

No Controversies Please:
We Are All Gentlemen!

Essays in Honour of Professor Bhuvan Chandel

Edited by
Murzban Jal and Bhagat Oinam



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On the Malestream Orientation of "Indian Philosophy" and "Philosophy in India": A Survey of Its Theory and Praxis

Muzaffar Ali

Introduction

In a 1964 television interview for the West German Television series titled *Zur Person* ('The Person'), Hannah Arendt is welcomed by the interviewer (Gunter Gaus) as the first woman guest of the series. Gaus starts the conversation by stating that Arendt's profession is a masculine one—that of a philosopher. He inquires by asking that does she find her role as a philosopher 'peculiar' or unusual because she is a woman? In her response, Arendt, forthrightly states that she is not a philosopher. Instead, she would most likely recognize her profession as that of a political theorist. Arendt's charge against philosophy as a discipline is that she has not been "accepted in the circle of philosophers." She, however, readily remarks that a masculine occupation—like philosophy—need not remain masculine. "It is entirely possible that a woman will one day be a philosopher."¹

Both Arendt's charge, as well as her remark, suggests that she was not accepted in the masculine and male-dominated discipline of philosophy. After precisely fifty-five years, we, as scholars of philosophy, need to press again on the same question(s). Is philosophy still masculine and male-dominated, thereby 'malestream' in its orientation? Has