***The Fundamental Principles of Feminism* Phillips**

**According to M.H. Abrams, in A Glossary of Literary Terms, feminists tend to view the world from two very distinct vantage points:**

1. **Gender is Socially Prescribed: In essence gender, as opposed to sex, comprises a variety of learned traits we absorb as members of an organized society. What it means to be a woman, in respect to relationships, occupations, behavior, etc, is very different from what it means to be a man. We are not born with these traits; instead we learn them from a very early age from the people around and from representations of gender we absorb from media.**
2. **Western Society is Patriarchal: The society which shapes our gender is “ruled by the father” or patriarchal. This is belief is evidenced by religious teachings, which tend to portray women as virgins or temptresses, and the societal tendency to respect the dominance of men and to place men in positions of authority at all levels of society. Traditionally, power, property, and wealth are passed down from father to son. Though this patriarchal tendency has shifted because of the women’s suffrage movement and the civil rights protests in the twentieth century, like racism – the social order has not disappeared from our culture.**

Consider the following scenario:

A little boy is wheeled into the emergency room of a hospital. The surgeon on emergency call looks at the boy and says, “I’m sorry I cannot operate on this child; he is my son.” The surgeon was not the boy’s father. In what relation did the surgeon stand to the child?

Most Common Answers:

Surgeon fathered the child illegitimately.

Surgeon divorced the boy’s mother and remarried and hence is not legally the boy’s father.

The Correct Answer:

The surgeon is the boy’s mother.