

MADNESS AND GENDER AS POSTMODERN METAPHOR

by

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ABSTRACT

In the existing literature, the constructs of "madness" and "woman" have long been associated with one another. This association has led to attempts by various authors, and also this current work, to deconstruct the constructs of madness and gender. The association between the constructs of "madness" and "gender" is seen in terms of metaphor. The relationship between the constructs of "madness" and "woman" are described in terms of the manner in which meanings of metaphors of duality are collapsed onto one another.

The approach to this discussion typifies the current shift in the human sciences from a belief in objective, bias-neutral research to a new kind of self-conscious and sophisticated reality. I placed myself in this discussion as a researcher and a therapist, influenced by feminist, contextual and social constructionist ideas. The structure of this discussion was employed to reflect the theoretical perspectives mentioned above.

Key Terms ;

Madness; Gender; Postmodernism; Social Constructionism; Metaphors; Metaphors of Duality; Language; Feminism; Narrative Approach; Deconstruction.

CHAPTER 1

Postmodernism and Social Constructionism : "Definitions for Simple Folk"

Introduction

This chapter will attempt to introduce the reader to the basic theoretical assumptions central to both the structure and the content of this dissertation. NS

It will deal with definitions and discussion of concepts such as postmodernism and social constructionist theory as well as the implications of this theoretical grounding for the structure of this dissertation.

The Shift to Postmodernism

Richters (1991) states that "postmodernism" has become one of the most elusive concepts in aesthetic, literary, anthropological and sociological discussions of the past decade. For the purposes of this chapter, it is not possible to discuss the complex modernity-postmodernity debate exhaustively. I will however, attempt to define the concept, since it has immense relevance for the discussion of the concepts of social constructionism and the social construction of gender which is to follow.

Hoffman (1994) describes postmodernism as a term which amounts to a proposal to replace objectivist ideals with a broad tradition of ongoing criticism in which all productions of the human mind are concerned. Therefore, theory and research into the human "sciences" fall into the category of written texts

that can be analyzed for their hidden political and social agendas, rather than statements of objectively verifiable fact.

Hoffman (1994) states that the word "postmodern" seems to be a catch-all term for the change in zeitgeist that has been taken up by many in the academic and non-academic fields.

A term related to postmodernism, which is sometimes used interchangeably with it, is poststructuralism. In general both postmodernism and poststructuralism are anti-positivist in nature. Both attack the assumptions of objectivity that characterize the Western world view and especially the claims of modern science. Postmodernists reject any position that consists of a "totalizing truth", an "ideal discourse" or any endpoint theory (Hoffman, 1994).

Poststructural thinkers have, in addition, challenged the twentieth century idea that hidden structures abide within human groups and their productions.

Postmodernism and poststructuralism brought about a "deconstruction" of prized and sacred writings. The purpose behind deconstructing a text is one of political emancipation. Exposing the relations of domination and submission embedded in a text, weakens its power to oppress (Hoffman, 1994).

Flax (1990) regards the shift to postmodernism as a response to fundamental changes in Western culture and the epistemological and sociopolitical consequences of these transformations.

Flax (1990) states that in the realm of knowledge, postmodernism represents

philosophic attempts to come to grips with the displacement of philosophy from any privileged relation to truth and knowledge. In post-seventeenth century Western culture, philosophy as the representative or guarantor of truth has been displaced, first by the natural sciences and then by the "human" sciences.

Hoffman (1994) distinguishes between French and German intellectual movements towards postmodernism.

In German philosophy before World War II, there was a movement called "Critical Theory". Proponents like Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno attempted to adapt the ideals of the Enlightenment and the views of Marx to a more general view of social emancipation. The movement continued to develop after the war and came to be known as the "Frankfurt School".

Hoffman (1994) states that although the French and German intellectuals do not often intersect, there are none the less similarities between the two movements. A major difference between the French deconstructionism and German critical theory is that the French attach importance to the process of deconstruction for its own sake, whereas the German theorists see it as advancing the cause of social justice.

Flax (1990) states that like the category "feminist theory", "postmodern philosophy" does not correspond to any actual or unified discourse. The persons and modes of thinking aggregated under the category of postmodernism are heterogeneous with regard to voice, style, content and concerns.

Flax (1990) regards Jaques Derrida, Richard Rorty, Jean-Francois Lyotard and Michel Foucault as four particularly influential writers associated with postmodernism. However, these writers differ with regards to their focus and the

importance they assign to certain issues.

Derrida has a special concern for ontological questions, including the "misrepresentation" of Being, "writing" and the "tyranny of metaphysics" (Flax, 1990, p.23).

Rorty is interested in epistemology and the history of philosophy, especially the traditional practices and concepts of philosophy and truth, as well as alternatives to them (Flax, 1990).

Lyotard and Foucault focus on relations between truth, power, legitimization, and the "subject" (Flax, 1990, p.26).

Hoffman (1994) regards Foucault as the French postmodern theorist that stands out for the clarity and originality of his writings. Hoffman (1994) regards Foucault to be a movement in himself. Foucault analyzed what he termed the "discourse" of modern institutions : medical, legal, educational, and so forth. Foucault's point of departure is that the forms of bureaucratic government that appear rational and benevolent are actually a kind of surveillance, constraining the life of the ordinary citizen. Foucault does not however, advocate revolution. He espouses a form of informed resistance to these faceless regimes. Foucault then, is an ambiguous figure, being more political than many of the other deconstructionists, but less so than his Marxist counterparts.

In using the term "postmodernism", there is the risk of violating some of its central values - heterogeneity, multiplicity and difference. Postmodernists claim, however, that the fictive and nonunitary nature of concepts need not negate their meaningfulness and usefulness. It can therefore be assumed that it is possible to

speak of "postmodernism" (Flax, 1990).

Although internally varied, postmodernist discourses are unified in identifying certain subjects of conversation as particularly appropriate and necessary. These crucial subjects include the following : (1) contemporary Western culture -its nature and ways to understand it; (2) knowledge - what it is, who or what constructs and generates it, and its relations to power; (3) philosophy - its crisis and history, how both are to be understood and how (if at all) it is to be practiced; (4) power - if, where, and how domination exists and is maintained and how and if it can be overcome; (5) subjectivity and the self - how our concepts and experiences of them have come to be and what, if anything, these do or can mean; and (6) difference - how to conceptualize, preserve or rescue it (Flax, 1990).

Ambiguity
 Postmodernists are also unified in their rejection of all certain positions. They all reject representational and objective or rational concepts of knowledge and truth. Theorizing in order to comprehend reality as a unified whole, is rejected. Any concept of "self" or subjectivity which it is not understood as the product of discursive practices, is questioned (Flax, 1990).

Postmodernists share a common framework within which they attempt to conceptualize contemporary Western culture. This framework is the definition of Western culture in terms of its struggle with, in and against modernism. Postmodernist discourse is constituted by and in a series of attempts to obstruct ways of thinking that lead back to Enlightenment modes of thinking or promises of happiness. The postmodernists question the necessity and desirability of completing the "project of modernity" or to fulfill the "emancipator" promises of bourgeois culture/Enlightenment (Flax, 1990).

By rejecting the teleological view implicit in the claims mentioned above, the postmodernists seek to create alternative modes of thinking and practice outside the imperative of the Enlightenment. Beyond this critique, postmodernists throw into doubt the ideas that reason is the necessary ground for philosophy or freedom and that an emancipator culture will arise if and when the "negative" aspects of modernity can be "aufheben". Flax (1990) regards postmodernism to be more successful as a critique of modernity and philosophy than as a theory of the postmodern as such because she regards the postmodernist as advocating the viewpoint that, in terms of modernity, we "need something else". Flax (1990) states that what this might be is clear neither in philosophy nor in practice.

In the final instance Flax (1990) points out that modernist discourses repress, exclude and erase certain voices and questions, e.g. the ideas of social relations that are essential to understandings of the self, knowledge and power.

Postmodernist discourse can be regarded then as one, internally varied, necessarily imperfect, and partial set of stories about contemporary Western culture (Flax, 1990).

Doherty (1990) juxtaposes modernism and postmodernism, stating that modernism favoured an aesthetic of purity, clarity, order and analytical abstraction. Postmodernism, however, tends towards elaboration, eclecticism, ornamentation and inclusiveness.

Doherty (1990) regards postmodern writers as being concerned with language. Postmodernist social scientists abhor universal theories, because no social theory can make claim to validity outside of a particular historical context and value system.

Postmodern thinking and Family Therapy

Doherty (1990) states that postmodernism profoundly influenced family therapy in particular. This influence is particularly evident in the importance gained by the feminist and constructivist views.

Lax (1992) states that writing on postmodernism frequently focuses on ideas regarding text and narrative, with attention to the importance of dialogic/multiple perspectives, self-disclosure, lateral vs. hierarchical configurations, and attention to process rather than goals. In addition, such writing is often characterized by the following : the self is not conceived as a reified entity, but as a narrative; text is not something to be interpreted, but, is an evolving process; the individual is considered within a context of social meaning, rather than as an intrapsychic entity; and scientific knowledge or what would be considered "facts" about the world yields the narrative knowledge with emphasis on communal beliefs about the world.

While family therapy recognizes the individual in-a-context rather than simply as an intrapsychic entity, Lax (1992) considers thinking in family therapy circles to be a more "modern" perspective, rather than postmodern.

Lax (1992) regards the modern perspective in family therapy as the idea that family structures are inherently hierarchically arranged. He includes the consideration of the family as existing independently from the observer, the expert position of the therapist and the concept of "normative family development" as the benchmark of healthy family growth and functioning as being representative of the modern perspective.

The work of the Milan associates, with their return to Bateson's thinking, as well as the work of Anderson and Goolishian (1988), Hoffman (1988, 1990) and Epston and White (1990) can be considered to be representative of a postmodern trend in the field of family therapy (Lax, 1992).

Lax (1992) enumerates several significant changes that is incorporated in this transition.

Universal truths or structures give way to a multiverse of ideas about the world. the idea of the family as a homeostatic system gives way to one of social systems as being generative and states of disequilibrium as being productive and normal. Families are conceptualized as social systems composed of meaning generating problem-organizing systems with problems existing and mediated through language (Lax, 1992).

Hierarchical, expert-orientated models of therapy are shifting to ones of lateral configuration. The family no longer becomes the object of treatment, viewed independent of an observer or as a source of problems, but as a flexible entity composed of people with shared meanings (Lax, 1992).

In the shift to postmodernism in the field of family therapy Hoffman (1994) regards the emergence of social constructionist theory as being central

In the following section, social constructionist theory as well as the interrelation between social constructionist theory and postmodernism will be discussed.

The Social Constructionist Movement

Postmodernism and the Emergence of a Constructionist Consciousness

McNamee and Gergen (1992) place the mental health professions of the present century within a single code of understanding, one which finds its roots in the Enlightenment and its purest form of exposition in scientific foundationalism.

McNamee and Gergen (1992) describe a growing loss of confidence in this vision (which includes the idea of the therapist-scientist). Together with this trend there has been a general questioning in the academic world of the traditional concept of scientific knowledge. Within the philosophy of science major critiques were launched against the presumption of formal or rational foundations of knowledge.

Knowledge (as discourse)

Logical empiricism has largely vanished from serious consideration, critical rationalists are a diminishing breed, and the aspirants of a "new realism" have been unable to articulate an alternative program of science. In effect, it is argued that what we take to be accurate and objective accounts of nature and self are an outgrowth of social processes (McNamee & Gergen, 1992).

This growing emphasis on the social embeddedness of what we take to be "true" and "good" is further emphasized and elaborated by widespread developments in literary theory, rhetoric and semiotics. Although this literature is vast and varied, McNamee and Gergen (1992) isolate a primary message from this work : our formulations of what is the case are guided by and limited to the systems of language in which we live. What can be said about the world - including self and others - is an outgrowth of shared conversations of discourse.

For a number of theorists, emphasis needs to be placed on the textual account.

Texts are considered to be byproducts of human relationships. They gain meaning from the way they are used in relationships. Our constructions of the world and of ourselves are limited by our languages, but we ourselves generate the conventions of discourse. Transformation then, is inherently a relational matter, emerging from a myriad of coordinations among people (McNamee & Gergen, 1992).

For critics of the traditional view of the scientist-therapist, the view of the social construction of the taken-for-granted is useful. It enables feminists (and others) to continue their questioning of the current canons of "truth". Constructionism invites critical self-reflection that might open possibilities for alternative forms of understanding (McNamee & Gergen, 1992).

Constructionism, together with phenomenology and constructivism, forms a critical challenge to the subject-object dualism on which the traditional view of the scientist-therapist is based. Constructionism is centrally concerned not with individuals, but with relational networks (McNamee & Gergen, 1992).

Constructionism therefore challenges the position of transcendent superiority claimed by those operating in the traditional scientific mode (McNamee & Gergen, 1992).

A Discussion of the Social Constructionist Movement

Gergen (1985) states that social constructionism views discourse about the world not as a reflection or map of the world but as an artifact of communal interchange.

Hoffman (1994) places the origins of social constructionism with a group of English and American social thinkers who had their roots in social psychology and anthropology. Hoffman (1994) regards social constructionism as a subset of postmodernism. Hoffman (1992) states that social constructionism as a movement owes much to the textual and political criticism represented by deconstructionist views of literary critics like Jacques Derrida in France and deriving from the neo-Marxist thinkers of the Frankfurt School. In addition, this intellectual context would be incomplete without reference to the work of French social historian Michel Foucault, who has brought the term "power" back into prominence with his examination of the way relations of dominance and submission are embedded in social discourse.

Gergen (1985) traces the evolution of social constructionism to Lewin's cognitively orientated field theory. This theory represents the idealist approach in the European controversy between Idealism (the view that knowledge derives from internal constructs) and positivism (the view that knowledge is a representation of facts and events in the "real" world). Departing from both these positions, social construction theory views the development of knowledge as a social phenomenon and holds that perception can only evolve within the cradle of communication.

Gergen (1985) regards social constructionist inquiry as being principally concerned with explicating the processes by which people come to describe, explain or otherwise account for the world (including themselves) in which they live. Social constructionism attempts to articulate common forms of understanding as they now exist, as they have existed in prior historical periods, and as they might exist should creative attention be so directed.

Gergen (1985) distinguishes a number of assumptions that such work manifests

at a metatheoretical level. These assumptions include the following :

1. What we take to be experience of the world does not itself indicate the terms by which the world is understood. What we take to be knowledge of the world is not a product of induction, or of the building and testing of general hypotheses. The mounting criticism of the positivist-empiricist conception of knowledge has severely damaged the traditional view that scientific theory serves to reflect reality in any direct or decontextualized manner.

2. The terms in which the world is understood are social artifacts, products of historically situated interchanges among people. From the constructionist position the process of understanding is not automatically driven by the forces of nature, but is the result of an active, cooperative enterprise of persons in relationship.

3. The degree to which a given form of understanding prevails or is sustained across time is not fundamentally dependent on the empirical validity of the perspectives in question, but on the vicissitudes of social processes (e.g., communication, negotiation, rhetoric, conflict).

4. Forms of negotiated understanding are of critical significance in social life, as they are integrally connected with many activities in which people engage. Descriptions and explanations of the world themselves constitute forms of social action.

Gergen (1985) states that social constructionism will have far reaching implications for both the character of psychological inquiry and for the nature of science more generally. From this perspective all psychological theorizing and the

full range of concepts that form the grounds for research become problematic as potential reflectors of an internal reality and become themselves of analytic interest. The explanatory locus of human action shifts from the interior region of the mind to the process and structure of human interaction.

Social constructionism then, implies theoretical dislocation. The mind becomes a form of social myth. The selfconcept is removed from the head and placed within the sphere of social discourse. "Facts about the nature of the psychological realm are suspended. Each concept (motive, emotion, etc.) is removed from an ontological base within the head and is made a constituent of social process" (Gergen, 1985, p.266).

In terms of social constructionism and the character of science, the challenge is essentially that of grappling with a new conception of knowledge. Gergen (1985) states that constructionism must eschew the empiricist account of scientific knowledge. It abandons then, the subject-object dichotomy central to disciplinary debate and challenges dualism as the basis for a theory of scientific knowledge. What is confronted is the traditional Western conception of objective, individualistic and ahistoric knowledge. Gergen (1985) proposes the possibility of an alternative scientific metatheory based on constructionist assumptions. Such a metatheory would remove knowledge from the data-driven and/or cognitively necessitated domains and place it in the hands of people in relationship.

Hoffman (1994) summarizes the point of departure of social construction theory by stating that social construction theory holds that our beliefs about the world are social inventions. Social construction theorists see ideas, concepts and memories as arising from social interchange and mediated through language. All knowledge evolves in the space between people, in the realm of the common world. The

individual develops a sense of identity or an inner voice only through ongoing conversation with intimates.

Social constructionists then, place emphasis on the intersubjective influence of language, family and culture. Gergen (1985, p.267) emphasizes "texts" that create identity. The idea that knowledge is anything but local, and indeed the idea of an objectively knowable truth is banished. Social constructionism sees the development of knowledge as a social phenomenon and holds that perception can only evolve within a cradle of communication (Hoffman, 1994).

MEANING

Social construction theory posits an evolving set of meanings that emerge unendingly from interactions between people. These meanings are not skull-bound and may not exist inside of what we think of as the individual "mind". Meanings are part of a general flow of constantly changing narratives (Hoffman, 1994).

Social constructionism then, is a subset of postmodernism can be summarized in the phrase "An End to Essences". A central part of social construction theory lies in the meaning given to the word "social". Essences do not exist as ideal forms by themselves, but they exist in the social realm where language, action and meaning intersect (Gergen, 1985, p. 267).

In a following section the intersection between language, action and meaning in the social construction of gender will be discussed briefly.

The Implications of a Social Constructionist Stance for Research

Gergen (1985) proposes social construction theory as a new paradigm for the

social sciences.

Mary Gergen (1988) makes recommendations for new methodology standards for social science research.

These recommendations are the following :

1. Recognizing the interdependence of experimenter and subject.
2. Avoiding the decontextualization of subjects or experimenters from their social and historical surroundings.
3. Recognizing and revealing the nature of one's important values within the research context.
4. Accepting that facts do not exist independent of their producers' linguistic codes.
5. Demystifying the role of the scientist and establishing an egalitarian learning relationship with subjects.
6. Acknowledging the interdependent relationship between science makers and science consumers.

These ideas are particularly useful in conceptualizing an approach to research that recognizes the impossibility of detached scientific observation, as well as my own participation as researcher, in the construction of the whole research process, including my interpretation of "findings".

MS.

Positivist science has been widely critiqued in recent years, particularly for its assumption of objectivity and neutrality and its failure to locate itself within historical or political contexts.

Social constructionists challenge the positivist beliefs that it is possible "to obtain an objective account of the world...not mediated by our language, by our interpretations, by our localization in the field of social structures." (White, Epston & Murray, 1992, p.96).

Social construction theorists emphasize that knowledge is power, that power allows some persons to define what constitutes true knowledge, and that dominant constructions of reality oppress other alternative or subjugated knowledges (Myers, 1994).

The critical questions for social constructionists have to do with "which values and social institutions are favoured by each of multiple versions of reality and whose interests are served by competing ways of giving meaning to the world" (Myers, 1994, p.87).

In the context of these statements regarding new methodology standards for social science research, the proposed structure of this dissertation arose. The following comments on this proposed structure must be interpreted in this context.

Notes on the Proposed Structure of this Dissertation

I locate myself in this discussion as a researcher and as a therapist, influenced by feminist, contextual and social constructionist ideas. It is from this perspective of attempting to view the world simultaneously in terms of gender-linked power,

interactional systems, and meaning systems that I propose the following structure for this dissertation

The proposed structure of this dissertation is that of parallel chapters and commentary. During the course of this dissertation, the reader will encounter interwoven chapters and commentary, where the commentary serves as a metatext to the preceding chapter.

The proposed structure consists of sections within sections. I will refer to the commentary as "metatext" during the course of the dissertation. Although the metatext is designed to comment on the content of the preceding chapter, the metatext will also serve as an attempt to comment on the process of deconstruction/construction in the preceding chapter.

The initial, introductory chapter and the final chapter of this dissertation take the form of single units.

The dual structure of this dissertation came into being, essentially because of three important considerations :

Located as researcher + therapist influenced by

The first consideration was the position in which I located myself at the beginning of this section. The dual structure facilitates my location of myself as researcher, and as therapist, influenced by feminist, contextual, and social constructionist ideas. This structure affords me a vehicle to make descriptions simultaneously in terms of gender-linked power and interactional systems (the chapters themselves) and meaning systems (the metatext).

The second consideration was that of content. Since this dissertation calls itself

"postmodern", I had to find a vehicle by which I could comment directly on the content of the chapters themselves. The metachapters in this dissertation therefore, serve the purpose of commenting on the content of the sections preceding them.

The third consideration was that of process, or the problem of writing a postmodern text.

I term the writing of a postmodern text as problematic, since the process of writing a postmodern text raised a number of questions in itself.

These were the following :

- 1. How to write a postmodern text, and in the process comment on that which has been written ?
- 2. How to write a text that infolds on itself and still makes sense ?
- 3. How not to create an impersonal academic text that is in itself a metadiscourse with a legitimizing theory ?
- 4. How to lend immediacy to the writing ?
- 5. How can the structure of this dissertation reflect the process of my writing ?
- 6. How can the structure of this dissertation reflect my own process of epistemological change and comment on that process ?

My response to the problem of writing a postmodern text is the dual chapter

structure proposed earlier. As mentioned earlier, the proposed structure is that of a text within a chapter (a metatext) that can serve as an independent text. At the same time, this subtext is recursively linked to the original text.

I call the first chapter the "original chapter" because these chapters were conceptualized and written first, in terms of chronology. The commentary of the metatext followed some time later. This is a matter of some importance, since this structure has been designed to afford me the opportunity to utilize a voice other than an academic impersonal voice. The impersonal academic voice belongs to the modern, along with objectivism and the "truth". In the light of the epistemological shift as represented by the dual chapter structure, it is impossible for me to present views as if they were "facts", without commenting on that presentation in some way.

This structure therefore affords me the opportunity to include the observer (myself) in the process of writing.

I will now direct attention towards my theoretical considerations in the construction of this dual structure, i.e. postmodernism and social constructionism as discussed earlier in this chapter.

The dual structure of this dissertation allows me to replace objectivist ideals with an analysis of the text for political and social agendas in a single text, since it is subdivided into text and metatext. Since I consider this dissertation to be in keeping with this ongoing tradition of criticism, it follows that I cannot merely make statements as if they were objectively verifiable facts. This dual structure allows me to analyze my own text for hidden political and social agendas.

The dual structure of this dissertation affords me the opportunity to comment on assumptions of objectivity and positivism as they occur.

The dual structure of this dissertation makes the process of deconstruction (both of other texts and my own) immediately obvious to the reader.

As mentioned earlier in this section, the dual structure would allow me to mirror and represent my own epistemological shift.

The dual structure of these chapters would make it possible for me to make my own text the object of my own observation. Lax (1992) states that this process in itself shifts discourse, and thus perspective. This structure enables me to step aside from the discourse in which I was initially engaged and to view it from a different perspective.

In the final instance, the dual structure of this dissertation can be seen as an attempt to reject all certain positions as well as an attempt to reject representational, objective and rational concepts of the truth, and to reject grand theories of reality. It attempts to acknowledge subjectivity as an effect of discursive practices.

The Social Construction of Gender

Although the social construction of gender and the influence of language as well as the role of metaphor specifically will be discussed in detail in the following chapter, this section will be incomplete without a discussion of the aspects of social constructionist theory that underlie the social construction of gender.

Gergen (1985) states that social constructionism has been nurtured in the soil of discontent. It began with radical doubt in the taken-for-granted world - whether in the sciences or in daily life - and in a specialized way acts as a form of social criticism. Constructionism asks one to suspend belief that commonly accepted categories or understandings receive their warrant through observations. Thus, it invites one to challenge the objective basis of social knowledge.

In an investigation of the social construction of gender, an attempt is made to break down the seemingly incorrigible fact that there are two genders. By examining the variations in the way differing cultures and subcultural groups understand gender, the referents for the terms "man" and "woman" are obscured (Gergen, 1985).

Feminist thinkers have been aware of the possibilities of social constructionist theory. For feminists, the empiricist orientation to knowledge has not been a congenial perspective, since it can be seen to advocate the manipulation, suppression and alienation of those one wishes to understand (Gergen, 1985).

From the feminist perspective, empiricist science can be seen to have been employed by males to construct views of women that contribute to their subjugation. Both the process and the products of empiricist science can therefore be attacked. As a result feminists have searched for alternative forms of understanding. Constructionism, because on its emphasis on the communal basis of knowledge, processes of interpretation, and concern with the valuational underpinnings of scientific accounts has become a viable alternative (Gergen, 1985)

In the following chapters the social construction of gender will be discussed in

detail.

Conclusion

The preceding chapter focused attention on postmodernism and social constructionism as a subset of postmodernism. In the following chapters the ambivalent relationship between feminist theorists and postmodern ideas will be highlighted. In a discussion of madness and gender as postmodern metaphor, this ambivalence may be set aside in the use of social constructionist theory. As mentioned in the preceding section, feminists have found that social constructionism acts, in a specialized way, as a form of social criticism.

CHAPTER 2

Madness

Deconstructing Madness

Madness is an emotive term. It serves to categorize, to separate, to designate as different. Madness has a long history - it is not a concept unique to the late twentieth century. In order to come to an understanding of the process of madness in people, i.e. being mad or being labeled as mad, we need to deconstruct the very concept of madness itself (Flax, 1990).

To use the term "madness" is to recognize the meaning attached to the perception of illness or dysfunction in the psychological domain and the stigma that is attached to it. To use the term "madness" recognizes the history, function and consequences of this "affliction" in different ages. The use of the term "madness", avoids entering into a discourse where systems of classification are deemed to exist as entities in themselves and where "illnesses" *cause* the disturbance in function in the first place (Flax, 1990).

Postmodern philosophies of knowledge can contribute to a more accurate and self-critical understanding of our theorizing and the intentions that underlie it. Postmodern philosophers offer a radical rethinking of the meanings and operation of power. Postmodernists share at least one common object of attack - the Enlightenment.

All these discourses are "deconstructive". They seek to distance us from and make us skeptical about ideas concerning "truth", knowledge, power, history, self,

and language that are often taken for granted and serve as legitimations for contemporary Western culture. According to postmodernists, many of these still predominant ideas are derived from a distinctive set of philosophical and political assumptions characteristic of Western thinking since the Enlightenment. Hence they seek to displace the metanarrative of the Enlightenment through a variety of rhetorical strategies (Flax, 1990).

In a deconstructive reading, one looks for what has been suppressed within a text or story. Given the premise that the Real is always heterogeneous and differentiated, it follows that whenever a story appears unified or whole, something must have been suppressed in order to sustain the appearance of unity. However, the suppressed within the story does not lose its power, it affects the character of the whole. This rereading transforms the story's meaning for us and lessens its hold of power over us (Flax, 1990).

To deconstruct the notion of madness requires focus on the function and experience of madness itself. Madness serves a function in every system it touches, be it society, the family or the individual. This statement is possible because madness can be perceived as acting as a signifier, clearly positioning the mad person as the Other.

"Madness" acts as a signifier which positions people, and especially women as ill, as outside, as pathological, as somehow second rate. The scientific and cultural practices which produce the meanings and "truths" about madness adopt the signifier "madness" as a means of regulating and positioning people within the social order. In order to deconstruct madness, it is necessary to deconstruct the discursive practices which are associated with madness, recognizing the connections between discourses of madness and other discourses such as those of

power, sexuality, misogyny and badness.

The term "discourse" is used here as Foucault uses it - it signifies a regulated system of statements, which has a particular genealogy (history). It is a set of rules which distinguishes it from other discourses, establishing both links and differences. The discourse is what organizes our knowledge about a subject and about the relation of both the individual and society to the subject (Flax, 1990).

Therefore the discursive practices which create the concept of madness mark it as fearful, as individual, as sickness and as possibly feminine. They function as a form of social regulation. The individual in distress, a distress that is 'real' in the sense that he/she is suffering, experiences that distress in a way which is defined by the particular discourse associated with madness. He/she is positioned in the discourse in a way which determines his/her experience (Ussher, 1991, p. 17).

If madness then, is shameful and fearful (as it is within our current discourse), the person in distress is stigmatized as an outsider. One kind of discourse is used when Laing argues that madness is a "perfectly rational adjustment to an insane world" and yet another discourse is being employed when medical professionals maintain that madness result from "a chemical imbalance in the brain, usually genetically transmitted" (Ussher, 1991).

A deconstruction of madness does not take these discourses as isolated and independent statements, but as evidence of highly organized and regulated practices. Thus the system of dependencies of a discourse can be retraced and the history reconstructed which demonstrates how our present practices emerged and how they came to be constituted as they are at present. The deconstruction of madness allows us to see the way in which discursive regimes (Foucault's

epistemes) determine what we "know", what we think and what we do. This implies that it is possible to perceive how the "truth" about madness will depend on whichever discourse is presently dominant. Therefore, the knowledge and belief in the "facts" about madness, the way in which we label and treat it, the experience of the "mad" person, are governed by these evolving discourses (Ussher, 1991).

Discourses which regulate femininity, "woman" and "the mad" are invariably linked. As mentioned earlier in this section, the discourse is what organizes our knowledge about a subject - in this case about madness - and about the relation of both the individual and the society to that subject. One of the foundations of the critiques concerning gender and madness is that madness is not an illness, but a social construction, which can be seen to be based on patriarchal principles. The feminist arguments concerning madness and gender include the notion that definitions of madness are based on value judgments and prescriptions of normality which support existing power structures. The woman is positioned within the discourse in a way which determines her experience. Thus, if madness is shameful and fearful, as it is within our current discourse, the woman is stigmatized and made an outsider. This relationship between madness and gender will be discussed at length in subsequent sections (Ussher, 1991).

Ultimately therefore, this is more than the deconstruction of madness. The deconstruction of madness is also the construction of a discourse about madness, which will alter the "truth" and the "facts" concerning madness.

In the following section, attention will be focused on the genealogy of madness in order to recover the suppressed within the discourses associated with madness. Such a deconstruction will transform the meaning of the construct of madness and lessens its hold or power over us.

Madness in the Middle Ages

Universal beliefs and practices connected with them are the material out of which social movements and institutions are constructed. The behavior of persons whose conduct differs from that of their fellows, constitutes a mystery and a threat. The notions of demonic possession and madness supply a primitive theory for explaining such occurrences and appropriate methods for coping with them (Szasz, 1970).

Medieval Europe was dominated by the Church. In a religious society, deviance from the norm was conceptualized in theological terms : the "deviant" is the witch, the agent of Satan. Thus the sorceress who healed, the heretic who thought for himself, the fornicator who lusted too much, and the Jew who rejected the divinity of Christ in a Christian society, were all characterized as "heretics". Each, as an enemy of God, was prosecuted by the Inquisition (Szasz, 1970).

The beliefs that led to witch-hunts existed long before the Thirteenth Century. People have a powerful need to perceive the causes of natural disasters , epidemics, personal misfortunes and death. The movement with the ostensible aim to protect society from harm, became the Inquisition. The danger was the witch, the protector was the inquisitor (Szasz, 1970).

Similarly, although the concept of madness existed long before the Seventeenth Century, only then did European society begin to organize a movement based on it. This movement, with the ostensible aim to protect society from harm, became Institutional Psychiatry. The danger was the madman or -woman. The protector of society was the psychiatrist. The persecution of witches lasted more than four centuries. The persecution of mental patients lasted for three centuries and is still

continuing (Szasz, 1970).

For millennia, the hierarchical model of social relations, regarded as the divine blueprint for life on earth as well as in heaven, and hell, appeared to men to be the only conceivable order of human affairs. Historical scholarship has come to recognize that in the West, the turn of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries formed the period in which the seeds for future constitutional development as well as for the standing of the individual in society were sown. Social transformation of such magnitude do not occur without human suffering. The rulers, afraid of losing power, redouble their domination; the ruled, afraid of losing protection, redouble their submission. In an atmosphere of change and uncertainty, the rulers and ruled unite in a desperate effort to solve their problems. They find a scapegoat, hold it responsible for all societies ills and proceed to cure society by killing the scapegoat (Szasz, 1970).

For centuries, the Church struggled to maintain its dominant role in society. For centuries the witch played her role as society's appointed scapegoat. From the beginning of its labours, the Inquisition recognized the difficulty of identifying witches. The inquisitors and secular authorities were provided with criteria of witchcraft and specific guidelines for their work. The medieval literature on witchcraft, is primarily concerned with one or both of these subjects. Among these works, the *Malleus Maleficarum* is recognized as the most important (Szasz, 1970).

Among the criteria for witchcraft, questioning the existence of witchcraft is one of the most important. To question the existence of witches is itself a sign of being a heretic. To induce others into performing "evil wonders" is a sign of witchcraft. The *Malleus* further states that it is women who are "chiefly addicted to Evil

Superstitions". Among women, midwives were seen to surpass all others in wickedness. The reason why women are usually witches is that "All witchcraft comes from carnal lust, which is in women insatiable". The reason why men are protected from this is that Jesus was a man. The *Malleus* therefore, is a kind of religious-scientific theory of male superiority, justifying and demanding the persecution of women as members of an inferior, sinful and dangerous class of individuals (Szasz, 1970, pp. 64-66).

One of the few critics of witch-hunts in this age was Johann Weyer, physician to Duke William of Cleves. Like his contemporaries, Weyer acknowledges the "existence" of witches and witchcraft. He stated however that the majority of people accused of witchcraft are not of this type. He characterizes people who are thus accused as innocent of any wrongdoing, but rather as being *unfortunate, miserable and deluded* (Szasz, 1970).

The fundamental parallels between witchcraft and madness can be stated as follows: In the Age of Witchcraft, illness was considered either natural or demonic. Since the existence of witches as analogous of saints could not be doubted, the existence of disease due to the malefaction of witches could not be doubted. Physicians were thus drawn into the affairs of the Inquisition as experts in the differential diagnosis of these two types of illness (Szasz, 1970).

In the Age of Madness, illness is similarly considered either organic or psychogenic. Since the existence of minds as analogous of bodily organs cannot be doubted, the existence of disease due to the malefaction of the mind cannot be doubted. Physicians are thus drawn into the affairs of Institutional Psychiatry as experts in the differential diagnosis between bodily illness and mental illness (Szasz, 1970).

The inquisitors who opposed and persecuted heretics acted in accordance with their sincere beliefs, just as the psychiatrists who oppose and persecute the insane act in accordance with theirs. In so far as the psychiatrist truly believes the myth of mental illness, he is compelled, by the inner logic of this construction, to treat, with benevolent therapeutic intent, those who suffer from this malady, even though his patients cannot help but experience the treatment as a form of persecution (Szasz, 1970).

According to Szasz (1970), even though the Inquisition and Institutional Psychiatry developed from different economic, moral, and social conditions, their respective operations are similar. Each institution articulates its oppressive methods in therapeutic terms. The inquisitor saves the heretic's soul and the integrity of his church. The psychiatrist restores the patient to mental health and protects his society from the dangerously insane. Like the psychiatrist, the inquisitor is an epidemiologist : he is concerned with the prevalence of witchcraft. He is a diagnostician : he establishes who is a witch and who is not. Finally, he is a therapist; he exorcises the devil and thus ensures the salvation of the possessed person's soul. On the other hand, the witch, like the involuntary mental patient, is cast into a degraded and deviant role against her will; is subjected to certain diagnostic procedures to establish whether or not she is a witch; and finally, is deprived of liberty, and often of life, ostensibly for her own benefit.

According to Szasz (1970), once the roles of witch and mental patient become established, occasionally people will seek, for reasons of their own, to occupy these roles voluntarily.

In the final instance the theme that runs through Szasz's (1970) analyses of "madness" in the Middle Ages and his critique of Institutional Psychiatry is the

idea of the scapegoat and his/her function in the moral metabolism of society. His emphasis is on the idea that social man fears the Other and tries to destroy him/her. Paradoxically, social man needs the Other and if needs be, creates him/her. Then, invalidating him/her as evil, he may confirm himself as good (Szasz, 1970).

This approach to the discussion of madness, i.e. constructing a parallel between the Inquisition in the Middle Ages and Institutional Psychiatry in the twentieth century, will enjoy attention in a subsequent section of this chapter.

The Great Confinement

In the preceding discussion some emphasis was placed on Weyer's argument, namely the criticism of the concept of witchcraft and a plea for its replacement by that of mental illness. (There exists some controversy on the precise emphasis of Weyer's argument).

In the seventeenth century, the old social order of the Middle Ages gave way to a new secular and "scientific" cultural climate. The proper ordering of this new society was no longer conceptualized in terms of Divine Grace. Instead, it was viewed in terms of Public Health. In this society, as in any other, there were still the disadvantaged, the disaffected, and those who thought and criticized too much. Conformity was still demanded. The nonconformist, the objector, in short, all who denied or refused to affirm society's dominant values were still enemies of society. Its internal enemies were seen to be mad and Institutional Psychiatry came into being (Szasz, 1970).

Foucault (1965) terms this period "the great confinement of the insane". In the seventeenth century, 1656 to be exact, a decree was issued by Louis XI II that

founded the *Hopital General* in Paris. This establishment and others like it throughout France, were established by the following words : "We choose to be guardian and protector of said *Hopital General* as being of Royal Founding, which is to be totally exempt from the direction, visitation, and jurisdiction of the officers of the General Reform and from all others to whom we forbid all knowledge and jurisdiction in any fashion or manner whatsoever " (Dowbiggin, 1991, p16).

Insanity was regarded as a form of social deviance. In order to be considered mad, it was enough to be abandoned, destitute, unwanted by parents or society. These institutions served as as a combination of workhouse, prison, old people's home, orphanage and reformatory (Dowbiggin, 1991).

The regulations for admission into the Bicetre and the Salpetriere provide that "children of artisans and other poor inhabitants of Paris up to the age of twenty-five who used their parents badly or who refused to work through laziness, or, in the case of girls, who were debauched or in evident danger of being debauched, should be shut up. This action was to be taken on the complaint of parents, near relatives or the parish priest. "Prostitutes and women who ran bawdy houses" were to be incarcerated (Szasz, 1970, p.77).

Foucault (1965) states that a few years after its foundation, the *Hopital General* of Paris alone contained six thousand persons, or around one percent of the population.

Foucault (1965) describes this creation of general hospitals throughout France as "the great confinement" because they constituted an institutional answer to the problems of social deviance in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

The horrific conditions in these institutions have been well documented and described (Foucault, 1965).

The mad in the age of the great confinement were seen to be closer to animals than to human beings, their loss of reason in this age of emerging science resulting in the loss of their very essence of humanity. Consequently, the mad deserved no better treatment than that meted out to a bad or very difficult dog. The very fact that the mad managed to survive such maltreatment and neglect, that they managed to survive sleeping on the dirt, in freezing conditions without protective clothing, that they survived the degradation and filth, was more confirmatory proof to the asylum keepers and expert observers that they were closer to animals, and should be treated as such. Foucault (1965) argued that, if madness was animality, it could be mastered only by discipline and brutalizing.

In the final instance, the incarceration of large sections of the population in insane asylums in the age of the great confinement can be described as follows : The individual was committed not primarily to receive medical care, but rather to protect society and to prevent the disintegration of its institutions.

Madness in the Age of Reason

The nineteenth century heralded a change in the view of madness as unreason. The discourse of madness as illness had begun to gain pre-eminence during what Foucault (1965) has termed the advent of the age of reason.

Dramatic changes took place in the theory and practice of madness in the nineteenth century. Large county asylums were built and the insane, particularly the pauper insane, were separated from the destitute and the criminal. They

emerged as a distinct social category. Within asylums, methods of treatment changed. In several institutions physical restraint was completely abolished (Skultans, 1975).

Care, exercise and cleanliness replaced brutal incarceration as appropriate treatment for the afflicted. The Victorian period marked an increase in humanitarian treatment, accompanied by the establishment of the scientific experts, who promoted the rise in formal state institutionalized and "expert" care of the mad (Ussher, 1991).

The rise to dominance of the scientific philosophy in the nineteenth century has a number of important implications. It legitimized the male scientific experts who held pre-eminent positions in the community, for scientific expertise brought with it the power to define reality (Ussher, 1991).

As science became the guiding philosophy, as illness rather than demonic possession became accepted as explanation for deviancy and madness, the newly established professions of psychiatry and medicine, which had come to espouse positivistic principles, could claim monopoly in treatment (Ussher, 1991).

Foucault (1965) ascribes the rise of the experts in madness to the rise of capitalism and the concomitant power of the bourgeoisie. The availability of wealth in the newly emerging middle classes and the scientific developments of the nineteenth century can also be viewed as contributing factors in this regard.

Madness was placed firmly within the scientific discourse, the professionals (mainly medical) took control of the treatment, excluding those they deemed mavericks, the lay healers and women. The medical practitioners and the

developing psychiatric profession had their state mandate for control, a mandate they have to this day (Ussher, 1991)

Psychiatry in the nineteenth century is dominated by two contrasting themes. The first theme which emerges gradually from the early nineteenth century onwards, stresses a number of moral factors which act as counter-forces against insanity. Habit, perseverance, the will, and character may constitute such counteracting forces (Skultans, 1976).

The second theme emphasizes hereditary endowment or the "tyranny of organization". According to this theme insanity forms part of one's inheritance in the same way as does wealth and social standing. It emerges from 1879 onwards and can be seen as a revision to an earlier Hippocratic and platonic view (Skultans, 1976).

These two themes do not altogether exclude each other. To some extent they survive side by side. The importance attached to each varies throughout the century however, so that it is necessary to take into account the wider social context in which these theoretical changes take place (Skultans, 1976).

In terms of the moral explanations of insanity, the loss of moderation and the presence of excess were both popular in the nineteenth century. Excess pertaining to both behavior and emotions was indicated. In the upper and working classes, the excesses can be summarized as overindulgence, while over-application was indicated in the middle classes. Moral factors were seen as forces against excess and thus against insanity (Skultans, 1976).

Nineteenth century ideas on insanity can be regarded as two schools of thought,

each an elaboration of the views of Hobbes and Locke, respectively.

Hobbes's view of insanity is that of outrage and licentiousness in the absence of intellectual guidance. Locke's view of insanity, however is that madness is a self-contained defect of reasoning (Dowbiggin, 1991).

Another abiding interest of all nineteenth century writers on insanity is sexuality. A widespread conviction that sexuality was potentially dangerous was held throughout the nineteenth century. In men, these dangers were associated with masturbation and excess. In women, such dangers are intrinsic in the very cycle of their sexual development. Puberty, menstruation, childbirth and menopause are each fraught with particular moral dangers (Dowbiggin, 1991).

Add to this the fact that women are thought to be more liable by their very constitution and that the presented picture of femininity in this age is one of great fragility. In the upper and middle classes sickness and invalidism for women were almost in vogue. In Victorian society, the madwoman was incarnated in the form of the hysteric, the neurasthenic and the anorexic (Dowbiggin, 1991).

The importance of such female frailty to the medical profession and to the emerging industrial society cannot be overestimated. As patients, women could have no autonomy, no power and if frailty was essentially intertwined with femininity, women could not act independently. Women then, were seen as essentially "sick" (Ussher, 1991).

Foucault (1980) points out that the hysterization of women, which involved a thorough medicalization of their bodies and their sex, was carried out in the name of the responsibility they owed to the health of their children, the solidity of the

family institution and the safeguarding of society.

In the latter part of the nineteenth century, the theme of moral power is left by the wayside as economic depression and lack of social opportunity leads to the popularity of heredity as explanation for madness. A theme emerges which emphasizes the physical basis of insanity, or the importance of hereditary endowment. The implication is that there is a submerged category of the insane visible only to the clinical eye. The relationship between character and temperament and the way these relate to the body are emphasized (Skultans, 1976).

Dowbiggin (1991) states that there is a relationship between the economic climate, the professionalization of the medical and psychiatric industries and the increased popularity of heredity as explanation for madness.

Dowbiggin (1991) states that physicians in the nineteenth century were afforded important societal privileges in the diagnosis and treatment of madness. The professionalization and the construction of a body of knowledge such as degeneracy theory played an important role in the popularity of theories of heredity. By depicting themselves as proponents of the most up-to-date ideas of biological science, psychiatrists could uphold their claims to specialized expertise and gain the approval of powerful social groups whose interests were safeguarded by asylum alienists (a role similar to that of modern psychiatrists).

Madness and theories of madness in the nineteenth century then, became the property of the newly professionalized medical profession. The theories concerning the origin of madness espoused in the nineteenth century, whether they were moral, concerned with sexuality or with heredity, all served to entrench the medical professional as an expert on madness.

Madness in the Twentieth Century

The genetic or biological view of madness as mental illness, dominant within psychiatric discourse gave rise to the fear of the infiltration of madness into the community in the early part of this century. It was the basis on which thousands of supposedly mad people were forcibly sterilized. This justification is still used today for the sterilization of the "mentally handicapped".

The Antipsychiatrists

Dissension and revolt, resulting in attempts to overthrow the dominant discourse of madness have been endemic in every society where the concept of madness has existed. The rejection of the medical model by such critics as Laing, Szasz and Cooper and their combined arguments that the diagnosis of madness is a moral judgment based on value-laden conceptualizations of health and illness was embraced by radical mental health professionals and the media (Ussher, 1991).

A common element among the dissenters is that they take a relatively sociological or social constructionist perspective on madness (Ussher, 1991).

Thomas Szasz (1970) distinguished clearly between organic illness and madness, proposing that all mental illness is a myth. Szasz (1970) argues that madness is erroneously termed "mental illness". Mental illness could also be termed "problems of living" that are labeled as an illness by the medical profession in order to legitimize their own authority. Rather than being a biological or genetic phenomenon, behavior is deemed mad because it breaks social rules. The classification and the diagnosis of the behavior results in the individual's being scapegoated by an oppressive society.

This view is elucidated by Erving Goffman (1963) in which physical and mental illness can be clearly separated. Diagnosis of the latter is based on the social construct of health or normality, while the former can be said to be objective and value-free.

The antipsychiatry movement argues that supposedly objective diagnoses, based on 'clinical judgment' are subjective and arbitrary. These diagnoses are influenced by values, morals and political allegiances. Psychiatry is seen to constitute the medicalization of deviance in order to maintain social control (Ussher, 1991).

For the diagnosis of madness, the decision to ascribe a label to any particular person, is ultimately dependent on the views of the individual expert. Labeling theorists, such as Goffman (1963), see madness as "labeled violations of social norms". They argue that all madness is dependent on social or cultural values and not scientific objectivity. Society creates madness through a process of definition. Any person may commit a particular act, or exhibit a particular type of behavior, yet not receive the label of deviant, or mad person, either because the behavior makes sense in the context within which it is performed, or because the person exhibiting the behavior is within a social category less vulnerable to labeling. Psychiatry is thus seen as an agent of social control (Ussher, 1991).

Madness as Social Control

The cohesion of social groups is maintained by outsiders and aliens. The "Other" is needed to define the "One". The identity of the group as well as the definition of "normal" behavior is defined in terms of the outsider. The definition "madness" also determines the conceptualization of "sanity" (Flax, 1990).

By marking groups out as different, as deviant or as mad, normality is affirmed. The boundaries between "normal" and "abnormal" are an important part of the maintenance of society itself (Flax, 1990).

Other "outsider" groups such as prostitutes criminals, child abusers, rapists and people with AIDS serve the same purpose in society as the mad. These people are positioned as the Other, being both different and "deviant" (Flax, 1990).

Commentary on the views of the antipsychiatrists

Ussher (1991) states the the view of the antipsychiatrists on madness in the Twentieth Century takes a relatively sociological or social constructionist perspective. The arguments of these theorists criticize modernist assumptions like those of the possibility of an objective diagnosis of madness as being instead subjective, arbitrary and founded in values, morals and political allegiances.

The second part of the arguments of these theorists however, postulates that concepts of mental illness mainly function as "social myths" and are used as a means of social control.

With regard to this point, the views of the antipsychiatrists cannot be considered to be of a social constructionist nature.

Gergen (1985) regards social constructionism as being concerned with explicating the processes by which people come to describe, explain or otherwise account for the world (including themselves) in which they live.

Hoffman (1994) states that social construction theory holds that our beliefs about the world are social inventions. In this view, it is particularly helpful for therapists to think of problems as stories that people have agreed to tell themselves.

While it is true that the antipsychiatrists criticize the so-called objective position of the "expert" as well as role of society in the construction of mental illness, they do not pay attention to the role of the person who has agreed to tell him/herself the stories of problems and mental illness in the mutual construction of these stories in language. In other words, in this instance *psychiatry* is scapegoated, while the person with the problem is not acknowledged or regarded as an individual with choices by either the psychiatrists or the antipsychiatrists. A question that arises in this instance is whether the point of view of the antipsychiatrists can be regarded as a metadiscourse in itself.

An interest in postmodern semantics, narrative and linguistics has led Anderson and Goolishian (1988) to view human systems as linguistic systems. In terms of this view, the problems that people have, are conceptualized to exist in language.

Following this line of thought, it can be said that madness (a problem) exists in language. This implies that madness is created by those "in language" about the problem (this includes myself). This also implies that madness might be "dis-solved" in a process of developing new meanings and understandings (like this thesis).

In conclusion, it can therefore be stated that although the antipsychiatrists address many of the modern notions associated with the discourses surrounding the construction of madness, they fail to acknowledge their own roles as observers. Furthermore, they fail to acknowledge the role of human systems as linguistic meaning-generating systems or the role of the person with the problem in the construction of madness.

Feminist Deconstructions of Madness

One of the foundations of the preceding discussion is that madness is not an

illness but a social construction.

In the feminist analysis, this social construction is seen to be based on misogynist or patriarchal principles. Thus, as women have been controlled through witch-hunting, suttee and Chinese footbinding, they are now controlled through labels of madness and its subsequent therapy (Ussher, 1991).

The feminist argument - that the concept of madness is used to control deviant women and to maintain the dominant order - is not new. As discussed earlier in this chapter, sociologists, antipsychiatrists and historians have presented documentation to demonstrate that madness is socially constructed and "expert care" a means of enacting oppression of the mad with professional legitimacy. What the feminist argument added is the dimension of misogyny.

The feminist argument then, accepts that definitions of madness are based on value judgments and prescriptions for normality which support existing power structures. However, since these power structures are clearly patriarchal, the basic concepts outlined by the antipsychiatrists are reinterpreted within a feminist framework.

Within the feminist analysis, the labeling process is seen to serve the function of maintaining women's position as outsiders within patriarchal society, dismissing women's anger as illness, and thus dismissing women's misery as some internal flaw, hereby protecting the patriarchal social structures from any criticism (Ussher, 1991).

In the historical analysis of women's madness, the feminist critiques point out how nosological categories were ascribed to women who were archetypically

feminine, e.g. the hysteric, the neurotic and the anorexic (Ussher, 1991).

Feminist critiques of madness in the twentieth century argue that madness has become institutionalized as a discourse which legitimates the positioning of women as good/bad - attractive and seductive, dangerous and fearful. The discourse, associated with the fear of women and the confining power of madness in the nineteenth century, has taken on the veneer of respectability and has extended its authority to greater numbers of women (Ussher, 1991).

This extension of authority has been addressed in feminist social criticism which emphasizes that evidence of the oppression of women appears also in the emotional domain. Feminist analyses have described how women's so-called "emotional complaints" and "disorders" can be identified as either internalizations of oppression or as a largely ineffectual means of protest against oppression (Richters, 1991).

These analyses emphasize medical management as a powerful force exercising moral control in society. Medical management has been described as being a major contributor to women's emotional distress (Richters, 1991).

One dominant feminist theory of women's madness relates women's madness to societal norms of femininity. Expressions of emotional distress such as depression, agoraphobia, anorexia nervosa and bulimia, as well as personality disorders such as histrionic, borderline and dependent personality disorders are conceptualized as consisting of the emulation of the feminine ideal to the point of self-destruction (Richters, 1991).

In the last instance Ussher (1991) states that feminist deconstruction of madness describes madness as being more than either a label or a protest. It is also seen as being more than a representation of women's secondary status within phallogentric discourse or a return to misogyny and patriarchal oppression. Ussher (1991) states that in order to understand "madness" it is necessary to focus on the entire discourse which regulates "woman" rather than a focus on the individual.

Commentary on feminist deconstructions of madness

Feminist deconstructions of madness are similar to those of the antipsychiatrists in argument in that the feminist theorists also emphasize the notion of madness as not being a thing in itself, but a social construction. Furthermore, the feminist theorists also argue that madness is a form of social control. The feminist theorists add the dimension of gender, however. In the arguments of the feminists theorists, madness is not merely a construction that is a form of social control of deviants in general, but a construction that serves to maintain women's position as outsiders within patriarchal society. Feminist theorists interpret this process of the feminization of madness as dismissing women's misery as some internal flaw, thereby protecting patriarchal social structures from criticism (Ussher, 1991).

Again, these theorists do deconstruct some of the power relations implicit in the construction of madness in the twentieth century. However, the comments about the modernist nature of some of the epistemological assumptions of the antipsychiatrists made in the previous section, also apply to feminist theorists' deconstructions of madness.

In the first instance the either/or assumptions about gender as well as the assumption that gender is an essential and unchangeable part of the human condition on the part of feminist theory makes it possible to comment on these aspects of the epistemology of feminist theory. These aspects will be discussed in greater detail in a subsequent chapter.

In the second instance, the feminist deconstruction of madness with its emphasis on madness as a form of social control can be commented upon in terms of its failure to acknowledge the role of the person with the problem in constructing his/her own reality (like the antipsychiatrists).

In the third instance, also as with the antipsychiatrists, the feminist deconstructions of madness do not regard human systems as linguistic systems where problems exist in language and where madness is mutually constructed in language through communal interchange.

Feminist deconstructions of madness therefore also do not take into account the role of the observer creating the reality observed through the act of observing.

From this a question arises that does not feature in feminist deconstructions of madness, namely their own role in the construction of madness in general and the construction of female madness in particular.

This issue, as well as the issue of my own role in the construction of madness will be discussed in a following section.

Madness Deconstructed

In the deconstruction of the discourse of madness, it becomes clear that, which we call "madness", is the product of systematic and regulated discursive practices, whose genealogy can be historically traced to show their connections with other discourses, such as that of "witch". The meanings and assumptions fused into the construct of "madness" can be prised apart. It is then possible to see present practises as historically determined phenomena rather as timeless and

incontrovertible facts.

As mentioned in the preceding sections, the foundation of the discussion in this chapter is that of madness as a social construction. The argument follows that of the antipsychiatrists that definitions of madness are based on value judgments and prescriptions for normality which support existing power structures.

The argument also follows that of feminist critiques that argue the patriarchal nature of these power structures. The social construction of female madness according to the existing (patriarchal) power structures of society were therefore also discussed.

In this chapter therefore, the social construction of madness as a form of social control by the existing power structures of particular societies, with special reference to the social construction of female madness in those societies was discussed.

Comment on the Deconstruction of Madness

In the preceding chapter(s) the structure which I have chosen utilize is that of dual parallel chapters which serve the purpose of double deconstruction, that is a deconstruction of the concept of madness and the theories that inform this, as well as a subsequent deconstruction of this deconstruction.

Every section in this chapter consisted of an initial section, followed by a parallel section commenting on the initial section. The section that you are about to read is in itself a comment on the content of these deconstructions and deconstructions of deconstructions, as well as a discussion of the implications of the content.

This section will also comment on the process which is occurring in the unfolding of this thesis.

Hoffman (1993) states that the term "postmodern" implies the banishment of the idea of an objectively knowable truth. The implication of the banishment of the idea of an objectively knowable truth for this deconstruction of the discursive practices associated with the construct of madness is that the current discourse cannot be replaced by another (if different) discourse of madness. Tyler (1990) states that part of the ideology of modernism was that every discourse needed a legitimizing theory. Therefore, in order for the current deconstruction of the concept of madness to call itself "postmodern", it is impossible to substitute one discourse for another, thereby implying that the one equals "truth" or "fact" and the other not.

Legitimizing

This argument is particularly significant if one describes this "deconstruction" of madness in a different way. The process of "deconstruction" as is manifest here, can be seen to be analogous to the construction of madness as described in the initial sections in this chapter.

The history of the concept of madness (the genealogy) can be described as a process of replacing one discursive practice with another (as a means of social control). This "deconstruction" of the construct of madness exhibits the same process. It traces the replacement of one discursive practice with another, indeed, in the final instance it attempts to replace one discursive practice with another, one "truth" with another.

one
discourse
truth &
replaced
by another

Tyler (1990) states that the hall-mark of a postmodern view is an unwillingness to believe such meta-narratives. (The aspect of social control associated with the current "deconstruction" will be discussed more fully in the following chapter).

The postmodern unwillingness to believe such metanarratives is exemplified by the metachapters, or commentary that follows the original chapters.

If the idea of an objectively knowable truth is banished in this way, the notion of "reality" as being constructed by the observer in some way, comes to the fore. Sluzki (1985) emphasizes the metastep to include the observer's role in constructing the reality being observed. Reality is no longer conceived as independent from the observer's attempts to organize it.

The sections of metacommentary strive to emphasize this and to include the observer (myself) in the description.

This description and the preceding "deconstruction" are further contextualized by the current commentary on that process and further emphasis on the notion that the distinctions drawn here, are drawn by me, the observer. There is a necessary connection between that which is being observed and my self. Keeney (1983) emphasizes self-reference and an ethical consideration for how we (I) participate in the the construction of our (my) experiential universe.

The notion of recursion therefore becomes central in this process, i.e. both the process of "deconstruction" and the comment on the "deconstruction". Keeney (1983) describes recursion as distinctions drawn on distinctions, and emphasizes the importance of marking orders of recursion involved in any given explanation/description.

A postmodern description of madness would involve an acknowledgment that this description says more about the observer (myself) than it does about the construct of "madness".

This kind of description also involves the acknowledgment that my views are partial and open to correction. This involves a particular view of views (Keeney, 1983).

The notion of recursiveness (everything infolds on itself) applied to the idea of madness implies that this description of madness is informed by previous descriptions (discourses) of madness and that this description will, in turn inform subsequent descriptions.

If the notion of recursiveness is applied to the idea that madness is socially constructed, the implication is that I construct madness in a certain way. The way that I construct madness is informed by the way in which other people have constructed madness in the past and are currently constructing madness. The way in which others construct madness will in turn be informed by my current description, and so on. I will elaborate on this point in subsequent chapters.

The metacommentary on the construction of madness therefore amounts to change of change.

In the introduction to the metacommentary I have commented on the way in which this format allows me to mirror my own epistemological evolution (more change of change) in the structure of thesis. I have also commented on the fact that this structure allows me a voice in which to comment about my own role (as mentioned above) in the construction of madness, and in subsequent sections, on the role of this (different) deconstruction of madness in subsequent (different) constructions/deconstructions of madness.

CHAPTER 3

Gender

Introduction

Feminism has been described as one of the most important political-cultural events of the past decade (Nicholson, 1990). Feminism is a political movement inspired by a belief in the fundamental equality of men and women and is committed to the eradication of gender-based injustices. Feminist political activism seeks to raise awareness of gender inequalities and to rectify blatant injustices, such as injustices that were institutionalized in laws and entrenched in policies granting rights, opportunities, privileges and immunities to men that were systematically denied to women. Feminist scholarship seeks to identify and purge androcentric bias in traditional disciplines and to reshape dominant paradigms so that women's needs, interests, activities, and concerns can be analyzed and understood systematically as well as the development of research methodologies that are neither gender-biased nor gender-blind (Hawkesworth, 1994).

Flax (1990) states that the single most important advance in and result of feminist theories and practices is that the existence of gender has been problematized. Gender now appears to be a powerful and virtually all-pervasive force in the organization of many societies, in ways of thinking and in the constitution of each person, both male and female.

A fundamental goal of feminist theorists is to analyze gender. Questions relating to the way in which gender is constituted and experienced arise from this analysis. The study of gender includes, but is not limited to what are often considered to be

distinctively feminist issues : the situation of women and the analyses of male domination. Feminist sensitivity to the effects of gender has begun to radically transform approaches to questions of self, knowledge and power (Flax, 1990).

This transformation also resulted in changes in thinking about gender and it is now perceived as comprising any number of dimensions.

Gender comprises a social relationship that is both independent and autonomous from and shaped by other social relations such as race and economic status. It is viewed as a form of power that affects theories and practices of justice. It is a category of thought - thinking is both overtly and subtly gender-bound and biased. Thus, traditional concepts of epistemology must be transformed to include analysis of the effects of gender on and about thinking (Flax, 1990).

Every culture constructs ideas about gender, and in turn these ideas structure and organize all other forms of thinking and practice. Cultures identify and assign a possible range of attributes and activities to certain groups that comprise the culture. This process is justified , among other ways, by the concept of gender (Flax, 1990).

Gender is also seen to comprise a central constituting element of each person's sense of self and in a culture's idea of what it means to be a person. Gender partially structures how each person experiences and expresses him or her self. Individuals are defined in part by and through their membership in a gender group. There may also be gender-based differences in how one forms, experiences, and maintains intimate relations with others. These differences not only reflect the influence of externally defined "sex roles", but depend upon and evoke feelings that are part of the very fibre of the self (Flax, 1990).

Comprehension of gender relations has been complicated by the equation of gender with "sex". In this context "sex" refers to the anatomical differences between male and female. These anatomical differences appear to belong to the class of "natural facts" or "biology". In turn biology is equated with the pre- or nonsocial or natural. Gender then appears to be constituted by two opposing terms or distinct types of being : male and female. Because male and female seem to be opposing or fundamentally distinct types of being, gender is not perceived to be a social relation. Gender is viewed as a "natural" attribute of "the self" and "otherness" is attributed to the individual's possession of distinct qualities. Gender is not generally regarded as the symptom of particular, historical and socially constructed cultures. Furthermore, moral and political consequences follow from this distribution of "natural" properties (Ussher, 1991).

Feminist theorists introduced the concept of "gender system" to focus the attention of researchers on aspects of gender including the notion that gender is socially constructed and that it becomes an independent and determining factor in the organization of society. Feminist theorists conceive the "naturalness" associated with gender to be derived from the existence of social conditions that no longer exist or that are in rapid transition, the existence of male dominance and the previously unexamined identity between gender and anatomical sexual differences (Ussher, 1991).

The very search for a cause or "root" of gender relations, or male domination however, may reflect a mode of thinking that is in itself grounded in particular forms of gender or in other relations in which domination is present (Ussher, 1991). Flax (1990) states that "reality" can have "a" structure only from the falsely universalizing perspective of a dominant group. Criteria of theory construction, such as parsimony or simplicity may be met only by the suppression or denial of

the experiences of the "other(s)". Only to the extent that one person or group can dominate the whole, can "reality" appear to be governed by one set of rules, be constituted by one set of social relations or be told by one "story".

In the light of the discussion above, concepts of gender then, become a complex metaphor for the ambivalence about human action in the natural world. Even postmodern discourses are marked by contradictory metaphors of nature and gender. Flax (1990) states however that the use of gender as metaphor for such ambivalence blocks out further investigation of the ambivalence. Before proceeding to the current discussion of madness and gender as postmodern metaphor, this discussion will focus on the questions raised by feminism.

In order to understand gender as social relation, feminist theorists have begun to deconstruct the meanings we attach to biology, sex, gender and nature. These efforts at deconstruction will be discussed in detail in the following section.

The Nineteenth Century Women's Movement

The nineteenth century woman movement was the term used to indicate women's strivings to improve their status in and usefulness to society in the previous century.

Nineteenth century women of various kinds, times, and places had perceptively analyzed the circumstances of their sex. As individuals and in groups they had sought diverse means and ends to assert their share in directing the world's private as well as public destinies. They had sought to gain access to the rights and prerogatives that men had, and to reevaluate and revalue women's nature and abilities (Cott, 1987).

In the women's movement, three areas of effort can be distinguished, although within each, variations abounded. The first began early in the nineteenth-century and lay in service and social action, motivated variously by noblesse oblige or by neighborly and altruistic intent. This included benevolent, charitable social welfare and civic reform efforts in which women, seeing a special mandate for themselves because of their gender, discovered new strengths in collectivity and forms of self-assertion (Cott, 1987).

The second comprised of more overtly self-interested, more focused campaigns for "women's rights", i.e. rights equivalent to those that men enjoyed on legal, political, economic and civic grounds. The third included more amorphous and broad-ranging activity directed towards women's selfdetermination via "emancipation" from structures, conventions and attitudes enforced by law and custom (Cott, 1987).

These areas did not represent greater and smaller versions of the same set of actions, although they often overlapped, but rather represented conflicting versions, with the first and to a large degree the second, loyal to the existing social order and with the third at loggerheads with the status quo (Cott, 1987).

Participants in these efforts, while linked by their attempts to revise gender relations, drew on more than one intellectual, philosophical and political tradition. The tradition that most obviously nourished woman's rights advocates was Enlightenment rationalism, with its nineteenth century political legacy liberalism and its social representation bourgeois individualism. This tradition of ideas about the natural rights and liberties of all human beings underlay women's demands for the removal of social barriers "arbitrarily" designated by sex (Cott, 1987).

Another important generator and legitimator of women's social assertions was the Protestant faith. Much as orthodox Protestantism insisted on the customary gender differences as the bedrock of social and religious order and strove to limit woman's proper role to a certain circumscribed benevolence, the proselytizing churches elevated and endorsed woman's character and social role. Evangelical Protestantism in the nineteenth century supported the notion that women were morally superior to men and thus encouraged women to value themselves and their own contribution to social life (Cott, 1987).

The third major intellectual influence of the women's movement lay in socialist critiques of the inherent inequities in industrial capitalism organized on a competitive and individual basis. The utopian socialist visions of Claude St. Simon and Charles Fourier early in the century, and to a lesser extent Marx's historical materialism and model of class conflict as well as the harmonious corporatist proposals of Bellamy's Nationalism at the end of the century, provided models of an alternative social organization taken up by the women's movement. The communitarian socialist tradition was a resource for women who wanted to make the sexual division of labour and the relation of the private household to the rest of society matters for examination and change, rather than resigned acceptance (Cott, 1987).

Taking up the "cause of woman" implied differing from and expanding on the intellectual traditions mentioned above. Women criticized the insufficiencies of political discourse, they apprehended Protestant teachings at a different angle from that intended by most ministers and they adapted socialist models to their own purposes. They were eclectic in their selection of mentors and resources and the focus of the women's movement shifted more than once. Participants took up a number of causes, including education, employment, legal and civic rights, social

reform and personal behavior. In the last half of the nineteenth century various women's institutions came into being : homes for widows and orphans, schools and colleges, health institutes and clubs (Cott, 1987).

By the end of the century, these efforts resulted in women's educational, occupational and professional advance. Growing numbers of women wage-earners were employed in urban industries and services, in part due to technological advances such as the invention of the typewriter. The noticeable growth of single women's employment outside the home, the diversification of living patterns and family relationships that it implied and the emergence to social concern of a new type of woman, educated in college and trained to analyze social problems, set the stage for a new era in the women's movement (Eisenstein, 1988).

By the end of the century, the spectrum of ideology in the women's movement, comprised two viewpoints : the first was concerned with eliminating sex-specific limitations, the other with the desire to recognize rather than eliminate the qualities and habits called female and to protect the interests already ascribed to women. A tension existed between emphasis on the rights that women (like men) deserved, and emphasis on particular duties and services that women (unlike men) could offer society. The debate then, was between the viewpoints that women had to act to their own advantage or for the benefit of others. No collective resolution for these tensions occurred. Although shifts in emphasis over time can be discerned, the women's movement as a whole maintained a functional ambiguity (Eisenstein, 1988).

The women's movement at the turn of the century was manifesting change resulting from the increasing differentiation and heterogeneity among women in America. As the consolidation of industrial capitalism agitated the conflict between

capital and labour, waves of European emigration, migration from farms to cities, and the consequent rapid urban growth multiplied religious and cultural variety and created broader ranges of educational sophistication, cosmopolitan privilege and occupational distinction among women (Eisenstein, 1988).

With the new century, a new phase in thinking about women's emancipation emerged, which diverged from generations in the women's movement, but to which it was greatly indebted. The nineteenth-century women's movement handed on a complex legacy to women of the twentieth century. This emergent phase will be discussed in the following section.

The Birth of Feminism

The gathering momentum of change mentioned in the previous section displayed itself most vividly in the labour movement and the suffrage movement, which were themselves reciprocally influential (Cott, 1987).

The link between women's economic roles outside the home and their civic and other rights was inescapable. A chief beneficiary of women's efforts to be recognized as "permanent producers" was the movement for women suffrage (Eisenstein, 1988).

Reciprocal influence between women in their US suffrage movement and their counterparts in Britain and Europe reached a peak in the decade before World War I. Women suffrage constituted an international movement in all industrialized countries, especially Protestant ones (Cott, 1987).

British suffragettes were the newsmakers of the movement at the time. Like the

woman suffrage activity in the United States, the English movement relied on women's roles as economic producers in order to support their claims to freedom (Eisenstein, 1988).

The staging of sensational events, the use of nonviolent civil disobedience, and the disruption of government that came to be called militancy in the woman suffrage movement were tactics adopted from an inventory available in working-class, socialist and nationalist politics (Cott, 1987).

In the United States, because of the example of British suffragettes as well as the phenomenon of women workers on strike, the contributions of Socialist women and women suffrage activity after 1907 embraced the techniques used by the political left (Cott, 1987).

By 1910, women suffrage was a platform on which diverse people and organizations could comfortably stand. The nineteenth century view that the ballot represented the self-possessed individual, gained new emphasis on the ballot as being representative of group interest. Politics conveyed the message that votes enabled self-identified groups to have their needs answered. Population growth and immigration, industrialization and the growth of great cities were compelling people to reenvision the state as the arena in which differing group interests might be reconciled. In America, the population turned to political reforms in order to address the conditions created by industrialization, immigration and urbanization in this decade (Cott, 1987).

Because the vote was recognized as a tool of group interest as well as symbol of equal access of citizens to government, the demand for equal suffrage could be brought into accord with the notion that women differed from men. In fact, the

more women's special needs were stressed, the better the argument for women's suffrage. Between suffragist's demonstrations and working women's self-assertions, a reciprocally influential escalation took place. In both the USA and Britain, women extended the boundaries and the women's movement gained momentum (Cott, 1987).

In this context of rising expectation, the term "feminism" was adopted by the movement. From 1913 onward, the term "feminism" came into general use. This reflected a need to represent in language a series of intentions and a coherent constituency. In part it represented a semantic claim to female modernism. The very rapid and intense gravitation towards the term "feminism" about 1913 suggests that it was not merely a convenience, but that it marked a new phase in thinking about women's emancipation (Eisenstein, 1988).

Like the radicalism of contemporary male intellectuals, feminism infused political claims with cultural meaning and vice versa. Feminism constituted a movement against formalism. It embodied a refusal to accept the abstraction of womanhood as it had been handed down which was characteristic of the attempt to achieve self-determination. As a movement of consciousness, feminism intended to transform the ideas of submission and femininity that had been incalculated in women. The suffrage movement provided a ready vehicle for propagating this vision with imagination and ingenuity. Feminism drew connections between women's suffrage and more radical transformations of women's status. The suffrage movement, larger in numbers, and the feminist movement, larger in intent, were separable but overlapping and reciprocally influential (Eisenstein, 1988).

The vision combining equality of economic choice with heterosexual intimacy was essential to feminism in this decade. The movement severed ties with

Christianity and abandoned the stance of moral superiority, invoking instead women's sexuality. Feminists assigned more liberatory meanings and value to heterosexual attachment than did any women's rights advocates before them. The assumption was that free women could meet men as equals on the terrain of sexual desire, just as they could on the political and professional terrain (Cott, 1987).

By the end of the decade the tradition of political action and argumentation laid down by the women's movement was crucial to the coherence of feminism. It encompassed the spheres of contemporary suffrage and labour movements, as well as radical experiments in arts and politics. In its early days the feminist movement was characterized by ambiguous aims, such as joining the concept of women's equality with the concept of women's sexual difference. The aim of individualism was joined with concerted social action. The "human sex" was endorsed while political solidarity among women was being deployed. The results of the incorporation of these paradoxes would become clear in later decades (Flax, 1990).

In 1920, the ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment (a constitutional amendment giving women the right to vote) became the most obvious benchmark in the history of women in politics in the United States. The events of 1920 became a watershed for the feminist movement. The sex barrier to the ballot was eliminated, but the women's movement to gain the vote was ended (Cott, 1987).

Feminism between Wars

Feminism came under heavy scrutiny and fire by the end of the 1920's. From one point of view, feminism appeared to be outdated. It seemed to have been superseded by the reality that men and women worked together every day. From the other point of view, feminism appeared to be futuristic, projecting a world in

which women's self-seeking destroyed gender assignment, family unity, kinship bonds, social cohesion and human happiness. Feminism was being condemned for on the one hand, harping on the definition of sex and on the other hand, for trying to obliterate sex distinctions (Cott, 1987).

Within little more than a generation, drastic alterations had occurred in women's character and opportunities as citizens and workers, in women's freedom of social behavior, ideals and practices in marriage, and in self-esteem. Women who had been suffragists in the 1910's never failed to acknowledge the distance that they had traveled towards freedom from sex-defined restrictions (Eisenstein, 1988).

Theorizing about women's "real" happiness and its relation to societal health became an essential theme in social analysis and in anti-feminism in the twentieth century. Male accusations that both the culture and the economy had become feminized, formed the second aspect of the onslaught. At the centre of this lay the increased likelihood that women would think and act for themselves, which was perceived to be manifest in wage-earning outside the home, a climbing divorce rate and the waning of patriarchal familial authority (Eisenstein, 1988).

Assessments such as those mentioned above were made because women's suffrage did not have world-shaking effects, but also because of the economic crisis in the form of the Great Depression and because the rise of European fascism cast doubt on the expectation that democratization was irreversible (Cott, 1987).

The view of feminism as an adjustment to historical forces, gained popularity. It caused the new status of women to seem right and inevitable, but it masked women's purposive efforts to defy limitations dictated by sex, to establish their full right to labour and to alter gender hierarchy. From this viewpoint, there was little

necessity for ideology or action in the present or in the future. The basis for continuing feminist advocacy did not exist. A more interactive view of the relation between women's economic lives and feminist intentions might have provided such a basis.

Instead, equality of opportunity was embraced as a way out of the conceptual problem, namely how to understand women as a gender group without suppressing differences without forcing women into definitional sex-typing (Cott, 1987).

In the twentieth century, unlike the nineteenth, not every woman who ventured beyond home joined the women's movement. Some women navigated over or around sex-barriers, making all claims regarding sex and sex discrimination equivocal as compared to earlier generations. Women had achieved entry into the same arenas that men occupied, but they were not welcomed, nor were they regarded as the equals of their male counterparts (Eisenstein, 1988).

For decades after the 1920's, decentralization and diversification, competitions and sectarianism were the hallmarks of efforts to define women's interests and work towards parity between the sexes. Although suffrage was an outstanding victory, the great expectations held for it were not realized. Soon after 1920, the main women's organizations disintegrated, and feminism entered a long period of dormancy. When feminism sprang to life in the 1960's and the 1970's, it took new plural forms and the emerging women's movements of the sixties had to rediscover basic truths about the oppression of women for themselves. (Cott, 1988).

The development of these plural forms of feminism will be discussed in the following section.

The Problem of the "Other"

In 1949 Simone de Beauvoir, one of the founders of contemporary feminist theory, described the constricting and constricted lives of the "second sex". De Beauvoir delineated the many ways in which "woman" is defined and limited in her being as the (lesser) "other" to man. According to de Beauvoir, no woman escapes the consequences of such a position in a male-dominated culture - she is mutilated and deformed by the ideas and by the social relations (de Beauvoir, 1953).

De Beauvoir (1953) states that such mutilation does not exclusively constitute and is not a reflection of woman's "essence". Rather it is seen as the consequence of historical and therefore changeable forces (de Beauvoir, 1953).

This critique is crucially related to the problem of "Otherness" and how it is conceptualized. It emphasizes the recognition that the dominant culture fails to give authenticity to female lives, treating women as "Other". "Otherness" is seen by de Beauvoir (1953) as a necessary aspect of dualism and the categorization of persons. One can be Self only if one has the Other to contrast. De Beauvoir (1953) argues that women have no selfhood in this sense, since they are defined as Other to men - both by men and by themselves. This definition is necessary because to define oneself as Self, would break the interrelation between men and women and would require men and women to live separately, which she considers impossible.

De Beauvoir recognizes that transformation is not easily achieved, either for individuals or for society as a whole. De Beauvoir (1953) states that woman must be the primary agent of her own transformation and that of male-dominated culture. She states that even the most privileged or gifted woman bears the marks

of her experience as the lesser other. The "independent woman" may acquire real competence, but she will be forced to repudiate all that she has in her that is "different". De Beauvoir (1953, p.13) denounces "this reasonable modesty that has hitherto set the limits of feminine talent...none have ever trampled upon all prudence in an attempt to emerge beyond the given world".

Although no active or visible women's movement existed when de Beauvoir wrote "The Second Sex", it rang in changes in gender relations that occurred with the reemergence of feminism in the late 1960's. The reemergence of feminism in the 1960's and the different schools of thought that arose out of this emergence will be discussed in the following section.

A Brief Overview of Feminist Thought from 1960 to 1990

In the 1960's, women in the New Left began to extend prior talk about women's rights into a more encompassing discussion of women's liberation. They encountered fear and hostility from their male comrades, who employed Marxist political theory as a rationalization for their reactions. Men of the New Left argued that gender issues were secondary because they were subsumable under more basic modes of oppression, namely class and race. In response to this practical-political problem, radical feminists such as Firestone invoked biological differences between men and women to explain sexism. This enabled them to claim that gender conflict was the most basic form of human conflict and the source of all other forms of conflict, including class conflict. They drew on the pervasive tendency in modern culture to locate the roots of gender differences in biology. These early theorists used biologism to establish the primacy of the struggle against male domination rather than to justify acquiescence to it (Nicholson, 1990).

In the early 1970's, Marxist and feminist anthropologists began stating that appeals to biology do not allow an understanding of the enormous diversity of forms which both gender and sexism assume in different cultures. Feminist social theorists came to recognize that accounting for the diversity of forms of sexism was as important as accounting for its depth and autonomy. In 1974, Rosaldo suggested that common to all known societies was some type of separation between the domestic sphere and the public sphere. The former was associated with women and the latter with men. Because, in most societies, women have to spend a good part of their lives bearing and raising children, their lives have been bound to the domestic sphere. Men, however have had both the time and the mobility to engage in those out of home activities that generate political structures. Thus, while in many societies women possess some or even a great deal of power, women's power is always viewed as illegitimate, disruptive and without authority (Nicholson, 1990).

Since the late 1970's feminist social theorists have largely ceased speaking of biological determinants or a cross-cultural domestic/public separation. Although many theorists have given up the assumption of monocausality, some have continued to implicitly suppose a quasi-metanarrative conception of theory.

Nicholson (1990) refers to Chodorow's analysis of mothering as an example of this. This analysis sets out to explain the internal, psychological dynamics which led many women to willingly reproduce social divisions associated with female inferiority. The answer she offered was in terms of gender identity : female mothering produces women whose deep sense of self is relational and men whose deep sense of self is not. Related to this work is the theorizing of Fergusson and Folbre, Hartsock and MacKinnon, who have built similar theories around the notions of sex-affective production, reproduction and sexuality

respectively (Nicholson, 1990).

Some feminist theorists set out to develop gynocentric alternatives to mainstream androcentric perspectives. An example of this type of feminist theorizing is the work of Gilligan (1982), which has sought to expose and redress androcentric bias in the Kohlberg model of moral development. She argued that it is illegitimate to evaluate the moral development of women and girls by reference to a standard drawn exclusively from the experience of men and boys. She proposed to examine women's moral discourse on its own terms to discover its immanent standards of adequacy (Nicholson, 1990).

The practice of feminist politics in the 1980's has generated pressure against metanarratives. Poor and working-class women, women of colour and lesbians have won a wider hearing and have exposed embedded quasi-metanarratives in feminist theorizing. The class, race and ethnic awareness of the movement was altered and with it the preferred conception of theory. There was a growing interest among feminists in modes of theorizing which were attentive to differences and to cultural and historical specificity (Nicholson, 1990).

Feminist scholarship in the 1980's then, was characterized by a decreased interest in grand social theories and scholarship became localized and issue-orientated. However, essential vestiges persisted in the continued use of ahistorical categories such as "gender identity" (Nicholson, 1990).

Specific schools of feminist thought that arose from the periods mentioned above will be discussed in the following section. In the sixties two different women's movements emerged. Business and professional women started to campaign for equality with men in employment, law, education and politics. Other

women worked in loosely organized groups that adopted larger goals such as liberating women from sex-role stereotypes and reshaping sexist institutions. The resulting diversity is a strength, but makes it difficult to generalize about the movement's distinctive characteristics. However, a comparison of the current movement with that of a century ago can bring several features of modern feminism into sharper relief.

Feminisms

Socialist Feminism

Socialist or socialist-Marxist feminism is particularly prevalent in Britain and Europe. This type of feminist thinking adheres to the notion of the social construction of female oppression. The capitalist structure of society is seen as being at the centre of this construction (Ussher, 1991).

Socialist feminism focuses on the economic and social system and how it sustains unequal relations between the sexes in the personal domain and unequal opportunities in the public domain (Haste, 1993).

The argument of socialist feminism is that the Industrial Revolution destroyed the pattern of the family unit which had hitherto combined domestic and production roles. In the new, large industrial units, man became the breadwinner and women became to a large extent the support for his labour, even though there was extensive child and female labour during this period. This conception of the family treats the man as economic head of the household and widens the gap between public and private spheres. The goal of feminist critique and feminist reconstruction within this framework is redefining the conception of difference

which maintains women in this state of dependency (Haste, 1993).

Socialist feminism mounts an attack on "essentialism", whether physical or psychological, but it also attacks existing rhetorical boundaries. The overarching concept is a model of natural justice, where there is sexual equality at home, in the workplace and in economic rewards (Ussher, 1991)

Socialist feminism deals with sex difference by advocating a model of androgyny, where both sexes have the characteristics that are traditionally deemed feminine and masculine. Dualistic dimensions of interrelationship, such as active-passive and public-private, are interpreted as the outcome of a patriarchal culture that is sustained by an oppressive relationship between the sexes (Haste, 1993).

Flax (1990) states that the metaphor which socialist feminism draws upon are Marxist models, applying systems of thought originating in the economic and work spheres to gender. The categories derived by Marx from his description of a particular form of production of commodities are applied to all areas of human life, in all historical periods. Socialist feminism makes issues of production and the division of labour key elements in the explanation of gender difference. In order to overcome the criticism that this description is not necessarily true for all cultures at all times, socialist feminist theorists have extended the concept of production to include most forms of human activity.

Flax (1990) states that socialist feminism is an Enlightenment model of human relations.

Liberal Feminism

Ussher (1991) states that the development of liberal or egalitarian feminism can be seen in to be rooted in the bourgeois development of the free market economy, wherein sex discrimination is deemed a hindrance to the operation of the market, and thus should be overthrown.

This model of feminism is associated in the United States with the National Organization for Women, which was founded after the publication of Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* in 1963. Subsequently the term has come to refer to reformists of both sexes who believe that the problems of gender inequality can be solved by changing the law and by persuasive campaigns to change discriminatory attitudes (Haste, 1993).

The viewpoint of liberal feminism is that men and women are equal, and given the opportunity and access to power, women will thrive and succeed. Biology is not seen as an insurmountable obstacle to women's emancipation. It is argued on the contrary, that any biological limitations imposed on women by patriarchal society will be eradicated by fundamental changes in social structures (Ussher, 1991).

In the liberal feminist tradition, inequalities evident within society are largely engendered by iniquitous socialization of males and females, in which girls are socialized into passivity and conformity, are denied an autonomous existence and are prepared for subservience to men. Factors such as education, the media and relationships within the family are believed both to create and to maintain gender roles, preparing women for their existence as the "second sex" (Ussher, 1991).

It is argued then, that if appropriate changes in both childhood socialization and institutional structures can take place, a liberal utopia in which people can achieve on the basis of individuality rather than gender, will ensue. According to this view, the free market economy will out. In disciplines such as psychology, liberal feminists have made "egalitarian corrections" in an attempt to redress the balance and demonstrate the fallacy in much of the psychological theorizing about women (Ussher, 1991).

Haste (1993) states that liberal feminism does not have a voice in feminist theory, but that it takes up a very important position in mainstream culture. The expression of liberal feminism is seen primarily in the pages of news media and in policy documents of mainstream culture, where acceptable versions of change and pressure to change can be presented.

There is debate on whether liberal feminism is representative of left wing thinking (Eisenstein, 1987) or whether it can be seen as part of the New Right (Haste, 1993). In any event, liberal feminism extends right-wing principles to include gender. At the same time, in keeping with this rhetoric, they endorse a free market economy, an ethos of individualism and a belief that one has responsibility for one's own life.

The dimension of self-development is seen as a major element of liberal feminism. The goal is wholeness and the realization of one's full potential. Discrimination impedes this, hampering one's development (Haste, 1993).

In Flax's (1990) terms, liberal feminism may be termed an Enlightenment model of gender.

Psychoanalytic Feminism

Both the theories and the therapy of psychoanalysis were rejected by feminists in the 1960's and the 1970's as misogynist. In more recent years however, dissatisfaction with the inability of egalitarian or liberal theories to explain women's continued inequality despite increased opportunities and the realization that women have internalized patriarchal discourse, have marked a turn towards psychoanalysis as a means of understanding women's response to the patriarchy. As the role of sexuality, power and ideology began to be acknowledged, psychoanalysis was seen as providing a framework for the investigation of these issues (Ussher, 1991).

Psychoanalytic feminists emphasize the roles of language, and of sexuality as well as ambivalence felt towards the mother. They have brought the whole array of psychoanalytic theorizing to bear on explanations of "the woman question". This kind of thinking places the role of the individual woman within society at the centre of the debate, as the unconscious is deemed to be the site of interactions between the body, history and psychic representations (Ussher, 1991).

Psychoanalytic theory as articulated by Freud, has as its basic premise the assumption that conscious and unconscious forces exist and that they operate in conjunction with each other. According to psychoanalytic theory, sexuality begins from the moment of birth and sexuality is a product of the individual's history (history both in an individual sense as well as the role of wider social factors in the formation of identity) (Ussher, 1991).

Freud posited that the father plays a major role in the formation of a woman's sexuality through the feelings of desire and guilt which occur at the Oedipal stage

of development. According to this theory, when a female child realizes her lack of a penis, she interprets it as a punishment of her sexuality, and blames her mother for her penisless state. Female heterosexuality is seen as being formed by penis envy. This phallogentric view of female psychology and sexuality has been challenged by both psychoanalytic and feminist theorists, who view the relationship with the mother as much more important in women's development and sexuality (Ussher, 1991).

Flax (1990) states that the organization of child rearing within the family had come to be seen as an activity which has fundamental consequences for virtually every aspect of human existence. Utilizing a psychoanalytic framework, feminist theorists began to argue that child rearing arrangements are central elements in the construction of gender identity and the self as well as in the origin and replication of male-dominated gender relations. Feminist analyses of child rearing arrangements (especially mother-child relations) have been central in the development of feminist theorizing. Paradoxically, this work has given rise to confusion and ambivalence regarding practices and meanings related to child rearing practices.

Despite the questions mentioned above, feminist theorists agree on basic premises regarding this theme : The centrality of the unconscious in human life, the difference between biological sexuality and the organization of gender as well as the importance of child rearing arrangements and families to the construction of gender identity (Flax, 1990).

In addition to this focus on the mother, emphasis on the role of language in creating and maintaining symbolic order has most clearly marked the contribution of late twentieth-century psychoanalytic thinking to feminist theorizing.

Psychoanalytic feminist theorists have developed their theories in this regard from the work of Freud, Klein, Winnicott and Lacan (Flax, 1990).

Despite marked divisions along the lines of theoretical origins, one of the most influential theorists in feminist psychoanalysis has been Lacan. Drawing on theories of linguistics and semiotics, Lacan argues that, prior to the Oedipal crisis, the child belongs to the realm of the Imaginary, where it believes that it is part of the mother and can perceive no separation between itself and the world. On acquisition of language, the child enters the "symbolic order" where it takes up "The Law of the Father", signified by the phallus, the symbol of patriarchal order and power. The male child possesses the penis, which is the signifier for the phallus, whilst the female child experiences only the absence of the penis and thus of access to power. Women then, are confronted through lack, with Otherness (Flax, 1990).

The term "symbolic" refers to a "set of meanings that define culture and are embedded in language". This lies beyond the individual but represents an order of humanity "...in which each of us has to take up position or risk psychosis". The positing of a symbolic order that is created by linguistic representations suggests that identity and subjectivity are ultimately linguistic constructs - they cannot exist outside of language (Flax, 1990, pp. 26-28).

id
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According to psychoanalytic feminist theory, it is this phallogocentric language that defines the "I", the One, as masculine and the feminine as the "not-I". Women are thus the "Other". The phallus (as representation of power) is central within the formation of both identity and sexuality. Since women are defined as the Other in relation to the phallus, their identity and sexuality can never be positive. The woman does not have an identity of her own, but is defined as not-male, denoting

negative identity. Women's relationship to the symbolic order will always be negative; they will always be represented as incomplete or lacking. One of the consequences of this is that femininity itself becomes an impossible conundrum because women are always defined as "other" within the symbolic order (Flax, 1990).

Radical Feminism

Radical feminism initially developed parallel with socialist feminism. Radical feminism rejects the notion that social factors determine women's oppression, asserting that women are very different from men and that biological differences are at the root of both misogyny and the subjugation of women. Radical feminists espouse the recognition of women's essential difference - women's biological superiority and "special nature" as well as the recognition that it is men's fear and envy of women's reproductive power, and women's essential self that underlies oppression. In this view, men are very clearly the enemy (Ussher, 1991).

Radical feminism argues for essential sex differences, based in biology and in life experiences. Radical feminism does not view culture and economic factors as responsible for women's oppression, in as far as culture is created as a justification for men's fundamental nature (Haste, 1993).

The main supposition of radical feminism is "woman-identified-woman". This implies the rejection of male definitions of Otherness. To identify oneself as a woman, and to be identified in terms of other women, requires exclusion of the male from the definition of the self. This presupposes a female culture and, to some extent, the subjective exclusion of male culture (Haste, 1993).

Radical feminism is fundamentally utopian and has generated a rich utopian literature. It is also engaged in the reconstructing of women's biology as a positive empowering force, as well as in various reconstructions of history, mythology and prehistory (Ussher, 1991).

Radical feminism places great emphasis on heterosexual sexual relationships, the power of the phallus and to the objectification and control of women through sex. For many radical feminists, heterosexual relations are impossible - in relationships with men, one has no choice (given the present culture) but to accept his definition of ones Otherness and society's definition of ones identity as "his" woman. Radical feminists regard men as fundamentally and irredeemably bestial creatures. According to this point of view, men control women through the threat of violence and the threat of rape particularly. Many radical feminists argue that all men are potential rapists, and although writers differ in their exact meaning, this is a central metaphor for radical feminists (Haste, 1993).

Radical feminist have been particularly active in the area of language and metaphor. Ussher (1991) discusses the work of theorists such as Daly, Rich and Spencer, who have explored linguistic forms and metaphors and have demonstrated the pervasiveness of masculine symbolism. The argument is that metaphors are powerful in creating subjective meaning, and only by removing these metaphors, a new framework can be created.

Radical feminism cannot be seen as an Enlightenment model of feminism, but is to a large extent postmodernist in the confrontation of the very essence of meaning and cultural definition of gender, and in redefining them in new terms (Flax, 1990).

Cultural Feminism

Haste (1993) states that cultural feminism is a postmodernist perspective on gender. Cultural feminism includes strands of psychoanalytic feminism as well as strands of radical feminism. Cultural feminism acknowledges the issues of social structure, but believes that the structural problem is embedded in language.

Cultural feminism emerges from a philosophical and psychological position that thought can be considered only in its communication through language. Language, in this view, creates meaning rather than being the vehicle by which ideas are conveyed. Rhetoric and lay social theory are central to cultural feminism. Decoding metaphors about difference and the relation between the sexes as well as analyzing styles of communication and discourse involving syntax and semantics are associated with point of view (Haste, 1993).

According to Haste (1993), the main goal of cultural feminism is to find a framework for defining the female experience more authentically. It is taken for granted that the female experience is different, partly as consequence of biology and partly as result of the cultural schemas which define experience. For cultural feminists, difference arises from cultural creation of meaning, and the reproduction of that meaning through forms of language and discourse. The problem of Otherness is twofold : the form of the self-other is in terms of the male definition and, more profoundly, there is no cultural space for more than one schema. Deconstruction in this context not only provides a missing schema for female experience, but extends the boundaries of rationality, rather than just legitimizing women's participation in traditional forms of rationality (Haste, 1993).

In many disciplines, cultural feminists take the same view of metaphor and language, but concentrate more on schema and symbols. Their anti-Enlightenment,

anti-Cartesian approach involves moving to a premise of pluralism and the coexistence of alternative perspectives, while moving away from the monolithic view of culture. According to cultural feminism, monolithic world-views generate dualisms and negations. By taking the pluralist perspective, the Other becomes an authentic different thing, not a reflection or negation (Haste, 1993).

In the cultural feminist view then, the monolithic conception of universals, singular objectivity and a particular view of logic are not adequate to encompass the range of possible ways of knowing, and the authenticity of women's experience is not met by the dominant male schemas for defining the range and the limits of knowledge (Haste, 1993).

The discussion in the preceding sections serves to illustrate how different schools of feminist thought can be seen as a process over time, arriving at a postmodern perspective, involving the coexistence of multiple perspectives.

Towards a Postmodern Perspective

Flax (1990) states that feminist theories must be located within the wider experiential and philosophical contexts of which they are both part and critique.

Postmodernist philosophies can make feminist theorists more critical of their own epistemological presuppositions. In this sense feminist theorists cannot be exempt from the implicit or explicit critiques of universalizing claims to knowledge (e.g. Enlightenment models of gender). From a postmodernist perspective, feminist theories cannot be versions of falsely universalizing or empiricist "science". Any feminist standpoint will, in this view, be necessarily partial and will to some extent reflect embeddedness in preexisting gender

relations. According to postmodernism, there is no force "outside" of social relations and deconstruction is an activity that can help the theorists avoid such partiality and embeddedness (Flax, 1990).

Postmodern philosophies emphasize the interconnections between claims of ("absolute" or "neutral") knowledge and power. Such connections have implications for feminists in terms of political as well as epistemological consequences. Any episteme requires the suppression of discourses that differ with or undermine the authority of the dominant one. Therefore feminist theories that seek a "defining theme of the whole" or "a feminist viewpoint" may suppress the voices of people with experiences unlike their own. The apparent authority, coherence and universality of beliefs stem out of the suppression of other voices (Flax, 1990).

Flax (1990) states that the search for "a" cause of gender relations reflects a mode of thinking that is in itself grounded in a particular set of relations (gender and other). Any single "reality" reflects the falsely universalizing experience of the dominant group.

Nicholson (1990) discusses the difficulty that is associated with a postmodern feminism as the unification of a postmodernist incredulity towards metanarratives with the socio-critical power of feminism.

Nicholson (1990) explores the prerequisites for a postmodern feminism which include that the theory would be explicitly historical, attuned to the cultural specificity of different societies and different periods, as well as that of different groups within societies and periods. The categories of postmodern feminist theory should therefore be inflected with temporality and with historically specific

institutional categories.

Postmodern feminist theory should be nonuniversalistic. The emphasis of postmodern feminist theory should be comparativistic rather than universalizing, attuned to changes and contrasts, instead of attempting to establish governing laws (Nicholson, 1990).

Postmodern feminist theory should, in this view, consist of complexly constructed conceptions of social identity, treating gender as one strand among others, also attending to class, race, ethnicity, age and sexual orientation (Nicholson, 1990).

Nicholson (1990) states that a postmodern feminist theory would be pragmatic. It would tailor its methods and categories to the specific task at hand, using multiple categories when appropriate, and avoiding the comfort of a single feminist method or a single feminist epistemology. It would recognize the diversity of women's needs and experiences. This implies that no single solution can be adequate for all.

Nicholson (1990) states that one might, in a postmodern sense, at best speak of the practice of feminisms, in the plural. In a sense, the advance of contemporary feminist theory is already implicitly postmodern. The most appropriate and useful theoretical expression of such a postmodern feminist theory would be in the form of critical inquiry. Such an inquiry would be the theoretical counterpart of a broader, richer, more complex and multilayered feminist solidarity.

Conclusion

Flax (1990) states that a neat integration or a new synthesis of feminist theories as well as feminist theories and postmodern philosophies is neither possible, nor desirable. The problems and ambiguities concerning self, gender, knowledge and power cannot be solved by new, integrated theories. An integration or synthesis will necessarily negate or deny irreducible differences between and among these discourses. Rather, the conversation among feminist theories as well as postmodern philosophies concerning the issue of gender is set to continue.

Comment on Discussion of Gender

In the existing literature, various comments have been made on the theoretical perspectives discussed above. These comments, as well as proposals for "alternative feminisms" will be discussed in the following section. The discussion will focus on comment on the assumptions of the theories discussed in the previous section. Feminism as a process will also receive attention.

Comment on the Content of Theories Discussed in the Previous Section

Hoffman (1990) states that the main importance of a focus on gender is that it exposes established assumptions and mores in psychological theory that have come to be taken for granted, and which are detrimental not only to women, but also to men.

However, Hoffman (1990) discusses feminist theorizing in terms of what Hare-Mustin terms the "alpha" and "beta" views in feminist theorizing.

"Alpha" view describes those theories that support the notion of female differentness. An example of this view is the separate sphere of domesticity for women

idealized by Victorian authors.

In contrast to this position, the "beta" view subscribes to the notion that men and women should be treated alike. A "beta" view then, seeks to abolish the power differential between men and women and comes out strongly in favour of women's rights.

In terms of the content of feminist theories, the theories then, can be divided into two distinct categories. The first category (the "alpha" view) has as basic thesis the notion that men and women are inherently different, and elaborate on this theme.

The second category (the "beta" view) has as basic thesis the notion that men and women are essentially alike. The theories subscribing to this view elaborate on this theme.

Hoffman (1990) proposes a third view, namely that both men and women need to be able to choose a "different voice". Hoffman (1990) also expresses concern about feminist creating yet another set of labels for mental pathology by declaring war on gender-linked ideas or structures in families, thus creating a new kind of "expert" to tell families how they ought to be.

Comment on the Basic Assumptions and Practice of Feminism

Flax (1990) comments on the way in which feminists have constructed new "genres", i.e. new stories about gender from women's points of view. In these stories, expectations about plotting, the central characters, and acceptable morality have radically shifted. However, Flax (1990) argues that "the problem of women" or "the woman question" has been mislabeled and misconceived. In the process of removing woman from her position as man's lesser other, woman was conceptualized as the problem. By conceptualizing woman as the problem, we repeat rather than deconstruct or analyze the social relations that construct or represent woman as a problem in the first instance. If the problem is defined in this way, through this process, woman remains in her traditional position : the "guilty one", the deviant, the other.

In this regard, Flax (1990) comments that any feminist standpoint will be partial and will reflect our embeddedness in preexisting gender relations. A postmodern perspective emphasizes that there is no force "outside" our social relations (e.g. science, history, reason, progress) that will rescue us from such partiality and embeddedness. Each person who attempts to think from the standpoint of women may illuminate some aspects of society that have been suppressed within the dominant view.

However, none of us can speak for "woman" because no such person exists except within a specific set of already gendered relations - to "man" and to many different and concrete women.

Flax (1990) states that one of the most important comments on feminist theories is postmodern attention to the interconnections between knowledge claims, especially absolute or "neutral" knowledge, and power as point of departure. Feminists' search for an "Archimedes point" may conceal and obscure an entanglement in a "discursive formation" or episteme in which truth claims may take some forms, but not others. Such entanglement entails political as well as epistemological consequences. Any episteme requires the suppression of discourses that differ with or threaten to undermine the authority of the dominant one. Therefore, within feminist theories, a search for a "defining theme of the whole" or a "feminist viewpoint" may require suppressing the important and discomfiting voices of persons with experiences unlike our own. This may be a necessary condition for the apparent authority, coherence, and universality of our own beliefs or experiences.

Flax (1990) comments that the very search for a cause or "root" of gender relations, or more narrowly, male domination, may partially reflect a mode of thinking that is itself grounded in particular forms of gender or other relations in which domination is present. Flax (1990) criticizes the notion inherent in feminist theories that "reality" can have "a" structure. The falsely universalizing perspective of feminist theories is commented on, as well as the notion that "reality" can be governed by one set of rules. Flax (1990) states that criteria for theory construction (also in feminist theories), such as parsimony or simplicity are met by the suppression or denial of the experiences of the "other(s)".

Frosh (1995) comments on the basic assumptions and practice of feminism from a different perspective. Frosh (1995) comments on the deconstruction of masculinity as a whole, and feminism's ideology of an integrated and rational masculinity.

The assumption which is questioned in this instance, is the assumption which is made in much social theory and feminist work, the assumption that masculinity defines the way in which the world is organized materially and perceived psychologically. Hence, dominant representations of events and experiences are seen to be forged from a masculine perspective.

Frosh (1995) proposes that rationality has long been the main western mode available for construing experience, and that rationality and masculinity have been conflated so that each connotes the other. Given the way which rationality is conventionally employed to demarcate boundaries of mental health, this is an important claim with implications for the marginalization of femininity and the valorization of a normative framework for action. It also relates to the way gender insinuates itself into the central polarities around which society is organized ; it is *reason* which is taken as marking out what is true and what is false, and reason is seen as something which is embedded within masculinity but not femininity. Where reason breaks down, madness ensues; femininity and madness are consequently aligned.

The argument here then, is that the received Western tradition identifying masculinity with rationality is giving way in the face of feminist and other cultural critiques, as well as the disappearance of traditional work-based spheres of masculine expressive activity, to make the entity "masculinity" problematic, just as it makes problematic the experience of each individual man. There is therefore an argument for the *heterogeneity* of masculinity. The feminist assumption of universality, of sameness and of the reality of phallic authority is questioned therefore. Just like all women, all men cannot be taken to be the same (Frosh, 1995).

The authors above, therefore question the assumptions of the feminist theoretical approaches discussed in the previous section in terms of the following aspects : the

assumption of objectivity and neutrality, as well as failure to locate themselves in historical or political context is questioned. The positivist belief that it is possible to obtain an objective account of the world is questioned. The existence of an objectively knowable "truth" (as espoused by feminist theories in this case) is questioned.

Furthermore, the assumption of dualistic categories of "masculine" and "feminine" received attention from different authors respectively. Flax (1990) questioned the process by which "woman" is defined as being problematic by feminist theorists, thereby continuing to define woman as the other.

Alternative Formulations of Feminist Viewpoints

Several feminist theorists have devised alternative formulations of feminist theory and feminist epistemology in response to comments such as those discussed above. An example of alternative feminist formulations will be discussed in this section.

Rixecker (1994) makes the case for an expanded conception of feminist standpoint epistemology. In her discussion she emphasizes that her version of feminist standpoint epistemology is not the only version.

Rixecker (1994) states that generally speaking, feminist epistemology challenges a variety of traditional conceptions of knowledge creation. Traditional elements within the Western canon of epistemological formulations, such as rationality and the concomitant separation of the spheres of emotion and reason are questioned.

Feminist standpoint epistemology uses women's lives as a ground for "reweaving" what seems "legitimate" within the dominant social paradigm. It neither essentializes the category "woman", nor suggests that women are the only concern. "Woman" is broadly defined as incorporating the multiplicity of contexts which women encounter. Women's lives are used to critique the dominant culture, highlighting how dominant structures and ideologies marginalize people generally.

The crux of feminist standpoint ideology is that context matters because it shapes the way we construct reality, and in disavowing this situational reality, traditional epistemology renders invisible a variety of knowledge generating contexts. Feminist standpoint epistemology therefore argues the significance of context and the social construction of reality (Rixecker, 1994).

Conclusion

In this section of comment on feminist theories, several aspects of feminist theorizing have received attention. Feminist emphasis on the dichotomous categories of "masculine" and "feminine", as well as the association of the category of "masculine" with the concept of rationality has been questioned by several authors. Feminist assumptions of the existence of an objectively knowable "truth" has also been a focus of attention. The process of the problematization of "woman" thereby continuing the process of defining "woman" as other received attention.

Finally, an alternative feminist standpoint epistemology was discussed.

CHAPTER 4

The Sexual Metaphor

Introduction

The following section will focus on the social construction of gender, with specific reference to the role of metaphor in the social construction of gender.

This emphasis on metaphor and language is in keeping with postmodern and poststructuralist ideas, where it is becoming increasingly common to use the analogy of text or narrative when referring to social fields of study. This emphasis is also in keeping with the tenets of social constructionism, where the emphasis on language is broadened to see ideas, concepts and memories as arising from social interchange and mediated through language. All knowledge, the social constructionists hold, evolves in the space between people, in the realm of the "common world" or the "common dance". Only through ongoing conversation with intimates does an individual develop a sense of identity or an inner voice (Hoffman 1992, p.7). /ms

This chapter will cover definitions of "metaphor", as well as a discussion of the centrality of metaphor to our understanding and experience of the world. The importance of language as variable in systems, as well as in a social constructionist view will be discussed. Finally, the relationship between language (metaphors in particular) and the construction of gender will be discussed.

Definition of Metaphor

Lakoff and Johnson (1980) state that a concern with metaphor implies a concern with how people understand their language and their meaning. In the existing literature several authors stress the importance of metaphors in understanding language and experience, in therapeutic change and in communication in general. Together with this greater emphasis on metaphor and language, several definitions of "metaphor" have come into use, despite the difficulty of formulating adequate definitions of the concept (Atwood & Levine, 1991).

Lakoff and Johnson (1980) state that the essence of metaphor is understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another. The implication is that a metaphorical concept structures what we do and what we understand.

Lakoff and Johnson (1980) define metaphor as the transporting of an image or association from one state or arena of meaning to another, thus highlighting similarities, differences and/or ambiguities.

Duhl (1983) describes metaphors in any form - spatial, imagistic, verbal, kinesthetic, or aural, as symbolic linkages and transformations of meaning, generated by a human mind.

Atwood and Levine (1991, p. 201) define metaphor as "...that which carries from one place to another". Phenomenologically, a metaphor is a persistent, habitual organization (pattern) of one or more of the following behaviors : images, symbols, words, emotions, postures and physical actions. A metaphor can also be seen as a novel representation of something, a way of talking about experience.

A metaphor therefore, can be described as a statement about something that resembles something else.

For the purposes of this discussion, this definition, as well as the definition used above include two important elements which will be elaborated in the following section. These two elements include the emphasis on a habitual, persistent organization as in the definition above, as well as the assumption that the resemblance implied by a metaphor is "real" as suggested by the last definition. These elements in the definition of metaphor have important implications for the social construction of gender. These implications will be discussed in the following sections.

In the following section the importance ascribed to metaphor by a number of authors, as well as the interest in language will be discussed. Metaphor and language are central to the social construction of gender. This will be discussed in a following section.

"Metaphors We Live By"

Lakoff and Johnson (1981) states that their interest in metaphors grew out of a concern with how people understand their language and their experience. A dissatisfaction with dominant views on *meaning* in Western philosophy, particularly with the views that permitted metaphor little, if any role in understanding our world or ourselves.

Metaphor has traditionally been viewed as a matter of peripheral interest in both the fields of linguistics and philosophy. For most people, in fact, metaphor is a device of poetic imagination and rhetorical flourish. Metaphor is typically viewed

as a characteristic of language alone, rather than thought or action. Lakoff and Johnson (1980) state however, that metaphor is pervasive, not just in language, but in thought and action. These authors regard our ordinary conceptual system, in terms of which we think and act, as fundamentally metaphorical in nature. Our concepts structure what we perceive, how we get around the world, and how we relate to other people. Our conceptual system, thus plays a central role in defining our everyday realities.

Lakoff and Johnson (1980) suggest that our conceptual system is largely metaphorical.

Our conceptual system however, is not something of which we are normally aware. Lakoff and Johnson (1980) regard the analysis of communication, which is based on the same conceptual system that we use in thinking and acting as a source of evidence for finding out what our conceptual system is like. Language is therefore regarded as central in this pursuit.

On the basis of linguistic evidence, these authors have found that most of our ordinary conceptual system is metaphorical in nature (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980).

The most important claims of these authors are that metaphor is not just a matter of language. Human thought processes are, on the contrary, regarded as largely metaphorical. The human conceptual system can therefore be seen as being metaphorically structured and defined. Metaphors as linguistic expressions are possible precisely because there are metaphors in a person's linguistic system. Metaphor can, therefore, be understood as a *metaphorical concept* (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980).

Bateson (1972, p.203) describes metaphor as one of several "communicational modes in human communication". Bateson (1972, p. 56) defines metaphor as follows : "It takes what is true of one group of things and applies it to another". He describes the metaphorical behavior of wolves which defines the nature of the relationship between them. Bateson (1972, p. 34) also defines what he terms a "metaphoric relationship". This is a statement of a "relationship between ideas". According to Bateson (1972, p. 140) a metaphor retains unchanged the relationship which it "illustrates" while substituting other things or persons. In the final instance, Bateson (1972) regards poetry as exemplifying the communicational power of metaphor.

Haste (1993) states that metaphor and language have become increasingly important in our scientific understanding of language and thought. Metaphors, once regarded as elegant literary devices which make speech more "poetic", are now recognized as part of our process of understanding. Metaphor and analogy are part of the common currency of ordinary language and ordinary thinking, they provide a bridge between the known and the unknown. They are also an essential part of communication. By the use of a shared metaphor or analogy, we can convey a novel idea.

Metaphors, symbols and images play a key role in explanation. They define what is deemed to be salient. They are important, therefore both in the individual's own interpretation and in communication with others. Shared metaphors, symbols and images are crucial for the effective negotiation of meaning (Haste, 1993).

Haste (1993) states that metaphors are imbedded in our culture, and that we draw upon the conventional wisdom and symbols of our time. The social roles available for metaphor can also change. Metaphor carries, however important

explanatory baggage. What is described is seen as having the attributes of that with which it is metaphorically associated.

Metaphors then, may serve the function of providing schemas, models for explanation and models for connectedness and the functioning of connections. A metaphor transforms meaning. Common metaphors are shared and meaning is easily communicated through them, the novel is easily made familiar. Metaphors may help us to communicate familiar ideas and to generate novel ideas, as well as helping in facilitating their transmission. Finally, metaphors may serve to provide frameworks within which we are able to think and to communicate (Haste, 1993).

Haste (1993) also argues that metaphor has specific psychological properties relating to their role in both cognition and communication. These properties are the following :

Metaphors are frames : Metaphors serve as categories for grouping things. An example is dualistic thinking. Polarity or dualism is a common principle for categorization. Thesis and antithesis order the world such that A is defined by being not-B. The effect is that once symbols, metaphors or images have become attached to one pole, by implication their negative becomes attached to the other, e.g. light vs. dark; mind vs. body; masculine vs. feminine.

Metaphors are models for mechanisms or processes : Through this process, analogies between different things imply that explanations of the one are explanations of the other. There are many examples of this in scientific progress, e.g. the pervasiveness of the metaphor of evolution.

Metaphors carry evaluative connotations : Certain words are widely used in a way that is not apparently metaphoric, yet they still carry meaning. An example is the term "hard". "Hard" science and "hard" evidence are understood to be "good" things.

Metaphors of roles contain and prescribe : A role defines the person and limits ways in which behaviors should be described. The role of "mother" is a metaphor which dominates models and explanations of women's behavior. Appropriate areas of work for women can be interpreted or prescribed by convention as an extension of the mother's nurturing qualities.

Metaphors explain relationship : The relations between things are key elements of explanation. Knowing how something "works" means understanding the functional interrelatedness of its components. An example of a model for relationship is "chemical", i.e. the interaction between two elements leads to their transformation into something altogether new.

Metaphors of the relationship of the human being and the physical world : These metaphors hang upon ideas of control and rights of possession. Metaphors of "mastery" of the environment and "mastery of one's fate" both assume control and manipulation. People who see the environment as organic and holistic tend also to use similar metaphors in human relationships, in medicine and in problem-solving.

Metaphors of mind and thought processes : These metaphors are not confined to the social sciences. Every person reflects upon and tries to make sense of the elusive processes of thought. Everyday metaphors of thinking are rich, drawing on eating (assimilating, digesting, swallowing); on fighting (struggling, conquering, battling) etc.

These categories of metaphor show how metaphors operate as models and frames, and also how one domain of interpretation spills over into others. In these ordinary metaphors and the ordinary explanations they imply, there is a rich repertoire of lay social theories, schemas and scenarios. These examples illustrate how metaphors are not only involved in innovation, but how they are part of "common-sense", ordinary language and taken-for-granted ideas. Today's metaphor is tomorrow's received wisdom (Haste, 1993).

In summary, from the discussion of the saliency of metaphor in the structure of the human conceptual system, both the way in which we understand the relationship between ideas, as well as the way in which metaphors act as models and frames for action and interpretation, became apparent. The importance of metaphors in human attribution of meaning will be discussed in terms of social construction theory in a later section.

The basic tenets of social construction theory will be mentioned briefly in the following section. The emphasis placed on language in this approach will also be discussed. In the section following from that, the salience of metaphor and the emphasis placed on the role of language in social constructionist theory will be linked and discussed.

Social Constructionist Theory and the Role of Language

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Social constructionist theorists see ideas, concepts and memories as arising from social interchange and mediated through language. All knowledge evolves in the space between people, in the realm of the "common world" or the "common dance". In addition, social constructionists place themselves squarely in the postmodern tradition. They owe much to the textual and political criticism

represented by the deconstructionist point of views of literary critics like Jaques Derrida in France, and deriving from the neo-Marxist thinkers of the Frankfurt School. Included in this intellectual context is the writings of French social historian Michel Foucault who examined the way relations of dominance and submission are embedded in social discourse (Hoffman, 1992,).

Hoffman (1994) places emphasis on the social constructionist stance that the idea of an objectively knowable truth is banished, as well as the intersubjective influence of language, family and culture.

The position of social constructionism on the development of knowledge regards this as a social phenomenon and holds that perception is a function of communication (Hoffman, 1994).

The importance of "text" and "language" in social constructionist theory can be seen against the backdrop of a growing emphasis on the social embeddedness of what we take to be the "true and the good". This was further elaborated by widespread developments in literary theory, rhetoric and semiotics (McNamee & Gergen, 1992).

Although this body of literature is vast and complex, there is, for the present purposes, a primary message to be drawn from these various sources : our formulations of what the case is, are guided by and limited to the systems of language in which we live. What can be said about the world, including self and others, is an outgrowth of the shared conventions of discourse (McNamee & Gergen, 1992).

McNamee and Gergen (1992) use the history of a country or oneself as an example to illustrate this point. Thus, one cannot describe such a history in terms of "what actually happened". Rather, one has an available repertoire of story-telling devices or narrative forms and these devices are imposed on the past. To fail in employing the traditional modes of telling stories would fail in rendering an intelligible account of what occurred. In effect, what we take to be "real and good" are largely products of textual histories.

For a number of social psychologists, communication theorists, and sociologists, the textual account must be emphasized. According to this view, textual histories are not independent of people. Rather, texts are byproducts of human relationships. They gain their meaning from the way they are used within relationship. Our constructions of the world and ourselves are limited by our language, but these limitations must, at last, be traced to us. We generate the conventions of discourse, and therefore also have the power of alteration (McNamee & Gergen, 1992).

Therefore, because our conjoint formulations of what the case is, are typically embedded within our patterns of action, our formulations are enormously important in constructing our future (McNamee & Gergen, 1992).

The work of the Galveston group, which is in keeping with the tenets of social constructionist theory will now be discussed briefly, with a particular emphasis on their view of the importance of language.

Human Systems as Linguistic Systems

The main premise of the work of the Galveston group is conceptualizing human systems as linguistic systems. Anderson and Goolishian (1988, p. 371) state that human systems can be distinguished on the basis of linguistic and communicative markers. The social unit that they address in therapy is a linguistic system, distinguished by those who are "in language" about a problem. They call this therapy system a problem organizing, problem dis-solving system.

Anderson and Goolishian (1988) regard human systems as existing only in the domain of meaning. Social systems are seen therefore, as communications networks that are distinguished in and by language. This domain of meaning is referred to as a conversational or linguistic domain. They use the terms "language", "to be in language" and "languageing" to distinguish their approach from current psycholinguistics. Human beings are defined as language-generating, meaning-generating systems engaged in activity that is intersubjective and recursive.

Anderson and Goolishian (1988) emphasize the conceptualization of reality as a multiverse of meanings created in dynamic social exchange and conversation. Language, according to this approach, creates the natures we know.

The process of therapy, in this view, becomes the creation of a context or space for dialogical communication. In such a communicative space, the membership of a problem-organizing, problem dis-solving system is engaged in the process of evolving new meanings and understandings - exploring the unsaid. Therapy in this view, becomes little more than the opportunity to explore new conversations, new language and new realities that are compatible with the human tendency to attribute the meaning of our experience to others (Anderson & Goolishian, 1988, p.

371).

The systems that Anderson and Goolishian (1988) work in, can be conceptualized as existing in language, and therefore problems that people experience can also be thought to exist in language. The goal of therapy then, would be to participate in the process of developing a conversational exchange in which problems dis-solve, and therefore, problem organizing systems dis-solve.

The implications of the preceding discussion of metaphor and its link to social constructionist theories will be discussed in the following section.

The Implication of Metaphor and Social Constructionist Theory for Attribution of Meaning

In the preceding discussion of the importance of metaphor, several issues were raised and the differing views of several theorists were represented. These views included the view that metaphors are not only elegant poetic devices, but that the entire human conceptual system is metaphorically structured and defined. This view regarded human thought processes to be largely metaphorical.

A different view discussed emphasized the idea that metaphor is a statement about a relationship between ideas, and that it is a means of expressing and retaining the relationship as unchanged whilst substituting other things and persons.

A third view regarded metaphor as providing schemas, models for explanation and models for which things are connected and how these connections function. A

metaphor transforms meaning. Common metaphors are shared, meaning is easily communicated through them and the novel is made familiar. Metaphors provide frameworks within which we are able to think and communicate. Specific properties of metaphors were also discussed in these terms.

Although these views each differ slightly in their emphasis, they have in common their insistence on metaphor as being a major factor in the way in which human beings generate meaning and make sense of their experience of the world and themselves in it.

Following the discussion of the centrality of metaphor in human attribution of meaning and experience, there followed a discussion of social constructionist theory and the centrality of language to this view.

Where the previous sections emphasized the centrality of metaphor in making sense of human experience, social constructionist theory goes one step further in suggesting that human experience and indeed reality itself is created in language through human interaction.

This implies that the way in which we experience and create our reality is limited by the language we use to do this. In terms of the centrality of metaphor, social constructionist theory implies that the way in which we create the reality which we experience is determined by the way in which we use language, and therefore also by metaphors. The implication is then, that the reality which we experience is determined, in part at least, by the metaphors we use, and by the explicit and implicit meanings that they carry.

The following section will discuss metaphors that are connected to gender (and

therefore which create gender). This discussion of "sexual metaphors" will take place against the background of the implications discussed above, i.e. that the metaphors that we use, create at least in part, the reality that we experience.

Metaphors concerning Gender

In the previous section, the concepts of metaphor and the implications of social constructionist theory were explored. This exploration led to an understanding of the role of metaphor in thinking, and why metaphors are deep rooted.

Metaphors of gender characterize traditional thinking about gender and have a long history.

Haste (1993) states that our thinking about gender is permeated by metaphor.

Haste (1993) considers the problem of gender to be informed by the primacy of the metaphor of dualism in our culture. With this, the mapping of the polarity of masculine vs. feminine onto other polarities occurs.

Haste (1993) considers the dualistic either/or metaphor which permeates our culture to be further characterized by two major metaphors of relationships between the sexes which sustain the either/or duality. These two major metaphors for relationship between the sexes are hierarchy and functional complementarity. As examples of metaphors which sustain the dualistic either/or metaphor of gender, this author explores the metaphors of active-passive, public-private and rationality-chaos.

Haste (1993) states that the power of cognitive categories should never be

underestimated. Stereotyping minimizes the intellectual effort of dealing with a mass of information about new persons. It is extremely convenient to make assumptions simply on the basis of whether the person is male or female. Furthermore, we map masculinity and femininity onto many other dimensions to which we also ascribe polarity.

Examples of these polarities are : light-dark, public-private, science-art, rational-intuitive, rationality-chaos, sun-moon, thinking-feeling, active-passive, soft-hard, thinking-feeling.

The examples which will be elaborated on, as mentioned above, will be public-private, active-passive and rationality-chaos.

Haste (1993) states that metaphors permeate gender. Our conceptions of sex difference, sex roles and sexual relations are couched in metaphors which explain and justify. The metaphors which derive from gender and sexuality invade vast other areas of life.

The primary metaphor of gender, as mentioned before, is that of dualism and polarity. The metaphor of dualism automatically casts A in antithesis to B. It implies the definition of A as the negation of B. This metaphor is regarded as sufficient to create the deep roots which attach the meaning of gender in our culture and which are extremely resistant to change. The extra power of metaphor comes from the mapping of other dualities onto gender, entwining masculinity and femininity with such dualities as active-passive, public-private and rational-intuitive. These enrich the meaning of masculinity-femininity, but they also become contaminated with the associations of masculinity-femininity. The whole operates as a continual feedback loop, reinforcing and reproducing itself.

Haste (1993) argues that the meaning of gender is socially constructed. No culture limits the social definition of gender to biologically determined sex differences. There are a number of universal behaviors, and there are certain necessary functions in any society : child care, fighting, hunting, disposal of waste, care of the elderly, decision making in the community. They are not universally allocated to particular genders. But, when they are assigned to a particular gender, this is explained by some "natural" attribute. The masculinity and femininity of a particular task then assumes symbolic meaning - i.e. fighting is not just what males do, it becomes a definition of manhood to be a good fighter.

What is believed about gender tends to become "real". Thus, something which is socially constructed within a culture's theory of gender may become "reality". Once something becomes substantively "true" in this way, the socially created "fact" may be enhanced, diminished, ignored, compensated for, or adjusted to (Haste, 1993).

Haste (1993) terms this process the operation of a cultural theory of gender. Such a theory is more than a simple description of sex differences. It also provides stories and explanations about the origins, functions and necessities of sex differences.

Haste (1993) states that we decode experiences and events in order to make sense of them. What counts as "sense" depends on our implicit theories of how things work. We also have scripts or scenarios for behavior. In effect we have an "available repertoire" of options for action, for interpreting and evaluating events, as well as our own behavior and the behavior of others.

These schemas and scripts are not constructed in isolation, they are part of

culture. The growing child becomes aware of the evaluations and explanations which form the culture's available repertoire. The culture also limits the range of choice in various ways. Some explanations are not available because they are unknown. Others are not deemed appropriate because they defy conventions about what counts as rational, or they counter other beliefs (Haste, 1993).

Because human beings are social creatures who use language, it follows that most human activity (some would say all) takes place within a social context. Expressing a belief is an act of communication, where one is aware of others' potential responses. Language is important not only because it is a means of communication. Through the use of language, people move to shared solutions. It is in this context that the use of metaphors becomes increasing significant (Haste, 1993).

As mentioned earlier in this section, Haste (1993) distinguishes two models of sex difference in gender roles which are prevalent in our society. These two models both support the dualistic, either/or metaphor, namely the functionalist and hierarchical models.

While functionalist and hierarchical models of gender roles and differences are different interpretations of these things, they are not entirely separate. The hierarchical model defines the masculine pole as the epitome of the human, and the feminine pole as its antithesis, a deficit or a support. The functional model, however, perceives the two sexes' role as being mutually dependent and reciprocal. This reciprocity is subsumed into a hierarchy when the masculine pole is deemed to be "really" more important than the feminine. The functional necessity of the feminine pole is then interpreted as servicing a deficit. What would then be the free exchange of roles between persons, irrespective of gender becomes contaminated

with metaphors of greater and lesser, and of pollution (Haste, 1993).

These two models have in common their metaphors of dualism, and the functional model becomes subsumed under the hierarchical when argument demands.

As mentioned earlier in this section, there are several examples of metaphors of dualism which can be explored in terms of the polarities which they represent, as well as the way in which masculine-feminine becomes mapped onto other sets of polarities. I wish to explore three examples of such dualities briefly, namely public-private, active-passive and rationality-chaos.

The public-private polarity defines the boundaries between male and female space, prescribes the attributes which sustain those boundaries. The need for female privacy, as well as its equation with the erotic is assumed in metaphors which presuppose male intrusion of the female. The privacy and secrecy of Nature is presupposed in Bacon's metaphors (cited in Haste, 1993). The privateness of the female world is defined by the terms of reference by which the male life is divided into public and private and any female is located in the private domain. Her "privateness" is primarily a consequence of the public-private boundaries of the male world. She enters the public world as a man's adjunct, reflecting his public status (Haste, 1993).

The dualism of active-passive ascribes characteristics of masculinity and femininity, and prescribes and proscribes relations between the sexes. There are innumerable metaphoric examples of feminine passivity and masculine activity. The active-passive metaphor is considered to be partly the heritage of Darwin's metaphors. Darwin's ideas of sexual selection reflected his nineteenth century

assumptions of the different sexual feelings of males and females, and the pattern of activity and passivity implied in this (Haste, 1993).

Rationality-chaos maps extensively onto our relationship with the external world, ideas of control, mastery and harmony, and our insecure sense of survival in the face of the unknown. This sense gives us a terrifying concept of chaos as the alternative to a rational, controlled universe. This dichotomy has given Western culture an elevated faith in rationality itself. The tendency to regard the darker aspects of sexuality as a threat to rationality has deepened the equation of a mind-body split with the masculine-feminine tension, aligning the feminine with chaos (Haste, 1993).

In Conclusion

This chapter explored the role of language, and metaphor in particular, in the social construction of gender. The important role of metaphor in our making sense of the world was explored and emphasized. This was linked with social constructionist theory, and the implication of the social construction of "reality" and the implication of metaphor in this process of construction was discussed. Finally the social construction of categories of gender and gender differences was discussed, as well as the prominence of metaphors of dualism in the construction of and the attribution of meaning to, categories of gender. The process of the mapping of other metaphors of dualism onto the masculine-feminine metaphor was also discussed. Finally, examples of these dualistic, either/or metaphors were discussed briefly.

In the following chapter, the implications of metaphors of dualism for the association between the constructs of "femininity" and "madness" will be

discussed.

Comment on the preceding discussion of metaphor

In the preceding section, dualistic metaphors and the mapping of the meaning of different sets of dualistic metaphors onto one another, was discussed. These connotations of meaning have been discussed by a variety of authors (Frosh, 1994).

However, although the mapping of meanings connected to different dualistic metaphors onto one another has been discussed by a number of authors, these authors have differed from one another in terms of what they consider to be the *basic* dualistic category of meaning onto which all others have been mapped.

Jones (1994) argues that most contemporary world cultures are to a greater or lesser extent based on dominator models, i.e. these are cultures in which difference (male/female, white/black, young/old) becomes a signifier for superiority or inferiority and for privilege or oppression. Jones (1994) argues that with this categorization of social organization, it becomes possible to question the ways in which gender comes to be constructed in a dominator culture. According to this author then, the most basic duality is that of domination vs. oppression.

Frosh (1994) however, proposes that rationality has long been the main western mode available for construing experience. Frosh (1994) argues that rationality and masculinity have been conflated so that each connotes the other. The way in which gender insinuates itself into the central polarities around which society is organized, is discussed.

With this regard, *reason* is taken as marking out what is true and what is false. Reason here is seen to be embedded in masculinity, but not in femininity. This author then regards reason vs. irrationality as being the basic duality organizing society.

Flax (1991) comments on the way in which gender appears to be constituted by two opposite terms or distinct types of being - male and female. Because male and female seem to be opposite or fundamentally distinct types of being, gender is not regarded as a social relation. "Difference" is attributed to an individual's possession of distinct qualities. Gender is viewed as a "natural" attribute of "the self". In this context, concepts of gender have become a complex metaphor for ambivalence about human action in, on, and as part of the natural world. Here, nature vs. technology is regarded as the most basic distinction around which society is organized.

Tyler (1991) also articulates this view in stating that man and nature are joined in a combat that will ultimately end in man's complete control over the dark powers of the mother. Tyler (1991) explores the meta-narratives which pit the light of reason and technology against the dark and chaotic feminine forces of nature. The dichotomies here, are obvious.

In all the points of view articulated above, different *basic* dualities are suggested as underlying gender relations in western society. The dualistic metaphor itself is not questioned, however.

As a comment on the dualistic metaphors discussed in the previous section, as well as the suggested basic dualities organizing gender relations discussed above, it is necessary to question the dualistic metaphor itself.

Bateson (1979,p.231) comments on what he terms the "Cartesian dualism" separating "mind" and "matter", linking this metaphor of dualism, to those assumptions of the physical sciences which hold that all phenomena can and shall be studied and evaluated in quantitative terms. Following Bateson, Keeney (1983) questions representations of an either/or duality, polarity and the clash of opposites.

This implies an expression with a logic of negation underlying it, e.g. (A/not A; right/wrong; good/bad). Keeney (1983) proposes instead a view that involves different orders of recursion and which demonstrates how pairs (poles, extremes, modes, sides) are related and yet distinct. He proposes what he terms *cybernetic complementarities* as providing a way of encapsulating recursivity. This frame permits different sides of a distinction to be seen as an imbrication of levels, where one term of a pair emerges from the other. The relationship between sides of a distinction is seen as being self-referential.

The most important comment of this chapter dealing with metaphor, in metaphor of duality in particular, is therefore the questioning of the assumption of dualistic metaphors, as well as the questioning of the assumption that a "reality" exists in which a *most basic* dualistic metaphor can govern human relations. The very assumption of objective categories such as male/female is therefore questioned.

CHAPTER 5

Women's Madness

Introduction

In the previous chapter the centrality of metaphor and the implications of social construction theory in the construction of gender and the meanings attributed to gender were discussed.

An issue which was of central importance in this discussion of metaphor was the primacy of the metaphor of dualism in our culture. Masculine vs. feminine is an example of such a dualistic metaphor. However, together with the pervasive use of dualistic metaphors in our culture, a process mapping the meanings ascribed to masculine vs. feminine onto other dimensions to which we also ascribe duality occurs. The implication of this process is that masculine vs. feminine categories become associated with a myriad of other meanings and metaphors associated with duality. Much of life is permeated with metaphors linked to gender. Masculinity and femininity spill over into other categories : hard-soft, light-dark, day-night, public-private, nature-nurture, rational-intuitive.

Haste (1993) uses the example of illness as a case in point. Haste (1993, p.36) contrasts conceptions of illness where there is a metaphor for "harmony with Nature" in relations with the physical world, where the metaphor of Nature is that of "chaos which has to be appeased". Using cancer as an example, Haste (1993) states that the disease is often experienced as a form of demonic possession - tumors are "benign" or "malignant", like forces. Many terrified cancer patients are disposed to seek out faith healers, to be "exorcised". For the more sophisticated,

cancer signifies rebellion of the injured ecosphere, with Nature taking revenge on a wicked technocratic world. This metaphor of loss of control extends to descriptions of the disease itself. The language used to describe cancer is that of the catastrophe of unregulated, abnormal, incoherent growth. Experts also use the metaphor of growth and restraint. Metaphors are part of a cultural context. They resonate, and make sense, across separate domains of experience which are not obviously related. That which is explained here in reference to other metaphors, itself becomes a metaphor. Cancer is in itself a metaphor for evil, for subversion and for rot in the body politic. The explanations of their growth, and their eradication, are metaphors drawn from the disease model.

In the description above, cancer was used as an example. However, the concept of madness could have been substituted for that of cancer. Also using the disease model, mental illness, or madness can also be described in terms of the dualistic metaphor "harmony with Nature" vs. "chaos which has to be appeased". As stated above, polarity or dualism is a common principle for categorization : light vs. dark, public vs. private, rational vs. intuitive, mind vs. body, masculine vs. feminine, sane vs. mad. The effect is that once symbols, metaphors or images have been attached to one pole, by implication, their negative becomes attached to the other, e.g. things of the body become other than things of the mind. Thus an illusion or assumption of mutual exclusivity is created.

The argument of this chapter rests on the assumption that in such a system of dualistic metaphors in Western culture, the poles of "feminine" and "madness" have become associated with one another. Richters (1991) states that evidence of the oppression of women in Western societies appears pre-eminently in the emotional domain. Feminist analyses have demonstrated how women's so-called "emotional complaints" and "disorders" can be identified as either internalizations

of oppression or as largely ineffectual means of protest against oppression.

Ussher (1991) states that madness is an emotive term which serves to categorize, to separate and to signify as different. In this view, madness is more than a thing-in-itself. "Madness" acts as a signifier which positions women as ill, as outside, as pathological, as somehow second-rate, as the second sex, as the Other.

This chapter will show how the poles "feminine" and "madness", as part of the dualistic metaphors of Western culture, have come to be associated with one another, and it will trace this association historically as well as in terms of the critiques of various feminist theories.

The following section will deal with feminist arguments for the deconstruction of the construct of madness.

Deconstructing Women's Madness

Feminist arguments for the deconstruction of women's madness as opposed to men's madness hinge on the different form that men's madness takes in our society. Men's madness is argued to have different roots, and to exist in a different framework from that of women's madness. Women's madness is regarded to exist within a different discourse and to have different meanings.

This argument is illustrated by comparing statistics on psychiatric admissions, as well as those on female depression, with the statistics on prison populations, as well as those on male violence and criminality. Therefore men may be mad, but are likely to be positioned as bad. Whilst women are positioned within the psychiatric discourse, men are positioned within the criminal discourse. Women

and men are therefore regulated differently.

Thus, it is possible to deconstruct the discourse associated with women's madness, which positions women and regulates their experiences.

As mentioned previously, madness is a term which serves to categorize, to separate and to designate as different. Madness has a long history, it is not a concept unique to the twentieth century. However, in the twentieth century experts prefer more scientifically loaded terms reified within systems of psychiatric classification. In order to come to some understanding of what causes women to be mad, or to be labeled as mad, it is necessary to deconstruct the very concept of madness itself. To look to the individual diagnostic categories of depression, anxiety, schizophrenia etc., would be to lose sense of the common history and the common function, as well as the common consequences of these different groupings of symptoms (Ussher, 1991).

To use the term "madness" is to recognize the meaning attached to the perception of illness or dysfunction in the psychological domain. This meaning includes stigma. To use the term "madness" is to avoid entering into the discourse of the experts, in which these categories are deemed to exist as entities within themselves, where illnesses are regarded to be the cause of the disturbance in function in the first place.

In recent work within the field of critical psychology, as well as within other disciplines such as linguistics, as well as film and literary theory, attention has been given to histories of the production of knowledge, to a deconstruction of discursive practices in order to challenge the given assumptions which underlie them. Much of this work is based on a post-structuralist analysis of language, in

which those practices which constitute our everyday lives are produced and reproduced as an integral part of the production of signs and signifying systems. In this view, madness is much more than a set of symptoms or a diagnostic category. The signs and symptoms of disease are not things-in-themselves. Therefore they are not only biological and physical, but are also signs of social relationship disguised as natural things, concealing their roots in human reciprocity. Madness acts to position "woman" within society and within discourse (Ussher, 1991).

The feminist argument is that, in order to understand women's madness, the deconstruction of the very concept of "madness" is imperative. It is also necessary to pay attention to the discursive practices which are associated with madness itself, as well as recognizing the connections between discourses of madness and other discourses such as those of misogyny, power, sexuality and badness (Ussher, 1991).

The term "discourse" is used in this context in the Foucauldian sense of a regulated system of statements, which has a particular history (which Foucault termed a "genealogy"). This is a set of rules which distinguishes it from other discourses, establishing both links and differences. The discourse is what organizes our knowledge about a subject, in this case about madness, and about the relation of both the individual and society to this subject. Thus, discursive practices which create the concept of madness as fearful, as individual, as feminine, and as sickness function as a form of social regulation (Ussher, 1991).

The individual in distress is positioned within the discourse in a way which determines her experience. Thus, if madness is shameful and fearful, as it is within our current discourse, the woman who "suffers" from it, is stigmatized and made

an outsider. The experts and critics adopt different discourses about madness, using these to formulate and reformulate their own practices, and as a means of positioning the "mad" person as either sick, tortured, irrational, understandable etc. (Ussher, 1991).

A deconstruction of madness does not take these discourses as isolated and independent statements, but as evidence of highly organized and regulated practices. Thus the system of dependencies of a discourse can be retraced, and a history reconstructed which demonstrates how our practices emerged and how they came to be constituted as they are at present. The deconstruction of madness allows us to see the ways in which discursive regimes, called "epistemes" in Foucault's early work, determine what we "know", think and do. We can perceive how the "truth" about madness will depend on whichever discourse is presently dominant, i.e. whichever discourse is adhered to by those (in power). Thus, our knowledge and belief in the "facts" about madness, the way in which we label and treat it, and the experiences of the "mad" person, the woman herself, are all governed by these evolving discourses. The concepts of masculinity and femininity are fictions deeply embedded in the social world which can take on the status of fact when inscribed with the powerful practices through which we are regulated. In the context of this statement, the discourses which regulate femininity, "woman" and "madness" are irrevocably linked. Madness can thus be viewed as a fiction deeply embedded in the social world, which takes on the status of fact, and which is experienced as "real" by individual women. It is located within a material world in which both "madness" and "woman" act as important signifiers (Ussher, 1991).

Ultimately, this is then, far more than an analysis of madness. It is partly an analysis of what it is to exist as "woman" and as the Other. De Beauvoir (1953) argues that Otherness is category which is fundamental to human thought. The

influence of the discourse of madness and the pervasiveness of misogyny in patriarchal societies may explain some of the submission of women, since this is not a submission borne easily. Yet, women are controlled very effectively, so that they never gain the status of being the One. Madness, then, marks women as the Other and prevents them from challenging the One (Ussher, 1991).

The basic feminist argument focused on in this chapter, is that of madness not as an illness, but as a social construction. In the feminist analysis, this social construction is seen to be based on misogynistic or patriarchal principles. The feminist argument, that the concept of madness is used to control deviant women and to maintain the dominant order, is not new. Sociologists, historians, and antipsychiatrists have presented much literature to demonstrate that madness is socially constructed and that "expert care" is a means of enacting the oppression of the mad within the cloak of professional legitimacy. The feminist argument added the dimension of misogyny (Ussher, 1991).

The basic concepts outlined by the male dissenters, e.g. those of labeling, culture-bound definitions of madness, social control and scapegoating, mystification of reality, symptom as protest and therapy as oppressive, were reinterpreted within a feminist framework. Within the feminist analysis, the labeling process is seen to serve the function of maintaining women's position as outsiders within patriarchal society, as well as that of dismissing women's anger as illness and of dismissing women's misery as being the result of some internal flaw, and thereby protecting patriarchal social structures (Ussher, 1991).

In an historical analysis of women's madness, it becomes obvious that the nosological categories ascribed to women are archetypically "feminine". The Victorian notions of the hysteric, the neurasthenic and the anorexic, have in

common aspiration to heights of femininity within the narrow confines of patriarchal dictates.

The twentieth century mad woman is considered no different by these feminist commentators. As madness itself is synonymous with femininity, those women who embrace the gender role assigned to them, as well as those who reject it, are at risk of being diagnosed as mad. Madness and asylums function as mirror images of the female experience, and as for *being* female, as well as for desiring or daring *not* to be. The socialization of women can also be seen to prepare women for madness. Without a legitimate outlet for feelings of anger, frustration and misery evoked by the reality of living in a patriarchal society, women turn to psychiatry. Madness in the twentieth century has become an institutionalized discourse which legitimates the positioning of women as good/bad, as attractive and seductive, dangerous and fearful. The discourse, associated with fear of women and the confining power of madness in the nineteenth century, has taken on a new respectability, as well as extending its authority to a greater number of women (Ussher, 1991).

Ussher (1991) refers, as illustration in this regard, to a classic study by Broverman which illustrates a bias in which femininity itself is seen as pathological. This study illustrates the paradox in which women who conform to the feminine role model, as well as those who reject it, are likely to be labeled as psychiatrically ill.

The following section will deal with a historical analysis of women's madness, while the section following will deal with women's madness in the twentieth century in the form of various comments on women's madness by a number of feminist theorists.

A Historical Analysis of Women's Madness

Women's Madness in the Middle Ages

Szasz' (1970) analysis of madness in the Middle Ages was discussed in some detail in a previous chapter. In short, Szasz (1970) argues that a parallel can be constructed between the Inquisition in the Middle Ages and Institutional Psychiatry in the twentieth century. The author compares the roles of the witch to that of the mental patient. The theme common to both of these roles is that of the scapegoat and his/her function in society. Szasz (1970) emphasizes the paradoxical relationship between social man and the Other, in which social man both fears and needs the Other.

Szasz (1970) explores the notion that the *Malleus Maleficarum* was a religious-scientific theory of male superiority. In a religious society where deviance from the norm was conceptualized in theological terms, the scapegoating of witches, with the *Malleus Maleficarum* as guideline, can be interpreted as the persecution of women. Women in this society were seen as members of an inferior, sinful and dangerous class of individuals.

The following section will deal with women's madness in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

Women's Madness in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries

Kromm (1994) argues that a shift occurred in the visual and verbal representations of madness during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. This shift comprised a movement from the representation of madness through the use of male stereotypes in both visual and verbal media. Kromm (1994) links this shift to a changing social and economic context.

Recent studies have argued that in nineteenth century England and France, madness was constructed as a "female malady". By the 1850s, asylum statistics first confirmed the perception that female inmates were likely to outnumber their male counterparts. Figures of madwomen, from Victorian love struck, melancholic maidens to the theatrically agitated inmates of the Salpetriere, already dominated the cultural field in representations of madness. This situation denotes a clear shift in the understanding of madness as a gendered disorder, because the previous dominating constructs had been cast in a male form (Kromm, 1994).

It is possible to trace the developments and interdependence of the two gender stereotypes associated with verbal and visual representations of madness throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Through such an exercise it is possible to show how these stereotypes were recast in postrevolutionary Europe in relation to fears about women's political empowerment and tensions about the role of physical aggression and violence both in delineating masculine forms of madness and in figuring in revolutionary change (Kromm, 1994).

Among early traditional modern stereotypes of madness, two in particular, one male and one female, externalize mental disorder into a shocking spectacle of physical agitation. These distinguish the madman as an aggressive, potentially combative figure and the madwoman as a sexually provocative, primary self-abusing figure (Kromm, 1994).

The shift between male-dominant to female-dominant constructions of madness was accomplished in discrete stages throughout the eighteenth century, up to the first half of the nineteenth century. During this period, the figure of the sexually aggressive madwoman effectively displaced the previously more common figure of the raving male lunatic. A critical aspect of this displacement operation involved grafting the physically threatening features of the male lunatic (where they could on occasion have a somewhat positive charge), on to the gender stereotype for madness in women, where the features were given an entirely negative connotation. The gender shift achieved further credibility through a change in representational context following the revolutionary decade when the female stereotype was transposed from a primarily poetic visual and literary field to an increasingly contemporary, politicized position (Kromm, 1994).

The timing of these changes in the representation of madness, the ascendancy of the sexually aggressive madwoman and the disappearance of the physically aggressive male lunatic, was determined by the conjunction of a complex series of events and developments in the last decades of the eighteenth century. An increasing tendency to position sexuality was at the core of formulations of femininity that were promulgated in conduct books. Two paradoxes fundamental to the ideology of ladylike behavior presented in these books are critical to the female gender stereotype for madness. First, the only negotiable social identities for

women had to accommodate the paradoxical relation of sexuality to chastity. Second, even though sexuality is the defining quality of women's nature, propriety demands that it be hidden (Kromm, 1994).

The radical, even militant pursuit advocated by some feminists and republicans, reinforced for the increasingly socially conservative male revolutionaries the idea that chaos and disorder were fundamental to women's nature, justifying rigorous containment in the private, domestic sphere. Hostile responses in which it was claimed that groups of women epitomized unruliness, viciousness and insanity were associated with revolutionary women's groups, as well as with individuals (Kromm, 1994).

This transportation from gender poetics to gender politics supports the multiple nineteenth century ideologies which functioned to control or contain women's sexuality and to control or thwart their public ambitions. Antisocial, violent, unruly and oversexed, the figures of madwomen are represented as species for observation, where they are configured within the asylum, and where they focalized the new medical movements of psychiatric diagnosis and treatment (Kromm, 1994).

Nineteenth century ideologies which relate to the construction of women's madness in that particular age will be the focus of the following section.

Victorian Women's Madness

As discussed in the previous section, up until the middle of the nineteenth century, there seemed to be evidence that women were less susceptible to mental illness than men. Because of a number of factors, however, this pattern has

changed.

The construction of large public county asylums added to the changes which were occurring. As rapidly as they were built, new asylums filled to overflowing and had to be expanded. With this expansion, the number of female lunatics also increased.

Social class and income were major determinants of the individual's psychiatric career. The increase in female patients was related to the expansion of asylum facilities for the poor. Although the afflictions of female pauper patients in asylums were loosely diagnosed in such terms as "mania" and "melancholia", Victorian psychiatric textbooks focused on more ideologically complex analyses of middle-class women and their disorders. From the theoretical perspective, female psychiatric symptoms were interpreted according to a biological model of sex differences and associated with disorders of the uterus and reproductive system. While physicians might have paid attention to the contexts of female complaint, such as poverty, the death of a relative, or physical complications, they were totally indifferent to content. Expressions of unhappiness, of low self-esteem, helplessness, anxiety and fear were not connected to the realities of women's lives, while expressions of sexual desire, anger and aggression were taken as morbid deviations from the normal female personality. The female life cycle, linked to reproduction, was seen as fraught with biological crises during which morbid emotions were likely to appear. Given so unstable a constitution, it seems a wonder that any woman could hope for a lifetime of sanity, and psychiatric experts often expressed their surprise that female insanity was not more frequent (Scull, 1981).

Scull (1981) states that a study of Victorian women and insanity shows that definitions of insanity and femininity are culturally constructed, and that the

relationship between them must be considered within a cultural frame. Insanity is intrinsically connected to a number of social and economic factors : the availability of custodial care, with rates of unemployment and migration, with urbanization and loneliness, and with changes in family size and cohesiveness.

It can be argued however, that in Victorian times, the relationship between femininity and insanity was constructed in such a way that women bore the brunt of social transformation. The traditional beliefs that women were more emotionally volatile, more nervous, and more ruled by their reproductive and sexual economy than men, inspired Victorian psychiatric theories of femininity as a kind of mental illness in itself (Scull, 1981).

In the first half of the century, when doctors were advocating the strenuous exercise of individual will in combating lunacy, women were seen as more vulnerable since they were uneducated and untrained. Later in the century, when theories of hereditary predisposition came to the fore, educated women were criticized as carriers of psychological disease (Scull, 1981).

By the end of the century, psychiatric physicians had established themselves as experts in the nearly invisible signs of "unsoundness of the mind". Women, particularly if they were disobedient, aggressive, or unattractive were often perceived as displaying these signs and were usually so guilt ridden by their deviation that they were readily persuaded to accept psychiatric labels for their emotions and desires. Well before Freud and psychoanalysis declared that women were physically deficient and emotionally masochistic beings, Victorian psychiatric theory had evolved to explain mental breakdown in women as evidence of an innate inferiority (Scull, 1981).

Some of the mental disorders for which women were committed in the nineteenth century are no longer recognized. Hysteria has virtually disappeared, nymphomania, puerperal mania, and ovarian madness no longer present acute symptoms. However, new "female diseases" such as anorexia nervosa and agoraphobia have taken their place.

These new "female diseases" have been the focus of critique of various schools of feminist thought in the twentieth century.

Women's Madness in the Twentieth Century

Views on women's madness in the twentieth century, as propagated by various feminist theories, such as liberal feminism, socialist feminism, radical feminism and psychoanalytic feminism, will enjoy attention in this section.

Liberal Feminism

As discussed in a previous chapter, liberal feminism can be seen to have its roots in the bourgeois development of the free market economy. Here, sex discrimination is seen as a hindrance to the operation of the market, and thus should be overthrown. The doctrine of the liberal feminists is that men and women are equal, and given opportunity and access to power, women will thrive and succeed (Ussher, 1991).

In this view, women's madness is seen to be related to their position within the structures and institutions of society. Thus, institutional change is seen as one of the major keys to enlightenment and freedom, as well as to the alleviation of misery and madness. It has been claimed that the easiest target in removing sexual

inequality involves legal statute change or judicial interpretation of rights in the public sector. The assumption here is that if women are allowed space to be equal, they will achieve their potential, throwing off the bonds of oppression, as well as the bonds of madness. In the meantime, structural supports such as child care, equal opportunity laws in the workplace, both free contraception and abortion are seen as some of the means by which women will achieve freedom (Ussher, 1991).

Socialist Feminism

Socialist feminism also adheres to the notion of the social construction of female oppression, but looks to the capitalist structure of society as the root of all evil. Its analysis has taken much from the rhetoric of Marxism. Ownership of the means of production is deemed to be at the root of abuse of power and oppression. However, Marxist accounts alone are deemed to be inadequate, failing to provide adequate explanations for the continuation of sexism in the proletariat where there is no access to property.

Socialist feminism still see the explanation for women's oppression (and madness) as located within social structures - determined by women's specific position of powerlessness within the family and in their lack of access to the means of production within the patriarchy. Biology itself is not seen to be central in these divisions between men and women, but the social construction of biology is central, in that it both reflects and contributes to the reproduction of the patriarchy and the existing divisions in society (Ussher, 1991).

Radical Feminism

Radical feminism, women-centered or cultural feminism rejects the egalitarian feminist assumptions that social factors determine women's oppression, arguing that women are very different from men and that biological differences are at the root of both misogyny and the subjugation of women. Women's biology is therefore reconstructed as a positive, empowering force. Radical feminists espouse the recognition of women's essential difference, women's biological superiority and "special nature", as well as the recognition that it is men's envy and fear of women's reproductive power and essential self, that underlies oppression. In this view, men are very clearly the enemy - it is men who make women mad (Ussher, 1991).

Radical/cultural feminism argues the centrality of language to women's oppression. It is argued that women must reject male definitions of reality imposed on them, as well as rejecting the polluted patriarchal culture and the language which supports and maintains it (Ussher, 1991).

Another theme within radical/cultural feminism is the attention which has been paid to heterosexual sex and the power of the phallus, as well as to the objectification and control of women through sex.

In this view, radical feminists argue that the heterosexual woman is a dupe who signs her own certificate for madness if she does not throw off the bonds of men and look to women for sexual relationships. These writers do not advocate sexuality for women, as did their nineteenth century counterparts (Ussher, 1991).

Thus, in the radical feminist view, women's difference is both the root of oppression and madness and the road to emancipation.

Psychoanalytic Feminism

Both the theories and the therapy of psychoanalysis were rejected by many early feminists in the 1960s and the 1970s as being misogynistic. However, there has been a return to psychoanalyses as a means of understanding women's response to patriarchy. Equally, the role of sexuality, power and ideology (or discursive practices) in the subordination of women and of their subsequent madness, began to be acknowledged. Psychoanalysis was seen to provide a framework for investigation, offering an understanding of how subordination can be internalized in women's personalities. Psychoanalytic feminists have also looked more closely at the role of language, as well as the role of sexuality, and the ambivalence felt towards the mother. They have brought a range of psychoanalytic theorizing to bear on explanations of the "woman question" (Ussher, 1991).

Drawing heavily on Lacanian theories of linguistics and semiotics, psychoanalytic feminists argue that the positioning of the symbolic order is created by linguistic representations. Identity and subjectivity are regarded to be linguistic constructs that cannot exist outside of language. This language, however is a phallogentric language that defines the "I", the One as masculine, and thus the feminine as "not-I". Women are thus "the Other". The phallus (a representation of male pre-eminence and power) is central within the formation of both identity and sexuality, and since women are defined as the Other in relation to the phallus, their identity and sexuality can never be positive. Women's relationship to the symbolic order will always be negative, and they will always be represented as incomplete and as lacking. The consequences of this are that femininity itself becomes an impossible conundrum because women are always defined as the Other within the symbolic order. Hence, for many women madness is almost an inevitable outcome, inasmuch as women's gender is defined in terms of negative

social relations. In this argument, men's fear and envy motivate them to maintain women as the Other. In this position she is no threat. The man continues to be the possessor of the sexualized signifier, and the woman as the Other, as mad (Ussher, 1991).

Feminist theorists have also criticized the practice of psychology in general, and practices associated with psychotherapy in particular, as will be discussed in the following section.

Therapy as Tyranny : Feminist Critiques of Psychology

In the feminist view, therapy is not gender-neutral. It is seen to be based on patriarchal principles and to support a patriarchal and misogynistic culture. The transformation of oppression into illness during the course of therapy is seen as reinterpreting women's lives and their pain within a framework which conceals patriarchal control of women, and encouraging women to conform and to be controlled. The "helping professions" are seen as agents who coerce women into situations that they do not want and are unhappy with. The woman herself is taught to see her misery as illness and to direct attention and "cure" to herself. This means that women fail to look to factors outside themselves and outside of their own madness, as possible explanations for their unhappiness. To pathologize the individual woman is to neutralize her as threat to the dominant order (Ussher, 1991).

Another major criticism of therapy is that it is practiced by men, on women, or by women who value the male perspective over the female (Ussher, 1991).

In this view, a critique of therapy is one part of the general critique of misogynistic practices which oppress women in patriarchal society.

In the field of family therapy, various authors have questioned the practices of psychology in general, and of family therapy in particular.

Hoffman (1990) questions the gender bias in psychological research. Hoffman (1990) questions the world view associated with male value systems, especially with such concepts as independence, autonomy, and control.

Family therapists have also challenged many foundational theories of modern psychology and psychotherapy : developmental schemes based on studies of male maturation, but applied to all humans, as well as biases built into the family life-cycle concept that take the heterosexual, patriarchal family as the norm. Furthermore, the devaluation of qualities like dependency and caretaking that are usually associated with women , is questioned. Theories of family therapy are being sifted for gender bias.

Conclusion

As discussed in the previous chapter, as well as in the introduction to this chapter, the importance of language in general, and metaphor in particular in our construction of reality as described by social constructionist theory was discussed. In this discussion the way in which metaphors of polarity become associated with one another was discussed. It was also shown the one set of polarities that have become associated with one another in Western culture is that of male-female and sane-mad, with femininity and madness associated with one another.

This current chapter had the aim to discuss women's madness, with particular emphasis on the description of women's madness as social construction, as well as a description of the different ways in which women's madness has been constructed both in different historical periods, and by different theoretical points of view. This chapter, thus aimed to discuss the different ways in which the concepts of "woman" and "madness" have become associated with one another.

Comment on the Issue of Women's Madness

Flax (1991) states that every culture constructs ideas about gender, and in turn these ideas help structure all other forms of thinking and practice, often in surprising and unexpected ways. Gender is seen to help us structure our ideas about nature and science, public and private, rational and irrational. Gender is seen to be a central constituting element of each person's sense of self and a culture's idea of what it means to be a person.

As stated in the preceding section, madness in such a context can be seen as a signifier, positioning women as the Other. Madness is seen by feminist theorists to act as a signifier which positions women as ill, as outside and as pathological. Madness is seen as positioning "woman" in society and within discourse. Ussher (1991) regards discourses which regulate femininity, "woman" and "the mad" as being irrevocably linked. This link between "woman" and "madness" as conceived by a variety of feminist theorists was discussed in detail in the preceding section. The mapping of the meanings of metaphors of duality onto one another was linked to the association between "woman" and "madness" discussed above.

Richters (1991) states that evidence of the oppression of women appears preeminently in the emotional domain. This has led feminist thinkers to suggest that psychiatric diagnostic criteria in which male-based assumptions about crazy vs. sane behavior are codified, may be responsible for the production and reproduction of the very conditions which these categories designate.

A comment on feminist discussions of the association between "woman" and madness comprises of two aspects :

- * Questioning the dualism implied in categories "female" and "madness".
- * Questioning the feminist practice of associating "woman" and "madness" in the light of social constructionist assumptions.

A comment on the implied dichotomous nature of the categories "woman" (vs. "man") and madness (vs. sanity) is made in the light of the discussion of the work of Bateson (1979) and Keeney (1983) in this regard, as discussed in the comments on the previous chapter. In terms of the discussion mentioned above, the categories "man/woman" and "mad/sane" can no longer be seen as discrete categories where a logic of negation applies. If these categories are seen instead as cybernetic complementarities, it follows that these concepts can no longer be seen as entities in themselves existing in an "objective reality". As complementarities, these concepts are understood to be recursively linked to one another (i.e. they are related but distinct). In such a view, it is no longer possible to collapse the meanings of different dualistic metaphors onto one another, since the dualism is replaced with the concept of complementarity.

The second comment of feminist theorists' emphasis on the association between "woman" and madness can be interpreted in terms of social construction theory. Social construction theory views discourse about the world not as a reflection, but as an artifact of communal interchange. Within such a view, the continued emphasis of feminist theorists on the association between "woman" and madness can be seen as a perpetuation of the process in which "woman" is defined as the Other, and as mad.

In such a view (which attempts to move away from dualistic categorization) feminist analyses is as much a part of the production and reproduction of the conditions that psychiatric diagnostic criteria designate, as the male-biased formulators of these criteria.

Wood and Rennie (1994) state in this regard that previous psychological research involving women can be criticized for its focus on psychopathology, its use of traditional methodologies, its limited conception of the person, and its reliance on dichotomous categories. A social constructionist, discourse analytical approach is offered as an alternative.

In terms of feminist theorists' association of the concept of "woman" and madness, the following comment can be made: Such practices serve to perpetuate the categories, rather than examining their social, cultural and historical roots, and, especially, their use in discourse. An emphasis on simple dichotomies are a reflection of a restricted conception of the self, which guides this association.

Haste (1993) regards this restricted conception of the self as being related to the conception of gender as the primary category of our social relationships. It is part of our world-view and we construct social theories to explain and justify our conception of gender and sex difference. However, in this process, we are overinclusive. Gender becomes the primary category for differentiation, and other metaphors (such as madness) consequently map onto metaphors of masculinity versus femininity. This argument is eminently applicable to feminist conceptualizations of gender as the primary category of social relationships in general, and feminist conceptualizations of women's madness specifically.

Such conceptualizations serve to perpetuate the categories in their construction of social theories to justify the construct of gender as primary category of social relationships. Social constructionist theory holds that essences may not exist as ideal forms off by themselves, but they exist in a very lively fashion in the social realm where language, action and meaning intersect (Hoffman, 1994). The implication of social constructionist theory is therefore that the association between madness and femininity in feminist literature may serve to construct a "reality" in language which serves to perpetuate this association between women and madness.

White and Epston (1990) provides an alternative description or conceptual framework for understanding the the restricted conception of the self (as reflected in an emphasis on simple dichotomies) discussed earlier in this section.

This conceptual framework is their exploration of narrative means. White and Epston (1990) draw on the notion of "narrative texts". The analogy of narrative text used by these authors serves as a bridge between the territory of narrative means and the territory of knowledge as power. In this view, humans give meaning to experience by "storying" their lives. We are also empowered however, to perform our stories through our knowledge of them.

Some stories promote completeness and wellness. Others serve to constrain, trivialize, disqualify or to otherwise pathologize ourselves, others and relationships. The particular story that prevails or dominates in giving meaning to the events of our lives determines, to a large extent, the nature of our lived experience and our patterns of interaction. It is difficult to liberate ourselves from habitually re-performing the old problematic story. This domination of problematic knowledge and the prevalence of pathologizing stories makes the exploration of "knowledge as power" relevant (White & Epston, 1990).

In terms of the association between the constructs of "woman" and "madness", it is possible to describe even feminist explorations of this association as a "re-performing of the same old problematic story". The domination of this problematic knowledge serves to perpetuate the "pathologizing stories" in which women and madness are linked.

CHAPTER 6

Stories

The Story So Far...

The aim of this chapter is to briefly state the various arguments contained within the structure of this dissertation and to draw conclusions from these arguments. This chapter will also make closing comments on the structure utilized in the course of this dissertation.

The aim of this dissertation was twofold. Firstly, this dissertation focused on the deconstruction of discursive practices relating to the manner in which madness and gender have come to be concepts which are associated with one another in Western society. Secondly, the focus of this dissertation was comment on the process of a deconstruction in the course of the dissertation.

The aims of the dissertation as discussed above, relate in turn to the content and structure of the dissertation, respectively.

The content of the dissertation focused on the issues of views of madness and views on gender. The ways in which dichotomous categories come to be associated with one another were then discussed. This is related to the ways in which the relationship between the concepts "woman" and "madness" have come to be associated with one another, as well as the different ways in which this association has been viewed, both historically and from the perspective of feminist theorists.

In the metatext, comments were made on the content of the various chapters. Comment was also made on the process of social construction that took place in the process of writing the various chapters. This process of social construction will be discussed in greater detail in a following section.

The structure of this dissertation, in turn, has allowed for comment on the process of the construction of madness as well as the process of association between the constructs of "madness" and "gender" in society. This structure however, also allows for comment on the process taking place in the course of the dissertation itself.

The following sections will comment on the arguments contained in the content and metatext of the dissertation, as well as the implications of its structure in greater detail.

Overview of the Argument Contained in the Content of this Dissertation

The arguments contained in the respective chapters, as well as their interrelationship will be presented as a coherent whole in this section.

The introductory chapter deals with the proposed aims of the dissertation, as well as the definitions of salient concepts. The introductory chapter also deals with a discussion of the proposed structure of the dissertation. This includes the theoretical foundation, as well as a description of the proposed structure, as well as a discussion of the rationale of such a structure.

The content of the following chapter deals with the construct "madness". A

rationale for the deconstruction of the construct was discussed. A historical overview of the ways in which madness has been regarded by Western culture since medieval times was made. This was followed by a discussion by the ways in which "madness" has come to be regarded in the twentieth century, including critiques of "madness" such as the critiques of the antipsychiatrists and feminist theorists.

The third chapter of this dissertation considers the issue of gender. The problematized status of gender in modern Western society is discussed. The rationale for the deconstruction of the meanings associated with "gender" introduced the subsequent discussion of feminist viewpoint theories. Feminism as an important political-cultural event enjoys attention. In this chapter an historical overview of woman movements concerned with the status in patriarchal society is discussed. The views of a variety of feminist theorists, as well as particular feminist theories enjoys attention in this chapter. A discussion of current feminist thought closes this chapter.

The content the dissertation thus far, therefore focused on the questions of "madness" and "gender" respectively. The rationales for the deconstruction of these constructs were discussed respectively, and an overview of broad trends in various attempts at deconstruction was made. In the subsequent chapter, the association between these two constructs. i.e. "madness" and "gender" was discussed. The way in which these constructs came to be associated with one another was also speculated on.

The association between the constructs "madness" and "gender" in this particular section was raised in terms of metaphor. The first issue concerning "metaphor" that was dealt with was the notion the "reality" is constructed between people in

language. The salience of the use of metaphor in human communication was discussed. Social construction theory and the importance of social construction theory as related to the salience of metaphor in human communication, as well as the implications of this relationship was discussed in the following section. Finally, the ways in which the meanings of metaphors of duality come to be collapsed onto one another enjoyed attention. Metaphors of duality concerning gender were of particular importance here.

Finally, the association between the constructs of "madness" and "gender" were discussed in terms of the way in which meanings of metaphors of duality are collapsed onto one another. The ways in which the meanings of "femininity" and "madness" have come to be associated with one another as part of a set of metaphors of duality was central to this discussion. A historical overview of the association between "woman" and "madness" was made. Following this, an overview of feminist theoretical standpoints which question the issue of the association between "woman" and "madness" in terms of their own theoretical assumptions was made. Finally, the question of the social construction of woman's madness was emphasized in terms of the ways in which "woman" and "madness" have come to be associated with each another.

The argument contained in the content of this dissertation therefore focused firstly on the issues on madness and gender respectively. This focus is specifically in terms of the rationale for the deconstruction of the constructs, as well as previous attempts to deconstruct these constructs, respectively. The focus then shifted to the association of these constructs, with specific reference to social constructionist theory and the ways in which the constructs of "madness" and "gender" have come to be associated with one another in language. Finally, the dissertation proceeds to attempt to deconstruct this association between the

constructs of "madness" and "gender" The manner in which the dissertation attempts to deconstruct this association is by focusing on notion of social constructionist theory that "reality" is constructed between people in language, with specific reference to the implications of metaphor in general, and metaphors of duality in particular, in terms of the association between "madness" and "gender".

Overview of the Argument Contained in the Metatext of this Dissertation

The arguments contained in the metatext of this dissertation generally consist of two parts, namely the comment on the content of a specific chapter, as well as comment on the process that is manifested in the writing on a particular chapter. An overview of these arguments will be made in this section.

In the chapter on madness, the comment on the content of the chapter consists of comments on the basic assumptions of the antipsychiatrists' view and the feminist theorists' comments on madness in Western society. The assumptions which are questioned include the assumption of the existence of an "objective reality", as well as failure to acknowledge their own part construction the view which they are espousing.

The comment on the process of construction of the chapter focused on my own role as observer and the acknowledgment of my own role in constructing what is being written. The comment on the process of construction in the course of this chapter also relates to the parallel process of the construction of madness both the chapter being written and the historical and theoretical views being discussed, which is the mere replacement of one view of "madness" with another, as well as the notion that this process of replacement of one view of madness with another

will continue if the observer (in this case, myself) fails to acknowledge his/her own role in the process of constructing what is being seen.

The following chapter (as mentioned) deals with the issue of gender and view of gender. The comment on the discussion of gender focused firstly on the content of the various feminist theories discussed in this section. The theories are categorized into two groups, namely those that subscribe to the notion that men and women are alike in the final analysis and those that subscribe to the notion that men and women are different in the final analysis. Both these views are questioned.

Secondly, the comment on the discussion of gender focuses on the basic assumptions of feminism. Assumptions which are questioned include the process of the problematization of women, the failure of feminist theorists to acknowledge their own embeddedness in preexisting gender relations, and feminist claims to "absolute" knowledge and the notion of a "reality". Other assumptions which are questioned include the failure to acknowledge the heterogeneity of masculinity as well as failure to locate themselves in a historical or political context.

Comment on the process of construction of this particular chapter include comment on the process of the problematization of women, which is mirrored in the writing of this chapter, as well as an alternative formulation of feminist viewpoints.

Comment on the content of the chapter which deals with the "sexual metaphor" includes comment on the assumption of various authors which include metaphors of duality and the search for the most *basic* metaphor of duality which would define all other metaphors of duality. In this comment the dualistic metaphor itself is questioned, and the possibility of complementarity is suggested.

Comment on the chapter which concerns itself with "woman's madness" includes a discussion of feminist theorists' assumption of dichotomous categories, as well as questioning feminist theorists' own emphasis on the association between the concepts of "madness" and "woman". The implications of the assumption of the association of these two metaphors of dualism are questioned in terms of social constructionist theory.

The argument which can be traced through the metacommentary on the various chapters is the following : in all the chapters which were commented on, the assumptions of the various theorists quoted, were questioned. These assumptions were not only questioned in terms of modernist vs. postmodern assumption, but also in terms of social constructionist theory. The relevance of social constructionist theory (in terms of comments on both content and process) has its basis in the position of social constructionist theory that "reality" is constructed in language between people in relationship. The implication of this for the comments on the chapters, as well for the conclusions of this dissertation lies in the role of language in constructing "reality". The implication is that, where language is used to describe, "reality" is being constructed. Therefore, the theorist (including myself) is constructing as he/she theorizes. Following from this, the associations which people choose to make are extremely important. The association between "woman" and madness which feminist theorists choose to emphasize, serves as an example in this instance. By choosing to emphasize this association (subscribing to dualistic metaphors) feminist theorists merely continue the same process which they are criticizing, and therefore play a role in constructing and maintaining this association.

The argument of the metatext in commenting on the various chapters is based in the discussion above. The process of deconstructing "madness" and "gender" in the

respective chapters is questioned. The association between "madness" and "gender" in language, as specifically related to metaphor is commented on. The assumption of metaphors of duality is questioned, and therefore the continued association between "madness" and "gender" in language is questioned.

**"Creating a Participant Text : Writing, Multiple Voices, Narrative
Multiplicity"**

The following section will deal with the recursive process between writing and the person who is the author (the observer). One of the arguments in the preceding chapters is that of social constructionism, and the way in which "reality" is created by people in language, in relationship. Social constructionism implies that by drawing distinctions in a certain manner, one is creating a "reality". This process of creating "realities" in language must certainly also be acknowledged in terms of the writing of this dissertation. The following section is an attempt to do just this.

In the course of this dissertation, I represent, juxtapose and construct "conversations" between a number of theorists on a number of issues. The most salient of these issues is the relationship between gender and madness. These issues are explored in terms of feminist theory, social constructionist theory and postmodern philosophy. At least three purposes motivate their exploration : a desire to grasp certain aspects of the texture of social life in the contemporary West; a fascination with questions of knowledge, gender and subjectivity; and a wish to explore how text might be written in postmodern voices - nonauthoritarian, open-ended, and process-oriented (Flax, 1990).

Postmodernism offers the most radical and unsettling disruptions of and in this epistemological terrain. As a woman I confront the omnipresence and centrality of

gender and the lived experience of its structures of dominance and subordination. As a therapist, I deal with the issue of the construction of madness, as well as the discursive practices which surrounds it. This dissertation is an attempt to find a postmodern voice, to continue theoretical writing while abandoning the "truth".

My use of social constructionist theory, as well as my preoccupation with writing in a postmodern manner has certain implications.

The ideas of social constructionist theory have been explored by Penn and Frankfurt (1994) in terms of the way in which our perceptions of ourselves in relation to others are formed through language. The idea that language has the inherent potential to generate a reply has strongly influenced this thinking. Penn and Frankfurt (1994) conceptualize inner conversation as interaction that moves back and forth from inner conversation to conversation with others, from monologue to dialogues, thus becoming the "stuff" of new narratives.

In their discussion of the implications of the use of narrative as metaphor Zimmerman and Dickerson (1994) suggest that these implications include the following :

- * Narratives evolve over time and are fluid
- * A narrative metaphor uses experience as a primary variable

In terms of the views mentioned above, it is necessary for me to acknowledge to stories, conversations and dialogues (both internal and in relationship with others) that became the "stuff" of this dissertation, this new narrative.

In the following section I will present a series of stories, observations and

vignettes which exemplify and acknowledge these conversations, and which (since the narrative metaphor implies fluidity and evolution over time) constitutes the stuff of this new narrative.

"Listening"

Family : "Me and my Shadow..."

When I was a little girl, I went to Sterkfontein Hospital once. My mother's father (divorced from my grandmother) was a patient there. He could not remember anything and he became confused sometimes. Sometimes he talked nonsense. He had to go to hospital because he got lost so easily. I know, because I heard my parents talking. To this day he is not mentioned in my home.

"Elsabe, please come and speak to your grandmother over the phone, she feels so depressed/unhappy/ desperate/confused/depressed/depressed/depressed". (My mother)

"Talk to me, I don't know what to do." (My sister)

"How could you let this happen, you were supposed to be looking after her" (My father)

"Typical female" (My grandfather -not the crazy one - irritated)

The endless buzz of conversation is humming over me (and what I just said). I tried to stop talking after I eventually realized that men were the only ones who were supposed to say interesting/important things.

Therapy : "Conversations in a Mirrored Room"

When I started training as a therapist, I could not work with battered women. Usually my therapy lasted all of one session. They never came back. I didn't like them, these women who could not control their lives, who could not force men into listening, who could not force me into listening.

The story of Irene : she came to therapy because she was jobless with a baby and substance abusing husband who beat her up. Her neighbors ridiculed her when she found work as a cashier at a supermarket. She left her husband. He came after her. She found a place where he would never find her, taking her baby with her. Irene was the most courageous person I have ever met.

Juanita : Juanita was admitted to Sterkfontein Hospital because of outbursts of aggression, directed primarily at her father. (She beat him up, tied him up and stole his car. On another occasion she ran away from home - she was raped by a stranger who offered her a lift). She is mentally handicapped. Her mother has the diagnosis of "schizophrenia" and is confined to a wheelchair. There have been suggestions of a sexual relationship between father and daughter from various mental health professionals involved with the case, but this was never raised by either Juanita or her father. On the day of her discharge from hospital, after a stay at home, her father shook my hand and said : "I just want to thank you people for what you have done for my daughter. Since she came home she has been helping with chores around the house, she is not fighting anymore. She loves us again. Every night she insists to come and sleep in my bed."

Quotes from my Supervisor

"Your epistemological slip is showing"

"Elsabe does not believe in anything"

"The implication of what is happening in there is the idea that things will be different if only she can find a voice. Is that what you want to do ? How does that fit in with your idea of what should happen in therapy?"

"I think that 'therapy' means to say the most difficult things"

' "What is the use of a book", thought Alice, without pictures or conversations ?'

From Alice in Wonderland (L. Carrol)

Stories from Stories

The first "real" book that I ever read was *Jane Eyre*. I was fascinated with Rochester's crazy wife hidden in the attic. I was ten years old at the time. The idea that Mr. Rochester *drove* his wife crazy only came to me later.

Sylvia Plath : "...From the moment I was conceived I was doomed ...to have my whole circle of action, thought and feeling rigidly circumscribed by my inescapable femininity" (cited in McCollough, 1982, p. 43).

Hamlet and Ophelia : "In Western literature, it is customary to portray men's madness as either "badness" or as moments of truth or insight. The madness of women, on the other hand is portrayed as "real" or passive madness" (Lidz, 1976).

"It didn't matter, you see, whether you had an IQ of 170 or an IQ of 70, you were brainwashed all the time...." (Jong, 1974, p.6).

Quotes from the Madhouse

In therapy a woman who was divorcing from her husband initiated our first conversation with the following words : "I'm here because my husband says that there is something wrong with me and he just can't live with me anymore. He says that I need help." Later in the conversation she said the following : "My husband thinks that women are crazy. He said that of his mother, of his previous wife, of other women and now he is saying it of me."

A psychiatrist, in a conversation about the female population of Sterkfontein hospital, stated the following : "A lot of these women work as strippers or as prostitutes, then they come here."

A woman who was committed after breaking a couple of bottles when she had a fight with her husband said : "When he comes home I just want him to talk to me. If he doesn't, I become angry and I fight with him. I broke the bottles to get his attention." The husband, in a meeting with the couple said : "I don't think that WE have a problem. This is HER problem."

A fifteen year old girl was called crazy by her mother after the girl stated that she wanted to drink poison. The girl had been abducted, raped and tortured by a male teacher at her school two weeks previously.

A thirteen year old girl was committed to Sterkfontein hospital's female acute ward as punishment for having a twenty-one year old boyfriend. The mother did this to show the girl "...how she would end up if she had a much older boyfriend (and presumably a sexual relationship) at such a young age.

A fifteen year old girl was called crazy by her brother after she experienced recurrent nightmares about their father. Their father has tried to murder the girl and her mother at least three times in the past year.

A nineteen year old mentally retarded girl was diagnosed with schizophrenia after she started to exhibit uncontrollable outbursts of anger at home. It is suspected that her father has been abusing her since the age of four (when her mother was admitted to a mental hospital).

No Conclusions

A fundamental question pervading this dissertation is how to justify, or even frame, theoretical and narrative choices without recourse to "truth". The previous section can be seen as an elaboration of this theme.

Another pervasive theme is that of the criss-crossing new influences such as French deconstructionism, German critical theory, Foucault-type discourse analysis, poststructuralism, narrative theory, hermeneutics, social constructionism and feminist critical theory. All these strands come together to make up the dense tapestry called postmodern thought (Hoffman, 1994).

Despite its diversity, this movement marks a major shift in human studies from a belief in objective, bias-neutral research to a kind of self-conscious and sophisticated subjectivity.

The postmodernists emphasize that, that which we term "reality" is part of a web which is continually woven and re woven between people. The line between the individual and the social becomes tenuous, as what is called the hermeneutic circle comes into play : an idea is constructed together with others; then is internalized in the private mind; then rejoins the common mind; and so forth (Hoffman, 1994).

In addition, my own location in the discussion was of central importance. I locate myself in this discussion as a researcher and a therapist, influenced by feminist, contextual, and social constructionist ideas. It is from this perspective of attempting to view the world simultaneously in terms of gender-linked power, interactional systems and meaning systems that I have written this dissertation.

In the final instance I remind myself and the reader of the questions regarding the writing of a postmodern text relating to the constructs of madness and gender put in the initial stages of this dissertation :

- * How to write a postmodern text, and in the process comment on that which has been written ?

- * How to write a text which infolds on itself and still makes sense ?

- * How not to create an impersonal academic text that is in itself a metadiscourse with a legitimizing theory ?

- * How to lend immediacy to the writing ?

- * How can the structure of the dissertation reflect the process of my writing and thinking ?

- * How can the structure of this dissertation reflect my own process of epistemological change and reflect on that process ?

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