DECONSTRUCTING THE PATRIARCHAL MYTH

Adrian K Perkel
Department of Psychology
University of the Western Cape
Bellville

Abstract. This paper attempts to deconstruct the idea that patriarchy is the cause of women's oppression, arguing for a more nuanced exploration of the developmental processes that contribute to gender identity. In particular, social processes that serve to distort normal affectional development in boys is explored, relating these to the masculine qualities that are held up in society as the norm for both genders, despite their being anathema to what psychology regards as healthy. This bias tends to delegitimise feminine characteristics and place women in a mental double-bind. Instead, this paper argues for the validity of the feminine, and questions absolutist feminist discourses which fail to account for broader systemic factors in the construction of gender.

The pendulum of social change has swung toward the recognition of the significant potential women have, and its under-realisation in the world where male values seem hegemonic. Affirmative action policies have geared institutions toward encouraging achievement and finding appropriate recognition for women within a reward system that has been constructed primarily within a male culture. Role models are posited to exemplify the attainments possible through work, and images of women Nobel prize winners with arthritic hands disabled from painstaking labour are sometimes presented as the ultimate route of self-fulfilment through external affirmation and recognition (Christie, 1993). Indeed, statistics are clear that women have faced oppressive values and social norms at many levels and society surely has much of which to be ashamed (Reskin, 1991). However, the image of downtrodden victims grinding away unrecognised by a male-dominated world may be defeating of its own purpose. It is generated from within that culture, and remains blinkered to the hegemonic stance from which certain assumptions derive. Ultimately, such a position, in its attempt at serving the interests of women, may paradoxically be contributing to holding the values of male culture as supreme and their fulfilment the goal of life.

There is much well-developed feminist discourse geared toward the emancipation of women (Chodorow, 1989; Ramazanogu, 1990; Grosz, 1992; Harding, 1992; Sayers, 1992). Occupying an important place in much of this discourse is the theoretical

underpinning that patriarchy lies at the foundation of all social problems affecting women. Constructions of theory as dichotomous, absolute, or "rational" (and therefore "true"), in this manner may be a replication of the masculine discourse which these theories attempt to deconstruct, failing to account for the contribution of non-rational factors in human motivation and the often irrational foundations from which supposedly intellectual or rational ideas derive. Harding (1992) has argued in this regard, that theory, including feminist theory, should not be reified as an end in itself. The scientific world-view, she argues, has taken itself to be a totalizing theory explaining everything within the assumptions of modern science. There is, she notes, another world: " .. the world of emotions, feelings, political values, of the individual and collective unconscious, of social and historical particularity explored in novels, drama, poetry, music and art, and the world *within which we live most of our waking and dreaming hours* under constant threat of its increasing reorganisation by scientific rationality." (Harding, 1992:342; emphasis added).

These rather cursory comments regarding feminism are not intended to do a theoretical disservice to its complex theoretical heritage, nor are they aimed at addressing the varying and sometimes difficult constructions taken up within feminist discourse. Rather, this paper will argue for a more nuanced theoretical construction of the dynamics and forces that shape gender, arguing that recourse to patriarchy as an explanatory construct does not do justice to a richly complex dimension of life. Such dichotomy implies that masculinity and femininity can be separated, and that men and women occupy inherently separate psychological spaces. In challenging this view, I wish to lean on Jung in arguing that masculinity and femininity cannot be posited as absolute or dichotomous but should be viewed as ranging on a continuum within both sexes. Jung made use of the concepts of animus and anima in providing a fluid view of psychological functioning, representing the masculine parts of women and the feminine parts of men respectively. Hence gender is not simply determined genetically or biologically, but also according to psychological functions that operate within both men and women.

Common experiences of power relations and social positioning contribute to expositions that view social effects as primary in determining individual consciousness (Marx, 1977) (1). Whilst significant, this theoretical vantage may remain inadequate in understanding the specifics of psychological attributes that assert *their* effects on constructions of society. Part of the task of constructing a discourse of gender, therefore, rests on moving from a linear exposition that sees society as shaping individuals to an understanding of how individuals shape society within a dialectic of mutual effect. Society, ideology, social power, and so on, are, afterall, dependent on human relations for their existence, despite their relative autonomy in functioning beyond the influence of any one individual.

According to Elshtain (1984, in Hekman, 1990), social constructivism needs to be challenged in its attempts to socialise all dimensions of human existence. Rather, she argues that it is important to preserve a notion of human beings as agents, individuals who are not determined wholly by the social forces of the society in which they live. She argues for an essential dialogue of inner and outer selves in the establishment of identity (2). To put this differently, it can be argued that although ideology may be constructed through the various filters of power relations found in society, it derives ultimately from characteristics *potentiated* by the human psyche and sometimes perpetuated by attempts at understanding and deconstructing it.

Whilst some shifts in feminist ideology have argued for an end to emphasising gender difference and dichotomy in research (Bem, 1981, 1983, cited in Sayers, 1992), others have made the point that feminism recognises the need to address both the social and individual dimensions of social oppressiveness, and that removal of inequality can only occur, "given the achievement of a society in which women are accorded the same freedom of action as men, in which women's needs are met equally with those of men" (Sayers, 1992:26). She argues that feminists have sought to achieve equal opportunities with men in education and employment, and that they have campaigned and continue to campaign to maintain and extend society's obligation to meet women's needs.

On the face of it there can be no argument with this. However, we need to be cautious in how this is pursued. At a more subtle level it may implicitly reinforce oppressiveness to women by implying not only that women should have their needs met (which is obviously desirable), but perhaps also *what their needs should be*. It psychologises the women's world in a manner that may maintain the notion of a faltered realisation of "true" psychological potential. It places certain values as *per se* essential for the achievement of worth, and premises itself on an assumption that holding qualities associated with women is insufficient. Such acceptance may serve the purpose of inculcating a sense of inferiority and failed actualisation, perhaps unconsciously constructing a social version of the Freudian metaphor of penis envy. Seldom is the psychology of *men* adequately addressed and the real values of respective masculine and feminine qualities weighed. Is male culture really the ultimate status-quo? How much of this world is really worth aspiring toward?

In this regard, Elshtain (op cit) has asserted that rather than society pressurising women to join the public world as men's political equals (with its associated values), the values of woman's (what she calls) "private sphere", must be brought into the male public world. Her argument is that women should not adapt themselves to the male values of the public world, but rather, should transform that world through the feminine values of the private sphere.

Miller (1976) addressed this point differently in arguing that despite the subordinate role women have been forced to play in society and their suppression through physical and cultural structures, the development of a "women's" psychology has surpassed that linear, restricted reality of the male psyche. Miller (1976:25-26) writes that "In the course of projecting into women's domain some of its most troublesome and problematic exigencies, male-led society may have simultaneously, and unwittingly, delegated to women not humanity's 'lowest needs' but its 'highest necessities' - that is, the intense, emotionally connected co-operation and creativity necessary for human life and growth. ... (W)omen have developed the foundations of extremely valuable psychological qualities which we are only beginning to understand".

The rich texture of the emotional world has been well-recognised by theorists and articulated in dynamic theory ever since Freud. Although early theory conceived of "affects" (3) as drive and instinct-related, later expositions by Freud and other theorists considered affects to be related to a variety of emotional dimensions that were not only aggressively and sexually determined. Broadly, emotionality came to be seen as central to all human development and existence (Tyson & Tyson, 1990).

Disturbances of affect are conceived of as central to the formation of pathology and as underlying particular fixation points in psychosexual and psychosocial adjustment. The affective interaction between care-giver (usually mother) and infant plays a crucial role in the differentiation, integration, and consolidation of instinctual drives that later come to acquire psychological meaning (Tyson & Tyson, 1990). Where moments in an infant's life are characterised by disturbances or distortions in interpersonal or inter-environmental relating, or where this interfaces with distortions in the defensive structure of the psyche or in disturbances in the intra-relational dimensions of the self, various forms of psychopathology can manifest. In its severe forms, a gamut of disorders may result in later life, including borderline, depressive, paranoid, or schizoid conditions, though lesser forms of psychological distortions may characterise people who function highly and maintain adequate psychosocial adjustment.

Arguably, affect is the most significant aspect of psychological development and exerts a profound influence on all aspects of its functioning. Since affects are present from the first days of life, albeit in primitive and undifferentiated form (anxiety, positive arousal, negative arousal), they influence psychological evolution long before cognitions are present in rational form and are able to exert an influence on such affects. Many theorists have described the importance of the intra-, inter-psychic relationship, terming this in various ways, including mother-infant reciprocity (Spitz) and "affect attunement" (Stern) (Tyson & Tyson, 1990). Subtleties within the mother's responses, such as her facial expression, can influence the infant's emotional responses as early as three months after birth. An optimal interactional process whereby affective attunement is realised is important in enabling the infant to develop an emotional world where feeling states are accessed consciously within and hence also become part of a relational world that is the cornerstone of human existence.

The focus on this aspect of theory is an attempt to argue for a basis for a commonly shared psychological norm that serves to create subtle distortions in male development because of the affective withholding that appears to contaminate responses to infants that are perceived to be male. Research has demonstrated in numerous ways how infants are treated differently, depending on their perceived gender. Studies have shown that perception of gender can influence attitudes, expectations, and behaviour toward a child. This occurs both before and after birth.

Mothers who have an active foetus in utero that kicks and moves a great deal, for example, are more likely to assume it is a boy (Lewis, 1982, cited in Huffman, Vernoy, Williams & Vernoy, 1991). Other studies cited in Atkinson, Atkinson, Smith & Bem (1993), have shown differential punishment and reward for pre-school boys and girls, with observations noting that parents reward their daughters for dressing up, dancing, playing with dolls, and simply following them around, but criticise them for manipulating objects, running, jumping, and climbing. In contrast, parents reward their sons for playing with blocks, but criticise them for playing with dolls, asking for help, or even volunteering to be helpful (Fagot, 1978). Most significantly, parents tend to demand more independence of boys and to have higher expectations of them; they also respond less quickly to boys' requests for help and focus less on the interpersonal aspects of a task. Boys are also punished more both physically and verbally by parents than are girls (Maccoby & Jacklin, 1974).

It is interesting to note is that even the characteristics of new-born infants are described differently: infants thought to be boys are described as robust, strong and

large-featured, whereas the identical infants thought to be girls are described as delicate, fine-featured and "soft" (Luria & Rubin, 1974). In another study, the same emotional reactions were labelled differently depending on perceived gender, with identical reactions of surprise to a sudden stimulus being labelled as anger in boys and fear in girls (Condry & Condry, 1976). One study showed that an infant called "David" was actually treated more roughly by subjects than when the same infant was called "Lisa" (Bem, Martyna & Watson, 1976). This early process of socialisation is carried through into all dimensions of the child's development, presenting in many less disguised forms of the commonly noted injunction of "big boys don't cry".

Male infants are therefore more likely to develop defences that restrict emotional responses to the external environment and also to feelings that receive negative social sanction if expressed. Whilst the precise form of these defences vary from individual to individual and are primarily influenced by specific developmental disturbances, it is apparent that the child's gender may elicit a shared process of psychological tuning common across these individual variations of development.

Further, most theorists acknowledge that the defensive style of a person is considerably important in giving form to the individual personality and its presentation in the intra-, and inter-psychic world. These defences develop out of particular responses to disturbances that are subjectively experienced by the developing infant or child. In addition, as the cognitive capacity of the child evolves, more sophisticated mechanisms become available to assist in the recognition, regulation, defence, and control of underlying affect that the ego has difficulty in dealing with. If the growing infant discovers during times of stress that the emotional reassurance of the immediate world is punctuated by injunctions of the not-full acceptance of vulnerable or dependent feelings, then the likelihood increases that intrapsychic mechanisms available to inhibit these responses will be used.

Given the significance of early development in later functioning, these inhibitory mechanisms probably become entrenched as a generalised mode of psychic operating, like a filter through which individuality and individual defences are manifest. In this way, social norms may be transmitted which deeply effect how male functioning comes to suffer the distortions of restrictedness and inhibition.

Whilst some paradigms both within a broad psychodynamic tradition (such as Transactional Analysis), and a cognitive behavioural one (such as Beck's Cognitive Behavioural Therapy) articulate the significance and importance of internalised cognitive patterns as they link to psychological disturbance, they nevertheless consider *affect* to be centrally linked as a concurrent causal agent or symptomatic consequence. It is noteworthy that developmental theorists consider cognition to develop considerably later in life than affect, and particularly in the early phase of thought (pre-verbal primary process) such cognition is subject to the vagaries of the emotional world.

Hence, there can be little doubt that later intellectual activities that derive from secondary process thinking are still profoundly affected and influenced by underlying emotional aspects. The pride in rationality and control of emotional responses that is characteristic of the "male world" ignores the fact that it is dominated by unconscious emotional forces over which the person may exert little control. By contrast, the

emotional cathexis that is more characteristic of femininity and the "woman's world" may enable its continual discharge which leads to a reduction in the contribution such unresolved affect may have on building intellectualised, isolated defences that bear, at the end of the day, little resemblance to anything rational.

The resolution of uncathected affect and its "working through" via catharsis in the form of communication with a therapist, is for the most part critical in the resolution of psychopathology in its many different forms. Intellectual insight into all of a person's dynamics and unconscious events seldom leads to complete healing within a therapeutic context without an appropriate accompaniment of emotion. In this regard, therefore, the restriction of affective development in male infants may be regarded as pathogenic in itself.

In clinical practice this is often given form in the unwillingness or inability by men to *feel* or express openly what is felt. It is often a long and agonising struggle for men in therapy to access and express their underlying feelings, and this sometimes becomes an obstacle to their own growth, or in their families, to the growth of those around them. In this context, emotional withdrawal is often noted, with the woman and their children in these situations experiencing emotional frustration (4). The generic questions then arise: Who has the problem? And more importantly, in which direction should the challenges to male hegemony go?

Kaplan (1983) in her questioning of the inherent sexism of the DSM-111 diagnostic system, and in particular the categories of "Dependent" and "Histrionic" personality disorders (5), argued that these diagnoses, which are most commonly noted in women, contain specific cultural stereotypes. Constructs of dependency, submissiveness, emotionality and the like are at once encouraged in women (with deviation considered pathological), but at the same time pathologised in the form of the DSM diagnoses. Women are thus pathologised for not fulfilling societal injunctions and at the same time are pathologised for precisely such conformity. As Kaplan (1983:788) puts it: " ... to be considered an unhealthy adult, women must act as women are supposed to act (conform too much to the female sex role stereotype); to be considered an unhealthy woman, women must act as men are supposed to act (not conform enough to the female sex role stereotype). Not only does this Catch-22 predict that women are bound to be labelled unhealthy one way or another, but also the double bind itself could drive a woman crazy."

This detour of establishing the hegemonic flavour of sex-role division in psychiatric nomenclature is not to argue the merits and demerits of these categories, but rather to establish the context for deconstructing two problems that surface: (i) the assumptions of what is considered pathological and what not within *non-pathological* (or normal) functioning; and (ii) to explore the inherent values contained in the manner that values are framed.

It is useful to borrow two proposed (fictitious) categories for DSM diagnoses from Kaplan (1983) which she constructs to illustrate diagnoses from the vantage point of a more female-oriented hegemony and which are uncannily descriptive of many men. This serves to illustrate the male bias in much psychiatric thinking. Her diagnoses are reproduced in full.

1. Diagnostic Criteria for Independent Personality Disorder.
The following are characteristic of the individual's current and long-term functioning, are not limited to episodes of illness, and cause either significant impairment in social functioning or subjective distress.
A. Puts work (career) above relationships with loved ones (eg, travels a lot on business, works late at nights and on weekends).
B. Is reluctant to take into account the others' needs when making decisions, especially concerning the individual's career or use of leisure time, (eg, expects spouse and children to relocate to another city because of individual's career plans).
C. Passively allows others to assume responsibility for major areas of social life because of inability to express necessary emotion (eg, lets spouse assume most child-care responsibilities).

2. Diagnostic Criteria for Restricted Personality Disorder.
The following are characteristic of the individual's current and long-term functioning, are not limited to episodes of illness, and cause either significant impairment in social or occupational functioning (though usually not the latter) or subjective distress.
A. Behaviour that is overly restrained, unresponsive, and barely expressed, as indicated by at least three of the following:
(1) limited expression of emotions, for example, absence of crying at sad moments;
(2) repeated denial of emotional needs, eg, of feeling hurt;
(3) constant appearance of self-assurance;
(4) apparent under-reaction to major events, for example, is often described as stoic;
(5) repeatedly choosing physical or intellectual activities over emotional experiences.
B. Characteristic disturbances in interpersonal relationships as indicated by at least two of the following:
(1) perceived by others as distant, for example, in individual's presence others feel uncomfortable disclosing their feelings;
(2) engages others (especially spouse) to perform emotional behaviours such as writing the individual's thank-you notes or telephoning to express the individual's concern;
(3) engages in subject-changing, silence, annoyance, physical behaviour, or leave taking when others introduce feeling-related conversation topics;
(4) indirectly expresses resistance to answering others' expressed needs (for example, by forgetting, falling asleep, claiming need to attend to alternate responsibilities).

A key element that emerges from this fabrication is that stereotyped masculine behaviour, aspects of which are captured in the real diagnosis of Compulsive Personality Disorder, for example, requires additional non-masculine criteria to be present for a diagnosis to be made. Behaving in a feminine stereotyped manner is sufficient to earn a diagnosis (such as Dependent and Histrionic), whereas behaving in a masculine stereotyped manner alone is not. As Kaplan (1983:791) says: "A masculine stereotyped individual, to be diagnosed, cannot just be remarkably masculine. Masculinity alone is not clinically suspect; femininity alone is".

Further, the dimensions of emotional isolation and restrictedness common to the masculine world fail to be considered as pathogenic, being held up instead as virtuous. The life enhancing and health-inducing dimensions of the feminine world, emotionality, shared-sustenance, self-revelation, are devalued, instead earning women the often patronised distinction of weakness and dependence. Yet it is precisely these

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qualities that psychology holds up as central to adequate psychological adjustment and health.

The manner in which particular notions are framed impact on the attitudes and values of social norms. In many ways, the notion of dependency is considered to be a feminine characteristic and hence is negatively sanctioned in men. However, in deconstructing the desirability of the masculine thrust, it is useful to note that many men socially sanctioned in their pride at independence and their capacity for unidimensional and often solitudinal pursuit of goals, are wholly dependent on women for the fulfilment of their most basic and also most complex of needs and to which they return daily for their "refuelling" (to borrow a concept used in Mahler's conceptualisation of the infant's processes of individuation from mother - Mahler, 1986). Is it possible that men's difficulty with self-sustenance (both domestically and emotionally) derives from boys being prematurely thrust into pseudo-independence from mother during a time when individuation is still tentative and incomplete?

Often, women provide physical sustenance for men, but, in addition, also provide the complex emotional nurturing and refuelling that enables them to sustain their sense of self and return to their daily tasks. By contrast, many women retain a capacity for self-sustenance and emotional refuelling that derives from within and from without. In essence, women seem more *able* to form meaningful and emotionally refuelling relationships (usually with other women) in order to satisfy the basic *human* need for emotional sustenance, fulfilment and belonging.

The question then arises, why is the notion of dependence considered a feminine characteristic and pathologised accordingly, when an incapacity by men to sustain the rudiments of their daily eating, cleaning, and emotional "topping up" functions are labelled as "independence"! Also, why are women burdened with negative sanction for conforming to what psychologists regard as inherently normal human need and function, whereas men are positively affirmed for being deviant *from* what psychologists regard as normal human need and function?

In such manner of ideological framing, achievement for women through concerted and independent functioning in a male-dominated value-system places emphasis primarily on mechanistic, goal-oriented behaviour and presents these as the *real* achievement and the most significant criterion by which individual value and worth is measured. In this well-intentioned thrust toward equality, the carrot of achievement (in all its phallocentric splendour!) may fail to take stock of the premise from which it has grown and the heavily pervasive constructs from which these notions are taken. If it were considered, again fictitiously, that the ultimate achievement was not in external recognition through work, but in the capacity to form meaningful mutual relationships, or to adequately resolve the intrapsychic hash inherited from previous generations, or to successfully bring up a child without excess pathology, the emphasis on what is worth aspiring toward may change. Conversely, the tendency to devalue stereotyped feminine characteristics, which includes, perhaps, emphasising *people* rather than things, subjectivity rather than objectivity, intimacy rather than distance, resolution rather than restriction, may implicitly further oppress women instead of recognising the *value* that is central to being a woman. Harding (1992:338) corroborates this point when she argues that " ... it has never been women's experiences that have provided the grounding for any of the theories from which we borrow. It is not women's experiences

that have generated the problems these theories attempt to resolve, nor have women's experiences served as the test of the adequacy of these theories".

There is an apparent contradiction in this point. It has been argued in this paper that women are over-psychologised and pathologised, and men not enough. However, it needs to be recognised that often women are psychologised from a frame of reference dominated by a value system inherently male-oriented and that it is not only the subject (as woman) that needs analysis, but also the means by which understanding the subject takes place. When we begin inquiries into women's experiences instead of men's, according to Harding (1992), we quickly encounter phenomena such as emotional labour or the positive aspects of "relational" personality structures - ideas that are often not contained, or only implicitly contained, in conventional psychological and psychiatric theory.

de Castillejo (1973:54-55) in her rendition of the worth and value of the women's psyche (perhaps, as with the above, some licence is permissible in resorting to huge generalities), had argued that many women have forgotten the role they can play "to be a mediator to man of his own creative inspirations, a channel whereby the riches of the unconscious can flow to him more easily than if she were not there". At first impression, immediate danger appears to lurk behind this idea: firstly because it appears to reinforce the notion that women should perform the function of mother to men and conform yet again to a dictated role that potentially negates their own development; and secondly, because it implies an innate mode of "being" that is asocial, and ahistorical and ignores the evidence that demonstrates the role socialisation plays in contributing to the "inherent" values typical of gender roles (Eichenbaum & Orbach, 1986).

However, there is something far more important to be obtained from de Castillejo's statement, and that is the celebratory, rather than condemnatory tone with which the women's psyche is characterised. She continues: "It looks to me as though we are caught in a dichotomy. On the one hand women are educated to accept man's values blindly. Schools and colleges have grown up throughout the centuries to meet the needs of growing boys, and girls have fitted themselves into what was already there. They have accepted without question the masculine over-valuation of a thinking function *(according to the typology described by Jung)* and physical prowess. Girls have adopted the ability to do mathematics as the test of intelligence and a capacity for games as the criterion of bodily perfection. Many an inferiority complex stems from these mistakes" (de Castillejo, 1973:56)(brackets added).

Of course, feminine characteristics are not the preserve of women, and achieving richness of being would be enhanced by men's cathexis with their own internal worlds. In trying to negate the fundamental qualities that have historically distinguished women from men in order to achieve some semblance of recognition and affirmation in a male dominated terrain, many women have entered not only the playing fields of men (which they should do to become part of a world where recognition, and economic and political power can be equalised), but have also imbibed the rules by which their games are played. In adopting a masculine-dominated value system that appears to enjoy social and political legitimacy and which has been constructed as the cultural symbols of achievement and success, they have neglected the inherent validity of that which is uniquely feminine.

In this, the celebration of femininity has been lost and its uniqueness relegated to a less significant position, both by the dominant male cultural terrain which has forever been threatened, perhaps, by women's power over him (this will be explored below), but also by many women themselves in their internalisation of these values. As de Castillejo (1973:58) says, "The tragedy of today is that civilisation ... has gone too far in the direction of masculine separation and the masculine urge to discover and create for its own sake and the accompanying danger that women are throwing over their sense of cosmic awareness and the connection of all growing things in order to adopt men's values in their stead".

How, then, is the imperative of achievement, success, economic independence, power, equality, and advancement for women to be married with generalised notions of the value of the feminine and its characteristics - seemingly contradictory ideas? The deconstruction of what is considered as the ultimate to which women should aspire has to be reframed into what can be recognised in women already, (it does not need to be created), and how such qualities can take their place in the cultural arena of what is worth aspiring toward for *both sexes*.

Such deconstruction and reconstruction does not imply that success or achievement are the male domain, nor that taking their rightful place in all areas of professional, work, political, and creative life is undesirable. Rather, achievement and success need not be embellished with the rudiments of power, success for ego-sake, or as a route through which real emotional confrontation and growth are avoided as is often the case in the world of men. Instead, achievement and goal attainment may benefit from feminisation as a means of addressing the routes and the methods via which such achievement has traditionally been, and is approached.

This opens another aspect in this exploration for which I would like to refer to Jung's (1960) construction of the psyche into "functions", and his consideration of the essential notion of equivalence and entropy in psychic functioning. In this formulation he viewed conscious and outward behaviour and attitude often as a compensation for underlying, unconscious parts of self that were unable to find fully integrated expression in a person. Macho behaviour may, for example, be viewed as compensatory for underlying feelings of vulnerability or inadequacy.

Chodorow (1989) corroborates this position, arguing that on a psychological level, male dominance may be viewed as a masculine defence which often carries a major psychic cost to men. It is built, says Chodorow, on fears and insecurity, and should not be over-socialised. Male dominance is not, she argues, straightforward power, something which some trends in radical feminist discourse argue as central (Millet 1977; Firestone, 1979, cited in Ramazanoglu, 1990). Hence, whilst social constructions of power and culture enable such defensive strategy to find form in the oppression of, or violence against women, these dimensions should not be viewed as causal, solely responsible for, or even as central - their psychic roots need to be considered as well.

The outward directionality of men, and the prized values that are placed on conquest, attainment, prowess, and of course the subjugation of women (and their converse avoidance of emotional experiences and demands which are often experienced as engulfing and threatening), may benefit from an (albeit) inadequate and somewhat

broad interpretation. Is it possible that the often observed insatiable need for men to prove themselves derives from an underlying sense of inadequacy, fear of losing control, or abandonment that is the consequence of a distorted but widespread social norm?

It will be argued here that the goal-oriented, object-oriented manifestations of the male psyche derive from a social system that pushes boys out of the cradle before they are ready to walk, and from Day One tends towards depriving them of a stable affectional foundation from which they can develop a true sense of security and emotional connectedness. This value-system seems to insist that boys be "men" fractionally ahead of their developmental readiness for it, and encourages the denial and suppression of basic, normal, (and according to psychology) *healthy* emotional needs; a social construction that effectively leads to the psychological retardation and arresting of male emotional development.

The fact that women play a central role in contributing to this aberration in psychological development, particularly as the mothers involved in "socialising" these characteristics into boys in the first place, is of interest since in the adult world they too become the victims of it - both in their disempowered position socially and in their emotionally frustrating though intimate relationships with men. Why then is boys' emotional development socialised (by both men *and* women) into restrictedness in such a universal fashion?

The origins of this practice are debatable - but the fact that it appears to be a norm in virtually every culture on the planet suggests its roots lie in some shared condition, though perhaps not necessarily a contemporary one. It does little by way of justification to locate this in evolutionary terms where men were hunters and warriors who were supposedly required to provide protection for the female during child-bearing stages, or in contemporary times where men supposedly play roles of wage-earners and defenders. Leacock (1981) in a detailed account of the evolution of the "patriarchal family" in her introduction to Engels (1981) has pointed to interesting evidence noting women's role as defenders (6), leading figures in many facets of life (including political and military) (7), and their participation in hunting-gathering in many "primitive" societies (8). Whilst not intending to consider cursory evidence in some esoteric tribal structures as conclusive for all humanity, these instances do point to the possibility of de-linking particular activities with the need for particular psychological attributes.

It seems an arduous task to begin speculating around the origins of practices that entrench emotional restrictedness in boys, and for the purposes of this paper an unnecessary one. Suffice it to note that this phenomenon exists and contributes to psychological distortions that impair the individual's capacity for emotional connectedness with both self and others. Intervention, also, appears to be made more difficult by this problem, particularly given the need in most therapeutic encounters for some cathecting process, some affective response, and the capacity for affective, rather than intellectualised (that is, pseudo-) insight (Appelbaum, 1976).

In concluding, I wish to argue, alongside Miller (1976:69), when she says: "It is clear that the large element of human activity that involves doing for others has been separated off and assigned to women. When this is combined with the fact that what women do is generally not recognised, we end up with some strange theories about the

nature of human nature. These strange theories are, in fact, the prevailing theories in our culture. One of these is that 'mankind' is basically self-seeking, competitive, aggressive, and destructive. Such a theory overlooks the fact that millions of people (most of them women) have spent millions of hours for hundreds of years giving their utmost to millions of others. While this fact has important consequences for women, in an ultimate sense it has equally serious implications for men *and for the dominant culture's theories about the nature of human beings*. Since man is the measure of all things - and man, literally, rather than human beings - we have all tended to measure ourselves by men. Men's interpretation of the world defines and directs us all, tells us what is the nature of human nature".

The process of psychological liberation, therefore, does not depend only on the equalisation of achievement or the recognition of women *from the vantage point of a male value-system*. It requires a re-orientation of what the status-quo is, and a reconsideration of what values are life-enhancing and which anathema to the inherent potential and realisation of human fulfilment. Oddly, the foundations of male-dominated society and the universal premise of most psychological theory are contradictory. Yet despite this paradox, women continue to be viewed as deviating from the norm and requiring of realignment with it.

It remains unconvincing to conflate the oppression of women by men with the qualities the respective genders have. The patronisation of women and their psychological quality by men, or by women themselves, denies the inherent value of what it is to be woman, and subjugates yet again the realisation of this uniqueness. It recreates the idea that what women are is "not okay", and adds to the burden of responsibility for change that already is carried by women. Perhaps in questioning male culture it is important to explore things not only from the point of view of how it oppresses women, but also from the vantage of how it constructs men and creates attributes that are generally regarded in psychology as unhealthy.

Does the notion of patriarchy adequately explain gender construction? Or would it be beneficial to consider notions of a disturbed *system* (of which women are an integral part) as being the agent of replication for the oppressive forces and practices that effect both men and women?

It appears to me onerous to simply expect that women take on the values of a society dominated by men and become part of this world as a means of recognition and status. Equally problematic, is the feminist pressure that yet again places a considerable amount of the burden for struggle at the door of women. Whilst access to economic power is central to the liberation of women and of society, such access need not negate that which is uniquely feminine. It is not only the psychological masculinisation of women that is needed but also the feminisation of men in striving toward some semblance of integration and balance.

Notes.
1. Although later writings by Marx modified this position, the following quote nevertheless captures the theoretical position found in much of the writing that argues for the centrality of social power and the economy: "In the social production of their existence, men (sic) inevitably enter into definite relations which are independent of

their will, namely relations of production appropriate to a given stage in the development of their material forces of production. The totality of these relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society, the real foundation, on which arises a legal and political superstructure and to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness. The mode of production of material life conditions the general process of social, political and intellectual life. It is not the consciousness of men (sic) that determines their existence, but their social existence that determines their consciousness" (Marx, 1977, pp20-21).

2. This argument represents an attack on theoretical positions which attempt to degenderise men and women and create a situation of "neutral, disembodied beings completely determined by social forces". This position, she argues, negates the "rich and robust" picture of human life embodied in sexual difference, family life, and psychological needs of sexuality, intimacy, and belonging. There can be, she asserts, both social justice and sexual difference.

3. According to Tyson and Tyson (1990:133), *affects* may be defined as "mental structures having motivational, somatic, expressive, communicative, and emotional and feeling components, as well as an associated idea or cognitive component". Feelings or emotions are therefore viewed as one component of affects. In this paper, this broader term is preferred since it encapsulates various aspects of the psychological world - though at times the different terms are used with some degree of synonymity to make a point clearer. It should also be noted that although in his early writings on affect Freud mainly concerned himself with anxiety, Tyson and Tyson argue that his later ideas can be generalised to other affects as well.

4. Olivier (1989:35) has eloquently described this: "Most often he (the father) will prefer to read - to read about wars and conflicts taking place outside of the family. He will bury himself in his newspaper, demand silence round the television, forcing the others to play down their personal conflicts in favour of national and international disputes. What a strange sort of father this is, who has longed for children yet will not look after them!"

5. See DSM-111 (APA, 1980) for the earlier version of these categories which were made more nuanced in the revised edition of DSM-111-R (APA, 1987).

6. For example, Leacock (1981:34) mentions " ... the magnificent army of perhaps 5 000 volunteer women soldiers of Dahomey were the legendary Amazons incarnate".

7. Leacock (1981:34) says that " ... women often participated formally in the making of political decisions" and "the literature again and again reveals the autonomy of women and their role in decision making".

8. "Many hunter-gatherers depended on the vegetable foods gathered by women as the staples to be augmented by meat" (Leacock, 1981:34).

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