them, and although it starts as ‘nuisance’ behaviour, the ways in which this behaviour intensifies into ‘gay bashing’ has dangerous consequences and demonstrates the seriousness of breaching particular gender norms in particular contexts (see also Messerschmidt, 2000; Tomsen, 2002). That younger boys police their own and other’s gender is a common observation in school based research (See, for example, Kimmel & Mahler, 2003; Swain, 2004; Nayak & Kehily, 2006; Renold, 2006).

Fear of being perceived of as feminine has a tremendous influence on the ways that dominant masculine forms are presented. For instance, Greg Young (2004) examines male
Australian rock musicians and posits that their images are constrained by fears of being seen as queer or gay, and that the Bush Myth and mateship aesthetic inform the way that frontmen present themselves to their audience. He notes the preoccupation with bushland and rural settings in music videos and the predominately asexual presentation of Australian rock men. Similarly, professional sport has emerged as another popular cultural arena in which new forms of masculinity are developed and presented for public display. Messner (1992) has shown that sportsmen’s bodies are disciplined and punished as a way of displaying their masculinity and thereby their non homosexual status, and then presented for public consumption as new models of ideal forms of masculinity.

This fear of being seen as feminine acts as a form of restraint in men’s lives, constraining even the ability of many to talk openly among one another lest they be perceived as un-masculine and therefore feminine or gay. The work of Scott Kiesling (2005, 2004) examines the way in which men communicate with one another to express homosocial desire through language. He notes the complexities involved as men negotiate competing cultural scripts of male solidarity and heterosexuality. He analyses fraternity boys’ conversations demonstrate the ways in which men ‘actively negotiate dominant cultural discourses in their everyday interactions’ (p. 695). (Similarly, Seal and Ehrhardt (2003), examine the tension men experience in their desire for emotional intimacy). Kiesling’s work also notes the prominent role that male solidarity plays in dominant cultural constructions, for example research has shown the way that homosociality is exalted in works such as Star Trek, the writings of Tolkien and Chaucer and a myriad of other artistic works of literature, poetry and media within Western culture (2005). (A perusal of the canon of western literature and film would be an ample demonstration of the cultural priority given to the masculine experience).

Homosociality puts men in a double bind of their own: To be a man is to be powerful and to be powerful in the current gender order is, in part, to be heterosexual. But affiliation is often equated with dependence, so homosociality is almost by definition
not masculine. To create a masculine identity along the lines of dominant cultural discourses of masculinity, one must not create love, dependency, nor sexual desire with his “fellow” men, but at the same time he must create solidarity with them. The men therefore find ratified indirect ways of taking up homoSOCIAL stances that are not homoSEXUAL stances (Kiesling, 2005, p. 720 – emphasis in original).

Weigman (2002) suggests that once it is understood stood that men use a negative conception of women and the feminine to create male solidarity, the positive and negative aspects of homosocial bonds can be explored and the ways that homosociality cleaves along class, race and occupational lines can be explored to show the alternatives to a model of patriarchy that considers that all men profit equally from. For example, research such as Heath’s (2003) investigation into the forms of masculinity propagated within the Promise Keepers movement explores the intersection of race and class. She argues that Promise Keepers foster men’s growth on an interactional level, allowing men to embrace a more expressive and caring masculinity that includes cross-racial bonding while simultaneously ignoring and reinforcing the structural conditions that underpin gender and racial privilege among white men.

Consumption and masculinity

One of the emerging suggestions about masculinity is that the changing roles of men in late modern capitalist societies has been the catalyst for men’s growing angst – suicide, depression, violence, crime, and family break down are posited as evidence of a crisis in masculinity (Faludi, 1999; Biddulph, 2002). Ferguson (2001) examines the way traditional masculine ideals are being replaced with modern market driven models. Alexander (2003) analyses the changing portrayals of masculinity in media and popular culture. She posits that masculinity ‘itself is constructed as a product available for consumption if one merely chooses the appropriate brand names’ (p. 535). She discusses the symbiotic relationship that
exists between the emerging male gender identity and the popular culture images of masculinity in postmodern society. In her words,

The development of branded masculinity, as evidenced by the growing number of health, fashion and lifestyle publications for men, provides empirical evidence that a structural change has occurred… Masculinity is no longer defined by what a man produces..but instead by what a man consumes (Anderson, 2005, p. 551).

In Anderson’s analysis market forces act upon men with the message that consuming new popular culture forms of masculinity will relieve their anxieties (about how to be a ‘real’ man) in the structural transformation to a consumer based economy.

Jain examines gendered nature of automobility (2005). She describes how standard readings of automobile safety ignore cultural narratives and gendered understandings of the car. For Jain there is a clear connection between auto deaths and masculinity. Within America in 2000, 41,057 drivers in fatal crashes were male, compared to 14,545 female drivers. For Jain

This astonishing correlation of gender and fatality is both rendered normal and incessantly remade by the various mythmaking machinations of machinations of media and celebrity, as ideals of masculinity are endlessly articulated through the fantasies of prestige, liberation, and heroism that are persistently used to invest car-crash deaths with significance’ (2005, p. 202).

Her work highlights that masculinity is asserted through dangerous driving and the consumption of particular cars and automotive products, and that standard analysis of car fatality statistics ignores the masculine nature of automobility.

Susan Faludi (1999) has examined masculinity in the US, in quest to explore whether or not phenomena such as domestic violence, male suicide and depression are indicative of a ‘crisis in masculinity’. She reveals a common sense of betrayal in diverse settings from Men’s rights groups, the Promise Keepers, unemployed steel workers, members of the mythopoetic
movement, and young men attempting to break into the porn industry. One of her conclusions is that consumerism and the capitalist economic system are acting upon men, the way feminists have long contended that women have been acted upon by cultural pressure that turns them into objects, rather than subjects. As consumers men are under a corresponding pressure upon men to look a certain way in order to prove their masculinity. (A process that Register, 2001, argues started to develop in the opening decades of the twentieth century). She asserts that the role of men has changed from producing to joining women in the role of consuming. She asks why men have not risen up, in a similar fashion to the women’s liberation movement and concludes that men cannot turn upon themselves using the confrontational tactics of the women’s movement and gay rights activists as these tactics would no longer work as men cannot turn upon themselves. She concludes:

And so with the mystery of men’s non-rebellion comes the glimmer of an opening, an opportunity for men to forge a rebellion commensurate with women’s and, in the course of it, to create a new paradigm for human progress that will open doors for both sexes. That was, and continues to be, feminism’s dream, to create a freer, more humane world (Faludi, 1999, pp. 607-608).

Masculinity and the potential for positive change

The point of masculinity studies for Nye is to deconstruct the masculine/feminine binary ‘in its various forms and with understanding its endless capacity for reinventing and reaffirming gender difference’ (2005, p. 1938). Feminist scholarship has stopped analysing masculinity as power over women, and starting articulating the nuances in differing forms of masculinity, that in addition their role in the oppression of women, also reflect power imbalances between men – in class, race, and sexuality (Nye, 2005). Drawing from the work of Butler, Nye sees the ‘presentation and performance of gender is inherently unstable, simultaneously undermining and reaffirming ideals and images of virility that circulate mysteriously in societies according to rules no one promulgates or controls’ (2005, p. 1939).
This instability is the aspect that can be exploited in order to generate new forms of
hegemonic masculinity that are not based on the anti-feminine and homophobic attitudes so
prevalent in dominant forms of masculinity. The work of Anderson (2005) suggests that this
quest is not a utopian dream as such non-hierarchal forms of masculinity can be found in the
right context.

Drawing on previous studies that indicate that a hegemonic process of masculine dominance
and submission (Connell, 1987, 1995; Dellinger, 2004) influences most heterosexual men in
feminised arenas to bolster their masculinities through the approximation of dominant
masculine requisites, such as the expression of homophobic and anti-feminine attitudes,
Anderson (2005) compares competing forms of masculinities underpinned by differing
organisational and institutional cultures. Anderson’s research into the types of masculinities
displayed by male cheerleaders in two different cheerleading organisations found that each
organisation had a different normative masculinity and that masculinity - rather than being
static - was influenced by the culture of the institution in which the men were a part. He
found that within the feminised arena of cheerleading two distinct forms of normative
masculinity were displayed; orthodox and inclusive. Anderson equates orthodox masculinity
with hegemonic masculinity – these men asserted their masculinity through the devaluation
of women and gay men. Within the group Anderson termed ‘inclusive’ the form of
masculinity displayed was less misogynistic and homophobic that the orthodox group.
Anderson found

that heterosexual men in collegiate cheerleading are nearly evenly split between
these two normative forms of masculine expression. The emergence of a more
inclusive form of masculinity is attributed to many factors, including the structure of
the sport; the reduction of cultural, institutional, and organisational homophobia; and
the resocialisation of men into a gender-integrated sport (p. 338).
This example illustrate how, within a given setting, hegemonic masculinity does not have to take a form that is anti-feminine and anti-homosexual. Although most forms of hegemonic masculinity functions within patriarchy corporeality to police heteronormality and to ensure the continued domination of men over women (within complex hierarchies that also include race, class and location), research such as that described by Anderson (2005) suggests that this process is not inevitable and alternative forms of masculinity (not based on homophobia and misogyny) can be developed. We shall now turn our attention to the arena of sexuality, suggested by some feminist theorists to be the location of women’s subordination to men, in order to examine the role that heterosexual norms play in the continuation of patriarchal corporeality.

Sexuality

It is reasonable therefore to ask first of all: What is this injunction? Why this great chase after the truth of sex, the truth in sex? (Foucault, 1978, p. 79).

Lastly within chapter five we shall turn our attention to one of the more insidious aspects of patriarchy. I shall look at its effects upon human sexuality. I shall briefly rehearse historical attitudes and examine the Victorian ideals of women as passive and sexless before turning my attention to the works of feminist theorists such as Brownmiller (1975), Dworkin (1981) and MacKinnon (2002). I shall examine some of the ways in which patriarchal corporeality not only establishes heterosexuality as the norm, but also exalts particular expressions of heterosexuality – typically those which prioritise male pleasure. As a consequence female sexual expression is shaped by cultural expectations that are biased towards the male perspective. Further research on sexuality reveals that men themselves do not express and experience their sexuality in ways that cultural norms suggests that they do. A brief look at
the terms which describe the sex act is an indication that this act is seen to be a way of ‘putting woman in her place’ so to speak. Women are no longer merely ‘screwed’ they are ‘whacked’ (a Mafia term for being killed or terminated), ‘hammered’, ‘nailed’, ‘tapped’, ‘blasted’, ‘impaled’, ‘smashed’ or ‘pounded’. Chapter five will end with an examination of the way in which the sexual act is contemporaneously described, which demonstrates that under patriarchal influence, even the sexual act, a deeply personal act with infinite potential for the unification of people, becomes twisted into an act of division and dehumanisation.

Sexuality and the Technology of Sex

Michel Foucault (1978) turned popular understandings of sexuality on its head when he declared the repression of western society to be a cultural myth in the service of a technology of sex. He attested that the belief that western society has, due to its Christian heritage, repressed sex and that since the dawn of psychology we have been engaged in a cultural search for the truth of sex - an escape from the imposed repression of an anti-sex religion - obscures the extent to which sexuality has been technologised and used as a means of controlling the population since the early days of the Christian history in the West. In his analysis, many aspects of the vast apparatus of the state have been deployed as technologies of control through the prism of sex; including: schooling, politics of housing, public hygiene, institutions of relief and insurance, medicine, psychiatry, jurisprudence, legal medicine, and state agents of control – such as social workers supervising dangerous and endangered children. In Foucault’s conceptualisation ‘Sex was a means of access both to the life of the body and the life of the species’ (1978, p. 146). The technology of sex operates on both the level of the individual and the level of society, and is deployed through increasingly sophisticated mechanisms especially after the medicalisation of the body in the nineteenth century. For Foucault, ‘sex’ has become a locus of control, and individuals are directed to seek its truth – through their childhood desires, dreams and mental and medical history.
Individual concern with sex meant that the power of it could be harnessed to shape society, in the form of a vast array of social concerns:

one also sees it becoming the theme of political operations, economic interventions (through incitements to or curbs on procreation), and ideological campaigns for raising standards of morality and responsibility: it was put forward as the index of a society’s strength, revealing of both its political energy and biological vigour.

Spread out from one pole to the other of this technology of sex was a whole series of different tactics that combined in varying proportions the objectives of disciplining the body and that of regulating populations (Foucault, 1978, p. 146).

For Foucault the obsession with ‘sex’ distracts us from the truth that a particular sexuality is being deployed, one which is a technology of power harnessed to sex and controlling various aspects of society and individual bodies. Foucault urged that the search for the ‘truth’ of sex be replaced with a concern for bodies, pleasure and desire. Butler has appropriated Foucault’s understandings about the way that sexuality has been used as a means of societal control in order to explore the way in which heterosexuality establishes hegemonic dominance over alternative expressions of sexuality.

Although Foucault has been criticised for his male-centric perspective (see Denike, 2003; Sponge-Møller, 1999) he did identify the figure of the hysteric, the bored nineteenth century housewife (see Foucault, 1978, pp. 146-7, 153) as being one of the first sites operated on by the technology of sex in the medical and psychological interventions leveled at these women. We shall now turn our attention to further feminist critiques of sexuality. Where for Foucault sexuality is used on society as a technology of power in the service of controlling people through mechanisms of what he dubs ‘bio-power’, for feminist theorists sexuality operates in an asymmetrical fashion, and is not just about controlling society, but is particularly about the control of women – their bodies, and their reproductive capacities.
Pornography and Rape: Male Dominance in Sexuality

Various feminist theorists have endeavoured to locate the cause of women’s oppression within the sexual domain. On the view to be discussed here the form of sexuality that dominates western culture construes woman as the perpetual victim of man. Brownmiller (1975) posits that it is fear of rape that creates the marriage contract. In her view a woman will align herself with one man in order that he may offer her protection from the potential threat of rape that is posed by other men. Dworkin (1981) and Mackinnon (2002) write that pornography inculcates the populace with the dominant expression of sexuality – sexuality as an expression of male power. In Dworkin’s words rape is ‘the defining paradigm of sexuality’ (1981, p. 136, 1987/2007). Sexuality is analysed by these theorists and seen to be a manifestation of the patriarchal mindset within which all categories of existence fall into one of two mutually exclusive categories – the ultimate of which is power. But for those with the power, there is the disempowered, for the strong, there is the weak; for the penetrator, the penetrated, the objective and the objectified. Sexual practices become a microcosm of the power relations within society, a ritual re-enactment of the power paradigm within which we dwell, a reflection of our dualistic view of reality. They argue that pornography functions as a form of masculine propaganda, in which women’s bodies are displayed in increasingly dehumanised and degraded ways, constantly available for male appropriation – inculcating the populace in the belief that women are nothing more than sexual objects available for the pleasure of men (MacKinnon & Dworkin, 1997). I contend, rather that women’s subjugation is not located within sexuality (as it is for MacKinnon and Dworkin). Rather the expression of subjugation we see in dominant depictions of sexuality is itself a reflection of the dominant (dualistic) mindset which is itself motivated by dominance and subjugation. Women’s subjugation is located within this mindset and although sexuality can be used to reinforce this subjugation; it is one facet of a sophisticated apparatus of hierarchal social control (which includes structural inequalities, negative stereotypes and conceptualisations, and gender roles which maintain patriarchal economic
systems) all of which stem from a epistemology of power that hierarchically orders in the world in male valued ways.

The view of sexuality espoused by Brownmiller, MacKinnon and Dworkin construes women as the perpetual victims of men, in sex and in marriage. This conceptualisation not only denies women any agency and obscures the fact that men do not in fact enact a global domination over all women, but it provides limited strategies for redress. For sex positive feminists, the problem is not one of direct oppression by men, but the sexual double standard. Stemming from Christian theological constructs that blame Eve for the entrance of sin into the world, women’s sexuality was long seen as something inherently dangerous and evil that needed to be controlled. The societal repression and denial of women’s sexual desire culminated in the belief in the Victorian era that women were naturally passive and sexless creatures while men were understood to be sexually aggressive and virile – women who deviated from that norm were considered to be ‘whores’. For sex positive feminists, women need to reclaim their sexuality and the pleasure that can be derived from sexuality that has long been denied to their gender. Strategies include viewing sex work as a job like any other – concomitant with the struggle for appropriate workers’ entitlements - dismantling the virgin/whore dichotomy, and the production of pornography aimed at a female audience with the aim of the legitimisation of female pleasure.

These opposite views of sexuality – negative and positive - obscure the reality that human sexuality is more complex than dominant perceptions of male sexual aggressive and female passivity suggest. Sex based research suggests that men do not experience their sexuality in ways that dominant conceptions of male sexuality would imply (Frank, 2003; Seal & Ehrhardt, 2003). In addition, research shows that while feminist agitation has lessened sexual double standards, these still exist, as do persistent asymmetries in the language used to describe and understand sex and the male and female body.
Uncertainty and sexual scripts

Research by Seal and Ehrhardt (2003) suggest that men experience tension between their desires for emotional and sexual intimacy. They suggest that men’s narratives reveal uncertainty over gender roles and gender scripts as they attempted to internalise changing gender and societal norms. Traditional heterosexual script theory portrays men as the initiators and women as the boundary-setters of courtship (Seal & Ehrhardt, 2003). This script contained a double standard – men are expected to actively initiate and pursue all sexual opportunities, whereas women are expected to delay sexual activity until emotional intimacy has been established. The traditional double standard posits that casual sex, sex with multiple partners, group sex, and sexual experimentation are more acceptable for men than women. Many of the narratives collected by Seal and Ehrhardt did not adhere to the script. Similarly, Giordano, Longmore and Manning (2006) found in their research with adolescent boys that the account of adolescent boys differed significantly from traditional accounts of the role of gender as an influence on the relationship dynamics within romantic liaisons. Result by Katherine Frank (2003) into men that frequent strip clubs has led her to conclude that rather than fulfilling a universal masculine need for domination or a biological male need for sexual release, strip clubs provide a kind of intermediate space in which men can experience their bodies and identities in particular pleasurable ways.

Sex and Language: The Priority of the Male Experience

Hirst’s (2004) research into the sex education of young people found that there was a lack of diversity in what young people are taught, there is little to no discussion on pleasure, desire or the emotional aspects of sex, and that within school based sex education there is a heteronormative agenda that precludes certain types of discussion, what discussion there is centres around the bio-medical model and is focused on the reproductive or health aspects of sex (see also Chambers, van Loon, & Tincknell, 2004). Further research into sexual
behaviour (Bogart, Cecil, Wagstaff, Pinkerton & Abramson, 2000) found that when specifically asking respondents what counts as ‘sex’ certain behaviours were found to be privileged and that sex continues to be associated with the male orgasm, which is perceived as the natural culmination of all sexual activity (see also Daley, et al, 2004). Crawford and Popp (2003) conducted a review of 30 studies that had been published since 1980 and their research demonstrates the continued existence of the sexual double standard, that is, there are differing standards of sexual permissiveness for women and men. Although they note that the standards have weakened in the last twenty years, men continued to judge women differently if they were looking for a life partner or a casual sex partner. Unfortunately, one of the affects of norm violation for women was an increase in their perceived culpability for sexual violence. For example, when women initiate dates, they are perceived as more willing to engage in sexual intercourse and their rapes are rated as more justified than when men initiate the dates. As with women who initiate physical contact, or are sexually experienced, the rape is judged as less serious and the perpetrator is seen as being less to blame, while the victim is viewed as being more to blame. This example serves to highlight the continued harm being done to women as a result of long standing conceptualizations of their sexuality.

In his research into gender-based insults, James (1998) found that derogatory terms that are used primarily to label women or primarily used to label men reflect and, in turn, enforce very different prescriptions as to the ideal woman and the ideal man. Men are expected to be strong, confident, successful achievers; women are expected to meet male needs and desires, particularly with respect to sexual attributes and behaviour. These prescriptions reflect a male viewpoint. While there has some shifts towards gender-neutral language and a blurring of the lines separating the categories of ‘man’ and ‘woman’, women appeared to accept male-based construction of femininity expressed through these derogatory terms for women (James). Male-referential derogatory terms reflect a construction of gender by which males are evaluated primarily in terms of the extent to which they can function as competent
masters of every situation, gaining and maintaining status in the eyes of other males. Females, on the other hand, are evaluated primarily in terms of how well they conform to heterosexual males needs and desires, including being attractive, of average intelligence, docile and supportive. All this reflects a construction of gender put in place through a male prism. Braun and Kitzinger (2001) examined the use of male and female slang terms for genitals and found persistent asymmetries in the way that male and female bodies were described. When animal terms were used, for instance, female terms were domestic animals while male terms referenced wild animals. Their data suggests that women’s genitalia continue to be represented in a more derogatory way than men’s and that female genital terms that convey disgust are more likely to be produced by men. Slang terms for women’s genitalia are also problematic in that they tend to be very imprecise, vague, and lack agreed meanings. The prevalence of terms for women’s genitalia that can be classified as derogatory or dismissive, or terms which are non-specific and vague, continues, reflecting and perpetrating a cultural context in which women’s genitalia are either conceptually absent or perceived negatively.

For all the work done by the sex positive feminists the language used to describe bodies and sex continues to reflect patriarchal, misogynist, and male biased conceptualisations of sex. As with the negative perceptions evident in the words describing female body parts, words used to describe the sex act itself demonstrate that sex continues to be seen as something done (by the male) to someone else (the female). The terms which describe the sex act is an indication that this act is seen to be a way of ‘putting woman in her place’ so to speak. Women are no longer merely ‘screwed’ they are ‘whacked’ (a Mafia term for being killed or terminated), ‘hammered’, ‘nailed’, ‘tapped’, ‘blasted’, ‘impaled’, ‘smashed’ or ‘pounded’. The way in which the sexual act is contemporaneously described, demonstrates that under patriarchal influence, even the sexual act, a deeply personal act with infinite potential for the unification of people, becomes twisted into an act of division and dehumanisation.
Conclusion: Can a world cleaved in two be put back together?

This chapter has explored the mind/body split at the basis of western philosophy and it has been argued that this can be understood as perpetuating a particular mode of thinking, dubbed epistemological patriarchy, and particular ways of being, dubbed patriarchal corporeality. While particular attention was given to describing the mechanisms by which patriarchal corporeality operates, the educational setting was examined as a site in which both epistemological patriarchy and patriarchal corporeality are enacted. One way to understand this is to see that epistemology patriarchy is transmitted via a school curriculum which espouses a form of knowledge that is based upon the values of power and control, and that patriarchal corporeality operates as a hidden curriculum via mechanisms such as sex education classes, teachers’ (gender based) practices and expectations, and through students’ enactments, formations and policing of their own and their peers, gender and sexual mores.

In the examination of patriarchal corporeality, it was argued that this is not a natural or inevitable way of being – gender, for example can be reformulated, as masculinity and femininity are not distinct essential biological, physical or psychological categories. The world is made to operate as though this illusory binary was real and people are compelled to regulate their behaviours, habits, and thoughts as though masculinity and femininity were somehow ‘truth’ categories to which they must adhere.

The latest scientific advances show that gender is nearly impossible to determine “scientifically” as the recent case of the athletic Caster Semenya demonstrates. Semenya, a female athlete from Africa whose rapid improvements in her running times triggered concern, was to have her gender determined by a panel consisting of an endocrinologist, a
geneticist, a psychologist and gynaecologist – which suggests that determining someone’s
gender is not a simple procedure (Levy, 2009). Butler argues that it cannot be done, as there
is no ‘true’ gender beneath the enactment of gender. Even the category of sex, upon which
gender distinctions rest, is not a fixed dichotomy. On the one hand, the experience of trans
gendered individuals demonstrates that sex can be changed. On the other hand, the presence
of the intersexed is a testament to the false binary of biological sex understood as consisting
only of male and female bodies. This is a significant point, for it reveals that the basis of
patriarchal corporeality is a false one. Patriarchal corporeality functions as though there is a
strict binary of two sexes, with corresponding gender traits and roles forming the basis of
their sexuality – ideally a culturally exalted form of heterosexuality in which male/female
roles uphold and maintain patriarchal familial and economic institutions. If the sex binary
upon which the system is based are understood to not be real, the naturalness and
inevitability of the patriarchal systems that depend on patriarchal corporeality is thrown into
doubt. If the existence of those whose sex, gender or sexuality defies simple categorisation
was no longer marginalised, rendered invisible, or brought to compliance through medical
means then the possibly of alternative ways of living or being, ways of existing outside of
patriarchal corporeality become revealed.

But it is not enough to break down the sex-gender-sexuality system - that is, patriarchal
corporeality - epistemological patriarchy must be broken as well as the two are mutually
reinforcing and generate and perpetuate understandings of the world that hide the very
existence of a system that creates and maintains a worldview that continues to hierarchically
order the world. Within patriarchal epistemology masculine knowledge is created by
subjugating and denigrating other ways of knowing the world. Within patriarchal
corporeality the dominance of masculinity is maintained by the repudiation and subjugation
of femininity. This bifurcation of the human person into mind and bodily experiences that
artificially divides humanity into two separate sexes and corresponding genders and
attendant sexualities is not inevitable. Alternative ways of coming to know the world, and to live and be in the world can be found and developed and the educational implications of this will be explored in chapter six.

While gender studies, work in the area of masculinities, and feminism have done much to advance the understanding of the way that gender functions in society, the more challenging goal of reconceptualising the logical character of ‘gender’ itself has yet to be achieved. This being so, the spiritual foundation upon which the dynamic relationship between males and females unfolds in socio-cultural terms has yet to be adequately understood. If the changes that have occurred and are yet to occur within this framework are in the long term to be rendered as little more than cosmetic, it is imperative that this conceptual limitation be rectified. I suggest that the aetiology of the problem of gender differentiation lay in comprehending the way in which what I have termed ‘epistemological patriarchy’ has limited the development of spiritual consciousness required to establish an educational feminism motivated by the vision of non-gendered personhood. Non-gendered personhood seeks to transcend concepts of personhood that are based on gender and gender-based expectations. In the argument I advance, patriarchal epistemology has limited the development of spiritual consciousness required to see beyond a person’s corporeal form. In this sense the emancipation provided by the concept of non-gendered personhood frees, not only women, but also men, to their true potential. Through the nurturing of moral consideration and the development of spiritual consciousness new understandings of personhood, not based on divisive categories, can be ushered in. I suggest that this vision of personhood could be developed in the context of new forms of education – and that development of this vision is a task for the next chapter.
At this point in the thesis it is clear that I am asserting that patriarchal rationalism and the dominant epistemology of power from which it derives are mutually reinforcing and complicit, in both the degradation of nature and the subjugation of women. Just as Laura and Cotton make clear, in their 1999 book *Empathetic Education*, the environment goals of education cannot be met as the form of knowledge that is propagated within schools encourages a philosophy of nature that is incompatible with ecological integrity, I attest that the personal and social goals of feminism will likewise not be met within an educative system which propagates a form of knowledge that is morally divisive of human personhood. By propagating patriarchal rationalism as the basis of our way of thinking about the world, our educative system has inadvertently entrenched an ideology whose dominant presumption is that women are lesser persons than men. While rationality has been unreflectingly endorsed as the only way in which to come to know the world around us this is not in fact the only way to come to know the world cogently and insightfully. While indigenous ways of understanding are available to us, within this chapter I shall endorse ways of knowing the world, based not upon detachment, but upon the values of connectivity and empathy.

The argument evinced by this thesis is that the primary epistemological paradigm, which serves to characterise western education, is gratuitously selective in a way that favours patriarchy. The problem is that, the particular form of knowledge propagated in our educational institutions is one from amongst a wide array of possible forms. The
institutional priority given to this form of knowledge is less a function of its endemic logical character than the fact that our dominant educational epistemology is motivated by society’s insatiable appetite for power. To put the point more strongly, the form of educational knowledge which monopolises the mind-set of our teaching institutions is conditioned and informed by the obsession with power as a primary means of control: control of the earth and control of every non-living and living thing on it.

Far from being ‘value-free’ or ‘neutral’ independently of how we use knowledge it is clear that knowledge enshrines a complex set of presuppositions which either explicitly deny or implicitly marginalise the intrinsic value not only of nature but of women, transforms both into objects of desire to be manipulated by the will of men or those in power. Such a form of knowledge which is itself motivated by the lust for power in turn engenders technologies of power, themselves defined by a preoccupation with domination, subjugation and expropriation. The way in which technologies of power achieve control depends upon their capacity to recast the face and the things of the earth into a form which makes the behaviour of those things predictable in ways which allegedly suit man’s needs and desires. The process by way of which technology achieves this measure of control depends upon ‘transformative subjugation’. The technological process of control through transformative subjugation involves manipulating the animate and inanimate things of nature by converting them into commodities or fabricated ‘things’ to be bought or sold in the economic marketplace, as indeed women still are. In essence, technology gives us power over nature by systematically synthesising and reconstructing it into things of our own making, and what better way for a man to control a women than by fabricating institutional structures which make her into just another of the ‘things’ he has subdued, this time by virtue of the impoverished social role ascribed to women.
Structural Inequality and Epistemological Patriarchy

Throughout this thesis various examples have been proffered to demonstrate that there exists a number of structural inequalities that affect women’s lives differently to that of their male counterparts. These examples serve to demonstrate that although men and women are considered equal in contemporary times, examination of particular structural inequalities underscore the continued asymmetry in opportunities and treatment offered within the western socio-cultural context. It is my argument that with the value system enshrined in epistemological patriarchy and the dualistic reasoning employed through patriarchal rationalism women are valued and conceptualised differently to their male counterparts. We shall now review the various structural inequalities explored in this thesis in all to make clear the some of the ways in which epistemological patriarchy continues to constrain women’s lives. (Whilst bearing in mind that due to the hierarchical systems of value which underpin epistemological patriarchy, power is not experienced as a global domination of men over women, gender intersects with other organisational systems such as race and class creating a complex web of value in which different people are subordinate in different contexts; and it is important to note that even while being subjugated women have been able to express their agency, for example those who have voluntarily entered the sex industry as a means of economic opportunity in a context where they would be otherwise poverty stricken).

Economic opportunities

In a mere two hundred and fifty years the position of women in western society has undergone remarkable changes. The status of women has changed dramatically from the times when a wife was considered to be the exclusive property of her husband. Marriage laws have changed such that the male and female partners have equal standing before the law. In addition, women now have the freedom to work in any occupation and the principle
of equal pay for equal work is enshrined in law (although the application of this principle continues to be problematic). Despite the impressive progress made by the Feminist movement, even a cursory examination reveals that as far as equal opportunity goes, women are still socially disadvantaged and subordinated.

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) provides an international report which includes the Gender Related Development Index (GDI). The GDI includes indices for measuring the gender differences in the share of earned income, life expectancy, adult literacy and school enrolment. The GDI reveals that from as late as 2008 no society and no country in the world treated its women as well as it treated its men (UNDP, 2007/2008). This process, which has been termed the ‘feminisation of poverty’ (Dholakia, 2003) occurs whenever there are insufficient efforts to reduce poverty, either through labour market or social welfare policies and where single motherhood is sufficiently widespread. This process is pronounced in the United States (Rowlands, 2002), but the feminisation of poverty occurs worldwide (Pressman, 2003). Within the United States nearly one fifth of families are headed by a single mother, but women are accorded neither a fair wage nor decent social support (Goldberg & Kremen, 1997). Nearly half of all single mother families are poor and these families comprise three fifths of all poor families (Goldberg & Kremen).

Women remain at considerable economic disadvantage in comparison to men. It has been estimated that women undertake 65% of the world’s work (here we refer to all work undertaken, both paid and unpaid) (Salleh, 1997), and yet receive only ten percent of the world’s income (Kelly, 1997). Moreover, women receive less than one percent of the aid distributed by the UN and own less than one percent of the world’s property (Salleh, 1998), despite the fact that females make up over fifty percent of the world’s population. The economic disadvantage experienced by women can by partly explained by the fact that women’s contributions to the economy have all too often been blatantly ignored, both by
way of social recognition and by way of pay. Given the dominant paradigm of epistemological patriarchy, much of the work performed by women is ‘invisible’. 

Education has been used as a means by which women can achieve equality with men; by having access to the same employment opportunities women should have access to the same level of employment and therefore economic opportunities. Examination of the statistics reveals that women’s earnings are still not on par with that of men’s. The wage gap is the statistical indicator often used to express the differences between men’s and women’s earnings in the paid labour force (Stout & McPhail, 1998). The gap is generally expressed as a percentage, which is obtained by dividing the median annual earnings for women by the median annual earnings for men. In the United States, in 1955 women’s earnings represented 64% of that accrued by men (Peterson, 1994). By the mid 1970’s this had slipped to 59% and by the end of the 1980’s it had increased to 68% (Peterson). In 1993 the wage gap was 72% (Peterson). While some of the difference between the wages of men and women can be attributed to differences in experience, education or other legitimate contributions, this only accounts for between one third and one half of the wage gap (Freedman, 2002). Presently within Australia the wage gap equates to it taking a woman 14 months on average to earn what a man earns in a year, and women retire with half the amount of savings of Australian men (Hawley, 2009). (This is an indictment of not only the wage gap, but also the continued cultural expectation that women will take time out of their career to raise children, while few men expect to have their careers interrupted by to the same degree by their parental responsibilities. Thus we see that while a person’s worth is sometimes measured by their earnings, women - on average - are never going to earn as much – and therefore be considered worth as much - as men while housework and child raising are both see as women’s work and seen as unworthy of remuneration).
Although women are participating in the workforce in ever increasing numbers the problems of “women’s work” has yet to be resolved. Women continue to perform an estimated 70 hours of housework per week (Warren, 1998). This is in addition to the hours spent in the workforce, and represents approximately twice the average working week. Women are neither paid nor acknowledged for this work, which has been estimated to represent between 25-33% of the GNP (Kelly, 1997). In Australia in 1997, this unpaid housework was worth $237 billion and amounted to about 44% of the GNP for that year ("Wageless workers a $261b boon," 2000). This process has been termed 'The Second Shift'; after a shift in the daily workforce, women arrive home to perform a second shift working in the domestic sphere (Peterson, 1994). According to Peterson, the problem of the second shift is not being properly addressed by social institutes. Attempts at justifying so glaring a form of exploitation reduce pathetically to labelling it strictly a private matter.

The above examples serve to demonstrate that equal educational opportunities and processes have not translated into equality in economic and employment terms. While women have made many advances into achieving equality with men, the above examples highlight that there is still much work to be done even at the level of equal opportunity as a measure of authentic equity. Although women’s opportunities have increased over the past few decades, the strength of gender based role expectations in the current socio-cultural context suggest that it is very hard to overcome the notion that men are the main providers. In Australia, for instance, 2002 census data indicates that only 5 percent of families have a female main breadwinner (Unreich, 2009). As I intimated earlier, there is a deeper issue which requires something more than ensuring equity for women, as valuable and momentous a goal that may be. In the light of my analysis it should be clear that although women have been provided with opportunities to enter the current socio/cultural context with greater equity than ever before, there has been insufficient appreciation of the extent to which that cultural context remains determinately textured by epistemological patriarchy.
Chapter two commenced with an historical overview of the institute of marriage. Marriage involves a relationship, not just between the couple involved in the union but with society at large. Families, kin and community, either secular or religious, bestow ‘marriage status’ on a given relationship in the way that they regulate, sanctify, and legitimate, the relationship (Coontz, 2005). As can be seen from the sweeping history of marriage detailed in chapter two, the dynamics of marriage have evolved. Initially marriage was policed by immediate kin, the family and clan groups. As communities settled, neighbours and community members would govern and regulate marriage. From the ancient Greek and Roman traditions, and throughout the Middle Ages, marriage was explicitly predicated on a patriarchal society, within marriage, the male father/husband was the head of the house, representing the members of his household economically and politically. Through marriage he subsumed his wife’s legal identity, and thus each household was represented by the husband. Within this model of marriage, the family functioned as a microcosm of the larger political framework, with the husband acting as the ‘king’ of his household. So too, during the Middle Ages both secular and religious rules governing marriage had a patriarchal bias. English common law contained within it the principle of coverture which maintained that upon marriage a man and his wife became one flesh and that flesh is represented by the husband. He had the right to vote, to dispose of any property that she brought to the marriage and control of any of her earnings, and he had the right to dispose of their children without her consent (LeGates, 2001). Feminist agitation and political campaigning resulted in the passage in 1882 of the Married Women’s Property Act, which removed most of the traces of coverture and gave women the right to maintain control of their property and wages upon marriage. In the early years of the twentieth century women in most western countries succeeded in their long campaign for
suffrage and were given the right to vote (Freedman, 2002). These two seminal events have forever changed the landscape of marriage. The patriarchal model, upon which marriage was for thousands of years predicated, no longer holds true. Theoretically, at least, man and woman enter marriage as potential economic and political equals, able to control their own property and participate individually in the economic and political processes.

While it is clear that an explicitly patriarchal political model no longer defines marriage, I attest that men remain the primary beneficiaries of marriage in its more modern manifestations. In the Australian context, for example, research by Ken Dempsey (2002) notes that men are still getting the ‘better deal’ out of married life. From as long ago as twenty years, researchers have been documenting the adverse economic impact that divorce has upon women (Arendell, 1987). Post-divorce, women experience a drop in income and an increase in living expenses and Smock, Manning and Gupta note in their review of the literature that there is a large body of research documenting the economic decline experienced by women who undergo marital dissolution (1999). They note that women’s vulnerability outside of marriage is ‘ubiquitous’. Zagorsky’s (2005) work with longitudinal data has found that while both men and women experience a ‘wealth drop’ after divorce, in percentage terms women experience the greater economic decline.

I contend that marriage remains more favourable to men than women. This conclusion is supported by research into marriage which presents a picture of an institution that although no longer explicitly patriarchal - due to changes in law, custom, societal norms and mores - still extends more benefits to men than women. Financially, and emotionally it appears men are better off than women with marriage – who continue to be burdened with ‘women’s work’, the expectation that they will be responsible for the work devalued such that is not considered to be worthy of remuneration, validation or support. In addition, marriage continues to order society hierarchically by extending status and privilege to those in
wedded heterosexual unions. Thus, marriage functions as an institution by which the state
deems which relationships are privileged. While no longer an explicit means of patriarchal
control, marriage remains a means of policing ‘heteronormality’ (Brook, 2007). The
legitimization of heterosexual unions over homosexual relationships forms an aspect of
patriarchal corporeality. Patriarchal corporeality maintains a sex-gender-sexuality
framework which hierarchically structures the world.

The Church and Women

In the Church, women as “sign” is more than ever central and faithful, following as it
does from the very identity of the Church, as received from God and accepted in
faith. It is the “mystical” identity, profound and essential, which needs to be kept in
mind when reflecting on the respective roles on men and women in the Church
(Ratzinger & Amato, 2004, p. na).

Within chapter two, the way in which Christian theology locates women closer to nature and
men closer to God was explicated. At a doctrinal level, Christian discourse is contradictory
when it affirms that all human beings have equal rights to salvation but excludes women
from the positions of authority which dispense salvation (Rosado-Nunes, 2003). Anne
O’Brien refers to the contradiction that ‘women used a theology of equality and inclusion to
empower themselves in an institution that depicted them as a secondary sex’ (O’Brien, 2005,
p.13). The Church has expected women to repress their sexuality, control their reproductive
life, valorised them as mothers while offering no other role in which to express their
spirituality and expected them to do the dirty and menial tasks. Yet at the same time church
life for many women has been a vehicle for autonomy, sisterhood and been a fundamental
part of movements such as temperance, female suffrage, social purity and Indigenous rights
– the intrinsic dualism of theology has played out in women’s lived experiences of church
life (Ecklund, 2003; O’Brien, 2005). On the one hand subordinated daughters of Eve, on the
other saved by the blood of Christ and offered equal redemption.
While some Christian denominations, other than the Catholic Church, do allow the ordination of women, research from the United States suggests that within the priestly roles women remain subordinated to their male counterparts. Women constitute ten percent of American religious leaders (Olson, Crawford, & Guth, 2000). Women clergy are over-represented in subordinate positions and in those having lower status – this inequality is remarkably constant and undiminished over time throughout their clerical careers (Olson et al., 2000; Sullins, 2000). As can been seen from the examples described in chapter two, drawn from Genesis through to the present day, Christian theology has been premised on underlying dualisms which hierarchically order the world, while problematic due to the paradox of women been subordinated to men, yet equal in reception of redemption.

Patriarchal Theism (Laura & Chalender, in press) has served to conceptualise women as being further from God than men and this has formed the basis of the treatment of women as being lesser persons and prevented their access to positions of authority. As seen in the further examples within chapter two, Christianity is not the only western institution to define and treat women differently to men.

Science and Women

Scientists realistically point out that the balance of nature was upset thousands of years ago when man’s invention of weapons made him king of the beasts. The balance has never recovered its equilibrium; man is the dominant species on his planet, and as his fields, pastures and cities spread across the land, lesser species are extirpated, pushed into refuge areas, or domesticated. (Smith, 2001, p. 741).

That western science has developed out of the Christian mindset has been argued by Lynn White Jr (White, 1967/1973; Stark, 2003). Out of this mindset developed the science that has been lauded as being responsible for the tremendous progress, scientific, technological and medical, that western culture has undergone. One glimpses a watershed in the sixteenth
and seventeenth centuries. During this time nuns were cloistered, husbands were given increased control over and responsibilities for their wives and children in their households, and women were being tried and executed for the crime of witchcraft. The beginning of the seventeenth century signalled the dawning of the modern era and a time when science was moving away from the control of the church. During this time state control was increasing over the populace independent of the Churches which had undergone the Reformation and Counter Reformation. The rhetoric used to describe science changed from seeking to understand the mind of God, to one of having nature reveal her secrets. Feminists have revealed the extent that science is not neutral and objective but instead is based on a dualistic understanding of the world. Science is based on the masculine values of a world that is understood in binary terms (Bordo, 1993; Haraway, 1988; Harding, 1991). Salient examples which illustrate some of the ways in which science manifests an ideology of control over women were detailed in chapter two. I described the medical processes which treat women as a deviant ‘other’ which must be controlled, not unlike the chaos of nature. In the fields of gynaecology and obstetrics, women are put under increasing surveillance and subject to increasing interventions in order that doctors are able to correct the deficiencies of nature’s imperfect design. In the area of mental health women are treated differently to men and their treatment demonstrates the masculine way that personhood, autonomy and agency are perceived. I used the example of Rachel Carson to illustrate that the way that she was treated by her fellow scientists revealed that her very femininity was perceived to be a direct threat to the masculine pursuits of scientific progress.

Global Economics

An examination of the global picture as presented in chapter three, reveals that the success experienced by some women within the nations of the West stands in stark contrast to the experiences of women and men of the rest of the world. A perusal of the work of feminist geographers and economists reveals the enormous disparity of wealth around the world and
the way in which the labour performed falls unevenly upon the shoulders of the world’s poorest women. It becomes clear that almost universally certain kinds of work are considered to be ‘women’s work’, that is, work not considered worthy of remuneration. On top of this, globally, women are in demand as the ‘ideal’ worker in the modern flexible workplace. In chapter three I examined patterns of women’s work across the globe in order to show how, it can be understood that women worldwide are conceptualised as resources available to for subjugation and exploitation, as the values underlying the economic system are those generated by patriarchal epistemology. Within this economic system women’s labour is defined as worthless, that is socially and economically without value, and therefore not worthy of equitable remuneration or regulatory protection (Mills, 2003). In addition to the highly gendered patterns visible in the global workforce, the economic inequities exacerbate existing racial, ethnic and geographic inequalities.

An examination of various aspects of the global sex trade – sex trafficking, prostitution, mail-order brides and sex-tourism attests to a persistent and remaining asymmetry in the treatment of male and female bodies. Not only are women’s bodies not regarded as workers’ bodies and can therefore be underpaid for their labour, but their bodies continue to be regarded as property that can be traded, bought, sold, smuggled over borders and over the internet. While some boys and men are involved in the sex industry it appears that the vast majority of those traded like chattel remain women. The international response reveals a paternalistic mindset, determined to control and regulate women and to ignore the structural inequalities which would bring women willingly to the sex industry. First women are dehumanised by being seen as just being bodies, they are then further dehumanised by the assumption that they have no agency. Sex workers are conceptualised as being vectors of disease and as morally corrupting agents – there is little attention on the men who pay for sex or who benefit from the sex industry. Two problems are rendered invisible by the
international response, firstly the structural inequality driving women to sex work and, secondly, the men who pay for sex making the industry lucrative for those who control it.

Sex trafficking, mail order brides, prostitution and sex-tourism are each arenas in which men’s power over women is displayed. Women’s bodies are treated as commodities and this betrays the structural inequalities faced not just by women, but also by some nations in comparison to others. The vast amounts of money involved mean that activities such as sex tourism are hard to eradicate, as sex tourism is a lucrative growing industry actively encouraged by some governments. The international response demonstrates a punitive mentality aimed at punishing women, while ignoring the male clients and a wilful refusal to examine the economic inequities that would compel women to prostitute themselves, or compel nations to consider the bodies of their populace as export commodities or tourist attractions that bring in the foreign dollar. Thus, an examination of prostitution and related industries highlights not only the economic imbalance between men and women and the asymmetry in the treatment of their bodies, but also the power and economic imbalance between various nations.

**Education**

I have argued that the form of reason embraced within the West, patriarchal rationalism, generates a pernicious patriarchal hierarchy of value and has as its basis a patriarchal form of epistemology. This epistemology is based on a lust for power and control – that is, what is considered knowledge is that which grants a measure of power and control over the world and every living thing in it. Because of the binary system of value underpinning epistemological patriarchy that which is deemed to be feminine is accorded a lesser value than that which is deemed to be masculine. From this epistemology western institutions have developed in which the impoverished role ascribed to women is justified as they are defined as being less human than men. While some degree of feminist gains have been made in
addressing the imbalance - success has thus far been limited as the epistemological basis remains fundamentally unchallenged and intact.

For example, while proffered as one of the keys to women’s liberation, education has not yet resulted in equality for women, even though female students have been educated along the male since the development of mass schooling systems in the late nineteen hundreds. That being said, female students have made significant gains to the point where the current educational debates are centred on the underachievement of male students. But as yet these educational gains have not yet translated into equivalent success outside of the educational setting (Mills, Martino & Lingard, 2007). Nineteenth century notions about the female mind have remained persistent in the face of a mass schooling system which educates male and female students alike, resulting in female students, especially those of working class background remaining alienated from science and mathematics (Teese & Polesel, 2003) - the very subjects that are most valued within the education system (Laura, Marchant & Smith, 2008). The gender educational debates themselves are conceptually myopic in that they fail to take into account the fact the very epistemic foundations of the educational system are morally divisive of personhood and inculcate students in the values of dominance and control (Laura & Cotton, 1999). But school is more than the site where the mind is educated; bodies are schooled too, disciplined in various ways to ensure the perpetuation and continuation of particular modes of physical being. We shall now turn our attention to patriarchal corporeality and examine the categories that shape our understanding of our gendered, sexed and sexual existence.
Patriarchal Corporeality

As well as being a category through which to analyse structural inequality, gender also functions a category of analysis through which to examine social relations. Within chapter four, gender was examined with a particular emphasis upon masculinity. It was argued that existing social relations are pernicious and harmful to both men and women and that men also suffer under the yoke of patriarchy as epistemological patriarchy implicitly favours men with institutional benefits, it can do so in a way that dehumanises and depersonalises them as well as women.

Chapter five also examined the body/split conceptual split in more detail, describing how the mind has been monopolised by an epistemology of power, the mindset embraced within the West is believed to give us a measure of power and control over the world around us. Within the context of chapter five, the concept of patriarchal corporeality was also described, which was understood as the bodily aspect of the mind/body dualism. I argued that patriarchal corporeality imposes a gender regime within which a two sex binary is maintained (literally at knifepoint in the case of many of the world’s intersexed). Within this lived bodily regime one’s sex is believed to imply certain gender characteristics, for example, men are masculine, therefore they are assertive, strong, aggressive, and rational beings whose masculinity is best expressed through the provider/breadwinner role. The female sex are passive, weak, non-aggressive and irrational beings ideally whose femininity is best expressed through motherhood.

Patriarchal corporeality creates a system where a person’s biological sex determines their corresponding gender which turn determines their sexuality – a culturally normative heterosexuality. The particular form of sexual relations that is culturally endorsed and exalted is heterosexual relationships – these are treated as the only true or normal form of sexual experience. Heterosexual relationships function to maintain patriarchal economic and
familial institutions, thus, demonstrating one of the ways in structural inequalities and patriarchal social relations feedback upon one another, reinforcing the normality and ‘naturalness’ of certain forms of inequality. For example, marriage although no longer predicated on an overtly patriarchal model, still functions to extend more benefits to men than women, and certain cultural scripts reinforce the notion that marriage is the ultimate expression, or inevitable outcome of male/female sexual relations. Within this model certain key gender norms centre on the male breadwinner, female housekeeper/child-carer gender roles are maintained and reinforced, continuing the benefits to the economy of unpaid women’s work (see Waring, 2003).

**Sex: A false dichotomy**

Within the gender regime established within patriarchal corporeality biological bodies are ‘sexed’ into exclusive categories of male and female and these biological sexes are understood to embody particular corresponding dichotomous, mutually exclusive traits, that is, male bodies are masculine and female bodies are feminine. Humanity, in all its variety, could be understood as existing upon a continuum; but, rather, under patriarchal corporeality it exists in strictly binary terms. Although this dichotomy seems natural, reflection upon the experience of the intersexed (an identity that encompasses those who used to be known as hermaphrodites and those bodies that defy straightforward male/female categorisation) reveals that the sex binary is artificial. Cadwallader (2009) notes that some 1.7 percent of live births are of babies who are intersexed and it is on these bodies that the male/female dichotomy is maintained at knifepoint. Many infants born intersexed are surgically altered into order to maintain the notion that sex is a natural binary. The disciplining of these bodies by the medical establishment reveals that the very category of sex, upon which patriarchal corporeality rests, is a false one and that some not insignificant proportion of the population would exist outside of this binary, if it were not for the ubiquitous power of the medical establishment working to maintain these normative categories.
This is a significant point, for it reveals that patriarchal corporeality has as its foundation an illusion. Patriarchal corporeality operates as though there is a strict binary of two sexes, with corresponding gender traits and roles forming the basis of their sexuality – ideally a culturally exalted form of heterosexuality in which male/female roles uphold and maintain patriarchal familial and economic institutions. If the sex binary upon which the system is based is understood to be false, the naturalness and inevitability of the patriarchal systems that depend on patriarchal corporeality is thrown into doubt. If the existence of those whose sex, gender or sexuality defies simple categorisation was no longer marginalised, rendered invisible, or brought to compliance through medical means then the possibly of alternative ways of living or being, ways of existing outside of patriarchal corporeality become revealed.

Gender

In chapter five we examined gender as ‘an institutionalised system of social practices for constituting people as two significantly different categories, men and women, and organising social relations of inequality on the basis of difference’ (Ridgeway & Correll, 2004, p. 510). As with other hierarchical systems, such as class and race, gender is maintained through cultural beliefs and practices which serve to distribute resources at the macro level, (chapter three detailed ways in which gender functions as an organising principle in global economics) and affects both patterns of behaviour and organisational practices at the interactional level and beliefs and identities at the level of the individual. Ridgeway and Correll note the ubiquity of gender, from the ‘segregation of jobs, to the gender differentiation of voluntary organisations, gender acts as a fundamental principle of organising social relations in virtually all spheres of social life’ (2004, p. 521). Within the gender regime imposed by patriarchal corporeality the particular forms of masculinity and femininity that are culturally privileged are those that ensure continued male dominance.
Masculinity defines itself through the constant repudiation of what it defines as feminine, ensuring through this process of repudiation that masculinity is more highly valued.

Within the gender regime of patriarchal corporeality masculine dominance is maintained through the process of hegemonic masculinity – meaning that in a given context the form of masculinity that is culturally privileged is that which ensures men are more powerful than women – often achieved through the invocation of homophobic, anti-feminine, and misogynistic attitudes. That patriarchal corporeality is depersonalising and dehumanising of men, even as it favours them with institutional favours, was explored in the claims of Faludi (1999), Biddulph (2002) and others who examine the toxic effects of dominant forms of masculinity on men (Gelfer, 2009). Nye (2005) argues that the most resilient aspect of gender roles is the idea that men must be the main provider and women raise children. In his analysis this notion emerged during the Industrial Revolution when the economic importance of the household declined and men moved into the public sphere to work. Thus it can be argued that our beliefs about gender are underpinned by patriarchal economic notions; notions which require the mobilisation and utilisation of the social body for the service of vested economic interests. The work of Anderson (2005), Connell (2000, 2005) and Butler (1993, 2004) suggest that particular versions of gender – for example, toxic forms of dominant masculinity – are not natural, preordained or essential and thus the way in which we experience and live as gendered being need not be a re-enactment of harmful gender norms.

Within the educational context Judith Butler notes ‘once we understand that these domains of saying and showing are regulated and yet open to a number of interventions, then it would seem that, pedagogically, saying and showing are the first elements in any political education’ (p. 534). One goal is then the subversion of harmful gender norms and the development of alternate understandings of genders and gender roles which no longer
support patriarchal economic systems and vested interests. But how are we to dismantle patriarchal corporeality, being as it is the physical manifestation of an epistemology of power? It is to this goal that I now turn. It is my argument that education maintains the mind/body schism at the heart of western philosophy and schools not just the teach mind in an educational epistemology of power and control, but are also a part of the process by which bodies are schooled into patriarchal corporeality. Peer interactions, teacher expectations and practices and prescriptive sex education all serve to perpetuate the particular notions of gender, sex and sexuality required in the maintenance of patriarchal corporeality. Patriarchal corporeality is, in short, a fundamental aspect of a patriarchal paradigm, in which economics, and heteronormative gender relations, gender-based roles and work opportunities are facets of this multifarious system.

Education and Epistemological Patriarchy

If there is a task of critical urgency confronting our educational institutions, it is to redefine our relationship to nature and to each other by redefining the fundamental concept of educational knowledge in a way that dignifies rather than diminishes our humanity by doing so. We need urgently to re-think also our willingness to re-order the world of nature through our technological transformations (Laura & Cotton, 1999, p. 3)

We have seen in chapter four how the form of reason embraced within western society is characterised by a set of interlocking dualisms, inherited from Greek philosophy, in which men are seen as being opposite and superior to both women and nature. With this dualistic thinking forming the basis of society's conception of women and nature it is unsurprising that within western society man's relationship with women and nature has been characterised
by domination. Women and nature have been conceived as being a resource which exists purely for the benefit of those men in power and treated accordingly. Without moral concern the things of nature have been expropriated, mined, ploughed, hunted, fished, forced to yield, experimented upon, blown up, poisoned, and often to the point of extinction. In a similar manner women have been bought, sold, traded, exchanged, oppressed, intimidated, battered, raped and murdered. While the notion that women and nature exist as the property of men - as resources with only utilitarian value - has been shown to be a social construct used to justify the treatment that they have received, the joint oppression shared by women and nature at the hands of the men in power is a reality. Ecofeminism offers an analysis which posits that the domination and oppression experienced by nature and women stems from this logic of domination (see Plumwood, 1991, 1993; Warren, 1998). Women and nature, it is argued, are similarly valued as resources available for expropriation and subjugation by man in his quest to know and control the world around him (Figlio, 1994). The argument evinced by the Ecofeminists is that the rape of women and the rape of the earth stem from the same paternalistic disposition, of which science is the socially endorsed expression. The educative system of the West functions to inculcate successive generations of students about the cultural prominence afforded to scientific learning.

From the vantage of pedagogic epistemology, it is clear that implicit in the very structures of the academic curriculum is a presumption that students working in the arts area are in fact working with ideas that are subjective and thus not representative of real or genuine knowledge, in the sense of what it is important to know (Laura, Marchant, & Smith, 2008, p. 10)

Patriarchal Rationalism

The fact that a single contested paradigm (or a limited number thereof) governs the current forms of knowledge demonstrates the role that power, rather than reason, has played in developing knowledges. This power, although not as clearly visible as
other forms of patriarchal coercion, is nonetheless integral to women’s containment within definitions constituted by and for men (Grosz, 1993, p. 216).

Laura and his colleagues have repeatedly argued that the form of knowledge embraced with western culture is driven by our desire for power and control (Laura & Cotton, 1999; Laura & Marchant, 2002; Laura & Ashton, 2006; Laura, Marchant & Smith, 2008). I have advanced this argument in chapter four, by making it clear that the power driven epistemology is patriarchal in character and leads to a form of reasoning that values what is masculine, objective and rational over what is deemed to be feminine, objective and irrational. Through my presentation of the genealogy of the particular form of reason embraced within western culture I sought to demonstrate that this dualistic, masculine form of reason has been a cultural constant for at least the last two thousand years – present in the work of Plato and other Greek philosophers, the theology of the Christian Church and underpinning the quest of western science.

This form of reasoning is based on a dualistic hierarchy in which what is deemed to be masculine is valued over what is deemed to be feminine. This means that women are commonly associated with nature and irrationality. This association, I have argued, forms the justification for treating and valuing women differently to their male counterparts. As irrational beings, women have to be socially guided and controlled. Being located closer to nature women’s role is thus naturally to reproduce the species – as they are understood to be more led by their animalistic appetites (this belief found explicitly in the works of Plato, Aristotle, Augustine and Aquinas, but remains implicit in, for example, current discourse in medicine in which pregnant women must be subjected to regimes of testing and surveillance to manage them in their task of reproduction). Conceptualised in this way, women can be justifiably subjugated and subordinated to the authority of men.
What I have sought to make plain is that not only is the power driven epistemology patriarchal in character, but that patriarchal rationalism and the dominant epistemology of power from which it derives, are conceptually parasitic and mutually reinforcing. Coupled with our insatiable desire for power and control over the world, the dualism of reason becomes the handmaiden of knowledge. The only way to know the world is to think rationally about it, and to think rationally about it is to presuppose the dualistic hierarchies of value into which it is divided. Patriarchal rationalism, not unlike the concept of knowledge to which it is married, is in a peculiar sense deemed to be beyond critique for it is considered to be the only basis for any critique worth making. Dualistic reason has come to be regarded, that is to say, as a precondition of patriarchal rationality. I contend that the unreflective and uncritical propagation of patriarchal rationalism in the educational context encourages the very social structures within which women will be categorised covertly as having less value than men; and as somehow being less capable and of less worth. This coupling of the epistemology of power and patriarchal rationalism I have referred to as epistemological patriarchy. That is to say, the epistemology embraced within western culture, is not only driven by the value that we are a culture have placed on power and control, but it is also implicitly patriarchal in character and incorporates a pernicious form of dualistic reasoning.

Following Laura and Cotton (1999) we have seen that western society has chosen a particular form of knowledge from an array of possible forms of knowledge. The form of knowledge chosen is a form of knowledge motivated by a desire for power and control. Far from being value free, or value neutral, as is often claimed, the values underlying western learning are themselves values of power and control. The way in which we have interacted with nature serves to exemplify the power paradigm within which we act. As Laura and Cotton make plain, nature has been viewed as our enemy, against which we must battle to assert our mastery in order to survive. Our technological interventions with respect to nature
are thus aimed primarily at finding ways to dominate nature, and to find ever more efficient ways of expropriating her resources. As a perusal of many environmental science texts will attest, our interventions in this regard have brought us to the point where we are endangering the survival of not just ourselves but of every species on the planet.

Educational mediation of Epistemological Patriarchy

There is little hope of teaching environmental values within an educational paradigm which implicitly values nature as a resource to subjugate and dominate for economic gain.

[T]he goals of environmental education are unlikely to be well served by turning to the existing dominant paradigm of educational knowledge whose technological applications have proved by their very nature to be profoundly disruptive ecologically (Laura & Cotton, 1999, p.133).

In the same way attempting to teach values in respect to the treatment and conceptualisation of women are also likely to be self-defeating as long as education maintains its dependence on a power-laden form of knowledge. But the moral morass that education has become mired in goes deeper than just the inculcation of economic values needed to perpetuate the values of consumeristic capitalist society.

We have throughout the thesis observed that western education remains dominated by pedagogies of power motivated by epistemically entrenched values of dominance and control. Generations of children have thus been inculcated with the paradigmatic presumptions that the way in which we ultimately control nature and everything contained within it, is by developing technologies which make the world as predictable as possible. The paradox is that we achieve this goal only by making the world as synthesised, inert and lifeless as possible. We have also seen that the obsession with dominating and controlling nature (i.e. mother earth or the earth goddess) is covertly extrapolated and assimilated into institutional structures and dogmas of discrimination which sequesters the locus of power to
men, or in many cases to women who have been indoctrinated to imitate men. We have observed that ‘socio-cultural patriarchy’ on the one hand and ‘patriarchal theism’ on the other lead inevitably to institutional forms patriarchal pedagogy based on hierarchies of value grounded in naïve Cartesian Dualism. I have thus argued that despite the impressive gains made by feminism in the past two and a half centuries, it has not yet successfully challenged the epistemic principles at the heart of the education system. The success that has been gained, we have observed, has also led to premature societal complacency, a high price to pay, when the more comprehensive goal entails the continued development of moral sensibility and empathetic connectivity. With principles such as equal pay enshrined in law, it becomes all too easy to dismiss ongoing feminist agitation as being jaded. In one sense, the gains achieved by feminism have all too often remained parochial in practice – certain demographics, particularly those privileged by favoured class, race and geographic locations - have benefited more from the changes to the socio-cultural context than others; which is all too apparent, as we have seen, when we examine the situation of women in the global context.

Although neoliberal globalisation is making the lives of many women better, it is making the lives of even more women worse. The lives of many of the world’s poorest and most marginalised women in both the global South and the global North are deteriorating relative to the lives of better-off women and of men and even deteriorating absolutely (Jaggar, 2001, pp.301-302).

The changes that have been made to the socio-cultural context, as admirable as they are, represent only a part of what is required to achieve a socio-culturally based form of non-gendered wholeness. The value that we as a culture place on our fellow human beings remains textured by patriarchal presumptions of value discrimination. Even if men and women obtained full ‘equality’ in the various social measures of worth, we would still not necessarily have achieved authentic equity, as the very measures of gender worth endorsed by our society reflect the epistemic preoccupation with power, dominance and masculine
control. This being the case, women’s success has come at the cost of the adoption and uncritical acceptance of an almost imperceptible socio-cultural framework of patriarchal pedagogy, along with its attendant value hierarchy of discrimination.

**Empathetic Education**

Empathy is [the]…term for a rather mysterious process of entering into a kind of mental symbiosis with other selves, of stepping out of one’s skin, as it were, and putting oneself into the skin of the other. Empathy is the source of our intuitive understanding – more direct than language - of how the other thinks and feels...(Koestler, 1978, p. 143).

One way to ensure that women are respected and their intrinsic value appreciated is not so much by educating people about the value that women possess, but by reconceptualising the patriarchal concept of knowledge which attribute values in terms of the worth of men. By reconceptualizing patriarchal epistemology itself, in terms, not of power, dominance, control, but in terms of empathetic connectivity, participatory consciousness and cooperation, we create the platform from which to view the world differently. The emancipatory education that derives from this new epistemic vision is one that honours both the masculine and feminine in the wholeness of personhood, not gender, *per se*. This new epistemic vision is also a shift away from patriarchal epistemology which is grounded purely in the economy of capitalism. When the worth of a person is no longer epistemically tied to their lifetime economic value, the education curriculum can be reconstructed in ways which facilitate the transmission of an epistemology of empathy in which the development of a spiritual and moral sensibility motivates humankind to enhance rather that to diminish its humanity (see Hoffman, 2000 for a discussion of the importance of empathy in the context of the development of morality, and Laura & Cotton, 1999, for the role of empathy in spiritual development). Through the cultivation of empathy, we come to participate in the
consciousness of those around us in ways which connect us to them that are not defined by
the monetary or fiduciary value accorded them within economics of power and control.
Liberation comes from seeing that empathy, not power, provides the measure of value that in
the end we impute either to nature or to women. It has been argued that by transcending the
epistemology of power paradigm and replacing it with Laura’s theory of Empathetic
Epistemology, we free ourselves to envisage a new way of seeing nature, women and each
other, and the potential role that can be played by the spiritual integration of the mind, body
and heart in ‘Knowing’.

**Beyond conformity: the search for connectivity**

By establishing connectivity as the basis of an epistemology of empathy, a new discourse
emerges within which men and women alike would benefit from an educational system that
no longer inculcates students in ways that are detached and divisive. Connectivity between
persons would enable people to be judged on their intrinsic worth, not on how well they
fulfil existing gender expectations. Another aspect, little appreciated, about the development
of an epistemology of empathy is that the educational pedagogy could be emancipated from
institutional structures and dogmas of conformity. Currently each school operates similarly;
what is interesting about the manifold education systems stretching across the nations of the
globe is not how different schools are in their varied locations, but how remarkably similar
they are. As conformity is a condition of predictably, it has come to define our schools. The
more predictable something is the easier is it to manipulate it and the easier it becomes to
shape the minds of students predictable ways, leading Laura to lament:

> No one has explored the adverse impact of such artificial and boring conformist
> environments not only on the human health but on the human spirit and the creative
> imagination of the human mind. How can we be maximally stimulated to cultivate
> our own or our children’s creativity if we voluntarily surround ourselves and those
> we love with death, images of death, and conformity? Why should we expect the
human mind to be awake, alert and alive to learning if the environment in which it finds itself by its very design and nature not only fails to stimulate those virtues but through deadness and conformity discourages them? (Laura & Cotton, 1999, p. 66)

It can be understood that schools have become mired in an educational dogma that suggests that a measure of educational success is schools similarity to each other, without seeing that this is in fact represents a failure of imagination. We have seen that students do not have to be learning the same information in similar environments for a school system to be successful (Gatto, 2005). By replacing the value accorded to power and control with values of connectivity and participatory consciousness, Laura’s epistemology of empathy provides the basis for very different forms of education in which the value of our spiritual connectivity to the world around us, frees us to know the world empathetically.

Indigenous forms of knowing the world have long been available to us, but they have been historically denigrated and devalued, and dismissed as superstition. By reconceptualising the concept of power epistemology, such forms of knowledge would no longer be cavalierly dismissed. If connectivity and empathy rather than power and control were prized, we would have new ways to evaluate the worth of differing worldviews. In this way, feminine knowledge intuitions could be unearthed and employed in different contexts. Being freed from the dogma of educational conformity, we would be in a position to appreciate that different forms of knowledge and differing orientations within our education system could flourish simultaneously. Within the framework of empathetic epistemology the profundity of women’s intuition and nurturing love could be developed as a form of spiritual awakening exemplified by an authentic way of knowing ourselves and the world. Hierarchically prioritised systems of gender value can thus be replaced with the wholism of non-gendered personhood, such that the measure of our moral response to a human being is guided not by whether the individual is male or female, rather by how either their ‘maleness’ or ‘femaleness’ is exemplified in their personhood, the spiritual core of their empathetic
connectedness and capacity to mediate the world around then in morally responsible modalities of behaviour.

A reconceptualisation of the concept of knowledge which underpins our educative system would potentially open the mind to envisage the world in new ways. An epistemology based on connectivity, rather than control, would free us from having to limit learning about the world by way of patriarchal rationalism. We could explore the world in ways other through cold, detached, objective, observation and manipulation – methods that have served to separate us from the objects of our investigation. Empathetic education opens up new ways of understanding the world based on connectivity rather than detachment, thus, making it morally harder for us to act upon the earth in ways that damage the ecological integrity of a delicately balanced system of which we are a part. It would also serve to connect us in our shared humanity.

Conclusion: The New Frontiers of Feminist Education

In the argument that I have advanced, an education system motivated by the value of empathetic connectivity rather than power fosters new dimensions of intellectual imagination through participatory consciousness (See, Laura & Cotton, 1999, p. 169-173). We have seen that by basing our knowledge of the world on our connectivity with those around us we engage in a new discourse which by its very nature cultivates moral sensibility and spiritual well-being. Because empathetic connectivity awakens us to the insight that when we harm the earth or each other, we are on some level harming ourselves, we afford ourselves the opportunity to honour our seamless, indivisible unity with the world around us. This participatory mode of consciousness would mean interacting and appreciating the world
on a more spiritual level, not just upon a knowledge of the world that is delineated by empirical observation and purely cerebral understandings.

We have seen that as the Ecofeminist scholars are at pains to point out, the epistemology of power paradigm within which we have traditionally acted has led us to harm not just the earth, but women as well, as Collard and Conrucci make clear:

In patriarchy, nature, animals and women are objectified, hunted, invaded, owned, consumed, and forced to yield and to produce (or not). This violation of the integrity of the wild spontaneous Being is rape. It is motivated by a fear and rejection of life and it allows the oppressor the illusion of control, of power, of being alive. As with women as a class, nature and animals have been kept in a state of inferiority and powerlessness in order to enable men as a class to believe and act upon their ‘natural’ superiority/dominance (1988, p.i.).

By changing our interactions with nature we will inevitably alter the logical character of the interactions between ourselves in ways that connect rather than divide. The reconceptualisation of knowledge in this way would lead to a new level of spiritual consciousness which betrays the extent to which our socio-cultural institutions are harmful to both men and women in viewing them in value division of gender terms too.

What is at stake is not merely the relations between men and women, and the values that are mediated educationally. The deeper issue relates to the dehumanisation of both women and men within the framework of patriarchal pedagogy. While I have explicated the multifarious ways in which women’s lives are textured by epistemological patriarchy, there can be no doubt that men too are dehumanised by a system of values which serve to hierarchically order the world in ways that are divisive. ‘Neo-feminism’, is then, a quest for a deeper perception of personhood, and is devoted to nurturing a level of spiritual consciousness capable of recasting a new moral imperative. The emphasis is upon the call to seek the
development of a new spiritual consciousness which continues to motivate the redressing of socio-cultural inequalities. I contend that a new of expression of feminism is to be found that is devoted to the idea that what is required is a spiritual development that nurtures a form of spiritual consciousness that allows people to transcend the category of corporeal form. What is of importance is not whether you are male or female but rather the moral concept of non-gendered personhood, in which the things that are paramount expressions of your personhood are not tied into conceptualisations of gender. Non-gendered personhood gives rise to values that which offer you the best opportunity for maximising your personhood as an expression of potential. It is a richer concept of what a person is in terms of the infinite potential of self expression and is guided by a moral sensibility with its basis in connectivity.

In this understanding we seek a reconceptualisation of knowledge – one which would nourish rather than diminish spiritual development and encourage a dynamic of notion of personhood. We seek a world in which achievements and interactions are made not as men, not as women, but rather as persons – in which personhood functions as a category of unity rather than a category of divisiveness. The understanding of non-gendered personhood preserves and encourages the dignity of persons, independently of their religion, colour, gender, sex or sexuality. It awakens us to the existence of the seamless unity of all of life. The moral concept of non-gendered personhood nurtures a form of spiritual consciousness that allows people to transcend the category of corporeal form – it is a richer concept of what a person is in terms of infinite potential of self expression guided by a moral sensibility – based in an awareness of connectivity unity of all of us. As Laura has elsewhere exhorted:

Relate to each other and nature in ways that energise the human spirit. Experience what it means to be alive. Through living our lives in such a way, we will honour nature, honour others, honour ourselves and have a newfound reverence for life and a new awareness of the spirit within all living things. We will in the end have saved the
soul of a culture that might otherwise have been lost. (Laura, Marchant, & Smith, 2008, p. 162)
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