

**PSYCHOANALYTIC FEMINISM: A SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW OF
GENDER**

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Abstract

Using a modified, systematic literature review I will examine issues of subjectivity, gender and difference in relation to psychoanalytic feminist theory. Psychoanalytic feminism evolved out of a reaction to classical psychoanalytic theory. In particular, the works of Chodorow (1978), Kristeva, (1977, 1989) and Benjamin (1988) were used. The literature review will discuss the development of these theoretical perspectives and the understanding of subjectivity, gender and difference in psychoanalytic feminism and the implication this has for clinical practice.

Keywords

Feminism, psychoanalysis, gender, difference, objects relations, postmodernism, intersubjectivity.

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Table of Contents

Abstract.....	i
Acknowledgements.....	ii
Table of Contents.....	iii
List of Tables.....	iv
Attestation of Authorship.....	v
Chapter One: Introduction.....	1
Chapter Two: Methodology.....	5
Evidence Based Practice and methodological issues.....	5
Method of Investigation.....	9
Method of Appraisal.....	10
Contribution.....	11
Conclusion.....	11
Chapter Three: Nancy Chodorow.....	12
Chapter Four: Julia Kristeva.....	21
Chapter Five: Jessica Benjamin.....	28
Chapter Six: Conclusion.....	35
References.....	41

List of Tables

Table 1: Search words used	9
Table 2: Databases used.....	9

Chapter One

INTRODUCTION

As a white, middle class woman I decided I wanted to formulate a research question which examined how the cultural construction of gender has been understood within feminist psychoanalysis. My interest in this topic was developed from personal experience and clinical practice. I attended seminars by Nancy Chodorow's and Jessica Benjamin's on issues of gender and clinical practice and was interested in understanding the theories of these women further.

While training, I worked at a community agency. The client population comprised of female clients from diverse ethnic and class backgrounds. The presenting symptoms included historical sexual abuse issues. Historically, the agency was established as a feminist collective. As an intern, the identification with a feminist framework was reviewed and was discussed during clinical team meetings. Central to the discussion was the extent to which women identified with feminism today and the implication for practice.

I also worked at an organisation where the issue of gendered stereotypes was raised by a client when she disclosed that nursing and nannying were the only career options she felt were available to her. The issues raised from these interactions sparked my desire to further examine the acquisition of gender and issues of subjectivity, difference and intersubjectivity, especially in relation to psychoanalysis, object relations and feminist thought.

During training I became interested in issues of gender differentiated subjectivity and I decided that I wanted to explore these theorists and issues further. The purpose of this literature review is to begin to clarify and understand these various standpoints in an effort to integrate the various strands of thoughts and to consider the implication this has for clinical practice.

Historically, I do believe the epistemological and ontological assumptions underpinning social science research has resulted in the female voice being greatly silenced in Western discourse. Feminism opposed the traditional canons of grand social theory because the world view began and ended with the male experience and definition of the world, this type of perspective, took little account of women's experience of the world and how this may differ from a males experience of the world. In particular the absence of diverse female perspectives has resulted in women being denied the right to

know from the perspectives of their own lives. The feminist world view however begins with women's experience of the world and focuses on the relationship between gender-differentiated subjectivity and the structure of the external world. While I don't identify with a strong feminist politics because I feel uncomfortable with terms such "patriarchy" and "oppression", I do believe theorists such as Chodorow, (1978) Barrett (1979) & Delphy (1979), have made a significant contribution to the debate on women, especially when understood from the historical context of which they are written. Overall I believe the feminist challenge, and the insertion of diverse female voices into classical psychoanalyses to have been an important development to have occurred

I am aware how many women still identify with stereotypical notions of masculinity and femininity and choose to structure their lives and create meaning in this way. I want to understand how the acquisition of gender has developed across time by examining the gender debate and to understand the different identifications and contexts in which they have been constructed as a way of understanding the issue more fully. I often become confused by the various perspectives and contradictions that arise and I would like to feel less restricted and more comfortable with the ambiguity of gendered subjectivity by examining the identifications and the complexities of gendered differences more fully.

The focus of Chapter Two, Methodology, will outline the Evidence Based Practice (EBP) research approach. For the purpose of this literature review a modified systematic review was developed to establish best practice decisions. The aim of this literature review is to examine gendered differences in terms of how early developmental experiences culturally construct the identification of masculine and feminine identities. In this literature review the impact of woman's knowledge of the female self is explored theoretically by critically evaluating the psychoanalytic works of Nancy Chodorow (1978), Julia Kristeva (1977, 1979) and Jessica Benjamin (1998). These three women were selected for this literature review on the basis of personal interest, I had attended seminars and were interested in the ideas generated by these women. Each theorist takes as their starting point the formative importance of the pre-Oedipal period of development in the acquisition of gendered identities for both male and female. The process included formulating a research question, searching for literature, selecting what to include and exclude and evaluating the literature.

The Oedipus complex has been considered a cornerstone of gender development in psychoanalytic thinking. Freud's theory of the Oedipus complex is a classic example of a child's journey to adulthood. According to Freud, everyone is born with a basic sex drive or instinctual energy called the libido. As a person develops, conflicting mental and psychical forces occur. Freud identified five psychosexual stages of development: oral, anal, phallic, latency and genital, with the core phase of infantile sexuality occurring at the phallic stage (Corsini & Wedding, 1995). The phallic stage occurs between the years of three to six. During this phase a child seeks pleasure and libidinal gratification

from his or her genitalia. Developmentally, sexual orientation and identification with the same sex parent occurs via an Oedipus complex. The developmental issues surrounding this stage comprise of sex-role identification, sexuality and gender identity (Corey, 1996).

For Freud, the impetus of a girl's Oedipal complex is signaled via the anatomical distinction between the presence or absence of a penis. On the basis of this distinction, Freud maintained children during this stage recognise the significance of the anatomical distinction between the sexes (Gay, 1988). Boys have a protruding sex organ, while girls, according to Freud, have a cavity. In recognising this difference a girl perceives herself as castrated and desires the male sex organ to substitute her lack. Freud termed this 'penis envy' and viewed this element of female sexuality to be universal. The girl blames the dismembering upon her mother and attempts to compensate for this lack by substituting a child in the place of a penis. A shifting of libidinal desires results in the girl redirecting her libidinal drive from her mother and towards her father. As a result of this distinction, issues of sexual difference and the emergence of the Oedipus complex is signaled (Gay, 1988).

Freud maintained the development of a mature femininity requires a girl to give up her sexual attachment to her clitoris, her attachment to her mother, the wish for a penis and for her to compensate these renounced elements with a desire to have children, initially from her father and in subsequent years, her husband (Craib, 2001). During this phase murderous fantasies are directed towards the same sex parent, in this instance, the mother. Although, ambivalence is also prevalent, as the girl loves and depends on her mother, and also wishes to protect her mother from her destructive drives and desires. The redirection of the girl's libido, from mother to father, via penis envy, and the subsequent renunciation of the incestuous object-father, stems from the cultural demands of society, or what Freud termed the incest taboo. The girl feels guilty over her incestuous desire and murderous impulses and becomes locked into an interminable conflict. The girl escapes possible prosecution by interjecting societal and parental moral laws, thus repressing her identity's instinctual cravings and executing the super-ego's moral authority (Frosh, 2002).

Psychoanalytic feminism is based on Freud and his psychoanalytic theories. However, it maintains that gender is not biological but is centered on the psycho-sexual development of the individual. (Ramsey, 2000).

For Nancy Chodorow, psychoanalysis is the method and theory directed toward the investigation of and understanding of how we develop and experience ourselves and other. In Chapter Three, Chodorow's (1978) *The Reproduction of Mothering: Psychoanalysis and the Sociology of Gender*, will be discussed as will the social construction of the individual psyche, the construction of heterosexuality, of femininity and masculinity as they are conventionally understood.

In Chapter Four, Julia Kristeva's (1977) influential work; *Desire in Language: A semiotic approach to Literature and Art* and *Womens Time* (1979) emphasises the theoretical role of language in the construction of femininity. Kristeva draws from a Lacanian framework to revise Freud's theory of the Oedipal complex. She examines the semiotic, a pre-Oedipal stage of development, prior to the acquisition of language and proposes a new maternal discourse from this period of development.

Jessica Benjamin's (1988) *Shadow of the Other: Intersubjectivity and Gender in Psychoanalysis*, will be discussed in Chapter Five. She provides an alternative to gender hierarchies, masculine-feminine, subject-object, active-passive, by emphasising the significance of identification and the recognition of similarities and difference internally, and in relation to other.

In conclusion, using a modified, systematic literature review I will examine issues of subjectivity, gender and difference in relation to psychoanalytic feminist theory. The literature review will discuss the development of Chodorow (1978), Kristeva (1977, 1979) and Benjamin's (1988), perspectives to determine how heterosexual gender differentiation and gender roles are reproduced and what the impact is on women's lives and understanding of agency.

Chapter Two

METHODOLOGY

In this chapter, I will discuss the methodological approach of this research project. The study utilised a modified systematic literature review to examine how psychoanalytic feminism and issues of subjectivity, difference and gender are relevant to clinical practice. This was done by selecting three theorists, from different psychoanalytic feminist schools of thought. Chodorow (1978) draws from an object relations framework, Kristeva (1977, 1979) French psychoanalytic and Benjamin (1998) intersubjective. The choice of research design is informed by an Evidence Based Practice methodology that was modified to utilise the clinical material, theoretical literature and predominantly qualitative studies available in the area of practice under examination, in order to ensure ‘best possible treatment.’

Evidence Based Practice and methodological issues

History

David Sackett led a group of epidemiologists during the late 1970’s at McMaster University, United States, in a discussion which sought to ‘bring critical appraisal to the bedside’ (Guyatt & Rennie, 2002, p. xvi). The focus of the discussion was on how the implementation of theory into practice could be more effectively incorporated into patient care. From these discussions a paradigmatic shift occurred within medical practice. There was recognition that intuition, unsystematic clinical experience, and pathophysiologic rationale are inadequate ways for medical practitioners to make clinical decision. This resulted in Evidence Based Practice (EBP) being developed with an emphasis on decision making processes which are informed by the critical examination of evidence from clinical research via systematic means (Guyatt & Rennie, 2002, p. xvi).

Definition

During the 21st century evidence based practice has come to be defined as: “The conscientious, explicit and judicious use of current best evidence in making decisions about the care of individual patients.” (Chambers & Wakley, 2000, p. 91). According to Gillies (2002) the practice of EBP results in health professionals integrating their individual clinical expertise with the best evidence available, in consultation with their clients, to decide upon the option that suits the client best. The goal is to be aware of the evidence on which one’s practice is based, the soundness of evidence and the strength of the evidence.

According to Haines and Donald, (2002) evidence based practice has an interdisciplinary application. The principles are applicable to a range of health based industries including medicine, nursing, dentistry, occupational therapy, podiatry and psychotherapy. EBP is a critical perspective on a research method. A central component of EBP is the application of systematic research evidence within a clinical context. EBP is clinical practice informed by ‘best’ knowledge available (Gray, 2001, p. 12).

EBP claims that the methodological norms of science provide an adequate means of inquiry. According to Guyatt and Rennie, (2002) research biases can be eliminated by stricter adherence to the existing methodological norms of scientific enquiry, thus creating an objective and value-free picture of nature and social life. Ultimately the canons of science may stand as they are, with issues of validity and reliability being addressed as a way of solving any biases that have arisen in the conduct of science. Ultimately, EBP challenges the incomplete way the scientific method has been practiced, not the norms of science themselves.

In contrast, the feminist perspective of Worell & Remer, (1992) maintain that traditional research procedures are social constructions rather than factual absolutes. The research process isn’t neutral, but determined by the conceptual framework and the research method. Kearney, (2000) maintains the research process should be reflexive. When researchers endeavour to interpret the social world around them they have also entered into the process of constructing it. This is congruent with psychotherapy theory and practice. Within a psychotherapeutic context the role of therapist, therapist as researcher and the concept of counter-transference, acknowledge that rather than passively observing reality, a therapist will actively construct the meanings that frame and organise perceptions and experience. According to Kearney, (2000) the position attempts to examine the intrinsic tendencies and properties of not only things and persons, but processes too. Therefore it refutes a strict empirical position and its propensity for applying an overarching perspective to encompass the varieties of possible types of knowledge and experience.

Ragin (1994) maintains the research framework of quantitative research is structured, so that deductive logic is applied and social behaviour is explained in terms of “social facts”. In order for objective data to be examined and for objective analysis to be produced, social behaviour is examined within a specific context. According to Jayaratne and Stewart (1995) quantitative research is unable to ascertain the underlying meanings of social behaviour as it is reduced to a set of objective social facts. Analysis results in the variables or types of social behaviour being identified, but the cause or meanings underlying that behaviour cannot be explained.

In contrast, according to Ragin (1994) qualitative research is explorative, therefore inductive logic is applied when examining social behaviour. Jayaratne and Stewart (1995) maintain qualitative research provides an indepth view of the social world because the research process allows women’s lives and experiences to be addressed on their own terms. According to this perspective qualitative research allows peoples’ perceptions of how they come to experience and perceive their social world to be examined and understood. The research process results in descriptive data being gathered and interpreted.

According to Guyatt and Rennie, (2002) rules of evidence have been established to grade evidence according to its strength. Systematic reviews and randomised control trials represent the highest levels of evidence, whereas case reports and expert opinion are the lowest. Evidential discrepancies can potentially occur in any of these study designs, for instance, within unsystematic clinical observations, subjective perception can be deficient and biased, and with physiologic experiments, predictions about intervention effects usually of benefit to the client, can also be deficient and problematical. This illustrates that qualitative and quantitative research each has its limitations.

For the purpose of this research project a modified systematic literature review was undertaken because of the qualitative focus of the research. The term modified systematic literature review denotes an acknowledgement that qualitative research best suits the research question, rather than a strict adherence to quantitative scientific principles and procedures. A focused clinical question, comprehensive sources and explicit search strategy was employed to gather data and the material obtained was critically appraised.

Methods

A research method can be defined according to Stanley and Wise (1990) as the way in which data is collected and analysed throughout the research process. The Evidence Based Health Care Workbook (1999) identifies three elementary guidelines when conducting EBP research which include find, appraise and act. These guidelines underpin the formulation, appraisal and findings of this literature review.

Find

Formulate the question and locate the evidence

Appraise

Assess the evidence and determine if the evidence is valid and useful.

Act

Integrate the evidence found with your existing expertise and pre-existing knowledge of your client's needs in order to ascertain decisions about health care.

Formulation of research topic

The key to finding EBP evidence is to construct a properly structured question. The benefits of formulating a clear well constructed question is it refines the research process by providing the clinician with a systematic method of identifying the type of evidence needed to address the clinical problem and by identifying key words that are to be used during the search strategy.

The focus of the review will examine psychoanalytic feminism and issues of subjectivity, difference, and gender in relation to the pre-Oedipal and Oedipal period of development. This is done through an examination of the works of Chodorow (1978), Kristeva (1977, 1979) and Benjamin (1988).

Formulation of research question

By using the works of Chodorow (1978), Kristeva (1977, 1979) and Benjamin (1998) I will examine how heterosexual and gender differentiation and gender roles are reproduced to determine what the impact is on women's lives and understanding of agency?

Method of Investigation

Finding the evidence

Identification of information that specifically addresses the research question is essential to Evidence Based Research (Hamer & Collinson, 1999). In particular, identifying information that addresses the identification of feminist psychoanalytic perspectives and issues of subjectivity, difference and gender can be obtained from a number of different research resources. The search strategy included the following terms and resources:

Initially a broad search on the research intervention (feminist psychoanalytic theory, gender) was conducted and then the search strategy was narrowed by restricting the search to high quality evidence and including different combination of terms (Feminism, psychoanalysis, gender, difference, objects relations, postmodernism, intersubjectivity, Chodorow, Kristeva, Benjamin.)

Table 1: Search words used

Search words - author	Search words: topic	Search words - subject
Chodorow, Nancy	The reproduction of mothering	Chodorow, Nancy
Kristeva, Julia	Semiotic and symbolic	Psychoanalysis and feminism
Benjamin, Nancy	Shadow of the other	Gender and intersubjective
		Gender and object relations

Electronic sources

Databases were searched using the interface of either Silver Platter or Ovid.

Table 2: Databases used

Psychoanalytic and psychology databases	Health, Humanities & other databases
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PEP	EBSCO Host: Health Source and Medicine
PsychINFO	ERIC
PsychARTICLES	Proquest 5000 International: All areas
Wiley Interscience: Journals under Psychology	Wiley Interscience

WWW. Provides unique and up to date information that can be accessed 24 hours and world wide.

Published and unpublished material

Personal experience / observation

Supervisor

Seminars

Networks

Library catalogue

Reference lists and Bibliographies – useful subjective pointer to related info.

Method of Appraisal

Once the evidence was gathered, I determined if the results were believable and whether the findings related to the research question and could be applied to clinical practice. Assessing the validity (closeness to the truth) and relevance (importance and usefulness) of the evidence is called a critical appraisal. The selection criteria and synthesis of material was determined by the literature that had been identified by the search terms stated in Table 1.

Inclusion and exclusion of material

The inclusion literature comprised of psychoanalytic feminist theorists who discussed heterosexual, pre-Oedipal, and Oedipal gender differentiated issues, while considering the works of Chodorow (1978), Kristeva (1977, 1979), and Benjamin (1998). The literature was derived from research and theories which was qualitative.

Exclusion criteria includes articles that do not directly relate to psychoanalytic feminism and the pre-Oedipal and Oedipal work of Chodorow, (1978), Kristeva (1977, 1979), and Benjamin (1998). Literature which employed a quantitative research design did not emerge, so was not included in the literature review. Articles which were not written in English were also excluded from the research.

Contribution

This literature review makes a contribution to social science research by supplementing the published material within this research area. The information is pertinent to New Zealand women today, especially for those who are undertaking or wishing to undertake psychotherapy training and/or therapy, as it raises women's awareness to feminist and psychotherapeutic issues and processes which have taken place and helped shape clinical practice and psychotherapeutic experience. Finally, I hope the research will provide insight into feminist psychotherapeutic issues and is thought provoking for practitioners and those interested of psychoanalytic discourse.

Conclusion

In conclusion, a modified systematic literature review provides the means for three feminist psychoanalytic perspectives to be examined. A review was undertaken; the information gathered was developed and critically appraised in relation to the development of Chodorow (1978), Kristeva (1977, 1979) and Benjamin's (1988) theoretical perspectives and the understanding of subjectivity, gender and difference in psychoanalytic feminism and the implication for clinical practice.

Chapter Three

In this chapter, Nancy Chodorow's (1978), *The Reproduction of Mothering: Psychoanalysis and the Sociology of Gender*, will be discussed. Chodorow examines the intrapsychic and intersubjective dynamics of the mother-daughter relationship, by focusing on how women create and recreate this relationship internally. Chodorow applies both an object relational and sociological framework to theorise the over-determined process by which women come to mother (Chodorow, 1994).

Chodorow (1997) revised Freud's theory by critically evaluating the formation of feminine and masculine identities. She examined how gendered subjects, boys and girls, are produced, not on the basis of anatomical distinction between the sexes, as reflected in Freud's theory of sexuality, but on the basis of object relationships and the cultural construction of family dynamics. Utilising data from anthropological case studies, Chodorow indiscriminately accepts, as a universal phenomenon, that women are the primary care-givers of children but she does not examine if the universal premise is valid.

For Chodorow it is the social and cultural construction of the mother-infant relationship which is pivotal to gender development and the relations between the sexes. Chodorow's work is significant because she highlights the centrality of a mother's role in the cultural construction of women's gendered representation of themselves. It directs psychoanalysis to examine this relational constellation, as well as the nature of women's relationships with other women and to pay attention to a father's role within the family (Lorber, Coser, Rossi, & Chodorow, 1981).

Chodorow (1976) wrote "We cannot separate the sexual division of labour from sexual inequality. The sexual division of labour and women's responsibility for child-care are linked to and generate male dominance" (p.6).

In effect, Chodorow saw the implications for social change in Freud's theory of how the psychodynamic is constructed by the social. If the social arrangements that relegated all child rearing

to women could be altered, the psychological process creating gender identity, and the devaluing of women, she suggested might also be altered (Tong, 1989).

By moving the psychoanalytic lens back from the Oedipal to the pre-Oedipal period, Chodorow's developmental focus is on the cultural construction of gender during the separation, individuation stage of development. Primarily, Chodorow's emphasis is on the role of a mother in the differential identity formation for boys and girls within the family unit. Families are characterised by an 'asymmetrical structure of parenting,' meaning that parenting is characterised by a division of labour in which women 'mother' and men do not. The mother-infant relationship creates a dynamic of identification in which only girls adopt the personality characteristically associated with mothering (Chodorow, 1979).

Chodorow (1979) viewed women's mothering to be a historical and cross-cultural phenomenon. She attributed this role to be the primary cause of the sexual division of labour and of the continued "domination" of women by men. She says the cultural construction of parenting which create the psychic structures that orient an infant to his or her gendered adult role, which in turn perpetuates and maintains a system of gender inequality. Consequently Chodorow's interpretation gave women's domestic responsibilities a psychosexual, rather than either a biological or economic basis; she perceived the primary care-giving role of women to be the fundamental reason for the oppression of women, which she judged to be a universal phenomenon.

During the pre-Oedipal stage of development an infant relies on their mother to meet their physical and emotional needs. An infant is totally dependent on their mother and during this stage of development they fail to perceive themselves as differentiated from their primary caregiver. The attachment style formed with the mother is the basis for the human capacity to relate to and love in later life (Shrier, Tompsett, & Shrier, 2004).

Developmentally, the formation of self and the process of separation, individuation occurs via the mother-infant relationship. During this stage of development, the ego capacity of an infant is not fully developed; the process of merger, to differentiation, to individuation, with clear boundaries of self and other have not yet clearly been established. Thus the ways in which a person (largely unconsciously)

comes to experience her or himself will be crucially dependent on the nature of these early pre-Oedipal relationships (Chodorow, 1989).

For Chodorow, mothers respond to their infants differently; depending on the child's sex, boys and girls have different object relational experiences (Tong, 1989). Furthermore, the divergent experiences that boys and girls have during the pre-Oedipal period of development result in different relational and gendered identities being developed. According to Chodorow, (1989, p. 55) girls develop a "greater relational potential", in comparison to boys during this period of development. She cites Jay's, anthropological study, done in Modjokuto, Java to illustrate that by the time a girl is five years old she has already identified with her mother and her mother's role of domesticity and care-giving within the family unit.

The mother-daughter pre-Oedipal relationship is also characterised by what Chodorow termed "prolonged symbiosis." Chodorow cites Fliess's (1961) work to highlight the narcissistic characteristics of mothering; a mother's tendency to over-identify with her daughter, and her predisposition to encourage a continuous sense of themselves as merged and continually in relationships with 'other.' (Chodorow, 1974) A girl's capacity for empathic relatedness is also experienced by girls to be non-threatening to their sense of self and identity. Furthermore, according to Chodorow, girls are perceived to be less differentiated and their ego boundaries are less defined, in contrast to boy's intra and interpsychic dynamics.

In contrast, a mother experiences her son differently; she will tend to end the symbiotic period early to emphasise his otherness, by highlighting his masculinity in opposition to her female self. As a result boy's relational and empathic capacity to their mother is curtailed and they experience the "relational modes" of the pre-Oedipal period of development to be more threatening to their sense of self (Segal, 1987). Instead they develop a greater sense of autonomy and separateness, are perceived to be more fully individuated and are thought to establish firmer ego boundaries than girls.

In contrast to the pre-Oedipal period of development, where the focus is on issues of separation and individuation, the Oedipal stage of development is preoccupied with the formation of sexual identities. According to Chodorow, (1989) the primary task of this stage of development is the establishment of a heterosexual orientation, which involves identification with the same sex parent.

Girls become aware that women become the primary erotic object of men. Girls distance themselves from their maternal attachment and identify with their fathers as a way to establish a separate and autonomous identity. However, girls never fully relinquish their pre-Oedipal relationship with their mother. Chodorow cites Geertz (1961) and Jay (1969) research on the familial structure of Java families to highlight the relational attachment of a mother-daughter relationship to be a permanent connection which extends the lifespan (Chodorow, 1974).

Chodorow (1974) also cites Sigel (1969) study, which documented Atjehnese families, to highlight the way in which pre-Oedipal relational modes are established and operated across the lifespan. In Atjehnese, when an Indonesian woman marries, it is traditional for her to continue to reside at her parents' home. For Chodorow, the sexual attachments reflected in the triangular Oedipal relationship of infant, mother, father, with the primary attachment remaining between the daughter's mother relationships, results in the father remaining only a secondary representative love. For Chodorow, the emotional and physical distance of the father from the infant represents the power and separateness of the external world.

The male Oedipal experience is quite different. Chodorow argued that a boy's repression of his maternal attachment seems to be more complete than a girl's. This is, in part, because a boy's Oedipal love for his mother is more threatening to his sense of independence and his sense of himself as a masculine person. Additionally, it is also a function of the fact that the normally sexualised mother-son bond is more threatening to the husband-father relationship than the mother-daughter relationship and causes the father to resent the son. In relinquishing his Oedipal mother attachment and identifying with his father, a boy gains both his heterosexuality and a stronger super-ego than a girl. Indeed, given the relative absence of fathers, a boy tends to develop his sense of masculine identity as an abstraction, rather than through close personal identification with his father. This results in a boy defining his masculinity in negative terms, as that which is not feminine (Chodorow, 1974).

Whiting (1950) and Whiting et al. (1958), highlight this point claiming that cultures which display sleeping patterns that centre around mother-child relations, and postpartum sex taboos, may well result in mothers assuming a provocative manner when interacting with their sons. Chodorow maintains mothers tend to end the symbiotic period early to emphasise the 'otherness' and the separateness of the infant, thus curtailing a boy's primary love and sense of emphatic tie with his mother (Tong, 1989).

According to Chodorow, girls continue to identify with relational issues and fulfill their maternal needs by becoming mothers. Heterosexual women seek men to fulfill their desire for physical and emotional union. Chodorow maintains, because men cannot satisfy women's emotional needs, women turn to children to recreate the emotional triangle they once experienced as children themselves (Tong, 1994). For Atjehnese women, paradise is the place "where they are reunited with their children and their mothers; husbands and fathers are absent..." (Siegl, 1969, p. 177, cited in Chodorow, 1974, p. 61).

For Chodorow the only way out of this endless cycle is shared parenting, wherein women and men actively participate in early child-care. This would allow the male to develop parenting capacities, allow boys to identify with their father on the basis of a real tie and activate exclusive heterosexual love in the girl. The female would not be trapped in issues of separation and primary identification and will relinquish her daughter more easily. Issues of differentiation would no longer be intertwined with sexual issues. Gender identity would be more stable, while both sexes would be free to choose what they want to do (Tong, 1989).

In relation to clinical practice, Chodorow (1989) locates herself in a feminist object relations approach. She maintains traditional distinctions, between therapist and client, are not present within the therapeutic process. For instance, Freudian analysis has traditionally employed an autocratic and conventional model, whereby the therapist develops an objective knowing standpoint in relation to the client as a passive object. In contrast, Heenan (1998) maintains a co-operative therapeutic environment is developed within object relations. The focus is on dissipating traditional power dynamics. This doesn't necessarily translate into an equal balance of power. It is unrealistic to presume that power dynamics can be totally removed. Instead, power is dissipated wherever possible; therapy sessions are less therapist-driven, communication is more open and therapy becomes an interactive process between therapist and client.

The therapeutic aim is for therapists to explore with clients how self and other representations are socially and culturally represented. An examination of early pre-Oedipal relationships occurs with an exploration of the client's early mother-infant relationships (Chodorow, 1989).

Moreover, therapy would also examine issues of power so women would have real as well as transference experiences. Clients explore their own intrapsychic and interpersonal dynamics, in

particular, they would be able to explore their maternal relationships, their wishes for and expectations for themselves. This may provide some clients with a different experience than they have been accustomed, where anger is not repressed and assertion of need is encouraged (Kofman, 2003).

Furthermore, a feminist object relations approach provides an opportunity for women to challenge pre-existing and supposedly 'neutral' social roles by providing an opportunity for women to examine the ideologies and social structures that have enabled men to gain and 'maintain domination' over women. Furthermore, the historical and universal accounts of psychoanalytic theory have been superseded and the focus of a feminist psychoanalytic framework is to understand the complexity and diversity of women's 'suppression', both at a personal and structural level (Heenan, 1998).

The Reproduction of Mothering: Psychoanalysis And the Sociology of Gender (1978) received the Jessie Bernart Award in recognition for developing our understanding of women in society. More recently the same canonical text was honored by the official review journal of the discipline, *Contemporary Sociology*, as one of the 10 influential books of the past 25 years (Chodorow, 2000).

Chodorow's work is also significant because she offered an alternative perspective to the classical psychoanalytic views of femininity. Chodorow challenged the tyranny of biological explanations of gender, which perceived the formation of gender identity in terms of genital difference and the presence or absence of a penis. However she remained psychoanalytic and utilised the developmental stages from the same psychoanalytic theorists that she critiqued (Chodorow, 2000).

In relation to Grand theory, the 1970's was also the context in which many Second Wave feminist's explored the universality of gender and male dominance. Grand theory is beneficial and always problematic and so is the tension of providing a comprehensive theory of the universal and the specifics of the sex gender system. In *The Reproduction of Mothering* Chodorow (1978) perceives the sexual division of labour in society to have been socially organised because women are the primary care-givers of children. For Chodorow she perceives the social organisation around the gender division of labour to result in women being "devalued". Although this is true for many cultures, in my opinion it is not universally true (Gamble, 2000).

Segal (1987) maintains Chodorow's reproduction of mothering is not a universal phenomena but instead is a culturally specific account of gender differences. 30 years later, the values and ideologies

of western culture and the family structure, organised in terms of the traditional division of labour, indicate that further examination is required, especially in terms of alternative family structures, such as blended families or families comprising of gay and different social classes. Similarly, Chodorow's theory also perceives subjectivity in terms of stable fixed entities. A stable ego, a secure sense of belonging and a well regulated relation to objects, are middle class and modernist perspectives that are presented as unquestionable ideals.

Chodorow does not pay attention to the subjective experience of women's reproductive and sexual bodies. Alice Rossi (1981) maintains shared parenting would not be enough to alter the relational configuration between mother and infant and significant gender differences would remain. According to Rossi, women's physical experience of menstruation, pregnancy and birthing would still exist to differentiate the parents. For Rossi these physical differences would still produce a qualitative difference to the mother-daughter relationship, in contrast to a mother-son relationship (Tong, 1989).

Chodorow perceives there is an absolute difference between boys and girls, and men and women; even though she offers a dialectical account of what she perceives to be an evolving social and cultural phenomenon. The underlying assumptions of gender differences are unsupported and untested. By concluding the relational configurations of males to be separate and autonomous and females to be empathic and relational, it over-simplifies and obscures the real similarities and differences of women and men, because it sets up a false dualism of gender opposites (Gardiner, 1992, 2002).

Furthermore, Chodorow's formulation implies a determinism, with an emphasis on childhood socialisation, in which men, in contrast to women, are not attributed care-giving traits. Empathy, nurturing and child-care are all learnt behaviours. Child-care is not mysterious, gender specific or part of early developmental psychology; they are characteristics learnt across a lifespan (Alsop, Fitzsimons, Lennon, 2002). Personally, I think if males do not develop these skills, it is because they have not chosen to, not because they are incapable of it.

Potentially the danger of emphasising gender difference, in terms of mothering, is it may become the justification of the status quo; because women mother, women are responsible for the reproduction of gender differences and inequalities. If, what it means to be a woman is narrowly defined, in terms of

motherhood, it is normal and natural for women to provide care, then it is assumed women choose to provide care or they cannot help but take care of others, consequently changing social arrangements will have little effect and intervention strategies will be of little use (Tong, 1989).

The formulation of Chodorow's theory is circular; inequality is the direct result of women having acquired the primary care-giving role. This system is perpetuated and reproduced via women adopting the necessary relational modes for parenting, which alternatively are omitted from the male pre-Oedipal experience. Chodorow's account explains the social and cultural reproduction of gender inequality and why such a system has been established but does not explain the underlying causes of such a system (Lorber, Coser, Rossi, & Chodorow, 1981).

Chodorow breaks free of her circular analysis by suggesting shared parenting as an alternative solution. Although in proposing this type of solution, she contradicts her theoretical rationale. If the majority of men do not develop the relational configurations for parenting and their strong ego boundaries prevent them from developing the empathic and relational skills to parent, it seems a contradiction to believe you will find enough men with the object relational configuration to parent and consequently break the cycle of women being the primary care-givers of children (Segal, 1987).

Even if dual parenting was achieved, the developmental process would require boys and girls to separate self from identification in order to achieve self actualisation and to clearly differentiate self from other. The ambivalent feelings generated from this developmental stage would be directed at both parents instead of only one and it is unclear if this would produce a less conflict-ridden subject and a more equitable society (Segal, 1987).

In recent years Chodorow (1994, 1999) has emphasised subjectivity and the specific meanings that are co-created from any mother-daughter relationship when discussing gender. Chodorow (2000) maintains it is not culture and the hegemonic processes that are created on a societal level or from a specific cultural group that determine the personal meaning of gender. Instead, a mother's unconscious fantasies about her daughter or the particular meaning that is constructed from a daughter's understanding of her mother and the recreation of that role or identification with her mother's gender are the inter-subjective elements which shape a women's understanding of gender.

In conclusion to this chapter, I disagree with Chodorow's analysis that a child's pre-Oedipal relationship with its mother is the single causal factor in the acquisition of gender roles. By focusing upon the psychological and personality dimensions, Nancy Chodorow fails to address the intermeshing and interdependence of social and signifactory practices. Chodorow needs to acknowledge that there are multiple factors that contribute to a person's gendered identity and that these cannot be reduced to a single psychoanalytic explanation of women's "subordination". Alternatively, Chodorow's analysis did allow me to see the importance of understanding gender, in particular, the significance of the maternal role in the construction of masculine and feminine personalities, not only to the social organisation of families, but also to self-other distinctions. However, I don't agree that it shapes the basis for dominant and subordinate gender relations.

Chapter Four

Julia Kristeva proposes a maternal discourse constructed on 'pre-symbolic' mental experience in relation to the development of the self. In this chapter I will outline the 'semiotic' which examines the pre-Oedipal stage of development and the interplay of the bodily rhythms and pre-linguistic relational modes between infant and mother in the formation of male and female identity.

Kristeva is a French psychoanalyst with a background in linguistics, philosophy and post structuralism. In *Women's Time* (1979), Kristeva identifies with a psychoanalytic perspective and develops Jacques Lacan's belief, "the unconscious is structured like language" (Brooks, 1997, p.71). Building on this premise, Kristeva defines subjectivity as shifting and multifaceted, in contrast to Chodorow's understanding of an individual as defined as stable, solid and fixed (Craib, 2001).

According to Kristeva it is the integration of the semiotic and symbolic processes that provide the potential to constitute an alternative stratum of gendered subjectivity which is different to modernists' perception of 'femininity'. For Kristeva it is the theoretical intersection of psychoanalysis and postmodernism that provides her with the means to focus on issues of subjectivity, to contextualise it as the site of difference, multiplicity, resistance and otherness (Humm, 1992).

In the formation of female identity, Kristeva emphasises the theoretical and linguistic meanings of sexual difference, focusing particularly on the role of language in the construction of femininity. Her perception of culture is an extension of intrapsychic dynamics whereby subjectivity and meaning originate from intrapsychic interplay between semiotic and symbolic discourse. Developmentally, Kristeva believes the formation of gender occurs at an early pre-Oedipal stage of development. She maintains the maternal semiotic chora informs an unconscious aspect of the psyche, whereby an interplay and disruption with established meaning structures of the symbolic order occur. The process is fluid, dynamic and meaning shifts in contiguous and substitutive patterns of signifiers (Evans, 1997).

In addition, Kristeva's theory of the 'semiotic' in language has opened up what Lacan and Freud had not theoretically considered in any substantive way, the significance of the maternal function (Craib, 2001). Her theory provides a basis from which to discuss the domains of signification that operate beyond the Oedipal structure. Kristeva's theory situates female subjectivity as more than man's subsidiary. It attempts to release women from the theoretical model of the hierarchical tyranny of the 'symbolic order', which advocates to speak is to follow the 'Law of the Father', and that to achieve mental space is to become subject to the structures of the male Oedipus complex. Kristeva's theory deconstructs the symbolic order, the cultural construction of sexual difference by highlighting the formation of language during the pre-oedipal stage of development (Tong, 1989).

According to Humm (1992) Kristeva maintains language originates from the symbolic and the semiotic chora. The symbolic is a linear, conscious and masculine realm whereby meaning is constructed according to "patriarchal" dynamics and to the benefit of men. The masculine, "patriarchal" voice is coded through the rhetoric of grand speech and delivered in public spaces to form public life (Leng 2000).

In contrast, 'the semiotic chora' precedes the acquisition of symbolic language, developmentally it is pre-language. Communication from this realm is situated at the boundary of potential experience, meaning and symbolic structures. Subjectivity is conveyed through words outside of symbolic definitions. Semiotic language does not reflect the linear and logical sequence of the symbolic. In contrast, semiotic language accesses primitive mental states and conveys a pre-symbolic language of rhythm, pulses and sensory, tactile communication, which is expressed for infants in bodily and affective relation to the maternal body and mind (Hamburg, 1993, Buren, 1991).

Kristeva attributes the semiotic with feminine attributes. Language from this realm is constructed from the symbiotic experience between infant and mother. The communication is based on the rhythms and disruptions of sensory and tactile communication from the mother's body and mental containment. Semiotic language is indeterminate and shaped by creative textual practices (Brooks, 1997). Masculine subjects can also experience and access semiotic language, as it originates from the chora, which is a platonic term for an intermediary space that is nourishing, unnameable and prior to the development of an individuated subject. The semiotic reflects non-Oedipal rhythm and pulses; its language structure is non-discursive and the texts deny fixity or closure when reading (Brooks, 1997).

The semiotic provides subjects with an alternative linguistic process to existing language patterns. The intermediary space provides creative and non-linear movement in relation to the compositional processes of symbolic practice. The construction of language is produced by the interplay of semiotic and symbolic systems of representations. The semiotic and symbolic exist simultaneously in a text to generate a language system that produces intermittent fixed and cyclical linguistic patterns (Sprengnether, 1995).

The interplay of textual practices embraces contradiction; being and non-being. An unstable subject position is problematic to a stable, fixed and linear process of language. It transcends specific meaning and produces multiple meanings to any linguistic practice. The considerations of historical and dialogical textuality are important mechanisms for Kristeva, she contextualises this space to exist in and through the phallogocentric masculine order. It represents an alternative modularity of temporality known throughout history and hence provides a powerful opposition in contesting the linear, hegemonic and masculine discourse of society (Leng, 2000).

When considering the therapeutic implications of this framework, Hamburg (1993) maintains a therapist seeks to develop an understanding of the client's discourse; including their vocabulary, rhythm and tone. The therapeutic aim is to work with the interplay of the semiotic and symbolic psychic realms, to create meaning which transcends the logic and specific content of a subject's discourse, while embracing nonlinear dynamics. In effect it is the integration of these two language systems which provides the potential to constitute an alternative stratum of subjectivity, which includes a dialectical relationship with semiotic and symbolic systems, meanings and structures.

Clinically, this may entail a client developing a new narrative in accordance to a theme never imagined before. Or the language that drives this mutual exchange may be fundamentally new. For instance, a client who "cannot get to the point" may create the following counter transference reaction in the therapist, a feeling of impatience and a desire to name the non-specific, aimless discourse, whose meaning overflows the context. Therapeutically, for this client, the content of what is being said is less significant than the digressive and expansive expression (Hamburg, 1993).

Within the therapeutic context, communication is centred on the crossroads between the unformed, nondeclarative galaxies of potential experience, meaning and symbolic structures. Clients who

engage with pre-Oedipal modes could potentially be frightened by the boundaryless and chaotic material that may arise from these psychotic depths; defying boundaries, unification and social regulation (Hamburg, 1993).

In these moments the therapist must modulate and be open to validating what was prematurely repressed as well as maintaining enough symbolic order. There is a constant movement and challenge for the therapist to alternate between the semiotic and symbolic modes, to be open to exploration and capable of providing limits and structure when necessary regulation (Hamburg, 1993).

Buren (1991) equates pre-symbolic modes of communication to the beginning of a dance, drama or creative expression. The therapeutic aim is to elaborate the semiotic modes of communication expressed through the tone, rhythm and linguistic structure of the voice, as well as through creative texts such as writing and painting.

Therapeutically, the early experiences of the pre-Oedipal period of development are reconstructed; unconscious material which lies beyond signification is made comprehensible even though the material was not conscious to begin with. This form of paradox seems radical in its approach as it exists outside of culture and words and views language as deriving from this core. (Shepherdson, 2000, Buren, 1991). It embraces the concept of the unthought known; that which we know but cannot think of, as it is not yet signified, known to conscious memory and thus able to be positioned in language (Bion, 1962).

The role of the therapist is to interpret these impulses within the here and now of the therapeutic relationship. According to Kristeva, "The therapist aim is to understand the unconscious meaning of the patient's transference, to give words, after giving it a symbolic sense." In contrast, Lacan maintains the preverbal material from the dyadic relationship between mother and infant is repressed and made unconscious by the law of the father. By barring a return to the mother, the father ensures the child's entry into language and culture. The individuated subject desires the return of this lost relationship, but this early pre-verbal, symbiotic experience of oneness can never be acquisitioned again. Instead the subject creates a chain of representations to replace this lost object. For Lacan, therapy requires the therapist to follow the endless chain of displaced signifiers in an attempt to recover meaning. In sum, Kristeva's emphasis is on reading the non-representable signs of the

semiotic, through the representation of tone, rhythm etc, rather than uncovering the repressed meaning through the chain of displaced signifiers (Bassin, 1996).

In “The Soul and the Image”, Kristeva (1995) discusses the clinical case study of the treatment of a client who presented with false self-organisation, somatic and obsessional symptoms. In treating this client, Kristeva’s interventions examined more than the defensive structure of the client’s obsessional speech, as indicated in a traditional psychoanalytic approach. Instead her treatment approach incorporated art therapy (Bassin, 1996).

For Kristeva a surrendering by the therapist to the counter-transference is encouraged and the differentiation between therapist and client temporarily disappear as the transference is worked through. In this case, Kristeva’s interventions comprised of her fantasies of what she perceived the clients images may symbolically represent, offering suggestions of what the client’s fantasies and aggressive impulses may symbolically represent (Bassin, 1996).

In contrast to the clients mother who had accepted her child’s art without responding to it, Kristeva provided the reparative, transference imagery necessary for the client to develop a relationship between the clients drive image (semiotic) and meaningful words (symbolic). Kristeva situated herself as the imaginary loving third and offered the client a fantasy of reunion with the maternal body which pacified the actual separation (Bassin, 1996).

In response to Kristeva, I would maintain it is potentially problematic when meaning is attributed to the client by the therapist, especially when the material that is being interpreted is pre-Oedipal and pre-linguistic. There is a danger of unexamined foreign objects being projected into the client, under a potentially ‘knowing’ standpoint and the power dynamics that may inform this type of relationship. This is in contrast to a Lacanian analysis, which includes the client’s association and the therapist’s interpretation of the subject’s associative bonds.

By strict definition, it should be impossible to speak of the space between the symbolic and semiotic forms. The application of interpretative material within a psychotherapeutic context, as Kristeva’s theory implies creates a tension and raises a question of objectivity and validity in relation to the

psychotherapeutic relationship and process in general, especially when pre-symbolic signs are the object of scientific study (Hamburg, 1993).

Because communication is centred on the crossroads between the unformed, nondeclarative galaxies of potential experience, meaning and symbolic structures, clients who engage with pre-Oedipal modes could potentially be frightened by the boundaryless and chaotic material that may arise from these psychotic depths (defying boundaries, unification and social regulation) (Hamburg, 1993).

In these moments the therapist must modulate and be open to validating what was prematurely repressed as well as maintaining enough symbolic order. There is a constant movement and challenge for the therapist to alternate between the semiotic and symbolic modes, to be open to exploration and capable of providing limits and structure when necessary (Hamburg, 1993).

Personally, the domains of signification that operate beyond the symbolic structure of science are of interest and seem valid, although it is more difficult to quantify the existence in terms of social facts. Furthermore, it highlights the contextual elements which shape the scientific and psychotherapeutic process; the intersection of art and science, semiotic and symbolic, unconscious and consciousness. Perhaps the most difficult project is living with the tensions of these constructions.

Reading Kristeva, I agree with Hamburg, (1993) who believes in the value of adult subjects intrapsychically returning to the boundless and terrifying semiotic space of rhythms, melodies and tone in an effort to reclaim what has been lost. It is only through the process of examining the repressed aspects of the self that a client can define themselves in a real, congruent and authentic way. Instead of a subject feeling subjugated to laws of society and alienated from their early pre-Oedipal experience, a client can begin to foster a more inclusive subjectivity.

In conclusion to this chapter, Kristeva doesn't have a women's centred theory or even a conceptualisation of 'women.' In fact there is very little in Kristeva's theory to challenge any existing definitions of feminine or masculine, even though there was such a challenge to understand how such definitions came about. What Kristeva's theory does provide however, is a basis from which to discuss the domains of signification that operate beyond the symbolic structure of femininity

(Shepherdson, 2000). In this respect Kristeva theory does bring more of the feminine to the practice of therapy and the exploration of self. Her writing has peeled away many of the entombed layers of female subjectivity. This allows Kristeva to theorise the marginalised and unspoken aspect of linguistic practice, the feminine, though not necessarily female. She is able to account for the ways in which linear language is disrupted by semiotic forces, and replaces a normative masculine subject with a dissolved and decentred subject of language. Therefore, by Kristeva injecting individual differences into language, subjectivity becomes more dynamic, complex and perhaps to those with modernist agendas, problematical.

Chapter Five

Jessica Benjamin reformulated Freud's Oedipal complex, by her inclusion of the female struggle for independence. In this chapter Jessica Benjamin's work *In Shadow of the Other: Intersubjectivity and Gender in Psychoanalysis* (1998) will be discussed. Benjamin is an American psychoanalyst who draws on an intersubjective and feminist framework to examine issues of sexual difference and gender identity.

In contrast to Freud's intrapsychic emphasis on the individual's internal psychological structure, that of id, ego and super-ego, Benjamin maintains recognition is seminal to human existence. Her focus is on ascertaining the relational interaction between self and other. Benjamin moves away from one person to a two person psychology. Her approach does not negate the internal by choosing to examine the social, but instead considers the internal and external reality by acknowledging the interplay between the unconscious and the social. She maintains the intrapsychic and intersubjective viewpoints are unified via recognition, which entails "not only the others confirming response, but also how we find ourselves in that response" (Benjamin, 1998, p. 21).

Benjamin suggests that within a Freudian framework, subjectivity was defined by the binary opposition subject-object. When object relations are defined in this way, whichever polarity gains the recognition of subject the other position is perceived as object. Historically, women have been subjected to the basic binary opposition of other and have not been considered active subjects. Within this conceptualisation women could only assume a subject position via reversal, by displacing man into the position of object (Benjamin, 1990).

Benjamin proposes an alternative perspective to the subject-object binary opposition. Gender identity is developed during the second year of life and is established by the third. She defines subjectivity as a continuous stream of consciousness informed by the phenomenology of experience and the cultural construction of meaning, creating a context and space between self and subject (Benjamin, 1998).

For Freud, the most salient example of the subject–object paradigm is demonstrated in his polarity of activity–passivity, whereby activity was considered male and passivity was perceived female. Benjamin reformulates the complementarity of the subject-object paradigm according to an intersubjective context, thus incorporating the complementary behaviours between two active participants and consequently altering the relationship between activity and passivity (Benjamin, 1998, 1990).

So far, the formation of gendered subjectivity and the idea of coming to terms with difference have been considered from a classical Freudian perspective, which conceived sexual difference in terms of anatomical difference. Chodorow’s object relational perspective conceived the division of gender by examining the object relations to the mother. Kristeva’s ideas are situated within a Lacanian perspective, whereby gender is perceived in terms of the structural relationship to the phallus. Benjamin reconstructs these Oedipal standpoints by offering an alternative analysis in her formulation of sexual difference. Masculinity and femininity are reconfigured and are no longer polar opposites, but are now considered as complementary. In contrast to Chodorow, she suggests masculine and feminine identifications are located internally within each subject. (Benjamin, 1998)

For Benjamin (1995) the development of gender has four phases of identification including nominal gender identification formation, early differentiation of identifications in the context of separation–individuation, the pre-Oedipal over-inclusive phase and the Oedipal phase.

Benjamin (1996) draws on the work of Stoller (1973), when discussing nominal gender identification. The aim of this first phase of development is the formation of core gender identity. During the first 18 months of life an infant will develop an awareness of being male or female. This identification subsequently develops into an understanding of belonging to a specific gendered group.

The relational constellation that is formed during this phase of development has been considered to be determined by an over-inclusive relationship between the infant and mother, whereby the infant does not perceive the mother as outside or differentiated. In contrast, Benjamin cites Stern’s (1985) understanding of presymbolic interaction, representation of interactions generalised (RIGS), which offers an alternative perspective. Stern maintains an infant begins to differentiate from the mother

almost from birth. The infant identifies and develops a series of self-body and self-other interactions which are retroactively defined as gendered (Benjamin, 1990).

During the second year of life, an infant begins to develop the capacity for symbolic thought and this developmental milestone signifies gender role identity, the next phase of identification. Included in this phase is the separation-individuation process whereby there is a differentiation between masculine or feminine self-image rather than male and female categories. According to Stoller, boys must separate more than girls during this phase of development. Benjamin proposes an alternative viewpoint to Stoller and she maintains separation occurs equally for boys and girls (Benjamin, 1990).

Benjamin (1998) cites Mahler, Pine & Bergmann (1975) to highlight how the father's role symbolises themes of separation, agency and desire during the rapprochement phase of development. During this phase of development, identificatory love is established. In contrast, to Abelin (1980), Benjamin (1993) maintains that children of both sexes continue to identify with both parents and therefore the rapprochement father is as important for girls as for boys. The relational connection that is formed during this period of development has been coined identificatory love. This identification is preemptive of aspects of idealisation and excitement throughout life (Benjamin, 1995).

In this phase, the child's identification with the parents begins to be differentiated in the child's mind, but the child continues to elaborate both identifications as aspects of self. Moreover, the structure of the parental constellation constitutes a differentiation between inside and outside, complementary and difference. The child's relationship with the mother signifies a greater familiarity and closeness. In contrast, the child's relationship with the father represents an inspiring outside. The father is identified as a subject, a symbolic representation that is different from the child's positive identification of the mother as good and similar (Chodorow, 1991).

In contrast to the classical Oedipal structure, Benjamin maintains the relational dynamics during this phase of development is dyadic, the father does not symbolise a figure that is rivalrous or forbidding. As the figure who exclusively loves the mother, he signifies a desiring outside, the identification with the father as a like subject allows the child to imaginatively represent this desire. The child's identification with the ideal father is considered defensive, as the identification veils the narcissistic loss of control over the mother (Benjamin, 1995).

During the pre-Oedipal over-inclusive phase there is identification with maternal and paternal figures. Identification with these figures symbolically represents the genital meanings and cultural representations of what society considers to be masculine and feminine. Children identify and distinguish between what it means to be masculine and feminine and attempt to integrate each of these elements within their self. The child imaginatively identifies and makes symbolic use of the organs and parental capacities with little awareness that they are not capable of acquiring certain capacities and anatomy (Benjamin, 1995).

Gradually the child's standpoint, that they can be everything, alters with their growing awareness of gender difference. The development of the complementarity as opposites held within the self, activates feelings of envy and protest in response to the limits. Castration represents the loss of the opposite sex capacities and genitals. This signifies the transition from the over-inclusive phase to the Oedipal phase of development (Benjamin, 1996).

The fourth year of life reflects the start of the Oedipal phase. Gender differentiation is consolidated during this stage of development. The complementary of opposites, masculinity and femininity, are fully attributed to self or other respectively. During the transition from ideal to object phase of development, love occurs, whereby the ideal object is surrendered and an acceptance occurs of a subject that is outside and represents what the self does not. There is a loss of ideal and a surrendering of what can never be obtained. The movement denotes a tension of resolution and mourning. The acceptance of one's own limits and the ability to love what is different in the other are not compromised by the previous integration of opposite sex identification (Benjamin, 1995).

In effect, Benjamin transcends previous ideas on gender formation, particularly the underlying polarity of oppositional differences, by proposing a different complementarity of identification alongside object love. The earlier subject-object pre-Oedipal complementarity is defined by opposition whereby the subject's unwanted feelings are split and projected into the other. Unconsciously the other is known to the subject but relationally is represented as a non-self. The other may be perceived as an ideal, unwanted or as a mirror of the subject (Benjamin, 1998). Alternatively, Benjamin perceives the post-Oedipal complementarity to be inclusive of difference. The subject experiences the difference as exciting and pleasurable instead of threatening and diametrically opposed to their sense of self.

Drawing from Bassin (1996) Benjamin (1996) highlights how symbol formation transcends the Oedipal polarity and the relationship of the phallic phase, in terms of difference being represented as polar opposite. During adolescence the Oedipal complementarity gives way to a true genital phase in which antithetical elements can be reunited.

Post-Oedipal symbolisation bridges, rather than prevents, the fulfillment of both aims, because the capacity for symbolic thinking denotes a greater fluidity and expressiveness, rather than an unconscious oscillation between the polar opposites. Symbols contain multiple representations which create a creative transitional third space to bridge the differences. By establishing identification in a less rigid way, the transition releases, from the fixed restriction of polar opposites, a lessening of a 'one or the other', to allow entry into the transitional third place beyond identity (Benjamin, 1998).

Benjamin's proposition does not aim to create a completely different gender representation, something that is outside of awareness or of culture as indicated in Kristeva's work. Rather, Benjamin situates her work in relation to the principle division of opposites, male-female. She maintains a psychoanalytic framework, but reworks the terms she proposes to disrupt the binary logic, by symbolically bridging the split polar opposites using symbolism to recognise, rather than manically deny the difference (Benjamin, 1998).

Benjamin perceives the construction of the self to contain multiple subject positions in which the variances reflect an attraction to difference and to the ongoing process of identification. Benjamin maintains this is possible because differentiation does not have to be perceived in terms of opposition to, but can also convey our desire for (Benjamin, 1995).

Developmentally, the cultural construction of culture determines that children negotiate and assume an Oedipal complementarity, insisting on polarity, mutual exclusivity, black and white, male and female and have and have not. The more differentiated postconventional relation to gender is one that includes, perhaps unselfconsciously, gender ambiguity and uncertainty. It allows a kind of symbolic thinking in which the complementarity of opposite is no longer concrete and projected outward. Benjamin perceives the pre and post complementary in terms of positions, not phases, although she acknowledges the emergence of these positions to be sequential (Benjamin, 1998).

Clinically, Benjamin (1988) questions Freud's construction of the therapeutic relationship according to the position of objective knower and the patient perceived as passive object. She suggests when the binary opposition subject-object is defined in this way, which ever polarity gains the recognition of subject the other position is perceived as object. Within this conceptualisation women could only assume a subject position via reversal, by displacing man into the position of object (Benjamin, 1990).

Historically, women have been subjected to the basic binary opposition of other; they have not been considered active subjects. Benjamin (1998) acknowledges how the privileging of a rational, autonomous, masculine speaking subject has obscured the female voice. She cites Dora, a histrionic client of Freud's. At the time of treatment, Dora worked as a nanny for Herr K. Herr K was a family friend of Doras father, Dora's father was having an affair with Herr K's wife and Herr K feeling rejected by his wife, made sexual advances towards Dora. Freud assumed an objective and knowing standpoint in relation to Dora and indicated throughout his case study that Dora must unconsciously be in love with Herr K. Freud does not perceive Dora has the power to reject Herr K, or that she is entitled to reject him. Throughout the therapeutic process Dora struggles to assert her voice, she rejects Freud's interpretations and terminates therapy early. Freud interprets this departure as revenge. The case study highlights how Freud is not objective and impartial, instead he is part of patriarchal power, he is male and expressed masculine assumptions in relation to Dora.

Clinically, rather than speech being situated as the property of the therapist-subject as indicated by the Freud-Dora, subject-object complementary. Benjamin (1998) draws from an intersubjective framework. She maintains language mediates subjectivity and provides a relational and transitional space for subjects to act and interact with another subject. In contrast to Freud there is a mutual recognition that occurs between two active subjects.

Moreover, Benjamin (1998) does not perceive language as the subjugation of the subject to the paternal symbolic order, as reflected in Kristeva's (1979) work, but instead she emphasises the intersubjective and relational elements of language. Language is perceived as a relational tool to connect and interact with subjects acting on and interacting with the world. Hence, it constitutes a space of fluctuating convergence and divergence between inner and outer. Therapeutically, the therapist is encouraged to make use of his or her emotional experiences in a knowing way this is considered an important aspect of the therapist- client relationship. "The aim is to formulate a space in between suggestion and objective distance, which encompasses the analysts emotional response to the patient and takes account of her or his involvement in the complementarity transference action as well as the means for extricating her or himself from it" (Benjamin, 1988, p. 24). Identification and

the use of symbolisation are significant features of the therapeutic relationship as it provides the basis for mediating and understanding the position of the other.

Benjamin maintains the establishment of internal and external alterity of the other is crucial to the development of subjectivity. Developmentally, this is predicated on a limiting and loving pre-Oedipal father, whereby both children identify with a powerful and loving father and mother. A post-Oedipal capacity to integrate the various identificatory positions from previous development to create multiple and less opposing identity positions and the capacity to perceive the maternal dyad as active. Moreover, the maternal function of holding, containing and the activity of giving back has traditionally been perceived by Freud as passive. In contrast Benjamin perceives the process of understanding another subject experience, recognition, and the process of digesting and giving back, expression, to be active. Benjamin considers this process to be intersubjective and maintains the maternal & paternal function and the identification and recognition of other is able to transcend the subject-object complementarity and the positioning of women as other (Benjamin, 1998).

Benjamin (1998) maintains the mutually exclusive gender polarity of the Oedipal period denotes a gender split, "if I try to have what the other has, I will lose what I have" (p.33) In contrast, the post-Oedipal complementarity utilises symbolisation to create a transitional space to bridge difference, by allowing opposing desire and identification, rather than a rigidity of split opposites, such as active and passive. The process acknowledges the limits of each position and makes multiple positions available.

In conclusion, Benjamin's intersubjective perspective opens up a way of transcending the subject-object relationship and hence of a different relationship of activity and passivity, it may point a way toward overcoming that logic of exclusive polarized identities. In relation to identity, Benjamin perceives the formation of self to hold multiple positions; the various standpoints signify the attraction to difference in conjunction with the process of identification.

Chapter Six

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, within the past 100 years the female voice, the carrier of female subjectivity, has been greatly silenced in western discourse. The same difficulties have been reflected in psychoanalytic theory, in that male perspectives have skewed perspectives on women, women's development and understanding of femininity.

Central to Freud's Oedipal theory is the idea of castration anxiety for boys and the absence of a penis for girls. This recognition affects males and females differently; boys renounce their Oedipal wish for the mother while girls recognise their lack of a penis and reject their mother and identify with the father, who symbolically represents their desire to obtain the phallus. The girl recognises this is impossible and attempts to fulfill her 'lack' with a baby (Frosh, 2002).

In response to these ideas, women began to write theory out of their own experience and gradually, different perspectives emerged about the nature of feminine subjectivity. They focused primarily on the relationship between gender differentiated subjectivity and the structures of the external world (Craib, 2001). This literature review highlights how psychoanalytic feminism, in general, has to transform the gender hierarchy of Oedipal to pre-Oedipal focus and revise Freud's perception of women as subordinate.

In reaction, psychoanalysis loosened its allegiances to Freud's nineteenth century ideas about the role of biological forces, including its role in the making of sexual identity and what could be understood as masculine and feminine. Instead, a kaleidoscope of different perspectives was developed. Melanie Klein, a British object relations theorist during the 1930's, revised Freud's theory by examining the symbolic importance of the breast in the organisation of identity. She developed the concepts of introjection for taking in, and projective identification for expelling. The deprivation of access to breast, instead of the lack of the penis, was perceived to turn the little girl away from the mother towards the father (Craib, 2001).

British, American and French schools of thought have subsequently sought to revise Freud's work. British object relations theorists, such as Klein, emphasise the connection between primary affective development and object relations. In the American school of object relations, theorists such as

Chodorow (1978), emphasise psychoanalysis as reproducing the patriarchal and examine gender in relation to the maternal. In the French school of thought, such as Kristeva (1977, 1979), examine the unconscious and the role of language in relation to the paternal. Intersubjectivists, such as Benjamin (1988), emphasise mutual recognition and acknowledge the mother and father in the separation-individuation phase of development. (Craib, 2001).

Historically, women have been defined as other. Relatedness, empathy and nurturance have traditionally been perceived as feminine traits; these traits have been devalued and considered passive (Benjamin). Chodorow (1978), Kristeva (1974) and Benjamin (1988) have each situated their ideas on gender, subjectivity and difference by emphasising the maternal function as active, in contrast to the paternal framework, as reflected in Freud's Oedipal theory.

Each of the theorists have emphasised the pre-Oedipal period of development as being significant in the formation of subjectivity, the recognition of difference and in the formation of gender identity. This is in contrast to Freud's emphasis on the Oedipal period of development. This shift has been significant within psychoanalysis, as it has created a greater focus on early developmental processes and the role of the maternal function.

Nancy Chodorow's (1978) *The Reproduction of Mothering: Psychoanalysis and the Sociology of Gender* developed an object relations framework, to highlight the mother-infant relationship and the significance of women's mothering, identification and holding during the pre-Oedipal period of development and the impact this has on the formation of gendered identities.

Chodorow (1979) maintains the cultural construction of gender and the reproduction of mothering is determined by the sexual division of labour and the phallogocentric organisation of culture. She views the function of mothering as creating an asymmetrical relationship between boys and girls. The girl has more permeable boundaries in the relationship with the other because of having been mothered by someone of the same gender. Girls are themselves, therefore more committed to mothering. Boys, in contrast, develop a sense of self in opposition to the mother and establish more rigid boundaries. The masculine sense of self is more separate. Chodorow proposes shared parenting to dissipate gender difference and diminish inequality.

In my view, Chodorow's answer to the question of why women come to mother seems to post an absolute difference between boys and girls, male and female, men and women, even though it is a dialectical account of what she recognises to be a cultural and evolving phenomenon. Thus,

Chodorow's underlying assumptions of gender differences are unsupported and untested, by her summarising the qualities of males as essentially autonomous and the qualities of females as essentially affiliative. This is both a simplification and a caricature that obscures the real differences and similarities of men and women. It sets up a false dualism of gender opposites (Gardiner, 1992).

Nancy Chodorow's work has, in my view, been historically significant in the articulation of a female voice and the examination of a masculine bias within psychoanalysis. While I don't necessarily fully identify with her ideas, in particular her use of terminology such as "patriarchy and oppression", I do, however, think her viewpoint has been significant to giving voice to the maternal role and for considering gender from an object relational framework.

In contrast, Chodorow's object relational emphasis is of the dyadic relationship between mother and child, and the different identification and relational attachments that are generated by this early relationship. Kristeva draws from a Lacanian and post-structural framework to propose a maternal discourse that is accessible to male and female.

Kristeva's focus is on the role of maternal bodily rhythms and language in the formation of gender. Her emphasis on the body and idea of the semiotic chora and the understanding of maternal body, for example rhythms and pulses, have been significant when emphasising the importance of a maternal pre-Oedipal discourse that is readily available to male and female (Hamburg, 1993).

Kristeva affirms the symbolic, by highlighting the way in which a subject is subjected to the symbolic order. A subject must assume a place within the symbolic order to speak. They must access the semiotic chora to experience, but then assume a place within the symbolic order to have a voice. While Kristeva upholds the structures of the symbolic, she also highlights the impact to women, who must deny their primary identification in order to gain access to language. It is only through identifying with masculine values that women have access to discourse and culture. To refuse this course is to descend into psychosis (Brooks, 1997, Sprengnether, 1995).

In parts, I found some of Kristeva's analyses too abstract. I believe Kristeva makes few moves herself in the direction of developing a more fully articulated theory of gender. While she points us in that direction by proposing a new maternal discourse, she ultimately leaves the paternal relationship to semiotic chora and the infant unexamined. I am curious as to why she does not acknowledge the father's or male's relationship to these aspects of relating.

Benjamin (1998) maintains that the classical Freudian perspective reproduces patriarchal gender characteristics, which were characterised by traits of domination and submission. The father dominates the mother and has been perceived as an autonomous, separate agent, while the mother is his passive object. She challenges the way in which maternal identification has been presumed to circumvent a child's entry into the world and maintains the maternal function is active.

While Benjamin (1998) acknowledges previous feminist psychoanalytic perspectives, such as the work of Chodorow and her emphasis of the maternal to reverse the privileging of the Oedipal father, she also seeks to transcend the split between male subject and female object, and the duality of active and passive in which separation and autonomy are privileged, more than connection.

Historically, Freud perceived the achievement of autonomy as an ideal; an infant leaves the engulfing mother and identifies with the father who is perceived as separate and represents freedom. In contrast, Benjamin (1998) maintains the child identifies and develops an ambivalent attachment to both parents during the separation-individuation phase of development.

In doing so, she recognises the maternal role as active. The emergence of a somatic self is predicated on maternal activity. For her, the mother is situated outside of the infant and the mother seeks to help her child to process and tolerate internal states of tension. Holding, containment, recognition and modulation of affect are considered active maternal functions and necessary in a child's formation of self, in particular, to identify and differentiate between me and not me; to assume the position of being one's own container, capable of regulating affect, instead of being overwhelmed or evacuating bad feelings into the other (Benjamin 1998).

As a result, autonomy requires the child to be recognised by a person who is different and separate from the child. In conjunction, the child needs to perceive the mother as outside of the child's control. Instead of the binary opposition; subject-object, male-female, active-passive, the mutual recognition of commonalities and difference in conjunction with the acknowledgement of the other's singularity, is recommended (Benjamin, 1995).

In contrast to Chodorow's understanding of gender identity as stable, solid and fixed, Kristeva draws on post-structural framework to privilege difference over identity. Within this perspective, there are multiple subject positions, rather than one fixed notion of identity. Benjamin also refutes that identity

can be clearly defined and advocates multiple identifications as an intrapsychic process in the formation of identity. The classical Oedipal hierarchical gender relationship is replaced by two desiring interpenetrating subjects; two bisexual subjects of desire, both of whom are free to consult their own emotional responses in a knowing way. In my view, I identify more strongly with Benjamin's ideas and maintain that psychoanalytic feminism should appreciate and work with the paradoxes of the intersubjective approach. I believe that an awareness of multiple gendered representations can be a resource for thought and practice, as it may enable women and therapists in clinical practice to imagine alternatives through the use of symbolism and the imaginary third or play space.

Finally, the information is pertinent to New Zealand women today, especially for those women who wish to undertake psychotherapy training, as it highlights women's awareness of feminist and psychotherapeutic issues and processes which have taken place, and help shape clinical practice and psychotherapeutic experience.

When evaluating the findings of this literature review it became apparent that there are problematic areas that need to be addressed. The sample size of the research project was perceived as problematic, as the perspectives of only three social theorists were gained. This permitted an overview of feminist psychoanalysis, but due to the limited sample size the overview resulted in a narrow account of subjectivity, difference and gender. The research sample should have included a wider range of theorists. This would have determined a more comprehensive overview of the psychoanalytic view of gender. Unfortunately this had to be balanced with the size of the dissertation.

Recommendations for future research could include an examination of the pre-Oedipal dyadic relations of mother-infant interaction in the development of recognition and symbolism to bridge multiple and opposing gender identifications in the development of desire (Benjamin, 1988, Bion, 1962, Winnicott 1971) . Moreover, a greater examination into the formation of gendered self in relation to the pre-Oedipal period of development, with a focus on Stern's (1985) intersubjective infants as active and social, in contrast to Klein's (1928) object relational infants as primitive and greedy.

In conclusion, this literature review has sought to integrate different models of knowledge including Chodorow's (1978) object relational analysis of how women come to mother, which can be affirmed

as gender specific. This analysis has been compared and contrasted with poststructural theories such as Kristeva's, (1977, 1979) which asserts difference over identity and Benjamin's (1998) intersubjective perspective which maintains mutual intersubjectivity, recognising the 'knowable in the other', in order to expose the tolerable paradoxes, the plural tendencies of gender and the significance of the maternal role as active.

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Personally, when I reflect on my lived experience, I often utilise an object relations, psychoanalytic and feminist framework to think about the personal, social & cultural dynamics of my life.

