FETISHES OF "EMPOWERMENT": THE ARGUMENTS, THE CONFUSIONS IN CONTEMPORARY FEMINIST THEORY

A Dissertation

by

ELIZABETH ANN WILSON

Submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies of
Texas A&M University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

August 2007

Major Subject: Political Science

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ABSTRACT

Fetishes of "Empowerment":

The Arguments, the Confusions in Contemporary Feminist Theory

(August 2007)

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"Empowerment" is a term used liberally throughout feminist theory. However, the term has a number of assumed meanings, depending upon the context of its use. In this dissertation, I examine primarily second-wave feminist theory arguments, dividing the concepts according to quadrants of human experience (Habermas, Wilber) in order to reveal the context of the theorists' views of "empowerment." I also examine relevant worldview perspectives (Beck & Cowan, Graves) within each quadrant in order to reveal the underlying assumptions about what it is hoped "empowerment" might achieve. I show that there are two primary types of "empowerment": empowerment of the autonomous self and empowerment of the relational self. These two distinctive types are of utmost importance because, though largely unacknowledged, they lie as the core foundation of conceptual frameworks that divide feminists into two opposing camps. Further, within these two primary types, there are diverse, nuanced understandings of "empowerment" that are based upon varied notions of what it should accomplish.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

WHAT IS EMPOWERMENT?

"Empowerment" seems to be the rallying cry of modern women. Websites boasting membership in the "Female Empowerment Web-ring" display everything from encouragement for women who breastfeed to family violence information to protests about the American taboo against female-toplessness to information about goddess-based religions (2005)[1]. The "Center for Women's Empowerment" (Watertown, MA) teaches Yoga and provides psychotherapy and retreats for lesbian couples (2005)[2]. One individual within a group of young feminist women interviewed by National Public Radio (NPR, 1998) used the term "empowered" repeatedly to describe how working with the group made her feel. An exhibitor at the Cosmetic Enhancement Expo 2004 in Los Angeles California even used the notion of female-empowerment to help sell her cosmetics. Given the seeming importance of and confusion about the meaning of "empowerment," academic examination of the term is in order. Yet among feminist theorists the term seems to be just as much of a fetish and no better defined than among women outside of academia.

In spite of the presence of implicit and explicit notions of "empowerment" throughout much of feminist theory, and in spite of the fact that "empowerment" looms

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This dissertation follows the style of the *American Political Science Review*.

as a catch-all solution to the collective and individual problems of women, very little attempt has been made to clearly conceptualize the term. Those who do make such an attempt often fail to accomplish actual clear definition. What is of perhaps even graver concern is that they fail to acknowledge the multiple uses of the term that would, if carefully examined, reveal multiple, varying notions of what this single term might mean. Making matters worse still, this inadequately defined term has been fetishized. That is, "empowerment" seems thought to be something relatively concrete that an individual can obtain which will magically make the complications and problems facing modern women disappear.

A striking example of this phenomenon is the attempt to define the term, and the comments made thereafter, by Rowland-Serdar and Schwartz-Shea (1991). First, they borrow a notion from Alcoff (1988), who states that, through empowerment, women can "come to believe in their ability" to be responsible for their own identity, their politics and their choices. They then contrast this "empowerment" to "powerlessness," which they define as "the continuing subordination of women to men in public and private spheres" (607). Finally, they tell us that empowerment involves developing "a sense of self able to make, and take responsibility for, choices affirming [this] sense of self" (609).

This particular attempt to define "empowerment" has a few problems. First, these theorists give only a vague definition of the term as it might be conceived within "liberal" feminist theory. They do not ask what empowerment might mean within other theoretical frameworks. Second, they do not define the term directly, but instead

expound upon what they see to be its direct opposite, "powerlessness," which they further equate with subordination. Third, they only understand "empowerment" as it applies to the individual "self," as though this self exists independent of a social context. This is an ironic problem, given that they place the "disempowered, subordinated" woman within a set of social contextual problems in the first place. I will return to a discussion of this matter below.

What is more disturbing than the definition, however, is that "empowerment" is established as a seeming end in itself that will somehow cure "subordination" and thereby end "domination." Yet if women are truly dominated by men within all realms of interaction between the two sexes, how do we know that "a sense of self" will give them any real choices? And, within the context of this overriding domination, insisting that women "take responsibility" for choices could be construed as a blame-the-victim idea. Subordination is, after all, often only a survival mechanism for those who cannot escape domination. Obviously, this work contains more assumptions than may at first be apparent.

Rowland-Serdar and Schwartz-Shea are not alone in presenting a muddy, paradoxical concept of empowerment. Hartsock (1983) declares that "power is a relation among persons that cannot be exercised apart from a social situation" (82), and concludes that "theorizations of power are cultural productions" (261). However, she too does not divorce the concept of powerlessness from the concept of subordination. She states that "an analysis that would not require that one sever biology from society, nature from culture" would be able to "expose the ways women both participate in and oppose

their own subordination" (261). Once again, if powerlessness and subordination are the same, and if women have always had to put up with being dominated by men, then to try to define empowerment for women by equating it with an ability to take responsibility for participation in subordination is either a contradiction of terms or a statement of defeat at the outset.

The equation of the "powerlessness" of women with their "subordination" to men was strong and constant in "second-wave" feminist theory, the feminist theorizing that swept through the halls of academia and in front of "national publics" roughly beginning in the 1960s (see Nicholson, ed., 1997). In spite of this, however, concepts such as "subordination," "domination," and "powerlessness" or "empowerment" should be divorced from each other. Otherwise, we cannot be clear about what we mean by these terms. Further, it must also be recognized that the term "empowerment" has different meanings within different contexts. Each different meaning establishes different goals and therefore different pathways to obtaining those goals. In fact, the term has such diffuse meanings that notions about how to obtain it often lead to recommendations for political, social and personal action that are incompatible with each other. This is one reason the varying types, or categories, of feminist thought have all too often strained against each other.

Yet, in spite of the strain between the varying lines of theory that emerged out of second wave feminism, these women did have one unifying cry that would be at least partially challenged in relatively recent times, that is, in what is now sometimes referred to as the "third wave" of feminist thought. Second wave feminists declared almost

unanimously that, collectively, men cause, promote and benefit from the "powerlessness" of women, which, of course, is why they unanimously demand that women must be somehow "empowered." To find the roots of this theoretical notion, we do not have to look too far back in time. For example, Beauvoir (1949) wrote that men have gained increasing strength for themselves by degrading and exercising power over women. This came about, according to Beauvoir, because woman did not share man's way of "working and thinking" and because she "remained in bondage to life's mysterious processes" (82). Man's power increased significantly when he "became owner of the land" (83). Because he saw woman as "other" and not like himself, he also began to claim ownership of woman as he did the land, the animals and slaves (83). We see these particular notions manifest again and again throughout various styles of feminist theory that emerged out of second-wave feminism.

Categorical Division and Analysis

In her 1981 book Public Man, Private Woman, Jean Elshtain lists the primary categories of feminist thought as radical, liberal, Marxist and psychoanalytic (202). She tells us that the divisions between these categories are not precise, and that there is some overlap between and among positions. She also notes, however, that there are important differences between them. Indeed, while it can and has been argued that these four categories do not adequately encompass all of feminist theory, especially today, these four can be correctly drawn as the cornerstones of second wave feminism. These second-wave feminists were searching for the source of women's oppression. As Firestone

(1970) said, in order to change something, we must first understand how it came to be, how it evolves over time and through what institutions it still operates. Each one of these four separate categories of feminist thought proclaimed to have found at least part of the answer to this puzzle about the origin, evolution and operation of the oppression of women.

Further, parallels can be drawn between these categories and the types of "domination" suffered by women, according to Beauvoir. They all start from a notion that women are almost universally subordinated to men and that men exploit this subordination deliberately in order to gain increasing power for themselves. Marxist feminism, from which socialist-feminist theory evolved (Jaggar, 1983), focuses on women's social oppression and its manifestation in social situations, such as the fact that, historically, men and women have performed different types of work (Kollantai, 1977; MacKinnon, 1989; Olsen, 1993a). This parallels Beauvoir's concern that women did not share men's way of working. Psychoanalytic theory focuses on how and why women's thought processes may differ from those of men (Chodorow, 1978; see also Butler, 1990). This parallels Beauvoir's belief that women did not share men's way of thinking. Radical theory blames women's oppression on cultural norms centered on biology (Firestone, 1970; see also Jaggar, 1983). This parallels Beauvoir's notion that woman remains "in bondage to life's mysterious processes." Liberal theory focuses on political processes and corresponding philosophical ideas such as rights (Friedan, 1963; Eisenstein, 1981) that can be traced back to early concepts of "ownership" (see Pateman, 1988a; Okin, 1979).

What these ideas led to in second-wave feminism was the creation of various theories meant to "empower" women within each of these realms. But these various notions of "empowerment" and how to accomplish it soon began to create division and discontent among academic theorists, even as they continued to fail to address how or why the notion of empowerment might mean very different things to different women. A brief look at each of the four types of feminist theory described by Elshtain and an examination of the arguments that proliferated within and around them will begin to reveal the extent of this phenomenon.

I begin with early Radical Theory, which targeted the biological differences between men and women and the "burdens" to women that sprang from these differences. These feminists were disturbed by what they saw as evidence that some form of male privilege has existed in every known human society. If women's oppression is so universal, they reasoned, it must be grounded in some universal difference between men and women. They turned their attention to biological difference, because it is constant across time and culture (Jaggar, 1983). For example, Firestone (1970) blames reproduction necessities for women's oppression. Women, she wrote, are weaker than men as a result of their reproductive physiology. Further, babies are dependent upon adults for survival, and human milk, or a substitute, is a primary need for at least the first year of life.

To Firestone, this means that women, particularly if they bear children, are necessarily dependent upon men in some way. She therefore declared that reproduction was costly and demeaning to women. To her, nature had placed an unfair burden on

females, but because of our human ability to seek out and find medical and scientific miracles, there remains no need for women to remain in "bondage to life's mysterious processes." For Firestone, the way out would be technological advances that could free women from the traditional reproductive role. That is, according to her, biological reproduction can and should be replaced by some technological process that is carried out apart from the female body. To her, this is the only viable solution for ending the thus far eternal suffering of womankind.

Other radical theorists, however, would charge that Firestone's ideas cast a dark shadow on the natural processes that could just as readily be seen as beautiful and as contributing to a unique power that only females have. That is, for example, Firestone's arguments lead to the conclusion that women's natural biology is bad for women. An opposite conclusion presented by some radical feminists (see for example Alpert, 1973; Daly, 1978; Griffin, 1980) is that women are naturally superior to men, beginning with the ability to give birth that men do not share. To strip a woman of this natural power and right is to take from her one of the greatest sources for happiness and empowerment in her life. Therefore, rather than believing that nature must be somehow overcome, these feminists conclude that woman's natural physiology makes her special, allowing her to experience and even to know and feel things that men cannot.

In other words, although their "frameworks" and conclusions differ vastly, what the theorists who have been categorized as "radical" have in common is the notion that men and women are different in some fundamental ways, and this difference begins with biology. Again, it is further assumed that women have been oppressed by men

specifically because of that difference. While this makes for some cohesion within the category, it does not mean that these feminists have any similar notions about what female empowerment would actually mean or accomplish. To Firestone, "empowerment" means, among other things, freedom from the "burdens" of pregnancy and childbirth. For those who argued against her on this, "empowerment" means a social enhancement of woman's prestige, based in part on her unique ability to bear children.

Next, I turn to Marxist Feminist Theory, which evolved into a socialist-feminism that sought ways to equalize women with men socially, economically and politically (Jaggar, 1993). Addressing issues of labor-division and class, socialist-feminism tries to address "the abstract nature of the category Woman" (Grant, 1993, 47). For example, MacKinnon tells us that "simply being a woman has a meaning that decisively defines all women socially" (1989, 90). It is noted that women have less money, less power and even less free time than men (Jaggar, 1983). Ideas about capitalism are united with ideas about patriarchy (Ehrenreich, 1990) in order to focus in part on the free labor that women perform in the home, which supports public structures that are assumed to produce profit primarily for men.

This parallels the conditions of the proletariat as described by Marxism, which painted the proletariat as working to support an economic structure that primarily profited the bourgeoisie. Because work and economic conditions received a high profile in this line of theorizing, the public/private split and woman's "traditional place" in the home received a great deal of scrutiny and criticism. It was not uncommon for socialist-feminist theorists to describe the traditional work of women as demeaning and part of an

economic structure that, again, served primarily men. Very similar to the way Marxism had encouraged the proletariat to rise up together to throw off the yoke of their labor class structure, these feminists called for women to forsake work in the home and insist on equal participation in the public realm of wage earners.

Yet this line of reasoning almost immediately gave rise to a protest by women who pointed out that work performed within traditional roles, such as quality childcare, continued to be necessary whether provided in the home or elsewhere (for example, Mason, 1988). These feminists noted that movement into the public, wage-earning work force only doubled the necessary work that the average wife and mother must do in order for the human race to survive. This was especially true for poorer women who could not afford to hire housekeepers or afford quality childcare for their children. Among other suggestions, this category of feminism produced the argument that women should be paid for their in-home labor and the care of their own children. This line of reasoning produced political theory that suggested movement of the public sphere into the private, for example, through state payment to women for their in-home labors. This was the direct opposite of the notion that women should move from the private sphere, the home, into the public sphere.

Again, this position implies definite ideas about what "empowerment" might mean for women and just how that empowerment should be accomplished. Theories that suggested women should always work outside of the home wished to empower them with financial security, independent of the family and, if applicable, of their husbands. Theorists who suggested that women should be paid for their in-home labors instead

sought to empower women with social prestige and with some control of family finances, even though their financial security would still remain largely dependent upon their husbands, ex-husbands and/or the state.

Obviously, like the radical feminists, socialist-feminists did not agree with each other about the type of empowerment they wished to seek for women or even what the end result of that empowerment might be. They did, however, agree with each other and the radical feminists that women are oppressed and that, again, oppression is both profitable to men and deliberately exacted against women by men. But unlike radical feminism, socialist-feminism did not address why it is women particularly, instead of men, who are oppressed. It also failed to fully address why women are oppressed in ways that cut across class lines and have little or nothing to do with capitalistic production (see Jaggar, 1983).

This, of course, is what the radical theorists had tried to address through their analysis of biology and reproduction. Another line of thought, however, would try to address the issue of the social reproduction of women's oppression. That is, they would examine the perpetuation of said oppression across generations. They would do this by focusing on "mothering," because traditionally, most children are cared for by women. In other words, the mother-to-child relationship was closely examined, and this scrutiny led to the development of "mothering theory" (Jaggar, 1983). This group of theorists included both psychoanalytic feminists and cognitive development feminists. What mattered to this theoretical group was that a social-norm of "mothering" creates a fundamental psychological difference between men and women, a difference which

affects how women think and behave. Further, how we understand and respond to that difference, or what we do about it, is of great importance.

Gilligan (1978), the cognitive development theorist whose work inspired "care theory," set out to show how Western society in particular has stigmatized feminine social norms. She stated that a difference between the ways boys and girls play has been used as an example by those who suggest that girls develop more slowly intellectually than boys. Gilligan argues that the difference is real but the notion of "slower" is incorrect. The notion of slow development, according to Gilligan, is a mistake rooted in the fact that other differences are not properly recognized or allowed for in the cognitive measurements. Gilligan suggested that the difference measured between the social norms of girls and the social norms of boys had to do with their socialization as caregivers, which gave rise to a reverence for human relational interaction at a level not shared by most males.

Further, Gilligan forwarded a type of empowerment for women which meant a recognition of woman's role as nurturer and caregiver as a good thing for all of mankind. She and other "care theorists" sought to "empower" women by instilling in society and academic scholarship a notion that this difference need not be equated with "bad" or "inferior." In fact, the particular elements which researchers had found primarily in feminine social norms and the feminine psyche, such as the tendency to be other-regarding and nurturing, were ingredients needed by the human race, particularly as a counterbalance to individualistic masculine social norms and psyche.

From the outset, however, "mothering theory" split into two opposing camps. Like the cognitive development feminists, psychoanalytic theorists proclaimed that the primary difference between men and women is located in the psyche. They, too, stated that this difference is spawned primarily by social conditioning. This conditioning arises in response to the biological necessity of mothering and the fact that, traditionally, women have been the primary caretakers of children. For example, Chodorow (1979) focused on how human beings develop certain thought processes at a very early age. She theorized that young boys begin to learn a different social role than girls because they perceive that they and their mothers are "different" and identify with the male figures in their lives who are not caretakers. But to Chodorow, this creates an array of social problems.

Unlike Gilligan and the other care theorists, Chodorow and some of the other mothering theorists charge that the traditional mother-child relationship created and maintained male dominant societies (for examples, see Myers, ed., 1997; Trebilcot, ed., 1984). These women, like many of the radical theorists, claim that childcare is indeed bad for women and for society, at least so long as it is primarily carried out by women. The result of the traditional mother-child relationship, they tell us, is the creation of dominating males and docile and dependent females. In other words, to these theorists "different" can indeed be very bad and does serve to develop female personalities that "participate in their own subordination." To them, "empowerment" came to mean an ability to recognize this participation and find ways to overcome it.

Here again we see two opposing notions of "empowerment" and of what empowerment would hope to accomplish. Care theory seeks recognition and prestige for women for their roles as nurturers and caregivers. It is further hoped that this prestige will allow women the opportunity to promote nurturing and communitarian ideals within the family and ultimately within larger political realms. Opposing this idea is the notion set forth by Chodorow and others that women should remove themselves as far as possible from the stereotypical role of "caregiver." It is hoped that this removal will empower them to demand equal responsibility from men in all necessary care-giving roles, thereby freeing women from this too-exclusive and self-perpetuating "responsibility."

Finally, I turn to liberal feminist theory, which began to dissect political theoretical debate about issues such as rights and justice, and began to call for the equalization of women and men before the law. Unlike other second-wave feminists, liberal feminists largely sidestep the question of why women are "oppressed." Starting from the observation that women are oppressed by men and male-centric society, these feminists jump straight to the matter of seeking ways to end said oppression.

In order to accomplish the goal of legal equality, liberal feminists have seen it as their task to show that women are in fact equal to men, because liberal ethics state that equals must be given equal legal rights. One way to show that women are equal is to show that they are fully capable of reason (Jaggar, 1983). It is important to note that there is a reason why such demonstration of and emphasis on cognitive ability has been seen as important. There has been a long-standing stereotypical notion that women are

not fully rational beings and therefore not capable of the same kind of decision-making as men. While I will discuss one possible origin of this notion in a later chapter, the important point to note for now is that, according to liberal feminist theory, because women are fully rational beings, their physiology is relatively unimportant and therefore physical difference between men and women is also relatively unimportant (for example, see Baer, 1999). Further, psychological difference, such as it exists, is thought to be caused by social problems, for example, inferior education (see Jaggar, 1983). In other words, minimizing gender difference in order to focus on "equality" instead became the norm among liberal feminists (Dietz, 2003). That this tactic was seen by these theorists as perhaps the only possible path to attaining legal equality for women began the heated "sameness versus difference" and "equality versus difference" debates that persist inside feminist theory to this day. Obviously, these debates set liberal feminism at odds with both radical feminism and psychoanalytic feminism.

Liberal feminist theory is likewise set apart from socialist-feminist theory, but in this case because of its focus on individualism rather than on the rights of women as a social category, group or class. This is true even though Eisenstein (1981), who is sometimes categorized by other feminists as a liberal-theory feminist,[3] insists that the problems of women should be understood first as a group/class struggle. This matter presents a need for explanation that all categories of feminist theory bleed into each other to some extent. For example, all hope to change laws that affect women and, as Eisenstein (1981) points out, demand equality and freedom of individual choice for women. Also, all recognize that women have some biological difference from males.

Likewise, all feminist theories recognize to some extent that women as a group are on lower levels in both social and economic realms than are their male counterparts.

However, what distinguishes the different categories can again be found by examining what it is that theoretical arguments in a particular group share, such as which elements of the given situation that they consider to be most important. And, most liberal feminists, like traditional male liberal theorists, focus primarily on the autonomous individual, with that emphasis seen as being of primary, even urgent, importance. This is because to conceptualize womankind as a group or class is to emphasis that which sets them apart from other groups, or in other words, to emphasize difference. Within the confines of a theoretical frame that sees an urgent need to minimize difference, this fact is problematic at best.

Yet as with other theoretical categories, we nonetheless see a division of the ranks within liberal feminist theory over the conceptualization of "empowerment," over how said "empowerment" might be obtained and over exactly what it is that said "empowerment" might hope to accomplish. For example, some liberal feminists have focused on the public/private split, locating many of women's problems in her "privatization" (for example, see Elshtain, 1981). Further, because states focus laws primarily on the public realm and ideally refrain, according to liberal-democratic theory, from interfering in the "private" lives of individuals, one highly recommended way for women to gain equality is for them to "go public." That is, they must be educated and employed outside of the home (see Jaggar, 1983). From this line of theory arose the

assertion that women could best be empowered by laws which would treat them the same as their male counterparts in public realms such as the workplace.

But this, too, drew a line of opposing commentary. A question was raised: did not equal treatment often mean that those with unequal needs were disadvantaged? Theorists would soon point out that certain female experiences such as pregnancy and nursing are not and cannot be shared by men. Because of this, it has been argued, a difference in the way women in general and mothers in particular are handled in workplace law and policy may be the only way to truly bring "equal opportunity" to women (Littleton, 1997). It must be recognized in the workplace, some of these theorists proclaim, that women are very often also mothers. Otherwise, there is no hope for equal chances of employment advancement, provisions for necessary time off for childbirth, or allowances for the complications that nursing and childcare bring to the working women's employment reality. Within this theoretical frame, "empowerment" actually requires different treatment. This notion, however, immediately reveals the magnitude of an as-yet unresolved dilemma, because a supposed need for the "different" treatment of women based on their reproductive biology has been used historically to make sure that they did not have employment opportunities equal to those enjoyed by men (see Baer, 2002).

These are but beginning examples of the varying and opposing concepts of "empowerment" that can be found in feminist theory. Theory itself evolves over time. We see feminist theory emerge as a critique to male-centered theories that shaped political and social life for millennia. But then an interesting but not unexpected

phenomenon began to take place. Feminists began to critique feminists, to point out the weaknesses within the arguments. While such criticism sparks more debate about its own accuracy or usefulness, theory nonetheless evolves to incorporate at least some of the new ideas. Further, various branches of theory emerged that focus on particular aspects of women's lives that had thus far been left unexamined by public discourse. These branches interact with each other, with individual theorists both writing and debating across the branches. This further evolves the theory, even as it sometimes splinters it.

If we see feminist theory as an evolving entity with multiple branches that also evolve and mutate across time, we can begin to understand the patterns of discovery and growth therein. We can also begin to understand the underlying notions about empowerment, which also evolve to some degree over time. By carefully dissecting the above and other arguments, one can begin to outline exactly what "empowerment" may mean within each theorist's perspective.

It is not enough to simply point out, as I have done so far, that differences obviously exist, because to do so does nothing to resolve the conflicts and confusions within feminism. What is needed is a careful analysis of why the differences exist. This can be done by carefully untangling the multiple definitions of the term "empowerment." Language often eludes us. Particularly, multiple concepts are often assigned to a single word. If we assume that everyone understands the word to have a single meaning when it in fact does not, then we commit a grievous error. The process of untangling and

clarifying concepts is a difficult one but is not impossible. Further, it is necessary if we are to ease confusions and clear a path for progress.

Clarification of Categories

The following pages untangle the messy conceptual confusions that surrounds the catchword "empowerment." The process uses a step-by-step analysis of second-wave feminist theory. The method of analysis, which involves the categorical sectioning of theory, should not be thought of as a statement or restatement about how feminist theories should necessarily be categorized. Rather, I categorize the four basic "types" of feminist theory primarily as a matter of research convenience and in order to attempt extensive coverage of second-wave feminism in my work. The categorical framework is based primarily on work by other theorists and is not intended, in and of itself, to assert a position about these categories or to establish any new ground. In fact, I recognize that these categorical groupings have definite inadequacies. However, in spite of inadequacies, I find the categories to be a very useful and easily defended research tool, as I am about to demonstrate.

Of foremost importance is the fact that these "basic four" cover all of the areas of human social study as outlined by Habermas, that are the human realms of "I," "we" and "it" (Honneth and Joas, 1991). In fact, it happens that Elshtain's categories, as mentioned before, align almost perfectly with Habermas' theory, if we simply take his analysis one step further. First, we must acknowledge what it is that each of Habermas "human realms" refers to. Simply put, "I" refers the internal cognitive processes of the individual.

"We" refers to "interior-collective" processes. That is, "we" is the inner workings of social and/or cultural constructs - those things which give groups and cultures their unique, internally-shared identities. "It," on the other hand, refers to those things which are externally observable, such as the rituals of a particular group or the laws and political organizations that a particular society creates. If we realize that "it" has both a plural component - collectively created constructs, and a singular component - individual observable behaviors, we have "four quadrants" of human reality.[4]

Returning to Elshtain's categories we see this interesting alignment: Psychoanalytic/cognitive development theories examine how individuals think and learn to think ("I"). This corresponds to the "interior individual" or "intentional" quadrant. Socialist-feminism theories examine how humans interact culturally and socially ("we"). This corresponds to the "interior-collective" quadrant. Liberal theories examine government and legal constructs collectively created to regulate the ways that humans interact with each other ("external, plural"-"its"). This corresponds to the exterior-collective quadrant. Finally, radical theory, although it partially grounds itself in theories about human instinct, nonetheless corresponds nicely to the exterior-individual quadrant because its theories are extrapolated from modern-day externally-observable behaviors and assumed historical behaviors of individual human beings ("external, singular"-"it"). I find this explanation of quadrants both useful and necessary, because as I move into analysis of the array of conceptualizations of "empowerment," it will become apparent that each category of theory presents an "empowerment" that would correspond to

human existence in each of these separate realms. Therefore, the usefulness of these particular categorical groupings to this research becomes readily apparent.

In spite of this, however, I find it necessary to present a few clarifications concerning the distinctive boundaries that I have drawn for these "basic four" categories. To begin, it is understood that some theorists quoted herein may not agree with the categories in which I have placed their work. There are, in fact, few precise boundaries in any of these categories. For example, as I examine texts that theorize biological difference between the sexes, I include writings which may also point to socialization or other factors as the current "true" cause of women's oppression. I place these writings in the category I have labeled as radical/biological theory anyway, because they point out specifically that certain problems faced by women are only faced by females and not by males, and so biological differences therefore must have been the starting cause of the oppression of females.

Jaggar (1983) explains the problem with attempting to define the different types of feminist theory. She says:

> Feminist theorist and activists do not always wear labels and, even if they do, they are not always agreed on who should wear which label. Moreover, there are differences even between those wearing the same label and, in addition, dialogue between feminists of different tendencies has led to modifications in all their views. (123)

As my earlier brief discussion of Eisenstein's work indicates, I recognize that theoretical writings do not always fit neatly into any single category. As further example, Grant (1993) identifies MacKinnon as a socialist theorist, yet MacKinnon's notion that women were restricted to the private sphere because of reproductive physiology and child-care

practices is borrowed directly from radical theory. In fact, as will be seen as this project unfolds, it is not uncommon for the work of any given single theorist to cross two or more categorical boundaries.

Further, I choose to focus on these "basic four" in spite of the fact that new categories have been drawn for feminist theory in recent times. As Dietz (2003) states, "the effort to simplify, categorize, and review the alternatives [in feminist theory] has become a small industry in the literature" (403). And yet the "basic four" still stand as the clearest division so far of the "types" of feminist theory. This is partly because other theories are either derived from or argue against these basic four. For example, "mothering theory" (see Grant, 1993) has its roots in the most common approaches found within what Elshtain titles the psychoanalytic theory category (for example, see Chodorow, 1978) and cognitive development theory (Gilligan, 1977), as mentioned above. Likewise, the original "woman's standpoint theory" (see Jaggar, 1983) stood on the premise that women's experiences which produce "ways of knowing" are different from those of men. This, again, has roots within psychoanalytic theory and cognitive development theory, although it could also fall under the umbrella of socialist theory or radical theory.

Further, the "basic four" are the foundations of other categories and ideas established and/or recognized relatively recently. For example, Dietz (2003) lists the following categories: difference feminism, diversity feminism and deconstruction feminism. Under the category of "difference feminism," she lumps together a number of subcategories, which she states "were forged out of second-wave feminism," which

during the 1960s and 1970s included "the liberal feminism of Friedan (1963), the radical feminism of Millet (1970), the socialist-Marxist feminism of Rowbotham (1972), and the psychoanalytic feminism of Mitchell (1973)" (Dietz, 2003, 404). Out of these four, Dietz tells us, the following categories emerged: Marxist historical materialism, psychoanalytic theory, cognitive development analysis and moral psychology, social psychology, situational sociology, interpretive social science, standpoint feminism, and the literatures on female spirituality and bodily essence. She further mentions that liberal theorists "predominant in the 1970s" (415) wished to minimize gender difference in order to focus on "equality" instead. Nonetheless, she places liberal theorists in the "difference feminism" category anyway, stating that these theorists make two basic assumptions: that persons are either male or female and that females have been oppressed because of patriarchy. "Equality," she tells us, is presented as an "alternative to masculinist citizenship" (415).

Having lumped all previous categories into one, Dietz then lists two separate categories: deconstruction feminism and diversity feminism. Deconstruction feminism, she tells us, responds primarily to "symbolic difference," which is rooted in the psychology of how and why "woman" might be given some distinctive definition. This feminism asks "whether it is possible or desirable to forward a collective concept of woman" (407). Diversity feminism, on the other hand, responds to "social difference," which is rooted in social difference and "socialist theory." This feminism says that we must also consider "race, class, ethnicity, sexuality, and other ascriptive identity categories" (402). Obviously, these new categories do not preclude the "basic four," but

rather either attempt to dismantle them (deconstruction) or add to them (diversity). I do not argue with Dietz's evaluation of the current categories within feminism. However, I find it both necessary and appropriate to return to the "basic four" to find a clear understanding of the roots of various feminist arguments and, again, of some varying definitions of "empowerment." This is because given the goal of "empowering women," which is more or less the understood goal of feminism, deconstruction feminism and diversity feminism examine and challenge concepts of "woman." I instead intend to examine and challenge concepts of "empowerment." Further, these two types of feminism are generally categorized as part of "third wave" feminism, which I will consider as I inquire about the various notions of empowerment in relatively recent feminist literature.

As I will demonstrate, using these particular theoretical groupings also helps to clarify distinctive notions about the roots of "women's oppression," as well as why suggestions regarding how women might overcome this oppression vary so widely. Further, cross-categorical debates that have often pitted theorists within different "categories" against each other help to reveal the multiple and varying conceptualizations of "empowerment." For example, some feminists charge that any universal concept of "woman" is essentialist and exclusive (Lugones & Spelman, 1983; Alcoff, 1988; Grant, 1993). Their concern is said "essentialism" actually stands to increase the oppressive problems that individual women face. On the other hand, Hirschmann (1992) declares that "obligations do in fact exist [for women] that are not chosen but rather stem from the crasis and history of human relationships" (12). This

argument suggests particular types of oppression that womankind as a collective group may face and have need to rise above. Further, Jaggar (1983) writes that if liberal theory would take biological necessity and other facts of human need into account then instead of community and interdependence seeming puzzling and problematic, "the existence of egoism, competitiveness and conflict" would be thought puzzling and problematic (41). This argument refers to an "interdependence" that is tied to biological reproduction. This hints at something both unique and important about the universal role that the women collectively play in the survival of the human race. These arguments over how "woman" is to be conceptualized led feminism into what has been called an "identity crisis" within feminism (Alcoff, 1988) that has still not been resolved today (Dietz, 2003).

Finally, within the "quadrant" categories as I outlined them earlier, I collapse some varied but related branches of theory. For example, while this research will necessarily include some coverage of feminist literature that discusses empowerment as it is understood by women of color, women of low economic status, and so forth, I do not find the need to use "diversity feminism" as a separate category for the research. As noted above, diversity feminism often challenges concepts of "woman," but I wish to challenge concepts of "empowerment." Further, because understandings of race, problems of race relations, economic class and the problems of low economic status are all social constructs, I combine some relatively recent theories about these and other social issues with the second-wave socialist-feminist theory that examined how social constructs affect the lives of women. Finally, it was from within a dialogue[5] between socialist-feminists and black feminism theorists that the modern "diversity-feminism"

first emerged. This is why I have titled this category socialist-feminism and emergent-diversity feminist theory.

As an aside intended for further clarification, I do not include here the social movements or theories that were part of "first wave" feminism. "First wave feminism" encompasses historical women's movements that were efforts to liberate women in multiple situations and in multiple ways, such as granting them suffrage and eradicating the social expectation of women to wear corsets. However, academic theorizing about these movements during their occurrence was scarce. "Second wave feminism," however, saw a massive ballooning of theorizing about women's issues within universities and academic journals and books. Because I wish to focus on how theorists have defined empowerment, I choose to focus primarily on second wave feminism, with some smaller amount of attention paid to the relatively recent third wave literature.

Also, I place psychoanalytical theory together in one category with cognitive development theory. This is because both types of theory examine the internal construction of thought processes and the influence of cultural norms on individual views and behaviors even though they use different methods to do so and often reach different conclusions. I also find it useful to place these two side-by-side within a single category because they both gave rise to types of "mothering theory." This is not meant to imply that feminists writing within other categories of thought did not ever focus on "mothering." In fact, as Trebilcot (1984) asserts, the "centrality" of mothering in women's lives is centrally "reflected in feminist theorizings" (1). However, psychoanalytical theory and cognitive development theory are both particularly

preoccupied with theoretical notions concerning the psychological effects of the nurturing of children when it is carried out predominately by women.

Finally, under the heading of liberal theory I will examine not only liberal political theorists, but also theorists who examine laws in a liberal democracy, particularly America, from an individualistic viewpoint. This is because the individualistic viewpoint is standard throughout liberal political theory and is in direct opposition/contrast to communitarian theory. Communitarian theory, on the other hand, can be shown to have close parallels within "care theory," which is one outgrowth of "mothering theory."

Research Method, Step by Step

With these categorical structures in place to help sort out the broad array of types and styles of feminist theory, attention can be turned to the task of unraveling the tangle of the multiple conceptualizations of "empowerment." This is not the impossible task it may at first seem. An understanding of the theoretical "frameworks" which support divergent notions of empowerment can be obtained by asking a few precise questions. This understanding will reveal distinctive definitions of the term "empowerment," all of which fall within two broader but distinctive types of empowerment. We can then make some sense of the conflicts and contradictions that arise across and within feminist theoretical frames.

I have formulated a step-by-step process of theoretical questioning intended to reveal these varying definitions of empowerment. The first step (1) is to identify the

addressed problem. The second step (2) is to inquire as to the context of the problem that "empowerment" is intended to overcome. This "context" includes both (a) the assumed cause or causes of the problem and (b) the kind of human interaction that is being addressed. The third step (3) is to ascertain the method which the theorist in question recommends as the best way to attain "empowerment." The fourth step (4) is to understand the theorist's goal, that is, what the "empowerment" intends to accomplish.

Taking these steps will reveal at least two distinctive "types" of empowerment, and within these two types, multiple nuances of what this "empowerment" really means to the theorists. These two distinctive types are of utmost importance because, though largely unacknowledged, they lie as the core foundation of conceptual frameworks that divide feminists and other theorists into two opposing camps. These must therefore be acknowledged and understood before other distinctions of definitions can be pursued.

Untangling the Skein

These two types of empowerment are important enough to be discussed at length separately. However, I will give briefer attention to the first, only because in western political thought, especially in relatively recent times, this has not only been discussed at length, but has been often been mistakenly thought to be the only legitimate type of empowerment. The two types are:

A. Empowerment of the autonomous self, in which ways are sought to allow women to live well as individuals and to be independently willed. Particularly, ways are sought to allow women to stand on their own without the aid of men and to gain

autonomous power within the public realm. When the private sphere is addressed, women are often encouraged to forsake interdependent relationships that are seen to create burden, responsibility and oppression.

B. Empowerment of the relational self, in which we see concepts of the individual as necessarily embedded in social interactions with other human beings, including males. It is assumed that no humans can ever entirely be independent of or separate from others, and that it is beneficial to human societies for this interdependence to be recognized and improved upon. Ways are sought to gain social prestige for caregivers and to improve the quality of intimate, interdependent relationships in order to provide for the happiness and care of all human beings, including those such as children who cannot care for themselves.

Empowerment of the Autonomous Self

Kant calls moral autonomy the "unconditional value" (Palmquist, 1995). Autonomy means that the individual must be free to choose his or her values, goals and corresponding actions. It is based on the Lockean notion that under God and the law of nature, "all men are free and equal" (Schochet, 1971, 15). If they are truly "free and equal," no man may define for another man what is "good." Barry (1965) states that freedom is measured according to the degree to which one is able to pursue wants against the contrasting tensions of restriction and control. Berlin (1969) gives further clarification to these ideas by telling us that there is more to liberty than merely not

being controlled. Negative freedom is the freedom from control. Positive freedom, however, is the freedom and ability to pursue one's own will.

Keeping these thoughts in mind, let us return for a moment to Rowland-Serdar and Schwartz-Shea's definition of empowerment: "a sense of self able to make, and take responsibility for, choices affirming [this] sense of self." In the context of individual autonomy, this definition makes a limited sense. Such "sense of self" is necessary in order for one to recognize one's own individual will as something separate from the demands and/or controls of others. Further, the process of overcoming outside control and pursuing one's own will takes personal responsibility and action. However, while "sense of self" may ensure that one is able to choose one's own values and goals as Kant suggested, it does not ensure that one also has the corresponding ability to take action according to those values and goals. This is where the need for positive freedom, or the ability to pursue one's own will, comes in. The combination of "negative" and "positive" freedom, together with a "sense of self," allow for the empowerment of the autonomous self. My research method allows for the isolation of and understanding of this type of "empowerment" wherever it appears in political theory.

Empowerment of the Relational Self

In the *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle made the following observation:

> The term self-sufficient denotes not merely being sufficient for oneself alone, as if one lived the life of a hermit, but also being sufficient for the needs of one's parents and children and wife, and one's friends and fellow countrymen in general, inasmuch as man is by nature a social being. (circa 382-322 B.C., Book I, Chapter VII, *in* Sterba, 1998, 52)

It has been recognized since antiquity, then, that human beings live interconnected and interdependent lives. This theme did not die with Aristotle. Although Aristotle did not consider the family to be a political matter, communitarians throughout the centuries have continued to carry his concept of "self-sufficiency" of the social being as it involved interdependence between "countrymen in general," applying this to the political wellbeing of the community, the state and the individual citizen. Etzioni (1995), for example, says that neither individual liberty nor human existence can be sustained for long outside of social communities. These communities, for Etzioni, necessarily entail pursuit of common goals which are only attainable as common goals. Dewey (1925) said that democracy is "the idea of community life itself"(156), and added that what constitutes democracy is "the clear consciousness of a communal life, in all its implications"(156). Sandel (1996) makes the point that this communal life cannot be understood without understanding the nonpolitical aspects of life, i.e., the social aspects that form our very identity. He argues that the inclusion of these aspects is necessary in order to understand our conceptions of the good life. Walzer (1983) tells us "goods with their meanings because of their meanings are the crucial medium of social relations" (7). Crittenden (1993) further declares that individuals are not simply born with autonomy, because autonomy requires both rationality and self-reflection. He says, "We cannot know we are and cannot claim to be, acting autonomously without some social context that will validate the process" (47).

I return one last time to the 1991 discussion of "empowerment" by Rowland-Sedar and Schwartz-Shea. They carry the concepts about the individual, autonomous self

from the public sphere into the private sphere in order to address issues of cultural norms about woman's responsibilities within the family. They attempt to reshape liberal theory's notion of the autonomous self by including how that self is shaped by the family and by cultural norms. Their efforts are to be applauded in that they recognize the shaping of the self by relational forces. But they fail to understand the empowerment of the relational self as such is put forth by other theorists even as they purport to address the same. The reason for this failure is two-fold. First, although they mention that "female children's learning about their sexuality" within social and cultural contexts produces results that span a "continuum" from one "extremely empowering and supportive end point" to "another profoundly disempowering and devaluing end point" (610), they thereafter only focus on family processes that produce the disempowering end, using this as a tool to attempt to discredit the work of other theorists.

Second, they state that "empowerment" must include redefining "responsibility" to mean "encouraging" others, including children, to take care of themselves, thus limiting the woman's "responsibility." Unfortunately, this fails to take into account the fact that all individuals have at least one prolonged point in their lives when they cannot "take care of themselves": when they are infants and young children. This, then, sidesteps the empowerment of the self as it applies to empowering one to take care of helpless others by assuming that no one is ever truly helpless and dependent. The argument by some theorists who promote what I define as "empowerment of the relational self" (for example, Gilligan, Fox-Genovese, Hewlett) is not that women must be "dependent" upon men, as Rowland Serdar and Schwartz Shea imply (607-608), but

rather that women often do find themselves responsible for individuals who cannot care for themselves (i.e., babies). The confusion about this begins with the assertion that mothers tend to desire a "partner" to help them in this responsibility, and for heterosexual women, "partner" means a male.

Rowland-Serdar and Schwartz-Shea confuse certain cultural norms that have defined how this "partnership" is structured with "helpless dependency," because they are focusing only on dysfunctional families. This is a common mistake in feminist theory and is one major reason for the splitting of feminist theory into multiple opposing camps. It is not my intention here to take a side in this dispute, but to demonstrate that some fundamental miscommunications have been in play. Rowland-Serdar and Schwartz-Shea are a prime example of theorists who make some valid points, but err in that their disapproval of "opposing camps" is based largely on misunderstanding. This is evidenced by accusations they make that do not apply very well to the theories they are criticizing. An understanding of the various definitions of "empowerment" found across feminist theory, coupled with a reexamination of empowering elements of cultural norms, could, if not create agreement between opposing camps, at least forge a bridge of understanding that better addresses the real, multifaceted concerns of today's women within the contexts of the various social landscapes in which they find themselves.

However, if we are to understand what interdependence means to the individual and what this has to do with empowerment, we must focus not just on the community and the state, or even on the notion of autonomy and how it is defined. We must also ask what interdependence has to do with the well-being of the family. This is not only

because of the oft-stated biological fact that babies cannot survive without adult care. It is also because the family cannot be independent of outside help, that is, self-sufficient, unless all members of the family, including helpless members such as babies, are properly and continually cared for by the family or by some means provided for by the family. It is within this context that the empowerment of the relational self first emerges. This is because, for example, a mother with an infant cannot be said to be empowered unless that "empowerment" entails an ability to see that her child is properly cared for.

Yet, this concept reaches well beyond the mother-child relationship. Anyone who wishes to care for any loved one - a child, a sibling, an aging parent, or even a pet - will feel utterly powerless the moment he or she loses the ability to help or care for said loved one, so long as the help or care is still needed for the wellbeing of the loved one. Further, this sensation of powerlessness has roots in a concrete reality: with failure of the ability of such care to take place within the family, in civil society care becomes the responsibility of and/or the burden of the community and/or the state. This problem arises even if concern for the care of others does not exist within the society, because this breakdown of in-family care produces such burdens to the society as "street children," homeless elderly and even high infant mortality. Within this context, empowerment of the relational self becomes a matter of political concern. The research I present will disentangle this relational empowerment from other concepts that surround it, to reveal a second type of empowerment prevalent in much of Second and Third Wave Feminism.

As a final point concerning these two distinct types of "empowerment," I return for a moment to Hartsock's analysis of power (1983). She tells us that male theorists have tended to define power as domination and control/ coercion, while female theorists, whether feminists or not (for example, Hannah Arendt, Hannah Pitkin, Dorothy Emmet), tended to define power as capacity/energy and relation. Hartsock applauds the "feminine" definition, states that an understanding of power that takes both definitions into account is needed, but then proceeds to limit the definition once again to the "masculine" definition by stating that an "adequate theory of power" (254) would address domination and locate sources of oppression. If she had truly intended to include the feminine version, she would also have maintained that this "adequate theory" must address limits to capacity/energy and breakdowns in relation. Here we see the root cause of the split of a definition of "empowerment" into two major types of empowerment: that power has at least two distinct definitions that have not been reconciled in theory. The "masculine" definition is concerned primarily with the autonomous self, while the "feminine" definition is concerned primarily with the relational self.

I do not suggest that these two types should or can be reconciled with each other, but rather that recognition of the existence of two distinctive types is imperative to theoretical clarity. I also do not suggest that Hartsock's "masculine" definition is truly or only a "male" definition or that her "feminine" definition is truly or only a "female" one.

Chapter Overviews

Chapters II through V each address one of the "basic four" categories. Within each of these, I analyze the work of some predominate second-wave theorists as I search for various conceptualizations s of "empowerment" and also untangle the types of empowerment. Chapter II discusses radical theory. While second-wave radical theory focused almost exclusively on empowerment of the autonomous self, it nonetheless presented two distinctive notions within this single type of what "empowerment" entails. As I demonstrate in the chapter, the predominant idea is that empowerment for women entails a limiting of male coercive power over the female. However, within a relatively small group of radical theorists, we see instead that "empowerment" for women entails giving social prestige to them based on their unique ability to give birth. Note that Hartsock mentions that "power to coerce" and "social prestige" are actually two distinctive types of power. I elaborate on this concept in the chapter.

Chapter III examines socialist-feminism and emergent-diversity feminist theory. Second-wave socialist-feminism theory almost exclusively addressed the autonomous self, in part because of its ties to radical theory. However, diversity feminist theory, that began with a dialogue[5] between socialist-feminism theorists and black feminism theorists and later blossomed to include many groups, has often addressed problems that require scrutiny of the relational self within social contexts. Black feminist theory, for example, has long taken issue with second-wave feminism for advocating "female separatism." These arguments include discussion of empowerment as it applies to the relational self.

Chapter IV addresses liberal feminist theory. This theory originally dealt solely with the autonomous self as it had been defined within non-feminist liberal theory. However, relatively recent theories within this category have begun to discuss the relational self. They have done so in two ways. The first deals with concrete laws and the corresponding problems that women face. For example, laws and policy that deal with family leave affect how working women interact with their families. It has been suggested that empowerment of women must include an understanding of their relational roles as wives and mothers. The second type of theory that has brought in discussion of the relational self is theory that takes issue with Rawls' concept of justice as it was applied to an "abstract other." These theorists maintain that the concept of the "concrete" other is needed in justice theory because it is the concrete other that places the self in a relational role to others who may be different than, and have needs different from, the autonomous self.

Chapter V examines cognitive development/psychoanalytical feminist theory, sometimes known as "mothering" theory. This category has been split into two camps since it began in the late 1970s. Gilligan and so-called "care theorists" have focused almost exclusively on the relational self, asking what this relational self is like, what role it plays in society and how it might be empowered against problems such as oppression and patriarchy. Chodorow and some other "mothering theorists" have focused more on the empowerment of the autonomous self. Because they largely attribute patriarchy and "subordination" to feminine relational norms, they see these norms as detrimental to the

autonomous self and ask how these might be eliminated from society in order to empower the autonomous self.

Finally, Chapter VI discusses my interpretation of findings and my own theoretical ideas. Very briefly stated, I find that the theoretical arguments diverge specifically along the lines of variance in the theorists' understanding of "empowerment." Further, said variance is created by the multiple social and cognitive frames from which distinctive theories are drawn. An understanding of this creates a "big picture" view of the rich tapestry woven by the numerous and vastly differing threads of feminist theory.

Notes

1. On the World Wide Web. Sites can be accessed from: http://a.webring.com/hub?ring=fem

2. Founded in 1992 by Claire Willis, LICSW, and Caroline Marvin, PhD., and located currently (2005) in Watertown, MA. For more information, see website located at: http://www.centerforwomensempowerment.com

3. Eisenstein classifies her own work as something "in between" liberalism on the one hand and "deconstruction and feminism(s) on the other," adding that "there is at present no place else to be" (224). While she seems to have had trouble classifying her own work, I find that her work simply crosses back and forth between socialist-feminist theory and liberal feminist theory. Because of this, I discuss her work both in Chapter III and in Chapter IV.

4. The "four quadrants" as explained here are outlined within the relatively new "integral theory," which has roots in Habermas' theories as well as work by Clair Graves (1970), and is further based on relatively recent works by Beck and Cowen (1996) and Wilber (1995 and 2000). Specific "quadrant" description is readily located online at: http://www.integralinstitute.org/public/static/abtapproach.aspx

5. See various articles in *Feminist Review* Volumes 20, 22 and 23, 1985 and 1986. Authors include Barrett and McIntosh, 1985, Bhavnani and Coulson, 1986, Mirza, 1986, and Ramazanoglu, 1986.

CHAPTER II

RADICAL NOTIONS: RADICAL/BIOLOGICAL FEMINIST THEORY

> Some have argued that the subordination of women and the concomitant power accruing to men are rooted in biological differences between the sexes. Of all the differing political perspectives, it is radical feminism to which the latter view has often been attributed; that is, it is frequently claimed (although not commonly by self-defined radical feminists themselves) that radical feminism is biologically determinist, that it believes that existing gender differences are firmly rooted in, and determined by, underlying biological differences. (Birke, 1986, ix)

This statement reveals a very common misunderstanding about radical feminism. Yet clearer understanding does not come so easily as one might at first suppose, because radical feminist theory does in fact turn to biology to find the roots of women's oppression. As will be shown in this chapter, these theorists turn again and again to the same theme: women's problems all start with our reproductive physiology and with specific matters of sexuality faced only by females. For example, Douglas (1984) states, "Virtually all of our theories are to a greater or lesser degree biological" and asks, "How can one talk about a form of oppression that has been so linked with sexual relations and childbearing without talking about biology?" (22). However, a couple of clarifications concerning radical feminist theory need to be made at this time.

First, it should be noted that radical feminist theory is to be differentiated from the radical feminist movement that took place in the mid 1960s.[1] The movement largely dissolved into disarray over various differences by the early seventies. Because Echols (1989) does a good job of recounting the movement's history, I have no cause to do so

here. The purpose of my analysis is instead to examine radical theory writings, which began to be published in earnest at about the same time that the radical movement unraveled. The theory grew out of the movement, with a number of the movement revolutionaries eventually becoming prominent writers.[2]

Second, although the above passage by Birke contains some truth, it nonetheless contains two erroneous assumptions that have repeatedly drawn inappropriate criticism to radical feminist theory. The first assumption is that if radical theory turns to biology to find a beginning or root cause of the problems women face, then it must also assume this factor to be the major, perhaps only, determining factor of gender identification and ongoing male domination. I will address this assumption soon. The second assumption is that radical theory must therefore believe in a sort of predestination - that is, it must have a defeatist attitude of "nothing can be done," or at best, it presents impossible propositions which give credit to conservative arguments that the male-over-female hierarchy is "meant to be."[3] Yet a number of plausible ideas are presented for how woman might be empowered, with each idea rooted in the theorist's perceptions of the present nature and condition of the human race. While it is admitted that the difficulties are large, it is also believed that they are not insurmountable. Different perceptions of the nature of woman as well as different perceptions about woman's current situation inevitably lead to different conclusions by the theorists of what female "empowerment" would mean and how it could best be accomplished. I will discuss these varying perceptions and conclusions as this chapter proceeds.

Radical Theory and Hobbes

In order to understand radical feminist theory, one must understand the theoretical notions that feminists in this category share. First, they believe that "all women as a group are oppressed by men as a group" and "that this oppression is, speaking historically, the first human oppression" (Douglas, 1980, 15; see also Elshtain, 1981). This assumption is sometimes argued against by feminists whose writings fall under other theoretical categories (for example, Elshtain, 1981; Gilligan, 2002). Second, there is a "story" behind radical feminist theory that explains how and why this oppression began. It is a story about the origins of modern human circumstance that closely parallels the story Hobbes told about the origins of civil society.[4]

In the "state of nature," or pre-political world according to Hobbes (1651), human beings lived under perpetually violent circumstances. Their lives were constantly threatened not only by wild animals and the forces of nature, but also by other humans. Individual men were not strong enough or skilled enough to protect themselves alone. To alleviate their constant fear, social contracts were made between men and group leaders were selected. The leader of each group was responsible for making sure that all men in the group were protected. In return, the men became "subjects," granting their leader, or "sovereign," power to make decisions for them. Hobbes asserted that such loyalty and obedience was necessary to ensure survival. This is not unlike the necessity of obedience to commanders in modern military organization. According to Hobbes, this is how the system of man ruling over man began.

In *Against Our Will*, Brownmiller embraces the Hobbesian notion that all humans "in the state of nature" existed in a "violent landscape" (14). However, woman in this original "state of nature" would have been faced with multiple disadvantages not faced by man (Brownmiller, 1975; Firestone, 1970; Pateman, 1998). She was physically weaker than most of her male counterparts. This was because of her reproductive physiology, which ensured that she would menstruate, very probably be pregnant several times in her life, go through either miscarriage or childbirth at the end of each pregnancy - both of which are painful and debilitating, eventually, if she lived long enough, go through menopause, and even very likely suffer "female-only" maladies (Firestone, 1970). She could also be raped in a way that could have particular consequences that men would never face, and that she could not retaliate in kind (Brownmiller, 1975). Finally, if she chose to care for any of her offspring, she then had both herself and the child to protect in any given battle or life-threatening situation (Hobbes, 1651; Pateman, 1998).

Realizing rapidly that other women could offer her little help, woman would have turned to man to be her protector (Brownmiller, 1975). Man would expect something in return for his protection, just as did the Hobbesian male sovereigns. Being less able to offer service as a warrior or laborer than her male counterparts, this "something" which woman offered to her protector would likely have been exclusive, willing and virtually unlimited sexual access (Brownmiller, 1975). Willing and unlimited access, of course, would have given him pleasure and satiation without struggle. Exclusive sexual access meant social prestige for him, based on the envy of

other males. It would also have been a guarantee that her offspring were his, which allowed for the development of patriarchal families (Engels, 1884). For her, however, it meant not only giving the male control over her sexual behavior, but even a restriction of her overall personal freedom in order that the male could be sure that she was keeping her end of the bargain. She would have found it necessary to allow this in order to ensure her own survival and the survival of her children (Pateman, 1998). And thus, according to radical theory, began the collective and universal subordination of women.

This story explains why radical theorists collectively declared that "the personal is political" (see Echols, 1989; Rudy, 2001; Elshtain, 1981). Elshtain hints that this declaration was absurd. Yet I would argue that within the context of this Hobbesian theoretical frame the personal must be political. From the Hobbesian point of view, it is this natural state of struggle which not only gives birth to politics but which justifies sovereign right and might. Laws that give anyone power over anyone else as well as laws that limit individual freedom in any way are based on this core concept: that human beings must be protected from one another else they be engaged in constant and bloody battle. It was the goal of radical feminism to destroy the male-over-female hierarchy, which was seen as permeating not only politics, but also culture and even "the very organization of nature" (Firestone, 1970). If this patriarchy began and continues because of man's ability to dominate woman's personal life and physical body and/or her need for protection, then real and widespread change could only be created by politics that addressed these personal issues.

The Hobbesian story also tells us that it was not only woman's physiology that began her subordination, but also the hostile natural environment in which early humans had to live and particularly the narcissistic nature of man. It is assumed that "natural" man is warlike and aggressive (Hobbes, 1651; Brownmiller, 1975). It is further assumed that he is narcissistic and driven by instinctual appetites. This would have created a very hostile social environment for all humans, which Hobbes said was improved by the establishment of the social contract. But feminist theory complains that when stable social order began to improve the life situation of free men, women's needs were forgotten, their plight ignored (Brownmiller, 1975; Pateman, 1998).

Further, while humans have subdued the natural environment, making it safer for our species in many ways, nonetheless, according to radical theory, the nature of man has not improved much, if any, over the millennia. Elshtain (1981) comments that radical feminists "sketch a vision of the male that is unrelenting and unforgiving in its harshness" (205). She reminds us that Ti-Grace Atkinson called men "frustrated and insecure," that Susan Brownmiller insisted that all men "lust for power," and that Mary Daly compared men to "demons." As Elshtain (1981) points out, a common style of writing within radical feminist theory uses "hard language" filled with talk of power, exploitation, manipulation and violence. A striking example of this is Firestone's description of the beginning of the "feminist revolution" as women who were "fleeing the massacre, shaking, and tottering" (1970). Men, Elshtain tells us, are cast by radical theorists as creatures who are cruel to women, and who are cruel because they can be.

Radical theory, then, begins from the debatable premise that Hobbes was correct about the violent, narcissistic nature of man. This can be contrasted to Rousseau's notion that the natural state of man is one of peace and harmony - a notion embraced by some care theorists, as will be demonstrated in a later chapter. But radical theory embraces Hobbes' notions that "in the state of nature" men would constantly, violently seek power. It further embraces the Hobbesian notion that women were disadvantaged in their defensive struggle against power-seeking males because of their weaker physiology and the necessity of biological reproduction. These are all large assumptions debated by other theorists, but I will not discuss these issues now. Instead, I wish to point out that it is not only biological physiology that is seen as the root of the problem, but also and particularly the nature of man. This is a crucial point, because the question of the nature of woman divides radical theory itself into three opposing camps. There is also divergence across the theories based on the varying notions about how woman is currently most seriously affected by the said narcissism and aggression of man.

Sets of Radical Assumptions

Elshtain argues that radical feminism sees women as "pure" and men as "evil" (1981). Yet this is far too simplistic an argument because it ignores the various nuances of radical theory. Jaggar (1983) comments that although radical feminists "do share some common assumptions," different radical theorists nonetheless "grounded their work in different views of human nature" (85). The four categories of radical thought presented by Jaggar, however, were not strictly based on ideas about "human nature" but

rather included one category based primarily on a proposed solution to the problem of oppression and three categories that focus on biology and sexual orientation. I propose instead that radical feminism can be divided into two sets of categories, the combination of which reveals each theorist's understanding of the "context of the particular problem that empowerment is intended to overcome," as I explained in Chapter I. This categorical division leads to varying empowerment goals, and therefore the methods for attaining "empowerment" vary also.

The first set of categories splits the theoretical writings according to the specific "assumed cause of the problem" of oppression - step 2A of my analytical structure. That is, while the theorists share the belief that female oppression began during some original prehistoric physical power struggle between the sexes, they have differing opinions as to the specific and primary cause of Woman's current misery.

The second categorical set splits the theories according to the human interaction that they address - step 2B of my analysis structure (see Chapter I). These concepts of human interaction are based on the theorists' interpretation of the "nature of woman" as she interacts with narcissistic man. Remember that 2A and 2B combine to equal the "context of the problem." I use two sets because it would be erroneous to say that the theoretical writings split cleanly with no overlap between the sets. Instead, some theorists moved from one category to the next and back again across time (see Echols, 1989). Also, as I will demonstrate, at any given time there is cross-over between the two sets, with theorists who agree with each other in Set One disagreeing with each other over Set Two assumptions.

Set One: Specific Causes of Oppression

Set One categories are based on what the theories see as the specific "cause of the problem," that is of woman's misery in her current situation. These categories are as follows: (1) Reproduction as burden to and/or as forced upon women; (2) Male lust and sexual aggression against women; (3) Male-defined and controlled sexuality of women; and (4) Lack of social prestige and privilege for women (low class status). Each category is explained below, and actual theories that fit these categories are presented later in this chapter.

Reproduction

Theories in this category see the primary cause of woman's current misery as being her responsibility for the reproduction of the human race. As mentioned in the Hobbesian story above, woman's reproductive physiology and the burden of care-giving caused women to have an unfair disadvantage in competition with males and/or left women vulnerable to aggression. This unfair disadvantage is seen as continuing into the present time, now causing women misery in the modern world. As will be seen as this chapter proceeds, recommended solutions range from biotechnology that would free women entirely from the "burden" of childbearing, to options that would give women choice in their reproductive roles, to the suggestion that all women should refuse to reproduce at all without regards to the preservation of the human race.

Male Sexual Aggression and Lust

Theories in this category see reproduction and preservation of the human race as only an indirect cause of the real problem that has caused women misery since the beginning of time: the aggression and animal-like lust of men. According to this view, lust is the driving reason for the male's conquest for power over the female in the first place. Then, when a woman turns to a particular male to be her "protector," he takes advantage of her need for protection in order to establish his own "right" to the sexual use her body. Suggested solutions range from laws that would control or ban pornography and stricter laws against rape, to teaching women to "fight back" against male violence, to separating women from men as much as possible.

Male-Defined Sexuality

These theories concentrate on what is seen as a serious consequence of male control of the female over time: male-defined and male-controlled sexuality of women. That is, the Hobbesian male conquest of the female is seen as only the beginning point of patriarchy, which, experienced over time, has usurped woman's right and ability to define and control her own sexuality. Solutions offered range from universal lesbianism, to celibacy, to separatism, to universal "free love."

Low-class Status of Women

These theories focus on the social status of women. According to these theories, men, who always desire and seek power, are jealous of the power-over-life that women

wield. While the Hobbesian male had no thought for his children, civilized man wished to control the family and reproduction (Engels, 1884). Because he had already gained power over woman, he used his authority to debase her, to keep her power and status low, so that he could have some measure of control of this enormous power-over-life.

Set Two: The Nature of Woman

The second set of categories of Radical Theory I label "Nature of Woman." The three categories in this set are as follows: (1) Woman as Competitor; (2) Woman as Victim; and (3) Woman as Goddess. Remember that, in all categories, men are seen as narcissistic and aggressive. Therefore the "human interactions" are: woman/competitor vs. narcissistic/aggressive male; woman/victim vs. narcissistic/aggressive male; and woman/goddess vs. narcissistic/aggressive male.

Woman as Competitor

Theorists in this category see both men and women as struggling for power and seeking pleasure. There is very little, if any, perceived difference between the "nature of man" and the "nature of woman." Women, however, are unfairly disadvantaged in their struggle for power. To these theorists, the situation of the original state of nature still exists for women. That is, they still struggle ceaselessly in a battle they have never collectively, and seldom individually, won. However, these theorists believe that the playing field must and can be leveled. They present varying, interesting ideas about how women could lose their disadvantage and compete in a fair fight at last.

Woman as Victim

Radical theorists in this category see men as eternal sexual aggressors and women as eternal-thus-far victims and slaves. According to these theorists, women do not tend to be driven by instinctual appetites and should not have to put up with the sexual aggression of the half of the human race that is. The aggression of males and particularly the coercive sexual power that they have held over women is branded as evil. These theorists do not seek a "level playing field" between the sexes, but rather a mass emancipation of women that could only be accomplished through the severing of all sexual-relational ties with men. Suggested solutions for emancipation include lesbianism, celibacy and separationism.

Woman as Goddess

To theorists in this category, the nature of man and the nature of woman are two entirely different things. Men are naturally narcissistic and aggressive. Women, however, are seen as naturally other-regarding and gentle. While other radical theories assume that women "in the state of nature" were very much like men - hostile and concerned foremost about self preservation (Brownmiller, 1975) - this set of theories assumes that women must have been different than men. How else would the children, and thus humankind, have ever survived? Babies, after all, are dependent upon adults for their survival. Human milk, provided only by the female and for which in pre-modern times there was no substitute, is necessary for at least the first year of life. Further, compared to other mammals, human children take a very long time to mature to a point

where they are able to care for themselves. If Hobbes was correct in his belief that prehistoric man felt no responsibility for and did not care for children, then survival of the human race would have depended upon the behavior of females (Whitbeck, 1984; Pateman, 1998). Therefore, it follows that women must have been empathetic, loving and nurturing.

These ideas were present during first wave feminism, were furthered by lesbians during the radical movement,[5] and finally were taken up with full enthusiasm by the "Mother Right" theorists of the 1970s (see Echols, 1989). These theorists see Woman as the pure nurturer and life-giver of the human race. She is a being of low status, even though, because of her goodness and great contribution to the human race, she should instead be of a social status higher than man. Lesbians in the movement used these arguments to ease the discomfort of women who viewed them as at-least-potential sexual predators, not unlike their male counterparts (Echols, 1989). Soon after, the Mother-Right radical theorists would use these same arguments to demand social prestige and privilege for mothers and caregivers.

Theories and Proposed Solutions

When examining the differences across the various categories of radical feminist theory, it is important to remember that they all address what they see to be the original and over-arching problem that women face today: that women as a group are oppressed and harmed by men as a group. This is believed to have begun in some time before fixed political institutions - i.e. the during the original Hobbesian "state of nature" - and to

have continued more or less unabated to the present time. However, in order to understand the specific modern problems they hope to cure, and thereby to understand their recommendations and hopes for the empowerment of women, one must also examine their various views concerning the specific problems women face within their current situation, as I have explained. Once this is revealed, then recommended methods for empowerment and the goals said empowerment hopes to achieve become readily understandable. I will discuss these matters as I go.

Reproduction

Firestone and those who agreed with her sought an empowerment that would free women from biological reproduction, allowing them an avenue to end "male domination" based on sex and "female weakness." This freedom from biological reproduction would have the added benefit of freeing them from the responsibility of taking care of children. This is turn would free them to live out their lives in a fashion similar to their male counterparts.

Firestone (1970) blames reproduction for women's oppression. To Firestone, women who have children have always been necessarily dependent upon men in some way. She therefore declared that reproduction is costly and demeaning to women. To her, nature had placed an unfair burden on females, but because of our human ability to seek out and find medical and scientific miracles, there remains no need for modern women to continue to shoulder this responsibility. Technological advances, not so far out of reach, could free women from their traditional reproductive role. That is,

according to Firestone, biological reproduction can and should be replaced by some technological process that is carried out apart from the female body.

Firestone writes that "men and women were created different, and not equally privileged" (8). Women have had to endure menstruation, menopause, "female illnesses," painful childbirth, and the necessity of nursing and caring for infants. All of this, together with the relatively long time that it takes for human children to mature, places women and children in a position of dependency upon males for their physical survival (8). She argues, however, that "to grant that the sexual imbalance of power is biologically based is not to lose" or give up the struggle for equality (9). As humans, we have long worked against the forces of nature. We do not simply give in to the forces of nature, to be ravaged by them. Rather, we work to improve upon our condition, to subdue nature as necessary in order to improve our lives.

Birke (1986) states that if "male dominance is everywhere and always the same," as some feminists assume, and that if it is also rooted in biology, "then there is precious little that can be done about it" (42). This, she says, is because biology is primary "both in the temporal sense (e.g. biology acting before birth) and in the sense of it assuming greater importance by virtue of its implied irreversibility" (54). Only social factors, she writes, "can be subject to significant change" (54). Obviously, Firestone would not agree. To Firestone, the answer to women's oppression lies in technological advances that would eventually dispel the need for painful and dangerous childbirth.

However, Firestone's complaint, and her solutions, are far more complicated than may at first be apparent. For Firestone believes that psychological problems, relationship

problems, degradation of women, the sexual conquest of women and an array of other social problems all trace their roots directly back to women's reproductive physiology and the mother-child relationship. The only way to truly create gender equality, to Firestone, is not only to end the need for biological reproduction, but also to end family interdependence altogether, including child-to-mother dependency. In fact, Firestone further argued that sex distinction, rather than only sex privilege[6], should be eliminated in societies. Only if women are relieved of their role as child-bearers and the biological family disbanded can this revolutionary change take place. This, she believes, would set women and children "free" to "do as they wish," sexually and otherwise (209).

For Firestone, this freedom from reproductive necessity and sexual restrictions would accomplish an empowerment of women, the end result of which would be her idea of a utopian world: one in which there were no class structures, no biologically based families and no need for "drudge work" (242). Further, all humans, male and female, child and adult, could enjoy "complex play" - "activity done for its own sake" and without other purpose. And sexuality would be freely and openly expressed by all, "flowing unimpeded" (242). It is immediately obvious that Firestone's idea of "utopia" would not appeal to everyone. This, of course, is why the "empowerment" of women hoped for by most other theorists intends to accomplish a different goal. It follows, then, that the "empowerment" itself would be of a different sort. However, there are those who agree with Firestone that child-to-mother dependency is one of the root causes of the subjection of women. Remember, for example, that Pateman (1998) points out that in a Hobbesian "state of nature" any woman who chose to protect and nurture her own child

would thereby find herself disadvantaged in any battle against an unencumbered male. Although the "state of nature" is past-tense, keeping this notion of a "battle" between the sexes in mind helps to bring into focus the assumed context of the problem within this line of theoretical reasoning, as well as the type of empowerment sought for women.

Firestone sees "the burden of reproduction" as woman's specific, current problem, which can be cured, with male-defined sexuality and the low-class status of women as byproducts of this central problem. This pinpoints her assumption, and the assumption of those who agree with her, about the specific cause of oppression. It is Set One, number one: "reproduction as burden to and/or as forced on women." Women are "competitors" in a modern-day "battle of the sexes" (for jobs, leisure time, sexual equality and so forth) who could rise to man's equal, enjoying equal pleasures with him, if only the unfair burden of reproduction were lifted. This pinpoints her assumption about the nature of woman. It is Set Two, number one: "woman as competitor." Finally, she seeks an empowerment defined as freedom from the burden of reproduction. The type of empowerment she seeks for women, then, is of the autonomous self. This last is obvious because there is nothing here that would, or that would strive to, give women increased ability to care for others; in fact, the intent is to end all need for women to care for others entirely. The goal is to create a society in which no individual is ever coerced to or ever even needs to care for any other individual (care of infants would be done collectively).

Other theorists reveal similar assumptions concerning the context of the problem and display a hope for the same type of empowerment. However, their ideas for attaining

said empowerment vary from Firestone's proposed technological solution. For example, Jeffner Allen (1984) declares that this is a "man's world," and that "a mother is she whose body is used as resource to reproduce men and the world of men" (315). Her assertion that women should refuse to bear children (328) is grounded in a notion that said refusal begins an empowerment for women by allowing them to shape the "whole" of themselves in their "own lifetimes" (328). There appears to be no room for compromise, because Allen asserts that motherhood is "servitude" (325), is "imposed" on women by men (316), that it "endangers" (316) and annihilates (325) the individual woman. The empowerment she seeks is for the individual self in the present moment. She offers no solutions for the human race as a whole. Rather, she admits that her goal is not "to save the world," but to shape her own life "in the present" (328). Martha Gimenez (1984), on the other hand, although also holding a pessimistic view of motherhood, offers a more compromising style of empowerment: to Gimenez, women should have greater choice in whether or not they wish to give birth. She states that women must have a right to decide "not only how many children they want and when they want them, but also whether they want any children at all" (308). Like Firestone, these theorists see "the burden of reproduction" as woman's specific, current problem. However, they seek empowerment defined as reproductive choice (in addition to above texts, see also analyses by Echols, 1989 and Jaggar, 1983). The type of empowerment sought, again, is of the autonomous self.

Male Sexual Aggression

MacKinnon (1989) also discusses a need for reproductive freedom, but the principal focus of her writings is male sexual aggression and "supremacy." MaKinnon sees rape and pornography as the primary problems faced by women. She tells us that "women often find ways to resist male supremacy," but that "they are never free of it' (1997, 166). Women are "silenced," says MacKinnon, by sexual abuse and by other social inequalities foisted on them because of their sexual vulnerability. Rape harms them physically and psychologically; pornography is exploitation and "sexual intrusion." Women, according to MacKinnon, face discrimination in all areas of their lives: "Sex inequality is the true name for women's social condition" (1989, 242). To MacKinnon, the cure is feminist jurisprudence - laws that stop pornography, that help to protect women from rape, that force equality and that work to end discrimination against women. She believes that states can and must take responsibility for ending sexual oppression.

Like MacKinnon, Susan Brownmiller (1975) writes about male sexual aggression. Her primary focus is on rape and fear, lack of personal freedom for women, and other problems created by rape. To her, the problem is universal, even though not all women get raped and not all men rape, because the actions of rapists leave all women intimidated and turning to hopefully nonraping men for protection. Rape, she says, "is nothing more or less than a conscious process of intimidation by which all men keep all women in a state of fear" (15). It is not that rape can only happen to women, but that, when raped, women cannot retaliate in kind. They also are particularly vulnerable

because of their relatively lesser physical strength. Further, for the female, the consequences of rape can be far greater than what a raped male might suffer. Not only might she suffer permanent injury or death, but she might also become pregnant, which is followed by the birth of a dependent child.

Adding insult to injury, according to Brownmiller, once women began to turn to males to be their protectors against other males, they were reduced by their protectors to the status of "chattels" or property (16-17). A crime against the female body became a crime against the estate of the male who protected her. Retaliation for rape might be to rape the women who "belonged" to the rapist. Further, freely raping the women of conquered men was an accepted practice throughout history, because it was by this action that the conquerors increased their numbers (21). However, that men rape women and only protect them if they are willing to become their "property" is, to Brownmiller, only part of the problem. The other component of this situation is that women are socially taught to be submissive and not to fight. This passivity makes a woman even more vulnerable to rape and even more dependent on the male who is willing to protect her at the high price of the her personal integrity and freedom. The cause of the problem of women's fear and dependency, then, is a complex union of male lust and aggression with female learned passivity. Given this, it only makes since that Brownmiller's notion of how to achieve empowerment for women would be two-fold process.

Like MacKinnon, Brownmiller turns to the law to empower women by restricting the sexual power of males. The definition of "rape" would be broadened and the punishment for rape would be certain and severe. Brownmiller (1975) writes, for

example, that the law should recognize forced intercourse carried out by a husband against the will of his wife to be a crime. This was unthinkable in the past, she says, because rape laws were originally conceived to protect the interest of the male, not the interest of the female. Further, sex outside of marriage, especially when carried out by force, was considered to be unlawful, but sex within marriage was considered to be the husbands lawful right, whether of not the wife wanted it; marital rape was unheard of. Modern law can, and should, correct this problem.

However, unlike MacKinnon, Brownmiller adds a second step to the empowerment process. Women, Brownmiller (1975) says, should learn to fight, to be aggressive against males who might otherwise do them harm. Women who learn to fight, Brownmiller states, are actually able to instill fear in men (401). When the tables are thus turned, women can overcome their own fear and eventually end their dependency on males for protection. Brownmiller sees women as victims, but sometimes, she says, this is because of their own socially learned behavior. She wants women to learn assertiveness and self-protection techniques. In other words, she wants them to learn to be physical competitors with men instead of behaving passively toward them, so that they may prove themselves to be at least equal to men in the modern physical arena, and thereby become able to "instill fear" when necessary. This, Brownmiller believes, will help to empower women out of their current "victim" status.

Both MacKinnon and Brownmiller see the most important, specific problems that women currently face as rape and other sexual abuses exacted against women by men (note that MacKinnon defines pornography as a sexual abuse of women). Their goal is to

cure these specific problems by some means, in this case by changes in the law and, for Brownmiller, teaching women to fight. This pinpoints their assumption, and the assumption of those who agree with them, about the specific cause of woman's oppression. It is Set One, number two: "male lust and sexual aggression against women." It is also relatively simple to extrapolate from this their assumption about the nature of woman. It is Set Two, number two: "woman as a victim" who needs to be legally protected and/or who needs to be taught to protect herself. Finally, they seek an empowerment defined as individual and collective freedom from said male lust and sexual aggression. That Brownmiller suggests that women who learn to fight can instill fear of women generally in men collectively gives a slight nod to a possible relational empowerment, as this would allow women to help each other indirectly. As an aside, I also suggest also that safety and protection for women who face real aggression such as rape and family violence could, in fact, allow them to better care for others such as their children. This is evident if one refers back to the notion that women become more in need of "protection" of some kind when/if they give birth to children. Empowerment to better care for their children would, of course, be a relational empowerment. However, the primary type of empowerment both of these theorists seek for women is of the autonomous self.

Male-Defined Sexuality

Dworkin (2002) states that "'victim' is a dirty word, [but] it is also a true word, a word that points one toward what one does not want to know" (194). Like Brownmiller

and MacKinnon, Dworkin's focus is rape, pornography and prostitution. However, Dworkin frames the problem as one of male definition of female sexuality. Dworkin examined fairy tales, pornography, Chinese footbinding and even mythology to demonstrate her notion of male domination. To Dworkin, male culture has always striven to keep women either passive, weak or both in order that men might maintain power over them. Her solution: refusal to participate in the roles she views as imposed upon women by controlling men. "We must refuse," she says, to participate or submit to "marriage, the nuclear family, religions built on the myth of feminine evil" (192). To Dworkin, the primary problem has been male abuse of the female, abuse intended to keep her in fear and him in power. Abuse which afforded him complete sexual freedom and sexual conquest of the female, while affording the female no option of choice at all. Sex, Dworkin says, has been the power dynamic between men and women.

Also, Dworkin seems to see only men as evil, even though women have been known to betray other women - to commit incestuous molestation of children, to usher their own daughters into pornography or prostitution, and so on. The men are evil and not the women because these women are simply taking their own frustrations and anger out on other women because "betrayal is always an easier choice" (199). No matter how bad the things some women may do are, they seem by this logic not to be to blame. "Their venom goes in the direction of other women because it is easier than taking on men" (200). Eternal victims cannot be to blame for their own actions.

To cure the problem of male-defined sexuality, Dworkin writes that sex as we understand it must be changed. Much like Firestone, she suggests that sexual taboos

should be done away with. For example, she states that "unambiguous conventional heterosexual behavior is the worst betrayal of our common humanity" (184), and therefore states that male/female sexual roles must be eliminated. It is fine for males and females to mate, so long as they do not restrict themselves to this heterosexual orientation or fall into traditional male/female roles. She also thinks we should do away with taboos against bestiality and even incest (188-190). Even children should be allowed, even encouraged, to be "erotic beings" (191). Dworkin equates female empowerment with total sexual promiscuity and freedom because she believes that sexuality has been ruthlessly controlled by men for their own purposes. The goal of Dworkin's particular style of "empowerment" is the end of all sexual "control" plus all sexual social norms and taboos, because these things have been instigated by and are maintained by a male-dominated culture.

It is interesting to note that MacKinnon (1989) takes issue with the notion that sexual permissiveness will cure any of the problems women face. For example, she says that "lesbian sex, simply as sex between women, given a social definition of gender and sexuality, does not by definition transcend the erotization of dominance and submission" (119). MacKinnon argues that if the problem is truly that men have constructed the meaning of sexuality and femininity, then said problem cannot be cured by men's absence - separatism, advocated as a solution by a number of radical feminists in the late sixties (see Echols, 1989), or by sexual permissiveness. Yet MacKinnon also does not see sexually defined roles or sexual taboos to be the primary problem women face in the modern world. Her framing of the problem is therefore, of course, different than

Dworkin's frame. That she was seeing a different problem and is therefore seeking a different type of empowerment altogether apparently did not occur to her.

Dworkin sees the specific problem that woman face, and therefore the specific cause of their oppression, as Set One, number three: "male-defined sexuality." Yet, as mentioned above, she, like MacKinnon and Brownmiller, see the nature of woman as Set Two, number two: Woman as Victim. She seeks an empowerment for women that would allow them to redefine their own individual sexuality without hindrance from males and male-defined society at large. Her focus is exclusively on empowerment of the autonomous self.

Low Social Class

Finally, one group of radical theorists sought an empowerment for women that would give social prestige to them based on their unique ability to give birth and on the debt owed to them by the human race for their nurturance of children. Feminists who hold these have beliefs been labeled "cultural feminists" by theorists who also say that they are not "true" radical theorists (Echols, 1989; Alcoff, 1997). However, I would argue that, based on the theoretical notions that they share with other radical feminist, these theorists, for all of their differences, do belong in the "radical feminists" category. Like other radical feminists, this group of theorists turns to biological differences between men and women to explain the beginning point of the problems between the sexes. They also address the male-over-female social hierarchy, and, like other radical theorists, assume that men gained their higher position through physical aggression

coupled with narcissism. However, these theorists do not advocate changes in the biological, reproductive "nature" of females as a solution, nor do they simply turn to law to restrict the power of males.

Instead, "cultural" radical feminists seek a distinctive type of empowerment for women, an empowerment that is something other than power against male physical dominance. What they seek is power in the form of "social prestige." Hartsock (1983) explains that coercive power and social prestige are two separate and distinct types of power. The power to coerce is hierarchical power that involves domination and submission. If it is assumed that the primary problem women face is forced submission to male sexual coercion, then to empower woman means either to make her equal to man physically or to in some other way raise her up to equal to him or above him in the physical hierarchy. Power in the form of social prestige, however, may have nothing to do with physical hierarchical arrangements. Instead, it affords individuals the power of respect. Respect can exist between equals or can even be accorded to someone in a hierarchy from someone who ranks above them. Through respect, individuals may find that others cooperate with them without coercion. Further, those who can coerce may refrain from doing so it they have respect for the individual they would otherwise exercise their power of coercion upon. Social prestige also allows for self-respect, which in turn creates opportunity for fulfilling self-potential.

For radical theorists in this category, "empowerment" means a social enhancement of woman's prestige, based in part on her unique ability to bear children. These theorists would charge that Firestone's ideas cast a dark shadow on the natural

processes that could just as readily be seen as beautiful and as contributing to a unique power that only females have. Firestone's arguments lead to the conclusion that women's natural biology is bad for women. An opposite conclusion presented by these radical feminists is that women are naturally superior to men, beginning with the ability to give birth that men do not share (Alpert, 1973; Daly, 1978; Griffin, 1980). To strip a woman of this natural power and right is to take from her one of the greatest sources for happiness and empowerment in her life.

Therefore, rather than believing that nature must be somehow overcome, these feminists conclude that woman's natural physiology makes her special, allowing her to experience and even to know and feel things that men cannot (Alpert, 1973; Daly, 1978). If it is further believed, as mentioned above, that the human race owes woman a special debt for its very survival, it makes sense that she should command a high level of respect and prestige. Said prestige would be an empowerment that would allow her to fulfil her own potential and ensure that her children could fulfil theirs. This would, in turn, bring other rewards to her life.

Thus, the so-called "cultural" radical feminists see a "low-class status of women" as woman's most important specific, current problem, which can and should be cured by a change in social and cultural attitudes and norms. This is Set One, number four of the "specific causes" of woman's oppression. Within the notion that women are superior to men and that the human race literally owes its survival to women, we find these theorists' assumptions about the nature of woman. It is Set Two, number three: "woman as goddess." The type of empowerment sought by these theorists is primarily

empowerment of the autonomous self, however, in that some of them suggest that prestige will also help them to help their children it also touches on empowerment of the relational self.

Radical Theory's Influence on Other Second-Wave Theories

It was the partially these very real and deep ideological splits within radical theory itself that promoted the outgrowth of the other three primary second-wave theories. Questions of ideological difference, rather than being recognized for what they were, dissolved into finger pointing and arguments about who qualifies as a "radical feminist" (Echols, 1989). Further, as radical theory itself largely receded to the sidelines of feminist theory, the other categories became main stream. This may have been partly because goals established by other categories of feminist thought often "seemed more palatable, not to mention more realistic, than the radical feminist project of fundamentally restructuring [all of] private and public life" (Echols, 1989, 11). Arguments which seem to present no realistic hope of relief for women are rejected outright, then, not because they cannot be true, but because they frustrate efforts for female empowerment. This is an important point, as this not only manifests itself throughout contemporary feminist theory, but is the primary reason for contention between types of theory. That one type of theory at least seems to frustrate the efforts of another type is at the root of most of the contention we see across the field.

Yet, in spite of radical theory's disagreements with the other categories of feminist thought, and in spite of the fact that these disagreements persist to this day,

these other categories can be seen to have roots within and paralleling the different perceptions of the nature of woman that I have outline in this chapter. That is, Socialist-feminist theory is grounded in an underlying perception of Woman as Victim, while liberal feminist theory is grounded in an underlying perception of Women as Competitor, and psychoanalytic/cognitive development theories are grounded in an underlying perception of Woman as Goddess. These theoretical groundings will become starkly apparent in the chapters that follow.

I begin the next section of analyses with socialist-feminist theory. The primary reason for this was the early second-wave entanglement of radical and socialist theory. We will see that some socialist-feminists grounded their theories first in Marx's and other canonistic socialist's writings, embracing radical theory only secondarily, if at all. Others grounded their theory first in radical-feminist theory, embracing socialist theory as a possible solution to the plight of women. Further, some socialist-feminists found radical theory a necessary and welcome addition to socialist understandings of class structure (Eisenstein, MacKinnon) while other socialist-feminists felt that radical theory was off-base - too extreme and too self-focused to be a viable political theory (Mitchell, Vogel). Because of this, we will find an interesting cross-over of radical theory into socialist theory, even as we see a spark of frustration with and even anger against radical theory within the ranks of socialist theory itself. The ensuing problems at the theoretical level eventually dissolved into disputes and disunity at the political-action level. This, of course, was not the only fracture in contemporary feminist theory, nor was fracturing among activist-feminists new.[7] These disagreements are interesting to note, however, not

only because of the tension they caused, but also because of differing notions about empowerment that formed the foundations of the theory in the first place.

To abate confusion, it should be mentioned here that the next chapters are structured somewhat differently than this chapter has been. This is necessary primarily because of the base theoretical frames that constitute the foundations of the next three categories of theory. That is, they each engage with some preexisting political, social and/or psychological theory that has been used to study and theorize about our current political systems and/or how political actors think about the systems in which they live. They either argue against some of the "masculine" premises of the theory, use the theory as a base upon which to build new concepts, or both. Therefore, the following three chapters are structured partially around examination of these aspects of theory engagement within the categories.

Socialist-feminism, liberal feminism and even cognitive development and psychoanalytical feminism all have particular methodologies in common. That is, theoretical arguments from each either attack masculine theories from which these same categories are derived for failing to recognize the plight or needs of women, build new "feminist" theories using the frameworks of those masculine theories, or both. It is important to separate out these methods when examining the literature, otherwise the tangle of criticism versus acceptance of portions or styles of masculine theory is hopelessly confusing. Furthermore, it must be understood that the theorists themselves are not "categorized," rather I categorize their theoretical writings. In each of these categories of theory, I examine both the critical arguments against the male versions of

the theories - regardless of the "type" of theory used to frame the criticism - and the arguments that use the male versions of the theories as skeletal frameworks of the feminist arguments.

Jaggar (1983) says that what socialist-feminism and radical feminism have in common is that they both believe that "older established political theories are incapable, in principle, of giving an adequate account of women's oppression" (124). I would argue that this is true of all second-wave feminist theory. They all pinpointed aspects of the "older theory" that was distinctly male, and therefore incapable of truly understanding woman's standpoint. They also all felt it was necessary to develop new categories of political theory and in some cases economic, social and psychological theory as well. In their attacks on each other, what they often failed to see is that the problem of the "woman question" actually exists within all realms of human existence. This, in and of itself, explains the need for various branches of theory. That said, however, argument and contention between the theoretical categories has served some useful function, for the ensuing debate has helped to expand the views of all. Unfortunately, as will be shown, the debates often also dissolved into progress-damning bickering.

Notes

1. Rudy (2001) says that the term "radical" has been "used by different groups with different ideologies at different times," but that the term "implies that adherents believe that the ideology and strategies of their particular group will ultimately lead to revolution and reconstruction" (193). This definition of "radical" is applicable to both the movement and the theory. Radical theory, however, is also defined by its quest to locate "the root source" of female oppression. "Going to the root source" is an accepted alternative definition of the term (see the Houghton Mifflin Dictionary).

2. For example: Jane Alpert, Ti-Grace Atkinson, Susan Brownmiller, Shulamith Firestone.

3. That radical theory has been used to "underwrite feminist claims" as Birke (1986) accuses is true enough. However, it is common for opposing camps in political battles to take ideas out of context and reframe them to suit their own purposes. It is not my purpose to take sides in this battle, but rather to show that radical feminism has been misunderstood.

4. While some may accuse that the use of a Hobbesian analogy would brand a theorist as a liberal rather than a radical (see for example, Jaggar, 1983), nonetheless I maintain that the analogy fits nicely with radical notions that patriarchy was the first human oppression -beginning before recorded history, that males are naturally aggressive and seek power, and that women originally succumbed to male authority because of her reproductive physiology.

5. According to Echols (1989), lesbians within the radical movement used arguments about differences between male "aggressive sexuality" and female nurturing "sensuality" to attempt to calm the worries of heterosexual women who feared that the lesbians may be bringing predatory sexual desires into the movement (217-218).

6. This parallels Marx's argument that socialism should eliminate the class distinction, rather than only class privilege.

7. The history of first-wave feminism in the United States, for example, reveals extreme splits in theory and political focus that often stalled the movement towards gaining basic political rights for women, such as the right to vote. For one reference on this subject, see Women, Politics, and American Society (McGlen, et al, 2005).

CHAPTER III

WOMEN IN SOCIAL CONTEXT:

SOCIALIST-FEMINISM AND EMERGENT DIVERSITY-FEMINIST THEORY

> Like radical feminism, socialist feminism is a daughter of the contemporary women's liberation movement. It is a slightly younger daughter, born in the 1970s and, like most younger daughters, impressed by its elder sister, while wanting at the same time to avoid her mistakes. The central project of socialist feminism is the development of a political theory and practice that will synthesize the best insights of radical feminism and of the Marxist tradition and that simultaneously will escape the problems associated with each. (Jaggar, 1983, 123)

As with radical theory, the first surge of early second wave socialist-feminist theory paralleled the feminist movement. For example, it was into the Freedom Socialist Party that a number of self-proclaimed "Radical Women" stepped in order to attempt to gain political power (Martin, 1978/86). Following the American socialist movement of the time, they grounded their political theories in "the best traditions of Marx, Engels, Lenin, Trotsky, and Cannon" (Martin, 1978/86, 3). However, they brought to the political table a notion of a necessity to "declare war on patriarchy, sexism, and male privilege" (Martin, 1978/86, xi), both within the system at large and within the party. Similarly, within socialist-feminist theory, ideas were grounded in traditional socialist theory but this theory was also criticized for failure to recognize the plight of women. In fact, socialist-feminist theory began both as a critique of Marxism and as a theoretical

perspective that made use of structural Marxist perspectives to explain discrimination against women as a class.

It is also largely because of the political movement mentioned above that some feminists whose basic theoretical assumptions are grounded in radical theory wrote arguments that can also be classified as socialist-feminism theories (for example, MacKinnon). While radical feminism discussed notions about why oppression of women has existed that these theorists did not abandon, socialist-feminist theory presented them with seemingly more viable ideas that hoped to solve the problems politically and economically. Nonetheless, even as some theorists attempted to synthesize the two theoretical categories, creating a rather unsteady alliance between them (see Hartmann, 1981/2003), cross-categorical tension remained.

For example, on the one hand, Eisenstein (1979) comments that both socialist males and radical feminists "fail to recognize the political distinction between being a woman and being a feminist" (5). Of importance is Eisenstein's notion that socialist women - that is, those who according to Eisenstein are not "feminists" because they are not radical feminists - needed to embrace radical theory in order to understand the true nature of capitalist patriarchy. She states emphatically that "understanding [the] interdependence of capitalism and patriarchy is essential to the socialist feminist political analysis" (5, emphasis mine). To her, radical theory is the explanation that must be wedded to socialist theory in order to change "the structure of oppression" (5).

On the other hand, others sharply disagreed, finding some aspects of radical theory "annoying," "simplistic" and lacking a sound "historical" or "dialectical base"

(Mitchell, 1972; Vogel, 1973, 12). Also, socialist-feminism's socio-economic theoretical base was in many ways in conflict with radical feminism's focus on the body as the root of oppression for women (see Kelly, 1979). Mitchell (1972), for example, argued that "radical feminists construct too rigid a theory" from biological instinct (93). She further argued that, by striving for an egalitarianism within biology, radical feminist theory set an empowerment goal that would not conquer male privilege but rather would eliminate sexual distinction. Rowbotham adds to this argument that the elimination of sexual distinction as advocated by Firestone would lead to an inhumane society. Mitchell (1972) also argued that to see male domination as the whole of the problem was much like "a worker seeing the employer himself as the only enemy, simply because he seems directly responsible for the individual exploitation" (93). She further stated that to take such a narrow stand would produce "not a political consciousness" but "simply a self-directed gaze" that would tend to ignore the oppression of other groups (94).

The ensuing argument about who "must" embrace what in order to forward the feminist cause generated tension that persists to this day.[1] Because theoretical arguments are the foundations for ideas about how to achieve empowerment within political and social spheres, the tension mattered, affecting "broader social commitments and political alliances" (Kelly, 1979, 219). Yet part of what has been misunderstood is that the varying perspectives sought to empower women within different realms of human experience, as I began to explain in the previous chapters. To understand this, we need to closely examine the differences between theories and attitudes forwarded by radical socialist-feminists and non-radical socialist-feminists.

For example, it is important to realize that although they often worked and wrote at least somewhat within its frames, radical socialist-feminists were not only critical of writings by the canonistic socialists, and they were likewise starkly critical of the men who worked within the then contemporary socialist movement. This is because, although "socialism" or "communism" as utopian concepts were embraced, the canonized writings, the male-led movements and even men-in-general were largely rejected by radical feminists as male-chauvinistic and therefore downright evil in many ways. This tendency was revealed within both the socialist-feminist movement itself (Martin, 1976/86; see also Van Allen, 1984) and within the radical theoretical writings (demonstrated in the previous chapter; see also MacKinnon, 1989). This male-hatred was born of a theoretical assumption that demonizes men as the purposeful initiators of female oppression which is also purposefully maintained through coercion and fear. Yet in spite of this "hard line" radical element within the socialist-feminist ranks, there also remained those non-radical socialist-feminists who called for all women to unite with each other and with men to bring about the emancipation of all humanity (Elshtain, 1981, 256).

This theoretical division between radical and non-radical socialist-feminists is important because of the theoretical confusion it created on both sides of the debate. As Mary Bailey, quoted by Pecheskey (1979), said:

> As Marxist-feminists we straddle an uneasy horse. We have not worked out what this means, this hyphen. … All too often all this has meant is that we are Marxist to our feminist sisters and feminists to our Marxist brothers. (375)

The "feminist sisters" that Bailey refers to are the radical feminists. Indeed, further confusion ensues as radical feminists embrace Marxian theoretical frames, uniting these frames with primary assumptions that had formed within radical theories.

For example, MacKinnon (1989), one of the radical feminists who embraced Marxian theoretical frames, explains that Marxism sees society as "fundamentally constructed of the relations people form as they do and make things needed to survive" as human beings (3). She goes on to explain the perceived power-structure of this constructed society, which is class. For Marxism, class occurs because of the social process of production within capitalistic societies. The issue is the control of production, which is accomplished through the control of proletariat people, the working class, by the bourgeois, the upper class. Within socialist-feminism, a "parallel argument" is raised: gender and sexuality are socially constructed and "yet constructing" (MacKinnon, 1989, 3). The "issue" (3), according to MacKinnon (1989), is control of reproductive processes, including the rearing of children. While radical socialist-feminism assumes that this control is deliberately exerted by all men for all men against all women because all men are aggressive and narcissistic, non-radical feminism does not.

According to radical theory, sexual control is not only universal, it is insidious. As demonstrated in the last chapter, radical feminism assumes deliberate and sinister control of the sexuality of females not only for reproductive purposes but for the sexual pleasure of men. This control is exacted against all women universally by men at the expense of female happiness and freedom. Further, this control is so embedded in the social fabric

of human lives that women by and large are unaware of it.[2] What is "constructed," then, is heterosexuality and the issue is control of sexual behavior, which is accomplished through the control of all women through fear of and coercion by men. This, thanks to the influence of MacKinnon and other "radical women," soon becomes one of the foundational assumptions of radicalized socialist-feminist theory, which, of course, happens also to be the foundational assumption of radical-feminist theory.

However, while non-radical socialist-feminism agrees that part of the problem is rooted in sexuality, they focus first or dualistically on social and economic class structures and second or dualistically on gender as it is socially constructed both within capitalism and within a male-focused society. That is, because one primary focus is on capitalism as a cause of problems, empowerment for women as a class, as well as other class-groups, depends upon the destruction of capitalistic systems. Because focus is also secondarily or dualistically on male privilege and male perspective as problems for women, empowerment further involves remaking this "male-defined world view" (MacKinnon, 1989, 5) to include and give credence to female perspectives and needs.

Some socialist-feminists complained that traditional Marxism assumes that the primary reason that women are oppressed is because they are excluded from public production, yet even as this exclusion is corrected, various other manifestations of oppression do not disappear. MacKinnon (1989), for example, comments that the primary complaint against traditional Marxism is that its demands can be "satisfied without altering women's inequality to men" (5). Women, we are told, remain susceptible to rape, physical abuse, harassment and objectification. They also continue to

be the primary caregiver of children and primarily responsible for housework. They continue to have less money, less power and less leisure time than men (Jaggar, 1983). It is further charged by radical socialist-feminism that by being "gender-blind," Marxism partially causes the continued oppression of women and that, in doing this, it becomes just "another ideology of male oppression" (Jaggar, 1983, 78).

In fact, it should be noted that since women may face any of these stated problems, and since it is argued that all of these problems have impact on the collective female psyche, the theoretical split between radical socialist-feminists and non-radical socialist-feminists is not only in underlying assumptions, but is also in the focus on what is understood to be the most serious problems that women face. When the primary focus is on the sociopathic tendencies of, for example, rapists, which stand to frighten and coerce females into roles they would not willingly play without this overriding fear, then we get a notion of female empowerment that involves not only control of the rapist male but freedom from the perception of male sexual coercion altogether. This is because when women are victimized, by rape for example, behaviors and psychological processes are altered because of fear and/or the desire to seek protection. Likewise, for some radical-feminists, particularly those who are also lesbians, gendered constructs such as heterosexuality are seen as coercive problems created by males for males at the expense of the female. When this problem is the primary focus, it is insisted that empowerment for the female necessarily involves freedom from the very confines of heterosexuality. For this reason, it is important to note the various focus differences across the theories as well as the differing theoretical assumptions. This also explains why some radical

theorists, Dworkin (2002) for example, became frustrated with lines of feminist theory that focused on employment and labor issues; Dworkin considered the sexual exploitation of women to be a far more serious problem.

As black feminists would later point out, these early socialist-feminists, particularly but not only the radical socialist-feminists, tended to focus on the problems that were most pressing in their own lives and the lives of the women closest to them. This is not altogether unexpected, because they were breaking new theoretical ground and because, since they were trying to add "female voices" to the predominantly "male world-view," it made since for them to begin with what they most intimately knew and understood. However, the fact that they failed to understand exactly why their theories differed led to unnecessary contention between the women who nonetheless called each other "sisters."

Yet, as I have pointed out before, the confusion can be abated by beginning with an examination of the primary-focus addressed problem, then tracing the thread of argument forward to theoretical assumptions about the context of the problem that the empowerment hopes to overcome. These factors, once clarified, help to explain why theorists promote specific methods for achieving what they deem to constitute "empowerment" for women. The chart on the following page should help to disentangle radical-feminist concepts from socialist-feminist concepts. First, however, it is important to remember the basic theoretical concepts held by radical feminism, as outlined in the previous chapter. That is, the overarching problem addressed by radical-feminism is patriarchy, which is said to allow the abuse of females by males. While the assumed

context of the problem varies somewhat within radical feminism as I have shown, it is fair to say that, in general, all radical feminism identifies the following assumed cause: excessive power in the hands of males that is not shared by females. The human interaction that they identify is one of aggressive, narcissistic males as the purposeful oppressors of females. They then suggest methods to empowerment, all of which include ways to empower the female against the male, and most of which include some form of restraint on male behavior.

Socialist-feminism, on the other hand, follows a line of thought that nowhere identifies the male as the primary source of the problem, and does not define the male as a deliberate aggressor or as necessarily narcissistic. This may explain why Hartmann (1981), for example, contended that socialist-feminism had focused on capitalism alone as the cause of the problems women face. This, she declared, would fail because it overlooked the supporting role that patriarchy plays in both the capitalist system and the oppression of women. She therefore argued that socialist-feminism lost its "feminism" intent simply by wedding itself to Marxism. The union, she charged, simply subsumed feminism into Marxism in much the same way that under English law, a woman simply became an extension of the man the minute she became a wife, losing her own identity, simply to become a part of his identity.

To Hartmann, it was therefore important to keep both the materialist approach and the sexual identity approach keenly distinct from each other, using both but not losing the one beneath the other. From Hartmann's ideas came the "dual-systems" approach which considered patriarchy and capitalism simultaneously when examining the plight

of women in capitalistic states. She therefore later gets credit for creating the "dual-systems approach to gender segregation" in the workforce and public/private spheres that was used by socialist-feminists to explain male control over the types of work that women perform and the level of pay, or lack thereof, that women receive for their labor (Wharton, 1991, 375).

However, Hartmann failed to acknowledge the sexual division of labor line of theoretical inquiry that had been present in socialist-feminist theory all along. She assumed that, because socialist-feminism is not as male-blaming as radical theory, it therefore ignores the role that male privilege plays in the hierarchal scheme of capitalistic labor. Notice, however, that even without the entanglement of radical-feminist assumptions with the theory, socialist-feminism does address a dual set of problems, one of which includes male privilege. Because socialist-feminism argued that socialism alone would not and could not free or equalize all women, it attempted to follow two lines of theory from the start (see for example, Mitchell, 1972; Jaquette, 1982). That radical socialist-feminists later used Hartmann's similar dual approach stood only to further entangle and confuse radical feminist theory with socialist-feminist theory. Notice, though, that the difference between radical and non-radical socialist-feminism is primarily one of where blame is placed, as can be seen by comparing the line of radical theoretical thought, given above, with the two lines of socialist-feminism thought as demonstrated in the following diagram.

Socialist-feminist Theory's Dual Addressed Problems

Class Division of Labor (Traditional Marxism)	Sexual Division of Labor (production & reproduction)

Contexts:

a. Assumed Cause: Capitalism b. Interaction: elites (bourgeois) benefit from exploitation of underclass (proletariat)	a. Assumed Cause: social and cultural norms of "who does what," reinforced by a distinctively "male" political view that gives privileged benefit to males while causing hardship to females b. Interaction: males as (privileged) producers & females as primarily (burdened/victimized) *reproducers*

General Recommended Methods to Achieve Empowerment:

Socialism	a. Create equal opportunity for women for employment positions previously held only or primarily by men b. Share reproduction and care-giving tasks with men c. Initiate movement of "private" labor to public realm and/or control of private realm by public institutions

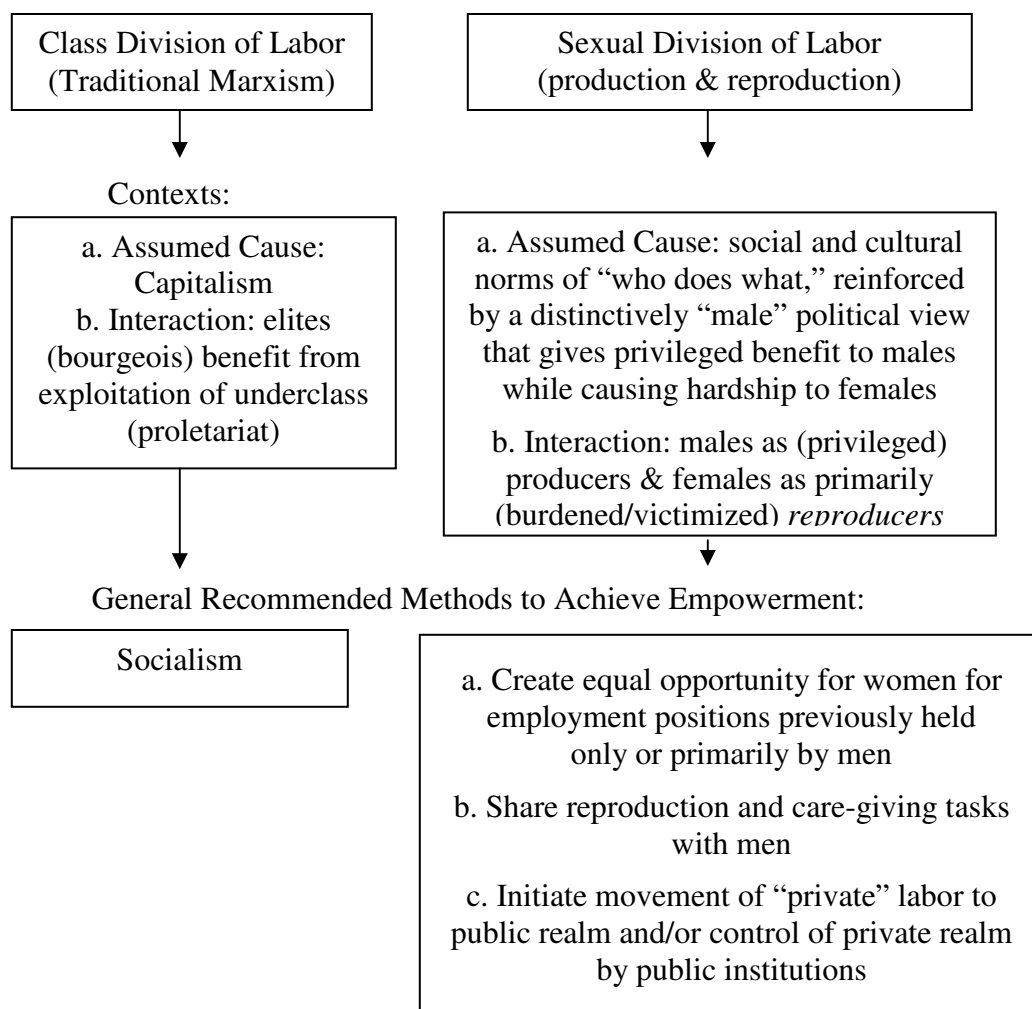**Figure 1.   Dual Problems and Methods to Achieve Empowerment**

What is missing in the socialist-feminism line of reasoning is an assumption that men deliberately cause the male-over-female hierarchy seen in the sexual division of labor because they are aggressive, narcissistic and power seeking. The various branches of socialist-feminist theory followed both unadulterated lines of socialist-feminist

thought shown in the diagram above. These branches of socialist-feminist theory share the "general addressed problems" and the contextual concepts, but can be better understood by using the "general recommended methods to achieve empowerment" as the distinguishing mark that separates one from the other.

Theoretical divisions also occur across and between the various branches of the less-radically influenced socialist-feminist theory. Therefore, an important step in this analysis is to take a close look at exactly what it was that each branch of socialist-feminism specifically was attempting to do and what types of empowerment were sought therein. However, as a foundation to this "empowerment" discussion, I will first discuss some of the criticisms brought to bear against traditional socialist theory by these feminists. Their writings discuss both inadequacies within said traditional theory and the fact that during the early part of the twentieth century, and before the advent of second-wave feminism, the question of how to end women's subordination was all but forgotten within the theory.

Criticizing the Classics

By the early 1980s, we see a proliferation of feminist literature devoted specifically to analyzing and criticizing the classic socialist texts, and by mid-decade we even see chapters by various writers devoted specifically to the synthesis of numerous socialist-feminists writings on just this subject. It is asked: just who is the "Marxist feminist" - "what does she want, and what sort of action shall she undertake?" (Elshtain, 1981, 257, emphasis mine). As the feminists criticize each other for failing to be critical

enough of traditional Marxism and socialist theory, we see not only feminist critique of Marxism but feminist critique of feminist critique and/or acceptance of particular tenants of Marxism. As a result, overall critique of Marx and Engels intensifies.

Eisenstein (1979) gives blanket approval to Marx for providing "the tools to understanding all power relations" (7, emphasis mine). She states further that "there is nothing about dialectical and historical method that limits it to understanding class relations" (7). As MacKinnon (1982) explains, both feminism and Marxism are "theories of power and its distribution: inequality" (516). As workers are exploited for the benefit of others, so females' sexuality is exploited for the benefit of others - for reproduction and for the pleasure of men. Jaggar (1983) tells us that the "defining feature of socialist feminism is that it attempts to interpret the historical materialist method of traditional Marxism so that it applies to the issues made visible by radical feminists" (124). Indeed, Mitchell (1971) commented that feminists "should ask the feminist questions, but try to come up with some Marxist answers" (99).

Yet even as many socialist-feminists made use of Marxist theoretical models to explain sexual exploitation, we also see stark criticism of "the inadequacies of Marxism" (ten Tusscher, 1986, 66). For example, it is said that Engels and Bebel both recognized the "Woman Question" - a term which "specifically dealt with the question of women's oppression" in the public sphere of work and politics and the private sphere of family, marriage and sexuality (Hunt, 1986, 48). They even discussed "the ways in which the notions of the public and private (spheres) themselves were conceptualized" (Hunt, 1986, 48). Yet they also both failed to fully develop their theories. Elshtain (1981), for

example, points out that Engels "insists that male domination requires as a prior condition, the holding, safeguarding, and inheritance of private property" (261), but fails to explain why male dominance is yet also present even among proletariats who own no property. This is one reason feminists stress that "gender relations cannot be subsumed under the categories of class and the economy" (ten Tusscher, 1986, 66). Traditional Marxism, then, is criticized as being "sex-blind" (Hartmann, 1981) and for viewing capitalist economic processes as gender-neutral (Wharton, 1991).

Jaggar (1983) further complains that although Marxists claim that history explains the sexual division of labor and women's oppression, the "historical reasons are obscure" and "unsatisfactory" (72). One example of this is Engels' remarks that the purchase and capture of women began because of a shortage of women, but also began during a period when women had been social equals to men. Jaggar (1983) suggests that, if women had truly been equal when the "shortage" became a problem, women "should have been selecting, accepting or rejecting husbands according to preference, rather than being themselves captured or sold" (73).

Engels and Bebel are further accused of having "effectively shelved" the Woman Question discussion by declaring that the problem of the oppression of women would have to wait until the problem of economic class struggle had been resolved (Hunt, 1986, 48). We are further told that although the "Woman Question" became a part of the "classical heritage" of the socialist movement during in the nineteenth century, during the early part of the twentieth century, before the advent of second-wave feminism, the

question of how to end women's subordination was all but forgotten (Mitchell, 1972, 76).

Marx embraced the Fourierian notion that increase in the degree of woman's freedom as it is measured inversely to man's brutality marks progress towards the emancipation of mankind in general (Marx and Engels, 1845/1975; see also Mitchell, 1972). However, he, too, is criticized for losing this thread of discussion of woman's oppression. We are told that rather than shelving the question, Marx buried it beneath his analysis of the family, wherein women "are not even mentioned" (Mitchell, 1972, 78). To Mitchell (1972), sexuality, reproduction and the socialization of children were subsumed by Marx under "the family." This conflation obscured multiple levels of oppression that needed to be brought to light and discussed before women could hope to progress towards any real equality (see also Coole, 1988).

The Various Branches of Socialist-feminism

When we think about what these feminists had to say in criticism of Marx and Engels, as well as the ways in which they made use of Marxian theoretical frames, we begin to see what it is that they wanted to happen within feminist theory and even within the movement as ways to empower women. For example, if the complaint is failure to discuss woman's position within the family, then it can be extrapolated from this that oppression within the family is assumed to pose a unique set of problems for women that have previously been overlooked or misunderstood. If the complaint is public "silence," then it can be inferred that the feminists doing the complaining assumed that gaining

said voice would bring some kind of relief and power to women. With this in mind, I more closely examine some of the many socialist-feminist writings intending to illuminate some of their varied notions of empowerment. It should be noted, however, that many socialist-feminists believed that women needed to be empowered in multiple ways. Therefore, even as I divide the theoretical "method of empowerment" focuses into various branches of socialist-feminist theory, I acknowledge the overlap of a number of specific theoretical writings across these branches.

On Class, Labor and Family

Feminists charge that Marxism "never really explains why it is women who do 'women's work'" (Jaggar, 1983, 71, emphasis mine). Marxist biological arguments concerning the sexual division of labor are rejected by feminists because these arguments are considered to be biologically deterministic. In Marxist theory, the biological division of labor in procreation is unquestioned (Jaggar, 1983; see also Hartmann, 1976). That is, it is taken for granted that women must not only give birth to children but must also be the primary caregivers of infants. Challenges against this assumption include a range of ideas, from the radical-feminist Firestone's assertion that modern technology can end the necessity for women to give birth to the assertion that "there is no reason" why men cannot care for infants and otherwise rear the children (Jaggar, 1983, 76). Feminists also challenge the Marxist assumption that only changes in production can produce changes in women's labor, suggesting, for example, that "the mode of procreation may partially determine production" (ibid, 76, emphasis mine). Yet

feminists also criticize each other for evading "the serious questions that arise when one attempts to express and examine the depth and complexity of family relations" (Elshtain, 1981; see also Coole, 1988).

In fact, some feminists, following the example of Marx, did simply collapse one problem, gender relations, into the other problem, class structure, analyzing women as they have existed as a labor underclass. Yet even within the labor, class and family focus, we also see other varying feminist uses of Marxian theoretical frames. For example, some theorists followed the Marxian model of historical analysis, discussing how the plight of women has changed across time as economic, political, and social systems have changed. Other theorists focused primarily on the public/private split of production and reproduction, while still others focused primarily on the family structure itself.

Economic Empowerment

Just as socialism was concerned primarily with economics (Hunt, 1986), much of early socialist-feminism was concerned primarily with the economic state of women as a class. Feminist theorists specifically interested in this economic approach focused on women's lives under capitalism and "the significance of women's subordination for the maintenance of capitalist social relations" (ten Tusscher, 1986, 66). Jaggar (1983) tells us that Marxists theorize that women's labor in the home allows the capitalistic market to be "relieved of the need to pay for the reproduction of labor power on which it ultimately depends" (71).

Jaggar further asserts that the ideology that suggests that it is men who must earn the primary wage for the family and that women do not regularly "belong" in the public market place allows women who are in the workforce to be paid less. This "not only provides capital with a pool of low-paid labor, but exerts a downward pressure on all wages" (1983, 71), allowing for increased exploitation of all workers.

Still, as mentioned before, Marxist theory does not tell us why it is primarily women who fill the roll of the "low-paid marginal" worker (Jaggar, 1983, 71). Jaggar (1983) also states that Marx and Engels call the "sexual division of labor" a "natural" occurrence and that they say it follows from "the division of labour in the sexual act" (68). Hartmann (1976/1990) agrees with Marx that "the roots of women's present social status lie in this sex-ordered division of labor" (146). She therefore declares that

> not only must the hierarchal nature of the division of labor between the sexes be eliminated, but the very division of labor between the sexes itself must be eliminated if women are to attain equal social status with men and if women and men are to attain the full development of their human potential. (146)

Jaggar (1983), however, argues that starting from the notion of a sex-ordered division of labor creates a theory that is deterministic because it suggests that the only way to dismantle this division would be to "abolish normative heterosexuality" entirely (69). She further stresses that

> the traditional Marxist analysis fails to acknowledge the extent and depth of women's oppression, and so it does not provide a satisfactory vision of liberation for women nor a workable strategy for achieving liberation. (69-70)

To understand fully how these theories face off, however, we must, again, closely examine the underlying assumptions. Hartmann is assuming that the "division of

labor between the sexes" can be eliminated, yet Jaggar's comments imply that this can not be accomplished unless we accept Firestone's extreme solution of the elimination of sexual identity itself, or, at the least, heterosexual identity, as the lesbian radical feminists had suggested. Eisenstein (1979), on the other hand, suggests that we do not need to change distinction between the sexes, but rather the current social structures of sexually divided power. She says, "If we change the social relations of power, men have to change, because they will no longer have their hierarchical base" (51). Indeed, it is in an attempt to change these "social relations of power" that some feminists focused primarily on work done by women in the home, suggesting that it is on the backs of "unpaid" female home-laborers that the foundation of modern capitalism stands (Gerstein, 1973; Delphy, 1984; Vogel, 1973). Vogel (1973), for example, says that domestic labor - women's labor in the home - is neither 'productive' labor - that which produces surplus capital that benefits a third party, nor 'unproductive' - that which does not produce surplus value but yet is directly paid for. Because of this, it falls outside of traditional Marxist analysis of labor. These feminists attempt to correct this oversight, hoping to show that this "unpaid" home-labor has contributed to the oppression of women in ways previously not understood. It is further said that women have been given jobs that men do not care to perform, given wages, if any, below that of men, and have been degraded for the very societal positions imposed upon them by this labor and wage division (Berkeley-Oakland Women's Union, 1974; Hartmann, 1976; Kollantai, 1977; MacKinnon, 1989). Also, a number of socialist-feminist works in the 1970s and 1980s used historical case studies to demonstrate that women have been consistently relegated

to a lower economic and social class than their male counterparts (for examples, see Boserup, 1970; Kuhn and Wolpe, 1978; Dauber and Cain, 1981; Matthaei, 1982).

Most of these socialist-feminists sought to empower women within the economic sphere as I have mentioned. That is, they sought mobility for women from "incarceration" in the home to public-sphere jobs and also sought choices of equal types of employment for those already in public-sphere jobs (for example, see Davies, 1974). They further sought equal wages for women, as studies clearly showed that women were regularly paid wages which were below the wages of men. As socialists, their primary concern was economic freedom and equal wages for all social classes, whether the classes were divided by gender, worker-relations or race. Within this branch of socialist-feminism, "empowerment" of women entails an equal-opportunity chance for women to be employed in the public sphere of work in jobs equal to the jobs men held, and for equal pay (for examples, see Hartmann, 1976; Davies 1974).

Empowerment Within the Family and the "Private Sphere"

Wages being representative of and even the result of other structures in society, though, it was not too far of a leap to move away from strictly economic analyses in order to bring Marxist-style analysis to bear on social structures other than wage-earning labor. Close examination of the complex problems which socialist-feminism hoped to overcome begins to reveal a few inherent problems within the wage-focused branch of the theory. That is, the problems were complex, yet this theory seemed relatively simplistic, conflating most of woman's oppression into her economic oppression within

a labor hierarchy. Without doubt, microscopic observation of other areas of oppression was needed. For example, Mitchell (1971) identified the "key structures" responsible for women's oppression as "production, reproduction, sexuality and the socialization of children" (see Coole, 1988, 242). Because the problem was not simply one of being excluded from the public workforce, or even of not being paid for labor performed in the private home, their movement into that workforce alone could not solve the problem (Mitchell, 1971).

This is why socialist-feminist writings that sought to empower women within the family suggested, among other ideas, a sharing of parenting duties (Chodorow, 1979; Matthaei, 1982; see also Jaggar, 1983), discussed the possibility of "socializing" housework (Gardiner, 1975), suggested a 50-50 split sharing of housework (Randall, 1979), and demanded an improvement of women's reproductive freedom (Gordon, 1979). The intent of all of these ideas was to lift from women's shoulders the unequal burden of responsibility for reproduction, childcare and housework within the realm of the traditional family structure. We see "empowerment" here defined as a lessening of care-giving duties (Chodorow, 1979), or public control of and payment for housework (Gardiner, 1975), or a lessening of the house-work load (Randall, 1979), or avenues for choice of how many, if any, children a woman might reproduce and then subsequently care for (Gordon, 1979). All of these ideas were intended to increase woman's power to not have her labor exploited by men and male-centered, capitalist society.

Argument Against Abolishing "the Division of Labor"

Elshtain (1981), however, presents a hope for two different kinds of empowerment. First, like other theorists mentioned above, she sought mobility for women from "incarceration" in the home into public activity. She criticizes Marx for ignoring the "silence" of women in the public realm. That the plight of women is not thoroughly examined by Marx might have been, according to Elshtain, because he saw the "voice" of men in the public realm as "distorted," thus rendering the fact that women were "silent" there a lesser problem than it may have otherwise seemed (1981, 194). We will see below that while Elshtain wants women to receive social appreciation for their work in the home, she nonetheless does not advocate that women should be isolated there. She states that her goal is empowerment of all persons to "determine for themselves the conditions of their labor" (1975, 476) to have equal social and political power to each other, and to live full lives "within the context of a just social order" (1975, 477). She wants women to be able to move freely between the public and private realm, which would be empowerment against coerced sequestering in the home.

Elshtain (1981), however, like the cultural-radical feminists before her, also seeks a different kind of empowerment. That is, her complaint is also that the social norms that tend to sequester woman in the home serve to degrade the value of what she accomplishes there. In her own discussion of the family, Elshtain applauds Marx for revealing the "hypocrisy of the celebration of the family under capitalism even as family ties are … eroded and family members exploited" (197). Yet she criticizes Marx for advocating the total elimination of the public/private distinction. For Elshtain,

empowerment for women would not entail an elimination of this distinction, but rather a "reconstruction" of the public and private realms so that, for example, the "private-familial sphere" has "its own dignity and purpose" (1981, 334, emphasis mine). Elshtain promotes theory that hopes to achieve an equality of respect between and across the sexes that is not based on capitalistic merit. This, as I pointed out in the previous chapter, is a different sort of power than the "freedom from coercion" power that the other feminists, above, and even she in the other part of her theory, were seeking.

Brief discussion of the value of labor in the home should help to shed light on why we see these two very different types of empowerment forwarded here and why this matter created tension within the ranks of socialist-feminist theory. First, I refer back to Vogel's statement that women's labor in the home is neither "productive" labor - that which produces surplus capital that benefits a third party - nor "unproductive" - that which does not produce surplus value but yet is directly paid for (1973). Now, if we take our view off of money, which is after all only a specific medium to facilitate exchange, and think instead of a barter system, many women would agree that they do receive direct pay for their labor, in the form of food, living quarters, and other goods supplied by their husbands. Further, it can also be demonstrated that women who care for children at home produce value, for both parents in modern America and for the husband in more strictly patriarchal systems. Children under patriarchal systems are considered to belong to the father. Any money that the father earns is strictly "his" as well. In this case, the labor that a wife puts forth to take care of the children keeps him from having to pay for child care, which is a direct value for him, because he can then spend his wages

elsewhere. For the sake of theoretical conceptualization, one might imagine that a widower with children marries a woman with no children of her own, who then actually cares for his biological children. In this case, it is easy to see that the father gains direct value from his wife's taking care of the children.

Modern capitalistic society, though, is guilty of devaluing the work that mothers do in the home. It places very little value on childcare, even though parents are usually well aware of its actual high value. That is, if both parents in a two-parent household go to work, paid childcare becomes an immediate concern, whereas so long as one parent is able and chooses to stay at home to care for the children, paid childcare is unnecessary. This is why the charge sometimes leveled at modern "stay-at-home moms" in America that they are degrading themselves (see Wallis, 2004) is unfair. If this is actually their chosen, though temporary, vocation, if they do in fact see this as what they want to do and likely the most important thing that they can do, why would they choose a different career and then pay someone else to raise their children?

Further, being a "stay-at-home-mom" need not then make the woman "dependent" upon her husband. If one considers the entire barter system in play, it is evident that she is no more "dependent" on her husband than he is on his employer. Although he needs the wage, and would likely be harmed should he be fired, he is not considered to be a "dependent" because he is exchanging his labor for wages. The capitalistic economic system works only if the employer gets value out of the bargain. That is, laborer and employer must be interdependent upon each other or else the employment system does not work. In the home barter system, if the wife exchanges her

labor for food, housing and so forth, the husband gets value out of the bargain in that he does not have to pay someone else to take care of the children. Thus, husband and wife, if they have children, in this arrangement are interdependent upon each other. This is true even if the children are considered to "belong" to and be the responsibility of both husband and wife. The husband pays his half of the expense of childcare to his wife in the form of food, housing and so forth. The couple also likely also does not have to pay outside help for housecleaning (although more affluent couples may choose to do so) and a number of other things because the stay-at-home mother performs these duties herself.

The problem, of course, is patriarchal society's tendency to coerce mothers to stay at home. The key ingredient in this system is choice. So long as women, or men, have the choice to either care for their own children or enter into the workforce and hire someone else to perform childcare duties, a real system of exchange can take place. To say that chosen domestic work is degrading to all women is to belittle the individual women who choose this vocation. Yet, in their attempt to justify why women should be empowered to leave the home if they chose to do so, some feminists described housework and other in-home labor in just this manor (see above). Elshtain's argument is that to label domestic work as "degrading" only makes the problem of the lack of social prestige for women who choose to labor in the home worse. The solution to this latter problem is, according to Elshtain, glorification and appreciation of the labor and care-giving women perform in the home. In fact, some socialist-feminists (for example Gardiner, 1975, mentioned above) wanted to "socialize" housework so that it would then

be recognized as part of the labor-exchange system and therefore likewise recognized as valuable.

As was explained in Chapter II, what we are seeing here is two distinct conceptualizations of what it means to be "empowered." One group of feminists believes that domestic work must be recognized as devaluing to women before women can be freed from coercion to perform it. This group believes that "empowerment" means freedom from coercion and domestic labor. The other group wants the domestic work that many women chose to perform to be valued, so that women who performed it can be empowered through social prestige and be paid, by some means, what their work is actually worth.

Sexual Empowerment Within the Family

Finally, when we discuss family structure as something that is located within the "private sphere," it is also important to note that although Marxists talk about the public and private split, their conception of it is very different than that of liberals. This fact will become more clear in Chapter IV, but for now it is important to note that one reason for this, according to Jaggar (1983), "is that the Marxist conception of human nature as a continuous social creation precludes the view that there is any aspect of an individual's life which, in principle, is of concern only to that individual" (61), and therefore "private" in the liberal sense. In fact, MacKinnon (1993) insists that liberal-political notions concerning the private sphere have caused harm to women. While the private sphere has been an assumed place of privacy for man, it has been an assumed place of

the sexual "consent" of women. This is another reason why socialist-feminists sometimes argue that the public/private split should be abolished or at least completely restructured. Ideas about how to end female sexual oppression within the family include the suggestion that women can be empowered by movement of sexual rights from the "private" control of the family into the public realm of social and political control (Davis, 1993; MacKinnon, 1993).

It is when we turn to sexual oppression and violence that can occur within the "private" family structure that we find reason for Jaggar's assertion that "Marxist analysis fails to acknowledge the extent and depth of women's oppression." It is here that we see the opposite end of the family-relations spectrum from that portrayed by Elshtain and which I discussed above. That is, in a family that is abusive to the woman, she can have no "stay-at-home" choice that will bring her personal satisfaction or empowerment, because the barter system it requires is dependent upon functional and satisfactory relations between the concerned parties, that is, between male and female if in a heterosexual household. In fact, there can never be empowerment for an abused woman so long as she both remains in the abusive home and the male-over-female hierarchy is in place in that home.

The fact that radical theory places male power and brutality within his sexuality and places female powerlessness within her sexuality explains why Firestone felt that empowerment had to entail the abolishment of sexual difference. This also explains why Jaggar declares that if there is a "sex-ordered" division of labor, there can be no empowerment for women without abolishing "normative heterosexuality." If we are

talking about a division which necessarily places woman in the home, if that home is heterosexual, and if men do in fact tend to be both brutal and power-seeking, empowerment for the woman is impossible. However, Jaggar, like Rowland-Serdar and Schwartz-Shea (1991), fails to realize that this series of assumptions only accurately applies to dysfunctional families. A similar mistake is made by MacKinnon when she assumes that the reason some women resist change in their lives must be that they are simply unaware of their own "oppression."

Consciousness Raising

Consciousness-raising hopes to empower women by giving them first an understanding that they are, in fact, oppressed. It assumes, then, that all women are oppressed by men, but some of them simply do not realize it. This is rooted in the radical assumption, explained in Chapter II, that all women (as a group) are oppressed by all men because, for example, of fear of rape. Following this radical influence, as I have explained, some socialist-feminists took a broad view of problems such as rape, prostitution and pornography, asking what about these is unique to women, in what ways these things are the result of socially-constructed heterosexuality, and/or in what ways they contribute to and reinforce the oppression of women as a class. In fact, it is because of this broad view of what happens to women as a collective group or class that "consciousness-raising" theory belongs within the socialist-feminist category.

As Marx used his alienation theory to explain the psychological effects of capitalistic divisions of labor on workers, MacKinnon (1982) and other "consciousness

raising" feminists used sexual control/use theory to explain the psychological effects of male-centric gender identity on women. Although "consciousness raising" theory is not always considered to be a part of socialist-feminist theory, I argue that MacKinnon (1982, 1989) uses the Marxist method even while she declares that her "consciousness raising" method is in "contrast" to it. It is in "contrast" only in that it centers on the effects of gender rather than economic class. That is, the Marxist method of examining class structure must be "dialectical materialism," because it is examining power structures that are born out of materialism. MacKinnon's approach focuses instead on gender construction. Because its focus is not economic class, it has no reason to use materialism as a base. It is dialectical, in that it uses the spoken and written words of women to raise awareness about women's oppression. Further, it uses a historical approach, as Marxism also does, to demonstrate this oppression across time.

However, as I mentioned above, while this line of theory attempted to explain what happens to women in general, it failed to see that the problems it addressed simply were not faced by all women alike. One again, the theory was hindered by its own "self-directed gaze." This same "self-directed gaze" created a notion of the "universal woman," which is also what sparked criticism from black feminists, as I demonstrate next.

Expanding to Include Other Marginalized Groups

As I mentioned earlier, some of the early second-wave socialist-feminists were concerned that radical feminist theory tended to cause feminists to narrow their focus to

themselves, forgetting about the marginalization of other groups. Given this, it is not surprising that growing protests by emerging black feminists that racial oppression was not properly addressed within the mainstream of feminist theory were welcomed and embraced by socialist-feminist theory. In fact, the problem of racial oppression accorded well with Marxist-feminists, who had always considered sexual oppression to be but one of multiple facets of the oppression that various groups of people faced.[3] Jaggar (1983), for example, mentions that "contemporary society" is composed of "groups of individuals," that are "defined simultaneously by age, sex, class, nationality and by racial and ethnic origin" (125). She further states that "these groups differ markedly from each other, both physically and psychologically" (126).

Socialist-feminism sought to empower all women, all classes of workers, and all races within the material realm of human existence. Within socialist theory, capitalistic hierarchy is understood as a problem that affects all of humanity that lives under its roof. From the feminist view, the problem is compounded for women by patriarchy and, for blacks, by white supremacy, both of which are also types of hierarchal human arrangements. The path to achieve empowerment was understood to be the destruction of all hierarchies which exploit women, proletariat workers and blacks (Berkeley-Oakland Women's Union, 1974; see also Segal, 1989).

Further, we see that the study of the sexual wage division sheds light on racial problems as well. Mitchell (1972), for example, pointed out that in America the wage-structure revealed a discriminatory pattern as follows: white men over black men, black men over white women, white women over black women. One possible reason why

black males came to feel that the women's movement was damaging to them is imaginable if one thinks about prejudice and social norms as they affect the changing dynamics of hierarchy under the women's movement. An increase in wages or social status for white women would not necessarily mean an increase in the same for black men or black women. If this is the case, black women's lot would not change, but black men would actually find themselves moving downward in the hierarchy, to be eventually placed below white women.

On the other hand, if blacks as a group could move up the hierarchal scale, both black men and black women would find themselves raised up within the wage and social orders, black men equal to, or at least closer to equal to, white men, and black women equal to or closer to equal to white women. Perhaps then further equality could be achieved without first harming the wage and social status of some segment (men) of the race. This brings to light one of the problems that black women faced: to follow mainstream (that is, "white") feminist precepts without regards to their racial effects could often pose a paradox, for what might seem helpful to them as women might harm them as blacks.

This begins to explain why it is that while Marxist-feminists tried to be more inclusive of problems such as race and class in their theories than radical feminists who generally focused solely on sexual oppression, black feminists rightly accused the mainstream Marxist-feminists of a "false universalism" (Coole, 1988, 249), and "ethnocentrism" (Barrett and MacIntosh, 1985; Mirza, 1986; Ramazanoglu, 1986) that ignored or misunderstood the particular types of oppression and problems faced by black

women. While "white solipsism" (Rich, 1979) among feminist theorists was not deliberate racism or a "consciously held belief" that whites are superior to other races, it nonetheless created a "tunnel-vision" which simply could "not see nonwhite experience or existence" and therefore could not describe it in any way that would have long-term "political usefulness" (306, emphasis mine).

When black women began to make an effort to "shift socialist-feminist politics" to include them and their struggles (Bhavnani and Coulson, 1986/2001, 65), socialist-feminists at last began to recognize that their sisters of other classes and races had been left out of the feminist "revolution" because the movement itself was largely populated by, and tended to serve, upper-class white women (Hooks, 1984). At this point, the struggles black women faced at last began to be discussed at length within the theory. As Marxian frameworks for understanding work and social experiences were put to use within black feminist thought (Collins, 2000), specific problems missed by mainstream theory because of its "tunnel vision" became apparent.

For example, Spelman (1988/2001) states that it is important to recognize "the many varieties of oppression" (86). She further states that "we need to keep a cautious eye on discussions of racism versus sexism" because "what sexism means and how it works is modulated by racism," and likewise how racism works and what is means "is modulated by sexism" (85). She points out that "Black women and other women of color are at the bottom of the economic heap" and that this clearly cannot be "fully understood in the absence of class analysis" (86). King (1988) also discusses the "multiple jeopardy" that Black women face, stating that "the physical and psychological impact of

racism is qualitatively different from that of sexism" (45). Hooks (1984) also explains that "being oppressed means the absence of choices" (5). She further asserts that "many women do not join organized resistance against sexism precisely because sexism has not meant an absolute lack of choices," and they therefore do not equate it with oppression (5).

Capitalism is attacked within some black feminist thought not only because of its creation of hierarchal class relations, but because slavery as it had existed in the U.S. could be seen as an extreme form of "capitalist exploitation" of blacks (Collins, 2000, 51). Hooks (1984) argues that "it is only by analyzing racism and its function in capitalist society that a thorough understanding of class relationships can emerge. Class struggle is inextricably bound to the struggle to end racism" (3). In fact, ideas about the varying ways that the social contexts of women's lives affect them has expanded socialist-feminist theory into a social-feminist theory that includes discussion of the cross-sectional ways that women are oppressed within and across class, race, religion and culture (for example see Bhavnani, 2001). However, socialist-feminism and Marxist-feminism have not altogether disappeared into this expansion. For example, Fraser (1998) reminds us that while "cultural recognition displaces socioeconomic redistribution as the remedy for injustice," we should not forget that these "struggles for recognition occur in a world of exacerbated material inequality" because, rather than lessening, "material inequality is on the rise in most of the world's countries" (19). King (1988) also states that "multiple oppressions," including "racism, sexism, and classism," must all be addressed if liberation is to truly be achieved (47).

Finally, black feminists charge that the family unit which is described and attacked by Marxist-feminists is European in kind and is not typical of many other cultures. They argue further that, in their unceasing attack on the patriarchal family, Marxist-feminists fail to recognize its "whiteness." That is, they miss the "solidarity" with which black men and women often work to combat racism (Coole, 1988, 249). Hooks (1984), for example, says that black men and women are united in the struggle against racism. This, she says, is something that white bourgeois women fail to understand because they "have not had as many positive experiences working with men politically" as have black women working with black men in the political struggle against racism (69). White socialist-feminists also miss problems within the structure of family that black women face which are atypical of the white family. For example, while white feminists were struggling for the right of women to leave the home and join the public workforce, "many black women were saying 'we want to have more time to share with family, we want to leave the world of alienated work'" (Hooks, 1984, 134). Further, King (1988) states that assumptions made by white feminists,[4] such as the notion that "family is by definition patriarchal," stand as hindrances to black women's association with feminism (58).

Types of Empowerment

Socialist-feminism sometimes claims to be concerned with something other than empowerment of the autonomous being (Jaggar, 1983). This is because it deals with groups and the "concrete person" as opposed to liberalism's "abstract person." When we

examine these matters from an empowerment outcomes perspective, however, we find that we are by and large still talking about the empowerment of the autonomous individual. Therefore, I find it expedient to point out some oft-times misunderstood concepts concerning self, other and context. It is important to untangle these concepts in order to understand the underlying assumptions about types of "empowerment."

It is carefully pointed out by socialist literature, whether feminist or otherwise, that the plight of individuals can never be understood without taking into account the context of the social environment that the individual lives in. This is certainly true, and a more holistic approach to any study would examine both the individual as an individual and the individual as part of a group and/or within some social setting. Certainly much feminist material has tried to do just this. What is often misconstrued, though, is just what level of understanding doing so brings and thereby what type of empowerment we are then talking about.

What is needed is an understanding of the multiple spheres of reality in play for the individual. There is, of course, the subjective self, which we can only observe when dialogue and writings reveal thought, and only to some minimal degree. There is also the objective self, which we observe by watching someone's actions and behavior and also how the self interacts with the social and political environment within which s/he lives. Much of feminist literature brings the subjective feminine-self into political and social studies, which is something that had not previously been done except on rare occasions. The objective self has long been studied, though for millennia most of the studies and philosophical discussions saw all important objective selves as male and, often, as white.

Next, there is the objective "we," or groups of individuals. This we can observe. We can see the effects that groups have on each other and on the individuals within the groups. This, too, has long been studied, particularly by "communitarians" and by "socialists." Again, unfortunately, the studies and philosophies for millennia saw the "important" groups to be at least led by males and the "important" influenced individuals to be likewise male and, again, mostly white. Feminists brought in a discussion about women, their interaction within groups and the influences that the groups have on the individuals therein.

What is all too often missed, however, is an observation of the subjective "we." That is, when feminists engage in discussion about the subjective "we," it is often only to try to influence that "we" in a particular way, based on assumptions made by observations of the objective "we" rather than to inquire what the true subjective "we" needs are. I discussed this briefly in the "consciousness-raising" portion of this chapter as well as in the portion about black feminism's complaint against mainstream (white) feminism.

When we talk about groups, socialism and communitarianism, we have to be very careful about our concept of "empowerment" and just what major type of empowerment we are talking about. Remember that there are two primary types of empowerment: empowerment of the autonomous self, and empowerment of the relational self. Now, when we talk about empowerment of groups, we are not necessarily talking about empowerment of the relational self as one might at first assume. This is because when we are looking at the objective "we," we can talk about empowerment of

groups, but the goal is really just the autonomous empowerment of each individual within the group even though these individuals might be empowered collectively as a group.

However, if the members of a group work to empower each other, a relational empowerment can manifest from within the group. For example, if we attempt to exert an influence, to "raise consciousness," so that the individuals in the group might then help each other, rather than to let social norms that may indeed be disempowering to dictate social interaction within the group, we have promoted relational empowerment. But to truly understand relational empowerment, we cannot simply exert a force from the outside, assuming that we know what the end results will be. This is very likely what frustrated much of the early "consciousness raising" efforts. What is needed instead is inquiry into the individuals' own understandings of their interactions with each other and just how it is that they go about attempting to empower (or disempower) each other and/or empower others who may otherwise be helpless, such as children. This is the bedrock of empowerment of the relational self, and where understanding of it must begin.

This is why I label most socialist empowerment goals as "empowerment of the autonomous self," even though they deal with group interaction. The exception to this is such efforts as consciousness raising, which were relational attempts at empowerment, sometimes of the autonomous self and sometimes of the relational self. These attempts could definitely have been better informed, however, had they more seriously examined the subjective "we" and notions about relational empowerment contained therein.

Nonetheless, while socialist-feminism overall was concerned primarily with empowerment of the autonomous self as I have explained, "consciousness raising" did make some feeble attempt at promoting empowerment of the relational self, as did black feminist theory in its discussion of black women's need and desire to spend more time with their families.

As will be seen, most of liberal theory also promotes empowerment of the autonomous self, but we do see some attempts to promote empowerment of the relational self therein as well.

Differences Between Socialist-feminism and Liberal Feminism

Socialist-feminism touted itself as the best overall solution to women's problems in the modern world. It gets into trouble though, with confusions about what it does and does not do. First, writers (for example, Jaggar, 1983) tried to bring under the one umbrella socialist perspectives, radical perspectives, multicultural perspectives and psychoanalytical perspectives, labeling all of these as "socialist-feminism." While the attempt to synthesize is to be applauded, it must also be recognized that each of these areas of feminism was actually distinct from the others in varying ways, as I have demonstrated. Second, while theorists tried to rope all of these categories under one by using Marx's interpretation of "praxis," they nonetheless focused on specifically economic materialistic solutions as the best route to female empowerment.

Further, they tended to exclude liberalism from their realm of accepted theory, facing off against it both because of its tendency to accept capitalism as the preferred

mode of economic function in society and because of its focus on individual autonomy. However, by the mid-1980s, we see some speculation within the socialist-feminist ranks that it may be possible after all to have a capitalistic society without patriarchy (see Van Allen, 1984). This does not mean that to socialist-feminists socialism is not still considered to be the preferable economic system, but rather a recognition that it may not be the only one in which women would gain empowerment.

Other Differences

On Praxis and Rationality

The concept of rationality, as will be seen in my next chapter, is very important to liberal theory and feminist liberal theory. But as Jaggar (1983) argues, for Marx, rationality is not the defining characteristic that separates humans from non-human animals. Rather, the defining characteristic is "praxis," defined as "conscious physical labor directed toward transforming the material world so it will satisfy human needs" (54). Marx further theorized that the combination of physical activity, rational thought and social interaction is what makes human beings unique among species and also what caused us to evolve the way we did. For example, bipedalism freed human hands to pick up objects, which led to tool use, which likely led to more complete bipedalism and development of the hands.

Part of what matters so much about this Marxist understanding of praxis, according the Jaggar (1983) is that its intent is to satisfy biological human needs. But this is not based on a notion of biological determinism, because biological and social

aspects of human existence are not "conceptually separable from each other; rather they are related in such a way that each partially constitutes the other" (55). Jaggar also argues that this is one of the primary foundational differences between liberal theory and Marxist theory. Certainly, and as will be seen in my next chapter, liberal feminist theory is partially preoccupied with human rationality and shuns most inclusion of biological arguments within its political theory.

Woman as a "Class" Versus Woman as an Individual

Eisenstein (1981) states that liberal feminism is "more than the simple addition of liberalism to feminism because its feminist commitment derives form the recognition that women are members of a sexual class and as such are excluded from liberal democracy" (24, emphasis mine). However, liberal feminists do not appear to agree with this class distinction. Also, when the distinctive characteristic of a line of theoretical argument is class, that line of theoretical argument is commonly classified as socialist or Marxist. Though admittedly women are understood by liberal feminist theory to have long been oppressed under the patriarchal system it is not because of a distinction that we would normally refer to as "class."

Eisenstein (1981) attempted to theoretically wed socialist-feminism to liberal feminism. It would seem that having made this effort she then began to define liberal feminism in her own, new terms. While her attempt to strengthen feminism by recognizing commonalities between some branches thereof are to be applauded, it is also true that her conflation of two types of feminist theory serve to further confuse debate.

This is because each category of theory is grounded in a distinctive set of notions concerning the origins of the problems women face as well as a distinctive set of goals intended to cure those problems. It was because Eisenstien believed that liberal feminism had become "subversive to the state," and because she believed that since it was grounded in a distinctly male liberalism it actually furthered male supremacy, that she argued that the theory should turn its attention to the problem of women as a class (1981). She declared that the needs of "feminism cannot be met by the liberal state" because it has "no commitment to women's liberation" (248). However, simply declaring that a particular category cannot be successful in its mission unless it changes focus does not actually change the focus within the category. Doing so merely moves the work of the theorist from one category to the next. Liberal feminist theory has continued to turn to the liberal democratic state and the reformation of laws to improve the lives of women.

Notes

1. For example, see contemporary feminists' quotes in Wallis, 2004.

2. This radical-feminist assumption also seems to be the primary reason that many feminists discuss a "necessity" for "consciousness-raising" for women in general. While this appears in some socialist-feminist writings, its appearance there is primarily due to the intermingling of radical-feminism with socialist-feminism.

3. This, plus the beginning dialogue between black-feminism theorists and social-feminism theorists discussed in this chapter is why I place black feminism into this "socialist-feminist theory and emergent-diversity feminism" category.

4. It is interesting to note, as will become apparent in Chapter V, that some white feminists make this same charge against the way these feminists describe the family and also against the fact that they assume that all women would prefer to be working in the "public sphere" if they were only given real choice.

CHAPTER IV

THE QUEST FOR LEGAL EQUALITY:

LIBERAL FEMINIST THEORY

Liberal feminist theory agrees with many of the basic ideals of traditional, masculine liberal theory. That is, it demands freedom of individual choice, it valorizes equality of opportunity, and it holds individual autonomy sacrosanct. It is also true that *all* feminist theories contain, at their core, at least *these aspects* of liberalism (Eisenstein, 1984) and that no feminism has gotten beyond the need to make basic demands for civil rights, education and autonomy (Snitow, 1990). Yet, although intertwined with other forms of feminism, liberal feminist theory nonetheless may be clearly distinguished from them, as was explained in Chapter I. This is because liberal feminist theory both engages and criticizes traditional liberal theory, with its emphasis on contract theory, its interpretations of the public and private realms of human activity, and its notions of "rational citizenship," rights, justice and the autonomous self in ways that other feminisms do not.

As I also mentioned in Chapter I, it has been the stated purpose of liberal *feminism* to "empower" *women* within the public and the domestic spheres (Rowland-Serdar and Schwartz-Shea, 1991). Empowerment in this case has been loosely defined as the process by which women come to have, believe in, and make actual choices in their lives and in politics (Alcoff, 1988; Rowland-Serdar & Schwartz-Shea, 1991). The primary goal is to extend rights to women that, in the past, were *typically reserved for*

males. In other words, legal equality is presented as an "alternative to masculinist citizenship" (Dietz, 2003, 415).

"Irrationality," "Usefulness," and a Male-centric Notion of the "Value" of Women

Like masculine liberal theory, liberal feminist theory criticizes particular aspects of traditional western political thought. Not surprisingly, though, the feminists give particular attention to western political thought's *treatment of women* across time, as will be shown in this chapter. Thus, and as with other categories of feminist theory, we find within liberal feminist theory ideas that parallel masculine liberal theory, simply adding feminist consciousness to it, and ideas that starkly criticize what is seen as male-centric ideas *within* traditional liberal theory. I begin my discussion with the former.

As explained in Chapter I, liberal theory forwards a distinct notion of the importance of individual autonomy. Autonomy means that the individual must be free to choose his or her values, goals and corresponding actions. It is based on the Lockean notion that, under God and the law of nature, "all men are free and equal" (Schochet, 1971, 15). Liberal feminists agree with this notion, but charge that the emphasis in traditional theory is literally on *men*, for women are not considered to be equal or given true freedom.

There is an overarching concept within liberal *feminist* theory of a form of human interaction defined as "patriarchy." This patriarchy, or "masculinist citizenship," has traditionally given legal rights to males that females do not share. That is, within liberal feminism, patriarchy is most simply defined as a system that gives rights to males as

"dominators" and withholds rights from females as the "oppressed" (for an analogy, see Williams, 1988). *However*, patriarchy is *not merely* understood as a political or societal male-privilege hierarchy, but *also* as a system that deliberately *devalues* all women. This notion is similar to the notion of male domination discussed in the chapter on radical feminist theory, but liberal feminist theory adds an important distinction: an emphasis on the historical-masculinist definition of rationality. For example, Wollstonecraft (1792) wrote:

> Avoiding … frankly acknowledging the inferiority of women …
> I shall only insist that *men have increased that inferiority* till
> women are almost sunk *below the standard of rational
> creatures*. (35, emphasis mine)

There is within historical western political thought a long-standing stereotypical notion that women are not as capable of rationality as men. This particular notion, though in modern time manifest in various liberal and non-liberal texts, has been around since at least the writings of Aristotle. As a result, this stereotypical notion was so deeply ingrained in western political thought that Ryan (1992) tells us that American republican ideology, from the beginning, "held that the female sex embodied those uncurbed human passions that inevitably subverted the self-control and rationality required of citizens" (201).

That this notion is forwarded by traditional liberal theory rather than corrected by it is illuminated by the fact that in Locke's seventeenth century theory, women were "seen as 'naturally' lacking in rationality" (Brennan and Pateman, 1979, 195). That little or no progress in this theory was made prior the advent of second-wave feminist theory is demonstrated by the fact that in *1978* the idea that women are "lacking in rationality"

and therefore unfit for political life was "frequently presented as one of the 'natural' *differences* of character and attributes between the sexes" (Brennan and Pateman, 1979, 196, emphasis mine).

The idea that women were not fit for rational citizenship was an important part of how Locke justified excluding them from the social contract (Eisenstein, 1981). I will return to this matter later, but for now I would like to suggest that this is likely why Jaggar (1983) supposes that one way to show that women are "equal to," or *as human as*, men is to show that they are fully "capable of reason" (also see arguments by Baer, 1999). To understand fully the problem posed by the women-are-irrational stereotype, though, we need an understanding of its roots. Said understanding will then help to clarify part of liberal feminist theory's empowerment themes.

The notion of what it means to be rational or irrational has evolved over time. Today we think of irrational as an inability or refusal to think logically, usually because of excessive emotional reponse to something or someone. However, in the seventeenth century, Locke tied the notion of "rationality" to property ownership. I will expound upon this when I discuss liberal feminism's charge that traditional liberal theory only further increased women's powerlessness. First, though, I search farther back in time for the likely origins of the western notion that women are "irrational." For that, I look to the writings of Aristotle. The relevance of my doing so will be apparent in a moment.

Although the meaning of "irrational" was somewhat different in Aristotle's day than what we understand it to mean now,[1] the original notion as Aristotle conceived it did not leave women faring any better than today's notion of female "irrationality"

which is based on the notion that women are more emotional and less reasonable than men. This is because the Aristotelian concept of rationality was based on an *authority*-equals-rationality value-system that saw to the needs of *men* at the price of devaluing all women. Aristotle believed that women were inferior to men and "naturally" belonged in the "private sphere," taking care of everyday biological necessity (Okin, 1989, 14). This arrangement afforded *men* the freedom to exercise rationality and thereby to pursue a higher quality of life in the polis or "public sphere." Because men had the *authority* to be "rational," women, who served men, did not.

This Aristotelian notion gives males the privilege of being cared for and deferred to by females. Western political thought, then, was in part shaped by a masculinist, narcissistic value system that sought to keep women in a position most beneficial and convenient to males. It was reasoned therein that women "should" be in service to men because they were not capable of rational decision, and within this circular argument, they were not capable of rational decision simply *because* their "proper place" was to be in service to men! Though traceable to Aristotle, this type of reasoning is pervasive throughout historical western political thought. For example, in *Emile*, Rousseau explains:

> A woman's education must therefore be planned in relation to man. To be pleasing in his sight, to win his respect and love, to train him in childhood, to tend him in manhood, to counsel and console, to make his life pleasant and happy, these are the duties of woman for all time, and this is what she should be taught while she is young. (1782/1998, 255)

While masculine liberal theory argues a number of points put forth by Rousseau, it largely ignores this statement of women's "duties," because much of masculine liberal theory held no quarrel with the notion that women are, and should be, "useful" to men.

Liberal feminists, however, borrowing from theories forwarded by Kant, point out that theories that emphasize the *usefulness* of women to men have served to *dehumanize* and thereby devalue them throughout the ages. To be thought of only in terms of one's usefulness to others robs one of *intrinsic value*, that is, value as an individual without measure according to someone else's needs. The assertion that one must always *obey* another has the same effect. *To be human* is to have an independent will, and to have a will is to have autonomy. Therefore, humans who are not granted a will of their own come to be thought of as *less than human*, as less valuable than "real" humans, in a way like inanimate objects (Williams, 1988).

Eisenstein (1981) argues that men have *deliberately* kept women in a subordinate position in order to *maximize their own benefit,* and Baer (1978) effectively demonstrates this phenomenon in historical American law. This intent, carried out in both law and social norms, effectively robs women both of recognition of their own intrinsic value *and* of their own independent will. I will show that liberal feminists rally against this ideology of enforced female "usefulness" (to males) because it is the assumed primary and over-arching cause of women's oppression.

Liberal Feminism's "Empowerment"

Context of the Problem

As I explained in Chapter I, the combination of the "assumed cause" of the problem and the "human interaction addressed" reveals each theorist's understanding of the *context* of the particular problem that empowerment is intended to overcome. The assumed cause of the limited self-determination suffered by women is "patriarchy," defined by liberal feminist theory as a masculinist, narcissistic value system that maximizes benefit to men at the expense of women. It is believed that patriarchy produces the following cultural norms which are the cruxes of general human interactions between the sexes in the modern world: (1) a culturally embedded and enforced belief that women "ought" to obey men, for the sake of men, which is rationalized among men by a notion that women are not fully able to make decisions for themselves; (2) relegation of women to the private sphere, which is supported by a notion that women are "supposed to" take care of men and others; (3) designation of duty to *women* to mind a specific need of the human race – reproduction – which is used to excuse a number of discriminatory actions against and even sexual subversion of women; and (4) a culturally embedded, biased framework of assumptions that allows some desired quality of life to be gained for males by building blindly upon the backs of females who are denied the privilege of a comparable quality of life.

Because liberal feminist theory addresses specific laws and sociopolitical situations, most of these theorists also address very *specific* human interactions within

these broader categories of general interactions. I will mention these as I go, because this will help to clarify the nuances of the theorists' understandings of "empowerment."

Recommended Methods for Empowerment

Many liberal feminists train their attention upon the discriminatory *laws* that man has created. These laws protect a "males only" mentality that has long excluded women from the public sphere and has maintained the reign of male authority that denies women their own autonomy and independence. Therefore, liberal feminism fights for *legal rights* for women on many fronts: they seek equal opportunity in work and careers, equal pay, abortion rights, the right to fair treatment in the event of divorce and so forth. They demand *legal recognition* that women are as valuable in their own right as men. Friedan (1981) emphasized women's need for the *right* and ability "to take control of their own bodies, their own lives" and their demand for "*equal opportunity* with men" (30). Landes (1998) tells us that liberal feminists wanted to "democratize and feminize the public sphere" (156) from which women had long been excluded.

Empowerment Goals

Friedan (1981) describes the intent of the liberal feminist *movement* –which *theory* closely paralleled, at least in the beginning - this way: that these feminists sought to end sexual discrimination in "employment, professions, education, the church," that they wanted to gain for women the "economic independence and self-respect they so desperately needed," that they wanted women to be able to have "control over their own

bodies and reproductive process," and that they wanted "simple, nonhumiliating police protection against rape" (50-51). Yet though the specific issues are numerous, overall liberal feminism seeks to empower women in four *general* ways: (1) to gain for them recognition as *rational* free agents; (2) to end their relegation to the private sphere and gain for them equal opportunity to compete in the public sphere[2]; (3) to gain control over what happens to their own bodies; and (4) to end bias against them caused by assumptions and oversights built into traditional liberal theory. The overall goal is to gain legal right to and ability of *self-determination* for all women.

Types of Empowerment

Liberal Feminism has dealt primarily with the *autonomous* self much as it had been defined within non-feminist Liberal Theory. However, relatively recent theoretical writings are discussing the *relational* self in two important ways. The first way deals with concrete laws and the corresponding problems that women face. For example, it is noted that laws and policy that deal with family leave affect how working women interact with their families. It therefore has been suggested that empowerment of women must include an understanding of their relational roles as wives and mothers. The second type of theory that has brought in discussion of the relational self takes issue with Rawls' concept of justice as it was applied to an "abstract other." This argument maintains that the concept of the "concrete" other is needed in justice theory, because it is this concrete other that places the self in a *relational role* to others who may be different than, and have needs different from, the autonomous self.

Specific Empowerment Themes

As I have mentioned and as will be shown, liberal feminists expend a good deal of effort to debunk the notion that women are inherently less than fully rational beings. Notions of rationality are tied to notions of *human worth* (for examples, see Kant, 1785 and Schmidtz, 1998). That is, a *rational being* is intrinsically valuable, in a way deserving of rights and respect *over* non-rational beings. Further, an intrinsically valuable being is not measured according to his or her *usefulness* to someone or something else. It is suggested that cultural and political norms which require women to care for men and to submit to their demands must be eradicated from society. Said norms are damaging to women both because of their coercive nature and because of the psychological effect they have on women. Women socialized to believe that they are inherently irrational and that they are "supposed" to take care of men usually tend to behave accordingly. Empowerment themes centered around these ideas forward a notion that women should and must be recognized as fully rational beings, that women must be as fully educated as men, and that women's rights as rational, autonomous citizens must be fully recognized by the law.

It is believed that these items are the cornerstones to all other empowerment goals that women might hope to pursue. This is in part because the process of overcoming outside control requires the rational ability to *recognize* one's own individual will as *separate* from the demands and/or control of others. This is what Rowland-Serdar and Schwartz-Shea (1991) define as a "sense of self," which is necessary in order for one to be able to recognize and choose one's own values and

goals.[3] However, in addition to this recognition, women also are thought to need legal help to *prevent male coercion* and to ensure that they have ample *opportunity* to pursue their own individual goals. The ability to recognize one's own values and goals *alone* does not ensure that one has the corresponding ability to *take action* according to those values and goals. This is where the need for "positive" freedom, or the *ability* to pursue one's own will, comes in. The combination of "negative" freedom – freedom from coercion - and "positive" freedom – the ability to pursue one's own will (Berlin, 1969) together with a *recognition* of one's own will - allow for the empowerment of the autonomous self (see Simhony, 1993).[4] Therefore, liberal feminists present a rage of specific empowerment themes within the legal contexts of either protection from male coercion or ensured equality of opportunity, or both.

This is also why traditional notions concerning the "public/private split" are criticized as containing an ever-present assumption that women "belong" in the private sphere while men "belong" in the public sphere. Tied to ideas concerning the private sphere are notions that it is a sanctuary and place of refuge/protection for the family, and that women therefore are "supposed" to, or rather are *coerced to*, remain there to take care of children, the elderly and the infirm. Women first need freedom *from* this coercion, and second need freedom *to* compete on an equal footing with men in the "public realm" of work and politics. In other words, they need to be not only freed from the notion that they must be "useful" to men, but also given equal opportunity to compete with men for jobs, political power and so forth in the public realm.

Likewise, traditional liberal theory is criticized for a recurring notion that women need a special kind of male-defined protection from the rigors of the public realm. It is pointed out, as I will soon demonstrate, that these supposed "protections" only serve as further coercive techniques to keep women locked within the private realm and in service to men. However, given the perceived problems of patriarchy and domination, "protective" legislation is not abolished within liberal feminism, but rather redefined as protection against sexually aggressive males and degrading or even debilitating cultural norms. Specific lines of liberal feminist theory have emerged to deal with each of these issues and sometimes stand in conflict with each other, as will be seen.

Finally, traditional liberal theory is criticized for failing to recognize the plight of individuals and groups who fall prey to biases within the framework of liberal-democratic systems. These biases are not merely created through inequalities, but also through assumptions built into traditional liberal theory. Because of these damaging assumptions, traditional liberal theory is seen as worsening the plight of women, as mentioned earlier in this chapter. An example of this is the concept of the "abstract other," which assumes that all individuals share a basic and similar type of thought process, and therefore any given individual who finds him/herself in a particular situation will likely desire the same things as any other individual placed in the exact same circumstance (see Rawls, 1971/1999).[5] For argument against this assumption, see Benhabib (1987) discussed later in this chapter. The demand here is for a recognition of *varying* individual viewpoints and needs.

These are the primary contentions that liberal feminism holds against traditional liberalism, which express specific arguments about the *problems faced by women* under patriarchy, and therefore also express specific notions about what "empowerment" would mean for women. As this chapter proceeds, I will present additional examples of each of these arguments.

Autonomy, Citizenship and Rationality

Vogel (1986) points out that among the male writers of the eighteenth century, a difference in "ways of knowing" between men and women was assumed. Yet not all of these writers granted that women's "way of knowing" was inferior to that of males. For example, she compares and contrasts Wollstonecraft's writings to those of eighteenth century "romanticists" such as Friedrich Schlegel. While Wollstonecraft believed that "knowledge must be conceived as being the same in nature for both sexes" (Vogel, 1986, 28), Schlegel believed that women possess a unique capacity for a *special kind* of reason that is *superior* to the type of reason employed by the average male (Vogel, 1986, 38). While the distinction does not purely arise from biology, it is stimulated by nature, because it has to do with "motherliness." Women are able to "harmonize experience and knowledge from an inner center of intuitive understanding and reflective feeling" (Vogel, 1986, 38). Vogel further states:

> Although women are perhaps less equipped for the rigour of analytical thinking and abstract speculation, their "lyrical philosophizing" will in many cases, where men's rationality tends towards dissection, isolation and fragmentation, come closer to embracing the whole and undivided nature of truth. The well-worn comparison between analytical and intuitive modes of

knowledge turns in romantic thinking often to the disadvantage of the former: enslaved to abstraction and lacking in feeling and imagination, men's reason is prone to neglect the wholeness of experience. (Vogel, 1986, 38)

Finally, Vogel (1986) points out that these ideas put forth by the "romantics" not only did not place women as inferior to men, but also did not establish "absolute divides" between the genders, because it was suggested that nature only "stimulated" the gender types, rather than made them certain. Further, both genders were seen as having the *capacity* to develop either type of reasoning.

However, the problem, as is argued by liberal feminists today (see, for example, Baer, 1999), was that this notion of "difference" between the genders was used in western political thought as justification for the separate and inferior education of women. Rousseau, for example, is guilty of just this practice in *Emile* when he "infers from women's natural, physical weakness a limited capacity for knowledge bounded by physical concerns" (Vogel, 1986, 28; see also Pateman, 1989, and Rousseau, 1762/1998). It was also used to declare that women "naturally" belong in the private sphere (Okin, 1989) because of an intuitive understanding that best suits them to care for children, the elderly and the infirm. This kind of use of the notion of feminine "motherliness" is one reason that liberal feminists tend to bristle against care theory notions of the importance of giving prestigious respect to feminine "mothering." It is believed by these liberal feminists that any focus on "mothering" or "motherliness" as a specifically *feminine* trait only gives an excuse to theorists such as Rousseau to use as a reason to exclude women from the public realm. It was even suggested by Rousseau that

this ability to care for others was in direct opposition to the ability to understand justice, a notion that was *not* corrected by traditional liberal theorists such as Locke. Rather, Locke, too, suggested that women were not capable of "rational citizenship." I will address each of these ideas in turn.

"Limited Capacity" and the Education of Women

To Rousseau's argument about women's "limited capacity for knowledge," as mentioned above, the early liberal feminist Mary Wollstonecraft (1792/1998) replies that the *social focus* of the times on women's physical attributes is the real cause of their lack of knowledge, not a "natural limited capacity." She explained that the education of women in her time is faulty because, in it, "the *cultivation of understanding* is always *subordinate* to the acquirement of some *corporeal accomplishment*," leaving the women "without a knowledge of life" and therefore willing to "blindly submit to authority" (255, emphasis mine). Wollstonecraft further argues that education for both men and women should "enable the individual to attain such habits of virtue as will render it independent," adding that "being virtuous" results from the exercise of *reason* (254). Wollstonecraft concludes that sexual difference (in reason) would disappear should education be the same for both sexes.

Contemporary liberal feminists, too, argue that psychological difference, such as it exists, is caused by inferior education and other social problems (for example, see Jaggar, 1983). Wendy Williams (1997) reminds us that "less than a decade ago," many scientists and doctors still held the view that women's *capacity* for both education and reasoning was *biologically* limited. Rationale for this ranged from a notion that women

are *governed* by their *emotions* and the *biology* of their bodies to the bizarre notion that women's brains are smaller than men's and therefore incapable of holding as much information as the male brain (Glen et al, 2005). In other words, in spite of more than two centuries of argument by women that equal education would dissolve the psychological difference between the sexes, some men continued to argue that women simply are not capable of *being* educated in the same manner as men.

Further, "the entitlement of rights" is based upon "autonomous reason," which "is staked upon certain methods of acquiring knowledge" (Vogel, 1986), which historically were distributed between the sexes in an unequal manner. Reason was assumed to be "a typically male capacity" (ibid, 28). This assumption lay "at the root of all social and educational arrangements" which had traditionally prevented women from "attaining a sense of their own worth as rational and moral agents" (ibid, 28). Women could not rise above this problem until they gained access to better education, but they were refused better education in part because it was assumed that they were not as capable of learning as men. The problem became circular, with no obvious way out.

Traditional masculinist liberal theory assumed that it is "natural" for women to remain in the private realm of the home and for men to rule over them as "head of the family" (Clark, 1998; Okin, 1979). This assumption followed a notion that women are not mentally or emotionally *capable* of being educated into "rational citizenship." Their exclusion from "rational citizenship" meant that they were relegated exclusively to the "private sphere" (Eisenstein, 1981; Pateman, 1989). Further, and as mentioned earlier, the "lacking in rationality" theme was an important part of Locke's explanation as to

why women were excluded from the social contract (Eisenstein, 1981). The "rationality that Locke describes is not understood as inherent in men but is socially acquired" via their ownership of property (Eisenstein, 1981, 44).

Eisenstein (1981) further explains that because private property is gained as the fruit of labor, the ownership of property is "a reflection of one's personality and the control one has over one's life and activity" (ibid, 44). Eisenstein bases these ideas in part on writings by Macpherson (1962). Macpherson argued that "Locke regards propertyless males as less than fully rational" (195), and therefore, the "free rational individual" (262) was one who owned property. However, Brennan and Pateman (1979) point out that this line of reasoning is somewhat faulty, because seventeenth century women were not dependent upon men and were, within the family unit, "economic" equals to men. For example, women made *clothing* for the entire family. Clothing is a form of private property and was also the "fruit of labor." By the eighteenth century, however, women had also begun to lose their economic equality with men, which only worsened their sociopolitical positions, because they were then both dependent on men *and* considered to be "irrational" in the more modern sense.[6]

Brennan and Pateman (1979) also point out that, under Locke's social contract theory, men gain acknowledgement as rational beings and citizenship as soon as they marry. Women, however, are denied citizenship throughout their lives. It did not matter that women had authority over children or whether or not women owned the fruits of their own labor, such as the clothing they made for their families, because they were, in Locke's eyes, naturally subordinate to the men and lacked the *rational ability* to enter

into a social contract (Brennan and Pateman, 1979). It is interesting to note that in a time when women were politically considered as little more than the property of their husbands, the act of marriage itself afforded men the right of citizenship. This parallels that fact that ownership of real property also afforded men right to citizenship. As Engels (1884/1998) explained, in monogamous marriage under patriarchy, the wife became the property of the husband. Brennan and Pateman (1979) point out that, under Locke's social contract theory, men gain acknowledgement as rational beings and citizenship as soon as they marry. Remember that for Locke, ownership of property signifies rationality, because ownership of property is "a reflection of one's personality and the control one has over one's life and activity" (Eisenstein, 1981, 44). Similarly, marriage affords the male a political *authority* as head of the family. As assumed *head of the family*, the male entered the political world because he now was part of a "new economic unit," separate from previously existing families ((Brennan and Pateman, 1979, 186). "Rationality," then, is recognized as soon as some form of *right of political participation* or *recognition* is gained.

Women, however, have no way to become rational or to gain political recognition within Locke's theory. If lack of political recognition brands one as "irrational" and being branded as "irrational" leaves one with no political recognition, then there is no way out except for those who are granted some way of *gaining* said rationality or said political recognition. Locke offered women no such way. Instead, their plight was explained away by referral to their "natural" state. Given this, it is understandable that liberal feminists would "rage against narrowly instrumental

conceptions of rationality" (Lloyd, 1997) and find it necessary repeatedly to make the point that women are, in fact, as capable of rational thought as men (for example Ryan, 1992; Baer, 1999). This emphasis on women's cognitive equality to men employs a method of empowerment that attempts to change stereotypical misconception about the mental capacities of women. The goal is to break out of the circular traps that women have faced due to this misconception.

Woman's "Place" Under the Law: the Public/Private Split

Labeling women as irrational both gave an excuse for their designation as the property of their husbands and effectively kept women out of the public realm of citizenship and *in* the home, where they were most "useful" to men (see Baer, 1978). Therefore, this notion that women are inherently irrational was a very convenient assumption for the support of patriarchal political systems, and one that generally was not challenged by traditional, masculinist liberal thought. Baer (1978), for example, addresses male-favoritism in the market, which is supported and enhanced by laws that purport to "protect" women while actually limiting their ability to compete with males in the workforce. According to Baer, these laws limit women's public-sphere liberties without affording them any real benefits in exchange because they are masculine attempts to keep women in the private sphere where they are thought to be most beneficial to patriarchal society (Baer, 1978; see also Eisenstein 1984; 1988). That is, masculinist society has *coerced women into caring for others* by blocking their access to the "public sphere" (Baer, 1978, Okin, 1979; Elshtain, 1981).

Usually, liberal feminists do not argue against the public/private split, but since Arendt (1958) wrote on the subject, there has been continuing argument about exactly where the dividing line should be drawn. Davidoff (1998), for example, tells us that "public and private are not (and never have been) 'conceptual absolutes'"(165). Although "they have become a basic part of the way our whole social and psychic worlds are ordered," it is "an order that is constantly shifting" (165). Nonetheless, the *primary* argument put forth by feminists is focused not on the split itself, but instead on the notion that women somehow "belong" exclusively in the private sphere because they "naturally" belong *in the service of* men and also are "natural" caretakers of children and others in need of care (Okin, 1979; Elshtain, 1981).

The difficulty for women was that they were the expected caretakers of their children and of the home (Baer, 1999), yet this role, coupled with their exclusion from the public realm, placed them largely into dependency upon males and left them unable to pursue meaningful choices of their own. Further, their assumed "natural ability" to carry out this responsibility is said to somehow be in conflict with their ability to understand justice, as though no human could conceivably do both (Pateman, 1989). Further, it was believed that the public realm is where "rational citizenship" is experienced, while the private realm is where "passion" is experienced (Coltheart, 1986).[7] Rousseau, for example, equated women with "love and passion," both of which he considered to stand *in opposition to* justice (Pateman, 1989). Again, traditional liberal theory, while arguing with Rousseau on various other points, did not attempt to correct this assumption. However, early liberal feminists (Wollstonecraft and Mill) called for the

education of women in order to "*develop* their sense of justice" which would *then* allow them "to participate in political life" (Pateman, 1989, 27, emphasis mine).

Susan Okin (1979) tells us that in order for women to be valued equally *as citizens,* they must be able to improve their education, economic independence and occupational status. Yet if women are somehow, by nature, not equipped to *understand justice*, then education alone could not make women "fit" for public life (Pateman, 1989). Again, we are faced with a circular dilemma. Even if it is recognized that women are at least *capable* of being educated to a point to where they can understand justice, they are still thought to "belong" in and to be best suited to remaining in the home caring for others instead. And this "belonging in the home" is thought to be "natural" because their nature suits them to love and care *rather than* to think about or understand justice (see Okin, 1979). Therefore, even with the availability of education to women, it is assumed that the majority of women would remain in the home anyway in order to care for the family (Pateman, 1989). As Baer (1978) pointed out, this was quite convenient for men. This line of reasoning led to discussion about assumptions within traditional western and liberal theory that placed the obligation of "care" for men and responsibility for the reproduction of the human race squarely on the shoulders of women.

On Care and Obligation

Baer (1999) asserts that liberal theory needs to rethink "obligation" in order to lift the unfair and unequal burden of care that has been placed on women. An alternative to completely freeing women from the responsibility of caring for others would be to

involve men equally in it, so that women would not be seen as the only humans bound by duties of love or influenced by "passion." If this could be accomplished, then it could be shown that understanding of love and understanding of justice are not incompatible with each other. It would simultaneously free women from the necessary *assigned duty* of caring for others, allowing them the freedom to be educated and to be fully admitted into "rational citizenship."

Giele (1980), for example, suggests as a remedy to the dilemma of "care duty" a process which she calls "crossover" (3). Simply put, she suggests that men should share equally in home and child-care duties, so that women can share equally in work and politics. Women need the right to share equally in work and politics so that they can find *happiness and fulfillment* of their own, rather than giving up their own needs for the needs of others. Similarly, Okin (1989) argues that the equal sharing of both paid and unpaid labor by men and women is the only "just and fair solution to the urgent problem of women's and children's vulnerability" (171). Eisenstein (1984) further asserts that *laws* should recognize that women's needs and right to happiness/fulfillment are just as important as men's needs and right to happiness/fulfillment.

In her explanation of the plight of isolated women, Baer (1978) attempts to refocus attention from the needs of the male to the needs of the female. She points out, for example, that housework and/or the daily routine of a stay-at-home mom is not likely to be satisfying, at least for long, to most women in America (see also Friedan, 1963; Friedan, 1981). Because of their isolated households, women are left alone or alone-with-children for the majority of the day. This leaves them without needed social stimuli

(Baer, 1978). Yet Betty Friedan (1963) pointed out that in spite of this problem, the majority of women had, prior to and during the time of the writing of her book, been socialized to believe that their proper place was in the private sphere, caring for men and children. Those who deviated from this norm through education and non-domestic employment found themselves feeling guilty and oddly out of place.

On Fair Competition

If women are at last set free from the private realm, they may still lack the right to compete equally within the public realm. This why Harlan (1998) tells us that liberal feminists seek for women the right to choose their own social or work circumstances and that American liberal feminists have placed much emphasis on the importance of "equal access for women to jobs and careers, equal pay, and equal consideration for promotions and career enhancement once they are on the job" (79). In fact, Betty Friedan, frustrated with some feminists' preoccupation with the creation and passage of laws that would restrict pornography and other male sexual expression and activity, commented that to her it "seemed irrelevant, wrong" for feminism to "waste energy" protesting pornography or other sexual issues "when their very economic survival" is at stake (Frieden, 1981, 20).

Finally, liberal feminist theory has concentrated some effort on ensuring that even women who do become mothers still have some opportunity to participate in the public realm of work and politics. The issue of pregnancy and the workplace as well as the plight of working mothers are addressed. For the most part, liberal feminism has shied

away from declaring that pregnant workers and working mothers are different than and pose a different problem than do men. This is because the "difference" arguments were for so long used to keep women out of the public sphere. Eisenstein (1981) further complains that "biological arguments" have long been used to "sideline" women into the "private sphere of home and family" (16).[8] However, eventually, liberal feminists found it necessary to come to grips with the modern "sameness versus difference debate" and to take their own stand on the issue.

Eisenstein (1988) points out that the female body is more like the male body than it is different. Although she acknowledges that "equality based on sameness of the sexes is problematic" because of the female body's capacity for reproduction, she does not advocate that the sexes be treated differently under the law, because this leads to inequality of opportunity in the marketplace. Yet she *does* advocate the special treatment of *pregnancy* in the marketplace under the law. She says, "Pregnancy is *the* hard issue to resolve because it combines specificity and engendered 'difference'" (197). Pregnancy, she tells us, is unique among human conditions, and as such cannot properly be treated the same as any given "disability." She goes on to tell us that "a commitment to equality" must recognize sex and gender difference, but must also require that this recognition of differences not be used "in restrictive ways" (200).

Eisenstein draws a distinction between equal treatment and treatment as equals. She says that to treat pregnancy the same as disability means to treat it as equal to "other disabilities," but that this is not the same thing as "treating the pregnant worker as equal to nonpregnant workers." Pregnancy, she tells us, "may need to be treated differently,"

because that may be the only way "to ensure that the pregnant worker will come out equal" (219). The concerns are that women not be relegated back to the private sphere simply because they do happen to become pregnant and/or become mothers. The assertion is that women must be empowered in a way that will allow them to compete equally with males in the public sphere in spite of their reproductive capabilities.

Liberal feminists have also dared to challenge the assumption that women should have to bear children, and thus become *care-givers* by way of becoming *parents*, at all. They assert that women's lives should be as valuable as men's lives, without regards for whether or not they will reproduce and then nurture other humans. Much of liberal feminism is focused on reproductive freedom for just this reason (see Olsen, 1993b; Smith, 1993a; Baer, 1999). I will return to this discussion in a moment.

Reclaiming the Body

> Control over one's body is an essential part of being an individual with needs and rights, a concept which is, in turn, the most powerful legacy of the liberal political tradition. (Petchesky, 1980, 665)

The idea that one has no rights at all if one does not have self-ownership of the body is the primary rationale behind the notion that women should have full reproductive freedom, from complete freedom of sexuality to the right to deny sexual access to others, and from the use of contraceptives to the right to abortion (Heywood, 1982 [1893]; Pateman, 1988b). Yet "control over one's body" for the sake of individual *right* alone is not the only reason liberal feminists have sought reproductive freedom for women. The other reason is, as I have indicated, a notion that women should be able to choose

whether or not to take on the *responsibility/burden* of being mothers. In other words, women need not only rights but also *freedom from* imposed, unwanted *responsibility* (Baer, 1999, 2002). Since women are the ones primarily *responsible* for the *care of children*, women should have the right "to decide about contraception, abortion and childbearing" (Petchesky, 1980, 662).

Also, even if the issue of who is most likely to care for the children is ignored, it can still be accurately stated that reproduction places tremendous burdens upon women. Pregnancy is a nine-month, usually uncomfortable, and sometimes very dangerous, ordeal. Childbirth can also be dangerous. Once a child is born, the mother's only choices are to spend many years nurturing the child, or to give it over to someone else to raise. Even the latter choice may not set the mother free from grief, worry or other emotional and mental stress, for there is no guarantee than any given adoptive parent will turn out to be a good one. The only real point at which a woman may have an opportunity to avoid such burden is prior to childbirth, via birth control or abortion. It is argued (for example, Baer, 1999) that the state should have no say in the matter prior to childbirth, because the woman, already an individual, should have full right to decide whether to confer life upon a *potential* individual, since to do so will certainly add responsibility and burden to her own life (see also MacKinnon, 1993[9]).

Further, because the responsibility of propagating the human race has always largely rested on women, and likely also because of the pleasure and instinctual components of the sex act, much of patriarchal right over the female has to do with sexual access (Pateman, 1988). The socialist theorist Engels (1884/1998) also tells us

that much of patriarchal control of the female has had to do with ensuring paternity. This is one reason why the marriage contract bound one woman to one man and gave that man free and unlimited sexual access to the woman and much legal control over her actions. Liberal feminists have complained about all of these aspects of patriarchy, asserting woman's right to deny sexual access to her husband (the recognition of marital rape), and be recognized as an autonomous individual even when married, rather than as simply under the legal jurisdiction of her husband (for examples, see Brennan and Pateman, 1979; Pateman, 1988).

Pornography is also seen by some liberal feminists to be a problem, because it concentrates on woman's sexuality and thereby her usefulness and sexual availability to man (for example, see Wolgast, 1993). In pornography, as in coerced prostitution and in coerced reproduction, women's bodies are used to satisfy a need of the dominant males. Female bodies become objectified for their usefulness to and for the males, without regards to the needs, health and happiness of the females. Here, too, women are reduced to little more than inanimate objects. Some liberal feminists have therefore turned their attention to the laws that could protect women from being treated as sexual objects rather than as equal and autonomous human beings (see Smith, 1993b).

Once again, as in other areas of liberal feminist theory, the emphasis is on empowering women in such as way as to separate their autonomous value from their usefulness to males and/or to society in general. The purpose is to grant women not only the right of choice but the political and, hopefully, cultural recognition of their own intrinsic value.

Systemic Bias and the Relational Self

Baer (1999) says that "law is male" (71). She urges feminism to

> reject the conceptual traps of man-made law and to devise new approaches to legal reasoning which consciously employ the emotional, intuitive, and imaginative faculties of the mind. One reason this enterprise is legitimate is that conventional legal decision making incorporates the emotional, concrete, and contextual thinking it claims to reject. (79)

Recognition of the autonomous self of the *female* requires *recognition* of the "moral identity of the concrete other" (Benhabib, 1987, 748).[10] This is because within traditional social contract theory the female has no autonomy and no identity: she is simply what the man is not. Social contract theory removed "gender relations from the sphere of justice" (ibid, 741). The concept of privacy in social contract theory subsumed under it the entire domestic-familial sphere. Yet, while it is declared therein that this is a region of "personal decision-making" (741), female autonomy is not recognized. Instead, an "entire domain of human activity" (741) is excluded from political consideration. Women are banished to this excluded domain and defined as "what man is not."

Okin (1989) weighs in on the discussion of the abstract other with her statement that "the best theorizing about justice" must come from a careful "consideration of *everyone's* point of view," and must *not* be based on "some abstract 'view from nowhere'" (15). She further states that a "capacity for empathy," which she equates with the ability "to see things from the perspective of others," is "essential for maintaining a sense of justice of the Rawlsian kind" (21). However, Okin is confusing the abstract and concrete other concepts. Rawls' "abstract other" and "veil of ignorance" concepts were meant specifically to allow for justice even when empathy is missing from most people's

perspectives. According to Rawls, laws are most just when lawmakers assume that the laws will apply equally to all people in all situations and further assume that they *personally* could end up in any given *situation*. This does not require empathy of how *others* in any given situation would feel or think, but only of how each lawmaker believes that he would *personally* feel upon finding himself in any given situation. This is why *Rawls uses an abstract point of view* and why Benhabib argues *against* it as a means of deciding what is just.

Justice theory is built upon an idea of "moral impartiality" within the political realm and upon recognition of the claims of an "abstract other" who is assumed to be much "the same" as oneself. There can be no justice or fairness that extends to the female within this line of reasoning because liberal justice theory is based on *masculine* concepts that view the feminine as "other" or "different" (Benhabib, 1987). A failure by theory to recognize both the abstract and the concrete "other" will continue to exclude women so long as the "ideal of autonomy" is "conceived in the image of a disembedded and disembodied male ego" (Benhabib, 1987, 750). Since women cannot be accepted by men as being entirely "the same" as themselves, and since, as I have shown, it may not be just or fair in all circumstances for them to do so anyway, empowerment for women would require an abandonment of the "abstract other" as the sole basis for determining justice. Instead, justice theory must be expanded to include a concept of the "concrete other." This is necessary before justice and fairness can be extended to women within liberal justice theory.

It is also within this concept of the "concrete other" that we can begin to see individuals in *relational* terms. Every individual recognizes "self" simultaneously as unique and has having a commonality with others. It is suggested that feminist theory must therefore move to a "synthesis of collective solidarities with plurally constituted identities" (Benhabib, 1993). For example, it must recognize that women make important contributions to society, whether they choose to be mothers and caregivers or whether they choose to reject these traditional roles (Baer, 1999). Further, it should recognize that some women choose to give care while others give care because they are coerced to do so. Women who are coerced need empowerment against coercion. This is empowerment of the autonomous self. Yet it is also important to recognize that someone must "take care of the children" (Baer, 1999, 190), and therefore ways are also needed to empower those who must or who choose to care for children to do so without depleting the quality of their own lives. This, for example, is why liberal feminism seeks "flexible, family-friendly" workplaces (Harlan, 1998, 79; see also Littleton, 1997).

It is also why liberal feminism examines and seeks female empowerment within family and divorce law. For example, Weitzman (1988) observed that in contemporary divorce cases, judges tend to place the needs of the father above the needs of the mother and children. It is common for the father to be allowed to keep two-thirds of his income for himself, while his former wife and children were expected to survive on the only one-third. She states that "the judges we interviewed gave first priority to the husband's needs" and that they viewed his money as "his rather than theirs" (322). Okin (1989) adds to this concern with her statement that even the "*wives* experiencing divorce,

especially if they have been housewives and mothers throughout marriage" tend to discount their own rights to shares of household assets, because they devalue *their own contributions* to those assets (141, emphasis mine). Further, in the cases discussed by Weitzman (1988), the needs of the mother were dismissed with a suggestion that it would be best for her to work and to become independent from her former husband. No consideration as to what amount of income she would be qualified to earn or how she might provide for the care of the child(ren) while she worked was typically given. Empowerment, then, would have to include some way for divorced mothers to be able to care properly for their children, financially and otherwise.

Pateman (1988) also tells us that women have had to provide unpaid care to others and that they have also been required to care for themselves. Yet it is also presupposed within modern society that women are in need of protection by and are dependent on men. She turns to the modern welfare state to give explanatory examples of interdependence, suggesting that there is an *interdependence* between the sexes which is contradictory to the socially held notion that women are "dependent" and men are "independent." Betty Friedan (1981) also wrote about this interdependence. She observed that many women had needs other than those set out earlier (1963) by herself and by other early liberal feminist writings. Women wanted and needed *more* than equal rights and equal opportunity. Many of them *also* wanted children and husbands and needed time to spend with both, time for quality *relationships*. What's more, she tells us that men and women *need each other*. "Most men," she writes, "sense that they are really dependent on women for security and love and intimacy, just as most women

learn… that they are dependent on men for these same qualities" (155). Friedan, Benhabib and others wished to forward a *relational* empowerment for women that would recognize this interdependence between men and women.

"Mothering" Theory and Relational Empowerment

What is missing from this discourse is an understanding that some give care not *just* because others are in need of care, or because the survival of the human race depends upon reproduction and "mothering," or even because of any real personal choice or external coercion, but *rather* or *also* because failure or inability to provide that care causes suffering of the would-be care-giver via empathy. This is the psychological and emotional "connectedness" that the theorists in my next chapter try to explain, and either defend, promote and glorify and/or express as an inhibitor to the freedom of women unless and until men are adequately socialized to experience the same. To these theorists, empowerment of the autonomous self *requires* empowerment of the relational self, not just because society is in need of caregivers, or because men and women may need each other, but because many "feminine" human beings are generously endowed with *empathy*, whether for social or biological reasons, and whether they wish to be or not. I will address the problems inherent in the term "feminine" in my final chapter, but for now I turn to an analysis of Psychoanalytic/Cognitive Development Theory and the so-called "care theory" that it spawned.

Notes

1. I will discuss this and other theoretical confusions in my final chapter.

2. It is important to note a distinction between economic equality for all, including women, as is sought by socialist theorists, and equality of *opportunity* as it is forwarded by liberal theorists. Largely because liberal theory holds private property ownership rights to be sacred, it tends to promote capitalism, and faces off against traditional Marxism.

3. It is interesting to note the implication that not all women are able to recognize their own needs and will. This, too, begins far back in theoretical history and continues to this day in the guise of "false consciousness" theory. I will discuss this briefly in Chapter VI.

4. For discussion of the inseparability of positive and negative freedoms, also see MacCallum, 1967.

5. It is important to note here that liberal feminism shies away from viewing women as a group as "different" from the "average" individual portrayed by liberal theory (i.e, rational, self-serving, happiness-seeking, etc.), and instead focuses on the diversity found across all humanity.

6. I discuss the evolution of the term "irrational" as it correlates with changing notions about authority, property ownership and political association in my final chapter.

7. I find it likely, although I have not yet seen it suggested by other theorists, that male theorists of the past labeled women as "sexual and passionate" only because they are the *objects of men's* passion, and the private sphere, where they believed women belonged, as the realm of passion only because that is where *their own* passions are played out. This narcissistic transference of one's own views or feelings to the "other" that is the subject of or object of said views or feelings is prevalent in many forms of theory.

8. It is largely because of this problem that the "equality versus difference" debate became so intense.

9. Although much of MacKinnon's work falls under my socialist-feminism category, I remind the reader that boundary lines of the theoretical categories are admittedly blurry, and many theorists cross back and forth between them, sometimes even within a single chapter or article. This same chapter by MacKinnon does in fact ground most of its argument in the socio-political constructs of the public/private spheres, arguing that the spheres are a "social organization of reproduction"(391) that place women as a group as socially inferior to men (which places this theoretical argument in the socialist-feminism category as I mentioned). However, I mention her work here because her arguments about the individual pregnant woman's rights closely parallel Baer's arguments about the autonomous rights that should be conferred upon individual pregnant women.

10. Seyla Benhabib presents epistemological theory that is neither liberal nor social, but which blends, criticizes and transcends both. However, in as much as her theories address both the *rights of individuals* and *liberalism's concept* of the abstract other, I use her arguments here

to show additional ways in which feminism has addressed and criticized masculinist liberal theory and its underlying assumptions.

CHAPTER V

THEORIZING GENDERED THOUGHT:

PSYCHOANALYTIC AND COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT THEORY

"Care theory" supposes that there is a *feminine*, though not necessarily *female*, tendency to feel empathy for, and therefore want to *care* for, other human beings. It further supposes that this tendency to care has been undervalued, given that it is required for the survival of the human race as well as individual happiness and well-being. However, partly because "feminine" is often equated with "female," and also partly because women have traditionally taken on the caregiver role in families, the notion that to care is "feminine" is often equated with a notion that all *women* have an innate ability and tendency to care for others to an extent that men do not share. From the latter notion emerged what eventually came to be known as "difference" feminism, a line of theoretical reasoning that sparked the heated "sameness versus difference" debate within feminist theory, as I have mentioned in previous chapters. Rhode (1994) adequately defines the dilemma of this debate when she says that theories that emphasize difference have the effect of permitting "the positive valuation of qualities associated with women," but *risk* allowing women to be labeled as deviant, thus allowing the (male dominated) status quo to remain intact (514). Yet minimizing difference, Rhode tells us, "fails to acknowledge that equal treatment" may not truly empower women "as long as women's roles, power, or resources are unlike men's" (514; see also Hare-Mustin and Maracek, 1990).

In spite of this theoretical dilemma, however, this chapter will reveal philosophical ideas that, although having created the spark that ignited the sameness versus difference argument, nonetheless largely operate *outside of* this debate. To understand this, it is important to acknowledge the separation of feminists' philosophical musings into the different quadrants of human experience upon which they focus. The heated "sameness versus difference" debate is grounded primarily within liberal political theory. This debate raged in part due to a belief that women, *because* they have been seen as the only or best "natural" caregivers, have been and will continue to be coerced into providing care for others whether they want to or not, as I discussed in Chapter IV. Entwined with this is an almost unspoken fear that women can not be seen as *both different and equal,* or rather that *they cannot expect to be treated as equal so long as they are perceived as being different than men.*[1] Therefore, there is a fear that serious theoretical or research work that focuses on ways in which men and women are or might be different impedes the progress of women towards social and political equality. This is because of a corresponding notion that human beings respond to each other *socially and politically* according to views of *power*, said power historically having been *stratified according to perceptions of difference.*[2] These "sameness versus difference" debates, then, focus on the *collective* quadrants of human experience – social "we" understandings and political "its" structures.

On the other hand, the focus of both psychoanalytic and cognitive-development research and theory, the forerunners to care theory, is mostly on *childhood*, when *powerlessness is assumed*. These fields of study ask how the consciousness of human

beings forms and develops during childhood, from infancy through adolescence. That is, the debates in this chapter focus on the quadrant of human experience that deals with the inner psychological workings of the *individual*, especially during the powerless, formative years of the individual's life. Therefore, theorists and researchers who ask the adult-world political question of whether or not perceptions of gender difference lead to power-abuse must look to a different quadrant of human experience than do psychoanalytical and cognitive development feminist theorists and researchers. All of these matters are related and intertwined, but the feminists in question actually perform research within and theorize about *different quadrants* of human experience.

This is not to say that psychoanalytic and cognitive development feminists did not recognize the influence that one quadrant of experience may have on the other. Mitchell (1974) tells us that "if patriarchal thought is dominant (in society) then (individual) femininity will reflect that system" (128). Also, Gilligan (1993) conceded that in some ways "psychological *theory becomes prescriptive*" (xv, emphasis mine). Gilligan, however, also makes it clear that her writings are based on *observation* and therefore should not be ignored. Freud, too, based his theories on observation, as Mitchell (1974) discusses at length.[3] I will discuss Gilligan's work and Mitchell's interpretation of Freud's work as this chapter proceeds. For now, the important point is that open-minded analysis of any psychological theory or cognitive development research requires recognition that the theory is based on and developed from researchers' observations of individuals' behavior. This is a point that feminists within these fields repeatedly make in defense of their research and/or theories (for examples, see Mitchell,

1974; Chodorow, 1978; Gilligan, 1982, 1993). Of course, this does *not* mean that these theories are therefore *correct*. Yet, if fears of the possible *misuse* of research findings and theory are allowed to *curtail* theory and research within the psychoanalytic and cognitive development fields, these theorists and researchers can not hope to find possible answers to the problems they believe individual women *psychologically* face due to patriarchy. This is not to say that such fears have had no effect on the feminists engaging in this work. Mitchell, as I will show, was particularly worried about societal use of deterministically suggestive theories. Nonetheless, researchers, clinicians and theorists maintain that observations *do* suggest that, for whatever reasons, *perception* of gender difference, as well as *actual* gender differences in thought processes and behavior, manifest early in childhood and ultimately affect how growing children, adolescents and, finally, adults view themselves and others.

The *beginning* theoretical question in this category of feminist writings, then, was *not* whether or not perception of gender difference is *good*. The primary question instead was whether or not gender differences and/or *perceptions* of gender difference *exist* prior to adult notions of whether or not they *should*. Having established to their own seeming satisfaction that at least early childhood gender difference perception *does exist*, theorists then asked in what ways it manifests itself, what effects it has on the individual human psyche, and, finally, what if anything can or should be done to change this situation. The *feminists* within the psychoanalytic and cognitive development fields, then, largely did not quarrel with the idea of gender difference per se or the research there about. They did, however, argue with their male colleagues' interpretation of the

degree of actual difference and especially how any difference should be *interpreted*. They also argued with each other about the effects that difference perception has on the psyche and about whether and in what ways the causes of difference perception should be changed.

Reinventing Freud

Freud believed that girls between the ages of three and five develop "penis envy." According to Freud's theory, all small children in this age category begin to desire to have sexual relationships with their mothers, and they all begin to feel envy of their fathers, who *have* such desired sexual relationships. However, said Freud, gender difference in the children will cause the object of this envy to vary. That is, while a little boy will envy his father's family position and power, a little girl will envy the father's penis, simply because she does not have one and therefore cannot engage in sex with the mother in the same way that he can. Although largely dismissed today as both assumptive and wrongheaded, given the extent to which most modern children are ignorant of their parents' actual sexual activities, Freud's "penis envy" theory was nonetheless in fashion for a number of decades before it fell out of favor.

It should come as no surprise, though, that female psychoanalysts fairly promptly attacked Freud's theories as patriarchal and misogynistic. Karen Horney (1924), for example, complained that the notion that girls had reason to envy the anatomy of boys while boys did not suffer a similar problem assumed inadequacy of the female body. Of course, as was pointed out by Juliet Mitchell some decades later, Horney's argument

ignored Freud's belief that it is the *mother* that children of *both* sexes desire to have a *sexual* relationship with, and therefore must be the *father's sexual ability* that they envy. Instead, Horney primarily focused on the idea of *power*, writing that if a little girl wanted a penis, it was likely only because she thought the male way of urinating was powerful and because a male could both see and hold his own genitalia while she could not (Horney, 1924; see also Mitchell, 1974).

Horney's arguments, then, largely changed the argument from one of female *sexual* envy to one of female *power* envy. Mitchell makes extensive use of this particular idea, as I will demonstrate. However, Mitchell objects to the fact that Horney then went on to theorize that boys likewise envied the female ability to bear children, a notion that "was to become the main thrust of her further work" (Mitchell, 1974, 128). This notion equalizes the problem of envy, in that it suggests that both girls and boys envy what they see as some form of power held exclusively by the other sex. However, Mitchell is starkly critical of Horney's belief that females have "an innate biological disposition to femininity" (131), even though, and perhaps partly because, this belief contradicts Freud's notion that both sexes experience sexual desire of their mothers early in life. Mitchell's expressed concern is that Horney's theory amounts to biological determinism, which she fears creates an impassable block for female empowerment. Her implied concern is that Horney's theories also discount much of Freud's presented "evidence" in the form of notes on his female patients. Both of these worries – how to avoid biological deterministic ideas and how to preserve the integrity of one's own theoretical

perspectives – are seen constantly at work within psychoanalytic and cognitive development theory as well as within the various debates that surround them.

Also, of course, this debate over the Freudian notion of envy was only one of a number of male-originated psychoanalytic theoretical concepts that would be challenged by feminist psychoanalytic theory and research. Further, as second-wave feminism emerged, challenges came not only from within Freud's own field of psychoanalytic theory, but also from within the closely related field of childhood cognitive development research. As Mitchell (1974) points out, the work of psychoanalysts, beginning with Freud, attempted to reconstruct theoretically unconscious childhood thought by analyzing *adult* psychosis. Cognitive development research, on the other hand, attempts to verify or discount psychoanalytic theories about childhood cognition through research on *children*. Feminists in the latter field used various research methods and theories to illuminate other male-biased assumptions pervasive throughout child development studies, as this chapter will demonstrate.

Of course, simply to demonstrate the inaccuracy of any given male-originated theory was never an end in and of itself. The purpose was the empowerment of women. Freud's theories, partly because they were based on research, were particularly damaging to women. His notion that girls were somehow "deficient," that they were physically and therefore emotionally and rationally *inferior* to boys, gave justification to patriarchal systems that oppressed women. The primary recurring theme among feminists who accept the notion of gender difference but criticize prior *interpretation* of it is that females, although different than males, are not *therefore* somehow *deficient* and *inferior*

to males. In other words, new theoretical *interpretation* of research findings was needed as a foundation to other avenues of empowerment for women.

Mitchell (1974), as I mentioned, sought a way to empower women within society without having to discredit decades of psychoanalytic research and theory in order to do so. This goal was the driving force behind her insistence that miscalculations within the psychoanalytic field occurred primarily because of patriarchal society's influence on the studies rather than because of any real failing of Freud's research or of the psychoanalytic field itself. This is an important point, because it seems that the theoretical leaps she takes to empower women are closely flanked by the theoretical leaps she takes to defend psychoanalysis. For women, she sparks a new line of feminist thought. For psychoanalysis, though, she offers up a very mangled Freud. The result of this finagling is that psychoanalytic theorizing by feminists veers away from the Freudian notion of *biological* influence on the psyche and focuses instead on *social* influence on the psyche (for examples, see Sayers, 1986; Wilkinson, 1985). Mitchell's motives in creating this shift are plain: she fears, as have other feminists, that admission of a biological influence on the female psyche must then be deterministic of her fate under patriarchy. This notion of biological determinism is what first causes feminists to attack Freud and, later, each other. Mitchell could only preserve both Freudian psychoanalysis *and* the feminist denunciation of biological determinism by creating a perception of Freudian theories that had nothing to do with biology. Understanding how she accomplishes this conceptual transformation requires discussion of her critiques of other feminists' writings.

Mitchell (1974) wrote what she referred to as a "reference source" (xxiii) of psychoanalytic literature. Of course, it is full of her own interpretations and biases, but she does offer a good deal of information from within the field in this one book. Interestingly, however, she both defends Freud's notions of biological influence on the unconscious mind *and* concludes that biology has little influence on the unconscious when compared to the influence of culture. She also both criticizes other feminists' works for missing "the whole point" (8) of Freud's work *and* fails to defend adequately his work against their protests. It is important to realize, though, that Mitchell was writing in the early stages of the second wave of feminist theory, and her work illuminated key aspects of the debate that seem to have been later forgotten, as I will show.

Mitchell's first critique of other feminists is that they seem to take Freud's suggestion of penis envy "outside of the context of the mechanisms of unconscious mental life" (8). "Desire, phantasy, the unconscious or even unconsciousness," Mitchell declares, "are absent from the social realism of … feminist critiques" (9). However, what Mitchell then proceeds to do is take penis envy out of the context of biology, which contradicts Freud's idea about the influence of biological urges on the unconscious mind. Her conclusions, very much like Horney's conclusions after all, are simply that little girls envy the penis *because* the penis *represents power*: hence, no power, no envy. She manages to sidestep Freud's biological arguments by stating that although he "longed for a satisfactory biological base on which to rest his psychological theories," such base was never proven and soon "forgotten" (407). This is interesting, given

Mitchell's further suggestion that it is folly to worry about proof of Freud's theories because they are grounded in the "unconscious" and thereby unknowable to the conscious mind.

As I mentioned earlier, Mitchell's philosophical engagements with specific feminists' theories are likewise unsatisfactory. She attacks de Beauvoir's interpretation of Freud by focusing on her assertion that Freud's philosophies are deterministic. Her method of attack, though, is to expose the fallacies in de Beauvoir's work that have little to do with what might be deterministic about Freud's biological theories. Mitchell criticizes de Beauvoir for seeing Freud's developmental stages as distinct steps, while in Freud's work the stages were described as having a "constant overlap and commingling" (Mitchell, 1974, 312). She further criticizes de Beauvoir for ignoring "the permeation throughout Freud's work of… the presence in both sexes of the inclinations of the opposite sex" (312). Next, she berates de Beauvoir for conflating Freud's theories with those of other theorists who were considered to be "Freudian." But the sticking point for Mitchell, who admits to agreeing with much of what de Beauvoir has to say, is her "implicit denial of the unconscious" (318). Here we see Mitchell again defending her field of psychoanalysis but failing to demonstrate that de Beauvoir's arguments are otherwise incorrect or damaging to women.

What de Beauvoir saw as deterministic about Freud's writing had less to do with any of Mitchell's complaints and more to do with Freud's notion that both boys and girls desired at some point to sexually possess, that is to penetrate, their mothers. To escape the frustration caused by the denial of this desire, the boy had only to grow up, thereby

gaining power to penetrate some other woman in place of his mother. A little girl, on the other hand, had to accept her "castrated" fate: she would never penetrate anyone, so must both accept her biological limitation and find some other means of satisfaction. If one accepts Freud's view that what a little girl truly desires is the sexual ability to penetrate a female body, then one must also accept that her fate of disappointment and realization of her own physical inadequacy is determined. This is the point that Mitchell sidesteps. We see this sidestepping repeat itself as Mitchell takes on the work of other feminists. Rather than addressing Betty Friedan's anger at the Freudian notion of "penis-envy" head-on, Mitchell attacks her attempt to use Freud's personal life to illuminate the possible origins and implied meanings of his theory. She launches similar attacks on the theoretical soundness of works by Eva Figes, Germaine Greer and Shulamith Firestone. While the weakness in their theories is real, pointing these weaknesses out, alone, does nothing to address the focus of their real objection to Freud's theory, which was his assumption that the unconscious mind of a little girl is *envious* of a particular sexual functioning that only males have.

Mitchell did, however, have some profound insights to offer that thereafter mostly disappeared from feminist thought, at least for a time. For one, although she missed the significance of Freud's assertions about the influence of biology on the psyche, she nonetheless recognized a split between biologically grounded arguments and psychically grounded theories that sometimes caused the debates across these fields to reach an "impasse" (130). Certainly, it is a valid notion that theorists who ground their ideas within different quadrants of human experience[4] then tend to talk past each other.

Unfortunately, however, Mitchell accepts Freud's own insistence that his theories of gender difference in the unconscious mind had nothing to do with biological *difference*. Freud's stance on this seemed to be due to his failure to realize his own bias to masculinity as the natural beginnings of human sexuality, a point that Mitchell misses. Therefore, a closer examination of Mitchell's theoretical confusion on this point is needed.

Mitchell (1974) tells us that in Horney's version of the story of the sexes, man and woman "are *created* in nature," while in Freud's version they are *made* in culture (131). What Mitchell ignores is that in Freud's version of reality, both sexes begin as virtually *male*. To Freud, *sexual desire* is born of an infantile wish to possess the *mother's* body, which provides sustenance. Sexual desire *is* biological, and in this case is decidedly masculine since it involves Oedipal desire to possess, even *penetrate* the *mother*, even if happens to manifest the same in both sexes. Further, according to Freud, it is the female frustration at her own physical inadequacies, relevant to her Oedipal desire of her mother, that then drives her to penis envy. This, in spite of both Freud's and Mitchell's objections, *is* a biological argument for sexual difference. The arguments between Freud and Horney were not, then, cleanly divided by quadrants of human experience as Mitchell suggests. This fact, however, does not invalidate Mitchell's observation of theoretical impasse as it applies to quadrant-specific theories.

Another important insight put forward by Mitchell is that, in Freud's analysis, it is the father who has power, power that is desired by both sexes but can only be acquired by males, and only truly acquired by *murder of the father*. This is the completion of the

Oedipal myth, and thereby becomes the basis for the "exchange of women" (409), because it is only by the "giving" of women to or acquiring women for his sons that a father can avoid murder at the hands of his envious sons. Within patriarchy, it is also by the "acquiring" of a woman that a man's power-position in society, as head-of-household, is solidified. Yet this insight, too, is lost in subsequent psychoanalytical works, and only scantily paralleled within feminist's writings in liberal theory, as I have shown.

The portion of Mitchell's reasoning, then, that is taken up by other feminists in the psychoanalytical field can be mapped as follows: Freud was right that the unconscious guides human behavior. Freud was further right that little girls unconsciously envy males. Freud was wrong that little girls envy males for any biological reason, such as that males have penises while girls do not, but yet right about what the penis supposedly represents in the infantile mind: power to "possess" the mother. The envy that girls experience, then, is strictly of male *power*. This envy causes all sorts of emotional difficulty for both men and women in the real world. The whole problem can be solved, and thus women can be empowered, by doing away with male patriarchal power. This line of reasoning opened a theoretical door for other feminists within the psychoanalytic field. Nancy Chodorow, for example, discusses cross-generational "reproduction" of traditions that, while practiced by women, help to maintain patriarchal power structures in society.

Chodorow's Mothering Theory

Chodorow (1978) analyzes "the way women's mothering is reproduced across generations" (3). She argues that the maternal role that women play affects not only the lives of individual women, but actually reproduces sexual inequalities across generations. Chodorow challenges claims that it is biologically "natural" for women to "mother." For example, she argues that women cannot be said to be more biologically prone to "mother" merely because they bear children and lactate. She further argues that there is a need for extensive studies of the effects of oxytocin on humans - both males and females – and suggests that findings from studies of monkeys cannot be extrapolated to humans. She also criticizes behavioral studies that had thus far been conducted on mother-child relationships as too limited. She likewise cites chromosomal research and declares that it, too, is limited and uncertain. While Chodorow is correct in all of these ascertains, she then goes on to make a very common mistake. She puts her own field of psychoanalytic research on a pedestal, sure that it alone can correctly answer the posed question of why women mother.

Further, having excluded all biological arguments from her list of acceptable ideas, Chodorow turns solely to *social* influences on the human psyche to explain the mothering phenomenon. Chodorow does this, apparently, because she, like others previously mentioned, believes that biological arguments are deterministic and therefore effectively block most, if not all, avenues for the empowerment of women. Interestingly, however, she denounces all prior psychoanalytic work as continuing to emphasize biological arguments in spite of the fact that she gives brief analysis of Mitchell's work,

discussed above. She gives Mitchell's work no credit for its admonition that psychoanalysis should turn its quest for answers to the "woman question" to social influences, and proceeds to declare that her own theories give new direction to psychoanalysis. While her "reproduction" of mothering theory is new, the turn of psychoanalytic studies to sociological influences had already begun, as I have shown above.

Having then turned her critical eye on her own psychoanalytic field, Chodorow (1978) next discusses Freud. She accepts part of Freud's analyses as correct, pointing to his clinical observations. However, she also starkly criticizes him for making "unsupported assertions" and for being misogynistic (142). Chodorow saw Freud's theories of Oedipal sexual conflict in children as being born of biology and having a single purpose: to ensure that females, who would otherwise naturally prefer to be masculine, accept their fate as physical receptacles for the reproduction of mankind. She asserts that her own findings accept Freud's "methodologically consistent clinical findings" concerning the object-relational experience of infant Oedipal complex "but not its assumptions about sex, gender, and innate determining drives" (159). Further, she tells us that although others have disputed Freud's "unwarranted assumptions," his theories have "never been systematically refuted within the psychoanalytic tradition in a manner that presents a coherent alternative theory" (154). It is her intent, of course, to create said "coherent alternative theory."

Chodorow accepts Freud's idea of penis envy, but says that males are just as prone to a similar type of envy – envy of their fathers – and that all this envy has more to

do with envy of "social privileges" (165) than with anything biological. Like Mitchell, Chodorow is adamant that causes other than physical biology must be at fault. She further is uncomfortable with placing any blame on actual sexual desires originating with the infant, and presents ideas from other theorists that suggest the desires could just as easily originate with the parents, with the infant merely responding to perceived parental fantasies. Finally, she is sure that the imbalance of expressed anxiety between the sexes is most likely because of the limited role that fathers traditionally play in childrearing. Herein we find the backbone of her theory.

Chodorow's 1978 theory is rooted in the *portions* of Freudian theory that she believes will not doom women to perpetual second-class citizenship and the role differentiation that she sees around her. She describes a situation much like the one described by other feminists of her time: the mother who works part or full time to supplement the family income, but who must come home to childcare obligations that are almost strictly her own. She tells us that this division of labor is perpetuated by a particular kind of mother-child relationship which almost excludes the father and which creates resentment on the part of the mother and of the child. Given that her description of the family is one that is also predominantly a two-parent – male and female – family with multiple children, it makes sense that her prescription for empowerment is as simple as the idea that men should share equally in childcare.

The unfair division of labor in society, Chodorow (1978) tells us, is not determined by biology, neither is it solely rooted in society. It is rooted deep in the psyche of each individual man and women by ideas that are planted there prior to age

five. Far from suggesting that it is then something which cannot be changed, she suggests that simply understanding this fact affords two very real steps which can be taken to empower women. First, both women and men must realize the psychological roots of the problem so that they understand that change begins with and within each individual. This gives the individual man or woman both the responsibility and the power to make change happen. Second, men and women who are parents should consciously change the way that they parent, in order to assure that men and women spend equal time with and have equal attachment to their children. These steps, Chodorow believes, will begin widespread change that will eventually undo patriarchy and replace it with a much more sexually-egalitarian society.

There are, of course, flaws in Chodorow's reasoning. Writing in 1978, she could not see the problems that changes in the family structure would pose for the possibility of wide-spread implementation of her recommendations. As the divorce rate and the number of unconventional partnerships have risen, the idea that *fathers*' "must" participate equally in order to break the chains of patriarchy has turned out to be as pessimistic as any so-called biological deterministic theories. That is, this notion leaves no room for the claim that single mothers and lesbian couples can parent as successfully as traditional heterosexual couples. Further, in her attempts both to present theoretical ideas for the empowerment of women and protect her psychoanalytic field, Chodorow, like Mitchell before her, manages to miss some of the most fundamental problems with Freud's theories. She, like Mitchell, accepts his theories as fully "clinically tested" without considering the most fundamental flaws of those "tests." For example, Freud

assumed that the "memories" his patients talked about were *not real* simply because he did not think that so many women could have really experienced such trauma. This belief on his part led to his "discovery" that the women were really remembering childhood *fantasies* (see discussion by Horney, 1924 and by Mitchell, 1974). Further, and as Mitchell also pointed out, Freud's patients, *if* they were only remembering childhood fantasies, were remembering those fantasies within the framework of an adult mind. Freud reconstructed his patients' unconscious experiences from their remembered fantasies. However, he did not consider the possibility that those "memories" could be distorted within the adult mind, and perhaps overlain with *adult* sexual yearnings.

While Mitchell discusses and then dismisses various possible problems with Freud's reconstruction techniques because she thinks such arguments undermine the integrity of psychoanalyses as a field (see Mitchell, 1974), Chodorow, in 1978, does not even bring up these problems with the Freudian technique. This is somewhat surprising, given that she so thoroughly analyzes, and finds fault with, other aspects of his work. Like Mitchell, Chodorow's 1978 work seemed to straddle two goals: carefully defending the psychoanalytic field of research and theory and finding some way within that field to promote ideas that might help to empower women.

Overall, the problems that Chodorow's theories address are two-fold. First, women are seen by Freud's version of psychoanalysis as inferior to men. This is evident in his ideas that men have a physical characteristic that women *lack* and *want*, and in his corresponding belief that this unfulfilled desire leads to emotional and psychological instability. Second, women are seen by Freudians to be "natural" mothers, while men are

not. This dooms women, collectively, to the mothering role, whether they want it or not. Given these two problems, Chodorow's method of empowerment is simple to understand. Like Mitchell, she attempts to defend at least part of what Freud had to say, along with his clinical studies, while criticizing the areas of his theory that doom women to a biologically determined fate. Chodorow argues that Freud was right about female infantile envy and the roots of studied psychosis; however, he was wrong about the *source* of all of this grief. The problem, Chodorow argues, is not biological. The problem is *social*, and affects infants strictly because they are mothered by women. Because social norms can be changed, Chodorow insists that her theory alone is empowering, since it suggests a way out of Freud's envy-complex dilemma.

By 1989 Chodorow had come to reevaluate some of her earlier ideas. She says she would no longer "give determinist primacy to social relations" as generating "psychological patterns and processes" (7). She further states that *individuals* "can help to create for *themselves* a more meaningful life" (9, emphasis mine). Further, she now believes that "an open web of social, psychological, and cultural relations, dynamics, practices, identities, beliefs" all come together to create and sustain gender "as a social, cultural, and psychological phenomenon" (7). Nonetheless, while Chodorow (1989) argues that feminisms that focus on "male dominance in the community, the economy, and the state" are "extremely important," she continues to place the emphasis of her own work on the *psychological* aspect of gender relations. For example, she tells us that, in contrast to Freud's belief that sex difference does not matter until about age four, it may psychologically affect girls as young as age one. She further states that gender is "part of

what is often on people's minds" even though it is "differentially salient at different times and places" (196). Finally, she argues that, while our life situations are not always determined by "gendered and sexualized psychological experiences," these nonetheless "are situated in, as they help to create, life in general" (198).

Feminist Cognitive Development Theory and Research

Gilligan, too, discusses the theories of Freud. She explains that Freud "built his theory of psychosexual development around the experiences of the male child" (6). Then, Freud attempted to find a way to reconcile this theory with "the different configuration of a young girl's early family relationships" (6). Unable to explain adequately the reasons for the apparent difference in young girls' development, Freud simply concluded that it was due to a failure or inadequacy on the part of the females. "Thus," Gilligan tells us, "a problem in theory became cast as a problem in women's development" (7).

This idea was not unique to Gilligan. Miller (1976), a social psychologist, and Smith (1987), studying situational sociology, both propose ideas about *women's ways of knowing* and understanding their lives. These theorists wrote that although policies and research affected women as well as men, studies focused first and primarily on men and boys, taking their lives to represent the whole of the norm while excluding women and girls. Similarly, Gilligan explains that although some studies had seemed to demonstrate that little girls were less intellectually developed than little boys, in reality the thought processes of girls were simply misunderstood because the male framework of evaluation

was imposed upon them. She partially concluded that the observed males had simply been inclined to focus more on justice, while the observed females had primarily focused more on "care." Gilligan incorporates much of Chodorow's theory into her own. She refers to Chodorow's assertion that the differences between the sexes are not due to anatomy but rather to the fact that women *take care of* young children. She discusses Chodorow's ideas about the personality development of these young children as it is affected by mothering. Gilligan then tells us that these differences, caused perhaps by the fact that women mother as Chodorow says, can be seen in the behavior of young children as they play. With this idea in mind, Gilligan then turns similar criticism upon the conclusions of cognitive development theorists who had researched children's behavior during games.

Not unlike Freud, early cognitive development theorists based their ideas first on the behavioral development of boys, creating developmental models from observed male behavioral. Seeing that the behavior of girls did not fit into these models, theorists concluded that girls had deficient development. We see this problem repeatedly. In 1932, Piaget concludes that girls do not develop moral judgment as completely as boys because they do not place as high of an importance on following game rules as do the boys. Writing in 1950 and 1968, Erikson, also observing boys, defines what he deems to be an essential step toward adulthood and moral maturity as developing a "sense of separateness and agency" (Gilligan, 1982, 12). For Erikson, when adolescent girls focus more on attracting a male mate than on their own individuation, their moral development

becomes impaired. Again, a model based on males, once females are shown to not fit into it, is used as a basis to conclude that females' development is deficient.

Gilligan also offers in-depth criticism of the conclusions of Jean Piaget and Lawrence Kohlberg, who believed that girls did not learn moral lessons as well as boys. Because boys, for example, would stick to the rules of a game and girls often would not, Piaget and Kohlberg assumed that the girls simply could not comprehend the moral importance of the rules. Gilligan, using Chodorow's ideas as a foundation, offered a different perspective. Gilligan suggests that the girls, having learned the importance of preserving relationship from their relationships with their mothers, were simply more concerned with preserving relationship than with following rules. As Gilligan further explains, Kolberg's

> six stages that describe the development of moral judgment from childhood to adulthood *are based empirically on a study of eighty-four boys* whose development Kohlberg has followed for a period of over twenty years. Although Kohlberg claims universality for his stage sequence, those groups not included in his original sample rarely reach his higher stages [references listed in Gilligan's text]. *Prominent among those who thus appear to be deficient in moral development when measured on Kohlberg's scale are women…*" (Gilligan, 1982, 18, emphasis mine)

What these male theorists miss, Gilligan asserts, is that, while adult women's moral judgments may be different from men's, the *nature* of women's developed moral judgment provides "an alternative conception of maturity by which these differences can be assessed and their implications traced" (22). In fact, Gilligan tells us, "women bring to the life cycle a different point of view and order human experience in terms of different priorities" (22).

It is upon these ideas that Gilligan bases her work. She is very careful to state that she is not making assertions about how girls may come to develop this different sense of morality, except to give nod to Chodorow's belief that it has much more to do with the mother-child relationship than with any biological difference between the sexes. Her primary concern is to show that girls do in fact develop through a full range of moral-judgment stages, just as boys do, but girls' development follows a different path. It is not, then, that the girls' development is deficient or stunted. Girls don't develop *less* moral understanding, Gilligan suggests, rather they develop it *differently*.

At this point in Gilligan's work, we see an empowerment goal that has to do with how women and girls are viewed culturally, and with how they view themselves. Her 1982 book is based on a reexamination and reconceptualization of the findings of three studies in which male and female moral development were measured according to Kohlberg's six-stage scale. She points to repetitive trends in the research. The interviewed males, when evaluating moral action, tend to place emphasis first on care of the self and only limited, secondary emphasis on concerns for others. The interviewed females, on the other hand, were more likely to consider the well-being of others first and themselves secondarily. This *different* development, suggests Gilligan, is perhaps caused by a girl's identification with her mother's role as caregiver and nurturer for the family. Further, the maturing boys in the studies cited by Gilligan first embraced a strong sense of self and of what was fair to that self. Only with greater maturity did they begin to embrace an idea of social responsibility. In other words, as the boys in the studies matured from childhood, across puberty and then into adulthood, they progressed

from childhood attachment to pubescent separate individuation to adult individuation that embraced some amount of a sense of responsibility and care for others. The girls, on the other hand, began with the same childhood attachment which evolved to a sense of responsibility towards and desire to care for others to an adult sense of responsibility centered in connectedness and relationship but which also embraced some sense of individuation and need for care of the self.

Gilligan asserts that Kohlberg's misguided judgment that women are deficient in moral development has a detrimental effect on individual women, causing them to be reluctant to speak their thoughts, to second-guess themselves and their judgment abilities. Expounding upon this idea almost two decades later, Gilligan (2002) explains that human happiness and pleasure requires relationships, and relationships require that *each* human involved in any given relationship be able to have a "voice." That is, each must be able to express her or his self so that the *true self* is engaged in the relationship, rather than an engagement in the relationship of a false-self, the presentation of which is based on what the other might expect or require. Part of what is often overlooked in Gilligan's 1982 research is her observation of adolescent women in the process of losing their "voice" due to external pressure to think that their own way of viewing life and morality is not "correct." To give women back the ability to speak confidently their thoughts is a form of empowerment of the autonomous self, but it is also a form of empowerment of the relational self because it allows them to engage the *authentic self* in relationships with others.

Feminine Ethics and "Care Theory"

Drawing on Gilligan's theories and observations, both Ruddick (1989/1995) and Noddings (1984) further suggest that the mental processes that are used to produce decisions about what is "good" and "right" within an *ethic of caring* are distinctly "maternal" or "feminine" (see also Brownmiller, 1984). These processes are not inferior to masculine morality-based notions about justice and fairness, they are simply different. Ruddick attempts to explain the difference between what she calls "maternal thinking" and the traditional masculine approach to ethics, which she says represent the "dominant values" of society (237). The point is not, she tells us, "to respect law and order for themselves, but for their contribution to the maintenance of caring" (201). It is important to ask, Ruddick tells us, "whose interests" these values serve and also to ask how these values affect children (237) and other people that women tend to "care for" (238). Noddings (1984) adds that "[o]bedience to law is simply not a reliable guide to moral behavior" (201). Held (1993) later adds to this discussion when she writes that caring and empathy "may be better guides to what morality requires... than may abstract rules of reason or rational calculation" (52). Noddings further contends that it is essential that an ethic of "care" be valued by society, and that those who care for others, be they male or female, should be encouraged and helped in their efforts to do so.

It is within this idea of an essential "care ethic" that we see a demand for relational empowerment. Feminist discussion about "mothering" and "care" forwards a notion that women need an empowerment that is other than an empowerment of the autonomous self. It is suggested, both directly and indirectly, that in order for a mother,

or anyone who is what Noddings (1984) calls "the one-caring," to be able truly to partake of the proverbial "good life," she or he must not only be autonomously empowered, but must also be empowered in the ability to care for "the other" (see also Reddy et al, 1995). Tronto (1993) greatly extends the scope of the "care ethic" by asserting that a political concept of care must include "everything we do to maintain, continue, and repair" (103) the world we live in, although she, too, gives strong emphasis to ideas about how parents can best be empowered in their abilities to care for their children.

Once criticism of this "feminine ethics" theory is that it paints too rosy a picture of the human race, seeming to assume that most humans desire to care for others and will be happy if empowered to do so (see, for example, Card, 1991). It is further suggested that this perspective does not see women as universally oppressed (James, 1995). However, we see repeated in this literature a notion that patriarchy is, in fact, oppressive to women. At issue is not over whether there *is* oppression, but whom or what is to blame. Gilligan (2002), for example, suggests that men are as oppressed and damaged by patriarchal social and political systems as women. Another part of the argument concerns changes that must be made before oppression can end. Conceptual confusion arises because theories about "mothering" forward a notion that an *ethic of care is essential to human survival*. This causes a dispute about whether women are oppressed because they are traditionally coerced into mothering by patriarchal society, or are oppressed because men do not equally share in this "duty," or are oppressed indirectly because of the fact that "mothering" itself is under-valued. If the latter, as

"care theorists" tend to argue, this undervaluation causes two primary problems. First, those who "mother" and/or are caregivers to others, whether they be male or female, are treated with less respect, less social status and less monetary rewards than they deserve, given that they ensure the survival of the human race. Second, mothering and care-giving are under-supported in various ways. Lack of support, whether monetarily or otherwise, causes care-giving to be much more difficult than necessary. From this perspective, the surest route to the empowerment of women as a group is to cure both of these ills. Further, such cure would also serve to improve the entire human condition.

Another criticism leveled at feminine ethics theory has to do with "essentialist" concepts that quickly became entangled with "care ethics." For example, Greeno and Maccoby (1986), while disagreeing with Gilligan (1982) on a number of points, nonetheless argue that studies indicate that women are more "empathetic," and thus more prone to be caregivers than men. Against this and similar ideas Alcoff (1988) argued that a universal concept of woman is essentialist and exclusive (see also Fraser & Nicholson 1990). Alcoff also questioned the normative significance of maintaining a concept of gender that is rooted in male/female differences as opposed to understanding gender as a concept that is constantly changing. Not all "care theorists," however, made truly gender-specific claims. Noddings (1984), for example, explains that she labels the 'ethic of caring' as a "feminine" ethic, not because only women 'care,' but because caring has been, throughout many ages, recognized as a *feminine attribute* of humans in general. However, because Noddings uses terms like masculine and feminine, much of what she wrote on this topic has been misinterpreted and mislabeled as sexual

"difference" theory, even though she expressed plainly that she believed these attributes had little, if anything, to do with one's being male or female.

The problem, of course, is that it is difficult to distinguish between "masculine versus feminine" attributes as they have been traditionally understood and "male versus female" attributes. This conceptual confusion is rampant partly because it is assumed that Gilligan believed that the findings of her gender studies had universal applicability (see for example Shogan, 1988), although Gilligan did not actually make this assumption (see Gilligan, 1982/1993). This confusion is also furthered by feminists' attempts to explain why *women* are oppressed by *men* under patriarchy. For example, Calhoun (1988) says that moral priorities in traditional liberal thought exclude *women's* lived experiences. By this, Calhoun in part means women's experiences as "feminine" care givers of children, of the ill, or of the elderly (see also Hirschmann, 1992). However, it is suggested that the promotion of care-giving as a valuable feminine attribute contributes to women's oppression under patriarchy (Wilson, 1988). This is partly because, as Shanley and Pateman (1991) argue, concepts of the "political" in traditional western political thought are constructed in such a way as to *exclude* women, the female body *and femininity* (see also Calhoun, 1988; Jaggar, 1992).

In other words, these theorists claim that care-giving is traditionally considered to be "feminine" (Chodorow, 1978; Gilligan, 1982; Noddings, 1984; Calhoun, 1988; Ruddick, 1989). Both care-giving and femininity are traditionally undervalued (Noddings, 1984; Ruddick, 1989; Hirschmann, 1992), given care-giving's importance to human survival and given that "feminine" is descriptive of half of the human race. In

comparison, "masculine" traits such autonomy, separation, obedience to cultural rules and laws, and competition are overvalued (Jaggar, 1992). This failure to value that which is "feminine" contributes to women's oppression (Calhoun, 1988; Shanley and Pateman, 1991; Hirschmann, 1992). This makes the under valuation of care-giving and the oppression of women difficult to conceptualize separately, even though some attempts were made to do so (for example see Tronto, 1987). This difficulty is such that some theorists maintain that "mothering and caring," as well as the traditional mother-child relationship, are *causes* of oppression because they "serve the patriarchal order" (Tong, 1993, 8; see also Myers, ed., 1997; Trebilcot, ed., 1984). Like many of the radical feminists, these theorists claim that childcare is bad for women and for society, at least so long as it is primarily carried out by women. The result of the traditional mother-child relationship is the creation of dominating males and docile and dependent females. Within this line of reasoning, a woman who is the primary caregiver of her children is participating in and furthering her own subordination. This is another reason for the seeming irreconcilability of much of feminist psychoanalytic with "care theory."

On the other hand, Kittay and Meyers (1987) suggest that the care perspective offers an avenue for *moral autonomy* that does not preclude human connectedness. Care theory seeks recognition and prestige for women for their roles as nurturers and caregivers. It is further hoped that this prestige will allow women the opportunity to promote nurturing and communitarian ideals within the family and ultimately within larger political realms. Theorists also attempt to demonstrate that some people give care not *just* because others are in need of care, or even because the survival of the human

race depends upon reproduction and "mothering," but *also* because failure or inability to provide that care causes the suffering of the would-be care-giver via empathy (for examples, see Reddy et al, eds., 1995). To these theorists, empowerment of the autonomous self *requires* empowerment of the relational self, not just because society is in need of caregivers, or because men and women may need each other, but because many human beings are generously endowed with *empathy* whether they wish to be or not (see also Gilligan, 2002). For these empathetic people, no "pursuit of happiness" is possible so long as those they love cannot be adequately cared for. To enable and ennoble the act of care-giving, then, is to empower the care-giver.

With these thoughts in mind, I give a final summary of the differences between "empowerment" as it is understood and forwarded by feminist psychoanalytic theory and "empowerment" as it is understood and forwarded by feminist cognitive development theory and "care theory." The primary problem addressed by both forms of theory within this quadrant category is a perceived "deficiency" of females which is imparted by theoretical and research interpretational flaws. The dispute, however, is found within the understood of the *context* of the problem that "empowerment" would need to overcome. Remember that this "context" includes both (a) the assumed cause or causes of the problem and (b) the kind of human interaction that is being addressed. Psychoanalytic theory predominantly concludes that the cause of the problems women face is the fact that "mothering," or care-giving, is traditionally and primarily carried out by women. The human interaction that they address, then, is the traditional family with a more or less absentee father and a "mothering" mother. Cognitive development theory and care

theory, on the other hand, suppose that the cause of the problems women face is the undervaluation of the care-giving that women traditionally do. Whether women are naturally predisposed to care-giving or whether this tendency is culturally imposed is basically irrelevant. This is because care-giving and the empathy that tends to develop with in those who regularly give care are considered to be *good* things for both the care-giver and others, so long as care-giving is both socially valued and properly facilitated.

This difference explains why the *methods* for attaining empowerment that these two types of theories suggest are opposed. Psychoanalytic theory suggests that women must distance themselves from the care-giving role at least enough to ensure that men are forced to take up half or more of the responsibility for it. Cognitive development and care theory, on the other hand, suggest that the attempt to distance oneself from care-giving further erodes the social perception of the value of care-giving. This attempt also, when it is contrary to what one truly is predisposed or desires to do, causes a separation of self from one's innermost desires and drives, thus causing emotional distress and confusion. According to Gilligan (2002), this leads to a loss of the individual's "authentic voice," and thus a complete loss of the empowerment of the authentic self, both autonomous and relational. Psychoanalytic theory, then, largely aims to empower the autonomous self, while care theory aims to empower the relational self. Empowerment of the relational self allows one adequately to give needed care without detriment to oneself, so long as giving care is what the individual desires and emotionally needs to do. This form of empowerment also includes a granting of social acceptance of care-giving and of prestige for the care-giver. Said social acceptance and

prestige grants further relational empowerment as well as empowerment of the autonomous self.

While these two recommendations for paths to empowerment may seem incompatible, they are not necessarily so if it is understood that these prescriptions need not be, in fact can not be, applied universally.[5] That is, no woman *or man* who does not wish to be a caregiver should be coerced to do so. However, those who are generously endowed with empathy and the desire to give care should be empowered and emboldened to do so, with pride rather than with shame. Once again, this simply demonstrates that universalistic ideas are likely to impede empowerment for some even as they may allow for the empowerment of others. What is actually needed is an integral perspective, which would take into account all the quadrants of human experience and the various types of human personality as they operate within those quadrants. This will be more thoroughly discussed in my final chapter.

Notes

1. This is due to the premises upon which liberty and equality have been based within western political thought.

2. I will give some discussion of this stratification of power, which is largely based on perceptions of difference, in my final chapter.

3. The difference between Gilligan and Freud's work is not *only* sex of the researcher and time frame. Gilligan's observations in the research leading to the writing of *In a Different Voice* were of *children*, thus falling within the cognitive development field, while Freud's observations were of *adults* with psychological problems who, with Freud's help, tried to reconstruct their childhood memories, thus falling within the psychoanalytic field.

4. The "quadrants" of human experience are the I, we, it and its perspectives as I explained in previous chapters.

5. However, not all theories that have been accused of being universalistic actually are. What is universalistic is the assumption that all women must follow some particular avenue to empowerment in order that no one's individual actions should cause detriment to the empowerment goals of another.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION: THE BIG PICTURE

MacKinnon (1989) says of the feud between traditional Marxism and socialist-feminism that each side accuses the other side of

> seeking what in each one's terms is [merely] reform … where, again in each one's terms, a *fundamental transformation* is required. At its most extreme, the mutual perception is not only that the other's analysis is wrong, *but that its success would be a defeat* (6, emphasis mine).

These comments may be applied to the varying sides of second-wave feminist theory. The debates *within* feminist theory were and are still often very heated. Further, there was a seeming inability of second-wave feminist leaders to communicate and cooperate with each other (Debold, 2005). Before the cause of this problem may be accurately understood, however, it is necessary to examine what is missing from the whole of second-wave feminist theory: an across-the-field discussion of what I will call the "big picture." That is, each category of feminist theory may be understood as presenting an important piece of a larger puzzle. Without the inclusion of *all* pieces, the distorted picture that this puzzle presents is at best incomplete and at worst horribly misconceived.

Pieces of the Puzzle

As I explained in previous chapters, the major categories of second wave feminist thought correspond roughly to the quadrants of human experience. These are: the internal individual – the thoughts and emotions of individuals; the external individual

– the outward physical and behavioral manifestations of individuals; the internal collective – the cultural mores, languages, customs and shared understandings of social groups; and the external collective – the observable political structures, written laws, and institutional organizations created by organized social and political groups. The table below illustrates the human-experience quadrants.[1]

Table 1.   The Quadrants of Human Experience

"I" Interior-Individual Intentional: Thoughts, emotions, etc.	"IT" Exterior-Individual Behavioral (physical), also the biological body
"WE" Interior-Collective Cultural: language, mores, etc.	"ITS" Exterior-Collective Social & Political Systems

The notion that no single-quadrant specific theory can possibly be complete by itself, that it is *necessary* to examine any given human problem as it manifests within *each* quadrant, is only recently gaining widespread acceptance among academic political writers (for example, see Beck[2], 2001; Crittenden[3], 1998; Ury[4], 2004). Given this, it is interesting that second-wave feminist theory nonetheless fairly adequately covered the quadrants, as I have shown. The problem has been the tendency of theorists to attack each other across these categorical lines. When the focus is on theoretical differences,

not only do feminists often miss the deep implications of the "big picture," but they also fail to realize that they are talking past each other.[5]

In hopes of clarifying some of the confusion, as well as opening avenues for the development of new theoretical precepts, I present in this chapter my own ideas about feminist theories as they correlate to human-experience quadrants, world view change across time, the "war" between the sexes and genders, and the effects these have on "empowerment" goals. I hope to demonstrate that each of these relates to and influences the other in a rich, complex tapestry, the whole of which must be considered if the goals of the "empowerment" of the autonomous self and the relational self are to be simultaneously accomplished for women. With that in mind, I turn first to a discussion of specific questions that remain unanswered.

Biological Difference, Social Mores and Political Equality

Early radical feminists discussed the vulnerability of women because of their biological differences from men. As I have discussed in previous chapters, this discussion became unpopular as worries surfaced that, within a liberal system such as the one governing the United States of America, women could not be accepted as both different *and* equal. This is further complicated by a high valuation of any given individual's employability versus the fear of burden-to-business caused by the unique problems brought to the workforce with the employment of *mothers* outside of the home in the postindustrial-revolution world. If "protectionist" policies that were oppressive to

women were to be eradicated while simultaneously protecting *capitalism*, mothers' employability problems had to be minimized or even ignored.

In hopes of eventually eradicating said protectionist policies, second-wave feminists exposed the possible sinister motives behind some of these policies and the hardships they often caused women (see Baer, 1978). Because of the hard work and dedication of these feminists, women today are able to pursue careers of their choice with much less difficulty than women once had to endure. Unfortunately for women, however, it did not take long for employers to take strides to eliminate the risks involved in hiring mothers and potential mothers. Women soon found that the road to business success involved finding ways to ensure that family life did not interfere with work productivity. For mothers, this meant a near impossible double work load because of double fulltime commitments (Mason, 1988). It also meant a silencing for a time of those who would speak out about the physical dangers and other problems that motherhood posed for women, likely because of a fear that admitting such problems would bring back "protectionist," oppressive policies.

This silence, however, was not destined to last. Third-wave feminism has resurrected discussion about the vulnerability of women as mothers. For example, March (1994) discusses the need for greater social understanding of the fear and vulnerability involved in childbirth. This social "understanding" is something that was, at one time, built into the social norms of the American family life, just as it is still, as March points out, built into the social norms of women in third-world countries. While March puzzles over the silence about this problem in the United States, I suggest that it is at least in part

due to a belief that to talk about biological fears and weaknesses experienced by women is counterproductive to the pursuit of women's equality in a political system that is based on an ideal of the rugged and self-sustaining individual. Also of concern are business systems that measure women's value against a male standard as it existed in a culture that kept men's roles distinct and separate from the role of nurturer or care-giving parent. Where cultural norms once emphasized the problems of childbearing and birth and a corresponding need to give special attention to and protection for pregnant women and women who were nursing young children, the emergence of a culture that emphasized instead the ways in which women were as strong and as *employable* as men began to shun the discussion of the many things that could go wrong for women and their children during these vulnerable times. That is, discussion of childbirth fear and vulnerability is seen as display of weakness that encourages the hierarchy of male over female within the economic system via 'protectionism.'

However, if women who experience the many problems associated with bearing children are *silenced* in the name of equality, how can empowerment of these women be achieved? I suggest that this dilemma should be understood by an examination of the effects of theory and political-climate change *across* the quadrants of human experience. For example, this problem of "silence" in the U.S. about the physical complications that women who bear children endure (March, 1994) may well be produced by a post-industrial cultural and theoretical overemphasis of the economic and political structures in the external-collective quadrant, while theoretically ignoring and/or politically

attempting to hide the differences between the sexes found in the individual-external and individual-internal quadrants.

Not only is this trend counter-productive to the empowerment of millions of women, it is increasingly both impractical and nonsensical. Modern medicine and science increasingly discuss the physical, emotional and psychological differences between the sexes which seem caused not only by genitalia difference but also by the effects that hormonal differences (Taylor et al, 2000; see also Rhoads, 2004) and even differences in chromosomal configurations (Philips etal, 1987; Hamer, 1993) may have on the human brain. In the face of increasing evidence of very real "difference," it seems that attempts to illustrate sameness in order to appease a system that grants equality based on sameness is foolish *and* increasingly counter-scientific. Would it not be better to *change the system* to one that grants political equality in spite of and by taking into account any biological *difference* between the sexes? Nowhere is difference more profound than between women who become or try to become pregnant and all other people who do not. While not all women will conceive or attempt to conceive children, this experience is nonetheless, at least so far, unique to *women*. Liberal feminist theory has begun to examine the ways that labor law might protect mothering women without restricting women's overall access to employment, but this alone is not enough. As further demonstration of this point, I discuss domestic labor and childcare in the next section of this chapter.

Capitalist Economics and the Value of Domestic Work and Care-giving

Some socialist-feminists examined the effects of economic systems on cultural norms and expectations as they apply to women. The cultural norms are internal-collective, while the economic systems themselves are external-collective. While these feminists attempted to address the internal-collective quadrant via their analysis of the family, a theoretical problem was created by the fact that they often failed to take the *interior* workings of the *economic structures* into account. Instead of a failure to take more than one quadrant of experience into consideration, the error here is one of conflation. It is assumed by these theorists that "value" which is not measurable in the external economic structure therefore does not exist at all. Vogel (1973), for example, says that domestic labor - women's labor in the home - is neither 'productive' labor nor directly paid for. As I mentioned in Chapter III, to understand the problem with her theory, we must first take our emphasis off of *money*, which is after all only a specific medium to *facilitate exchange*, and think instead of the entire exchange system. If we take money out of the picture and look only at what it *buys*, we begin to see a truer picture of the partnership men and women in traditional households often have. Many domestically –laboring women would argue that they do receive direct "pay" for their labor, primarily in the form of living quarters, food, family medical insurance and so forth. Economists, at least, have begun to understand domestic labor's hidden value. This is evident in the fact that "unpaid" labor is now part of the sum total figures of "national gross products." It is understood, then, that there are types of "payment" other than payment with cash. Vogel's attempt to explain the difference between domestic

labor and other forms of labor focused, in part, on the lack of wages paid to those who perform it. By measuring exchange value only through wages visible to the external structures of society, Vogel misses the value gained by women's domestic labors which are evident only *internally* within the family.

Okin (1989) makes a similar mistake in her analysis of the power-structure problems in heterosexual marriages. She discusses "pooled resources" (140) within marriage, observing that *un*married couples were less likely to assume that one partner would provide the primary wage, or that income and assets would be pooled. Okin argues that pooled resources and wage-disparity within the household are unhealthy relicts of patriarchal-marriage traditions. What she misses is that the purpose of pooled resources and the stay-at-home care-giver role, as these practices now exist, are primarily a function of *families with children,* the goal being, of course, to take proper care, both economically and physically, of said children. The problem has not been that resources were pooled, the problem was the *power-structure* which allowed men to "enforce their views or wishes" (141) while suppressing the views and wishes of women. In other words, the economic and childcare arrangements are not the problem, they are merely the *excuse* for oppression. Attacking the excuse instead of the problem only makes the problem worse, because it fails to recognize the original goal – the care and feeding of children. By focusing on only one piece of the problem, Okin and other feminists failed to recognize that relational empowerment is just as necessary as empowerment of the autonomous self. It also puts all the blame squarely on the shoulders of men, while the real culprit is the hierarchal power-structure of patriarchy.

Hierarchies came out of cultural norms in place for millennia. While such are no longer desired or necessary, hierarchies are not the fault of all modern men, nor are they desirable by many modern men. Hierarchal structures, as Gilligan (2002) explains, can be as damaging to men as to women. It is the hierarchal structure that needs abolished, and this, in spite of appearances, has little to do with who cares for and who financially supports the family. This is because the notion that only those who earn wages, or own property, are fully human and therefore deserving of rights is *also* an archaic and damaging notion.

That all of this was not adequately theorized is one reason for much of the tension and misunderstanding between feminists and "traditional" women. Vogel's (1973) theory, for example, suggests that domestic labor is merely a necessary, unpleasant chore that all humans should have to share unless someone is hired, and paid, to do it. Grasping for tools to "empower" women, second-wave feminists often failed to understand that it was neither necessary nor prudent to insist that domestic work was degrading to women, because this implies that domestic labor has no real value and, further, is not something that anyone who can choose otherwise would do. This demeans all people who choose to perform it, whether as part of the family barter-system, or because it is, to some, enjoyable, or even as paid-for labor. The same problem has plagued stay-at-home moms and workers in the childcare field.

Feminist discussions of domestic work and childcare also tend to ignore interdependence as it affects the psychology of individual women (interior-individual). Part of the problem is that interdependence is seldom discussed in terms of

empowerment. For example, Baer (1999) discusses the *responsibility* that society places on women, stating that it is too seldom noticed "that women… have a disproportionate share of [it]" (3). While her assertion is correct, the question that goes unanswered is: who would take up this mantle of "burden" should these women decide to lay it down? Not all women carry a burden that they *could* lay down without *seriously damaging someone else* whom they love. This is because various types of "care" are necessary within all human cultures: of infants, of the ill, of the very aged and so forth. In modern society, care can be "bought" by the affluent, but it is still, even for them, provided by *someone*. Further, humans are drawn to care that is given out of *love* rather than because it is bought. Finally, some people greatly enjoy giving care, and consider doing so to be among the most fulfilling and noble of occupations.

Part of what has been missed by feminists who argue with *each other* over the issue of "nurture" is that in the traditional family structure, both men and women have historically "cared for," or nurtured, each other and their children. Men "nurtured" by providing finances, the women by providing *physical* nurture/care. The problem is that this system was never truly "equal," partly because financial control means power and partly because providing finances is a part-time job (until the end of the work-day), while providing nurture, especially to babies and young children, must occur around the clock. Changing the expectations of who "must" provide what kind of "nurture" and increasing the *value* of the *domestic variety* of nurture should not be seen as opposed goals, but as varying aspects of "empowerment." The quandary that we find ourselves in is this: to demand freedom from the "responsibility" to nurture labels responsibility as

"bad"; labeling "responsibility to nurture" as "bad" further devalues the *type* of "nurture" that women have for so long performed; devaluing this nurture causes society to turn a blind eye to the fact that responsibility for each other is *necessary* for the very survival and overall societal health of the human race; and when society at large turns a blind eye, it falls to those who have traditionally taken up this "responsibility to nurture" to continue to carry it, for if they do not, no one will. The trap is perfect, *unless* we realize that *each* form of empowerment that has been discussed in this book is actually *needed*, and is merely one small piece in a larger puzzle, as I have said.

Because of love and empathy, empowerment of the relational self is desperately needed by many. *There are those among us who cannot fully enjoy our own lives and fortunes so long as those we love are in pain.* Therefore, what people, women or men, who care for others need is not release from the "responsibility," but an *empowerment* that allows for the *sharing* of this responsibility with other capable and willing human beings. We would do well to realize that when fellow human beings are in *true* need of help, which *everyone* is at some time in his or her life, saying "I can not be responsible" is synonymous with saying "I do not care." Too much apathy creates widespread desperation. The extent of this is evident currently in various societal problems, such as homelessness of the mentally ill and disabled, infant abandonment, and abuse of the elderly. *Empathy* is what allows for human co-existence and the very survival of the species. The "ethic of care," whoever carries the mantle, is what holds the fabric of the human race together. To understand this is to know that empowerment of the

autonomous individual can never be realized without simultaneous empowerment of the relational self.

It was with an eye to this problem that "care" feminists began to theorize about why the care ethic has been degraded and equated with weakness and dependency within modern patriarchy. However, because of the nature of the theorizing by these "care" feminists, yet another argument arose: whether there is a difference between "masculine ways of knowing" and "feminine ways of knowing" (see Gilligan, 1982; my discussion, Chapter V).

Semantic Trouble

It helps to understand the varying contexts within which these "masculine and feminine" terms are used, but the entanglement of social-gender terms with biological-sex terms is so complex as to make a clear distinction between them almost impossible given the historical usage of the terms. In fact, in recent decades researchers in various disciplines have conflated these terms, using "sex" and "gender" as interchangeable words (MacKinnon, 1989; Walker and Cook, 1998). I suggest that what we *do* know is that there *are* at least two distinctive ways of "knowing." However, the labels of "masculine" and "feminine," when placed on these two ways, immediately cause problems. What is needed is to recognize that on *this subject* we are dealing with a problem of *semantics*. Noddings (1984) explains that she labels the 'ethic of caring' as a feminine ethic, not because only women 'care,' but because caring has been, throughout many ages, recognized as a feminine attribute of humans in general. However, because

she uses terms like masculine and feminine, much of what she and others wrote on this topic has been misinterpreted and mislabeled as a sexual-difference theory, even though she expressed plainly that she believed these attributes had little, if anything, to do with one's being male or female.

The problem comes from the fact that language itself is so entangled with the experiences of human beings across time, as languages and societies have evolved together. Women for millennia have been the primary caretakers of children and men, having both shaped and controlled the public realm, have been the primary creators of concepts about social and political justice. Therefore, a "feminine" ethic that emphasizes care has been conceptually tied to females, while a "masculine" ethic that emphasizes justice has conceptually associated with males. How do we adequately define the difference in these ethics without confusing masculine with necessarily male and feminine with necessarily female? It may be impossible to untangle these concepts without creating new terminology to describe the difference between these two types of ethics.

Connectedness and care are labeled "feminine," and have been so historically because *mothers* must be connected emotionally and psychically to their infants in order to properly care for them. When an infant cried, the mother had to know whether the child was in need of nursing, which she alone could provide, or in need of something else that could perhaps be provided by someone else. Nature somehow provided this "intuitive" wisdom, and it therefore became known as a *feminine* (mother) trait. But because femininity has been equated with this intuitive wisdom and "ethic of care" – the

latter of which often refers to a mother's instinct or desire to do what is necessary to ensure the survival of her infant – women find themselves both collectively coerced to *be* care-givers, whether or not they are mothers, and *to give care* to others besides just their own offspring. Because of this, we find it necessary in the modern world to declare that "caring" is not a "feminine" characteristic. If we call it "feminine," then we are suggesting that women ought to have it, that those who have it are "feminine" (whether they are male or female), and that those who do not have it are not feminine (whether they are female or male). This gets theorists into trouble, because in the modern world the term "femininity" means a great deal more than the possession of intuition or the care ethic, and one can likewise be "feminine" without either one. Further, women who have these traits should nonetheless be spared coercion just as one should not be forced to paint simply because one *can*. The real problem lies with the definitions. This is only clear if we examine these internal-individual ideas in light of the influence of internal-collective language evolution.

Liberal Political Theory's "Rationality": Language and Changing World Views

The effects of language evolution can also be seen in attempts to reconcile ancient notions about rationality with modern ideas about the gender-neutrality of the human capacity for rational thought. In the western tradition, at least, the roots of most political writing can be traced back to Plato and Aristotle. It was certainly not with these authors that the female portion of the human race began to have problems with the male portion. However, their writings simultaneously brought these problems into the realm

of the written history of civil society and obscured them from political debate for millennia by pronouncing the social and political "place" held by women at that time to be both natural and unavoidable.

Plato depicts human society as a hierarchal ladder with cross-cutting dimensions. That is, depending upon one's rank in society, there is, according to Plato, a precise placement of each human in relation to others who are either above or below one in status. This creates a metaphorical ladder, upon which women on one rung may be ranked above men on a lower rung. However, each rung of the ladder has its own hierarchy in that men on any given rung are ranked above women on the same rung, and both men and women are ranked above children (Plato, *The Republic*; Lange, 1979).

Aristotle disagreed with Plato on a number of fronts, but the two to which I shall give attention here have to do with woman's place in the "natural" human hierarchy and with whether or not any woman should be a part of the polis. As I mentioned above, Plato's version of the hierarchy would allow some women to be on "rungs" that would place them equal to or above some men. To Aristotle, this was an abomination. Aristotle instead collapsed the ladder dimensionally, so that all women were placed below all men except, perhaps, slaves. His reasons for doing so were clear: to him, no woman was capable of being "rational," and therefore could never be on a level with men who were. He uses this same rationale to place women firmly in the "private sphere" of life, because, to Aristotle, it is there that all things "irrational" belong (Spelman, 1998).

However, "irrational" did not appear to mean to Aristotle precisely what the word brings to mind in the modern world. To Aristotle, in order to be counted as

"rational," one must have *both* the capability of making reasoned decisions and the ability to *act on* those decisions. Whether or not one was simply denied the latter by others with power over them had nothing to do with the matter (*Politics*, 13). It is not difficult to see how this notion of rational versus irrational could be detrimental to those who held no power within the power-makes-right (and rational), hierarchal framework of society in Aristotle's day. No matter how capable of rationality a person on the bottom of the hierarchy might actually be, he or she (slave or woman) would never be viewed as capable of rationality by those on the top of the hierarchy because they could never have the power (which translates to ability) to act on their own decisions.

For Locke, however, "reason" was measured in part by one's ability to gain property or economic wealth for oneself. Brennan and Pateman (1979) discuss the notion that "Locke regards propertyless males as less than fully rational" (195). They go on to tell us that, for Locke, men all can gain rationality by the "tying of the conjugal knot" (195). Women, however, have no way to become rational in Locke's theory. Brennan and Pateman also point out that, while women in the seventeenth century were not economically dependent on their husbands, they were still subject to them (186). While Brennan and Pateman successfully point out these oft-times overlooked facts, they do not follow through to explain why these seeming contradictions exist within Locke's theory.

We can come to understand what is going on, however, if we consider the possible evolution of the word "rational." I have explained that, for Aristotle, "rational" meant having the ability both to deliberate and to act. The term evolved across time, so

that by the seventeenth century it meant something different, but still did not mean what it does today. We can come to understand what "rational" meant in the seventeenth century if we carefully examine the arguments presented by Brennan and Pateman, adding in consideration of the point made by Macpherson. Men who had no property were not "rational" (Macpherson, 1962) unless and until they married (Brennan and Pateman, 1979). Remember that to Locke, ownership of property signifies rationality, because ownership of property is "a reflection of one's personality and the control one has over one's life and activity" (Eisenstein, 1981, 44). Therefore, gaining a wife, which is gaining *property*, as well as a position of power and control, also signifies rationality.

If lack of ability to control one's own life and activity brands one as "irrational" and being branded as "irrational" leaves one with little or no control over one's own life and activity, there is no way out except for those who are granted some way of *gaining* said *control*. For women, no path to gain either was offered by Locke. The political thought offered by both Aristotle and Locke kept women out of the public realm and in the home caring for children, managing domestic resources and *under the control of men.* However, this does not mean that an increased valuation of care in the modern world need have a detrimental effect on women as some liberal feminist writings imply. Further, a propensity for care need not be equated with irrationality. The notion that these two *are* equated is rooted in past worldviews and now outdated semantics.

However, the question of whether or not women tend to have more of a natural propensity for care than do men is one that cannot be raised without sparking heated controversy. This is in part due, as Eisenstein (1984) states, to liberal feminist demands

that "woman be treated as equal to man, *rather than differentiated from him*" (12, emphasis mine). Eisenstein characterizes feminism that focuses on "sexual difference issues" as "reactionary," and thereby tosses it aside as though it is not "real" feminism at all. She reveals the basis of her frustration with "difference theory," however, when she equates "different" with necessarily "unequal" (13). Yet both Aristotle and Locke's ideas about what makes one an equality-deserving citizen grew out of an ethnocentristic worldview that only recognized others who are most similar to oneself as deserving of equal treatment. This worldview therefore offers no avenue for the equality of all peoples. According to modern ethics, it is not what people own, what they do, or how similar they are to one another that should determine their equality to each other. We can only understand the dynamic of political change across time if we account for change of worldviews across time and therefore also the evolution of language across time – because language and speech reflect worldviews.

Sex and Gender "Wars"

No discussion of the confusion posed by empowerment fetishizing could be complete without mention of the gender wars spawned by some feminist notions about the victimization of all women by all men. In her assessment of the modern condition of women in America, Baer (2002) comments that, while some important legal strides have been made, women in general are no better off now than they were decades ago. They are overworked, underpaid and have little job or marriage security. She adds that one

observing the present situation is left with "a suspicion that women are still doing what it is in men's interest for them to do" (300).

Baer's statements reveal a frustration with the slow pace of change as well as with the dilemmas women face under patriarchy that have as yet found no solution. This same frustration has fed much of the anger towards men apparent in feminist theory. However, Gilligan (2002) suggests that patriarchy, having grown out of a now-archaic worldview, is detrimental to modern *men* as well. It is indeed interesting to note how completely the plight of men under patriarchy is downplayed by most feminist theory. The perceived problems posed by patriarchy are couched only in terms of how these affect *women*, and it is assumed that *women's* plight is always worse than anything the men might have to suffer. For example, when speaking about the draft during the Vietnam War, Philipson and Hansen (1990) explain why this phenomenon was a problem for women: men were given a chance to be "heroes" of the antiwar movement by burning their draft cards and resisting the draft, but women were "marginalized" because this experience was "unavailable" to them (5). In a rush to demonstrate that women are always the victim in any given scenario, these authors attempt to romanticize an experience that was surely traumatizing to the men who experienced it, given the real possibility of court-marshal for AWOL soldiers and imprisonment for men refusing military induction. This not only makes a mockery of *real* instances of victimization of women, it ignores the plight of men, which cannot be so easily disentangled from the plight of women. After all, why did women join the protest movement against the Vietnam War? Was it to gain heroic recognition for themselves or was it to help to stop a

heinous war that was killing *thousands* of American *men* in addition to uncounted Vietnamese, both male and female, both young and old?

Empowerment for *All*

This dissertation has focused on the various categories of feminist theory, based on their associated realms of human existence. This understanding is necessary, for we cannot advance the understanding of women's condition, and therefore the overall human condition, without examination of each of these realms. This is because the realms do not and have never existed independent of each other. Rather, each influences the other in a profound, entangled way. No "big picture" understanding can be formed without first creating conceptual building blocks. That second-wave feminists presented opposing views based on their own quadrant-specific concerns is neither surprising nor unfortunate.

What I find unfortunate is that the ensuing cross-categorical bickering at times led to the broad dismissal of important theoretical insights, led to the breakdown of a number of feminist-progressive movements, and helped to spark the "gender wars" as well as anger between varying women's groups. Third-wave attempts at a truce, however, led to a type of feminist relativism that fetishizes "empowerment" through a conceptual confusion that equates the attainment of personal physical enhancements through procedures akin to self-mutilation or torture - such as painful do-it-yourself procedures intended to have beauty-enhancing effects similar to a surgical facelift - with the attainment of employment or education goals (see Chapter I). All are hailed as

similarly "empowering" to the individual woman. In addition, a similar conceptual confusion is to blame for the overemphasis of empowerment of the autonomous self while all but ignoring empowerment of the relational self. This tendency sometimes borders on the absurd. For example, Barnett and Rivers (2004) call the relational self a "straightjacket" which prevents women "from ever putting ourselves first," and declare that women must "break free of the caring trap" (45). As I have shown, however, both relational empowerment *and* autonomous empowerment are needed. Caring is only a "trap" if it is coerced or overemphasized. Self-care becomes an equal trap if *it* is *overemphasized,* because said overemphasis damages human relationships that are needed by all, and forwards the myth of the rugged individual who is never in need of assistance or care from others.

Each of these problems – theoretical relativism and overemphasis of self-care - arise from shifting worldviews.[6] The now-archaic hierarchal worldview that produced the power stratification between the sexes also forwarded a notion that equality could only be based on sameness, with all persons *not* "the same" as the elite group at the top of the hierarchy suffering systemic denial of rights. In time, this worldview gave way, at least within the some parts of the world, to a notion that equality should be based instead on some measure of acquired property or power, thus glorifying the "rugged individual" who could manage to attain such for himself. Eventually even this worldview has altered, shifting to one that grants an intrinsic worth, and therefore a "natural" right to equality, to all humans regardless of property ownership or power acquisition.

An integrally empowering feminism, then, would pull together theoretical insights from all quadrants of human experience, would include an understanding of worldview changes across time, as well as the effects of this change on language evolution, and would not place the biological sexes in a deadlock of opposition to each other. It also would not elevate either empowerment of the autonomous self or empowerment of the relational self above the other, because it would recognize the *codependence* of these forms of empowerment upon each other. An understanding of all of the varying components of feminist theory, as well as what sort of empowerment each intended to accomplish, will allow us not only to more clearly trace where we have been and what we have accomplished so far, but also to map where we hope and intend to go as we collectively create our futures.

Notes

1. Table information available at the Integral Institute. Online at www.integralinstitute.org.

2. Currently a Fellow at the George Gallup Institute at Princeton University, Don Beck taught for twenty years at the University of North Texas.

3. Jack Crittenden is an associate professor of political science at Arizona State University and the author of political theory books and articles.

4. Dr. Bill Ury is the Director of the Program on Negotiation and the Project on Preventing War at the Harvard Law School.

5. See Chapter V, discussion of the insights of Mitchell (1974).

6. A good beginning source for discussion about and research of worldview change across time is Beck and Cowan, 1996 (see references).

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