

ABSTRACT

In Philosophy, the centrality in thought and language of the universal man affects the ability to reason about humanity. There is a famous syllogistic quotation, which is used as the very basic in deductive logic:

All men are mortal, Socrates is a man, Therefore Socrates is mortal.

But lets try this one:

All men are mortal,

Amna is a

Amna is ----what? Of course I cannot say “Amna is a man” So I say she is a women. Therefore what? Amna is immortal? Amna being a Female is in a category neither masculine nor mortal, or we must admit Amna ends up being somewhat mortal, somewhat immortal creature. We cannot thus reason about Amna while thinking of her as a female at all. We can think of Socrates as a man without derailing the Syllogism; we cannot think of Amna as women.

Similarly the term History, deals with only the male counterpart. Many people find it odd or threatening to suggest, that it is appropriate to expand the horizons of History to include all human beings. This means that only some few kinds of humans can be imagined as our representatives. Reason flounders; the center holds, with Man in it, but it is an exclusive, not a universal or neutral center. Women disappear through the looking glass.

My thesis “The History of Her Story: the power of context and the context of power” deals with this very issue. Using the context of History’ for all’, enters us into a process of influential strategies, ways of communication, non-verbal languages, and ways of perceiving the world. Just as in Rome most people do a 6 the Romans do, the behavior of men and women depends on the context they are interacting with rather than something intrinsic about the gender they are. The prevalent inclination to regard masculinity and femininity as permanent personality traits has over shadowed the importance of context in which men and women live.

The confusion over whether men and women are the same and whether they can be “different but equal” is the core of my study. I take my basic premise that there is nothing essential --- that is universal and unvarying----in the nature of man and women. I wish to examine the consequence of ‘Her-Story’ on us all, male and female, when only some few of us sets the standards of universality and normalcy. My goal is to expand our visions of normalcy, not to replace a male-centered view with a female-cantered one. I have tried to gather various theories and philosophers in this regard, who have tried to evaluate women’s role and place in history. Inequities ad ambiguities about women’s place are built into the life and structure of our society. I think it will be uncomfortable, even frightening for women to modify their role or seen it being modified. Similarly it is much easier for men to withdraw to silence then to articulate the fears and losses, that jeopardize masculine identity.