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PORNOGRAPHY: THE DYNAMICS OF DESTRUCTIVE PSYCHIC CONTAINMENT

IN PATRIARCHAL SOCIETY

by

Valerie Diane Oglov

B.S.W., University of Calgary, 1976

THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF

THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

MASTER OF ARTS

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ABSTRACT

I argue that preoccupation with the control of women's bodies in patriarchal culture is the result of denying feelings, skills, and knowledge associated with women, and needing to reintegrate these feelings and skills, and this knowledge, into the individual and collective patriarchal psyche. I employ a feminist psychoanalytic perspective in making this argument, and I illustrate it with an extensive discussion of pornography.

The control of women's bodies and the appropriation of women's physical, emotional, and psychic services by patriarchal culture are consequences of ambivalence and the distorted attempt to resolve it. Ambivalence is the experience of incompatible impulses and feelings, and it is normal and inherent in life. However, in patriarchal culture, it is split apart so that women contain or embody frightening and uncomfortable bodily aspects of life, and men contain or embody transcendent mental capacities. Men also control the cultural machinery through which those aspects of life contained by women are denied and controlled. The control of women's bodies, and the appropriation of women's services, are not authentic resolutions of ambivalence. Authentic resolution requires toleration and incorporation of uncomfortable feelings and impulses, rather than splitting off and projection of the

unwanted aspects of life onto others. Normal ambivalence becomes destructive ambivalence when patriarchal culture works to obstruct the authentic resolution of ambivalence on individual and collective levels.

Destructive ambivalence toward women, and some solutions to this problem, are evident in the forms of patriarchal culture, particularly in pornography. I argue that this way of analyzing pornography accounts for its content, motivation and appeal more adequately than the major alternative theories that have been proposed.

I conclude by discussing possible solutions to the problem of women's destructive containment of ambivalence, including increased participation by men in child-rearing, enhanced connection between mind and body for men, and integration of women's knowledge, capacities, and skills into public life.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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INTRODUCTION

In this thesis, I argue that patriarchal ideologies, social practices, and institutions pre-empt the fundamentally human capacities for individual self-renewal and collective evolution. They do so by functioning as normative defenses against the experience and expression of normal ambivalence. Normal ambivalence is the co-existence of feelings of powerlessness, need, fear, and desire *and* impulses toward enhancing feelings of power, overcoming fears, meeting needs, and realizing desires. Normal ambivalence is inherent in human life, and is first felt during infancy by both women and men. But in patriarchal culture, normal ambivalence is split apart in such a way that women contain the frightening bodily feelings of powerlessness, need, fear and desire, and men contain the mental capacities to deny and control these feelings. Normal ambivalence thus becomes destructive, because the institutionalized splitting of ambivalence prevents the authentic resolution, or tolerance, of ambivalence in patriarchal cultures by individuals and groups. I refer to this destructive ambivalence as destructive containment.

Normative defenses can be considered as temporary and ultimately unsatisfactory solutions that manage, or resolve, in an inauthentic and destructive way, the consequences of common or widespread cultural practices, especially those of child-rearing (Stoller 1975). In patriarchal culture, child-rearing is performed almost exclusively by women, not men. Both women and the work of child-rearing are devalued. As a result of women's child-rearing within a culture that values neither women nor child-rearing, inevitable feelings of powerlessness, fear, need, and desire become associated with women, because these feelings arise initially within the mother-child, and not the father-child relation. Another consequence is that

these feelings are denied, and are therefore exacerbated, within the individual and collective patriarchal psyche *because* they are associated with women. Conflict surrounding these feelings and women is thus not resolved.

The experience and expression of frightening feelings is necessary to individual and collective integrity and evolution. It is through their authentic experience and expression that feelings are psychically incorporated and resolved, rather than denied and projected. The method that patriarchal culture utilizes to defend against the experience and expression of feelings that are difficult to incorporate, is to make women carry or contain them. By subordinating and controlling women in patriarchal culture, men can both *have* these feelings of powerlessness, fear, need, and desire, vicariously, by making women embody them, and *not have* them, by denigrating them and labelling them feminine. But, by denying and projecting these feelings onto women, men commit themselves to a generalized fear of women, and simultaneously, to a desperate need of them. They need women in order to reintegrate denied aspects of their existence. This destructive ambivalence toward women is one of the consequences of the patriarchal system, in which women mother and are devalued, and in which men are mostly absent from child-rearing and are valued much more highly than women.

Destructive containment ensures that women embody split off experiences of humanity in patriarchal culture. It ensures that the knowledge, skills, and strengths that women have developed as a result of their unacknowledged caretaking remain outside public consciousness and mystified. It also ensures that men are protected from developing the knowledge, skills, and psychological strengths necessary to tolerate

ambivalence. The destructive containment of ambivalence by women for individual men and for the patriarchal system therefore helps to preclude men from experiencing and developing their capacities for humanity. Individuals and cultures cannot engage themselves in the process of renewal if they have convenient objects upon whom to project their conflicts in a way that precludes the authentic resolution of conflict.

Normative defenses are inauthentic and destructive ways of reducing the anxiety of ambivalence. The ideologies and social practices of patriarchal culture can be read as unconscious attempts to replace feelings of powerlessness, need, fear, and desire (or, for that matter, any uncomfortable feelings that are felt within the body), with fantasies of omnipotence over these feelings, and over women. However, if these fantasies of omnipotence help men individually and collectively to rid themselves of the discomfort of ambivalence, and if they actually work to conceal and reverse the dynamics of power and powerlessness, then the sheer "metaphysical overkill" (Frye, 1983, 162) of these strategies does the opposite. It reveals their underlying motivations, and it reveals their failure. The strategies of denial and reversal cannot work because they do not confront the real problem; they avoid it. And because they do not work, these strategies are repeated and become more destructive, revealing more clearly their underlying intent. In psychoanalytic terminology, this is called repetition compulsion. It occurs because the individual or the collective system is actually attempting to express, in a distorted way, knowledge that it has repressed or denied. The system is compelled by its own desire to become aware of, and to express, this knowledge through personal relationships or social practices, in the attempt at psychic resolution. Repetition compulsion is therefore a sign of hope for the individual and for culture, because it is an

attempt to bring to conscious awareness the experience of psychic conflict in order to resolve it (Miller 1984, 160).

I think that there is no patriarchal ideology, social practice, and institution that reveals the dynamics of destructive containment as clearly as pornography does. Pornography reveals in its content the following: 1) the desire to reverse the powerlessness and dependency of infancy into power over women, by the mechanisms of repression, splitting, and projection, 2) its failure as a normative defense, evidenced by its compulsive repetition and increasing violence, 3) the ways feelings that have been repressed do not dissipate, but return in distorted and destructive forms, 4) the circularity of the process of destructive containment: pornography's function as a normative defense is a consequence of the repression of the feminine in patriarchal culture, and its availability as a normative defense contributes to the maintenance of the repression of the feminine in the individual and collective male psyche, and 5) the destructive ambivalence and hostility toward women that is pervasive in our culture.

Pornography is a normative solution to ambivalence for men because it offers a culturally available and socially sanctioned, safe and temporarily satisfying revenge upon women who are held responsible for uncomfortable and unwanted feelings (Stoller 1975), while not enabling users to experience these feelings authentically. Pornography is safe and satisfying because it allows users to reverse the original roles, so that women are now the victims of the inner child's power. Through this reversal of roles, users are able to re-experience the feelings of powerlessness, need, fear (and any other uncomfortable feelings they originally felt), but in a controlled way, through the bodies of women, and the roles those bodies play in the users' psychic dramas. Because women also represent eroticism in this culture, they also

play the roles of repressed pleasure and gratification. This dual role of desirable, needed object and degraded, hateful object, is what most clearly reveals the ambivalence toward women that exists in the individual and collective male psyche. Through pornography, viewers or readers are attempting to reintegrate repressed and split off aspects of themselves. They need the roles women play because they need these feelings the roles represent. But pornography is ultimately unsatisfying for this very reason. What users of pornography need is the authentic reconnection or reintegration within themselves, of those feelings they have projected onto women. Because pornography cannot do this for them, men collectively imagine, create, and pursue more images, and more violent ones, in the hope that they will eventually reconnect with lost parts of themselves through pornography, and through women.

The value of my theory is that it provides a framework for understanding some of the individual and collective psychic motivations for, and some of the consequences of, women's oppression. However, the immediate purpose of my thesis is to demonstrate the value of this theory by using pornography as an illustration of the destructive containment of ambivalence by women. Therefore, the immediate value of my theory lies in its ability to explain the underlying motivations for pornography, its content, and its widespread appeal as a cultural phenomenon, while acknowledging, and attempting to account for, the variability of the content, motivation, and appeal of it.

The major weakness of my thesis is its focus on men. Although the solutions I discuss for addressing the problem of destructive ambivalence and hostility toward women, and the problem of creating individuals and collectives who are capable of psychic integrity and evolution (Chapter four),

would ultimately benefit women as well as men, my focus nonetheless remains with men. For example, I do not discuss how the connection between mind and body may be enhanced for women, even though I have acknowledged that my understanding of this process comes largely from women. My application of knowledge that women have developed to healing the mind/body split of men, rather than women, seems to slight the importance of women's experiential dislocation in patriarchal culture. In addition, with regard to pornography, my focus on men and on male perversion (Chapter two) leaves out a discussion of women's responses to pornography, women's motivations for participating in making pornography, and the development of female perversion. I acknowledge these limitations, and ask the reader to recognize that no neglect of women's experiences is intended. Rather, in my discussion of pornography as an illustration of the dynamics involved in destructive containment, I necessarily focus on men's psychology and the patriarchal system because men overwhelmingly control and consume pornography. In addition, I focus on men and the patriarchal system in order to shift some of the responsibility for social and structural change onto them, and to indicate some of the motivations they may have for resisting change.

In Chapter One, <u>An Overview of the Theory of Destructive Containment,</u> I develop my theory of the repression of the feminine in patriarchal culture and the destructive containment of ambivalence by women for individual men, and for patriarchal culture. First, I introduce readers to my understanding of the meaning of symptoms, employing a psychoanalytic perspective to do so. I indicate the importance of looking at the content of symptoms in order to understand the dialectical process of individual and

collective symptom formation, and to understand that symptoms convey in their content, both problems and indications of solutions in the environments in which they arise. My central argument in this first chapter is that patriarchal culture controls women's bodies in order both to deny and to appropriate uncomfortable feelings and impulses that are inherent in life. This control is manifested in a variety of ideologies, social practices and institutions, and is an overarching symptom of patriarchal culture. Patriarchal culture reduces the anxiety of ambivalent feelings and impulses by splitting off the frightening aspects of bodily existence and associating them with women, and by attributing to itself the capacity to control them and women. The result of this splitting is destructive containment. It is destructive because it keeps women and their knowledge in the margins of culture, it prevents men and the patriarchal system from acknowledging and incorporating important knowledge about life, and it ensures than men and the patriarchal system continue to appropriate or retrieve essential aspects of life from women. To make my argument, I draw on a variety of theories, including those of Dorothy Dinnerstein (1976), Susan Griffin (1981), Robert Lifton (1976), Alice Miller (1983, 1984), and Jean Baker Miller (1976).

Next, I apply my theory of destructive containment to pornography, referring primarily to Susan Griffin (1981), indicating the ways in which pornography, as a normative defense for men, reveals both a denial of the life of the body and an attempt to recapture it, through the bodies of women. I argue that pornography is a repetitious cultural form because ambivalence toward women is not authentically resolved and because the availability of pornography works to preclude authentic resolution.

Then I discuss the institution of motherhood with reference to Adrienne Rich (1986). I argue that the institution of motherhood provides men and

the patriarchal system with unacknowledged emotional, physical, and psychic services. It permits the patriarchal system to appropriate aspects of life from women continually, while devaluing both women and the services they supply. I point out the contradictions and the distortions in the institution of motherhood, and the way in which it absolves patriarchal culture of responsibility for contributing to the limitations of women and men.

Following this, I discuss feminist activity in patriarchal culture as a symptom that carries potential for change, with reference to the work of Jean Baker Miller (1976). In keeping with my understanding of symptoms, I characterize feminist activity as revealing problems and indicating solutions to problems in patriarchal culture. I suggest that feminism, as a collective movement, is resisted because it reveals the unacknowledged dependence of men upon women for the provision of essential but denied emotional, physical and psychic services. I provide an illustration of this dependence in individual men as well.

Finally , I argue that patriarchal culture obstructs the capacities for collective evolution by keeping the creative capacities of men and women split apart by the gender division within the system. My major reference for this argument is Dorothy Dinnerstein (1976). Furthermore, this gender division, or "sexual arrangement" as Dinnerstein calls it (1976, 4), in which women mother and are relatively powerless, and in which men are largely absent from child- rearing and hold power, helps to prevent the resolution of ambivalence toward women, and contributes to the replication of the split by producing complementary, or symbiotic, feminine and masculine gender identities.

In Chapter Two, <u>Gender Development, Normative Perversion, and</u> <u>Pornography</u>, I take a closer look at the dynamics of destructive containment. First, I discuss masculine and feminine gender development, as it has been theorized by Nancy Chodorow (1978), with a focus on ambivalence. I argue that ambivalence in masculine gender development contributes to a preoccupation with exaggerating the differences between women and men, and to a compulsive need to appropriate the characteristics associated with women. Both of these preoccupations, I argue, are evident in the ideologies, social practices and institutions created by men in patriarchal culture.

Following this, I discuss the development of extreme and normative perversion in males, referring to the work of Robert Stoller (1975). With reference to Stoller, and Ethel Spector Person (1980), I argue that both masculine identity and masculine sexuality, as they have been constructed and restricted in patriarchal culture, are compulsive and normatively perverse. They exhibit the reversal, distortion, and hostility that is characteristic of the the need to be rid of unwanted feelings, and to replace these feelings with feelings of power and control.

The central argument of this chapter is that men who develop gender identities in relation to women, or the feminine, in a culture that is anti-female, develop identities which are also anti-female. Because men form their identities in relation to the feminine (in white, western, male-dominated cultures where women perform mothering work, and are devalued), and are required to repress their feminine identification in order to establish and maintain masculine identities, they are in perpetual defense against feminine identification in themselves and in other men. Their feminine identification cannot be totally exorcised however, because it is

part of masculine gender identity for most men. Therefore, ideological and institutional attempts to exorcise feminine identification through denying, devaluing or ridiculing anything associated with the feminine, and women, are not entirely successful, and are resorted to repeatedly for this reason. Yet, men collectively retrieve what they have denied and devalued by making women embody lost aspects of themselves, and by controlling women and the attributes associated with them.

In the final part of this chapter, I apply the above arguments to pornography, illustrating its defensive and compulsive qualities, and its hostility. I indicate the normatively defensive function of pornography for men, and I attempt to account for the variability of men's sexual responses to pornography.

In Chapter Three, <u>Three Alternative Approaches to Understanding Pornography</u>, I contrast my theory of destructive containment with three other accounts of pornography, focusing my criticisms of them on the content, motivation, and appeal of pornography. For all but the first of these alternative theories, I indicate the contributions they have made to our understanding of pornography.

First, I critique catharsis theory which has been made most popular by Berl Kutchinsky (1983). My main objection to catharsis theory is that it depends upon the assumption that male sexual hostility is normal. I will have argued that the hostility in male sexuality is a symptom of pathology in patriarchal culture, and is not normal, but normative. I think that traditional catharsis theory contributes to the expression of hostility toward women, and therefore I cannot find that it makes a positive contribution. I do, however offer a different understanding of catharsis, and in this section I contrast it with that of traditional catharsis theory.

Next, I critique the false consciousness approach to understanding pornography, referring to the work of Angela Carter (1978). My main objections to Carter's false consciousness theory are that, according to her, pornography succeeds in falsifying, or obscuring the unequal power relations between women and men, and that her theory ignores the importance of content and affect in pornography. In contrast, I will have argued that pornography, and other ideologies and myths of patriarchal culture, reveal the condensed and distorted truth of unequal power relations in patriarchal culture, and that examining the content and affect of pornography is crucial in order to see this truth.

Finally, I critique the theory of pornography as sexual reality, a view advocated by Catharine MacKinnon (1986). I criticize her theory for its inadequate account of the dynamic mechanisms contributing to the relationship among male power over women, sexual arousal, and pornography, and for the determinism which pervades her theory of gender, sexuality, and oppressor consciousness. In contrast, I will have attempted to account for the relationship among male power, sexual arousal, and pornography, and for the sources of variability in sexual response, and gender identity, and for sources of resistance and change within systems of oppression.

In Chapter Four, <u>Possible Solutions to the Problem of Destructive Containment,</u> I illustrate another value of my theory, which is that it provides for the possibility of change and offers constructive solutions for achieving it. All three of the solutions I discuss have as their goals the reduction, and ideally the elimination, of the generation of destructive ambivalence and hostility toward women, and the creation of men and women - and social systems - with capacities for psychic integrity and evolution.

First, I discuss the more equitable participation of men in child-rearing. With reference primarily to feminist object relations theorists such as Nancy Chodorow (1978) and Eva Feder Kittay (1984), I argue that the availability of men as objects of identification, especially for male children, would result in less ambivalence and hostility toward women. I also argue for changes to the institution of motherhood, and for the economic equality of women, in order to address the issue of male power in the wider culture. In making these latter arguments, I refer primarily to Adrienne Rich (1986), and to Meg Luxton (1987), respectively.

Second, I discuss the enhancement of the connection between mind and body, with a focus on men. In this section, I elaborate upon the meaning and process of constructive containment, as I have come to understand it, from therapists such as Luise Eichenbaum and Susie Orbach (1983), Naida Hyde (1986), Alice Miller (1981, 1983, 1984, 1990), and Marion Woodman (1985), and from Robert Lifton (1976). I end this section with a critique of Robert Bly's recent work (1990).

Third, I argue for the integration of knowledge, skills, and values that women have developed into the social practices, theoretical formulations, and institutions of culture. My primary reference in this discussion is Sara Ruddick (1989). My argument in favour of integrating women's knowledge into public consciousness is grounded in the belief that women have developed conceptions of reality and morality that show a tolerance for ambivalence, and therefore serve as good examples of constructive containment on the theoretical level.

CHAPTER ONE: AN OVERVIEW OF THE THEORY OF DESTRUCTIVE CONTAINMENT

According to psychoanalytic theory, contradiction or internal conflict is experienced by individuals when they internalize elements from their external cultural environments. The experience of internal contradiction or conflict results in the formation of symptoms. The internalized environmental elements include prevailing cultural beliefs, values, and social arrangements, child- rearing practices and parental needs and frustrations. The internal conflict has been repressed because the experience of it could not be tolerated or confronted. Symptoms are compromise formations; they are meant to protect the individual from experiencing the conflict, yet they draw attention to the fact that conflict exists. Symptoms are formed by the individual in order to restore balance or integrity to the individual system, so that there is no contradiction or internal conflict. The symptom itself is evidence that internal conflict cannot be totally repressed however, since the conflict is embodied in the form of the symptom; by forming a symptom the individual is externalizing internal conflict.

The individual's externalization of internal conflict provides the link to understanding the manifestation of symptoms on the collective or cultural level, since symptoms that manifest on the cultural level are embodiments of individual internal conflicts that have been collectively repressed. And like symptoms within the individual system, they are also attempts to restore balance or integrity to the collective system by reducing collective conflict. Thus, collective symptoms occur and recur because internal conflict is not resolved on the individual level. Similarly, individual symptoms occur and recur because conflict is not resolved on the collective or cultural level.

Individual and collective symptoms may, therefore, be considered to be concurrent, and mutually-reinforcing.

The content of symptoms is crucial to an understanding of individual and collective psychic conflict because it indicates the source of conflict, and the potential resolution of it. The content of a symptom is made up of elements within the personal and cultural environment, the way they have been internalized and externalized, and the way they have affected the individual and the collective systems. These elements are, in general, people and their relations, institutions, and social practices, the emotional, mental, and physical responses to these, and the psychic dynamics and mechanisms that have been activated to find a balance between the individual and collective environments. These elements are all visible, though disguised, in the symptom and must be brought out of repression into conscious awareness, so that the internal conflict they have generated does not continue to have an unconscious controlling effect.

What distinguishes formative psychoanalysis from traditional Freudian analysis is its focus on the role of the cultural environment, and not biology, in creating, and in obstructing conscious awareness of the experience and expression of internal conflict, and its formative understanding of symptoms. According to the formative psychoanalytic framework, symptoms not only defend and protect against the awareness and experience of internal conflict, they are also creative resolutions to conflict, because they actually reveal in their content what the individual and the collective requires in order to resolve the conflict authentically. So symptoms reveal both a problem in the system and a solution to the problem. They are formative because they are created or formed by the individual and collective in such a way that resolution of the problem is evident. The individual and the

collective seem to know what they need in order to heal. The formation of symptoms therefore embodies ambivalent impulses toward protection and defense *and* toward reparation or resolution (Dinnerstein 1976; Griffin 1981; Lifton 1976; Maslow 1968; A. Miller 1984; J.B. Miller 1976; Woodman 1985).

Like symptoms, the ideas, theories, visual images, social practices and institutions produced by cultures are forms. They are externalizations of internal conflicts, as well as manifestations of the impulse to create, and to create resolutions to internal conflict. Like symptoms, these forms are created by individuals and collectives to restore systemic balance or integrity. Their content reveals the elements of the personal and cultural environment from which they arise (Flax 1983, 248), along with the way these elements affect their creators. These forms also reveal the ambivalent impulses toward systemic defense and resolution. In patriarchal culture, it is primarily male experiences of the personal and cultural environment, and the defenses activated against them, that are externalized and concretized into public consciousness in the form of ideas, theories, social practices and institutions. It is men, as a group, who create and sustain cultural hegemony economically, socially, politically and ideologically, thus controlling the production and dissemination of cultural forms (Addelson 1983; Flax 1983; Harding 1986; Keller 1985; Rich 1980, 1986; Spender 1982). These forms created by men then purport to reflect universal aspects of "human" existence (Flax 1983, 269), while in fact excluding women's experience, knowledge and consciousness from their formation, thus generating distorted conceptions of reality. As Evelyn Fox Keller has stated,: "The construction of truth is a gendered enterprise" (Keller March 8, 1989).

Patriarchal culture reveals a preoccupation with the control of women's bodies, and the services rendered from them (Frye 1983; Griffin 1981; Kittay

1984; J.B. Miller 1976; Rich 1986). Adrienne Rich characterizes patriarchal culture thus:

> At this crossroads of sexual possession, property ownership, and the desire to transcend death, developed the institution we know: the present day patriarchal family with its supernaturalizing of the penis, its division of labor by gender, its emotional, physical, and material possessiveness, its ideal of monogamous marriage until death (and its severe penalties for adultery by the wife), the "illegitimacy" of a child born outside wedlock, the economic dependency of women, the unpaid domestic services of the wife, the obedience of women and children to male authority, the imprinting and continuation of heterosexual roles. (Rich 1986, 60-1)

I will argue that preoccupation with controlling women's bodies is the result of denying the feelings associated with them, and needing to assimilate or reintegrate those feelings. The formative psychoanalytic approach that I employ to make this argument theorizes that the elements of the personal and cultural environments are visible in the content of symptoms, and that symptoms reveal both the conflict that is defended against and the resolution of the conflict. If this approach is correct, then it should be possible to account for the preoccupation with the control of women's bodies in patriarchal culture in terms of the existing patriarchal environment, as a defense against a conflict concerning those bodies. It should also be possible to find a resolution to the conflict suggested by patriarchal culture.

Individuals live and die physically and psychically within their bodies, and their bodies are finite. This is what is meant by carnal and mortal existence. It always involves ambivalence. Ambivalence is the experience of "mutually incompatible feelings" or impulses (Dinnersten 1976, 245). Biologically, the mutually imcompatible impulses that co-exist are those toward life and death. The psyche exists within the biological body and is also subject to life and death impulses. The psychic counterparts to life and death impulses are those toward connection, integration and movement, on the one hand,

and separation, disintegration and stasis, on the other (Lifton 1976, 37-9).

Biologically and psychically then, the experience of mutually incompatible

impulses is a condition of mortal and carnal existence, because it is the

consequence of the processes of biological and psychological change and

growth that human beings experience (Dinnersten 1976, 12). These

processes of change and growth bring with them feelings and realizations of

uncertainty and impermanence. These feelings and realizations are not only

mental and emotional, but are sensual, bodily comprehensions of the

ultimate uncontrollability of the processes of change and growth. The

physical, emotional and mental comprehensions of this ultimate

uncontrollability are what cause feelings of powerlessness, fear, need and

desire (Griffin 1981). The ambivalence created by feelings of powerlessness,

fear, need and desire *and* the co-existing impulses toward enhancing

feelings of power, overcoming fear, having needs met, and desires realized,

is what I mean by "normal" ambivalence. It is an inherent condition of

human existence.[1]

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1 An explanatory note is necessary here regarding the use of the word "normal". As used above, I mean the word normal to be taken at face value. Later on, I use this word in such a way as to question its meaning. I suggest that what we call normal, is not, in fact normal, only normative, that is, commonly occuring or widely accepted. This questioning of normality derives directly from the method I use in making my arguments, one which arises from a long tradition of psychoanalytic practice and theory, originating with Freud. This method will be clearest in chapter two when I refer to the work of Robert Stoller to discuss perversion in males (1975), but all of the psychoanalytic theories I employ use this method. The method is this: extremes of feeling, thought, dynamics, and /or behavior found in pathological or abnormal symptoms are studied and analyzed. From this analysis, inferences are made about the development and operation of normal thoughts, feelings, dynamics, and/or behavior. The rationale for this is that normality (in the development and operation of thoughts, feelings, etc) cannot be seen or understood until it breaks down, this breakdown of normal operation manifesting in the formation of symptoms. In other words, normality is invisible. R.D. Laing uses this method in his analysis of the generation of insanity in abnormal and normal families (1969). Alice Miller uses it in her analysis of the conditions that support the generation of poisonous pedagogy through pathological and normal child-rearing practices

What ambivalence means psychically is that individuals are pulled in two

directions simultaneously, toward connecting *and* separating, toward

integrating *and* fragmenting, and toward evolving *and* stagnating psychically.

This internal contradiction results in continual psychic disjunctions and

dislocations (Lifton 1976, 37-9). Ambivalence is crazy-making, for it is not

possible to exist while being "...torn to pieces by what seems to be

intolerable contradiction" (Woodman 1985, 14). In order to make

ambivalence tolerable, some splitting, or reduction of the ambivalence is

necessary (Laing 1969, 26). Splitting is a psychic mechanism of survival that

allows human beings to continue with the processes of growth and change

(Stoller 1975, 106). As such it is a necessary defense against being

overwhelmed by intolerable contradiction. This defense manages or

resolves ambivalence by splitting the ambivalence into two parts so that

there is no apparent incompatibility or contradiction.

In patriarchal culture, this ambivalence is so split apart that women

contain the negative, frightening aspects of bodily existence and men

contain the mental capacities to control them. The essential function of

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(1983). The normal and the pathological (extreme or severe) are conceptualized as existing on opposite ends of a continuum, so that what occurs at the normal end, is less so, in degree, than at the pathological end. The difference between points along the continuum is therefore quantitative. This method is the same as that used by the medical profession, where studying diseases (states of pathology) sheds light on more healthy functioning. For example, when large quantities of caffeine are found to cause severe kidney damage in some people, it is assumed that smaller quantities of it may contribute, in lesser degree, to kidney damage in healthier people. The relative health of the latter group is thereby put into question. The major limitation of such a method in psychoanalytic theory is that all behavior, thought, dynamics etc., can come to be thought of as pathological, and we lose the meanings of both normality and pathology. I think though, that this is mostly a problem in the application and misuse of the method, and not in its conceptualization. For me, the value of this method is that it provides a framework for understanding the connection between normality and pathology, and thereby indicates solutions to problems that could move us to the more normal or healthy end of the continuum.

containment for individuals and for cultures is the concealment of
uncomfortable and unwanted feelings and knowledge about reality or life
that exist, but are denied. These feelings and this knowledge should be
acknowledged, expressed and incorporated by all members of society in
order that individual and collective connection, integration and evolution
may be possible. Containment by one group makes it possible for another
group to deny some essential knowledge about reality, and it keeps the
containers of the frightening and devalued aspects of life in the margins of
culture because they are associated with these unwanted feelings and
knowledge. Containment therefore results in the separation, fragmentation
and stagnation of individuals and cultures through denial of feelings and
knowledge that need to be incorporated into public consciousness. This
culturally-induced splitting exacerbates normal (inherent) ambivalence and
makes it destructive to individuals and to cultures; thus I refer to it as
destructive containment. In the simplest terms, when containment is
destructive, it prevents the toleration and authentic resolution of normal
(inherent) ambivalence by obstructing the connection with, and
incorporation of, feelings, skills, capacities and knowledge that are necessary
in order for personal and collective transformation to occur and evolve.
When containment is constructive on the other hand, it enables this
connection, incorporation and evolution.[2] The preoccupation with the

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2 Constructive containment might occur, for example, when men and
women were enabled to acknowledge and connect with their fears of death
through some ritual, drama, song, or idea, that guided them safely through
their fears. Whatever method was used to help guide them, the purposes of
the ritual, song, etc., would be to help them acknowledge and incorporate
(rather than deny and project), the fear of death in themselves, to
acknowledge and incorporate the reality of the ongoing-ness of death in the
midst of life, and to acknowledge and incorporate the reality of the ongoing-
ness of life in the midst of death. The desired goal of this containing
experience would be to balance the fear of death with an appreciation for
life. With this balance, the fear of death would not exert such a controlling

control of women's bodies by men reflects a need to deny and escape the bodily comprehensions of helplessness, need, fear and desire (and the potential knowledge thereof), and the attempt to control these feelings, and is therefore destructive. And this escape and control is reflected in the pervasive symptomatology of patriarchal culture.[3]

The denial and control is accomplished by the formation of "poisonous pedagogy". Poisonous pedagogy is the term Alice Miller uses in reference to any ideologies and social practices that have been created to reclaim power lost during infancy to parents (A. Miller 1983, viii). They are meant to conceal from proponents and their victims the unconscious need for power. Poisonous pedagogy is characterized by reversal, or attribution, and distortion. Its essential affective content is hostility and the need for revenge. The purpose of poisonous pedagogy is to reduce the anxiety of ambivalence that is exacerbated by cultural practices of child-rearing. I will summarize Miller's theory on distorting child-rearing practices; then I will apply her theory to my own.

Miller argues, based on her experience as a psychoanalyst, that parents continually prohibit in their children the expression of feelings that are inevitable, such as anger, fear and jealousy (A. Miller 1984, 154). They prohibit them because these expressions threaten to bring to conscious awareness their own experiences of powerlessness in relation to their own

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influence in life. Marion Woodman provides many examples of constructive containment in *The Pregnant Virgin: A Process of Psychological Transformation* (1985) from a traditional Jungian perspective.

3 Essentially, patriarchal culture attempts to control what cannot be controlled. There are change, uncertainty and there are uncomfortable feelings. The dominant culture attempts to deny reality. Instead of accepting these aspects of reality, it creates theories about the way things are in order to achieve certainty and permanence and to control unwanted feelings. In its attempt to control what cannot be controlled, it causes deformations, which is the concern of my first two chapters.

parents (A. Miller 1984, 121). The powerlessness of children in relation to parents derives from their total dependence on adults for physical and emotional survival. It is exacerbated by parental prohibitions against expressions that parents find uncomfortable or threatening. Because they are dependent, Miller argues, children learn very early in their infancies to tolerate, by repressing, memories of exploitation, prohibition, or overt abuse in order to continue receiving whatever love and nurturance is available. So for example, when a child is physically beaten, verbally insulted, psychologically manipulated, or simply not understood, the feelings experienced are always humiliation and degradation. Because the child cannot defend her or himself, the consequent feelings of anger and profound sense of powerlessness are immediately repressed in the service of maintaining the relationship that is so necessary to the child's survival. "At the most, he will experience feelings of anxiety, shame, insecurity, and helplessness, which may soon be forgotten, especially when the child finds a victim of his own" (A. Miller 1983, 21).

As adults, these children then make victims of their own children by prohibiting in them the expression of feelings that remind them of their own painful experiences. In effect, they reverse the locale of feelings, unconsciously, and project onto their children a dangerous, humiliating or merely wilful "nature". Parents express their own unacknowledged need for power by exerting it upon their children; they take revenge on their own children for what their parents did to them (A. Miller 1983, xi). In this way, they use their children as containers of their own projected needs and frustrations. Further, parents are able to do this with the complete sanction of society, since most people have undergone the experience of frustration by their parents, and most, unconsciously, need some objects on which

"...to discharge pent-up affect or the rationalizations that enable us to keep a clear conscience" (A. Miller 1983, 17).[4] Adults are able to keep their collective consciences clear by attributing to the nature of the child, and not to prevailing cultural norms of child-rearing, behavior and expressions they find threatening or unfathomable. They are spared from acknowledging that their parents were responsible for hurting them.

Of particular importance in the development of poisonous pedagogy is the enduring quality of ambivalence in the child's developing self, and the availability of the means with which to reduce it. The confusion and intolerability that result from the psychic association of love and dependence *with* anger, humiliation and powerlessness become integral,

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4 Miller has based her theory about normal child-rearing practices on her analysis of child-rearing texts that recommended severe (extreme, pathological) discipline, punishment, and manipulation of children by parents as standard practice for molding "good" children, and on her observation and analysis of patients who have suffered forms of abuse of various kinds and intensities at the hands of their parents. It is in keeping with the psychoanalytic method of observing and conceptualizing a continuum of, in this case, abusive child-rearing, that Miller is able to argue that most people have been frustrated by the exercise of power, projection, and hostility by their parents, and that most people seek revenge, somehow, for this frustration. Her claim that most people have been frustrated by their parents stems from the fact that children are powerless in relation to their parents, dependent on them, and therefore subject to whatever their parents do to them. She does not assume that all people have been equally frustrated or (abused), or that all people have an equal need for revenge as a result of their experiences. The degree of frustration (or abuse) matters, as does the time in a child's development when it happens, how many times it happens, and in conjunction with what other factors. In general, where there is less prohibition of feeling, less projection of unmet needs for power, and less hostility directed at a child by a parent, there is less frustration, and less abuse, and *vice versa*. According to Miller, the most significant factor contributing to the likelihood of a person not seeking revenge on others is the availability of at least one empathic person with whom the child can relate, and who, in effect, acts as an ally for the child. This empathic person can tolerate the experience and expression of feelings that the parent(s) cannot, and this reduces the likelihood of repression of those feelings. In turn, if the child does not have to repress these feelings, s/he will be less likely to express them later, in reversed, distorted and hostile form. Miller theorizes that this would be true for people who had suffered from severe abuse, as well as for those who had suffered milder abuse, or frustration.

though unconscious, components of the child's identity development and interpersonal relations throughout life. Without the authentic expression of feeling, the adult *needs* a victim to do this for him or her. For, according to Miller's theory, the individual always strives to express his or her own repressed affect. The desire to express her/himself, when combined with the absolute necessity of repression in order to survive the prohibitions of parents, manifests itself as repetition compulsion (A. Miller 1984, 160). This means that the individual is compelled by her/his own desire to become aware of and to express these feelings, and to relive in other relationships and practices, the unconscious dynamics of her/his earliest experiences of conflict. The individual attempts to resolve the intolerability of ambivalence. His or her victim may be his/her own child, another person, or others generally, through adherence to any available ideology, institution or practice that helps rid him/her of the awareness of any feeling he/she does not wish to experience, by projecting these unwanted feelings onto the victim(s). So the creation of, and adherence to, beliefs expressed in any poisonous pedagogy, is the easiest resolution to ambivalence, because it is the easiest way to restore power and reduce anxiety about unwanted feelings.[5] I think that all forms of sexism, heterosexism, racism and classism

5 Alice Miller clearly illustrates the formation and acceptance of poisonous pedagogy in her assessment of Freud's theory on the sexual drive of children (1984, 107-134). His theory arose at a time when the sexual abuse of children was rampant and the awareness of it was increasing. Freud's theory gained acceptance (unconsciously) because it offered absolution to the perpetrators and to the dominant culture in general. It protected adults who believed it from the knowledge that they were themselves probably abused by their parents. The sexual attraction that adults (mostly men) had for children, and the availability of children for use by their parents, found perfect - reversed and distorted - expression in Freud's theory that children were by nature sexual and seductive. Children were powerless victims of adult sexual feeling that had no means of acceptable expression in that Victorian culture. Freud's theoretical absolution of abusers, and the culture that allowed it to occur, was not only itself a distortion of reality; the authentic natures of children *were* distorted

are good examples of poisonous pedagogy, though Miller herself does not make this claim.

Thus, poisonous pedagogies are normative defenses (Stoller 1975, 92-134) against the incompatible impulses to express conflicting feelings originating in infancy, on one hand, and to repress or deny these feelings on the other. The ideas and underlying intentions expressed in the beliefs of poisonous pedagogy have appeal because they satisfy the unacknowledged needs of their proponents. Poisonous pedagogies are normative because they are widely available, accepted and practiced. That so many people can employ various available ideologies, practices and institutions as defenses against ambivalent feelings, indicates that many people have the need to be relieved of discomfort and have a need for revenge. The widespread appeal of such ideas is in their ability to rid their adherents of unwanted feelings, and to replace them with ideas and practices that make them feel powerful and in control.

The ideology, social practice and institution of pornography is a clear example of poisonous pedagogy in patriarchal culture. It is a widely available, accepted and culturally-generated form through which men are able to work out their experiences of ambivalence in relation to women, by splitting off unwanted feelings and projecting them onto women. In other words, internal conflict about women finds a perfect expression in pornography, so that users do not need to experience this conflict directly, and pornography allows them to experience revenge upon women.

Susan Griffin, in *Pornography and Silence*, does an excellent job of demonstrating how it is precisely the avoidance and control of feelings that

whenever adults sexually abused them. Freud clearly took the standpoint of the oppressor, the powerful adult, in the formation of his theory, unlike Miller, who takes the standpoint of the powerless child.

result in the denigration of the female body in pornography (1981). She argues that it is not women's bodies *per se* that are so frightening or threatening to men (though they become so), but the *life* of the body, the inherently human feelings of fear, powerlessness, need and desire. These feelings and comprehensions are frightening because they indicate the ultimate uncontrollability of carnal and mortal existence. Since, according to psychoanalytic theory, all feelings that are denied authentic expression through acceptable means find amplified existence in other forms, these uncomfortable feelings then find a distorted life in the images of pornography. In pornography, these feelings are avoided and controlled by having women display them, and then by punishing women for their display because they are reminders of precisely those feelings that are avoided.[6] Griffin states that women's bodies in pornography "...mastered, bound, silenced, beaten, and even murdered, are symbols for natural feeling and the power of nature, which the pornographic mind hates and fears" (Griffin 1981, 2).

It is Griffin's argument that this embodiment by women of unwanted feelings is the way patriarchal culture accomplishes and maintains a denial of its collective carnal mortality. She refers to this pervasive cultural denial as the pornographic imagination. However, she is not referring only to pornography but to the entire range of institutionalized (Griffin 1981, 3) oppositions between mind and body, where others always play the parts of denied, frightening aspects of existence, and then are punished for carrying

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6 Just as, according to Alice Miller's theory, children perform the essential service of absorbing and concealing their parents' intolerable feelings, yet are constant reminders of these, so women perform this essential service for men, in pornography and throughout life.

this part for their culture, by exclusion, ridicule, devaluation or death.[7]

Pornography, like racism, is a mass delusion, a cultural distortion of reality that is taken to be true and inevitable (Griffin 1981, 156). Pornography meets the need of expressing, in distorted form, feelings that are unwanted and simultaneously denies these unwanted feelings by having others display them and be punished for it.

The hostility toward women evident in the images of pornography, its defensive function, and its reversals and distortions of affect, are actually hidden by pornography's normative acceptance (Stoller 1975, 65-113). The more pornography can be used as a defense against unwanted feelings,[8] and as a safe means of reclaiming power over women, the more it looks like a reflection of normal or natural dynamics between women and men, and not a form created by men. Its existence as a means to avoid feeling and reclaim power is not acknowledged. Instead it looks like there is something given in the nature of men that makes hostility and violence toward women sexually exciting for them. It looks like there is something given in the nature of women that finds humiliation, degradation, and physical abuse sexually stimulating for them. These distortions eventually are taken as the

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7 Susan Wendell (1989) has written an essay on women and disability, in which she clarifies the function that others perform generally, and that disabled people perform specifically, for culture. Among other issues, Wendell discusses the individual and collective resistance to integrating the knowledge of the disabled, the consequences for disabled people of being other, and the consequences for culture. Then she suggests what culture could learn from the disabled.

8 The unwanted, yet necessary feelings vary individually, according to personal history. Stoller (1975) has shown that *whatever* feelings need expression through others will be sought, thus accounting for the wide range of pornographic material and the differing responses to pornography. This will be discussed more in chapter two. What does not vary is the hostile motivation of pornography, and that the hostility is almost always directed at women and the feelings associated with women (Stoller 1975, 63-113; Griffin 1981).

truth, through repetition, socialization, and internalization (Griffin 1981, 156-200; Rich 1980, 72; Stoller 1975, 92-134).

Remembering that repetition compulsion is an attempt to resolve the intolerability of ambivalence, the images and ideas found in pornography are created, repeated and used because they meet the need for the reclamation of power over women, and they serve the function of denying, yet expressing unwanted feelings. Paradoxically, the repetition of images and ideas about women and men found in pornography and across the spectrum of available pornographic forms,[9] reveals its lack of success as a defensive function. Pornography does not succeed in reducing the anxiety about unwanted feelings for very long. Nor does it help men to restore power over women for very long. This is because it does not help men to connect with, and to incorporate unwanted feelings in themselves, nor to meet their needs for power authentically. Pornography repeats as a cultural form because ambivalence toward women is not authentically resolved and because the availability of pornography helps to prevent its authentic resolution.

What is it about patriarchal culture that creates the conditions under which normal (inherent) ambivalence becomes destructive ambivalence felt in relation to women, and under which compulsive attempts at resolution fail?

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9 The Fraser Report on Pornography and Prostitution counted 540 pornographic magazines available in Canada by the 1980's, "representing a sharp increase over the past 20 years" (1985, 89). According the the Canadian Coalition Against Media Pornography (Newsletter 14, March 1987, 3), the Report of the Commission on Obscenity and Pornography (1970) in the United States estimated that there were 50,000 different magazines available there. Neither of these statistics include pornography in the form of pay television movies, video cassette recordings, or films shown in theatres that specialize in pornography.

Despite the strength of Alice Miller's theory on the motivation for, and the appeal of defensive ideologies, practices and institutions, Miller does not account for the fact that what is normative in patriarchal culture is parenting of infants by women, almost exclusively, and the devaluation of both women and the work of mothering. She does not offer a feminist critique of male power over women.

Because Miller does not account for the unequal power relationship between women and men, she does not deal adequately with the fact that women are systematically discouraged from developing interests other than those associated with their roles as mothers and the caretakers of men. Nor does she deal with the fact that it is men and not women who have generally formulated the principles of poisonous pedagogy, yet it is women who deliver to their children the annihilating rules and principles of a "good" upbringing (Rich 1986). In addition, since women have been assigned the work of caring for others, they have not been encouraged to satisfy their own needs for care and nurturance, nor to have them met by others (Eichenbaum and Orbach 1983). These factors make it difficult, if not impossible, for most women to be emotionally and intellectually empathic with, and attentive to, the needs of their children as Alice Miller recommends (1983, 100-101). These factors contribute to making a mother the prime agent in the reproduction of poisonous pedagogy. As Adrienne Rich states:

> The power-relations between mother and child are often simply a reflection of power-relations in patriarchal society: "You will do this because I know what is good for you" is difficult to distinguish from "You will do this because I can *make* you". Powerless women have always used mothering as a channel - narrow but deep - for their own human will to power, their need to return upon the world what it has visited on them. The child dragged by the arm across the room to be washed, the child cajoled, bullied, and bribed into taking "one more

> bite" of a detested food, is more than just a child which must be reared according to cultural traditions of "good mothering". S/he is a piece of reality, of the world, which can be acted upon, even modified, by a woman restricted from acting on anything else except inert materials like dust and food. (Rich 1986, 38)

Because Miller does not account for the patriarchal institution of motherhood, she cannot adequately account for the fact that a crucial dynamic that takes place in relation to women's bodies during infancy, is the connection of feelings of powerlessness *with* feelings of pleasure and closeness (Chodorow 1978; Dinnerstein 1976; Eichenbaum and Orbach 1983; Flax 1983; Griffin 1981; Kittay 1984; Rich 1986). For most infants, it is women who provide the physical and emotional nourishment necessary for human survival, and it is women from whom children must most often separate in order to establish independent identities. A woman's body is the whole environment to an infant, providing the physical and psychic matter from which the child develops. Women's bodies have the power to provide the pleasures of physical, emotional and psychic satiation, providing infants with their first experiences of bodily comfort and erotic connection. But women's bodies also have the power to deny these experiences. If a mother does not satisfy an infant, feelings of pain, fear and helplessness result. Because women have primary responsibility for the care of children, women are responsible for providing infants with their first experiences of powerlessness. Women's carnal (bodily) presence takes on the omnipotence of life and death (Dinnerstein 1976, 124-30). Susan Griffin provides this description of the meaning of a woman's body to a male child:

> ...mother's body *is* the world to him. All sustenance comes from her. All bliss. All comfort. And also, all fear, all pain, all rage, all hunger and thirst, come to him from her. And above all, the knowledge of these things, the knowledge of the body, comes to the infant from his mother. How, in these moments of rage, he has to hate her and love her; wish to keep her forever and obliterate her. (Griffin 1981, 139)

The normative practice of mothering by women only, the devaluation of women in patriarchal culture, and the consequent association of women's bodies with ambivalent feelings of powerlessness *and* emotional, physical and psychic comfort help to explain why, collectively, men feel that they have lost power to women, and why they compulsively attempt to reclaim it through the bodies of women, in various ways. One way is through the fantasy of pornography. Through pornography, men in patriarchal culture can use women as the objects upon whom to "discharge pent-up affect" in order to conceal their need for power. But the release of hostility toward women, and the reclamation of power over them, is not confined to pornographic fantasy, or indeed to fantasy. For in immediate, daily life, women are systematically oppressed and controlled by men by "...a pervasive cluster of forces, ranging from physical brutality to control of consciousness..." (Rich 1980, 71).

Since it is primarily male experiences of their personal and cultural environments, and the defenses activated against them, that are externalized and concretized into public consciousness in the form of ideas, social practices and institutions, we can expect that the pervasive environment of patriarchal beliefs and practices reflects male subjective experiences of hostility to women, and the need to reclaim power over them. And it does. Some examples of the way in which patriarchal culture compulsively controls, reduces, devalues and exerts power over women are: 1) through the acts of rape and battery (and the pervasive belief that women are responsible for these), 2) through the overt and covert discrimination against women entering professions, clubs, and exclusive male activities (and the resistance to paying women salaries equal to those of men), 3) through the exclusion of women as subjects from the development of language, the

"cognitive authority" (Addelson 1983) of various disciplines, and epistemologies of the dominant culture, and 4) through the overall devaluation of *any* skills, knowledge and values associated with women, in relation to those of men, such as interdependence vs. independence, emotional involvement vs. rationality, and corporality vs. spirituality. Cumulatively, these and other beliefs, practices and institutions comprise the ubiquitous and distorted environment in which children and adults develop their identities, and experience their lives. These are the elements that make up the content of patriarchal symptoms in circular, continuous fashion, and which pass as acceptable (and objective) cultural form.

I have suggested that symptoms within the patriarchal system should reveal the resolution of the conflict they attempt to deny and control. If the problem in patriarchal culture is the development of a destructive ambivalence toward women's bodies, and the feelings, skills and knowledge associated with their bodies, patriarchal culture also reveals the solution to its systemic problem, albeit in a distorted fashion. For it is precisely the life of the body that men attempt to reintegrate, in a controlled way, by subordinating women in daily life. Patriarchal culture recaptures the feelings of powerlessness *and* the pleasures of emotional, physical connection and relation, by requiring women to carry them.

Adrienne Rich (1986) argues that all patriarchal institutions and social practices demonstrate the need to control women's bodies in order to appropriate their reproductive and sexual powers for men's use, to reverse the original powerlessness of men into institutionalized power over women, and to incorporate the essential, though unacknowledged, emotional, physical and psychic services that women's bodies provide. The central cultural manifestation of this appropriation is the institution of motherhood.

Rich differentiates between the institution of motherhood and the potential experience of mothering. The institution of motherhood is motherhood pressed into the service of patriarchy and has little to do with the abilities of women and the interests of children. The institution of motherhood depends upon the archetype of the mother for its success, for it is the archetype that ensures the continual delivery to men of the essential services that women's bodies provide. The archetype of the mother is the sentimentalized and unrealistic image of the mother as the:

> ...source of angelic love and forgiveness in a world increasingly ruthless and impersonal; the feminine, leavening, emotional element in a society ruled by male logic and male claims to "objective", "rational" judgement; the symbol and residue of moral values and tenderness in a world of wars, brutal competition, and contempt for human weakness. (Rich 1986, 52)

The archetype of the mother reveals a reversal and distortion like those characteristic of poisonous pedagogy, for it works by attributing to nature what is actually a man-made institution. By revealing the contradictions in the institution of motherhood, Rich makes it clear that it is no more natural and eternal than other man-made institutions like slavery and prostitution (1986, 33). By attributing to feminine nature the qualities the archetype contains, the institution of motherhood conceals the fact that women are systematically encouraged and coerced, ideologically and structurally, to perform the work of mothering at the expense of their own needs and interests.

Following are some of the contradictions that Rich indicates: Women learn and develop the caretaking skills that are believed to be innate (1986, 37). It is required by the patriarchal system that women be selfless in order to provide the nurturing environment in which the selves of men and children can be developed (1986, 43). In being dehumanized or reduced to

bodily maternal functions for the benefit of patriarchy, women become estranged from their own bodies, and from their creative potential (1986, 13). The "powerless responsibility" (1986, 52) of motherhood means that women are blamed for the failures of their children, and for their own failures in providing what they are not enabled to provide emotionally and economically due to the ideological and institutional obstacles put in their way by patriarchal culture (1986, 52-3).

The archetype of motherhood is very compelling and therefore dangerous (Rich 1986, 52), because it ensures that men continue to get their emotional, psychic and physical needs met by women, without having to acknowledge that they have them, since it is nature that provides these comforts through the bodies of women. And men can blame and punish women for not providing these services, ideologically, institutionally, and with physical force. It is also dangerous, because, in concealing the fact that motherhood is a patriarchal construction, it absolves the system from acknowledging responsibility for the sacrifices required for "good mothering" (Rich 1986), for the distortions and limitations in masculine and feminine personality that result when unequal power relations between women and men are internalized, and for the overt physical, emotional and sexual abuse characteristic of the traditional patriarchal family (Rich 1986, xxxiii). And it is dangerous because it only serves to reinforce the unacknowledged dependency of men upon women, increasing men's perception and fear of women's power over them. Finally, it is dangerous because, by attributing to feminine nature qualities of nurturance that are actually learned and developed, men are absolved from the responsibility of developing them themselves. This, in turn, ensures that the skills and abilities associated with the essential services women provide, are not

integrated into the institutions, social practices and theoretical formulations of culture, but rather, continue to be confined to, and associated with, the privacy of the sacred and idealized home (Rich 1986, 43-5).

In *Toward a New Psychology of Women*, Jean Baker Miller articulates and revalues positively the psychological strengths, skills, and values that women have developed as a result of their daily lived experiences within male-dominated culture (1976, 11). She notes that these abilities and values are either unrecognized or explicitly distorted and devalued in patriarchal culture, and she aims to explain the reasons underlying this invisibility and distortion. She believes that the strengths that women have developed and the knowledge they carry for men must be brought into public consciousness if culture is to outgrow its preoccupation with domination and violence.

Jean Baker Miller draws an explicit parallel between women's subordinate position in the patriarchal system, and symptoms that carry formative potential for the resolution of conflict. By suppressing women, men suppress the knowledge that can be gained from experiencing conflict, individually and collectively. Since the patriarchal system has projected these conflicts onto women, individual men and the patriarchal system continually and desperately attempt to recapture or reintegrate these repressed experiential aspects of themselves (J.B. Miller 1976, 46).

On a collective level, feminist agitation is a symptom of social conflict; it reveals the fact that conflict exists, that there is something wrong with the patriarchal system. Women's demands for social change - the demands for equality and autonomy, for shared responsibility in parenting, and for "physical, sexual and emotional frankness" - are threatening to men because these demands threaten to remove the essential physical and emotional

services women have provided (J.B. Miller 1976, 24-5). In Marilyn Frye's words, feminists threaten to reveal the male "cannibalism" or "parasitism" upon women in patriarchal culture (1983, 99-100). Feminist analyses and demands expose the social construction of archetypal motherhood (and femininity) and the distortions of the true natures of women, men and children. The most convincing evidence of the unacknowledged dependency of men upon women for the provision of these essential services is the pervasive cultural resistance against women's attempts to gain power of their own. Miller notes that feminist demands have been considered to be trivial and that they have been resisted systematically by adherents of the dominant culture. She states:

> In fact, now as in the past, the issues are anything but trivial; rather, they are highly charged, unsolved problems of the dominant culture as a whole, and they are laden with dreaded associations. The charge of triviality is more likely massively defensive, for the questions threaten the return of what has been warded off, denied, and sealed away - under the label "female". (J.B. Miller 1976, 24)

On an individual psychic level, women threaten to reveal the very deep and disturbing dynamics underlying men's projection onto women of those aspects of experience they cannot deal with. A pertinent example of the way women threaten to reveal to men their own sense of need and powerlessness is the situation of a battered woman who attempts to leave her abusing partner. She is the socially sanctioned object from whom he is entitled to demand sexual gratification, emotional nurturance, domestic services and much more. She is in that relationship to please and comfort him, that is her socially sanctioned role as a subordinate in a male-dominated culture. When she fails to meet his demands, he can blame her for his feelings of anger and resentment *without* questioning why he actually has those feelings in the first place. Since she is there to absorb his anger,

he is prevented from actually experiencing his deepest feelings of vulnerability, need, and powerlessness, feelings against which anger and resentment are his defense. She plays the role of his powerlessness in male-dominated culture; he needs her *because* she expresses his powerlessness. When she threatens to leave him, he is threatened with confronting his vulnerability, his need, and his powerlessness, which she formerly carried for him.

According to Jean Baker Miller, keeping women out of public culture while assigning them the essential, but devalued, work of caring for others has damaging consequences for women and men and culture. It prevents women from developing pride and confidence in the work they do and the knowledge they have developed as a result of being the caretakers of society (J.B. Miller 1976, 29-48). It also mystifies and distorts this knowledge; women's skills and strengths are often referred to as "feminine intuition" and "feminine wiles" (J.B. Miller 1976, 10). In addition, women's containment of male conflict prevents men from learning how to manage it themselves, as individuals and as a culture (J.B. Miller 1976, 46-7). And keeping women outside culture ensures that their knowledge remains outside of public consciousness. Like Rich, Griffin and Dinnerstein, J.B. Miller argues, and I agree, that the psychological strengths, nurturing skills, ideas, and values that women have developed as a result of their caretaking work, when transformed by a feminist consciousness, are essential to the reformation of patriarchal society, since ideally they express, rather than deny, fundamental knowledge about human development and growth. Among the strengths and skills of women that J.B. Miller describes (1976, 27-60) are the following: 1) the ability to admit to and tolerate feelings of vulnerability, weakness, and need, 2) the capacity to express emotion, and

particularly to attend to the emotions of others, 3) a keen appreciation of the processes of physical, emotional and mental growth that arise from "participating in the development of others" (J.B. Miller 1976, 40), 4) a recognition of the importance of, and necessity for, cooperation with others, 5) a recognition of the need for ongoing personal creativity or transformation in order for psychological growth to occur, 6) the capacity for giving, 7) a more flexible and enlarged understanding of the meanings of passivity and activity, and 8) a realistic and fundamental understanding of change as basic to human growth and development for both parent and child.

To summarize, in patriarchal culture, normal ambivalence, which is a condition of existence for both women and men, is transformed into destructive ambivalence, such that women come to contain frightening aspects of bodily life, and men contain the capacities, and control the cultural machinery, through which these frightening aspects of life are denied and controlled. Patriarchal culture denies and controls the frightening aspects of existence through ideological formulations about women and men which are taken to be true and natural, and through social practices and institutions which operationalize these beliefs.

In circular fashion, the ambivalence toward women and the feelings associated with them that these ideologies, social practices and institutions are meant to ward off, is exacerbated through the patriarchal context itself, through the institution of motherhood and other poisonous pedagogies that make up the cultural environment that is internalized and reproduced. Patriarchal ideologies, institutions and social practices, can thus be considered as normative defenses, which are cultural formations created in response to dynamics that occur during infancy within patriarchal culture.

Their defensive function is hidden by their normative acceptance, with the consequence that patriarchal culture becomes blind to the fact that it exacerbates the dynamics and creates the responses to them.

The defensive and compulsive character of the patriarchal forms or symptoms is revealed by their cumulative repetition. Their cumulative repetition, or "metaphysical overkill" (Frye 1983, 162), indicates that they are attempts to resolve a problem that is systemic in origin, the denial and control of women and the feelings associated with them. Their compulsive repetition also indicates that they are not successful in their defensive function.

The characteristics of normative defense - reversal, distortion and hostility - apply to pornography, and to all patriarchal ideology, that has as its psychic motivation the reclamation of power over women, and control of the feelings associated with them. These patriarchal forms are symptoms of a culture that cannot resolve its problem with ambivalence because women carry the experientially negative aspects of it. Since women carry the negative aspects for patriarchal culture, there is pervasive resistance to integrating women and their knowledge.

On the other hand, the compulsive control of women's bodies through institutionalized patriarchal ideology reveals, upon analysis, the authentic resolution to its systemic problem. The dominant culture needs to restore balance or integrity by assimilating the experiences, knowledge and values that women have carried and developed as a result of being the outsiders or scapegoats of patriarchal culture.

Dorothy Dinnerstein (1976) offers one of the clearest and widest-ranging theories on patriarchal culture as a formative system gone wrong. She suggests that the division of labour necessary to accommodate motherhood

may have at one time been useful for the evolution of human culture. Her theory is grounded in the assumption that cultures evolve from the dialectic between body and mind, that biological and psychic creational capacities work together to produce viable forms (1976, 10) in order to continue the process of evolution. Patriarchy evolved, Dinnerstein argues, as an efficient way to enhance species survival, and resulted in the development of enhanced creative potential due to long human infancies.[10] However, this division of labour, or the "sexual arrangement" (Dinnerstein 1976, 4) is no longer necessary or viable; on the contrary, it now constitutes the major block to individual, cultural, and global evolution. Its formative capacity is static; there is no evolutionary potential remaining in the patriarchal system. This is so because the gender roles in patriarchal culture now function only to keep split apart or unintegrated aspects of human existence that need to operate together in the project of individual, collective and global formation.

Her main argument is that the male-female split in patriarchy functions to destructively contain, and thus to keep unresolved, the species-wide ambivalence resulting from the knowledge that humans are, on the one hand, responsible for the cultures they create, and, on the other hand, fearful and doubtful about their abilities to be responsible. This is the central ambivalence responsible for the general "human malaise", - the

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10 There is no evidence that patriarchy evolved for this reason, or that it enhanced creative potential. It is an assumption, one that I think reflects the tendency for androcentric biases to pervade scientific enquiry and theorizing (Addelson 1983). In general, this means that the (mostly) male theorists who have speculated about evolution and early civilization, and who themselves come from patriarchal cultures, project their own social structure onto their subjects of study. In addition, because traditional disciplines and their practitioners have generally begun their histories of civilization with the assumption of some form of patriarchal social structure, pre-patriarchal cultures, and their possible gender arrangements, and creative abilities have only recently been discussed and theorized.

static, destructive and defensive dilemma of patriarchy (Dinnerstein 1976, 4, 248).

As a containing mechanism, or symptom, the male-female split is a collective neurosis or delusion that functions to keep women and men irresponsible. It protects against the awareness that patriarchal cultural arrangements cause damage to individuals and to culture in general, while simultaneously it allows patriarchal culture to go on creating forms which are no longer evolutionary. Therefore, there is resistance to changing roles for women and men, because major changes would make the damage and the responsibility for it visible. There would be no protection from the knowledge that culture was responsible for hurting them, if women and men did not play their respective parts. The damage to individuals is the construction and limitation of feminine and masculine identities. Since the respective and unequally valued attributions to them make the split seem natural and inevitable, the damage is not questioned because it is not acknowledged by the patriarchal system.

The aspects of human existence that need to operate together, according to Dinnerstein, in order to provide the conditions for individual, collective and global evolution, are men's and women's collective creative abilities and their collective knowledge of the limitations of their creations. She argues, as do Griffin and J.B. Miller, that men have thus far carried human immortality for the species - the capacities for creation and transcendence - while women have carried mortality - the reservations about, and knowledge of, the limitations of immortality.

Dinnerstein's theory has been criticized by various feminists for three egregious errors. The first is her assumption that heterosexuality is a natural preference for women. Although she examines and critiques the

development of masculine and feminine identity in patriarchal culture, she does not explore the social construction of this natural preference, as Adrienne Rich has pointed out (1980).

Second, Dinnerstein assumes that women and men have participated equally in maintaining unequal gender arrangements in an unconscious agreement to maintain irresponsibility for culture-making, and that women and men have been equally blind to the damage caused by patriarchal culture. These assumptions, which pervade her theory, take no account of feminist resistance throughout history against both the institution of heterosexuality and the oppression of women by men (Rich 1980, 66). Nor does she take into account the pervasive institutional resistance of men against women's cultural creations (Rich 1986, 40).

Third, Dinnerstein offers no feminist critique of the division of labour supposedly necessitating motherhood. This omission results in her inability to account for the economic motives underlying the division of labour, and the way economic power of men contributes to the maintenance of gender inequality (Luxton 1987; Marchak 1987). Further, her lack of analysis of the division of labour by gender results in her inability to account for the facts that women's work of mothering and taking care of men is not considered productive work, and that whatever work women do, less value is always attributed to it when compared with the work of men in patriarchal cultures. In effect, Dinnerstein assumes that the devaluation of women was an accidental outcome of women's biological capacity to bear children (1976, 201-10). But, biology cannot explain the devaluation of women. It is (male) people, and the systems and institutions they create, that devalue women. Nancy Chodorow's groundbreaking work on the reproduction of mothering, and the applications of her theory, show that mothering is a social variable

quite apart from the capacity to give birth, and that it works in close connection with existing patriarchal forms to perpetuate the devaluation of women and the work of mothering (1978, 3-39). Therefore the devaluation of women, mothers, and the work of women does not follow inevitably from biological reality without the heavy ideological and material investment of patriarchal forms to make it so.

In spite of these serious problems with her theory, I find Dinnerstein's use of the formative paradigm (which she refers to as the erotic "...creative-integrative, constructive-reparative..." tendency (1976, 10)) valuable for its implications. Like all formative theorists, she indicates the internal "structural defect[s]" (Dinnerstein 1976, xii) of personality development, and the external distortions of the cultural forms which preclude their resolution, without losing optimism about the possibilities for transformation. Since these defects are constructed by patriarchal culture out of biological reality, they are capable of being transformed culturally, because human beings tend toward creating "...more viable forms" (Dinnerstein 1976, 10), and are always doing so. Illustrations of this tendency will be discussed in Chapter four.

Dinnerstein's analysis of the structural defects, the distortions, in feminine and masculine nature as constructed within patriarchy now, is very valuable. The distortions in the gender development of women and men result in a "symbiosis" (Dinnerstein 1976, 2), or complementarity between them that assures the reproduction of the gender split, as Nancy Chodorow also articulates in her theory (1978), and thus the non-resolution of ambivalence regarding the responsibility for self- creation on a species level, and the fears associated with it. On an individual level, this ambivalence is felt in relation to women, as a profound hatred of, yet erotic connection to

"...the person or persons who tend the body..." (Dinnerstein 1976, xiii).

Since most women and men are tended by women, ambivalence in relation to them is not resolved in patriarchal culture; it is replicated in the complementary gender development of men and women.

The development of feminine and masculine identity is the subject of the next chapter. I will draw on feminist versions of object relations theory to indicate the complementary distortions, and how the ambivalence between hostility and erotic connection to women finds different expression in the respective symptomatology of women and men in patriarchal culture. The particular relevance of feminist object relations theory for understanding the normative defense of pornography lies with two of its fundamental sub-theories. One is that sexuality is linked with gender for men in a way that it is not for women. This means that sexuality is available as a vehicle for the expression of hostility toward women, and is linked with a sense of masculinity (Chodorow 1978, 1980; Person 1980; Stoller 1975). This helps in understanding the use of pornography by men from another, though related perspective; the sexual compulsion of men in the use of pornography (and women) is a repetitive attempt to secure identity.

The second and closely related sub-theory is that the development of masculinity *requires* that men repress the feminine within themselves in order to become masculine. Thus a sense of maleness is never secure; it is precarious and defensive. It is precarious because males have to give up or repress the primary identification with their mothers. It is defensive because men have to fight against the feminine within themselves in order to establish identities, in order to become men in an anti-women culture (Chodorow 1978, 1980; Flax 1983; Griffin 1981; Kittay 1984; Rich 1986; Stoller 1975).

Thus for men in patriarchal culture, masculinity requires the repression of the feminine from inside, in the development of a sense of self, and the oppression of women on the outside, in culture, through various and pervasive forms, one of which is pornography.

CHAPTER TWO: GENDER DEVELOPMENT, NORMATIVE PERVERSION, AND PORNOGRAPHY

Feminist applications of object relations theory attempt to account for the ways that patriarchal social structures and power relations are distilled in feminine and masculine identity development, leaving the respective genders with different orientations to the self and to others. They focus on the role of the mother, as the first external object, in informing the quality of internalized object relations, since she is usually the first and most significant person with whom children relate, identify, and experience erotic attachment. Specifically, they focus on the way that experiential aspects of the mother, such as her relative power over the child, her association with erotic connection and comfort, with survival and dependence, and feelings and defenses developed in relation to these aspects during identity formation, become internalized objects, contributing to differing developmental tasks and conflicts for women and men. Finally, feminist object relations theories attempt to describe and analyze the way in which these tasks, conflicts and defenses, that are developed in relation to women, are manifested in subsequent personal relationships, sexuality, theoretical formulations, and cultural practices (Chodorow 1978, 1980; Dinnerstein 1976; Eichenbaum and Orbach 1983, 1987; Flax 1978, 1983; Gilligan 1982; Griffin 1981; Harding 1981; Keller 1985; Kittay 1984; Person 1980; Stoller 1975).

An important implication of object relations theory, as I see it, is that different cultures would have different ways of managing the consequences of early male identification with females. Eva Kittay discusses other cultures and the way they manage the consequences of male identification with

females in her essay (1984). For example, initiation rites among New Guinea males and some native Australian males may be understood, within an object relations framework, as ways to defend against, or "counter" (Kittay 1984, 110) feminine identification through appropriation. The indirect forms that male appropriation takes in these cultural groups, such as rituals of symbolic male menstruation (New Guinea), or the subincision of the penis to make it look like a vulva (Australia), are different from one of the direct and pervasive forms it takes in predominantly white, western, capitalist cultures, that of male medical control of the process of childbearing. So, Kittay argues, the forms vary, but the motivation may be the same: they all function to appropriate the life-giving capacities of women *in order* to enhance male power and reduce female power (Kittay 1984, 109-112). The important point here, as I see it, is not to generalize the conceptual framework or the applicability of object relations theory, but to show that different cultures where women do mothering work have different ways of dealing with the consequences of male identification with females. This cultural variation suggests the optimistic possibility that the forms cultures create to undo, repair, or defend against the consequences of male identification with females need not always be damaging to women or to men. This possibility is central to my thesis, as I apply it to our predominantly white, western, male-dominated culture where women, nearly exclusively, do mothering work and are devalued.

Nancy Chodorow was the first major feminist theorist of object relations to develop an account of the differing gender development of women and men in predominantly western, male-dominated cultures. In *The Reproduction of Mothering* (1978), Chodorow attempts to account for the generation and perpetuation of the psychological defects in femininity and

masculinity. She theorizes that these defects become structured, though not inevitably, into identity within the context of patriarchal culture, where women mother and are devalued, and fathers are mostly absent from child-rearing and much valued. The primary purpose of this work, and a subsequent summary of it (1980), is to account for the relational gender differences that function to perpetuate the institutions of patriarchy, capitalism and motherhood, through the social process of mothering (Chodorow 1978, 7). Her theory of gender development is important for my theory of destructive containment and pornography, because it suggests that the experience of gender ambivalence is exacerbated in male development in a way that it is not for females. This difference may contribute to the development of a defensive and compulsive masculine gender identity that is preoccupied with both establishing difference from women, and with appropriating the feminine in subsequent social and sexual relationships. First I will summarize Chodorow's theory of gender development with a focus on the issue of ambivalence. Then I will apply the concept of ambivalence to the generation of perversion in men. Finally, I will show how difficulties with the establishment of gender identity for men are manifested in the normative perversion of pornography.

In cultures where women mother and are devalued and men are largely absent from child-rearing, there is an essential difficulty involved in male development which does not apply to females, according to Chodorow. The difficulty is the fundamental ambivalence which results when a male's primarily female sense of self co-exists with the necessity of establishing a core gender identity by denying this female sense of self. To resolve this ambivalence, a male must repress part of himself in order to acquire a masculine gender. Although females do not have this particular gender

identity problem, they do have a parallel problem with the development of autonomy which I also discuss.

Core gender identity refers to a cognitive, somatic, and psychological sense of self that is female or male, or something in between. It is acquired developmentally in relation to women in the societies Chodorow discusses, and it is established together with a sense of self within the first two years of life. Gender role socialization and self assessments about one's success or lack of it, in conforming to one's appropriate gender, occur after core gender identity is established (Chodorow 1980, 12-13).

During the period of primary identification, infants experience themselves as literally identical to, or identified with, their mothers. This means that during this period, infants do not yet experience or perceive any psychological, physical, or cognitive boundaries between themselves and their mothers. Both female and male children experience this attachment to their mothers which is described as a narcissistic attachment (Chodorow 1980, 5), and both internalize the femaleness of mother (Chodorow 1980, 13). At this time, the child is erotically connected to the mother too. That is, the child is in possession of a shared bodily, psychological, psychic, and emotional being or experience with her. This means that sensuality and parts of the body that will later be capable of sexual response are directly associated with mother and the object relations developed during this period, and they continue to be associated with her as the child separates from her.

The secure establishment of core gender identity for a male child is a problem. In order to become a separate person, individuated from mother, a male child must become other than he experiences himself to be bodily, psychologically, and emotionally. He must become not-mother, not-female.

He individuates negatively, against, or in opposition to, his sense of femaleness and oneness with mother (Chodorow 1980, 13). He develops his separate gender identity as "...who I am not", rather than as who "I am" (Chodorow 1980, 11). In addition, his mother relates to him differently, as more of an other, because she is of a different gender than he, and "pushes" him out sooner from this preoedipal stage of development (Chodorow 1978, 104-110). Due to these factors, a male's developmental process of differentiation, which is necessary to the establishment of a self-other distinction, becomes structurally associated with difference from the feminine, in relation to his mother. Finally, a male child learns his appropriate masculine gender role not through personal interaction with an available father (or father figure), but through highly mediated and relatively abstract images of what it means to be a man. This gender role learning occurs after his experience of bodily, emotional, and psychological identification with a woman (Chodorow 1978, 71). A male child does not internalize aspects of his father (or available father figure) and develop feelings and defenses in relation to him during this critical stage of development because his father is usually absent, or distant from child-rearing. The child does not erotically connect with maleness (Chodorow 1978, 194). All of these factors contribute to making the establishment of core gender identity for men conflictual (Chodorow 1978, 174-5).

Thus, a male child represses structurally the part of himself that was identified with mother, in order to continue separation and individuation. Because this identification with mother is structurally repressed, it is split off from his developing sense of self, guaranteeing that his ambivalence is not resolved. Repressed along with this sense of femaleness, Chodorow argues, are all those shared relational aspects of mother that he has internalized,

including his erotic connection to her. This means that a male child loses a fundamental part of himself in order to acquire a masculine identity. This structural repression is often referred to as a "narcissistic wound" or loss of self (Chodorow 1978, 122-25; Kittay 1984, 102-04). Chodorow writes:

> Boys and men come to deny the feminine identification within themselves and those feelings they experience as feminine: feelings of dependence, relational needs, emotions generally. They come to emphasize differences, not commonalities or continuities, between themselves and women, especially in situations that evoke anxiety, because these commonalities and continuities threaten to challenge gender difference or to remind boys and men consciously of their potentially feminine attributes. (Chodorow 1980, 13)

As a consequence of his difficulty in establishing an unambivalent core gender identity, a male's developmental issues centre around the establishment of a secure gender identity. It becomes very important to his masculine sense of self that he not be confused or merged with mother, or with the mother in himself - those repressed feelings, associations, and connections with femaleness that are now a part of him. Later in his development, when he is cognizant of gender role socialization, he is given ubiquitous positive reinforcement from his parents, and from the wider culture, for this loss of self, for being unlike mother, by means of ideas, theories, and practices that emphasize his differentness and his superiority in relation to women. These external cultural reinforcements only exacerbate his internal developmental problem of establishing unambivalent core gender identity, because they reinforce the importance of not being feminine, without offering concrete and present masculine forms of identification. For example, the inducements to autonomy and independence for boys have the value of being superior attributes, not because thay are attributes that boys have developed and internalized in relation to available masculine figures, but because they are (so patriarchal

socialization says) not feminine (Chodorow 1978, 174). Cultural reinforcements through socializing ideology and practice prevent male children from acknowledging their socially constructed need to establish difference (through superiority) in relation to women, and from dealing authentically with this continual developmental problem.

Eva Feder Kittay (1984) revises Chodorow's theory somewhat by suggesting that males repress the envy of women's childbearing capacities, since this is the only truly distinguishing characteristic that may not be incorporated or internalized into gender identity for males. She argues that envy best accounts for the hostility found in subsequent defenses against it. What both Chodorow and Kittay agree on is that hostility underlies the structural repression of feminine identification for males (Chodorow 1978, 122; Kittay 1984, 97). Whereas Chodorow focuses more on the psychological structure of femininity and masculinity, Kittay focuses more on the fate of the repressed affect of hostility in individual and collective male development (1984, 104), as evidenced in the following defenses: idealization of women, devaluation of them and their capacities, devaluation by men of the self, appropriation of women's childbearing capacities, cultivation of envy about male characteristics, the suppression of feelings of love, and intensification of hateful feelings toward women and their capacities associated with childbearing and rearing (106-120).

For both Chodorow and Kittay, a female child also experiences identification with her mother, along with the narcissistic erotic attachment. But to establish a separate and individuated identity from mother, she does not have to become other than she experiences herself to be. She need not repress the part of herself that is identified with mother to become feminine. Her acquisition of a core gender identity is therefore not

conflictual. Because she has a concrete and present figure to identify with, she develops her core gender identity positively, as "who I am", rather than as "who I am not". In this sense, gender difference is not associated structurally with a girl's process of differentiation from her mother (Chodorow 1980, 13-14).

However, a girl's developmental identity problems derive from sharing the same gender as her mother. Because a mother and her daughter share the same gender, a mother does not experience her daughter as an other as much as she does a son, and does not "push" her out of the preoedipal stage of development as quickly; therefore, this phase lasts longer for girls (Chodorow 1978, 109). Because of this less differentiated and longer-lasting narcissistic relation to her mother, a girl's most difficult developmental task is emerging as a separate, autonomous self from this relation with her mother. She has, according to Chodorow, a more difficult time establishing firm boundaries between self and mother, and later, between self and others. Later in her development, when she is cognizant of gender socialization, a girl is given positive reinforcement from her mother, and from the wider culture, for being like mother, that is, feminine. Thus there is a continuity between her early identification with her mother and her subsequent feminine gender socialization (Chodorow 1980, 14), unlike the developmental situation for a boy. Whereas for a girl her gender identity is not a conflictual issue, the value of it is (Chodorow 1980, 14). She and her mother belong to the gender category that is not valued in patriarchal culture. Her mother is accessible to her as a object of identification, but her mother is a powerless and devalued person. The cultural devaluations of the feminine that comprise her gender socialization exacerbate a girl's developmental problem of achieving a separate, autonomous sense of self,

since the self she is trying to achieve is not valued, and her female identity is also not valued.

Thus, Chodorow concludes that femininity and masculinity, as they are constructed and restricted in patriarchal culture, come to complement each other in their developmental defects and subsequent defenses. For men, the major developmental issue is the establishment of a secure and unambivalent masculine gender identity. Therefore, defenses are developed and activated whenever the sense of masculinity is threatened. Men become defensively preoccupied with controlling feelings in themselves and other men, feelings that they associate with femaleness. They develop the defenses of "hyperseparateness" (Chodorow 1980, 8) between self and others, and of rigid distinctions between the masculine and feminine, in order to ward off this threat and establish and secure difference from women (Chodorow 1980, 13). In general, capacities for empathic emotional expressiveness, and abilities to relate to others as separate subjects rather than different objects (Chodorow 1980, 7-9), are developmentally diminished in men. Because women do not repress structurally the capacities for emotional expressiveness and the ability to relate to the subjectivity of others, Chodorow argues, they are developmentally equipped to provide these nurturant services to men. In fact, these capacities compensate for what men lack. Men can, and do, look to women to provide emotional reconnection and sustenance, and to confirm their masculinity.

For women, the major developmental issue is the establishment of a separate, autonomous self. Therefore, for women, defenses are developed and activated whenever the sense of separate self is threatened. Since the boundaries between self and other are more malleable for females, according to Chodorow, the invasion of self-other boundaries is a continual

problem that disrupts the attempt to establish an autonomous self for women. Since men do develop more rigid boundaries, and appear to have a more individuated, distinct self, and since men belong to the gender that is valued in patriarchal culture, women look to men to provide this sense of separate and valuable self, vicariously. Thus, by aligning themselves with men, women are compensated for what they lack developmentally.

I think that the implication of Chodorow's theory, as it relates to ambivalence, is that males' experience of gender identity ambivalence is greater and more damaging to them than women's experience is to them. I do not think that she adequately accounts for the ambivalence, and the destructive consequences of it, for women who are raised by women in a culture that devalues them. She values too positively the relational abilities that women acquire, without acknowledging their negative consequences. Girls do not have an easier time acquiring a devalued identity from persons like themselves. One could argue that girls and women experience even more ambivalence in their attempts at establishing separate identities from a person of the same and undervalued gender, as Eichenbaum and Orbach (1983) suggest. They argue that there is much greater damage to a female's sense of self because of the internalization of a needy and under-developed mother, who was not allowed to achieve a strong and autonomous identity in patriarchal culture. They argue that due to the intense narcissistic relation between mother and daughter, a daughter is essentially required to sacrifice her self in order to meet the needs of her mother. In this way, a daughter comes to embody her mother's loss of self and deprivation in patriarchal culture, and this embodiment constitutes the daughter's acquisition of femininity. Eichenbaum and Orbach demonstrate how daughters become the containers of their mothers self-denial in patriarchal culture.

However, even Eichenbaum and Orbach do not deal adequately with the

hate and anger daughters feel toward their mothers for providing them with

their first developmental experiences of acquiescence to the needs of

others, an acquiescence which is later reinforced through gender role

conditioning for powerlessness, and the taking care of others, at the

expense of their own needs, interests and identities (Rich 1986, 218-255). In

a more recent work, Eichenbaum and Orbach (1987) do take this affective

residue of hostility, that was first generated in relation to their mothers, into

account when they discuss and analyze the competition, envy, and love in

women's friendships. This book and Rich's (1986) help to explain many of

the destructive emotions and behaviors that women direct toward

themselves and other women, that derive from the ambivalence between

erotic connectedness and hostility felt originally in relation to mother.

The important point about ambivalence is not to determine which

gender suffers greater damage to their identities,[1] but to recognize that

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1 As a feminist however, I want to clarify my stand on this. Both women and men are denied authentic achievement of secure identities in patriarchal culture. But the resolution of ambivalence, as it is revealed by the defense of repetition compulsion, works to the advantage of men. By this I mean that men's institutionalized collective defenses against the feminine identification within themselves are given approved cultural form, and in fact reward men for the damage to their identities. Although the defenses men employ can never authentically gratify the need for self-connection, men can be gratified to know that patriarchal institutions assure them of a constant supply of women on whom to project their ambivalence and hostility, in language for example, or in epistemological frameworks, or in visual representations of women, to name just a few. The damage to men's unstable gender identities results generally in the tendency of men to dominate and feel superior to women, to express and act upon hostile feelings toward them in fact or in fantasy, to "master" their tender emotions, particularly feelings of dependence and connection, and to be sexual predators of women. These masculine attributes are highly valued in patriarchal culture, and are visible in men's collective cultural creations. By contrast, the damage to women's self-identities results generally in the tendency of women to acquiesce to the needs of others, to suppress their strivings for selfhood, to engage in self-lacerating (rather than other-lacerating) compulsions, and to direct their energies toward becoming valuable, loveable, and attractive to men. Women's compulsive mothering

both males and females develop experiential ambivalence between erotic connectedness and hostility toward women, and that they both "resolve" it, by taking revenge on women. The gender differences in the manifestation of this ambivalence are evident in their respective symptomatologies.

Because women experience their first erotic connection to a woman, and because they do not have to repress structurally this connection in order to acquire femininity, their primary affective and relational attachments continue to be to women. This has profound implications for the development and experience of sexuality for women in patriarchal culture. It means essentially that women, unlike men, are required to give up their first, and emotionally primary love objects in favour of heterosexual bonds with men (Chodorow 1978, 192-3; Rich 1980, 1986), which in turn requires women to suppress their erotic connectedness to other women. But, because a woman was also the first and most significant person responsible for suppressing a daughter's development of autonomy, women experience other women as the major threats to their autonomy. This is illustrated by the symptoms of jealousy, anger, competition and envy, to name only a few. These symptoms indicate how women's less secure sense of separateness continues to be a problem whenever other women demonstrate a strong and individuated sense of self. The threat here is not to feminine gender identity, but to the establishment of independent selfhood, which is felt to

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for example, or their cleaning and body image compulsions, while depended upon by men for men's comfort and satisfaction, are not accorded prestige and value economically, socially, politically, or ideologically. Because women's subjective experiences and defenses are generally not considered valuable, their compulsions are not institutionalized as the objective, paradigmatic "truth" of human existence. This difference in the value of masculine and feminine defenses raises the question: if men's defenses are so rewarding to them personally and culturally, what is the incentive for men to change? I begin to address this question in chapter four of my thesis.

be violated precisely because the boundaries between self and others are not distinct (Eichenbaum and Orbach 1987).

In addition, women develop feelings of inadequacy about their body images in relation to their mothers. These feelings contribute to a variety of very common eating disorders, which clearly can be attributed to patriarchal culture (Lawrence 1987). Since the feelings that contribute to these disorders are generated through the mother-daughter relationship, women are held responsible for them. In general, women blame their feelings of deprivation, unworthiness, and relative lack of value and power in patriarchal culture, on women. Their ambivalence toward women is revealed by the fact that women expect and desire a continuation of maternal-like nurturance from other women (because of their early narcissistic attachment to their mothers), and feel betrayed and worthless when they do not get it. In short, women continue to be both the desired and the threatening objects for women. When they are a threat, women then work out their hostilities on themselves and on other women.

In spite of the weakness of her theory in accounting for female ambivalence, Chodorow's conclusions about the ambivalence in male gender identity are clear. Built into males' psychological structure is the necessity of maintaining psychic defense against femaleness and feelings associated with it in order for their identities to be secure. Developmentally, males become heavily invested in not being female, feminine, or anything like it. Collective cultural reinforcements, and the individual defenses men create, are meant to confirm their unlikeness to the feminine.

When Chodorow's theory is applied to Robert Stoller's independently formulated theory of male gender identity and perversion, and Ethel Spector

Person's theory of male sexuality and identity, it helps to explain the compulsive character of male identity and sexuality as a way to resolve ambivalence, the hostility underlying the compulsion, and the apparent fusion or association of hostility with erotic pleasure, for men.

Stoller is a psychoanalyst who works with men who are extremely perverse, those men for whom a very confused sense of gender identity was brought about by parents who severely traumatized and confused their child's sense of identity. From his work, Stoller developed his theory of the continuum of perversion. Stoller distinguishes between "true" and "normative" perversion,[2] and I have taken the term normative defense from him.

True perversion refers to a fixed and rigid defense formation that generally controls the person's life (Stoller 1975, 110-11). The man who is truly perverse can only be relieved of the discomfort of ambivalence by fantasizing and acting out his perversion in order to feel secure. His perversion defends him against the possibility of reliving the trauma his parents, usually mother, inflicted upon him (Stoller 1975, 115). Through the enactment of his perversion he can recapitulate his experience of extreme gender mystification, only now in a more controlled, safe and satisfying way, with him as perpetrator, not victim (Stoller 1975, 106). In effect, his perversion enables him to take revenge on his abusive parent(s).

At the centre of this controlled reliving or repetition of gender conflict is hostility and not sexual satisfaction (Stoller 1975, 97, 93), though the experience of orgasm helps to establish the permanency of the perverse

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2 Stoller does not use the adjective "true" to connote the severe, extreme pole of the continuum of perversion; for efficiency, I am summarizing his distinctions between the polarities of perversion with the adjectives "true" (pathological) and "normative" (1975, 110-11).

habit. In fact, Stoller states: "...the perversion lies in the meaning of the act, which is hatred and a need to do damage, not love one's partner" (1975, 97). To put it another way, perversion is not motivated by distorted sexual desire, but by the desire for revenge brought about by distorted object relations.

According to Stoller, the essential elements in the formation of perversion are the following: First, there is the anxiety caused by having to become differentiated from mother, with whom the child was originally identified. This anxiety is fuelled by rage for having to give up this identification, fear of failing to differentiate from mother, and revenge directed toward her for being responsible for this impossible conflict (1975, 99). Second, there is the obscuring of sexual difference between her femininity and his masculinity, which causes increased anxiety; this occurs through very contradictory punishments and rewards (1975, 103) for his search for unambivalent gender identity. In the end, these punishments and rewards function to eroticize particular body parts of women, to heighten male's mystification of those parts, and to mystify their (male) identities (1975, 96, 98, 100). Third, there is some extreme form of gender confusion and trauma, by which he is threatened with the danger of losing his sense of gendered identitiy. This threat is to the very part of his body or psyche that would confirm the sexual difference between himself and mother, masculine and feminine (1975, 105, 118). Stoller illustrates this with the example of a boy who was forced to wear feminine clothing by two women who severely humiliated his sense of masculinity because they themselves hated men (1975, 71-73). This severe destabilizing of the child's sense of identity, which he needs desperately to be unambivalent so that he can feel secure, increases the sense of danger that he may not overcome the risk of being

like mother, that is, identified with the feminine. This is not just generalized separation anxiety, but anxiety that comes from the fear of being destroyed, of losing his psychic sense of discreet existence, apart, and different from, the feminine (1975, 118-121). Finally, when the child is capable of adult sexuality and orgasm (1975, 107), he establishes the perverse (hostile, distorted, and vengeful) act. The fantasy and enactment of the perverse act enable the man to establish, at least temporarily, his existence as a masculine person; through them he successfully converts danger and risk into conscious pleasure. The experience of pleasure establishes the permanency of the defensive, perverse act. The pleasure in the enactment of perversion is derived from the temporary relief of overcoming the danger of losing his self (the risk of being like mother), and the simultaneous experience of sexual sensation (1975, 101).

The sexual excitement that a perverse man feels when contemplating or enacting his perversion, Stoller suggests, derives from the anxiety caused by anticipating the danger of reliving the trauma (losing his identity) on the one hand, and, on the other hand, the hope of overcoming this danger through reversal and revenge. Sexual excitement is like "...a rapid vibration between fear of trauma and hope of triumph" (Stoller 1975, 105). The experience of orgasm for the perverse man is not just pleasure, but an acknowledgement and reinforcement of the fact that extreme risk was taken and overcome (Stoller 1975, 107).

However, for sexual excitement to be possible, the details of the perverse individual's original experience must be recapitulated with safety features. Otherwise, the original fear of losing his identity, and the extreme hostility and desire for revenge engendered as a result of this fear, will destroy his sexual excitement (Stoller 1975, 103) and prevent him from

successfully reversing the dynamics of original abuse. Therefore, he employs, unconsciously, such psychic defense mechanisms as projection, denial, splitting, fetishization or idealization to hide his fears and hostilities.

Further, for the perverse man, the sexual excitement he experiences by enacting his particular perversion is evoked only by engaging in that perversion, and no other (Stoller 1975, 64- 65). This is so because his perverse defense contains in highly condensed and distorted form *all* of the elements and dynamics of the extreme gender mystification that he suffered at the hands of his parents, including his sexual history in relation to them. While not yet capable of adult sexual response in infancy or childhood when his parents abused him, and when he was too young to know coherently what was being done to him (Stoller 1975, 97), he recorded unconsciously the precise details of his abusive sexualization, which became part of his identity. His adult sexual response was highly channelled and restricted as a result of his early experience. Thus, his perverse defense is like a containing mechanism that reveals his traumatic sexual and psychic history, as they were developed in relation to his parents (Stoller 1975, 104-5, 115). Because of his unique experience of trauma (Stoller 1975, 103), his sexual response is also unique. Person refers to this highly individualized sexual response as a sex print or erotic signature (Person 1980, 51). When Stoller theorizes that *all* of the elements and dynamics are visible in the perverse symptom, he means the precise person(s) and gender of person(s) who abused him, the precise parts of his body or psychic sense of identity that were sexualized and confused (parts that could have established his sense of secure difference and separateness), the range of feelings he had as a result of this abuse and mysification, and the defenses he employed in order to survive the onslaught. The safety features - the defense mechanisms of splitting,

projection, idealization, fetishization, and reversal - were all necessary in order for him to continue with identity development in the context of his dependence on his parents.

Of particular importance for understanding the vast array of individual variations *within* perversions such as fetishism, voyeurism, sadism, or exhibitionism, are the feelings that were experienced at the time of abuse, which were repressed. If, for example, humiliation was the feeling that was most salient for that individual, then humiliation will be an essential ingredient in that individual's perversion, only reversed, so that someone else will have to suffer it at his hands. Further, humiliation of another will be the feeling that arouses sexual excitement in him, since his sexual excitement *and* his humiliation were pathologically linked during childhood (Stoller 1975, 105). These dynamics are clear in an example of exhibitionism that Stoller gives (1975, 129-131), in which an exhibitionist's need to show his penis in order to humiliate his female victim was always preceded by a situation in which he felt humiliated by his wife. In effect, whenever his unwanted feelings of humiliation threatened to bring to conscious awareness his early, original victimization, he warded off the unconscious threat by humiliating and victimizing someone else.[3] By extension of Stoller's theory,

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3 A man who needs to be humiliated in order to be sexually excited, and who seeks out *this* particular association in a perverse fantasy or act so as to temporarily stabilize his sense of identity, is also possible. In this case, Stoller argues, the man is still getting revenge, that is, still victimizing someone else, in his mind. Part of the pleasure in this case comes from feeling and thinking that he is controlling the other person's sexual response. Stoller says these dynamics are more hidden, in that the hostility and revenge are disguised in the fantasies that accompany an apparently masochistic act (1975, 58). It is clear from Stoller's work that both women and men can become perverse, both women and men can require humiliation in order to be sexually aroused, and both women and men can fantasize and enact perversions that reflect this association. Yet because Stoller's focus is on perversion in males, he does not describe the etiology of perversion in females. He does suggest though, that perversion in women is harder to see because "...the rules of the game at present in our

this applies to all repressed feelings as they relate to perversion. If fear was the most salient feeling experienced by an individual, then fear will figure highly in the reversed perversion, and the expression of fear in another will be the most sexually exciting for that individual. The same applies to feelings of powerlessness, mystery, risk, and revenge (Stoller 1975, 134). Whatever feelings were experienced and repressed, will be sought in others, through perversion, along with all the other details of original trauma. All these details vary individually, according to the unique experiential contradictions engendered in the person by each family's particular method of gender mystification (Stoller 1975, 103). What does not vary in the formation of perversion, and in the subsequent repetition of it, is the hostility and the need for revenge upon others that the original experiences engendered.

The perverse man usually feels compelled to repeat his perversion over and over again, because the pleasure experienced with the relief of anxiety and sexual gratification only lasts temporarily. Since his original ambivalent experience is part of his identity, is *in* him, it continues to disrupt his sense of secure identity. He resolves the insecurity by repeating the perversion. That way, he gets his unwanted feelings out of himself, and onto someone else, through reversal. In addition, the regeneration of sexual desire

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society demand that this [perverse "attack"] take the form (but not the substance) of passivity" (1975, 109). This may be the case, he suggests, for some, but not all, prostitutes for example, who look like they are submitting to, and being humiliated and victimized by, others. I think another reason perversion in women may be more hidden (and Stoller only implies this, but does not state it) is that women can hide their perverse dynamics in the abuse they perpetrate on a child who will later become perverse (1975, 191). The implied perversity of the two women who forced the boy to wear feminine clothing, in the example I referred to earlier, would be a good example of this. The implication of this of course, is that there may be far more perverse women than we know about, that is disguised in the social role of mothering.

reactivates the perverse dynamics since they are linked in his identity. So, whenever sexual desire is stimulated or evoked, the perverse mechanism is almost automatically reactivated, thus contributing to the repetition of perversion.

The consequences of true perversion or severe gender mystification, which are extreme hostility and the need to project unwanted feelings onto another repeatedly (Stoller 1975, 126), cannot be dealt with in culturally acceptable or normatively available ways; sadism and voyeurism are examples of such consequences.

Normative perversion, on the other hand, refers to gender mystification or confusion that is culturally applied and is less severe (as opposed to that specifically applied by parents who are presumably themselves perverse), the consequences of which can be worked out, that is, defended against, through reversal and distortion in culturally available and acceptable ways. As with true perverse symptoms, these normatively perverse defenses enable men to reverse the damage done by gender mystification, and they reveal in their contents the cultural elements that went into their formation, the defenses activated to cope with the damage inflicted by social norms, and the hostility underlying the defenses. All this is evident in pornography, which I will discuss shortly.

The culturally applied gender mystification with which men collectively are traumatized is the structural repression of the feminine. Men are required to lose or repress their fundamental feminine identification in order to become and remain masculine (Stoller 1975, 98-9). Stoller emphasizes that the biggest promoter of perversion is the obscuring of sexual difference for males that derives from having to separate from (in fact, repress) feminine identification. I emphasize, while not criticizing his theory, that

males are repeatedly confronted with ideologies of sexual difference as defenses against the likeness to the feminine. I emphasize the role of already institutionalized defenses against the feminine in exacerbating the problem of gender confusion, so that men are not enabled culturally to acknowledge their feminine identification, their similarity to the feminine. Just as in true perversion, individual men were not allowed to know what was being done to them by their parent(s) (Stoller 1975, 97), so in collective patriarchal culture, men are not allowed to know they've lost this fundamental part of themselves, because patriarchal ideologies, social practices and institutions tell men that they are superior in all ways to women, and that anything associated with the feminine is to be disparaged, disregarded, or assailed. Hyperbolized self-aggrandizement and the assertion of superiority and power over others in order to relieve gender anxiety is the whole psychodynamic purpose of perversion (Stoller 1975, 126). So, the ubiquitous ideologies of male supremacy and female subordination are the institutionalized defenses against, and the symptoms of, unstable and defensive masculinity, and are thus perversions. They are meant to de-mystify or clarify ambivalent gender for men by exaggerating the difference between women and men. Yet, they actually preclude clarification and the stabilizing of gender identity for men, because they deny men's authentic internal identification with the feminine, and they work cumulatively and reflexively.

Since the identification with the feminine continues to exist nonetheless in the *life* of male bodies, in their very identities, and since they are required to deny and disparage it, it continually threatens to disrupt their sense of self. The success of defensive attempts to control the feminine within themselves, or in others, through domination, reduction, ridicule, assertion

of superiority and hyperseparateness, is short-lived, since the feminine is *in* them, and since women, by their presence, remind men of what they are trying to control and avoid acknowledging. Therefore, the defensive attempts at controlling the feminine are repeated, as evidenced by patriarchal theory and practice.[4] Thus, male identity may be said to be compulsive, for it is in perpetual defense against itself. It is for this reason, I think, that Stoller finds that men are more perverse than women, and that they develop more "bizzare" perversions. He suggests: "In men, perversion may be at bottom a gender disorder (that is, a disorder in the development of masculinity and femininity)..." (Stoller 1975, 99).

Just as in true perversion, unstable and defensive masculine identity is worked out by compulsive engagement in perverse acts, so too, what we think of as normal male sexuality may be the working out of unstable and defensive gender identities. Ethel Spector Person (1980) finds that sexuality and a sense of secure identity are much more closely linked for men than for women. In agreement with Stoller, she argues that sexuality as a drive, (the release of libidinal instinctual energy) is not the cornerstone of identity, as traditional psychoanalysts believe, but a vehicle for the expression of non-sexual meanings that derive from early infantile experience in relation to women. For men, however, sexuality may be the mainstay in the establishment of gender identity (Person 1980, 50). This means that men apparently are able to confirm or consolidate their masculine identities through sex with women. The non-sexual meanings that are conveyed through male sexuality are the establishment of gender difference from

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4 One would think that male superiority and female inferiority would eventually be evident, if true. Since it is not true, and since the need to proclaim it stems from unstable gender development that needs continual stabilization, such ideas, in all their manifestations, have to be reiterated over and over again.

women, the overcoming of primary identification with women, the satisfaction of dependency and intimacy needs from women, and the expression of dominance and power over women (Person 1980, 57). The compulsiveness of male sexuality stems from the fact that these functions of sex are continually necessary, because male identities are never firmly established. Since sexuality, like identity in general, carries the unconscious record of the early, uncomfortable and repressed experiences of dependence, powerlessness, and erotic connection in relation to women, conflicts and defenses surrounding these experiences will be evident in male sexual expression when they are later felt in relation to, and appropriated from, women, as Person shows. Women also use sexuality as a means to pursue the non-sexual motives of intimacy, connection, and dependence. However, as Chodorow (1978), Dinnerstein (1976), Eichenbaum and Orbach (1983), Griffin (1981), and Rich (1980, 1986) show, the procurement of these from men is extremely difficult, because the nuclear family structure, which produces gendered personalities with differing relational abilities, generally precludes men from developing and therefore expressing empathic qualities in sexual, or any other, relationships.

Thus, compulsive male sexuality, as it is usually expressed in patriarchal culture, may be seen as the normatively perverse - that is, reversed, distorted, and hostile - consequence of repressed erotic connection developed in relation to women in infancy. As a normative perversion, compulsive male sexuality illustrates clearly how symptoms are formed which express the very essence of conflict and the resolution of it. For through compulsive male sexuality, which requires the use of female bodies, heterosexual men are able to deny their original feminine identification, thus restoring temporary security in their sense of masculinity. Simultaneously

they are able to appropriate what has been repressed: aspects of themselves that now reside solely in the bodies of women. There is always truth, however distorted, in the symptom. I suggest that this compulsion may help to explain the ubiquitous presence of images of female bodies in most of patriarchal institutions, a compulsion which can be most clearly seen in visually-oriented institutions such as advertising, the rock music and video industries, and in film. Men's collective "erotic neuros[e]s", that is, perversion, (Stoller 1975, 101), is visible everywhere, not just in sexuality, but wherever women's bodies and body parts are used as props to support the collective male identity. Pornography is one, very clear example of this perversion.

Authentic erotic connection to another person is only possible, I think, when mind and body operate together in one person, so that lost parts of the self do not need to be retrieved by appropriating them from another, and so that love and empathy rather than hate and revenge are felt for another. In this sense, eroticism has less to do with sexuality and more to do with internal self-integrity, such that two whole persons may relate (Griffin 1981; Whitbeck 1984). In fact, I suggest, as Susan Griffin does, that eroticism *is* the integrity between mind and body. It can include sexual experience, but is not confined to it. Pornography is the opposite of eroticism.

In pornography, men are preoccupied with women's bodies and body parts, because they need their own bodies back. What men control and appropriate through pornography (and through compulsive sexuality and through women's services) is the life of their own bodies that has been repressed during the acquisition of masculinity. Due to the normative practice in patriarchal culture of women's near-exclusive parenting, the first

pleasurable erotic connectedness that men experience within their *own* bodies is developed in relation to women's bodies. When men repress this early erotic connection with their mothers in order to establish masculine gender identities, they lose this connection with their own bodies, and eroticism is thereafter located for them in the bodies of women.[5] The consequence of this is that men do not use their own bodies to develop the capacities for erotic connection, but look to women, in general, as the instruments of their own potential erotic experience.

When the desire associated with erotic connection reasserts itself, as it always does because it exists and is not allowed expression, it returns amplified and distorted. This is revealed in almost all pornography that features sexually insatiable women, and where the promise of pleasure through women's bodies is highly hyperbolized and guaranteed to be an awesome experience.

Stoller has shown that pleasure in the enactment of perversion is not just the pleasure of sexual gratification, but the relief of anxiety about gender mystification. This is also true of normatively perverse pornographic fantasies. The following discussion of pornography constitutes a description of normative pornography. Normative pornography is that pornography that is continually created, widely available and used in order to relieve anxiety about gender mystification. This gender mystification is culturally applied. It is the consequence of males having to repress feminine identification, and this, in turn, is the consequence of standard child-rearing practices that

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5 Women are also clearly alienated from their own bodies in patriarchal culture, but this alienation is not due to difficulties with the establishment of gender. It is due to the value of female bodies in patriarchal culture, and the way women's bodies have been used by men for the appropriation of their lost parts. This devaluation is internalized through the mother-daughter relation.

require women to be the persons who are identified with, and the persons to be separated from. Normative pornography is that pornography that allows men to work out, through reversal, distortion and hostility, their anxieties about feminine identification, and more specifically, their anxieties which are the result of having to deny it. So, normative pornography is all pornography that functions as the easiest way to restore power over women, the feminine, by exercising it upon them through objectification, domination, humiliation and brutality. Through the objectification, domination, humiliation, and brutalizing of the women in pornography, men can establish their difference from, and superiority to, the feminine within themselves. They disavow their feminine identification this way, and get control of it. Through reversal and revenge, men collectively establish their different and better masculine identities, and the experience of orgasm when they succeed reinforces their success.

Since the majority of pornographic content is characterized by its emphasis on the humiliation, degradation, powerlessness, neediness, dependence, and fear of women, as well as the hyperbolized erotic attractiveness of women's bodies (Griffin 1981), pornography as a normative perversion reveals clearly that men hold women responsible for these same feelings that they originally felt in their own bodies. These feelings, and the erotic connection to a woman's body, were a condition of infantile existence for men, as they were for all infants who were dependent on a relatively powerful woman for survival, during the process of identity formation. Users of pornography look to the women in pornography to express these aspects of repressed experience, and pornographers make women express these through the various stagings of threat, rape, beating a..d torture, or through mere passivity.

Pornography is a vehicle for expressing the hostility to women that is the affective residue of repressed feelings generated during the processes of identity formation. Pornography provides the means for taking revenge on women through reversal, so that women are forced to feel these feelings. In this sense, I suggest that part of the pleasure experienced by men in seeing women victimized in pornography may be the distorted pleasure of reconnection with their own lost feelings, as well as expressing hostility, establishing masculinity, and experiencing orgasm.

Hostility is evident in all pornography, even in pornography that is not considered by some as violent or aggressive. I argue, as Stoller does, that all pornography is hostile because all pornography requires a victim in order to be exciting for the user (1975, 64-5, 109). "...No victim, no pornography" (Stoller 1975, 65). So, for example, pornography that apparently displays nothing more than female nudity can also suggest hostility, only the hostility is more hidden than in a depiction of a woman who is being tortured (Stoller 1975, 109). In an actual perverse act of torturing a woman, as opposed to the symbolic act of doing it with pornography, the hostility is not hidden at all. In this case, "...the object[s] must be truly - not symbolically - harmed or even destroyed, soiled with excrement (or words), or slashed, wounded, and physically brutalized" (Stoller 1975, 132-3). This illustrates Stoller's conceptualization of perversion as existing along a continuum. The hostility felt in the "sexual looking" at a naked woman is the hostility, in lesser degree, of sadism - the thought and feeling that the user is "...acting forcefully, sadistically, upon an unwilling woman: he is doing what, so goes his fantasy, she decidedly does not want" (Stoller 1975, 108). Stoller illustrates this element of sadism when he compares the sexual looking at a woman on a beach, a woman who, let us say, does not mind if

she's looked at, and the sexual looking at a woman when she does mind, such as when she is acting upon the assumption that she is in a private, as opposed to a public, situation. Stoller argues that usually, the looker would only be sexually excited when he fantasizes that he is looking at her against her will (1975, 109-110), always depending on his particular psychodynamics. This is what makes the woman an object and a victim. What looking at a representation of a naked woman has in common with looking at a representation of a tortured woman, is the desire to degrade and/or destroy her (Stoller 1975, 108-9). In voyeurism, the looker projects his hostility onto real women rather than representations of them, and the risks and dangers of losing or establishing his identity, and of succeeding or failing to reverse dynamics, are real rather than simulated as in pornography, or in imagination. Sexual looking is on the normative end of the perverse continuum, and voyeurism is near the truly perverse end.

Sexual looking is a normative perversion for most men in patriarchal culture because of the contradictory messages about women's bodies that exacerbate already difficult differentiation for males in cultures where women mother (Stoller 1975, 96, 98-100, 108). Curiosity about women's body parts is heightened into almost permanent mystification of those parts (and women as whole persons) for males, when looking at them is both forbidden and encouraged with the promise of reward in childhood:

> the pornography of nudes will be ubiquitous when a class - in our society, males - is unceasingly informed, openly and subliminally, from childhood on, that they may not look, but that if they could the vision would be astonishing. (Stoller 1975, 96)

This is a pervasive and cumulative contradictory message that boys and men internalize not only during identity development within their own families, but during their socialization in the wider culture. Reflecting the circular

nature of this process, this mystification, which confuses the discovery of anatomical difference for males (Stoller 1975, 98) is itself the consequence of male identification with women, an identification that males have a difficult time exorcising. Collectively, males are apparently mystified about the feminine. This mystification informs child-rearing practices through ideology about the differences between girls and boys, women and men, and through the institution of motherhood, which requires and ensures that women will be the persons with whom males and females identify and from whom they separate.

The safety features or defense mechanisms evident in true perversion are also evident in normative pornography. Fetishization, dehumanization, splitting, and idealization are all means of reducing the threat or power of the object by fragmenting it into parts so that it is not overwhelming and intolerable (Stoller 1975, 122-34). By reducing the wholeness of women, the overwhelming nature of repressed feelings is also reduced, and then reinvented in manageable aspects so that they are safer to approach. Of course, it is not only in pornography that women are idealized, fetishized, dehumanized, and split off from male consciousness. Since these are defenses that are developed in early infancy to protect males from remergence with the feminine, so that their discreet male identities can continue to develop, these defenses are manifested in almost all male creations that have been developed in the context of patriarchal culture where women perform exclusive mothering work. All perversions are methods of self-preservation. I think they are clearest in pornography because of the graphic nature of it.

Normative pornography is safe in another way. In it, the risks and dangers of becoming merged with the feminine and losing identity are

simulated or fantasized, and so is the revenge. Simulation, as Stoller suggests, means that it is several times reinvented and removed (that is, mediated), by the unconscious and by various media apparati, from the risks and dangers that were originally encountered and from the risks and dangers inherent in relating to a real human being who might re-evoke some of the original feelings, and therefore from the risks and dangers of confronting repressed feelings in the self. In normative pornography the risks and dangers are always arranged so that the user will triumph over them, without knowing they are there, since they are embodied by women and the roles they play in pornography.[6] Unfortunately, the user's hostility is not simulated, since he brings it with him to activate his excitement. Thus, although normative pornography is different from truly perverse acts which involve real, immediate risks and recapitulations with real people, it is a real institution that has real consequences for women and men, as I, and others (Griffin 1981; Lederer 1980; Steinem 1983; Wendell 1983) have outlined.

Not all men are sexually stimulated by the same normative pornographic images, and Stoller has shown why this is so. In order for a particular pornographic depiction to be arousing for a man, it has to approximate the particular unresolved childhood dynamics of risk and danger, the feelings experienced and repressed during identification and separation, and the defenses activated to cope with them. These all vary individually, according to the unique experiential contradictions engendered within each individual in each person's family, leaving each one with a unique constellation of

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6 I refer the reader to chapter five of Stoller's book (1975) for a very clear account of the relationship between an individual's personal history and pornography that is later found to be arousing for him. This illustration is not one of normative pornography, but it serves the function of clarifying concepts that are common to all pornography, according to Stoller.

feelings to be sought and reversed. In addition, the approximation of these details in the pornographic depiction have to be safe (that is, reduced and disguised) enough that the original hostility felt is not so great that it overwhelms the sense of excitement. If the hostility is not masked enough, if the depiction threatens to reveal the original feelings and hits home, it will be too frightening, and not exciting. On the other hand, if the depiction does not approximate the man's sense of risk, feelings associated with it, and the defenses originally activated, the depiction will not arouse him at all. That individual will not have his hostility activated, and the depiction will be boring (Stoller 1975, 116-17). I think the fact that there are individual variations in response to pornographic images, that some men are aroused and others are not, as indicated by Malamuth and Donnerstein's experimental research on pornography (1984), confirms Stoller's theory and observations that an individual's personal and sexual history will shape that individual's response to pornography.

Yet the fact that so many men do find pornography appealing, that so many men do take advantage of this normative perversion to help them express unwanted feelings through women and the roles they play in pornography, also confirms that a need to take revenge on women exists and that pornography meets that need. All normative pornography has women depicted as victims and women displaying the various repressed aspects of infantile experience, indicating that the users (and producers) of pornography first felt these feelings in relation to women, and that they are attempting to reverse, control, and appropriate them.

Stoller emphasizes the repetitive cycle of gender mystification for men and the consequent feelings of hostility felt toward women whenever females are the primary objects of identification for children. He focuses on

the consequent importance for men of establishing difference from women. I wish to emphasize the equally important point that males will probably have a difficult time overcoming feminine identification, and will continue to be mystified about the feminine, as long as masculinity requires them to reject it. As long as men collectively are not enabled to acknowledge the feminine identification within themselves, the repressed feminine will continue to be a problem carried by women, as is evident in pornography and other forms of victimization of women.

In summary, the oppression of women, which includes the institution of motherhood, is a culturally systemic problem that distills into individual conflict about women in continual circular fashion. In general, what is not resolved culturally is not resolved individually, and vice versa. This is not universally true for everyone however; if it were, there would be no change in cultures and in individuals, and there would be no feminist resistance to male hostility. Rather than seeing male contempt for women as normal as Freud did (Chodorow 1978, 144), feminists seek to discover and understand the conditions under which this contempt is developed, internalized, and perpetuated.

Patriarchal culture supports the generation and repetition of hostility toward women through ideological, social, and institutional means. The institution of motherhood is the cornerstone in the development of hostility toward women, because it produces internal object relations that are distorted to the disadvantage of women. In circular fashion, the oppression of women by men is expressed in the repression of the feminine in masculine development, which in turn ensures that ambivalence and hostility are continually generated toward women. In general, men who grow in an anti-female culture, form identities that are anti-female. The

repression of the feminine within the collective masculine psyche, and the hostility felt by men to women, are then given approved cultural form in the various manifestations of patriarchal culture.

When men collectively deny and avoid a primary and significant part of existence, namely, the uncomfortable feelings that emanate from the body, and when uncomfortable feelings are inextricably associated with women because women mother, men will continually and collectively attempt to reintegrate this lost aspect of existence through the bodies of women, in ways that make these feelings less uncomfortable. The patriarchal system, like all organic systems, ensures that it gets back what it needs, in this case, by controlling, suppressing, and appropriating women's bodies. Since the oppression of women is not an authentic resolution to internal, collective male conflict, conflict returns and continually threatens those who attempt to suppress it. Thus more denial, more control, and more need for appropriation are created.

Normative defenses against unwanted feelings and the women who embody them, such as pornography, are collective compulsions or addictions that are produced and reproduced systemically. They are addictive because they work and because they don't work. Pornography works temporarily because it restores stability to masculine identities, it allows for the expression of socially sanctioned (and induced) hostility toward women, it enables men to appropriate repressed feelings, and it is sexually arousing. But it does not work, and is resorted to repeatedly, because it actually precludes authentic resolution of conflict about women and about repressed feelings. It prevents men from acknowledging that unwanted feelings are in themselves, not in women, and that women become the carriers of these feelings because masculine identities are

forged in relation to women. It prevents men from acknowledging, and therefore from questioning, the hostility they feel toward women because women are the carriers of feelings they wish to avoid. It prevents men from acknowledging the fragile nature of their identities such that, in general, the only way they feel like men is when they can appropriate aspects of themselves in a controlling and dominating way. And finally, it prevents men from considering how their sexual arousal is linked both to their hostility toward women and the repressed feelings they see displayed by real and fantasized women.

There are other variables, besides the dynamics of identity development within patriarchal culture and the availability of existing normative defenses, that contribute to the motivation, the content, and the appeal of pornography. These other variables include the economic motive for the production of pornography, varying community standards which affect the content that is available in any one community, and desensitization to particular contents of pornography. Desensitization may induce some producers and retailers to create and sell more shocking pornographic depictions in order to alleviate boredom in their consumers and collect more profit for themselves.

I have limited my discussion to the internal psychic dynamics that are generated within patriarchal culture that combine to give pornography a particular content, motivation, and appeal for men. The particular content is the victimization of women. The particular motivation is the expression of hostility toward women. The particular appeal is the reduction of anxiety about unwanted feelings, the reduction of anxiety being accomplished by the reclamation of power over women and the feelings with which they are associated. I acknowledge that the content, motivation and appeal exist

along a continuum, as perversion does, according to the psychic dynamics generated within individual men. I focus on male identity development, male manifestations of ambivalence toward women, and male preoccupation with female bodies because it is the collective male subjective experience of women that is reflected in pornography, and in all culturally institutionalized normative defenses against women.

In the next chapter I will criticize three alternative theoretical approaches to understanding pornography and discuss their contributions to understanding it.

CHAPTER THREE: THREE ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES TO UNDERSTANDING PORNOGRAPHY

In this chapter, I evaluate critically three alternative approaches to understanding pornography. They are catharsis theory, pornography as false consciousness, and pornography as sexual reality.

Catharsis Theory

When it is applied to pornography, catharsis theory is used to explain the beneficial consequences of pornography to the men who use it, and to society in general. For the user, pornography is argued to be an aid to the release of tension that is caused by having to sublimate sexual energy that is considered to be instinctual (Bart and Jozsa 1980, 203). The experience of tension is considered to be uncomfortable for men, and ultimately, destructive, for when the tension becomes too great, men may be compelled to release it upon others in a harmful way (Bart and Jozsa 1980; Griffin 1980, 1981). This is where the beneficial consequence of pornography for society accrues. Pornography, according to proponents of catharsis theory, is a safe way to channel and dissipate built up, frustrated, or blocked sexual energy, which would otherwise be directed toward, or discharged upon real people in society. So, pornography "protects" society from the users' sexual energy according to this approach, and that is why catharsis theory is often referred to as "safety valve" theory (Bart and Jozsa 1980, 203; Kutchinsky 1983, 295).

According to this theory, the motivation for producing and using pornography would appear to come from nature, as do the content and the

appeal of it. I have one major criticism of catharsis theory as it relates to the motivation, content, and appeal of pornography. The idea that pornography is cathartic depends, I think, upon the assumption that male sexuality is hostile by nature. I have argued that hostility, as a constituent of what we call normal male sexuality is a symptom of pathology in patriarchal culture, and is not natural or normal, though it does come to look like it is. Because of this assumption of normal male sexuality as hostile by nature, I find catharsis theory to be a very pessimistic theory, and one that contributes to the ongoing expression of hostility toward women.

Catharsis theory assumes that male sexual energy is by nature violent and uncontrollable, and that its violent character is also naturally directed toward women. There is an unstated equation between inherent animal violence and male sexuality, with women as the objects of it (Griffin 1980). These assumptions are a direct remnant of Freud's biologically deterministic theory of sexuality. According to Freud, both sexual hostility (Bart and Jozsa 1980, 203) and male contempt for women (Chodorow 1978, 144) are biological givens that determine male sexual psychology. The consequences of holding such assumptions are made clear in catharsis theory, as it relates to pornography. To avoid neuroses or perversion in the individual man (Person 1980, 38), and to avoid violence and destruction in society, the channelling and dissipation of male libido should be encouraged, or at very least allowed (Kutchinsky 1983).

Berl Kutchinsky's study of pornography in Denmark (1983) is the most popular illustration of catharsis theory, and is the one most often employed to defend the use of pornography. Kutchinsky's study of the relation between sex offenses against females and the availability of pornography in Copenhagen between 1959 and 1969, strongly implied that two sex offenses

- peeping and the molestation of female children - decreased in incidence as a direct result of pornography's availability as a substitute for real victims (1983, 308-9). The incidence of rape did not decrease along with the availability of pornography, and Kutchinsky did not probe the possible association here. Some methodological criticisms concerning his categorization of sexual offenses, and neglect in accounting for changing attitudes toward sex offenses have been made of Kutchinsky's work (Bart and Jozsa 1980), and some political ones have been implied, particularly as they relate to the funding of such studies by countries that rely heavily on the pornography industry to produce wealth (Russell 1980). But my purpose in citing Kutchinsky's study here is to point out how the employment of catharsis theory precludes asking certain important questions about male sexuality that may help us to understand its association with hostility in patriarchal culture. For example: Why do some men want to molest children and rape women? How many men want to? What are the social conditions that contribute to the formation of male sexuality, such that it is often expressed as a violent act against children and women? Who is responsible for creating what Kutchinsky calls a "...new generation of victims..." (1983, 304) who do not feel comfortable reporting offenses? I think that the absence of such questions in Kutchinsky's study illustrates and reinforces the assumptions that male sexuality is an inherently anti-social force that must be tamed or re-directed by culture, and that hostility toward women is natural to male sexuality, rather than a symptom of pathology, as I argue.

What does the belief in an inherently violent male sex drive do for patriarchal culture? I think that by attributing to nature what is really a man-made assumption about violent and driven male sexuality, the idea and

practice of male sexuality are kept frozen within a biologically deterministic framework. This keeps the "...motor force..." (Person 1980, 38) of male sexuality, along with its supposedly inherent hostility, inevitable and unchangeable. And this means that there is no possibility of real social structural mediation of male hostility; hostility and contempt can only be appeased through channelling and dissipation. In consequence, individually and collectively, men are not held responsible for the violence toward women that emerges from their sexuality, since "normal" sexual hostility is considered a biological given, and so is male contempt for women.

If catharsis as applied to pornography meant only the release of hostility through sex, then pornography would indeed be cathartic, for as Stoller and Griffin have shown, male hostility toward women is certainly unleashed in both the content and the use of pornography. But Griffin, Stoller and Person have shown that male sexuality and hostility are not inextricably linked. They have shown that the non-sexual motives of revenge and power are what give sexuality its "motor force" in perversions, and in normal male sexuality, in conjunction with whatever is biologically given. I have shown in Chapters one and two of my thesis that the motivation for revenge and power over women is generated and exacerbated within the context of patriarchal culture, where women are responsible for child care and are devalued beings. The consequence is that a destructive ambivalence in regard to women is endemic, perpetual and self-reinforcing. Ambivalence about, and hostility toward, women are unresolved in patriarchal culture, and the resolutions to ambivalence and hostility are blocked by cultural forms such as pornography.

Since I conceptualize male sexual hostility as a symptom of pathology, I understand catharsis differently from those who support the catharsis theory

of pornography. My understanding of catharsis allows for the possibility of healing and resolution of male hostility through cultural mediation. Thus, the symptom outlook of male hostility allows for some degree of optimism, unlike the deterministic outlook of traditional catharsis theory.

Authentic catharsis as I understand it, is an experience of healing, rather than the mere release and appeasement of tension, frustration, hostility, or anti-social forces that pro-pornography catharsis theory seems to suggest. On an individual level, the healing process is enabled by assisting the person to reconnect with feelings and knowledge of the self that have been repressed, and that live on in the form of symptoms (Griffin 1980, 139). Continued hostility would always be taken as symptomatic, that is, indicative of ongoing internal conflict that is not being resolved. The treatment of the person with the symptom would include comprehending the story the symptom tells about that person's experience, and eventually discovering the source of the conflict by putting together fragments of the story. Eventually, the repressed feelings the symptom expresses or externalizes are acknowledged and truly incorporated into the psyche, not denied and projected. Treatment would not consist of informing the individual man that the more he expresed his symptom, the more likely it would disappear as is implied in pro-pornography catharsis theory. As the title of Susan Griffin's essay on the subject states, this sort of "treatment" is the disease. In practice therefore, pro-pornography catharsis theory contributes to the ongoing expression of sexual hostility toward women because it does not acknowledge the pathology of male hostility.

In *Sadism and Catharsis: The Treatment is the Disease* (1980), Griffin points out that it is not usually assumed that obsessive fears, phobias, or compulsive habits will disappear the more they are expressed as symptoms.

They are being expressed as symptoms, and not as recognizable and integrated feelings, or aspects of experience, because the knowledge they contain about that person's experience is hidden from consciousness. In theory, and in therapeutic practice, only discovering the source of these feelings and experiences, and integrating them into the conscious psyche, will enable the symptoms to disappear (Griffin 1980, 138-9). This means that pornography will no more reduce or eliminate hostility toward women than a person repeatedly washing his hands to rid himself of the feeling that he is unclean will cure him of that compulsion. I think that pornography reinforces male hostility toward women *because* it offers a socially sanctioned channelling of hostility without bringing the user any closer to an understanding of why he feels the hostility, and why he uses this culturally available outlet to express it.

This is perhaps why we see not a decrease in hostility toward women, but an increase. I think that the increase in hostility is evident in the increased availability of pornography generally, in the greater number of available sexually violent pornographic films, and in the content of pornography itself.[1] Pro-pornography catharsis theory predicts that hostile

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1 The Fraser Report on Pornography and Prostitution concluded that pornography was much more widely available in Canada in 1985 than it was fifteen years previously. It linked the greater availability, particularly of magazines, to increased production of pornography in the United States (1985, 89). The Report adds, that in general, "This availability results from the use of all forms of media, from an increased production in some forms, if not all, and from a distribution network that has increased significantly in size to take in a far wider variety of outlets than previously. Pornography is certainly part of the content of every form of the media and is easily available in every part of the country" (1985, 89). The report acknowledges that its conclusions were not based on accurate statistics of available pornography in all its forms because such statistics were not systematically compiled over time, nor were its newer methods of transmission - video, pay television, and satellite dish - anticipated. The report therefore based its conclusions on a variety of sources such as available statistics, "indications, trends, and general observations" (1985, 87).

male sexual energy would be, or is, stabilized or reduced by watching, reading, or listening to pornography (McCormack 1985, 185; Griffin 1980, 135; Kutchinsky 1983). If pornography were cathartic in the way its proponents said it should be, that is, if sexual energy were released, and men's violent sexual nature were appeased through the channelling and expression of it, why would men produce and consume more pornography, and more violent pornography?[2]

The psychoanalytic theories I employ would predict that the violence in pornography, and the quantity of it, would increase over time because the real causes of hostility toward women are not being acknowledged and addressed in culture, and because the internalized conflict that men have

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As far as the escalation in violent themes in pornography is concerned, The Fraser Report similarly affirms an increase in violence. According to the Ontario Film Review Board for example, in 1982, one out of twenty films depicted sexual violence. By 1983, one out of nine films did so (1985, 65).

Finally, in regard to the content of pornography, a presentation by the Toronto Area Caucus of Women and the Law to the Committee indicated that there was "...much more incest, pedophilia, violence and humiliation of women than there was ten years ago" (1985, 66).

2 Clearly, there should also be a reduction or a stabilization in the incidence of sexual offenses against women, since pornography is supposed to be a substitute for real enactments of hostility, according to catharsis theory. I think that it is an agreed upon observation by feminists who work with female victims of male sexual violence, that there has been no such reduction or stabilization, that instead there may be an increase. However, I do not offer any verification of this observation with statistics since I do not think it possible to accurately correlate the availability of pornography with either a reduction, or an escalation, of sexual violence. For example, it is not possible to know which men, and how many of them, would commit an act of sexual violence if pornography were not available to them as a substitute. Conversely, it is not possible to know which men, and how many of them, commit sexually violent acts because of the availability of pornography. I think that even when men admit to the use of pornography as a prelude or adjunct to enacting a sexually violent act, that pornography can only be considered as an indicator of existing hostility, and not as a causal factor, since the hostility has to present before the pornography could help to express it, as Stoller has pointed out. Pornography is not the cause of hostility (but the channel for it); hostility is the cause of pornography. The most we can say in regard to catharsis theory's prediction is that enactments of male sexual hostility toward women continue and are endemic in patriarchal culture, in spite of the increase in production, availability, and consumption of pornography.

about women, is not being resolved through pornography. As I have argued previously, pornography really prevents the authentic resolution of conflict. Therefore, the conflict, and the need to solve it, becomes more insistent, and this insistence would be evident in the content, and the greater quantity of pornography over time, as with any symptom. I take this non-resolution of the problem to be an accurate explanation for the increase in more violent pornography and for the increase in pornography generally. Unfortunately, I doubt that empirical evidence will substantiate this fully, because psychoanalytic theories about the relation between repression and manifest symptoms, and the relation of cultural blockages to these, are difficult to measure and prove to the satisfaction of scientific endeavor. On the other hand, cross-cultural and cross-historical studies that compare the availability of cultural forms (such as customs or rituals) to help express and resolve hostile feelings, with the sexual beliefs and fantasies about women and the incidence of violence against them, may at least begin to substantiate the claims of my theory.

There are other factors that may contribute to the increased availability of pornography, the greater number of available pornographic forms, and the increased hostile content of pornography. They include the following: a more widespread acceptance of pornography on the part of the public, a reduction in censorship of images that formerly may have been censored, a general proliferation of media technology such as video cassette recordings, satellite transmission, and pay television, and the existence of the women's movement. In regard to the latter, the greater availability of pornography, the greater number of pornographic forms, and the increased violent content, may be considered as a backlash against women's struggles for equality.

Authentic catharsis in regard to pervasive male hostility toward women on a cultural level, would require the recognition of hostility as a symptom of pathology in patriarchal culture, not inherent normalcy. It would require the acknowledgement of culturally-induced damage to women and men that is experienced individually. With such recognition and acknowledgement, we could then begin to alter our social arrangements, and hopefully, our collective object relations. We could also begin to offer forms through which to mediate between social structures and personal experience, as collective rituals used to do, with the purpose of guiding men through the processes of authentic expression and incorporation of feelings they wish to deny and project onto women. The ultimate purpose of genuine cathartic rituals and practices is to prevent severe blockages of energy, which do become destructive to the individual, and then to others. Catharsis exists, but pornography is not cathartic.

Pornography as False Consciousness

In this critique of the theory of false consciousness, I am going to contrast the Marxist and the psychoanalytic conceptions of myth and containment, as they relate to pornography. In the Marxist view, myth is always false. It is an ideological tool of oppression that functions to obscure power relations in culture. Containment, according to this perspective, refers to the political suppression of powerless people by those who hold power. From my psychoanalytic point of view, myth gives a condensed picture of the truth of power relations in society, and containment refers to the display or embodiment of this truth.

In *The Sadeian Woman and the Ideology of Pornography*, Angela Carter states that "All pornography derives directly from myth..." (1978, 6), in which there is no trace of real women's and men's actual experience in the world. For Carter, a Marxist feminist, all myth functions to obscure the real material conditions of existence in order to prevent women and men from experiencing their oppression and instituting change. Myth obscures reality by abstracting elements of human experience and reifying them as whole representations of the human self. In pornography, this is done by the reduction of women (and men) to their anotomical sexual function. It then "...enlarges this aspect, simplifies it and then presents it as the most significant aspect of [their] entire humanity" (Carter 1978, 4). Myth also obscures reality by false universalization, so that particular experiences of women and men get lost in archetypal, symbolic representations of the supposedly inevitable, unchanging, and universal "human" experience.

Universalizing is a method of erasing individual experience by denying the complexity, diversity, and particularity of it. In pornography, universalization is achieved by representing female and male sexualities as if they exist without social construction; that is, outside the scope of economic and socio-historical influences. So, pornography reifies aspects of feminine and masculine existence into archetypal images. Thus pornography, like all myth, is false consciousness, "...consolatory nonsense..." (Carter 1978, 5), that, by obscuring the real material conditions of life, placates women and men with images or ideas of reality. Carter's solution to the problem of pornography which conceals the real class dynamics of power and powerlessness between women and men, is the creation of a "moral pornography", (1978, 19), which would reveal the economic power imbalance between women and men to its users. Moral pornography would

be an antidote to false consciousness by offering a critique of the economic dependence and sexual servitude of women. According to Carter, the Marquis de Sade was just such a moral pornographer, who exposed this reality and was punished for it.

I think Carter offers a very clear example of Marxist feminist analysis of women's sexual inequality in patriarchal culture. She believes that women's sexual inequality derives from their historical economic dependence upon men. Her argument for a moral pornography rests upon the hope that exposing the truth of women's sexuality as labour would help transform society, as, she argues, Sade's had the potential to do (Carter 1978, 24). The strength of Carter's analysis of pornography is that it helps to explain how the economic power of male groups is held, and how authentic and diverse social and sexual realities are unrecognized, unrealized, and/or destroyed through the control of consciousness. The control of consciousness derives from the ruling class's control of, and access to, the means of production, signification, and dissemination of its versions of reality.

However, Carter and I have different conceptions of myth and containment. This difference results in our understanding pornography differently in terms of its motivation, content and appeal. The fundamental difference in our perspectives is that Carter focuses on the destructive aspects of myth and containment, whereas I focus on their positive or constructive aspects, particularly their ability to reveal, rather than conceal, the potential for change individually and culturally. This difference is in addition to the obvious one, namely that she approaches myth and containment from a Marxist and I, from a psychoanalytic perspective, which I do not believe are mutually incompatible conceptual frameworks.

From Carter's Marxist feminist perspective, myth refers to the collective ideologies of the dominant male class that holds economic power. Myth creates false consciousness when it is internalized, believed, and lived. It prevents women, and men who do not have economic power, from gaining knowledge about themselves and the larger world. Thus, it obscures the truth of who people are and who they could be, socially and sexually. The result is that people are alienated from their own power as individuals and as collectives. Myth, from this perspective, is always false. That is, it reflects and constructs only one version of reality, that of the dominant group, while it obliterates the authentic and diverse social and sexual realities of those who do not hold power. Containment, from this perspective, refers to the suppression of the subordinate group(s) by those who hold power. So, the dominant group produces mythology to "contain" , or hold in check, the power of the subordinate classes that would otherwise erupt if those powerless groups realized their potential as active, conscious human beings.

In my view, myth is akin to all socially created forms, such as theories, institutions and social practices. My thesis throughout has been that all of these forms are synonymous with symptoms. Symptoms are dynamic responses to, and reflections of, the cultural environment in which they arise. They are outcomes of the processes of living, and they manifest on an individual and a collective level. They give a condensed or distilled picture of that culture and people's experience of it. Symptoms simultaneously reveal problems in the cultural environment in which they develop, and they indicate solutions to those problems. From this perspective therefore, myth is not false. Rather, it expresses the truth , in projected and distorted form, of social conditions, and it reveals the way in which people who internalize those social conditions attempt to resolve the damaging consequences of

them. The people whose myths have reached and maintained public

consciousness are male. Therefore, I see the collective mythology of

patriarchal culture as reflecting, and responding to, systemic problems that

men have with women, as a result of gender and power arrangements in

patriarchal culture. Let me apply this to pornography. For Carter,

pornography's "...fantasy relation to reality" (1978, 6) is enough reason to

discredit its capacity to reveal its origins in the social structure. In contrast, I

see the reality of the social structure "contained", embodied, or displayed,

in distilled form, in all pornography. From my perspective, myths are

containers or holders of knowledge about culture and its arrangements.

They are stories, in psychic shorthand, that reflect the dynamic interaction

between individual and collective experience within particular social,

political, economic, ideological, historical and sexual environments.[3] The

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3 This is in contrast to the traditional Jungian view of myth that I think does not place "human" experience within these contexts, but places them instead in the realm of the eternal, universal, and essentially unmediated "truth". What I do take from Jungian, and other, psychoanalytic theorists is the notion that whatever psychic material is not dealt with will find its way into myth, and that some aspects of existence will always need to be dealt with, such as fear, loss, ongoing transformation , and death. Since these aspects of existence (of reality) are difficult to comprehend, articulate, resolve, and contain within the individual body, they are contained or embodied in mythological stories and personifications that reflect ongoing struggles of the collective unconscious to deal with these realities, and offer guidance for resolution of these struggles. So, when I argue that myths are containers of knowledge about culture and its arrangements, I am referring to both the ideological myths of man-made culture, like pornography, and to the grand mythologies of cultures that keep occuring and repeating because the knowledge they are attempting to bring to conscious awareness is continually necessary because it is not being integrated into the collective psyche. In the case of pornography, the myths are normative. In the case of grand mythology, the myths appear to be underground phenomena, out of step with the dominant culture. The re-emergence of Goddess worship in some feminist circles in western male-dominated cultures is a good example of the kind of mythology that is out of step with the dominant culture. I take the re-emergence of Goddess worship recently as an indicator of the widely shared need felt by women (and some men) in patriarchal cultures, to bring into their own consciousness knowledge and values of the positive feminine that have not been allowed expression,

myths of pornography in my view, do express the truth about unequal power relations beween women and men in patriarchal culture, that are manifested economically, politically, socially, and sexually, and they indicate the potential solutions to the power imbalance. I do not disagree with Carter that containment also refers to suppression. Women and their sexual, social, economic, and political power are indeed suppressed in patriarchal culture. In Chapter one, I offered an overview of a theory which might help to explain the dynamics and circular processes through which this suppression occurs.

I have tried to show that "Pornography is the communicated sexual fantasy of a dynamically related group of people" (Stoller 1975, 115). There are real social and personal histories, psyches, and affects involved in the creation of, and in the responses to, pornography because of this relation, though Carter argues the opposite (1978, 6, 9, 18). The personal histories, psyches, and affects in collective male identities are what make pornography work for so many men. Without ambivalent gender identity, and without the hostility that is generated and exacerbated in patriarchal culture toward women, there would be no pornography, as I indicated in Chapter two. For the reasons given above, I think that a moral pornography would not work because it would not be arousing. I do not think that men use pornography to learn an economic and social history lesson, which is what she suggests a moral pornography should be created to do. I think Carter misses the entire psychodynamic purpose of pornography, which is to avoid dealing with reality, not to confront it.

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acceptance, integration and respect in patriarchal cultures, but that used to be, in pre-patriarchal times.

The psychic origins of pornography are in the internalized dynamics which create distorted object relations to the disadvantage of women. These internalized dynamics are themselves the response to external dynamics of an oppressive social structure that places women in the position of being objects of identification for men, and that then compulsively attempts to manage the ambivalent consequences of this identification. The "fantastic" nature of pornography, according to my psychoanalytic perspective, does not reveal the conscious intention to falsify or mystify the relations between women and men in order to entrench ideological and material power.[4] It does have this entrenching effect, however, because it is pervasive and internalized. Pornography's fantastic character reveals the unconscious psychic motivation of males to resolve (albeit destructively) their ambivalence toward women, by reversing the dynamics of power and powerlessness, and restoring and controlling aspects of themselves that they see embodied in women.

In order for pornography to reveal its origins in the social structure, and to indicate solutions to the individual and collective conflicts surrounding women that are consequences of that social structure, the overt content, and the affect conveyed by the content of pornography, have to be acknowledged. This is something Carter does not do, precisely because she thinks that pornography bears no relation to reality, and is only an ideological tool of suppresssion with no dynamic motivation other than the

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4 This is not to say that the conscious pursuit of money is not a motivation in the production and sale of pornography. But the economic motives of pornographers cannot explain pornography's ability to sexually arouse, nor its hostile and compulsive qualities. Pornography could not produce material wealth unless some needs in its users were being manipulated and exploited. Nor does money need to have changed hands in order for pornography to have been produced, as Susan Cole has pointed out (Cole, 1989, 30).

promotion of false consciousness. This neglect of content and affect is illustrated by her defense of Sade, in whose works she finds a political critique of conditions at the time of his writing - conditions that made social, economic, and sexual prostitutes of women. She does not find the dismemberment, corporal punishment, humiliation, and outright "...annihilation of the partner..." (Carter 1978, 142) worthy of analysis. In effect, she interprets Sade's sadism metaphorically only, and explains neither the hostility evident toward women in his pornography, nor the repetition of this hostile theme throughout patriarchal culture.

Carter and I come closest to agreement in regard to the appeal of pornography. For Carter, pornography is appealing and satisfying because it consoles many men for their lack of power and unrealized potential as whole human beings, in relation to the men who hold economic power. It placates men with ideas and images of power over women. So pornography, like all myths according to her, succeeds in fabricating the illusion of power, when the power that is really needed is the kind that comes from shared economic wealth and self-actualization. But, for Carter, the placation is entirely "cerebral", or "intellectual", that is, ideological (1978, 14, 142); real needs for power are offered the substitutes of images and ideas of power. Since the need for authentic economic and existential power is not met through ideas and images, men become addicted to ideological power, through which they are only temporarily contented (Carter 1978, 14). Ideology, "...turns the flesh into word" (Carter 1978, 13). In contrast, I argue that pornography is appealing to men because it helps to reduce anxiety about unwanted feelings (in their own flesh), by reversing and appropriating these feelings. This reversal and appropriation of unwanted feelings, I have argued, helps men to feel powerful and in control

of them, and of women. I agree with Carter that it is addictive because as a solution, pornography both works and does not work, as I indicated in Chapters one and two. But I have argued throughout that without its affective and dynamic motivation, the ideology of pornography would not work to placate men, even temporarily.

Pornography as Sexual Reality

The radical feminist position of Catharine MacKinnon (1986) has provided a valuable feminist critique of American obscenity law as it relates to pornography. One of the best contributions of MacKinnon's theory is that it helps to explain the inability of law to deal effectively with the issue of pornography from a feminist perspective, because the law is concerned with obscenity, not pornography. MacKinnon argues that obscenity is an abstraction and is a concept developed and understood from a male perspective that views morality (good and evil) as the central issue in pornography. Pornography from MacKinnon's feminist perspective, on the other hand, is the concrete practice of sexual subordination, and the politics of power and powerlessness is the central issue in pornography (MacKinnon 1986, 64). MacKinnon argues that obscenity law reflects liberal conceptions of morality that can only reproduce inequalities of power and gender because these conceptions do not grasp women's fundamental inequality in patriarchal culture. Nor can these conceptions of morality grasp women's experience of pornography, according to MacKinnon, since women's experience is not taken into consideration in the formation of these conceptions.

MacKinnon's critique is based on Andrea Dworkin's analysis that pornography is lived sexual reality and that it constructs sexual and social meaning for women and men[5] (1986, 63, 65). I am going to criticize this analysis, but first, I am going to point out the value of approaching pornography this way.

I have shown how catharsis theory makes of pornography a device , which has the consequence of making the cultural generation of hostility toward women invisible to most people. The theory of pornography as false consciousness makes pornography an ideological tool that bears no relation to reality. In contrast, MacKinnon and Dworkin have drawn attention to the lived cultural practice of pornography as a pervasive and overarching patriarchal form, to the fact that real women live with, and through pornography, and to the fact that pornography has many harmful consequences for those women, and for all women. This attention to the lived practices of culture is, in my opinion, the greatest strength of all radical feminist theories.

The premise of radical feminism is that the sexual oppression of women is the fundamental oppression (that is, more essential than race and class oppression), and that the sexual oppression of women by men is exercised in all man-made institutions and ideologies. MacKinnon's and Dworkin's view of pornography is that it is the lived practice of male domination and that it is "Central to the institutionalization of male dominance..." (MacKinnon 1986, 63). So, for them, pornography is not imagery, not representation, and not fantasy, it is sexual reality[6] (MacKinnon 1986, 66).

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5 See *Pornography: Men Possessing Women*, 1981.
6 This is also the view of Susan Cole, a Canadian radical feminist, whose book *Pornography and the Sex Crisis* (1989), is a reiteration of MacKinnon's and Dworkin's work, placed in a Canadian context.

They, like Carter, offer a good description of the external, political dynamics of oppression, an understanding of the ideological machinery through which patriarchal culture imposes its experience of the world on women, with the control of consciousness, violence, and moral authority. In short, they alert us to the ways that the male power to define and control reality, in essence creates reality for most people. What they do not offer is an adequate theory to account for the continual motivation for male power over women, or for the internal psychodynamic mechanisms that help explain the processes of sexualization and perpetuation of ideologies that express hostility toward women. In addition, their theory of sexual reality as constructed by patriarchal culture is overly deterministic.

I think MacKinnon discusses male domination of women through pornography as if it exists without motivation. It is as if the reality of male domination is sufficient to explain itself; it is, therefore it continues. In her discussion, the content and the appeal of pornography seem to be similarly self-explanatory, since she makes no comment on these either. Presumably, the content of pornography *is* nothing more than the practice of male domination, and pornography's appeal would be that it allows for this practice of domination.

MacKinnon's analysis, or lack of analysis, of male power is remarkably similar to Paulo Freire's critical Marxist perspective on systems of oppression (1986). Though Freire does not deal at all with male power over women, and MacKinnon does, they both share the theoretical weakness of making no comment on the inclination toward power by one group over another. Neither of them deals with the unconscious psychic motivations for power by oppressors, other than to suggest that it is the experience of being dominant and powerful that results in the perpetuation of domination over

others. But what then fuels the continual desire of men for power over women? What accounts for new generations of oppressors? Where does renewed hostility toward women come from? Though MacKinnon states that the feminist critique of pornography involves a political analysis of power and powerlessness (1986, 64), she, like Freire, fails to make the connection between powerlessness and the consequent distorted desire for power.

I have attempted to show in the first two Chapters of my thesis how the continual need for power over women, and the hostility felt toward them, are generated in patriarchal culture through experiences and dynamics of identity development, and are exacerbated in the context of an anti-woman culture. To understand the concept of generation, one must acknowledge some kind of dynamism that could account for the relationship between individual experience and oppressive and annihilating ideological practices of culture, as Alice Miller does (1983). Whether or not my theory is correct, some explanation of male hostility, and the mechanisms through which it is generated, is necessary in order to account for the links among male domination, sexual arousal, and pornography, and MacKinnon implies that there is a relation among these. I think that MacKinnon's lack of analysis of the motivation for power over women through pornography, and her silence on the issues of the content and appeal of pornography, stem directly from the determinism which pervades her theory. This brings me to my second criticism of it.

The sexual and gender determinism in MacKinnon's theory is conveyed in the following paragraph, taken in entirety, which was written as a refutation of Susan Griffin's work on pornography:

> Contrast this view with the feminist analysis of Andrea Dworkin, in which sexuality itself is a social construct, gendered to the ground. Male dominance here is not an artificial overlay upon an underlying

> inalterable substratum of uncorrupted essential sexual being. Sexuality free of male dominance will require *change*, not reconceptualization, transcendence or excavation. Pornography is not imagery in some relation to a reality elsewhere constructed. It is not a distortion, reflection, projection, expression, fantasy, representation or symbol either. It is sexual reality. Dworkin's *Pornography: Men Possessing Women* (1981a) presents a sexual theory of gender inequality of which pornography is a core constitutive practice. The way pornography produces its meaning constructs and defines men and women as such. Gender is what gender means. It has no basis in anything other than the social reality its hegemony constructs. The process that gives sexuality its male supremacist meaning is therefore the process through which gender inequality becomes socially real. (MacKinnon 1986, 66)

If sexuality is "gendered to the ground", then the social construction of sexuality by pornography is a closed system. MacKinnon's statement, taken from Dworkin, clearly implies that sexuality is *totally* constructed by pornography, and so is gender. Sexual and gender reality as constructed under patriarchy then, is *all* there is! This is again reminiscent of Freire's conceptualization of the pervasiveness of oppressor consciousness. He argues that usually, it is only the oppressor consciousness that individuals identify with, since they have no consciousness or knowledge of themselves apart from that which is shaped by the dominant ideology (Freire 1986, 30). But Freire at least allows for the possibility of developing critical consciousness. In fact, his efforts to raise the consciousness of oppressed people rest on this possibility.

If oppressor reality is all there is, this would mean that there are no such things as gender or sexuality apart from their patriarchal manifestations. And this means that there is nothing whatsoever that is given in human nature, contrary to what Susan Griffin believes; there is only that which is made by male-dominated culture. This raises several important questions: If all there is sexually, is that which is made or constructed by pornography and other practices of male dominance, how does "...the erotization (sic) of dominance and submission" (MacKinnon 1986, 65) *work?* What is there to

work on? Why are there some women and men who do not find submission and domination arousing? Why do individuals of the same gender find different pornographic depictions arousing? How and why do pornographic tastes vary for each individual such that some depictions are boring, and some are frightening (Stoller 1975)?

How is that change in individuals and in cultures occur if people are totally constructed by political and ideological systems of power? How does individual gender and political variation occur? How would MacKinnon account for her own standpoint outside the system of male domination if she believes individuals are totally constructed socially? Finally, how would MacKinnon account for the existence of lesbian women and homosexual men? MacKinnon herself, as a feminist, is evidence that the construction of gender and sexuality is not total, or at least that the construction is not totally controlled by male domination, and that some dynamic resistance and change is possible within systems of power. Her notion of complete sexual and gender construction by male domination fails to account for the fact that many women and men seemed to have escaped heterosexual construction.[7] Further, her theory fails to account for the finding that gender exists along a continuum (Devor 1989; Person 1980; Stoller 1975), and is not fixed at polarities of masculinity and femininity. An improvement in her approach would be to conceptualize sexual and gender construction as indeed very deep, restrictive and damaging, but to acknowledge the variable dynamics of internalization, the existence of continua, and sources of resistance and change that are strong enough to undo partly the

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7 This does not mean however, that they have escaped oppression by the structures of power.

pervasive attempts at construction, or at least strong enough to allow us to recognize them.

According to Griffin and others, what is given in human nature, are the capacities and tendencies toward individual integrity and evolution, which together account for the possibility of individual and collective transformation and variability. Without some givens, it would not be possible to damage or harm women and men, through pornography or any other social practice or institution. There would be nothing to harm because there would be only that which is constructed. There would be no experience of psychic pain, and no development of symptoms. To account for the existence of psychic pain, cultural damage, symptoms, and the reality of individual variability and cultural change, some capacity must be present that allows the individual to feel differently from the way s/he is constructed to feel, or to recognize the damage, and sometimes, to repair it. So, Griffin argues that there is some reality apart from that which is constructed and damaged, and for her that is the capacity and tendency toward Eros, the integrity and evolution of mind and body. It is this integrity and evolution that is restricted and blocked by patriarchal ideologies, institutions and social practices, causing, and reflecting, deformations within individual psyches, and in cultural practices, institutions and ideologies.

In the next chapter, I will discuss how the erotic connection between mind and body may be enhanced for men. This is one of three strategies for solving the problem of women's destructive containment of ambivalence for men in patriarchal culture that I will present in this last chapter. The other two strategies are changing child-rearing arrangements, and integrating women's knowledge into public consciousness.

CHAPTER FOUR: POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS TO THE PROBLEM OF DESTRUCTIVE CONTAINMENT

I have argued that patriarchal ideologies, social practices and institutions obstruct women's and men's capacities for individual self-renewal, and for collective evolution. They do this by making women the carriers or containers of important but unacknowledged and/or devalued feelings, skills and knowledge. The function of destructive containment for individuals and for cultures is to deny uncomfortable feelings and knowledge about reality that are difficult to acknowledge and incorporate into psychic experience. So, they remain unincorporated or split off, along with their carriers. When the denial is widespread, and when the source of the denial is systemic, the result is the institutionalized denial of women, the feelings they are associated with, and the knowledge they have developed. A destructive ambivalence toward women, felt by both women and men, and individual and collective psychic fragmentation, disintegration, or disconnection are the two major consequences of institutionalized denial of women. This also works the other way around. The institutionalized denial of women in patriarchal culture also fuels the ambivalence toward them, and contributes to personal and collective fragmentation, disintegration, or disconnection. Neither individuals nor social systems can evolve when they are presented with ideological and institutional obstacles or barriers to the assimilation of important human experience and knowledge, and when the capacities for psychic assimilation and integrity are themselves blocked and/or unrecognized by such destructive containment.

The strategies I will discuss for dealing with the problem of women's destructive containment of psychic conflict for individual men and for the

patriarchal system, aim ultimately at reducing, and ideally, eliminating, the generation of destructive ambivalence and hostility toward women, at creating women and men who are capable of psychic integrity and evolution, and at creating social systems that are capable of the same. With these two ultimate goals in mind, I discuss in the first section of this chapter the more equitable participation of men in child-rearing work. The particular aim of more involvement by men in child-rearing is to change object relations so that hostility toward women is not a developmental outcome of the gender identification process for males. Yet, more equal parenting by men does not, by itself, address the issue of male power. Hostility toward women, I have argued, is the result of women's mothering within a context of unequal power relations between women and men in the entire culture. Therefore, the power relations between women and men must be more equitable throughout culture in order for equal parenting, and equality in all of its manifestations, to be truly meaningful for children of both genders, for women, and for men. To this end, I discuss changes to the institution of motherhood, and the necessity of economic equality between women and men. In the second section, I discuss the enhancement of the erotic connection between mind and body with a focus on men. In this section I elaborate upon the dynamics of constructive containment for men, and how they could begin to deal with uncomfortable feelings in their bodies. My focus on men rather than women in this section is not meant to imply that women's integrity and evolution are unimportant or less important than men's. Rather, it is because I have identified men's fear and denial of the life of the body, and their consequent attempts to control it, as problems in patriarchal culture, that I focus my discussion of erotic integrity on men and patriarchal culture. In the final section, I discuss

the strategy of bringing into public consciousness knowledge, skills, and values that women have developed as a result of their caretaking work in patriarchal culture under conditions of oppression. This strategy is important because it makes possible the integration and application of conceptions of reality and morality that acknowledge and appreciate, rather than deny and denigrate, the normal (inherent) ambivalences of life.

These strategies intervene at different points within the individual-familial-cultural matrix. It is difficult to address these strategies separately because the interventions and their consequences have effects throughout this matrix.[1] For example, the involvement of men in fathering work would theoretically affect the psyches of male and female children positively. Yet a serious commitment to fathering requires a cultural reconceptualization of motherhood, as well as a commitment to economic equality for women. As another example, creating individual men who are capable of psychic integrity requires individual men and patriarchal culture to acknowledge that self-containment is important for their psychic health. This requires that culture provide the means for helping men to manage the conflicts that arise for them positively and creatively, rather than denying conflicts and making women embody them.

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1 R.D. Laing was perhaps the first major modern theorist to point so clearly to the conundrum that faces individuals and cultures when they wish to initiate change (Laing 1969). If the unresolved psychic dynamics of familial and social systems contributes to the damage of individual psyches, and if individual unresolved psychic dynamics contribute to the continuation of familial and cultural damage, where can authentic change begin? Though Laing provides no feminist analysis of male culture, he does make it clear that what remains unresolved in any one system - individual, family, or cultural - will be carried by the next generation in the system, and repeated. In this chapter, I indicate my belief that authentic resolution of systemic problems can be implemented simultaneously at all levels of the system - individual, familial, and collective.

Participation of Men in Child-Rearing

The primary reason that a more equitable sharing of parental responsibilities between women and men would result in decreased hostility toward women by men is that positive opportunities for male children to identify with male caretakers would be enhanced. Men would have the opportunity (and the obligation) to develop and apply their nurturing abilities, as women do, and would pass these abilities on to their male children in psychic structure, and through gender role socialization (Chodorow 1978; Eichenbaum and Orbach 1983; Kittay 1984). Male children would develop a strong sense of gendered self in relation to male bodies, as well as female bodies, who were concretely present and available to them. This would, ideally, ground their sense of masculinity within a context of an authentic physical, psychic, emotional, and cognitive relation or connection to a person like themselves, as well as to a person unlike themselves in gender. Consequently, the process of differentiation would not be structurally associated with difference from femaleness.

Male children who developed a strong sense of gendered self in relation to men, as well as to women, would not have to repress their feminine identification to become masculine, because the feelings and relational abilities that the feminine represents, and that occur during identity development, would not acquire the meaning feminine in the first place. Feelings of fear, need, and powerlessness (and any other uncomfortable feelings arising out of the condition of dependence in relation to a caretaker), as well as bodily erotic connection and comfort, would be felt in relation to men as well as women. If, in turn, male children did not repress their feminine identities, they would not subsequently be psychically preoccupied with suppressing and controlling these feelings and relational

abilities in themselves and in other men. Men would not be threatened by these feelings and abilities, nor be preoccupied with assimilating them from female bodies through the exercise of power and control. Finally, if males were not preoccupied with defending against the feminine in themselves and other men, the ideologies, social practices, and institutions that control, reduce, devalue and exert power over women, while aggrandizing and according power to men, would not be created; they would not be necessary to establish secure masculine identity.

Chodorow has suggested that there would also be a positive consequence for female children, of forming identities in relation to men as well as women. They could develop a more individuated and autonomous sense of self by identifying with, and later separating from, a person who was unlike them in gender. However, as Chodorow has also pointed out, the lesser value of a girl's gender, and her mother's, in patriarchal culture is more of a contributing factor to the problem of developing a sense of self for a girl than is the establishment of core gender identity. Eichenbaum and Orbach (1983, 1988) and Rich (1986), have shown clearly that the hostility women feel toward mothers, and later, other women, is due to internalizing the legacy of selflessness and powerlessness from their mothers, who pass on to their daughters their own lack of value during identity formation and through gender role conditioning. Therefore, I do not think that parenting by men is as necessary to the development of a girl's sense of self, as is being mothered by a woman who is accorded value and power in culture generally. I will address this issue in more detail shortly.

Men who actually fathered their children, male and female, would experience the pleasures, as well as the obligations, of participating in the development of others (Eichenbaum and Orbach 1983; Kittay 1984; Ruddick

1989). Ideally, this involvement in children's development would provide men with a more realistic understanding of the essentially contradictory or ambivalent emotional and psychic processes of the carnal and mortal body, both their children's and their own. Conceptual frameworks that arose from men's collective experience with child-rearing work would reflect an acknowledgement rather than a denial, and an appreciation rather than a denigration, of the processes of change and growth, and the uncomfortable bodily feelings that accompany these processes (Dinnerstein 1976; Griffin 1981; J.B. Miller 1976; Ruddick 1989). The possibility of men collectively generating more life-affirming (and less defensive and destructive), ethical frameworks that acknowledged dependence upon, connection to, and responsibility for others, would be greater than at present (Flax 1983; Gilligan 1982; Keller 1985; Ruddick 1987, 1989).

However, feminist object relations theorists clearly suggest, even conclude, that most men in patriarchal culture have such diminished capacity to relate to others that the idea that they could develop their nurturing skills by being caretakers, and that they could pass these on to their male children, seems at least implausible, and at most, dangerous. Nevertheless, these same theorists and others (Rich 1986; Ruddick 1989) acknowledge that socialization and internalization are not always complete or successful, and that there are, therefore, some men who are emotionally capable of, and morally committed to, the work of fathering.

The involvement of men in meaningful child-rearing work, however, is not sufficient by itself as a means to achieve a reduction or elimination of destructive ambivalence and hostility toward women. Since it is the near-exclusive parenting by women *and* the devaluation of women in the larger patriarchal context that contribute to both distorted object relations and the

development of socializing ideology that devalues women in continual and

circular fashion, male participation in child care addresses only half the

problem. The other half of the problem is the continued existence of the

structures of male power that devalue women and obstruct their access to

power. As Sara Ruddick states:

> Those of us who live with the fathers of our children will eagerly
> welcome shared parenthood - for overwhelming practical as well as
> ideological reasons. But in our eagerness, we must not forget that as
> long as a mother is not effective publicly and self-respecting privately,
> male presence can be harmful as well as beneficial. It does a woman
> no good to have the power of the Symbolic Father brought right into
> the nursery, often despite the deep, affectionate egalitarianism of an
> individual man. It takes a stong mother and father to resist
> temptations to domination and subordination for which they have
> been trained and are socially rewarded. And whatever the hard-won
> equality and mutual respect an individual couple may achieve, as long
> as a mother - even if she is no more parent than father - is derogated
> and subordinate outside the home, children will feel angry, confused,
> and "wildly unmothered". (Ruddick 1982, 227)

The institution of motherhood, and the institutionalized economic

inequality of women, have to change if culture is to acknowledge, support,

and value the work of women and of mothers in practical terms, and to

encourage men to participate in the development of children. Since these

practical changes deal directly and unequivocally with the issue of male

power, and make visible patriarchy's unacknowledged reliance upon women

for the provision of essential caretaking services, they are, and will be, met

with strong resistance.

The institution of motherhood has to change from a practice that serves

and perpetuates patriarchy (Rich 1986) into a practice that has as its major

focus the development of children into full human beings rather than

distorted stereotypes (and archetypes) of femininity and masculinity. It must

also acknowledge women's unequivocal right to choose the role and work of

mothering. Acknowledging this choice would in turn result in the

recognition that women are individual subjects apart from the work of mothering they do. This in turn would mean that women would be free to pursue their other interests and abilities, and to pursue the fulfillment of their own needs for nurturance from others. Consequently, taking care of themselves, and taking care of children, would not be seen by others or experienced by women as mutually-exclusive choices, as is currently generally the case. In addition, the development and practice of emotional empathy with children would be far more likely for women who were thus empowered. Ideally, they would not induce in their daughters feelings of deprivation and unentitlement (Eichenbaum and Orbach 1983) and feelings of being "wildly unmothered" (Rich 1986, 225). Daughters who had powerful mothers would not learn from their mothers acquiescence to the needs of others, but would experience, learn, and expect autonomy and personal value. Being thus equipped to be autonomous and self-valuing would result in a daughter's ability to reject gender role conditioning for powerlessness and servitude from the larger culture. Women who choose motherhood without sacrificing themselves, and without sacrificing their daughters to patriarchy, would not be "good mothers" according to the present culture; they would be mothers who were "...on our side" (Rich 1986, 225).

Sons who had powerful mothers would not subsequently look to other women to do their emotional work for them, partly because they would have acquired and developed relational capacities and nurturing skills from the early relation with their fathers, and partly because they would have observed and experienced their mothers as doing work other than mothering.

The economic inequality of women in relation to men is one of the major structural impediments to changing the institution of motherhood. Yet, the institution of motherhood is also the major obstacle to women's economic equality. On one hand, because women make less money than men do - in Canada, they earn approximately sixty-four percent of what men earn (Armstrong and Armstrong 1987, 225n) - they are more likely than men to give up their paid employment in the labour market to stay home and look after children. This way, the economic loss incurred by a family unit is less than if the male member of the household stayed home to look after children. Eva Kittay has suggested that there will not be a great incentive for men to participate equally in childrearing if the economic losses are greater if they do so (1984, 122). On the other hand, the assumption that women will stay home to look after children and provide other unpaid domestic labour results in women making less money than men. This assumption, and the consequences of it, have been clarified best by socialist feminists. Meg Luxton (1987) has argued that the assumption that women will perform childrearing work and other household labour underlies the ideology of the family wage. The family wage takes for granted that a male bread- winner ought to make enough money to support a dependent woman and children (Luxton 1987, 170). A woman's child-rearing and household services are seen as her part in an arrangement where she maintains the family with unpaid services, while her male partner maintains the cost of keeping a dependent family with a paid salary. This arrangement justifies women's economic dependence on men ideologically and structurally. At the same time, the expectation that women will perform these services is also often used as the justification for paying women lower salaries when they do enter the labour market (Luxton 1987, 171), the assumption being that women

have male bread-winners to support them. Furthermore, because women are responsible for child-rearing and household work, when they seek paid employment it is often part-time employment they seek in order to accomodate it to their domestic responsibilities (Armstrong and Armstrong 1987, 217). Part-time work pays lower wages in addition to offering few, if any, benefits, and not much opportunity for advancement (Armstrong and Armstrong 1987, 215) which usually brings with it higher wages. Finally, women's responsibilities for unpaid domestic labour, in addition to whatever paid employment they engage in, does not leave women as free as men are to take part in special training programs that result in higher earning power, to travel to obtain higher paying jobs, or to be as involved in union negotiations on their own behalf (Luxton 1987, 172).

None of the above yet mentions that the majority of single parents are women (Armstrong and Armstrong 1987, 219), that most of these live below the poverty line (Armstrong and Armstrong 1987, 225n), or that the majority of women who are employed, are employed in clerical, sales and service jobs in Canada, (Armstrong and Armstrong 1987, 215; Marchak 1987, 198) which traditionally pay lower salaries and offer fewer opportunities for advancement than jobs in other sectors of the economy. Thus, it appears that women are not as "free" to compete equally in the labour market as men are because of their unpaid labour at home (Maroney and Luxton 1987, 19-20).

Because women's economic inequality and the institution of motherhood are mutually-informing problems, strategies invoked to solve one problem must take into consideration the other, as feminists have long argued. Men will not be encouraged to participate equally in child-rearing and other domestic labour as long as there is a large disparity in the earning power

between women and men. Therefore continued struggles toward pay equity are necessary. Paternity, as well as maternity leaves should be equally available in order to encourage men to rear their children and perform household work, and to show that society expects them to do so. Affordable childcare outside the home is necessary to promote women's economic equality so that women who decide to engage in paid labour are not penalized by the high cost of working, whether they are attached to males, or male bread-winners, or not. Finally, the value of women's work both inside and outside the home has to be acknowledged. The work that women do at home by providing child-rearing and domestic services has to be identified as work, so that it becomes visible and valuable in itself, and so that its contribution to propping up (male power in) the economy is visible. This requires a redefinition of work, and it requires society "...to recognize that the total work necessary for the maintenance of life is not reducible to paid work..." (Luxton 1987, 167). Outside home in the paid labour market, incentives to hire women, to pay them equal salaries, and to provide them with equal benefits to those of men, would be encouraged philosophically and economically by understanding that employment and pay equity for women are not a drain on the economy but provide a resource to be drawn and learned from.

Enhancing the Erotic Connection Between Mind and Body

I have taken many of my ideas on the processes of cultural formation and evolution from Robert Lifton (1976). His theory on cultural formation is important to my discussion on the erotic connection between mind and body for men, primarily because of its emphasis on integrated psychoformation and the cultural impediments to it. I will summarize his

theory on cultural formation, and review for the reader the way I have applied it to my own theory on destructive conta.) ,ent. Then I will discuss the dynamics of constructive containment for men on an individual and collective level, with a focus on the importance of the body in healing.

In general the formative process is a positive inclination toward a sense of continuity with others and with past and future history. By form, Lifton means anything that people create - ideas, theories, symbolic systems, visual images, literature, social practices and movements. By formation he means the process of continual creation or self-renewal on an individual and collective level that functions to maintain and enhance symbolic connection to others over time and space (Lifton 1976, 31). He argues that psychic formation is a given in the human dialectic between mind and body, but that the process of formation or self-renewal can be impeded by blockages in image-form interaction, absence of necessary images or forms that could mediate connection, or deformations of various kinds (Lifton 1976, 78).

Psychoformation requires a confrontation with conflict, an "immersion[s] into death" (Lifton 1976, 114), when old patterns of static defense are given up in favour of more life-affirming, or animating orientations. When an individual experiences this immersion, she or he experiences a symbolic reordering, reintegration, or rebirth of her/himself. This experience, according to Lifton, is fundamental to individual and cultural transformation, and is the essence of the self-renewing process. Lifton's theory of psychoformation emphasizes continual transformations and therefore continual transitions in the process of reordering experience and finding new forms to express that reordering, since there is no point at which people self-actualize or transcend all conflicts once and for all. He speaks instead of "adaptive configurations" in inner psychic life and in cultural

formation (Lifton 1976, 58). It is Lifton's belief that our culture often impedes the potential for continual renewal by not offering enough images and forms that could guide people along the journey to death and rebirth, toward reintegration and renewal.

"Psychic numbing", the inability to feel psychic distress or conflict, is the major block to the formative process, and it exists along a continuum (Lifton 1976, 79-80). Lifton refers to some of the human arrangements that contribute to psychic numbing, such as bureaucratization and technicization (1976, 80). He does not, however, consider the social structural containment of psychic conflict for men by women as one of the forms that maintains and exacerbates psychic numbing in patriarchal culture.

I have reformulated Lifton's theory to show how women collectively embody men's collective psychic conflict, and how this embodiment keeps it from being resolved. Men have difficulty dealing with uncomfortable bodily feelings. Due to their gender development within a culture that already devalues women, they repress these feelings and project them onto women; women subsequently embody these feelings for them. The result as I have argued, is that women contain the frightening aspects of bodily existence, and men contain the mental capacities to deny and control them, by virtue of men's power in patriarchal culture. The ideological and institutional barriers against women and the feelings associated with women become obstacles to the experience and reintegration of these feelings (and to the integration of women into culture), because they reinforce the belief that these feelings belong to the feminine realm of experience, and are therefore derogated by individual men and by patriarchal culture. This is how the social relations of patriarchal culture impede or obstruct transformative potential on a cultural level. The forms- the ideologies, the

symbolic systems, the social practices and institutions- that patriarchal culture creates, in general, block the capacities of men to feel and resolve psychic conflict and to connect with their transformative potential. They also ensure that women and the capacities, skills and knowledge they have developed remain outside public culture and consciousness, and that, in general, their transformative potential is blocked. Thus I have used the term destructive containment, for such containment helps to prevent the resolution of a systemic problem. In addition to the problem that the pervasive forms of patriarchal culture themselves obstruct access to the formative potential of individuals and cultures, Lifton has pointed out the problem that the culture does not have enough newer forms that could help men and women to connect with their capacities for transformation.

Tolerance for one's own feelings in one's own body is generally referred to as self-containment; it is what I mean by constructive containment or the erotic connection between mind and body. Self-containment refers to the ability "...to confront the pieces of the self that may be experienced as fragmented and contradictory" (Belenky, et.al., 1986, 136). The essence of constructive containment is the toleration of ambivalence.

The focus on the body is important in conceptualizing and realizing constructive containment, because the body is the original location of feeling. Our bodies are where we live. It is within our bodies that experiential ambivalence and continual dislocation occur and are felt, and it is therefore where the experiential dynamics of integrity, connection, and creative transformation occur. It is within our bodies therefore, that feelings have to be resolved and integrated and not be projected outward with the use of mental mechanisms (Dinnerstein 1976; Griffin 1981; Laing 1969; Woodman 1985).

Ideally, children learn tolerance for their feelings within their own bodies, developmentally, in relation to their caretakers. All of Alice Miller's writing is concerned with the fact that this is rarely the case, as I indicated in Chapter one. People may learn tolerance for their feelings as children from their caretakers, or, as adults, within an individual or collective relationship of some kind (not necessarily, but often, a professional therapeutic relationship). Such tolerance for one's own feelings within one's own body is a necessary prerequisite to the ability to acknowledge and tolerate the feelings of others, and to tolerate difference in all others, whether it be difference in gender, race, class, sexual orientation, or physical ability (Griffin 1981, 1982; Laing 1969; A.Miller 1981, 1983, 1984, 1990).

What follows is a general description of the individual psychotherapeutic relation as I apply it to men. My knowledge of this relation and its processes derives primarily from the work of women and of feminists (Eichenbaum and Orbach 1983; Hyde 1986; Miller 1984; Woodman 1985), though I also draw on Lifton's concepts. I apply this knowledge here because I believe that women and feminist therapists and clients have made the most significant contributions to our understanding of the healing of mind and body in patriarchal culture, largely because women have most often been the victims of the mind/ body split and have sought the most constructive resolutions of it. My description is meant to convey the meaning and dynamics of constructive or creative containment, and the role of the body in the healing process. It is also meant to convey that the healing relation may itself be considered a constructive or creative container- a holder, carrier, or embodiment of the potential for continual

transformation.[2] My focus on the one-to-one healing relationship is not meant to imply that the only method of healing for men and for patriarchal culture is for men to engage in psychotherapy. This is highly unlikely and impractical, and it reinforces the belief - the ideology - that individuals are solely responsible for the internal discomfort they feel. Rather, my focus on individual therapy is meant to illuminate the dynamics of change and growth as they may be experienced individually by men, and to shed light on the potential and value of collective forms of containment. Constructive containment on the collective level would mean, as Lifton's work has suggested, that culture would provide the means - through various forms, such as dramas, images, epistemological frameworks, theoretical formulations, healing groups, ritual practices - by which ongoing integrity and transformation would be mediated, rather than leaving individuals to seek repair of culturally-induced internal damage on a one-to-one basis. I discuss briefly a currently popular example of collective containment for men after my discussion of individual healing.

The purpose of therapy is to enable a man to experience a psychic death and to re-emerge with the capacities for connection, integration, and psychic movement or dynamism intact. In individual therapy, the therapeutic relationship is the container through which this transformation occurs, by the therapist holding together the energy that is released during the process of change. The therapist assists the man in his attempt to experience, acknowledge and incorporate his conflictual feelings by providing the environment in which a "...loving communication with [his] own inner

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2 As I understand it, a container in the positive sense can refer to an individual, and object, a relationship, a vessel, an image, a performance, a drama, a ritual - anything that "holds in" or embodies the dynamic energy of potential transformation.

symbols" is engaged (Woodman 1985, 30). By providing a safe, receptive, and attentive space within the structures or boundaries of the therapeutic relationship, the therapist helps the man to set up a dialogue between his conscious and unconscious mind and body (Woodman 1985, 164). Without the guiding structure of this relationship, the man's fear of confronting his inner symbols might be strong enough to prevent him from engaging in this dialogue, since there would be no container strong enough to hold, focus, or make sense of the knowledge contained in these inner symbols. In feminist psychotherapy, the body is considered an ally, like the therapist herself, in the healing process (Hyde 1986, 24). Dreams, thoughts, images, associations, somatic symptoms, and emotional feelings all occur within the body; they are the elements of corporeal speech. These and other representations of feeling comprise the inner symbols referred to above. These inner symbols reflect the internalized object relations as they have developed within his particular family, and within the larger context of patriarchal culture. The therapist attempts to piece together these elements of bodily speech, while holding together the tension of dynamic change within the relationship in order to comprehend and mediate the process of transformation. The therapist holds the dynamic tension while these symbols or elements emerge, and draws in to herself the projections of her/his client, in order to understand the man's inner processes. The therapist holds the tension while, and until, the pattern of the man's early relationships and defenses in regard to those relationships, becomes intelligible (Eichenbaum and Orbach 1983, 78-81). In the therapist's modelling of this constructive containment, she/he is showing her client how to dialogue with his own inner symbols, to pay attention and respond to his mental, emotional, and physical speech. The therapist is thereby showing

him how to use his own body as the container through which continual transformations can occur.

So, constructive containment means the ability to keep the creative processes of death and rebirth dynamic, that is, active and moving, by using the body as an instrument of self-knowledge, and being able to incorporate that knowledge rather than repressing and projecting it outward. In order for self- knowledge to be incorporated, or integrated into the body, it first has to be received. For it to be received, one must be firmly grounded in one's body, since it is within the body that this knowledge is manifested.

The purpose of constructive collective containment is the same as that of individual therapy - to provide safe guidance through uncomfortable experiences and to reconnect with the capacities for psychic integrity within the body so that body and mind function together. However, its scope is larger. In collective containment, culture at large would provide the means for enabling individuals to connect with their fragmented parts, rather than leaving individuals to seek out professional healers (Woodman 1985). Collectively, people would acknowledge that social structures exacerbate the tendencies toward separation, fragmentation and stasis (Lifton 1975) internally, interpersonally, and culturally. Constructive collective containment would mediate between social structures and personal experience in such a way that connection within one's self, connection to others, and connection with life is enhanced.

Robert Bly's rituals for male initiation come close to illustrating what I mean by constructive containment on the collective level, for men. Where they fail to qualify as a really good example, they also confirm my arguments about the masculine/feminine split in patriarchal culture. Like Lifton, who argues that culture does not offer enough forms to guide men and women

through the processes of death and rebirth, and like Marion Woodman, who similarly argues that culture does not offer enough "ritual containers" (1985, 17-19) to guide people through difficult transitions, Bly argues that men need ritual guidance to help them with the transition into masculinity.

Bly mourns the loss of fathers and of older male mentors who could help initiate men into masculinity. Men need help, he says, because "...manhood doesn't happen by itself" (Bly 1990, 15). His ritual containers are myths and stories that are meant to help men move "...from the mother's realm to the father's realm" (Bly 1990, ix), and they are meant to help men incorporate or take into the body (ix) the knowledge about masculinity contained in them. His recent popularity as a male mentor would seem to indicate that his stories and myths do tap this experience of loss of the father by men, and also tap men's desire for connection with positive masculine attributes.

Thus, in one sense, Bly gets to the heart of one of the problems that has been identified by feminist object relations theorists and other feminists, and one which I addressed in the first section of this chapter, that is, the lack of equal responsibility of fathers in child-rearing. What Bly acknowledges are the emotional and psychic consequences to men of their loss of caretaking fathers to identify with. But in no way does he acknowledge this lack of responsibility in child-rearing as one of the problems in patriarchal culture. He does not name patriarchal culture itself as the source of the problem and the reason for its perpetuation. His initiation rituals into masculinity are about undoing or exorcising men's identification with the feminine that occurs in patriarchal cultures because women mother. Though he acknowledges that men could be more active in fathering, he does not suggest this as the most obvious solution to the

problem of men's need for concrete and available masculine figures of identification. The primary responsibility for child-rearing remains with women, and the solution he offers is the "...active intervention of the older men" (Bly 1990, 15), by which he means both actual older men and mythical, legendary, and archetypal men. He leaves unproblematic the division of physical, emotional, and psychic labour that has as its consequence the need for an initiation into masculinity for boys and men in the first place. It seems to me that men need to father earlier, as well as to initiate later.

Most of Bly's theoretical mentors are traditional Jungian and Freudian psychoanalysts. I think that, like them, he understands masculinity and femininity as essences that derive directly from male and female biology. Being uncritical of them, he does not acknowledge the social construction of the feminine and masculine in patriarchal culture, nor the way patriarchal culture works to divide experience by gender. In his work on male initiation, therefore, it becomes clear that it is not possible for men or women to have experiences or personal qualities without the attributions of gender and without the appropriate (according to him, and to patriarchal culture) descriptor or value attached to them, even when the other gender is expressing them. Thus, he states that men who are receptive to their feelings of loss and grief for example, are "soft" men who are expressing the "feminine side" of their natures (Bly 1990, 2), and he implies that women who are "hard" (on their sons in childrearing) "...would lose touch with [their] own femininity" (17), that is, be acting in a masculine manner.

So, Bly's work does not transcend traditional patriarchal conceptions of masculinity and femininity. I think it is actually a prime example of the institutionalized opposition between masculine and feminine, and in practice

with men, would reproduce this split or opposition. Yet I find Bly's work, both his writing and his gatherings of men, valuable, not so much for their realization, but for their potential.

First, his work enables at least some acknowledgement that the gender split in patriarchal culture is damaging to men, and this is more acknowledgement than the rest of patriarchal culture allows. That acknowledgement, however small, in Bly's work at least provides an entry point for men to question further a social structure that requires men to be absent from child-rearing work, and requires women to be nearly fully responsible for it. My hope is that such acknowledgement and questioning would lead to an understanding by men of how the institution of motherhood is partially responsible for the compulsive, defensive attempts of individual men, and of collective patriarchal culture, to make continual "...sharp and clean break[s] with the mother" (Bly 1990, 86) through the ideologies, social practices, and institutions they create, and the extent to which these ideological and institutional "breaks" in turn contribute to the ongoing need for mothers and women in general.

Second, Bly's men's groups and his writing also provide a safe forum for men to acknowledge and connect with their feelings of loss in their own bodies. He says that men do not know how to "shudder", to feel grief (Bly 1990, 84), and that learning to feel grief helps to "...take away the numbness..." (85) that disables men. If one of the consequences of male identification with females in a culture that devalues anything asssociated with the feminine, is the inability of men to experience and acknowledge uncomfortable feelings in their own bodies as their own feelings, as I have argued, then this shuddering experience would seem to be a crucial and necessary first step for men. This unfortunately, is exactly the point at which

the potential in Bly's work breaks down. For although Bly states that in shuddering, a man "...is developing a part of the masculine emotional body..." (1990, 85), which implies to me that men are emotional and bodily beings who have just lost connection with these characteristics of themselves, he repeatedly falls back into the practice of attributing these same characteristics of bodiliness and emotionality to femininity throughout his book, in keeping with traditional psychoanalytic (and other) patriarchal theory.

In order for Bly to help men more fully connect with their fragmented parts, he would have to acknowledge that these parts are not in reality feminine (or masculine), but that they come to have the attribution of femininity (or masculinity) due to the institution of motherhood, which is a product and process of patriarchal culture, not of nature or biology. He would have to acknowledge that at least one major contributing factor to men's experiences of numbness is that real women in their lives, and women as a group in general, have expressed men's emotions and embodied uncomfortable feelings for them. It seems possible to me that if men are able to experience and express their feelings of loss regarding their fathers, and if they are able to connect this loss to the structure and processes of culture, they may also eventually be able to acknowledge that their feelings of hostility toward women are also an outcome of the patriarchal social system.

In spite of the weaknesses of Bly's theoretical approach to understanding some of the sources of men's difficulties with masculinity, I think his work does encourage men to acknowledge that masculinity is not so experientially rewarding for them, even though they have been externally rewarded for their masculine defenses with status and power. Bly says that there is much

emotional malaise among men, that they feel something is wrong in their inner lives, even if they can't identify what it is. Because of his focus on uncomfortable feelings in the body, Bly's approach would seem to increase the awareness of this malaise. Since the awareness of experiential pain and dislocation is often a catalyst for individual and social change (as it has been for many women) when it is encouraged within a safe environment and connected to its structural sources, I think that Bly's work may help to provide men with the necessary experiential incentive toward change.

The important points to remember about constructive collective containment are the extent to which we acknowledge that social arrangements, institutions, and practices contribute to dynamics that occur in our culture, and, then, what we collectively decide to do with these dynamics. How will we, as a culture, manage and elaborate upon outcomes of, in this case, male identification with females, when the devaluation of women is pervasive? Can we provide ways in our culture for men to be masculine that do not require rigid distinctions between women and men, nor require the reification of these distinctions into theoretical formulations, symbolic systems, and social practices that preclude resolution of ambivalent gender identity for men? Can there be culturally available ways to establish and maintain masculine identity that do not require the devaluation and ridicule of women and of all things associated with femininity, and the concommitant hyperbolized aggrandizement of men and all things associated with masculinity?

Integrating the Knowledge of Women into Public Consciousness

Because women have been oppressed in patriarchal culture, the knowledge, values and skills they have developed have not been integrated

into public consciousness. In Chapter one, I indicated some of the psychological strengths and capacities that women have developed under conditions of oppression, when I referred to the work of J.B. Miller. Like Miller and other feminists, I believe that these strengths and skills should be integrated into the social practices, theoretical frameworks, and institutions of culture, in order that public consciousness could be more concerned with reciprocity and empowerment instead of preoccupied with domination and destruction. In this final section of Chapter four, I argue for the inclusion of women's intellectual knowledge, skills and values into public consciousness on the grounds that, at its best, women's caretaking work gives rise to conceptions of reality and morality that acknowledge rather than deny some fundamental dynamics of psychological, emotional, and intellectual life - change, uncertainty, growth and conflicting impulses. I have identified as a problem, patriarchal culture's lack of tolerance for uncertainty, changeability, and conflicting impulses and feelings. This lack of tolerance is evident in the cumulative cultural creations of patriarchal culture, and in the control of women's bodies, as I argued in Chapter one. It seems crucial therefore, that women's thought(s) and reasoning should be integrated into public consciousness so that conceptions of reality and morality do not remain distorted by masculine subjectivity. If, as I have suggested, containment is destructive when it prevents women and men from developing and accessing knowledge, capacities, and skills they need in order to resolve psychic conflict and enhance ongoing creative potential, and containment is constructive when it enables the development of, and access to, ongoing creative potential, then the conceptual frameworks women have developed may be considered as movements toward constructive collective

containment, because they carry transformative potential for individual

women and men, and for culture.

In *Remarks on the Sexual Politics of Reason* (1987), Sara Ruddick says:

> Although philosophers differ in the degree to which they hope and allow that women can become 'rational', the attainment of reason for both women and men tends to depend upon overcoming what is identified, within particular philosophical and cultural contexts, as female - body, change, emotion, and particular affections. (1987, 238)

In *Maternal Thinking* (1989), she articulates the forms of thought that arise

from the work of mothering, from a mother's perspective, in a way that

values the body, change, and emotions as sources of knowledge. Her

purpose in articulating maternal thought is to identify alternative and

"...distinct ways of thinking about the world..." (Ruddick 1989, 12) that are

epistemically superior to the dominant modes of thinking and reasoning.

The dominant mode of thinking and reasoning, she argues, agreeing with

Nancy Hartsock (1983), is characterized by abstraction from, and

transcendence of, the material world. Here is what Ruddick says about the

dominant and masculine abstract mode of thought and reasoning:

> ...especially "masculine" men (and sometimes women), fearful of the physicality and needs of care, develop a fantasy of transcendence based on a "tradition of freeing the thinking brain from the depths of the most pressing situations and sending it off to some (fictive) summit for a panoramic overview". From this perch they promulgate views that are inimical to the values of caring labor. They imagine a truth abstracted from bodies and a self detached from feelings...they forge agreements of reason and regiment dissent by rules and fair fights. Fearful of the dependencies in which connection begins, they become attached to detachment, developing ideals of objectivity that turn on separation and distance. Beset by needs they are ill equipped to name or satisfy and faced with an anarchically lively, caring world on which they fearfully depend, they misdescribe in abstractly sentimental or demeaning ways what they insist on labeling "women's work." At worst, from their fictive summit they deliver abstract understandings that systematically invert "the proper valuation of human experience". They might, for example, accord superiority not "to the sex that brings forth but to that which kills,"

considering the "sacrifice" of a child in an abstract cause to be the vindication of caring labor. Or, as in violent pornography and rape, they might transform "the force of life in sexuality" into fearful relations of dominance and submission. (Ruddick 1989, 132)

In contrast, maternal thinking arises from engagement in the material world of bodies, feelings, and relationships (and these within varying economic, political, and cultural contexts). It is by virtue of this engagement, and the responses this engagement evokes in caretakers, that different conceptions of the processes and requirements of psychological and intellectual growth arise; different capacities and values are also developed, and from these different moral frameworks.

There has been, and still is, a greater likelihood of women (women in general, not only mothers) developing these distinct ways of thinking, and working toward the inclusion of their thought(s) into public culture, because it is mostly women who do caretaking work. Since the gendered division of labour in patriarchal culture is responsible for women taking nearly full responsibility for caretaking work, men could develop maternal thought by actually engaging in the work that women do. More to the point, men should engage in caretaking work, not only to relieve women of the full responsibility for it, but also to transform the role and status of fatherhood into the action and work of mothering (Ruddick 1989, 42-46).

In describing distinct ways of thinking that arise from maternal work, Ruddick does not assume that women are confined to maternal thought by virtue of their caretaking work. She acknowledges that women engage in work other than caretaking, and therefore develop ways of thinking that are congruent with the other disciplines they engage in. Women are not more material, more concrete, more real, more natural, or more moral than men. The important point that Ruddick makes is that participating in the

development of others makes possible the development of metaphysical attitudes, cognitive capacities, and values (Ruddick 1989, 11) that challenge those of the dominant culture and are superior to them because they see more, and more deeply, beyond the sources and consequences of oppression.[3] Ruddick does not assume that these different attitudes, capacities, and values are achieved simply by engaging in the work in the context of oppressive conditions; they are ideals of reasoning to work toward through feminist intellectual and political struggle (1989, 129).

Ruddick argues that maternal work gives rise to thoughtful reflection in meeting the demands for the preservation, growth, and the social acceptability of those people maternal workers are committed to caring for. These demands are met by the work of preservative love, fostering growth, and the training of children (Ruddick 1989, 17).

Maternal workers experience first hand, and they reason from this first hand experience, what works and what does not work in bringing about the personhood and the empowerment of both themselves and those they care for. I think there is a characteristic common to the the cognitive capacities,

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3 A comment is necessary here on epistemological standpoints. Women and men occupy different (and various) positions in the patriarchal social system. Therefore, they have access to different knowledge(s) of that system, and construct different conceptual frameworks that reflect that knowledge. This is what is meant by standpoint epistemology: a theory that claims that what you know depends on where you stand in the system. Nancy Hartsock has argued that there is a perspective that reflects "the feminist standpoint" (1983). I take the position of other feminist philosophers, notably Sandra Harding (1986), that there are many feminist standpoints from which knowledge could be generated. The existence of many feminist standpoints does not mean, however, that all standpoints are equally useful. I think that some standpoints are better than others. I think that better standpoints are those that uncover and articulate most clearly the various sources of oppression and their interconnections, suggest most clearly strategies for empowerment of oppressed people, and allow for the articulation of more epistemic standpoints that could further illuminate the sources of, and provide strategies for the resolution of, systems of oppression.

metaphysical attitudes, and values that Ruddick has identified as emerging from maternal work: that they reflect an acknowledgement of the ambivalences of life, and accept the ultimate uncontrollability and changeability inherent in it. So, for example, "scrutinizing", the ability to attend to a child's safety without intruding on her or him, is a cognitive capacity that Ruddick has identified as emerging from the work of preservative love (1989, 72). A maternal worker has to make a judgement about how to meet the need for safety, but meet that need in a way that does not result in total control over the child. The metaphysical attitude of humility, in its ideal form, helps a maternal worker to know when to intervene and when not to. Ruddick says that "With 'humility', a mother respects the limits of her will and the independent, uncontrollable, and increasingly separate existences she seeks to preserve" (1989, 72). Humility is identified as a virtue when a maternal worker recognizes in herself the compulsive desire to control every aspect of the child's life in order to keep her/him safe. This kind of control would not work in bringing about the personhood or empowerment of the child, whereas scrutinizing with humility would. So, with the cognitive capacity for scrutinizing, and the virtue of humility, control would be conceptualized differently than it is in dominating modes of thought. Rather than control being an act of domination of an object, protective control would provide for the safety of a subject who has a will of her/his own. The negative form of humility is passivity in the face of an ultimately uncontrollable child and world. Women are used to being controlled themselves, and in regard to child-rearing, are used to giving up control to experts who say they know what is "good" for children and mothers. Attempting to overcome the internalization of external control and to conceive of what one knows best (and maybe to act

upon it), is an example of what constitutes the struggle toward the liberatory potential expressed in the ideals arising from maternal work.

In the following pages, I summarize some of the capacities, skills, and values that Ruddick has identified as arising from maternal work. I do not describe them all, nor do I indicate all of their negative, or "degenerative" forms (Ruddick 1989, 72). My purpose is to give a sense of the ideals arising from maternal work. What I have described as the struggle toward overcoming the internalization of external control in the passage above about the virtue of humility and its negative form, passivity, applies as well to the following capacities, skills and values. That is, when maternal workers recognize in themselves the ambivalent impulses toward repeating the various forms of oppression they have internalized, and are able to identify what could be done differently to empower their children and themselves, this recognition and identification constitute the struggle toward the liberatory potential expressed in the ideals.

As a result of engaging in the work of preservative love, maternal workers develop a conception of nature, in all of its manifestations, as ever-changing yet asserting itself as a constant force. Far from being self-contradictory, this conception of nature enables maternal workers to discern what is naturally and unpredictably developing and changing in their children (and their illnesses and accidents), and at the same time to "...negotiate with nature on behalf of love" (Ruddick 1989, 77), rather than to see nature, in their children and in the forces acting upon them, as an adversary to be controlled and dominated.

In addition, engaging in the work of preservative love gives rise to thought that is connected to feeling, rather than separated from it. Feelings are the "instruments" (Ruddick 1989, 70) of maternal work that stimulate

reflective thought, and in maternal work, feelings are almost always conflictual. "Thought-provoking ambivalence is a hallmark of mothering" (Ruddick 1989, 68). Maternal workers negotiate and learn from thought-provoking ambivalence in the interest of preserving the lives of their children, rather than using thought to deny or control their own, or their children's, feelings.

The work of fostering growth gives rise to a conception of psychological and intellectual development as an integrated process of bodily, mental, and spiritual unfolding and evolution, of continually becoming something greater (Ruddick 1989, 82-3). As I see it, this conception of development takes as a given the ambivalent impulses toward integrity and wholeness, and the unevenness and uncertainty of growth, in contrast to the dominant conception of development, which conceives of growth as developing in a linear fashion.

Nurturing the growth of a child also makes possible the development of a metaphysical attitude that welcomes and expects change psychologically and intellectually. This metaphysical attitude clearly demonstrates an acknowledgement of the reality of continual change in life, and therefore, a tolerance for continual uncertainty. It enables an adaptive, rather than a precise and rigid, response to the changing needs of the self and of others (Ruddick 1989, 89-90).

Concrete thinking is a cognitive capacity that maternal workers develop when they foster the growth of children; it reveals, perhaps most clearly, the intellectual ability to tolerate ambivalence and uncertainty. Concrete thinking acknowledges the complexity, uncertainty, and contextual nature of a given problem. To engage in concrete thinking is "...to relish complexity,

to tolerate ambiguity, to multiply options...", rather than, as in abstract thinkng, "to simplify, generalize, and sharply define" (Ruddick 1989, 93).

Finally, training, which is the response to the demand for nurturing socially acceptable children, provokes maternal workers to question their own moral principles and values as they participate in the development of children. Training toward conscientiousness as opposed to inauthenticity, and toward educative control (or non-coercive shaping) (Ruddick 1989, 103) as opposed to domination, are the two main struggles Ruddick has identified in the work of training. These two struggles make clearly visible the divided consciousness, the ambivalence, with which maternal workers live and practice. On the one hand, women and mothers are relatively powerless in relation to men. On the other hand, they have some power over their children. Given their relative powerlessness in patriarchal culture, they are nonetheless responsible for the empowerment of their children. Both impulses - toward repeating their oppression and training for powerlessness - and toward ending oppression and training for empowerment - co-exist in maternal practice.

When a maternal worker is inauthentic, she trains her children, as she has been trained herself, to obey external authority without question, thus repudiating her own values and perceptions. "Inauthentic mothers construct, before the eyes of their children, a world in which maternal values do not count" (Ruddick 1989, 112). Inauthenticity is the intellectual counterpart to the act of abdication. Abdication occurs when a mother gives in to her internalized socialization to accept the external power of others, whether it be experts in child-rearing, the authority of "the father", or anyone who has more status and power in the world than a mother does (Ruddick 1989, 109-113), at the expense of herself and her children.

Abdication occurs, Ruddick says, whenever "...a mother hides from her child her real feelings and the realities of the power situation as she sees them" (1989, 112). Training for social acceptability then becomes a matter of domination in two respects. She not only practices excessive domination in order to mold her child's will and desires so that they conform to external social standards. She is also teaching her child to accept domination by those who have power, as a right. Maternal workers who abdicate their values and perceptions "...replace for themselves and their children the idea of conscience with that of submission. They identify unquestioning obedience as a virtue and dominant people as the authorities to be obeyed" (Ruddick 1989, 112).

On the other hand, the aim of a conscientious maternal worker is not to produce compliant, obedient children, but to guide the development of "reflective judgement" (1989, 117). This means practicing, or doing moral work. In effect, she enables her children to make moral choices and decisions with her guidance that do not require obedience to her or her judgements. Ruddick says that "If her children are to become conscientious people, she must help them learn that they cannot count on her own or any other person's authority" (1989, 117). So she has to permit her child to ask questions about, and to develop answers, through conversation and reflection with her, to moral issues that come up daily. Maternal workers, when they act in accordance with their own best conscience in relating to those external authorities who are more powerful than they, are good models of empowerment for their children (1989, 117).

A cognitive capacity and a virtue that operates at all levels of maternal thinking is attentive love. Attentive love "...teaches us how real things [real

children]⁴ can be looked at and loved without being seized and used, without being appropriated into the greedy organism of the self" (Ruddick 1989, 121). Attentive love, as I see it, is a corrective to the impulse toward the repetition of oppression; is a movement in the direction of empowerment because it lets the differentness of the "other" emerge, and "...lets otherness be" (Ruddick 1989, 122).

Taken together, the intellectual ideals of reasoning made visible through engagement in maternal work, Ruddick argues, enable the development of a morality of love and responsibility (1987; 1989, 2), that ought to be brought into public consciousness.⁵ In several articles (1982, 1984, 1987), as well as in her book (1989), Ruddick applies the moral reasoning that arises from maternal work to the politics of the peace movement. I, however, apply her work in a more general way, as it relates to my arguments about ambivalence. The intellectual and emotional tolerance for ambivalence that is evident in maternal thinking is what most needs to be brought into public

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4 The brackets are Ruddick's.
5 Ruddick's morality of love and responsibility is similar to Carol Gilligan's ethic of care, though Ruddick focuses more on the impact of work in informing conceptions of morality. Gilligan's work is an application of Chodorow's theory on gender development and conceptions of self. In her book, *In a Different Voice* (1982), Gilligan identifies two modes of moral reasoning that are associated with gender and conceptions of self, but are not determined by, or confined to, gender and conceptions of self. The morality of justice is most often associated with men. The morality of justice is primarily concerned with individual competing rights and obligations. Those who operate within this moral framework emphasize the values of autonomy, abstraction, and hierarchical connections among individuals when making moral decisions. The ethic of care is most often associated with women. It is primarily concerned with responsibility for, and response to, the particular needs of others. Those who operate within this moral framework emphasize the contextual nature of moral dilemmas and they value relationship, particularity, and connection to others when making moral decisions. For a good summary of the way Ruddick combines Gilligan's psychological theory on moral development and reasoning, with philosophical theories on the impact of work practices on moral development and reasoning, I refer the reader to *Remarks on the Sexual Politics of Reason* (1987).

consciousness, and applied to social practices, theoretical frameworks and institutions of culture. Maternal thinking reflects an intellectual acknowledgement, if not an acceptance, of continual uncertainty, changeability, and conflicting impulses and feelings, as a fact of life.

All the capacities, attitudes, and values I have summarized need to be integrated into cultural knowledge and not remain as private and sentimentalized maternal knowledge, if we are to enhance the creative potential of individuals and cultures.

The three solutions I have suggested in this chapter to the problem of women's destructive containment of ambivalence for men, and for the patriarchal system, are all necessary in order to make movements toward the authentic resolution of the problems I have described. The more equitable participation of men in child-rearing, the enhancement of mind/body connection, and the integration of knowledge that women have developed into public consciousness, are all directed at changing the social conditions and institutions of patriarchal culture that help to generate, maintain, and exacerbate the problems I have identified. All of the solutions work toward authentically resolving normal and destructive ambivalence, and toward bringing women and the feelings, capacities, and values that are associated with women and the feminine, out of the margins of culture, and into integrated public consciousness. Thus, they work toward constructive containment of conflict, and toward integrated individual and collective transformation.

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