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Erika Haubold
University of Wollongong

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**FEMINIST UTOPIA AND THE NEW FATHERS:
FROM MATRIFOCAI MONOTROPISM TO BIOLOGICALLY GROUNDED UNIVERSAL
FATHER HUNGER**

ERIKA HAUBOLD

**A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor
of Philosophy in the Department of Sociology
at the University of Wollongong**

September 2002

I, Erika Haubold, hereby declare that this thesis, submitted in fulfillment of the requirements for the award of a Doctor of Philosophy, in the Department of Sociology, University of Wollongong, is my own work unless otherwise referenced or acknowledged. The document has not been submitted for qualifications at any other University or Institution.

Erika Haubold

ABSTRACT

From the early fifties, the defining control over 'the best interest of the child' has developed into the perhaps most powerful tool in sexual politics. An essential part of this ongoing process of redefinition is the men's movement's declaration of the emotionally absent father as psycho- and social pathology and the son's demand for his restitution into their lives. This rhetoric transforms mid-century maternal deprivation into paternal deprivation and almost imperceptibly transmutes the exigencies of the fathers into the essentialized needs of the child. After this 'reinvention' of fatherhood, the relevant literature attests a potential for radical social transformation to those functions and modes of parent-child interaction which have traditionally been marked as the provenience of 'the feminine'.

The new masculinist theorist of need construction have joined feminist theorists in their challenge to the normativity of orthodox parental functions. Both disciplines have used the critique of Enlightenment's dichotomous polarities as the theoretical framework for their reinventing of fatherhood and motherhood respectively. But despite their shared subject matter, there are few similarities between the two discourses. Whilst the fatherhood literature argues that Enlightenment's emphasis on the 'Maleness of Reason' has severed the father's connection to his children, feminist theorists maintain that the same phenomenon has secured their conjugal and sex specific parental functions within the family. This thesis explores the discrepancies between masculinist theories of loss and feminist theories of acquisition. It highlights the aggravated tension between complementary and sex transcendence produced by a politics of fatherhood which lays claim to qualified sameness of and radical difference between female and male parenting potentials and functions.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION; FROM ABSENCE WITH PRESENCE TO PRESENCE WITH ABSENCE?

The notion that fatherhood is in crisis has, within the last decades, assumed a new degree of urgency, particularly in popular psychology, media representations, in the way individual men may experience changing patterns of family life and in their attempts to redefine or reassert their masculine or paternal identities¹.

Victimization and disenfranchisement of fathers and the perceived need to lobby for cultural, political, legal and social change on their behalf figure prominently, especially in the Men's Rights or Fathers' Rights strands of the men's movement. Simultaneously, a second approach has shifted the focus from the needs and 'the best interest of the father' to the needs and the 'best interest of the (male) child'. In a slow but politically significant redefinition, 'fatherhood in crisis' has been transformed into 'sonhood in crisis'.

The theory of father absence as social pathology now unites a wide array of interest groups, informs a multitude of ideological, social and theoretical positions and produces contradictory father images. At one end of the political spectrum, the family values debate reaffirms a gentler version of the traditional authoritarian father whose physical absence from the world of women and children has, in orthodox discourses, been a

¹ The very definition of the word 'crisis' changes its meaning within different discourses. Knijn (1994) summarizes some of its interpretations. She prefers this term to 'change' or 'transformation' because its explanatory power reaches beyond a sense of urgency, calling for emergency intervention. Whilst it acknowledges the anxiety-provoking dimension of social change, it also "questions fatherhood in all its forms and meanings", including its symbolic representation (p.3). Resistance to social change as well as inspirations and more satisfying structures of fathering are amongst the reactions to or ways of resolving this crisis.

prerequisite for his symbolic presence. In this version, the father is, at least theoretically, responsible for nurturing the spirit, a capacity grounded in his philosophical representation as being "radically not body" (Laqueur 1990:155).² In its insistence on sex-specific parental functions, this father imago relies for its most important prerequisites on the gendered division of labour, on 'natural' gender complementarity, on the resurrection of a repressive 'Mother-World' and on male-defined concepts of sexual difference.

It is this difference, and its presumed essential and inevitable psychic consequences, which calls for the rescue of the son from what one contributor to this thesis has called "the suffocating embrace of the mother". The 'Mother-World' in this context refers to patriarchal fantasies about motherhood and is very distinct from the worlds of women and their social realities in feminist theory. At the other end of the spectrum, the father's absence and exclusion from infant care are defined as the pathologizing effects of his orthodox, narrowly defined symbolic presence. As an aspiring occupant of the 'Mother-World,' this father now competes for traditionally female nurturing competencies and potentials or for those aspects of 'the feminine' which have, under the assumption of 'natural' gender complementarity, secured his power to delegate the nurturing of her children back to the mother.

Reunited with a re-imagined body, visions of the pregnant, fecund, life-giving and nurturing father have emerged out of the post-Jungian fatherhood literature. They extend from the earth father, who in his primitive form is seen "to give birth to life

² Laqueur 1990:155 with reference to the Cartesian self as thinking subject.

itself" (Colman and Colman 1991:38-39; O'Connor 1993:214), to a "breast-bearing, phallic father" inhabiting "our" psychic backyards (O'Connor 1993:222-223). They include the 'pregnant' male, whose creative potentials lack appropriate recognition (Colman and Colman 1991:157) and the vision of a second, male birth indispensable for the transformation from boyhood to manhood (Bly 1990:16). This appropriation and degendering of birth-giving has contributed to the contemporary notion of the 'pregnant couple' in which the mother is only one of two equally 'involved' life-giving parents with equal moral and ethical entitlements³.

The middle range, which dominates the media representation of the new paternal image, draws on both the symbolic father and the metaphoric mother. Influenced by the post-Jungian mythopoetic men's movement, the father incorporates significant elements of 'the feminine' or 'the maternal' into the 'deep masculine'. Fathers with a discretionary and flexible definition of what constitutes paternal nurturing are competent occupants of the traditionally maternal sphere, without relinquishing their separating function.

These contradictory positions respectively reaffirm and challenge some of the most fundamental canons sanctified within a system not unproblematically understood as 'Western culture'⁴. The now contested theoretical foundations of fatherhood as an institution have traditionally been supported by a wide array of disciplines, including philosophy, sociobiology, psychoanalysis, theology, sociology, law and medicine. These disciplines have impacted upon the most vital theoretical positions and material

³ see Laqueur (1990)

⁴ For a critical assessment of the concept "Western culture" and of the positions taken up by the use of the terms 'I' and 'we' to denote positions within this culture, see Flax (1990:6).

conditions which have shaped cultural and family life (or the distinction between them). They have as their subject matter the very meaning of autonomous selfhood, the concept of the 'other', knowledge, objectivity, human nature, femininity, masculinity, the private and the public sphere, body and mind, emotions and reason, the gendered division of labour, including domestic labour and childcare.

This extended nexus of meanings is no longer discernible in the current debates about the 'reinventing', 'reassessment' or 'reclaiming' of fatherhood. Explicitly or implicitly discussed within a critique of Enlightenment *dicta*, the definition of the fatherhood crisis focuses on the emotionally absent father and consequently on a parental function previously associated with maternal care. As a socio-political *novum*, this change of paradigms occurs in a cultural and economic climate in which traditional family values and the gendered division of labour no longer safeguard those paternal privileges which were acquired under the presumption of natural paternal or conjugal authority.

Earlier discourses on father absence or on the crisis of fatherhood diverge in significant aspects from the current debates. Beyond a generalized concern, there has been little consensus, within different historical periods or between participating interest groups, on the precise aspects of fatherhood deemed to be in crisis. Some light can be shed on the genesis of these inconsistencies if the notion of 'crisis' is dissected into its constituent elements. The core experiences of the crisis, such as sentiments of loss, grief over broken promises, moral outrage (the 'Angry White Male Syndrome'), perceptions of injustice or victimization, take as their point of departure a sense of normality and entitlement attached to a *status quo ante* which might be called the 'moment of bliss'. Group-specific or individual attempts to make sense of the nature of the conflict, as well

as efforts towards its resolution, interact with the concepts of loss and the determination of the 'moment of bliss' in a dynamic process of assessed and re-assessed social transformation, interpretation and representation. The vision of fatherhood now to be 'reasserted' according to new gender-political exigencies informs the definition of loss as distinctly as the definition and experience of loss shape the content and the politics of reassertion.

Fatherhood theory, committed to the restitution of orthodox paternal authority, gender complementarity and the father's unchallenged power to delegate child-rearing to the private sphere of women, encounters few obstacles in its definition of either loss or the moment of bliss. Patriarchal discourses offer a multitude of narratives on the benevolent acquisition of conjugal and paternal authority⁵ with the presumed "Maleness of Reason" as one of its natural and undisputed justifications (Lloyd 1984).

A theory of loss which attempts to resolve conflict outside the parameter of orthodox paternal authority and father right is confronted with a different crisis. It can not look back on either its own moment of bliss or its own concept of loss, since it lacks a social history for its model of paternal care and fatherhood as an institution loses its theoretical roots in history and culture. This loss of roots has the potential to point to new horizons but would leave fathers in a gender-political vacuum, necessitating a fundamental re-negotiation between women and men about the future of parenthood. The new men's movement, however, has conceptualized its vision of conflict resolution in a backward-looking invention of its own moment of bliss and radically renamed the content of loss.

⁵ Pateman (1988) demonstrates that fatherhood as an institution has historically presupposed sex right and the power of men over women.

This thesis will follow the discursive logic and the empirical effect of the masculinist reinvention of parenting and the term 'masculinism' is here understood as the antipode to the understanding of 'feminism' as a subject position committed to the concerns of women. It covers the ideological content of a wide range of theories, philosophies and sexual politics preceding the advent of feminism, including those which have shielded male needs and priorities behind the claim to objectivity, scientific knowledges, religious truths and behind essentialized and ahistorical visions of human nature.

Central to my inquiry is a phenomenon which, within less than three decades, has seen a dramatic change in emphasis from the feminist demand to draw reluctant fathers into co-parenting (Curthoys 1976; Rich 1976; Dinnerstein 1976; Chodorow 1978; Eichenbaum and Orbach 1984), to an emphatically defended paternal right and duty to nurture, grounded in an essentialized need of the (male) child for a new mode of paternal care. Women who were prepared, if necessary, to force unwilling fathers into primary caregiving (Curthoys 1976:6) have acquired a new identity as 'gatekeepers' of mother-monopolized childcare. It is now the father who has to assert his right to nurture against the resistance of the possessive mother.

American Child Psychologist Brazelton, for instance, (quoted in Margo 1993) sees mother monopolized childcare as the outcome of 'gatekeeping', a function of the mother's deep possessiveness. "I felt my own father allowed his role to be denigrated by my mother rather than following his own inclination to be really involved with his children's activities". He feels that it might take several generations before this obstacle to paternal care can be broken down. Brazelton, on the one hand, negates the political,

material and ideological genesis of the nuclear family when he holds maternal attitudes and practices responsible for the division of labour and, on the other hand, insists on the right to paternal involvement secured by patriarchal power structures⁶. A similar unreflective reference to those power structures is apparent in Lamb's (1981a:16) observation that although mother and father are equally suited as primary caregivers "fathers tended to *assign*⁷ responsibility for caretaking to their wives".

Implied in this change is a shift from the father's right to delegate childcare to the mother to his right to withdraw his consent to maternal care. Between these two interpretations of father right lies hidden the political, philosophical and mythical thinking of five thousand years of Western cultural tradition⁸ and a substantial part of the subject matter of feminist theory.

In this context, the question of consent takes on a central significance. The tacit assumption that men have erroneously 'left' nurturing to women leads patriarchal theories of father right *ad absurdum*. Their prime shortcoming is the inability to explain

⁶ The analysis of patriarchal power structures has been and still is an essential part of feminist theory, even if its status as a monolithic dynamo of subjection has been replaced by more subtle interpretations of its functioning (see Diamond & Quinby 1988). Women's and men's studies have both emphasized the inappropriateness of classifying all men only as oppressors and all women only as victims, without consideration of class, ethnicity, race, sexual preference, historical and cultural specificity; without complicity and resistance as elements of an individual's agency to reaffirm or challenge power relations in their acknowledged and unacknowledged, visible and invisible, centralized or dispersed manifestations. A sociological inquiry into the reconceptualizing of fatherhood within this extended framework, although a worthwhile project, is beyond the scope of this thesis .

⁷ My emphasis

⁸ These 5000 years denote the estimated age of the Old Testament, whose moral codes and definitions of father right still contribute to the sense of normality determining the interpretation of loss in contemporary social theory and the men's movement.

where the authority to delegate came from, without reverting to those theoretical positions and gendered dichotomies which have produced both the phantasmic 'Mother-World' (with women and children as its natural inhabitants) and the gendered division of labour with its socio-political implications. The mother's consent is the forgotten quantity in this equation. Did women consent to a gendered division of labour or was their consent irrelevant? If this consent is assumed, did it occur spontaneously⁹ and how was it embedded in multifocal power relations?¹⁰ These power relations and the shift from the father's authority to delegate childcare, to the mother's newly acquired power to withdraw her consent from paternal and matrimonial authority offers one analytical key to the historically specific interpretations of loss.

⁹ The issue of consent has been explored by Pateman (1988) in the context of social contract theory. See also Coltheart (1986).

¹⁰ Submission which replaces consent with divine ordinance can be found in the Old Testament story of Genesis. Freud in *Civilization and its Discontent* (1929) assumed consent in a confusing account which sees all women already under the control of the primordial father and still assumes that women sought the protection of the stronger male in the interest of their own and their children's safety. Engels (1884) maintained that the monogamous marriage was the initiative of women because it protected them from the sexual advances of more than one man. The threat of violence, both Freud and Engels imply as a strong motivation for women to submit to male authority and 'protection', allow at best for a very qualified reading of 'consent' even though they offer a more realistic account of the dangers women and their children might have faced than the claim that men offered protection against the attacks of wild animals (Bly 1990).

Father Absence as Social Pathology

The concept of crisis central to the early fatherhood debate in critical theory bears no resemblance to its current definition. The rise of fascism in Germany motivated the Frankfurt School to develop an interdisciplinary theory which could explain the unquestioning obedience of the German population to external or superior power.

Applying a synthesis of Marxist theories of alienation and the Freudian identification with and struggle against an authoritarian father, Horkheimer (1936), in his influential essay *Authority and the Family*, used the demise of traditional paternal functions as an explanation for the evident social crisis. The Industrial Revolution, so Horkheimer argued, has undermined the father's material and psychic functions and his authority in the family, whilst it survived to some extent, could do so only as an empty shell. The son subsequently identified with a now irrational authority, deprived of its authenticity, and his failed socialization carried the aftermath of the father's loss of authority into the wider community. Strong arguments against Horkheimer's theory of fatherlessness as the origin of fascist masculinity have later been developed within different disciplines (see Benjamin 1978; Theweleit 1987; Benjamin and Rabinbach 1987).

Neither Horkheimer nor, one generation later, Mitscherlich (1963) and Lasch (1977) conceptualized their theories of loss to challenge the gendered division of labour. For each of the three theorists, the demise of paternal authority is accompanied by the intrusion of instrumental reason into the heart of family life and this intrusion posed a dangerous threat to an idealized vision of the 'Mother-World'.

This idealization of motherhood is strictly the glorification of the limitations it imposed on women. Rumpf (1989; 1993) has explored the often negated significance of the mother in the work of Horkheimer and later theorists of father absence. But, so Rumpf (1989:102) argues, even in 1963 Mitscherlich could still complain about the intrusion of professionalization and specialization into the private sphere, which alienates the mother from her true instinct nature.

Social transformation, including those developments which impacted on the life experiences of wives and mothers were attributed exclusively to 'outside' influences. This assumption left no room for women's agency in and contribution to the dynamics of change and obliterated the necessity to theorize the desirability and moral justification of the *status quo ante*¹¹. Within its own logic, the defense of a 'natural' division between the public and the private spheres constituted the son as the equally 'natural' heir to the father's agency as a political subject¹² and attempted to relegate a new generation of daughters to the isolation of the family's inner sanctum.

Social theory of the early seventies produced a new men's literature, which shifted the focus away from Mitscherlich's and Lasch's definitions of loss. The original emphasis on sons and the moral fabric of modern Western societies as casualties of father absence transmutes into a new position which constituted men as victims of mandatory father

¹¹ Horkheimer (1936) has adopted the Darwinian-Freudian theory of women as fundamentally hostile to civilization. The division of labour serves women's peculiar interests and their future efforts to enter the workforce will be frustrated by extensive unemployment which makes them unwelcome participants in the labour market.

¹² Mitscherich (1973:140) is particularly explicit in his articulation of the privileged father-son relationship. This relationship must stand for all other relationships: father-daughter, mother and son, mother-daughter, brothers and sisters and also for the relationship between the parents. The father son-relationship, Mitscherlich argues holds a special place in paternalistic societies and the changes in this relationship allow reflections on fundamental social transformations.

presence. The needs of adult men were seen as being in conflict with the orthodox division of labour, still glorified and defended in previous theories of loss.

The motivations behind this drastic change of paradigms are still unclear and remain in a continuous process of redefinition. One line of argumentation interprets the shift, from fatherlessness to masculinity as social pathology as a response to and reaction against the feminist movement (Ehrenreich 1983:12). Chapman (1989:226) maintains that feminism has pathologized masculinity. Carrigan, Connell and Lee (1985:551) show that some research on masculinity and "the political incoherence built into the 'sex role' paradigm" predates the advent of second wave feminism. Morgan (1990:69) argues that the new focus on masculinity was not only a reaction against feminism, divorce and the loss of parental rights. He points out, that within this debate, issues like domestic violence and child sexual abuse became subject matters of major concern.

Frequently critical of Parsonian functionalism (Parsons and Bales 1956), the new men's literature questioned the orthodox arrangements of family life and what was then defined as the 'male sex role'¹³ on some of its elementary premises¹⁴. Different approaches leading to diverging conclusions pathologized stereotypical macho behavior

¹³ According to French (1986: 354) the concept of 'male sex role identity' first emerged in Terman et al (1936)

¹⁴ Hearn (1987) provides a comprehensive survey of the social changes which have initiated the critique by men as against the critique by feminists of masculinity and power relations. For a survey of the early men's movement see Carrigan et al. (1985); Connell (1995). For a critique of sex role theory see Cardigan et al. (1985); Connell (1985). Connell (1995: 26-27) argues, that sex role theory exaggerates the "degree to which people's behavior is prescribed", privileges biological differences over social relations as motivating phenomena, presupposes a reciprocity of functions and fails to deal adequately with the issue of power in gender relations. Ehrenreich (1983) gives a particularly illuminating account of the redefinition of the male sex role in the seventies men's literature, where it was, though not in all accounts, seen as separated from biology, as acted out or played, a mask that men wore to their own detriment.

"as a form of arrested development" and encouraged men to "get in touch with their emotions" (Chapman 1989:230).

As an early example of the problematization of men and masculinity, Balswick and Peek's essay, *The Inexpressive Male: A Tragedy of American Society*, developed a critique of the male socialization process which "encourages physical toughness, competitiveness and aggression, whereas femininity is, in contrast, expressed largely through gentleness, expressiveness and responsiveness" (1971: 364). Pleck, one of the most influential early theorists on masculinity, critiqued the traditional 'male role', signified by a lack of interpersonal and emotional skills which invites impulsive behavior as particularly validating (1976:156). Consciousness-raising sessions and group discussions, modeled on the early women's movement, searched for new, positive male identities (Stein -Hilbers 1994:3; Ehrenreich 1983, Chapter 6). Externalization, that aspect of the male gendering process described in Chodorow (1979) as the need to define masculinity in terms of 'otherness' to maternal and feminine aspects of nurturing, stunts emotional growth and leads to emotional isolation, particularly in man-to-man relationships¹⁵. Pro-feminist voices, amongst others Farrell (1974) and Fausteau (1974) coexisted with the explicitly misogynist positions of Tiger (1969, 1971) and Goldberg (1976) and their commitment to develop strategies of *Surviving the Myth of Masculine Privilege* (Goldberg 1976). Masculinity now transforms men, particularly as fathers and

¹⁵ Emotionally impoverished male to male relationships constitute a significant issue within the current men's movement .Against this claim, Pleck (1976:157) interprets the traditional male role as encouraging strong, though ritualized emotional bonds between men. Tiger (1967) elevates male bonding to the origin of civilization. Voelger and von Welck (1990) have published two volumes of contributions on the subjects of "Maennerbande, Maennerbuende" (Male Bonds and Brotherhoods), emphasizing the strongly emotional content of institutionalized male-to-male interaction which extends from the rituals of ancient religious organizations to the culture of contemporary football clubs.

breadwinners, into victims of male conditioning and masculinity into a "health hazard". In its most extreme articulation, women are the exclusive beneficiaries of this conditioning process and its manifestations (Goldberg 1976).

A second reading of male discontent is suggested by Ehrenreich (1983). Rather than being a reaction to external changes, the male rebellion or "the flight from commitment" and the collapse of the breadwinner ethic predated the revival of feminism. The first manifestations of a deep dissatisfaction can be traced back to the fifties (1983:12-15). Men's involvement in their families and the responsibilities of providing for a permanently dependent wife and her children appeared to be a trap set by sex role stereotyping, rationally indefensible and ultimately emasculating¹⁶. Middle class men in particular who had "crafted and popularized the ideology that had supported the breadwinner ethic" were now energetically involved in its collapse. The perils of the fatherless society (Lasch 1969; Mitscherlich 1973), the bemoaned loss of traditional paternal authority and the strong conviction that families and indeed societies need fathers transmutes into the 'male revolt' proclamation that fathers do not necessarily need families. The later right wing backlash, so Ehrenreich (1983:13) argues, was not so much a reaction against feminism but rather against the 'male revolt'. In Chapter 10 of the same book, Ehrenreich outlines "The Antifeminist Assault on Men". Conservative women's groups celebrated the defeat of the Equal Rights Amendment, which would have improved women's property rights during marriage and strengthened their position

¹⁶ In Bly (1990:1) the 'fifties male' reappears as a conformist family man, isolated, deprived and passive. Segal (1990) points to two contradictory male images in the fifties: a new ideology of 'togetherness' between men and women supports the image of the family man who was more involved in the house but had little contact with his children and a second hyper-masculine image of the "Angry Young Male" (pp.13-16) anxious about his sexuality and manhood.

as wage earners. The basic tenet of this backlash was the defense of the family and women's right to be supported by their husbands as housewives and mothers.

The Emotionally Absent Father as Social Pathology

Within a few decades of the 'male revolt' of the fifties and the beginning of the early consciousness-raising and men's liberation movements, the objects of male discontent had undergone a further dramatic change. Additional influences from the New Right, sociobiology, the post-Jungian men's literature and father-right groups contributed their very diverse and sometimes strongly contradictory influences.

As a uniting theorem of these diverse influences, Horkheimer's assertion that families need fathers, was revived as an implicit rebuke directed at unassertive or inactive fathers, at mothers who 'monopolize' child-rearing and at the division of labour, which discourages intensified paternal involvement. It emphasized the child's postulated needs for a new mode of paternal care and commitment. Paternal emotional competence and availability not only accommodated the novel needs of the child but transgressed the boundaries of the 'private' sphere of emotions and family life as the radical elements for broader social change (Bly 1990; O'Connor 1993; Biddulph 1994, 1995; Blankenhorn 1995). Based on a more intimate relationship between father and child, or, in the new men's movement, between father and son, this committed caring would be carried into the wider community and provide solutions to complex local and global concerns.

The transformative power of paternal emotions derives its dynamics from three basic assumptions. First, the father must be established as habitually unemotional both in his motivations and in his interaction with the child. Second, emotions must be accepted as intrinsically benevolent or beneficial and third, their absence must have left a notable vacuum in the lives of their children or, again, in the community to which these men

belong. Consequently, the theoretical construction of the emotionally absent and illiterate father of the immediate past, takes on one of the most significant functions in the representation of the "New Father". According to Chapman, the new father is first of all a reaction. He "presupposes an old man against whom he defines himself as the other. In this way he is illustrative of the classic dualism which is endemic to patriarchal thinking" (1989:227).

As the emotionally absent father, the old man holds the second position in the men's movement's three father model. The first image is that of the lost, perfect father of the past. It is retrieved from various historical moments predating either the industrial revolution or the period of Enlightenment, or it is based on mythologies and fairytales from a conglomerate of cultural heritages. It provides the idealized, though historically indefensible, model against which the not-good-enough absent father of the immediate past is measured and vilified. The good-enough father of the future is invested with the qualities of a nurturing, emotionally competent, authoritative mythical father who lost his 'natural' paternal functions and capacities at various stages, and especially under the destructive influences of modernity¹⁷.

This representation of the new idealized father takes no account of the most elementary theoretical foundations of and justifications for orthodox father presence. The theories, symbolisms, metaphors, imaginings, fantasies, material conditions and historically variant male exigencies which have transformed biological motherhood and fatherhood

¹⁷ The strongest arguments for a lost paternal nurturing tradition arise out of the Jungian inspired mythopoetic fatherhood literature (Colman and Colman 1988; Bly 1990; Keen 1991; O'Connor 1993; Biddulph 1995, 1995a). Tacy (1997) and Samuels (1986, 1993, 1996a, 1996b) work within the Jungian tradition but are critical of the mythopoetic men's movement's reactionary use of Jungian thought on fatherhood.

into the social reality of "The Family" fade into a gender-political limbo, whilst the rhetoric of paternal metamorphosis dates the significant loss to historical moments preceding the structural changes responsible for the current challenges to the position of the father. Horkheimer (1936:49) described this process as "arbitrary historical periodisation" and linked its dynamics to prevailing systems of power and their control over knowledge production. Discourses in a multitude of disciplines "have sought to establish divisions based on criteria proper to themselves".

This historical periodisation produces not only new knowledges but also its own silences. In its attempts to regain control over the social agenda of gender politics, the fatherhood lobby creates new legitimizing discourses in which the voices of real fathers become inaudible. Mostly middle class, middle-aged men, plagued by the phantom of paternal redundancy, shed the persona of the father. Speaking in the voices of the sons, the father's traditional monopoly on knowledge production, articulated in the language of reason, transmutes into the emotionally inspired knowledge production of the sons. The transformation of paternal redundancy into an insatiable longing for paternal nurturing postulates the agency of the son in the creation of an essentialized need for the abandoned self as father.

This focus on the deprived sons reclaiming their fathers allows men to reclaim fatherhood or, more precisely, reclaim the son as a benevolent action in the 'best interest of the child'. Their own needs, rational and emotional, lose their transparency and transform the conceptualization of future father-child relationships into a 'male matter'. Resurrected from its demystification, the 'Father-World' attempts to withdraw from the orbit of gender politics into a mythical space outside the gaze of feminist theorists and

apart from the subject matter of critical men's or gender studies. "Once again, the father's authority is asserted and concealed, his desire is privileged and protected" (Flax 1990:105) ¹⁸.

In Chapter Two¹⁹ I explore different critiques of Enlightenment philosophies, which constitute the theoretical framework for this thesis. I outline the male rise to conjugal and paternal power, in an account which reads feminist theories of acquisition against masculinist theories of loss. The first contested theoretical position is the historical periodisation, which locates the loss of an assumed male or paternal emotional competence and availability in the second period of the Enlightenment. In contrast, feminist theorists trace the origin of the now problematized dualist concepts back to the earliest records of Western culture and follow their footprints into modern social sciences from Durkheim, Weber and Parsons, to sociobiological and psychoanalytical descriptive assumptions and prescriptive *desiderata*. The significant discrepancies between the very diverse discourses on the 'Maleness of Reason' converge in their collective project: the creation of hierarchically ordered 'otherness' between sexed or gendered categories, as the ideological and philosophical foundation of the fantasized 'Mother'- and 'Father'-Worlds, organized into the feminization of a sphere considered to be 'private' and into the concrete social reality of the gendered division of labour. The father's now lamented exclusion from this 'feminized' realm of nurturing and from those aspects of human relations considered to be emotional, is shown to rest on precisely those polarized categories which have, until recently, provided the single most

¹⁸ Flax directs this observation at the perceived universal relevance of the nexus culture/language/Law of the Father in Lacan and implicitly at Freudian theory .

¹⁹ "Theories of Acquisition; The Emotional Content of Reason".

significant legitimizing and explanatory argument for various accounts of 'natural' conjugal and paternal authority and thus created, at least theoretically, a space for men in the lives of women and their children²⁰.

A specifically important purpose of this chapter is to draw attention to those patriarchal strategies which have successfully transformed unacknowledged male self-interests and historically variant needs into women's (or Woman's) nature and natural functions. The aim of this approach is to retrieve the very notion of fatherhood from the men's movement's limiting focus on the father-child relationship and to restore it to its appropriate dimensions within sexual politics.

Chapter Three²¹ highlights some of the important challenges to a sense of normality which, although flexibly adapted in accordance with or reasserted by new scientific knowledges or belief systems, saw its claim to male supremacy and female subordination as grounded in diverse accounts of human nature and anatomical differences. Whilst the dynamic forces of economic and cultural changes in the fifties to seventies including the rising of second wave feminism, threatened a sense of conjugal and paternal entitlements, Freudianism, post Freudianism, sociobiology and endocrinology come to the aid of a threatened 'male role'.

The evolving struggle of this period between an androcentric vision of matricentrism and a gynocentric notion of autonomous motherhood is explored within the framework

²⁰ I am here concerned solely with the theoretical perspectives of fatherhood as an institution, not with the emotional significance, concrete fathers may have in the lives of their children .

²¹ "Voices of Discontent".

of ideologically inspired masculinist need-construction. Whilst Freud's theory of female development saw motherhood as the only possible option for healthy female need-satisfaction, attachment theory offered theoretical support for the essentialized needs of the child in terms of uninterrupted and biologically encoded maternal care. Motherhood and wifehood, inseparably fused into the 'female role' took center stage in the support of the father-holds-mother-holds-baby-doctrine. This doctrine, its grounding in and support of patriarchal priorities, formed the theoretical and very practical breeding ground for the female discontent which was to grow into 'second wave' feminism. Debates about the definition of Woman or women, Man or men, and about the best interest of the child began to take shape as contested issues of sexual politics.

Chapter Four²² explores a repeated and often passionately expressed sentiment of deprivation prevalent in the current literature on masculinity and fatherhood. Central to this deprivation is a specific interpretation of emotions as ahistorical and benevolent substances of the soul or the 'true self'. Male socialization processes since the second period of Enlightenment and their emphasis on rationality have prevented men from reaching their full potential as human beings.

The work of Victor Seidler (1993) offers a very clear example for this theoretical position. "Theorizing from the Ruins of Logos"²³, Seidler paradoxically has to argue for the Enlightenment as a completed, though rather unfortunate, male project, since he grounds his interpretation of loss on a deprivation theory which postulates the absence

²² "Theories of Loss; The Rational Components of Emotions".

²³ The title for this part has been borrowed from Butler (1993:IX)

of emotions or their suppressed articulation as the origin of a multitude of unsatisfied and unspecified male needs. The "Man of Reason" rules supreme against his own 'nature' and best interest until reason ceases to be an uncontested source of male privileges. Emotions, corporeality, connectedness and 'the feminine'; the traditional features of 'femaleness' which are denigrated as long as they were lived through female bodies within the confines of the 'private sphere', gain their profile as humanizing forces for global social transformation.

Despite the new and highly politicized function of emotions as potential instruments for radical social change, the extensive debate on men's exclusion from their 'orbit' leaves the very nature of emotions unchallenged. Since the very definition of what constitutes an emotion follows the logic of their hierarchized organization into gendered categories, their invisibility in masculine behavior patterns needs to be analyzed as part of a technology of gender. The main focus of this chapter is on the problematic assumption that men who "get in touch with their emotions" have a controlled but uncompromising and liberating access to 'the feminine' as part of their own 'true nature', whilst socialization processes have produced only those aspects of masculinity which *men* now experience as limitation and victimization. The examples of crying and anger as stereotypically feminine and masculine displays of feelings are analyzed within the framework of a constructivist theory of emotions. Within this theoretical approach, the agency of the emoting subject replaces the orthodox understanding of emotions as involuntary and biologically primitive reactions (Averill 1980:311), which has allowed for their orthodox association with 'the feminine'.

After the nature of emotion has been explored, the focus returns to their presumed loss. Since Horkheimer's essay *Authority and the Family* in 1936, the Industrial Revolution has been widely accepted as the commencement of male deprivation, as a period of substantial loss for fathers, their sons and only via the violation of this prioritized relationship, for the wider community. But whilst the current debates on the legacy of Enlightenment philosophies emphasize the lost male 'right to emotions', the original loss was defined as the demise of a specifically male conjugal and parental 'role', firmly grounded in the definition of authority as male prerogative. As the notion of "fatherless" societies²⁴ changes its content synchronously with the changing concepts of motherhood, the characteristics of the 'good enough' father in Horkheimer bear little resemblance to those of the emotionally competent and available father of the outgoing twentieth century. Gradually, Horkheimer's authoritarian father transmuted into the men's movement's 'not good enough' father of the immediate past, or into the second father figure of the three father model. Simultaneously, the perfect father of the distant past retrospectively acquires the capacities and functions, desirable in the context of contemporary sexual politics. In a spiral of mutually reinforcing emotional, political and ideological exigencies, a new idealized 'history' of fatherhood has informed the account of loss until this loss has reached its present, dramatic proportions.

The last section of chapter four gives a brief outline of masculinist and feminist accounts of the Industrial Revolution and argues that, rather than having separated

²⁴ The notion of fatherlessness as social pathology constitutes one of the principal concerns of this thesis. It has undergone significant redefinitions from Horkheimer, to Mitscherlich's *Society Without the Father* (1969) to Robert Bly's *Iron John* (1990) and Blankenhorn's *Fatherless America* (1996):

fathers from their children, the sexual politics of this period mustered all available social and cultural resources, to ensure the lasting conjugal and paternal control over women and their children.

Chapter Five²⁵ explores the disparities between feminist and masculinist assessments of co-parenting, and approaches the image of the 'New Father' in search of discrepancies between "collective fantasy and social reality" (Manne 1999:21). The guiding question is to what extent the struggle over the definition of the 'good enough mother', the 'good enough father' and 'the best interest of the child' is either informed by shared priorities between men and women or makes shared priorities a realistic proposition in the future.

This issue necessitates an appraisal of fatherhood which has not only changed its historical meaning as a social institution, now oscillating between 'Fatherhood' and 'Dadhood', but also has to accommodate the fluctuating needs of fathers at various stages of their life cycle and according to possible changes in their relationship to the mother. Fathers, increasingly threatened by the possibility of divorce and separation, must decide whether it is in their best interest to plead for 'sameness' with the mother and her nurturing capacities, or whether the insistence on sexual difference offers a safer theoretical position to secure a paternal function in the life of the child, independent of the mother-father and mother-child relationships within and outside the nuclear family. Are men willing to relinquish a specific 'paternal role' for the privilege of sharing the rewards and labour of primary caregiving on the basis of an equal and gender independent nurturing, involvement, connectedness, responsibility and caring? How do

²⁵ "Politics of Reassertion; From Monotropist Matricentrism to Biologically Grounded Universal Father Hunger".

those concepts change their meaning when applied to a male as compared to a female carer? How does the representation of the 'Mother-World' change through the presence of a participating father and how does the 'Father-World' change if both men and women are seen as competent occupants of both spheres?

The remaining group of sub-chapters will test the hypothesis that the representation of the 'New Father' as an homogenous entity, on closer examination reveals two different persona, conceptualized according to two different categories of exigencies and paternal needs. Tracing the limited and selective dissolution of gendered dichotomies within the fatherhood literature, this inquiry explores which aspects of the Man of Reason and the Woman of Emotions are either challenged or protected. The next step attempts to establish how both challenged and defended aspects of female and male 'nature' shape a new sense of normality which in turn influences the perception of parental rights, duties and entitlements.

Whilst the Man of Reason, embodied in the emotionally absent father, occupies the prominent position in the current fatherhood debate, patrifocal child development theorists of the early seventies concentrated their theoretical efforts on the omnipresence of the mother, as the sole occupant of the child's emotional life. Thus, preceding the advent of the Man of Reason as social pathology, early attempts to reinvent the father identified the 'man-made' Woman of Emotion ²⁶ as the disruptive entity who frustrated

²⁶ The 'man made' Woman of Emotion in this specific context refers to the claim in early patrifocal child development theories that the presumed maternal monopoly on emotional competence and the developmental necessity of mother love were the results of methodologically inadequate research, undertaken by a prior generation of child development theorists. See in particular Lamb (1976, 1981, 1997) and Rutter (1972, 1979).

the recognition of the traditional father's vital influence on child development and blocked the path to sensitively nurturing paternity.

The legacy of Bowlby's attachment theory and its insistence on mother love - not only as the biologically encoded prerequisite for appropriate nurturing but also as an essentialized need of the child, - transmute into a gender-political liability the moment the Woman of Emotion begins to experience herself and refuses to be represented by interests other than her own, as the complementary, irrefutable 'other' to the Man of Reason.

This mother whose love is now in need of androcentric redefinition is not the Freudian Oedipal mother but object relation's powerful pre-Oedipal mother who, according to Bopp (1984), has usurped the father's Oedipal throne and in the wake of this usurpation, the claim to a unique and dominant influence on the child's moral, emotional and intellectual development. In terms of sexual politics, the father and the 'Father-World' have lost their vital monopoly as instruments of and locus for the attainment of reason, morality and autonomous selfhood.

The demise of a uniquely masculine quality, acquired in the civic space or the 'Father-World' and traditionally 'handed down' to the next generation of male heirs, remains, at the end of the millennium, one of the most lamented losses in the fatherhood literature. Although acquired and sustained by the claim to reason, the resurrection of an exclusive paternal function peacefully coexists with the claim to paternal competence in what has traditionally been declared the 'inside' or the 'Mother-World'. The 'New Father' in his

contradictory manifestations, thus draws not only on the unchallenged nature of emotions but also on the unchallenged nature and origins of authority and reason. In order to explore the Enlightenment dichotomies which have survived not only in the masculinist claims to rigorous difference and selective sameness, but also in social sciences and some strands of feminist thought, this chapter turns to feminist mothering theory in search of models of parenting which are no longer committed to either orthodox or contemporary androcentric definitions, paradoxes and priorities.

In contrast to the masculinist critique of maternal deprivation theory which demythologizes only the mother and transforms her prior omnipotence into the features of the "New Father", the equivalent feminist critique demythologizes father as well as mother, the 'Father-World' as much as the 'Mother-World'. At the center of a new strand of mothering theory are the two concepts which mark not only the decisive features of the two persona of the new father but also represent the epitome of conventional paternal and maternal functions; authority and nurturing, or the capacities associated with the rightful occupants of either the civic or the private sphere.

Drawing on the work of earlier feminist philosophers and their critique of Enlightenment *dicta*, presumptions about the masculinity of authority and the femininity of nurturing are revisited and analyzed, as to their very nature²⁷ which includes and moves beyond their assignment to either men or women as natural attributes. Jones' *Compassionate Authority* (1993) and Everingham's "Investigation into The Rational

²⁷ The work of Kathleen Jones (1988, 1993) provides the main arguments for the unchallenged nature of authority, even in some feminist texts and Everingham (1994) explores the largely unchallenged nature of nurturing. Both scholars argue, that the subject matter of their concern has, for a long time, evaded scientific curiosity, attention and redefinition.

Components of Mothering" (1994) challenge authority and nurturing as anchored in either male or female bodies or their modes of attainment in divided social spheres. Strictly sex-segregated parental capacities and functions and the needs of the child in terms of these functions are relegated from child development theory to sexual politics.

With the 'de-naturalization' of maternal practice and the new emphasis on its groundedness in concrete social relations, the mother no longer holds a monopoly on competent primary caregiving, nor do 'The Law of the Father' or the father's Oedipal intervention survive as prerequisites for the attainment of reason or the birth of the male psyche. From its very beginning, the patrifocal demystification of the mother has been concerned with only a partial dissolution of parental monopolies. In congruence with feminist mothering theory, the early fatherhood literature challenged the overwhelming responsibility of the Woman of Emotions and the grounding of the maternal capacity to recognize the elementary needs of the child in a uniquely female nature. However, subsequent attempts to rectify the perceived imbalance between appropriate assessments of maternal and paternal influences, significance and potentials, return to the myths created by prior generations of theorists and challenge the maternal monopoly of nurturing, rather than its very nature. Theoretical, ideological and political efforts to alter the social reality of mother-monopolized primary caregiving or the gendered division of labour are almost invisible behind efforts to reinvent fathers as participants in and beneficiaries of a revised vision of the offending myths, without having to relinquish the privileges accumulated under their sway.

The father as significant influence in the development of the child and as potentially proficient primary caregiver derives his competence from those phylogenetically

encoded knowledges which feminist theorists have laboriously identified as one of a number of phantasmic and goal-directed patriarchal inventions. In addition, the needs of the child remain ahistorical and culturally invariant givens, communicated in phylogenetically transmitted signals, ready to be 'decoded' without any prior nurturing practice or even without prior contact not only with a specific infant but with infants in general. Mothering is dissected into politically potent and selectively appropriated elements. The claim to 'sameness', or to shared access to a common pool of intrinsic knowledges, previously the monopoly of 'the feminine', deconstructs the positive aspects of the myth of motherhood which are now superimposed onto masculinity and 'the paternal' as natural endowments.

This vision of 'parental' competence thus remains firmly grounded in an increasingly diffuse understanding of 'nature' and, as instinctive and intrinsic knowledge, conceals the emotional, intellectual and physical labour the mother invests in her relationship with her child. It *theoretically* dissolves or deconstructs the maternal monopoly as attachment figure and the elementary (now politically inopportune) premises of maternal deprivation and the 'maternal role'. At the same time, this vision poses no challenge to the gendered division of labour but allows the fathers to claim the same degree of competence, without the labour of primary caregiving and its social cost. The selective claim to 'sameness', however, from the very beginning coexisted with the retained claim to 'otherness'. The father's entry into the 'Mother-World' retrieves a lost and neglected potential.²⁸ It is far removed from any concept of 'masculinization' and

²⁸ The difficult question, whether the 'Mother-World' casts its dark shadow over the father or whether the presence of the father significantly changes the morphology and symbolic status of the 'Mother-World' has been answered in a

from the strong sense of intrusion implied in the lament that either fatherhood (Dye 1998:171), the classroom (Biller 1974; West quoted in C. Jones 1995), the domestic sphere (Blankenhorn 1995:13) or little boys in kindergarden (Donaghy 1994)²⁹ have been 'feminized'.

The simultaneous insistence on the significance and function of the father in the 'Father-World' raised the question why the masculine, in its appropriation of what is symbolically and metaphorically associated with femaleness within the logic of its explanatory argument, remains resistant to the reverse process. In concrete terms, why does the masculine, lived through the female body, withstand the liberating and humanizing effect of the feminine, lived through the male body, or why are women still incapable of nurturing their own sons?

In contrast to current feminist mothering theory, which acknowledges fathers as potentially competent primary caregivers, mothers in masculinist fathering theory are still excluded from nurturing functions postulated as essentially male. Theories of paternal potentials and functions rarely enter either the consciousness of individual men or the politics of fatherhood in their pure, abstract form.

Male nurturing capacities which theoretically extend to all aspects of care continue to support a specific mode of paternal, as distinguished from parental, authority. Without any perceptible conflict between the contradictions involved in the simultaneous claim

simplicistic form by O'Connor (1994:230) The father carries the light of logos into the 'Mother-World', so that the place of the mother is either cast in light or shadow with the entry and exit of the father respectively.

to sameness and difference, this combination offers the gender political solution to the two most contradictory exigencies within the politics of fatherhood: the need to occupy the child's early infant period as a significant other and to retain an exclusive male parenting function, inaccessible to the mother.

The construction of the 'Father in the Mother-World' is theoretically grounded in the rejection of strictly sex-segregated, complementary capacities and in the father's access to the positive aspects of 'the maternal' or to the knowledges mothers are supposed to 'have'. In contrast, the reassertion of the 'Father in the Father-World' follows a reverse logic. His function as mentor, guardian and authority figure for (male) children depends as its most powerful prerequisite on his monopoly of those knowledges and capacities, which mothers are perceived and *must be demonstrated not to 'have'*. Although nurturing and emotional competence are now integral elements of a "compassionate masculinity", (West, quoted in C. Jones 1995),³⁰ the knowledges of the 'Father-World' defy degendered, phylogenetic transmission³¹

From the very beginning, the masculinist deconstruction of the dogma of maternal deprivation employed the theoretical instruments of this deconstruction to simultaneously constitute paternal deprivation as a social pathology of insurmountable magnitude. Father absence as "our most urgent social problem" (Blankenhorn 1995)

²⁹ Donaghy does not endorse the view that there is a "risk of 'feminizing' the boys" at Kindergarten but critically observes that the rights of girls are frequently subordinated to the perceived need to protect the little boy's budding masculinity.

³⁰ West's compassionate masculinity is in no apparent conflict with the author's call for the resurrection of the most orthodox conjugal and paternal authority (West 1998).

³¹ According to the mythopoetic men's movement, the father or mentor derives his nurturing competency from a way of knowing which has survived at the bottom of the male psyche for the last 20,000 years, waiting to be reactivated by contemporary men (Bly 1990:230).

established the child's, particularly the male child's, 'birth-right' to a specifically male mode of parental nurturing.

Central to this ongoing project are three distinct but closely interrelated theoretical aspects: the functions and capacities of the father, the functions and incapacities of the mother and the reassignment of the essentialized needs of the child from maternal to paternal deprivation. The struggle for the survival of the 'paternal role' reactivates the struggle over the right to define the social, psychological, philosophical, legal and symbolic meaning of motherhood and thus over the right to influence and recreate the social realities of mothering according to androcentric exigencies. 'Objective' masculinist, male or paternal voices contest the validity of 'radicalized' feminist, female or maternal views on the possible meanings of parenthood. The representations of the men's movement's mother-images in the mass media and popular psychology contribute powerfully to a new sense of normality in which maternal deprivation, with its widely acknowledged ideologically grounded shortcomings, has been replaced by a presumably unbiased assessment of paternal deprivations and its catastrophic consequences. Whilst "mother is a verb, not a noun", (Chesler 1992:135)³² 'father' remains, most decisively, "not a verb at all, but a gender specific noun" (Blankenhorn 1995:201).

³² Chesler attests this statement to the left wing father's rights movements in support of the claim that "a man can be a better mother than a woman", a vital aspect in the legal battle over custody. Right wing and left wing fathers, so Chesler continues, are convinced that male parenting, whether on "a 'mothering' or on a patriarchal fathering model, is sufficient and often superior to women's parenting.

CHAPTER TWO

THEORIES OF ACQUISITION; THE EMOTIONAL CONTENT OF REASON

PART I: FEMINIST CRITIQUE OF ENLIGHTENMENT DUALITIES

The main purpose of this chapter is to read feminist theories of acquisition against the men's movement's theories of loss. Central to this project are the silences which remain in the strongly vocalized discourses on male emotional deprivation and its presumed devastating effects in the past. Produced by self-imposed analytical censorship and limitations within the fatherhood literature, these silences conceal not only the highly political nature of the original male disavowal of emotions. Analyzed in conjunction with a claimed victim status and with the moral and legal claims made on behalf of this victimization, the new, enthusiastically declared avowal of emotions can also be seen to paradoxically function according to patterns very similar to those which regulate the logic of their disavowal. As ostentatiously apolitical as their original disavowal, men's 'new access' to their emotions performs as a powerful instrument in the restitution of the conjugal and paternal rights and entitlements, acquired under the pretence of male 'passionlessness'.

In practical terms, what exactly does it mean when men bemoan the 'fact' that secularization, changing patterns of women's work-force participation, a cultural climate of sexual permissiveness or the availability of reasonably safe contraception has "allowed the female to alter the power balance in sexual relationships in her favor"?

(Moore 89:47)³³. This moral outrage extends in its implication far beyond the negotiation between individual sexual partners about the regulation of their fertilities. It points to the epicenter of sexual politics, where issues of female consent have traditionally been determined by male control over women's bodies, seen as the indisputable prerequisite for father-right and paternal authority. Even if different forms of loss are substituted as paradigms for a perceived new gender injustice, no single aspect of this new 'imbalance' can be theorized in isolation. Any suggestion of an epistemological distance between the notion of an unruly female reproductive autonomy and the concept of male emotional deprivation would be superficial and theoretically unsustainable.

From a feminist perspective, the two experiences of loss can be re-integrated into an analysis of the complex nexus of meanings from which they have been separated by the diverse discourses on male victimization. Feminist theory has explicitly insisted that the loss of control over women's reproductive functions and the disavowal of male emotions³⁴ can not be analyzed in isolation from each other and that the claimed 'maleness of reason' may effortlessly be reunited with the claim to what Daly has called "Mono Gender Male Automotherhood" (Daly 1978:87).

³³ Moore follows this quotation with the suspicion, that the inventors of the 'pill' might inadvertently have employed their ingenuity against basic male interests, since they have liberated 'the female' and her sexuality (p.46). An interesting feminist reflection on the male fear of the pill can be found in Parturier (1981:59-63) Parturier maintains that male scientists, usually so proud of their discoveries, have for half a century kept hidden in their drawer the safest method for women to determine their own reproductive lives, out of fear that women might lose their fear. Her enthusiasm for oral contraception is not shared by all feminists unanimously. Daly (1978: 260-263) comes close to a Right to Life argument, when she points out that women who take the pill are victims of their own ignorance and glorify a male identified sexuality. None of those views envisages a social reality, in which sexual partners, either from a common desire to avoid pregnancy or for their individual sexual or reproductive priorities, might benefit from safe contraception.

³⁴ The male disavowal of emotions is the implicit subject matter of the substantive body of feminist literature on the "Maleness of Reason" which extends from Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* (1949) to spiritual, ecological, radical to postmodern and corporeal feminisms.

The claim to the absence of emotions from male motivations, conduct, knowledge-production and policy-making has an impressive history in Western metaphysics which runs through political and social theory, not only about father right and paternal authority but, equally importantly, on sex and conjugal right, on marriage, family life and the organization of paid and unpaid labour. Restored to the context of its negations, the hypothesized male exclusion from the 'realm of emotions' represents only one element in those hierarchically ordered dichotomies, understood in terms of femininity and masculinity. It stands paradigmatically for exclusion from intellectual and moral incompetence, passivity, corporeality, nature, immanence, matter as indeterminate, the feminine. Ultimately, the presumed male distance from emotions epitomizes separateness from the fantasized 'Mother- World' as that which has to be transcended on the road to masculine selfhood. It signifies the masculine principles of logos, culture, reason, rationality, intellectual superiority and moral agency. It constitutes the prime prerequisite for 'natural' male leadership and liberates men from the suspicion of emotionality as the disqualifying obstacle to the Enlightenment project of the self-legislating, autonomous subject, competent to fulfil the demands of Kant's categorical imperative: "Act only according to that maxim by which you can at the same time will that it should become universal law" (Kant 1959:39). This ideal behavior presupposes that the objective principle of reason has full command over all subjective motives.

As the necessary prerequisite of rationality, the negation of male emotions has first of all conveyed to male knowledge production the privilege to invent, define and politicize the symbolisms and metaphors of its own exaltation. Adapted to changing historical and social modalities, the power to lay out the basic principles of what it means to be either male or female, masculine or feminine in terms of hierarchically ordered otherness or

gender blind sameness makes male 'passionlessness' one of the organizing principles of social life.

Grosz (1994), in her defense of embodied sexual specificity, points out that the metaphors for sameness "neutralize not only women's specificity but, more insidiously, they neutralize and thereby mask men's specificities, interests, and perspectives". This argument makes sense in the light of Rousseau's claim that "the male is male only in certain moments, the female is female her whole life." Grosz (1994:200) further maintains that men have the capacity to distance themselves from their subjectivity as sexual beings and experience themselves as "different beings" during sexual encounters. Although the creation of difference has been a persistent issue in feminist theory, its negation or the negation of sexual specificity has found its critics, particularly amongst such French feminist philosophers as Irigaray (1985, 1985a); Cixous (1985); Kristeva (1980,1982) and amongst the proponents of corporeal feminism, for instance Gatens (1983, 1986,1988, 1991); Butler (1993); Grosz (1987, 1991, 1994)³⁵.

³⁵ See also Whitbeck (1989).

PART II: THE MALENESS OF REASON AS FOUNDATION FOR HIERARCHIZED SEXUAL DIFFERENCE

In her inquiry into the now contested female monopoly on emotions, Lloyd (1984) starts with the genesis of the male monopoly on reason in early Greek philosophy.³⁶ Her analysis follows the slow transformation process of logos, the abstract power ruling the universe³⁷ or, in her own definition, the "exalted conception of cosmic reason" (1984:5) into the masculine principle of reason which rules over nature as its absolute and knowable other. Logos, in its original understanding, did not distinguish between a knowing subject and a knowable object. As the cosmic soul and creative power, it was depersonalized, independent of and superior to the celestial pantheon (Schmidt 1961:350).

Lloyd argues that the gendering of logos or cosmic reason, owes much to Plato's distinction between form and matter as its deliberately downgraded other. During the late pre-Christian era, the Greek linguistic synonymy between logos, word, language, discourse, thought, reason, intellect and rational thought was employed to synchronize the rational principle with Judaic canons of belief. Logos transmuted into the all-encompassing power of the Biblical Creator, into the word that becomes flesh in Jesus, his autogenetic son. Philon, (25 BC- 50 AD) the strongest proponent of the logos-

³⁶ Green (1995:3) offers a different reading of sexual politics from Plato to Freud. She challenges the feminist positions which place too much emphasis on the philosophical and psychoanalytical association of women with the lack of rationality and with corporeality. Arguing from the perspective of a humanist feminism, Green rejects the feminist mistrust of humanism and maintains, that the philosophical tradition can, despite its frequently overt misogyny, provide the grounding for "a distinctive feminine conception of rationality and objectivity" (p.3).

³⁷ The term logos first appeared in the writing of the pre-Christian philosopher Heraklit around 400 BC with this meaning (Aster 1975:45).

mysticism, claimed authority and authenticity for his new theo-philosophy with specific reference to Platonic thought (Schmidt 1961:350, 441).

The dichotomization between form and matter in its various representations has supported the progressive but by no means lineal dissolution of the tension between allegory and metaphor and between metaphor and actual masculine and feminine characteristics and the ways they are linked to male and female bodies. In this process, each individual stage of transformation has created its own specific and still relevant problems in sexual politics. Corporeal feminism and the men's movement's appropriation of 'the feminine' into the 'deep masculine' represent the two discourses which respectively problematize and exploit the conceptual confusion between analogy, metaphor and embodiment at the two extreme ends of sexual politics.

Originally, Greek philosophy did not associate the form-mind over matter-body domination with the transcendence of the feminine but with the master-slave-relationship (Lloyd 1984:16). Platonic and Aristotelian thought, however, provided the philosophical support not only for the subsequent politics of knowledge production but also, to a significant extent, for the politics of human reproduction and the metaphysical fantasizing of the 'Mother-World'. The concept of logos offers one theoretical framework which can integrate those issues in a way that makes sense of the men's movement's diverse theories of loss. Its function can be extended, from an instrument of exclusion of women from 'masculine projects of culture'³⁸ to an instrument of inclusion

³⁸ The 'masculine project of culture' is here understood as its definition in mainstream political and social theory. Women's long exclusion from the civic space, where culture is supposed to emanate, is only half of the story. The other part of the same narrative is the interpretation of women's practices and actions as being located inside nature and as culturally unmediated and unproductive.

and appropriation when it is employed as a principle of male physical and spiritual autogenesis. Jung's association of the masculine principle with logos and cognition and of femininity with Eros, as the expression of women's true nature (Jung 1927 para. 254, 1951 para. 29), signifies the persistence of metaphysical dichotomization and has impacted on the mythopoetic men's movement's politics of fatherhood and masculinity.

Lloyd's main challenge is directed at the implicit understanding, that reason, despite its overt maleness, might transcend gender difference (1984:IIIX). This assumed transcendence then suggests 'objectivity' as the genesis of those sanctified canons which have constructed the meanings of complementary sexual attributes and potentials. Reason, converted from its allegorical association with logos or form into the faculty of a masculine mind which has no sex, claims the right to define the sex that has no reason (or 'the feminine') as a pretext for "masculine self-glorification" (Baridotti 1986:47). It has, for extended historical periods, conferred on men the vital power to define and represent the masculine self through the definition and representation of the feminine as its other³⁹. The very notion of reason, Lloyd argues, has historically relied on its otherness to the feminine and the feminine itself has been partly conceptualized through its exclusion from reason (Lloyd 1984:X)

³⁹ Although in feminist theory the politics of male defined difference has, for a long time occupied the most prominent position, other voices contest either the absoluteness or the existence of difference as the foundations of sexual inequality. Laqueur (1990) offers a very useful account of historically variable representations of anatomical and physiological sameness or difference adapted to political and social realities and exigencies. Whitebeck (1980) points to a reading of Aristotle which constitutes "Woman as Partial Man" in terms of women's failure to comply to the standard of male norms, and she claims that this reading is "in many respects isomorphic to later theories" on sex difference in Freud and Jung (p.55). Irigaray (1985) argues that, rather than creating the feminine as its other, the representation of femininity in Plato and Aristotle erases the feminine at the very site of its representation and that femininity is produced exclusively through the logic of the same. Otherness as injustice to be eliminated on the road to equality, versus the need to create and redefine difference, mark strong points of disagreement between individual strands of feminism.

Situating power as a central concern, Braidotti (1986:47) offers a useful reversal of the chain of causality between reason and power. Postulating an inextricable connection between knowledge, power and dominance, she suggests that men are not masters because they are rational but that they have been able to "appropriate rationality as their prerogative" because they are masters. This reading of the claim to reason as attainment, based on power and instrumentalized into dominance, restores a sense of agency obscured in the men's movement's implicit claim that rationality has, first of all, victimized men and induced them to act against their natural inclinations. It brings back into focus the self-interest and self-reflectivity of male or paternal responsibility which functions as a code for female inadequacy and for unacknowledged male needs.⁴⁰

⁴⁰ Spender (1983) has given an illuminating account of the extent to which male theorists, critics, politicians and moral ethicists were prepared to go when they needed to silence *Women of Ideas*. The defence of the male monopoly on rational thought, workforce participation, education, control over reproduction and a wide range of other privileges inspired a growing 'scientific' body of literature documenting women's presumed physical and mental delicacy, 'naturally' in need of being complemented by male moral and intellectual leadership.

Logos as Instrument of Exclusion

Women's exclusion from what was defined as culture, from autonomous moral agency and from the production of socially relevant knowledges⁴¹ can be traced from Plato to Freud and Parsons, within the matrix of the form-matter or active-passive distinctions. The need to uphold those distinctions, the right to define their nature and the power to transform those definitions into political theory and thereby shape social reality has been and still is a breeding ground for scientifically presented rationalizations of ideological positions and, vice versa, for the ideologically informed conceptualization of scientific hypotheses⁴². The critique of the politics of knowledge has, as Hawkesworth (1989:533) points out, revealed the difference between knowledge and prejudice and "may not be able to tell us a great deal about women but it can tell us a great deal about men and male desire" (Gatens 1986:25).

This critique shifts the emphasis from the knowledge produced to the various modes of its production. The re-positioning of the knower into the historically and ontologically specific contexts of age, sex, class and of ethnic, religious, emotional, moral and ideological commitments has illuminated the crucial relationship between subject positions and knowledge as power. It has challenged the most fundamental assumptions about scientific method, objectivity, the unbiased subject of knowledge, about modes of knowing or categories of knowledge which might exist independent of the knowing

⁴¹ For an analysis of women as subjects of science see Flax (1983); Fox-Keller (1983,1985); Jaggar and Bordo (1989); Harding and Hintikka (1983); Harding (1986); Harding and O'Barr (1987); Irigaray (1985b).

⁴² The nexus between knowledge and power and the challenge to the notion of a disembodied subject capable of producing objective scientific knowledge is not an exclusively feminist concern. In particular Foucault (1970, 1980, 1980a) Derrida (1978, 1981) Rorty (1991) have influenced this debate with their diverse contributions.

subject⁴³ This demystification of the knower also dissolves the vital distinction, made on behalf of the claim to rational knowledge, between truth and the imaginary and, within the imaginary, refocuses its gaze from the passive object of imagination to the emotional and ideological motivations of the imagining subject.

Male fantasies of physical and spiritual creation are perhaps the most extreme example of the imaginary informing logos whilst logos, by definition, insists on excluding the imaginary from its own orbit. In a self referential *ad infinitum*, logos not only reproduces humanity but renames and reproduces itself, in continuous and superior acts of autogenesis.

⁴³ The question whether or not a female subject of knowledge has a privileged access to a specific kind of truth is one that creates a vivid debate between various feminist schools. Postmodernism's critical attitude towards the very notion of the subject and its deconstruction of all grand narratives offers no vision of a female or feminist truth which might replace patriarchal imaginings. See Harding (1986); Hawkesworth (1989); Flax (1983, 1986, 1990) and Frazer and Nicholson (1990). Other disciplines, amongst them cultural, radical, spiritual or New French Feminism sometimes, though not inevitably, suggest that under layers of patriarchal indoctrination lies a female or feminine 'true self' with unmediated access to an unsocialised body speaking its own language. For a critical appraisal of this position see Wenzel (1981) and Stanton (1986).

Logos as Instrument of Inclusion and Appropriation

According to Lloyd, the guiding principle of early Greek philosophy and its concepts of human procreation is the association of women's capacity to conceive with the fertility of nature. It reflects the polarity between the active, determinate form as male and the passive, indeterminate matter as female. The father's contribution to generation provides the formative matter and the mother functions as the host for the male autogenetic project. As the empty vessel, she nourished what he produced in her and her contribution is reduced to the passive imitation of the earth, planted with seed (Lloyd 1984:2-3).

As a legitimizing source for the 'father as sole parent' or 'father as true parent' theory, early Greek philosophy had access to older systems of belief (Lloyd (1984:2-3)⁴⁴. In the Old Testament, the clearest indication maintains that "he was, so to speak, in the body of his ancestor Abraham when Melchidedek met him" (Hebrew 7:10). This passage allows for two different interpretations. It may refer to the ensouled seed theory, which postulates that the soul was locked in male sexual fluids or to the preformed person theory, which saw the homunculus, a miniature perfect human being, transmitted to the female body through the male 'seed'. Aristotle concludes from his own male seed theory that women cannot pass on their soul to their children and Laqueur suggests that Aristotle's reproduction theories might have led to the belief "that the seed of life and seeds of wisdom might well come as the same thing." According to Laqueur, the

⁴⁴ Stonehouse (1994:198) argues, that Aristotle's male seed theory was only the vestige of a tradition which traces its origin back to approximately 3000 BC and only lost its final credibility in most Western societies at the beginning of the twentieth century.

inability of women to produce an active seed, allows for the conclusion that their minds are as passive as their reproductive function (1990:59).

Other narratives on the father as 'true' or 'sole' parent have survived in ancient Greek mythology and literature. A very familiar quotation in feminist theory is Apollo's defense of Orestes after the murder of his mother, in Aeschylus's *Eumenides*: "The mother is not the parent of that which is called her child, but only of the new plant seed that grows. The parent is he who mounts." (quoted in Rich 19776:109). According to Stonehouse (1994), his theory was not seriously challenged until the discovery of the female ovum by Karl Ernst von Bear in 1827⁴⁵.

Although both Plato and Aristotle see the father as the child's real biological parent, physical procreation still takes backstage to the reproductive power of logos as a superior mode of creation and road to immortality. The superiority of spiritual birth is asserted through the claim that the definition of love has been appropriated by one particular form of desire and that the concept of love needs to be extended to all desire for what is good or creates happiness. "Love's aim is birth in beauty, whether of body or soul" and both modes of birth-giving can satisfy the longing for immortality. Whilst the pursuit of wisdom shares with physical love the longing for immortality, as a pure form of spiritual procreation it safeguards a superior form of immortality. Men who are "pregnant in the body only" betake themselves to women but those whose souls are their more creative parts "conceive and bring forth wisdom and beauty" (Lloyd 1984:25, quoting from Plato's *Symposium*).

⁴⁵ See Stonehouse from p.27 for a thorough account of this discovery, its hostile reception within the academic community of its time and of its theoretical consequences.

The reference to the male 'pregnant in the body' draws on the ensouled seed or preformed fetus theories and appropriates the female power of procreation for the male body and its sexual fluids. And yet it is, Lloyd argues, the transcendence of nature and the world of the contingent, of the corporeal as "matter with its overtones of femaleness" which facilitates love in its highest form, the love of Platonic wisdom. Proclaiming their victory over old fertility myths, both beauty and reason are transformed into procreative powers (Lloyd 1984:22). Form, logos or the masculine principle not only creates physical life but transcends the brutish act of procreation through a simultaneously sexless and duosexed mind in its autonomous act of self-creation. Slaterer (1968:233-35) reverses the logic of the soul's striving for immortality. According to his reading of ancient mythologies, it is the striving for immortality which led to the invention of the immortal soul. Men, being unable to give new life, felt that bodily immortality was beyond their control and imagined the soul as a vehicle for a superior form of immortality.

In early Greek philosophy however, the need and the capacity to transcend the flesh not only appropriate the maternal metaphor into the masculine but also form the theoretical foundation for the fantasies of the repressive 'Mother-World'. It is, argues Spelman, Plato's exaltation of the soul and his somatophobia which set up a radical distinction between the world of material things and a true world of forms and ideas which can only be accessed through and in the soul (Spelman 1982:111). Those who are too close to the body are perilously close to the ways of women (Spelman 1982:114). They disqualify themselves from the nurturance of "the best parts of us: our souls" (Spelman 1982:117) and remain entombed in the world of the body and of material things, the

world of maternal darkness. Stein-Hilbers (1994:77) reads the identical message in Kant. Dijkstra (1986: 204-205) holds a fusion of Platonic and Darwinist thought at the end of the nineteenth century responsible for the emerging imago of a "young, blond, godlike male" whose soul belonged in the care of men.

Schmerl (1989) summarizes the connections between male creation mythologies and their impact on pedagogic theory. The symbolism of the monosexual male act of creation, which obliterates the mother from its orbit, also transforms the education of the son into his second 'real' birth, into the spiritual creation of men who are therefore the only authorized educators of male children. The mother is only suited to look after their physical needs, since men represent spirituality and mothers represent pure nature (Schmerl 1989:30-31) ⁴⁶. In contrast to this view of women as nature, Segal (1987:7) points to sociobiological accounts which see nature as male and "forceful, violent, animal-like, and instinctive, whilst "the female is the product of culture, tamed, domestic and civilized."

The logo-centric and somatophobic metaphysics of disembodied reason and spiritual birth-giving are outlined here only in their briefest condensation but they foreshadow a politics of usurpation and denigration which has found a most virulent revival in the current Jungian inspired men's literature. In connection with classic Greek understanding of women's birth giving as imitation of the earth, they provide the

⁴⁶ See also Rutschky (1977) and Holzkamp and Steppke (1984:63-64).

symbolism for the mythopoetic men's movement's appropriation of the maternal metaphor into its imagining of male spiritual and physical "life-giving". It is, to a significant extent, neo- Platonic thought and its contradictory adaptation to contemporary concepts of masculinity and paternity which provides the legitimizing and explanatory arguments for a new politics of fatherhood.

PART III: ENLIGHTENMENT PHILOSOPHIES IN POLITICAL THEORY

Pateman's analysis of *The Sexual Contract* (1988) can be read as a transformation of Lloyd's analogies, metaphors and symbolisms into the political theory of the Enlightenment period. Placing the neglected significance of the connection between sex- and father-right at the center of her hypothesis, she is able to convincingly demonstrate that women's reproductive power constitutes the nodal point between the allegory of women (or the feminine as nature) and the political construction of the nature of concrete women under the guiding principles of male conjugal rights and paternal needs.

Pateman's story of the sexual contract starts with a political theory which sees the father firmly installed in absolute legal, physical and moral power over the members of his household. Read in conjunction with each other, Lloyd and Pateman make these manifestations of power contingent on the father's ability to transcend what he has to control. The authority to delegate child-rearing to the mother and the male control over women and children both presuppose and safeguard a vision of conjugal and father-right based on fantasies of natural male intellectual and moral superiority, originating in a fusion of early Greek and medieval philosophies with theological beliefs systems.

In her analysis of the sexual contract Pateman traces the transformation from classical patriarchalism to contract theory. Both schools of thought commence the history of social life, of civilization or of society with the advent of the patriarchal family (Pateman 1988:24). Classical patriarchalists, with the exceptions of Hobbes and Maine, saw political right as natural, not conventional. It arose out of the father's generative

power. Political rule was consequently regarded as paternal rule. Sons were born into subjection to their fathers and therefore into political subjection (Pateman 1988:24-26). The battle in the seventeenth century between patriarchalists and social contract theorists⁴⁷ ended in the victory of a vision of political right which was no longer grounded in the father's procreative power⁴⁸ but exclusively in the social contract. The significant gender political aspect of this transformation is the interpretation of patriarchal power as literally the rule of the fathers. Hidden in both classical patriarchalism and contract theory is the place of the mother and her status within either. To become a social father, a man first has to become a husband and exercise his conjugal power over a woman, with the consequent right to call her children his own. Control over the woman's 'child' is, however, an inadequate definition of intra-familial hierarchies and power relations. One of the sub-narratives which runs through Pateman's analysis of the sexual contract is the centrality of the father-son relationship in the history of political, conjugal and moral rule. It is, argues Schmerl (1998:29), the greatest cultural achievement of patriarchy to have transformed a man and his biological contribution to pregnancy into a social father who 'owns' his children. One of the strongest rationales behind this achievement is the father's ownership of the male child, believed to be the carrier of an exclusively paternal ancestry, uncontaminated by any maternal contribution⁴⁹

⁴⁷ Pateman (1988:3 and elsewhere) refers to Filmer, who defended classical patriarchalism against Locke's contract theories.

⁴⁸ Pateman (1986:87) explains that for Filmer, the father was "the nobler and principle agent in generation" and the woman no more than the empty vessel. This vision, so Pateman argues, demonstrates the survival of Biblical and Greek birth mythologies in Filmer's work.

⁴⁹ The subaltern position of daughters, their diminished ritual, legal and social significance, their exclusion from inheritance and frequently from succession to the throne, owe part of their rationale to the long held belief that as mothers they will make no contribution to the family tree of their families of origin. Only sons were seen to secure the survival of the paternal blood line.

The shift from classical patriarchalism to contract theory had crucial consequences for the father-son relationship. The sons, in their status of naturally free subjects and owners of the property in their own bodies, entered, according to Locke, into a free contract with the father and voluntarily submitted to his government (Pateman 1988:93). The challenge of contract theorists to paternal generative power as the origin of political right did not embrace a challenge to the patriarchal power of sex or conjugal rights. In contrast to the sons who eventually outgrew the subjection to their fathers and attained their position as autonomous political subjects, women were theorized as permanently subordinated, both in the state of nature and in the new civic order.

Pateman demonstrates the paradox which arose out of two incompatible positions within contract theory. The first position could not afford to release women from their state of subordination, the second position could not deny their status of free individuals. This theoretical freedom created the illusion of voluntarism and unmitigated 'consent', when the same women who were considered to be 'naturally' subjected to men were nevertheless required to freely enter into a contract with them (1988:54).

Pateman's analysis suggests the transformation of male needs into the very nature of women or into women's natural needs. Contract theory's emphasis on freely chosen submission exerted considerable pressure on its proponents to explain women's willingness to enter into the marriage contract as simultaneously natural, voluntary and inevitable. The supposedly voluntary exchange of submission for protection presupposed plausible arguments in support of women's need for protection and in support of men's ability and willingness to provide it. In its diverse individual

interpretations, this argument inevitably returned to a list of female inadequacies and deficiencies.

Pateman's reading of contract theorists suggests their unanimous conclusion that women naturally belong under the control of men. Whether women are theorized as being free and equal individuals in the state of nature (Hobbes) or are excluded from the status of individuals (Locke), both agree with Rousseau's conclusion, that "civil order depends on the right of husbands over their wives" (Pateman 1988:52), a right based fundamentally on the different attributes of the sexes. Kant, whose philosophical thought has recently been enlisted to demonstrate Enlightenment's restricting effect on men's emotions,⁵⁰ might have been surprised to find that he had laid the path for their future victimization. "By nature of being human, everybody has reason" Kant argued, but only men are mastered by reason and women are creatures of emotion. They are morally incapable of comprehending or following universal rules and therefore lack political and civic reason (Pateman 1988:168)

Enlightenment visions of the self-legislating subject were, from their beginning not meant to include women (Flax 1990:230). Rousseau's *Emile* (1986) is an excellent example of the concerted effort to keep women in a state of mental, moral and economic dependence and under marital control⁵¹. Although women are on one level men's equals, their regular indisposition through natural bodily phenomena motivates and

⁵⁰ See Chapter IV, part X of this thesis: "Theorising from the Ruins of Logos".

⁵¹ Rousseau's complex representation of women, from their idealist glorification as being part of nature to their mental and moral disqualification, has been the subject matter of intensive feminist analysis: Lloyd (1983), Okin (1979), Green (1995).

necessitates their effort to bind men into responsibility for their and their children's well-being.

Enticed into relinquishing their natural desire for freedom to women, husbands should now expect their wives' submission to their government. Sophie, the future wife of Emile, is educated with the solitary aim of anticipating, perceiving and fulfilling every conceivable need of her husband. As one of the startling consequences of this vision of women's functions, the needs of men (which for Rousseau included but were not limited to the need for absolute control), are converted into female needs which justify a lifelong, silent and cheerfully anticipative obedience to the guarantor of her safety and security⁵².

The extended educational process of Sophie, which prepared the young woman for her wifely duties, strongly contradicts Rousseau's vision of 'natural' female functions. In contrast to the Victorian concept of female 'passionlessness' (Cott 1979), Rousseau's women are passionately and positively dangerous unless their emotions come under strict patriarchal surveillance. In practical terms, femaleness excludes one group of human beings from being active participants in the civic world, where their debilitating influence would create chaos and disorder. Foreshadowing Freud, Rousseau maintains that women lack the capacity to sublimate and that their natural disposition makes them intrinsically hostile to civic life (Pateman 1988:97). But whilst the civic space, created

⁵² The transformation of men's needs into women's nature is an essential topic of feminist theory. O'Brien (1981) sees men's alienation from their sexual product and from a meaningful part in the reproductive process as basic male need which informs the conceptualization of women as naturally inferior. Moller-Okin (1979: 236) refers to Rousseau's vision of the 'natural' family as a concept inspired by men's needs. Whitbeck (1980) sees womanhood as defined by men's needs as one of the guiding principles of theology, philosophy and science.

by a rational mind in its own image, has only male inhabitants, the same rational mind also transgresses into the 'Mother-World', defining women as its natural occupants, modeled according to men's unacknowledged emotional and (power-) political needs.

Pateman argues that patriarchal theorists have fantasized an image of women, their bodies, bodily passions and unlimited desires. These fantasies not only symbolize nature or 'the feminine' to be ruled by reason, but warrant and necessitate the continuous control of real women and their conduct through male judgement in the interest of patriarchal priorities (Pateman 1988:99). The men's movement's claim to emotional deprivation and its proclaimed sacrifice of male needs to the demands of restrictive Enlightenment cultural prescriptions, lose much of their persuasive power in the light of a sexual politics which simultaneously defines and suppresses female needs as a means of meeting male exigencies⁵³. This point is particularly relevant in the context of this thesis, since it will later be argued that men's needs, made partly invisible in the invention of women's needs, are now equally obscured in the theorizing of the child's needs and that the listing of maternal inadequacies remains the most important prerequisite for the restitution of father right and the reassertion of masculinist priorities.

⁵³ See Chapter IV, part X, "Theorising from the Ruins of Logos".

PART IV: THE 'FEMALENESS' OF EMOTIONS IN SEXUAL POLITICS

Where Lloyd and Pateman have outlined the impact of the reason-emotion dichotomy on philosophy and political theory, Sydie (1987) traces the last and ultimate transformation of the metaphorically 'feminine' into the social functions of concrete women and their place in modern sociological thought. Femaleness and femininity, still widely used as interchangeable synonyms for natural attributes attested to women or, more precisely, to 'woman'⁵⁴, govern the varying positions of women in the rapidly changing social landscape between the mid-nineteenth and the mid-twentieth centuries⁵⁵.

In this period, political right ceased to be based on paternal right, and the modern father took up his position as breadwinner with its ensuing rights and responsibilities. New questions had to be asked about the dynamics between individual and society and about the organization of increasingly separate 'public' and 'private' spheres. Sydie directs her inquiry at the methodologies and epistemologies of Weber, Durkheim, Marx, Engels and Freud. Like Lloyd, she focuses on the subject of knowledge and the hierarchical ordering of knowledge production (1987:VII) and points to the lingering impact of Greek philosophical and Enlightenment thought on some of the nineteenth century's most influential social theorists.

⁵⁴ Sydie (1987:207) clearly distances herself from the frequently unitary concept of "woman" in social theory. She maintains that class blindness has been a persistent issue, particularly in the interpretation of the family which showed little concern for working class women and tended to see their capacity to both participate in the paid work force and to bear and raise children as animalistic.

⁵⁵ Marx 1818-1883; Engels 1820-1896; Durkheim 1858-1917; Freud 1856-1939; Weber 1864-1920. Although Marx, Engels and Freud are not sociologists, their thinking has a substantial impact on contemporary social theory.

Although the theorists analyzed by Sydie start from different theoretical positions and cannot agree on the basic nature of society, on what constitutes valid knowledge about it and where it might be found, their thinking remains infused with dichotomous notions of "natural" woman and "cultural" or "rational" man (1987:VII-IX). In the last analysis, they are united in their unanimous and unquestioned assumption that "women are biologically and therefore naturally different" from men (1987:203) and that the limitations arising out of this difference make a sexual division of labour both desirable and necessary. This basic classification, Sydie argues, has organized social life into supposedly natural relations of subordination and domination and, as an unchallenged presumption, informed the "received wisdom of the sociological fathers" (1987:IX)

Sydie's work illuminates the complex nexus of meanings which has evolved out of the basic assumptions of the 'maleness' of reason. Durkheim sees the division of labour as a desirable development with a stabilizing effect on the moral health of organic society (Sydie 1987:24), since it keeps individuals in a state of interdependence. In congruence with Rousseau before and Freud after him, Durkheim sees women as having contributed less than men to the "movement of civilization". Certain characteristics of primitive nature have kept their hold on women and, being the more instinctive creatures, their mental life is therefore less developed than men's. The assignment of affective and intellectual functions to women and men respectively gives both partners the chance to fully develop their natural potentials (Sydie 1987: 23-29). In addition, women's natural potentials should "be more fully developed to complement those of men" (Sydie 1987:36), a claim which comes close to Rousseau's vision of women's functions in *Emile*. Similar understandings of a sexual division of labour based on naturally hierarchized capacities undermine Weber's critical analysis of patriarchal father-right

and the woman submits - supposedly voluntarily - to the "normal superiority of the physical and intellectual energies of the male" (Sydie 1987:59)

The traditional male functions within the family, the exercise of conjugal as well as paternal authority, are deeply indebted to the notion of women's inadequacy and male-defined 'otherness' which, in turn, are the basis of sex complementarity. Far from being abstract principles, the proclaimed 'maleness' of reason and the 'femaleness' of emotions have permeated all facets of the organization of the 'public' and 'private' spheres and women's and men's positioning within them. In the last analysis, the 'Angry White Male Syndrome' epitomizes the rage which men experience after the loss of privileges they had, over many generations, come to take for granted as the 'natural' entitlements of the 'Man of Reason'.

With its emphasis on the emotionally absent father, the current fatherhood literature simultaneously denies, challenges and reaffirms origin and consequences of the emotion-reason split in its impact on gender relations, the organization of family life and particularly on the father-son relationship. The indebtedness of fatherhood as social institution to the belief in men's superior access to reason and to the structures built on and justified by this belief, appears to be an irrelevant detail of the men's movement's social history of fatherhood. But despite all claims to the new supremacy of emotions, the vital paternal function of separating the son from the Mother-World' reverts to the logos principle to explain its very justification.

The paradox of a position which attributes a sex-transcending power to emotions and a sex-specific access to a parental function, understood to be based on rational thought,

can be explained by a shift between Freudian and Jungian traditions. Whilst father absence as the 'problem' has its theoretical grounding in Freudian drive theory, the emotionally competent father as the 'solution' draws primarily on Jungian archetypes.

In some of his major works Freud has given pseudo-scientific credence to those ancient mythologies which emphasize the father-son relationship as the formative element in the creation of culture and civilization⁵⁶ The father son-relationship and the repressive, repressed 'Mother-World' as its necessary prerequisite emerge according to Freud, at the very dawn of human history. Women, for their children's safety, seek the protection of the stronger male (Freud 1929:285-288). Contained within the 'domestic' sphere, they soon exert their restraining influence on civilization. Men, unperturbed by the mundane concerns of human existence, including childcare, establish their monopoly on the production of culture. Accordingly, the creation of the separated 'Father'- and 'Mother'-Worlds at the beginning of civilization rests on a sexual division of labour which either presupposes or produces in men, (Freud is not very clear on this), the capacity for instinctual sublimation which is essential to the creation of culture and religion but "of which women are little capable" (Freud 1929:293).

Freud's ontological account of the attainment of reason links an incorrigible female inferiority to the repressive 'Mother-World' and the father's separating function. Central to the separation process is the Oedipus complex and its different modes of dissolution for girls and boys. The first sight of female genitalia arouses in the little boy the horror

⁵⁶ Freud in *The Future of an Illusion* (1927:202) summarizes his findings in the briefest possible version: "Everything was the father-son relationship".

of the mutilated creature (Freud 1925:336) and, out of fear that he too might be castrated as a punishment for desiring his mother, the boy renounces his first object of desire. In this process, he identifies with the father, the father's law and moral codes. The superego takes over as the internalized paternal agency and "thus initiates all the processes that are designed to make the individual find a place in the cultural community" (Freud 1931:375). The little girl who, early in her life, accepts the "fact" of her castration (Freud 1931:376), does not have to demolish the Oedipus complex and consequently women's standards of what is ethical are different from male standards. Their "superego is never so inexorable, so impersonal, so independent of its emotional origins as it is in men" (Freud 1925:342).

Thus, men's monopoly on rational thought⁵⁷ and moral agency has its origin in the male power to sublimate; in the capacity to shift the sexual aim "so that it cannot come up against frustration from the external world." His explanation of the striving for what is "finer and higher" returns Freud to Plato's imagery of the masculine mind and its creation of beauty. It is the love of beauty, the artist's or scientist's capacity for and joy in giving body to his fantasies which yields the highest human satisfaction. As projects freely chosen by sublimation, these acts of creation allow for the channeling of existing inclinations and instinctual impulses towards "something indispensable to the preservation of existing society" (Freud 1929:267-268). Kant's monadic subject who achieves autonomy through the suppression of inclinations and desires also speaks through Freud's exposition on male sublimation. Although Kant and Freud both see the mastery over inclination as the prerequisite to the achievement of humanity's highest

⁵⁷ Gay (1995:XVII-XX) offers a valuable insight into Freud's self-identification as a "soldier in the brave army of reason", prepared to wade 'into the sewers of irrationality not to wallow in them but to clean them out'.

goals, their motivations informing moral and intellectual action, are incompatible. Whilst for Kant, an abstract moral imperative demands human sacrifice which "injures the ends of inclinations" (1959:13), Freud links the act of sublimating inclination with the pleasure principle and the avoidance of suffering. His interpretation therefore suggests a possible reading of inclinations as not being simply suppressed but turned into instruments of their own mastery.

The extent to which the self becomes either decentered and fragmented, the degree to which rational thought or "the categorical imperative of the super-ego" (Freud 1923:651) are potentially threatened by the demands of the id and the ego, and whether or not Freudian thought can overcome the mind-body dualism, are contested issues amongst individual theorists and schools of thought. Flax (1990:64) points to the contradictions in Freudian thought which, on the one hand, undermines the Enlightenment claim to pure rational thought and, on the other hand, adheres to a scientific method "of rationalist, especially neo-Kantian tenets". Whitebook (1996) attempts to reconcile Freud with the project of Enlightenment and in his vision, the superego or the power of sublimation, rather than dichotomizing the rational and the irrational, functions as a mediator between them.

The impact of Freudian analysis as a prescriptive theory, despite its focus on the significance of the father-son relationship, has had a pervasive influence on the conceptualization of motherhood in social theory, social policy and child development theory. Feminist theories on motherhood from de Beauvoir (1949) to Everingham (1994) have challenged Freudian thought in their critique of male defined maternity and

in their attempts to shift the emphasis within the motherhood debates from 'women's nature' to 'maternal practices'.

The feminist critique of Enlightenment dualities and of the impact these dualities had on the conceptualization of traditional maternal and paternal functions, provide an important counterbalance to the men's movement's victim theories. This critique can redirect the focus from sons as victims of the father's emotional absence in masculinist fatherhood theory, to women and the 'Mother-World' as the product of the all pervasive presence of the self-proclaimed 'Rational Man'. Neither 'the feminine' nor male emotional deprivation can be salvaged as politically innocent concepts in the service of an improved father-child relationship. The hypothetical radical potential of men's avowal of emotions for future social transformation is a politically naïve and, from a feminist perspective, dangerous illusion. Unless the radical impact of presumed male 'passionlessness' on past social processes and theories is acknowledged and integrated into a reassessment of father-child and mother-child relationships, new paternal privileges might simply be added to those acquired under the theoretical roof of the reason-emotion split. This reassessment must necessarily extend to the full nexus of social meanings, social policy, family law and child development theory developed under, by and for "The Man of Reason".

CHAPTER THREE; VOICES OF DISCONTENT

PART V: DISSOLVING CERTAINTIES

Male disembodied reason is, as the previous chapter has demonstrated, a masculinist myth, defended by a persistently self reverential claim to the authority to define and redefine, invent and reinvent the crucial concepts for its own preservation. Even as a concept, the myth of male rather than human reason would have been politically irrelevant without the corresponding myth of female emotionality as its denigrated other.

As long as this 'otherness' provides the moral and ethical justification for the organization of social life, its definition and interpretation remains as vital a priority of sexual and social politics as it was in past centuries. It explains the authority, ardently defended across a wide spectrum of ideological belief systems, to assign adequate behavior patterns, capacities or limitations to either sex as natural, socially desirable or undesirable, as worthy of protection or in need of moral or therapeutic intervention. Sexual difference, as the bedrock of a supposedly natural division of labour, presupposes the definition of this difference as much in terms of what either women and men are excluded from as on the determination of behavior patterns marked as either intrinsically female or male. One is always, Judith Butler argues, defined as much by what one is not as by the position one explicitly inhabits (1993:51).

Rationality as an attribute of masculinity and paternal authority versus corporealized and instinctual emotionality as the hallmark of femininity, maternal love and maternal caregiving are two mythologies which can, in their socio-political consequences, neither

be separated from each other nor can they be neutralized through the belated male avowal of emotions. As deeply rooted presumptions of sexual ideologies, their philosophical and sociopolitical readings as polarized, mutually exclusive categories, have permeated the smallest facets of the social fabric of Western societies. Feminist theorists, beginning with Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* have demonstrated the difficulty of retrieving from cultural, ethical, moral, religious or social norms and from historically specific definitions of what is 'natural', the pervasive *dicta* of masculinist and specifically of paternal self-interest⁵⁸.

In contrast to the current suggestion that men have been victimized through their exclusion from emotions and their alienation from their bodies, feminist theorists have spent a substantial part of their analytical and theoretical energy in rescuing femaleness or femininity from its connotation of, or even identification with, dichotomized visions of emotionality and corporeality as 'other' to those phenomena which originate in and move relevant cultural projects. If today, masculinist and feminist theorists both challenge the reason-emotion dichotomy, they diverge significantly in their evaluation of its effects in the past and in their utopian vision of sexual politics, specifically their politics of parenting.

However, feminist theory is far removed from a unified interpretation of maternal potentials and limitations or from a shared, distinct utopian vision of maternal practices and of the social field in which women, under ideal circumstances, would mother their

⁵⁸ Rich (1976:42) describes the power of the fathers as difficult to grasp because it invades everything, "even the language in which we want to describe it". Marks and Courtivron (1985:229) express a similar problem when they point out, that it is impossible to say 'woman' without using the categories of the fathers.

children. Whether the creation of sameness or of difference are considered to be the social roots of gendered or sexed inequality or negated specificity, whether biological, economic, psychoanalytical, symbolic, linguistic or cultural categories are privileged, some fundamental challenges do unite different schools of feminist thought. One of the most radical challenges is the rejection of male-defined femininity and motherhood and the insistence on women's right to autonomously search for and articulate the possible meanings of both these concepts.

Essential to this search remains the right to separate the social institutions of womanhood, wifehood and motherhood from each other and to challenge the elementary ideological and moral canons which attempt to fuse these concepts into the 'natural' sequence of women's biographies. This challenge has given women the opportunity to experiment with what might be in the best interest of different groups of women, within the context of their differentiated individual or shared life biographies. Even the change from the patriarchal naturalization of 'woman' to the plurality of 'women' with diverse histories, needs, interests and priorities is potentially subversive and undermines the unifying and universalizing category of 'the feminine'.

PART VI: HISTORY AS BIOLOGY

An initially strong anxiety about the definition of the body *per se* as feminine, has for an extended period focussed feminist theory on the distinction between what is political and what is biological or what is cultural and what is natural. In this process, both concepts, (culture as well as nature or nature as well as nurture) were slowly drawn into the arena of the political, a move which problematized their presumed self-evident dichotomization in a common pool of ideologically inspired determinisms. The tension between biology, history, ideology, social and sexual politics found its first preliminary resolution in the recognition that what was represented as biological is in fact predominantly historical, political and ideological. The focus shifted from the deciphering of an enigmatic female nature to the political struggle over its representation and over the power to transform this representation into social politics and social practice. Feminism became the vocal and politically relevant voice of women's autonomous self-representation as intellectual, social, moral and sexual agents.

The moment women started to define themselves or their otherness in gynocentric rather than androcentric terms, rewriting femininity and their bodies, they also started to rewrite masculinity and men's bodies. If the 'other' changes, the reflecting mirror of the 'one' no longer projects the familiar image. Laing refers to the explosive potential of the power to name and convey meaning: "the 'family romance' is a dream of changing the other who defines the self, *so that the identity of the self can be self- defined* by the identity of the other" (Laing 1971:95)⁵⁹. Not only femininity, but female corporealized

⁵⁹ Emphasis in original.

emotionality and motherhood become denaturalized and contested categories . Masculinity, male disembodied reason, fatherhood as an institution and 'The Family' are suddenly in need of explanation.

These processes of redefinition which touch upon some of the elementary philosophical and sociological issues have left many questions unanswered. Although they have not produced a new set of universal truths, they have undermined the truth claims of competing discourses. The current fatherhood debates clearly reflect the struggle by diverse groups of men, with diverse ideological commitments, to come to terms with the loss of traditional certainties. The unresolved tension between culture and nature which has in patriarchal discourses plagued women, particularly in their male-defined maternal functions, resurfaced in defense of men's right to 're-connect' to their bodies and their emotions as the repositories of appropriate parental care, accessible as unalienated and ahistorical categories under layers of social conditioning.

Not surprisingly, the questions now directed at the body-mind, reason-emotions and nature-nurture dichotomies in the name of legitimate paternity bear little resemblance to the assumptions, stigmata and disqualifications those categories held for the philosophical and scientific definitions of femininity. Masculinity acquires properties of nature⁶⁰ and embraces emotions and corporeality as 'humanizing' and enriching

⁶⁰ The association of masculinity with reason and culture and femininity with bodies and nature, although a philosophical and sociological principle which has determined much of sexual politics in Western cultures, is not without its contradictions and does not exclude portrayal of men and women outside this frame of reference. Dutton (1995) offers an impressive insight into the preoccupation of Western culture with male bodies, from the Greek understanding of the male body as a symbol of self transcendence, (p.63), its Greek and Roman representation as heroic (p.65), to the contemporary masochistic pleasures of body building as an expression of supra-masculinity (p.276). But beyond these images of male bodies which are, within the context of their own cultural space idolizing and positive, different representations and experiences of male corporeality emerge if, for instance, the focus shifts from gender to class. For an account of blue collar workers and their experience of their bodies see Donaldson

qualities, whilst mothers are charged with 'monopolizing' the emotional aura even of the infant and toddler.

This kind of accusation would have made little sense to the first post-Freudian generation of child-development experts whose theories have, from the forties to the sixties, contributed significantly to the institutionalization of this monopoly. Under new premises, the discourses around fatherhood, men's nurturing potential and the need for a new mode of paternal care are again locked in the dichotomization of what is natural and what is cultural, without addressing another more significant issue: how and to what extent have biology and theories of the body been transformed into 'an ideology which rationalizes the political' (Marks and Courtivron 1985:227) and to what extent will the new politics of fatherhood challenge, fragment and restructure the complex nexus of pluralities of the culture-nature debate, according to its current priorities?

The identification of history as biology in patriarchal assumptions about human, feminine or masculine nature has preoccupied second-wave feminism since its beginnings. The construction of women as body, as 'the sex' and as the ultimate 'other' to male transcendence, remains strongly identified with the work of Simone de Beauvoir (1949). Rejecting the notion of a given human nature, Beauvoir insisted that this reading of history as biology can be traced in patriarchal discourses from the Old Testament to Greek and Enlightenment philosophies, from Hegel to Marx, Engels and Freud. Millennia of 'outwardly insignificant' ideological prescriptions have produced

(1991). Segal points to sociobiological concepts of nature as bloody and male and to the ambivalent status of the very concept of nature throughout human history. Neither women nor men, so Segal claims, have been "consistently connected with nature" (1987:7). On the other hand, women and in particular the passionless women between the seventeenth and the nineteenth century were "less carnal and lustful than men" (Cott 1979:163) and therefore seen as more refined and cultured.

social realities for women and men which suggest that both the representation of women as the persistently denigrated other and the accumulation of men's privileges "whose full extent they can hardly measure" (Beauvoir 1949:26) might in fact be grounded in human nature.

The first publication of *The Second Sex* in 1949 came at a time which allowed few socio-political phenomena to alleviate Beauvoir's fear that women as 'body' or as "The Sex" might continue to be geared towards a "biological career-line" (Friedan 1963:126) which defined their inevitable destiny as motherhood. Second wave feminism, when it emerged as a politically potent movement in the sixties and more recent commentaries on this period, saw the post-war years of the forties, fifties and the sixties as an era of restorative, extremely conservative sexual politics from which feminist theory, particularly mothering theory, has not yet fully recovered ⁶¹.

The feminist critique of the sixties and early seventies and the rejection of motherhood in the lap of the nuclear family was partly directed against an ideology and an organization of caregiving, in which the social, symbolic, economic and emotional functions of the father were theoretically dependent on the 'normal pathology' of either mother absence or mother presence. Each of the two phenomena has created its own version of paternal salvation and father absence. Both versions of father absence however have not only outlived their usefulness in their original form but also created a tension between them.

⁶¹ The difficulty of validating the specific experiences of women as mothers and their contribution to the cultural life of their community without falling back into essentialist categories is still a feminist concern at the turn of the millenium. See, amongst others, Everingham (1994:4).

Individual feminists and other social theorists vary in their accounts of the origin, extent or definition of the social dynamics behind post-war sexual politics, and the current fatherhood debates have added a new dimension to this subject matter. Explicitly rejecting a monocausal explanation, Rumpf (1989:103) argues that threatened male identity, first during the Great Depression of the twenties and again in the post war period, mediated against more egalitarian gender relations. Men found that women had successfully replaced them in traditionally masculine functions in the workforce and within the family. A similar point was raised earlier by Friedan and later by Wearing who maintain that men returning from World War II found the professional competence and assertiveness of a new generation of women threatening and alienating. (Friedan 1963:166; Wearing 1996:85; Ehrenreich and English 1979:238-240; Crouch and Menderson 1993). Pleck (1981:159) refers to the plight of returning soldiers who found women "economically and psychologically independent". In addition to intellectual competition, Segal (1994:10) argues, women's increasing control over reproduction added to the perception of lost power and male redundancy.

The possible loss of control over more educated women was perceived as a potential threat to male virility and generated a "particularly pugnacious manliness and heterosexual aggressiveness" (Segal 1990:16), in retaliation against perceived female transgression into the 'Father-World'. The problem of this transgression at this particular historical period was not the competition between men and women in highly saturated labour markets, as Horkheimer (1936) had suggested of the thirties. It was rather the challenged myth of mutually exclusive male and female functions and capacities (seen as simultaneously natural and endangered by rapid social change) whose erosion provoked male anxieties.

Parallels and differences between the motherhood debate in the middle of the twentieth century and the fatherhood debate at the end of the twentieth century reflect as much the common denominator of potential paternal or male redundancy as they do the diverging cultural and moral climate in which these debates struggle for dominance within sexual politics. Anxieties and uncertainties about masculinity in the fifties tighten the scientific grasp on the 'feminine' as its other and thus, via the control over its other, the redefinition of the masculine self. But whether the stabilization of fatherhood foregrounds the definition of 'the feminine' or, in the current fatherhood debate, the redefinition of 'the masculine', both theoretical approaches rely on the authority to fantasize the 'Mother-World'; the activities within its boundaries, the needs and the nature of its inhabitants, their relationships to each other and to the 'Father-World'.

PART VII: MASCULINIST POLITICS OF NEED CONSTRUCTION AND THE 'BEST INTEREST OF THE CHILD'

As a further parallel between the two debates, a substantial, (if not the most powerful) single issue pertains to a moral position supposedly outside sexual politics. In the middle and at the end of the twentieth century, developmental psychology takes center stage in the support of the nuclear family and the father's position within it. As a solution to male emotional needs and to waning ideological and gender-political certainties, the control over the definition of the 'best interest of the child' turns into an extremely powerful weapon. The presumably innocuous or neutral question of what it is that a child really needs, has lost the historicity which marks the accounts of, amongst others, Aries (1960); Shorter (1975); deMause (1974) and Badinter (1980). Von Henting (1978:15) expressed his own uneasiness, deliberating about the amount of "love, cuddling, patience, attention" we might owe our children. Redirecting his focus from the needs of the child to the theorists of its needs, Henting challenges the rightness, effectiveness and humanitarianism of tightly regimented socialization programs, as well as the function and motivations of the agents of this socialization.

The drastically different definitions of the needs of the child experts have provided in different social climates warrants a reminder that "politics are psychological and that psychology is highly political" (Samuels 1995)⁶². Therefore it comes as no surprise that in contrast to the men's literature of the nineties which problematizes masculinity and fatherhood with a mandatory finding of paternal deprivation, expert knowledge of the forties to sixties draws femininity and motherhood into the spotlight of scientific inquiry

⁶² This statement in Samuels refers to the current idealization of the fathers and the simultaneous stigmatization of single motherhood as intrinsically problematic.

and identifies maternal deprivation as the monocausal explanation for an astonishing array of social ills .

In the name of sexual complementarity, a sexual division of labour and the restitution of a perceived social equilibrium, science, ideology and sexual politics focus their energies on the successful theoretical synthesis of the naturalized needs of the mother with the essentialized needs of the child.

According to early second wave feminists, post-war sexual politics do not suggest even a moderate male challenge to the sexual division of labour or at least not to 'mother monopolized' primary caregiving⁶³. Instead, a multitude of disciplines and interest groups enlist the support of psychoanalysis as the most powerful instrument in the defense of an established sexual ideology (Friedan 1963:111). As a new, initially uncontested metanarrative, Freudianism synthesizes biology, ideology, philosophy and mythology into a new scientific religion (Friedan 1963:111), with its descriptive and prescriptive dogmatism writing the rules of sexual politics. "Freudian and pseudo-Freudian ideas settled everywhere, like fine volcanic ash", Friedan argued and sociology, anthropology, education, even the study of history and literature became permeated and transfigured with Freudian thought (Friedan 1963:111). It was exactly the combined expert knowledges of Freudian and post-Freudian developmental psychologies and their stabilizing influence on orthodox gender stereotypes which attracted the initial wrath of feminist writers.

⁶³ The qualified rebellion against the breadwinner ethics and duties (see Introduction) did not extend to the desire for a reversal of traditionally male and female parental functions.

The Needs of the Mother

Early second wave theorists took orthodox Freudian thought to task for its account of normal, desirable female development which makes motherhood into a compulsion born out of internalized corporal and cultural inferiority⁶⁴. According to Freud's account of female development, the little girl compares her body with its male counterpart, and discovers a penis where she has nothing to show. "She makes her judgement and her decision in a flash. She has seen it and knows that she is without it and wants to have it" (Freud 1925:336). This desire becomes "her life's aim" (Freud 1931:376). Even if in the normal course of events, the wish for a penis will transmute into the wish for a child, the equation penis-child remains "strongly cathected in the unconscious and helps to prepare the female creature for her later sexual role" (Freud 1924:321)⁶⁵.

Freud thus successfully transforms giving birth from an awesome act of female creation into the always inadequate substitute for a part of the male anatomy⁶⁶. Penis envy which does not transmute into the desire for a male child⁶⁷ but goes astray in ambitions

⁶⁴ The main essays in which Freud develops his theories on female sexual development, are *Some Psychological Consequences of the Anatomical Distinction Between the Sexes* (1925), *Female Sexuality* (1931), *The Dissolution of the Oedipus Complex* (1924) and *Femininity* (1932). Amongst early second wave feminists, Friedan (1965 Chapter V), *The Sexual Solipsism of Sigmund Freud* summarises and critiques the Freudian construction of femininity. Millett (1969:177-203) gives an extensive analysis of this subject matter. In 1974, Juliet Mitchell in a more sympathetic revaluation of early psychoanalytic theory, distances herself from both Friedan and Millett in her attempt to align Freudianism with contemporary feminism.

⁶⁵ Other theories, which postulate the wish for a child as a uniquely female phenomenon but within the framework of object relation theory have been summarized by Chodorow (1978:89-90).

⁶⁶ Freud in *On Transformations of Instinct as Exemplified in Anal Eroticism* (1917:297), suggests that "nature has given babies to women as a substitute for the penis which has been denied to them". This assertion goes beyond penis envy as a subjective assessment of anatomical differences by the little girl or by grown up women. It rather assigns to nature a sense of justice, compensating female human beings for their now factual "organ inferiority".

⁶⁷ Freud explains his theory on the woman's need for a male child as the only adequate substitute for a penis in his essay *Femininity* (1932). Lacan, who shares Freud's notion that the mother is motivated by the need to undo her castration, "to fill her lack or hole" hypothesizes that even the male child cannot bring relief to her narcissistic injury (Flax 1990:98).

to 'transcend' the 'Mother-World' or to achieve what would in contemporary terms be defined as 'getting in touch with the masculine', is doomed to failure. The attempt to withdraw from the prescribed definition of femininity and the indicated refusal to accept maternity as either inevitable or as a totalizing, all embracing calling, turns into a pathology *par excellence*. The terminus "masculinity complex" (Freud 1931:376) functions as a diagnostic generalization for any female who engages in those projects which Western philosophies and Freud in their footsteps have defined as culture, a declared a male prerogative. In his essay *Femininity* (1932:125), Freud maintains that frustrated women who enter into analysis, unsatisfied with their domestic life and in search of an intellectual profession, display nothing less than sublimated, repressed penis envy⁶⁸. The motivations behind women's aspirations towards the "loftier goals" of humanity diverge dramatically from those of their male counterparts. Penis envy, as a reliably therapy-resistant phenomenon, paradoxically constitutes a truly 'normal' emotion, governing female motivations as well as a psychopathology. It serves as the monocausal syndrome which explains both the mother's need for a child and the masculinity complex or motherhood as a compulsion, as well as its unwomanly rejection⁶⁹.

Millett argues that Freud (in a complex theoretical construct) employs penis envy to explain almost the full spectrum of female or maternal emotions and motivations beyond compulsively craved or pathogenically rejected maternity. Masochism,

⁶⁸ Millett (1969:206-207) gives an illuminating account of a post-Freudian defense of a cultural sphere understood as masculine against the intrusion of penis envy- ridden feminists and other women who attempt to cross the boundaries between the 'Mother'- and the 'Father'- Worlds in the work of Ludenberg and Farnham (1947).

⁶⁹ Winnicott (1958) quoted in Badinter (1980:275) returns to the mother with a strong male identification as problematic. In his case, repressed penis envy inhibits appropriate maternal care and may, as its worst consequence, stunt the development of her child into autism.

narcissism, passivity and shame are grounded in anatomical difference and are therefore "constitutional and biologically destined" (Millet 1971:197). This suggests a female propensity to tolerate humiliation and domination (Millet 1971:194) and the myth of self-sacrificing and joyfully suffering maternal love is partly anchored in the Freudian vision of femininity as the outcome of 'surrender', 'relinquishment' and 'resignation' in the course of the woman's "healthy development" (Millet 1971:194) which will induce her to submit "without bitterness to the 'fact' of her castration" (Flax 1990:82). In contrast to female resignation into 'normal' femininity, through abandonment of 'masculine' projects, the acquisition of the status of manhood or maleness, Lloyd (1984:38) argues, has been seen as itself an achievement, attained by breaking away from the more natural condition of women.

Transformed into women's 'instinctual nature', this development mobilizes the full strength of psychoanalytical theory in its defense. It exerts the strongest pressure on women to 'adjust' to the prescribed femininity, emotionality and maternity either *For her Own Good*,⁷⁰ or "for the security of society and the strength of the traditional marriage" (Millet 1971:196). Once more, the illusion of an ideology-free fusion between the natural needs of women as mothers and the protection of the nuclear family reign supreme in sexual politics.

⁷⁰ *For Her Own Good* is the ironic title, Ehrenreich and English (1978) have given to their analysis of "150 Years of Expert Advice to Women". None of this advice, Rich (1984:214) argues, has "been particularly scientific or women-orientated: it has reflected male needs and male fantasies about women".

PART VIII: MOTHER ABSENCE AND MOTHER PRESENCE AS SOCIAL PATHOLOGY AND PATERNAL SALVATION

The next generation of child development theorists further tightened the supposedly indissoluble connection between femininity, womanhood and motherhood. If Freud had focussed his attention on the mother's availability as child-bearer, with more attention given to her 'being' rather than to her nurturing practices, child development theories in the middle of the twentieth century (Bowlby 1951, 1958, 1969; Ainsworth 1967, 1969, 1972, 1973, 1974) fused all the prerequisites for maternal nurturing, the mother's availability, motivation and capacity to care for her child, into a common causality. The strongest critique of feminist theory was directed against Bowlby's attachment and bonding theories⁷¹. Pointing to the unquestioningly humanistic intent which motivated Bowlby's work and to the progressive suggestions which followed his research into attachment deficits of orphaned or hospitalized children, Ehrenreich and English argue that his data become questionable when applied to the child within the family. The mode of maternal care which, according to Bowlby and his followers is the only safeguard against a "social infection" threatening to engulf the next generation like a contagious disease, burdened the mother with the total responsibility for her child's well-being. The dutiful mother not only acknowledges that her child needs the feeling of belonging to her but she herself must internalize the thought that she belongs to her child. Only her undivided attention 365 days a year and 24 hours a day will assert the child's healthy psychic and somatic development (Ehrenreich and English 1978:230-231).

The myth of the 24-hour availability of the primitive mother who "devotes herself exclusively to her child for two or three years" inspired in Freud the suspicion of contemporary infant deprivation (1931:381). Feminist theorists, amongst them Janssen-Jurreit (1976:216), have debunked this myth, with the reminder, that most women in

⁷¹ This section cannot be a review of the large body of literature on child development, nor can the differences between different strands of this discipline be adequately reflected. What can, however, be isolated from the relevant discourses are the questions directed at the needs of the child, the adaptation of those questions to changing socio-political modalities and in turn, the socio-political implications of subsequently modified and prescriptive theoretical positions.

most historical periods had to provide, produce, find or prepare food for themselves and their families.

According to Crouch and Menderson (1993:9)⁷², the reactionary 'Zeitgeist' of the fifties and its strong reliance on evolutionary theory⁷³ fostered the notion that mothers were genetically predisposed to decode the infant's innate signals for need satisfaction. In turn, these signals were considered to be phylogenetically transmitted remnants of an instinctual plea for protection against predators. Whilst the theory of monotropy, as a new and important concept in child development, hypothesizes the infant's capacity to form only one vital attachment, the need for mother love advances to a drive on a scale equal to the need for food. It transmutes into a biological necessity, which comes to bear on the mother-child unit as natural and biological (Lewis, Feiring & Weinraub 1981:261).

Despite considerable differences in the theoretical approaches of both theorists, Winnicott echoes Bowlby's conviction that the "good enough mother" is exactly and exclusively that, with little room or time for interests other than the immediate needs of her child⁷⁴. Winnicott may have attempted to obliterate residual maternal insecurity

⁷² In the same paper, Crouch and Menderson not only emphasize the regressive impact of bonding theory but also explain how women have successfully used Bowlby's work to lobby for the right of mothers to have their neonate infants 'roomed in' with them during their stay in the maternity ward.

⁷³ Lamb (1981:4) gives an extensive list of development theorists from the late forties until the middle of the sixties who assign to the mother the 'natural' duty of primary caregiving.

⁷⁴ Winnicott (1957:4). Read in conjunction with Ehrenreich and English's (1978:185-210) account of scientific, expert-controlled motherhood in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, the return to 'natural' motherhood and intuitive maternal knowledge may, according to Everingham (1994:73), have been meant to encourage mothers and to strengthen their own confidence in their nurturing competence. In contrast, Badinter (1980) argues that, rather than achieving a more relaxed attitude towards maternal caregiving, Winnicott's understanding of the "good enough mother" with its prescribed rigid demands induced in women, particularly in women who could neither afford to be full time mothers or who rejected the notion of motherhood as an all exclusive vocation, an intense sensation of guilt and inadequacy.

induced by earlier dogmata of 'scientific motherhood'. A different reading of Winnicott suggests that his emphasis on the "extra-rational sources of thinking" might support the post modernist critique of Enlightenment (Flax 1990:108-109). Regardless of possibly well-meaning intentions, Winnicott's mothering theories revoked the unfortunate tradition of the 'woman- or mother-as-child imagery'⁷⁵ which is far removed from either Ruddick's or Everingham's ⁷⁶ visions of rational thought as an important element of maternal practice.

Winnicott reassures his readers in the opening chapter of his book that all a "good enough mother" has to know to fulfil her child's elementary needs she knew already, when she was a little girl, playing with her dolls. To fulfil the requirement of an ordinary devoted mother, women do not even have to be clever: "you do not even have to think, if you don't want to" (Winnicott 1957:4) and anyone who can play with a doll can be a "good enough mother". Again, the child's needs and the mother's capacity to identify and accommodate them are represented as natural or given.

Mothering theory of the fifties and sixties, formulated in the presumed 'best interest of

⁷⁵ For an overview of the 'woman as child' theory, see Dijkstra 1986, Chapter VI. Dijkstra argues convincingly, that Darwin's theory of evolution and his belief that "the female somewhat resembles her young offspring throughout life" (p.173, quoting Darwin, *The Descent of Man* p. 702) gave credence to pre-existing notions of female infantilism and informed contemporary development theory via a connection between Moebius' notion of women's natural feeble-mindedness (Moebius 1898, 1903) which in turn had a significant impact on Freud's theories on the nature of femininity. Dijkstra cites Breuer and Freud's *Studies in Hysteria* (1898). A further reference in Freud to Moebius which translates into qualified support for female "intellectual atrophy" can be found in *The Future of an Illusion* (1927:16). Beyond evolutionary biology or psychoanalysis, the image of the mother as child became a popular image in *Fin de Siècle* culture and art.

⁷⁶ Ruddick (1980) in her essay "Maternal Thinking" has contributed significantly to a better understanding of maternal care as social practice grounded firmly in rational thinking. Everingham (1994) has taken the notion of "the rational dimension of mothering" (subtitle of her book *Motherhood and Modernity*) to the next level of analysis and inquired into the knowledges indispensable to maternal care and into the different ways mothers produce and acquire these knowledges.

the child' was fraught with many contradictions. Whilst the mother was seen as the natural carer and whilst the skills required for her nurturing can be reduced to the level of child's play, expert advice penetrates the mother-child interaction, making every minute detail of day to day care "subject to corrective prescription" (Badinter 1980:274). But the mother's competence was not the only thing inadequately and unreliably guarded by nature. Emerging doubts about the reliability of biological imprinting, as the guarantee for her unconditional availability, were alleviated through the rigidly defined needs of the child. These needs transform maternal care into an ethical duty which bypasses purely biological impulses whether as maternal motivation or as justification for the sexual division of labour (Rumpf 1989:98). As a strategy in sexual politics, mother absence as psycho-social pathology provides a supposedly gender neutral 'society' with a forceful moral argument to claim full time maternal care, ostensibly in the 'best interest of the child'.

Maternal deprivation theory, with its apocalyptic visions of mother absence, its antidotal, dangerously idealized "good enough mother" and its fantasies of a normatively and blissfully symbiotic mother-child dyad, restructures for maternity what contract theory saw as the prerequisite for women to enter into the marriage contract; that it be natural, voluntary, inevitable and necessary. If one of those elements is missing, the myth of motherhood collapses into itself (Rumpf 1989:103) and with it the complex theoretical edifice and the social structures which support fatherhood as an institution.

If mid twentieth century child development theory insisted on the myth of the mother with either a sacred or a biological calling, and defined the child's best interest in terms

of her idolized, masochistic, self-sacrificial or biologically compulsive love, this insistence is politically comprehensible only in so far as it signifies the mother-child relationship in terms of its 'otherness' or complementarity to the father-child relationship. Yet the maternal matrix is not reducible to the mother-child relationship, since it is informed by and re-informs more than women's unquestioned and indiscriminate availability for child-bearing and child-rearing within the specific social setting of the nuclear family. It is firmly grounded in a vision of female 'nature', in a masculinist understanding of 'the feminine'. As such it not only determines the mother's inclinations, compulsions, needs, capacities and her moral duty of care but also her legal position as carer and her presumed ethical and intellectual limitations and restrictions. It cements the nuclear family as the only realistic locus of maternal care which offers (at least theoretically) the hope for economic security in exchange for dependence and, to an extent, the right to self determination.

It is this restriction of maternal care to an exclusive function within the nuclear family which determines the symbolic, cultural and moral status of maternal, as well as paternal functions and of the supposedly separate spheres in which these functions take place. The mother's economic and emotional dependence as ardently defended 'natural' conditions are therefore cause, effect and political desideratum of her 'inert' limitations and, safe in this limitation, the essence of her qualified admiration. Although women's lives as mothers are shaped by multitudes of historically variant factors, amongst them class, ethnicity and sexual orientation, fantasies of 'The Mother' and 'The Mother-World' are set up to redefine each other *ad infinitum* in a circle of mutually reinforcing

metaphors,⁷⁷ whilst at the same time re-validating the realm of the symbolic father. Without the metaphoric 'Mother-World', the place of the symbolic father would be empty and the functions of the concrete father - at least in their conventional, dichotomized version - no longer sustainable.

Strictly speaking, there are two distinct fantasies of the 'Mother-World', centered around different images of maternal practices or different effects of maternal absence or presence, which fulfil two separate, though intrinsically linked political functions. Both the glorification and the denigration of the 'Mother World' remain indebted to the appraisals of a female nature which, in its perfect imperfection draw on the philosophical heritage outlined by Lloyd, Pateman and Sydie. These philosophies still provide the basis of scientific, pseudo-scientific, political and ideological assessments of the mother, child, father triad.

At the center of Freud's repressed 'Mother-World', Horkheimer's mythical aura and Lasch's *Heaven in a Heartless World* resides an only marginally different version of the "Angel in the House", with an identical gender- political and emotional function. She provides the secure space where the father can or could deposit 'his' children into the temporary care of a reliably available mother⁷⁸. This is where, in Rumpf's analysis of

⁷⁷ Everingham (1994:14-15) rightly warns against the claim of some feminists that mothering can do nothing but reinforce patriarchal values and structures. The point to be made here however, is that the representations of 'woman', 'femininity' and 'mothering' perpetuate an *illusion* which has no room for the mother's agency and cultural contribution which Everingham has analyzed and highlighted in her work. Particularly significant for the perpetuation of this illusion, was the refusal of social theory to take the activities within the domestic sphere as valid subject matter for scientific inquiry. With special reference to Durkheim, Parsons, Parsons and Bales, Yeatman (1986:158) argues, that the question of what it is that women actually do in the domestic sphere has been marginalised in social theory because women in general were associated with 'nature', rather than with 'society' and, correlatively "the proper object of social interest was the activities and concerns of men."

⁷⁸ The father's experience as part of the nuclear family has found contradictory interpretations in feminist theory. Rumpf, (1989:13) maintains that, from a male perspective, the family has always been more than an institution for

Horkheimer (Rumpf 1989),⁷⁹ unsocialized maternal love as the other to reason provides the first and safe aura for the psychogenesis of the son's masculine selfhood. It is the phantasmic site into which male knowledges intrude destructively, threatening the very core of motherhood - the mother's instinctual nature and unmediated maternal love.

It appears to have been more acceptable for male theorists to take the blame for the disruptive forces threatening the 'Mother-World' than to credit women with the basic social agency to initiate cultural and political change from within a sphere that is, by definition, outside culture⁸⁰. Women's gradual departure from the scene of paternal imaginings, their slowly successful attempts to discharge themselves from the 'protection' of conjugal authority, suddenly turns women into victims of knowledges other than their own. Not without irony however; men's bemoaned loss of the idealized mother bears no memory of her very invention through knowledges other than her own⁸¹. The more clearly individual elements of the myth of motherhood, such as innate competence and availability, become dependent on scientifically legitimized induction and ideologically inspired redefinition, the more carefully science and ideology shroud

the socialization of children. Guaranteed through the praxis of women, the family was also the place where men hoped to have their elementary human needs for intimacy, love and happiness fulfilled. In contrast, Game (1985:137) maintains that: "Feminists have not made the claim that the family is pleasant for men; rather that is a crucial site of male power".

⁷⁹ Rumpf analyses the maternal image, or, specifically the mother's 'mythical aura' and the mother's neglected significance for the son's developing masculine selfhood in the writing of early fatherlessness theorists, with particular emphasis on the work of Max Horkheimer .

⁸⁰ A related argument which transforms women's struggle for autonomy and financial independence into victimization has survived from Mitscherlich (1969:56-57) to Santamaria (1994,1995, 1996, 1996a). Women, so the contention goes, have been transformed into slaves of capitalist imperialism and into reluctant participants in the paid work force.

⁸¹ Patrifocal child-development theory when it emerged in the early seventies offered an explanation which does not acknowledge patriarchal interests as a strongly motivating force behind the social construction of motherhood. Within this discipline, aspects of the idealized mother, in particular her assumed biologically encoded monopoly on infant care was redefined as the product of preceding, methodologically inappropriate research methods. For details infant care was redefined as the product of preceding, methodologically inappropriate research methods. For details see Chapter V, part XV, 'The Woman of Emotion' and part XVIII, 'From Maternal to Paternal Deprivation'.

their creative participation in the myth-making, so that the act of creation disappears behind an "ideology-free" and ahistorical version of woman's nature. Nevertheless, the idealized 'Mother-World' is a space that dissolves if the real mother no longer obeys her biological or her sacred calling. It constitutes a place she can leave, where the resulting vacuum created by her absence takes, according to bonding and attachment theories of the fifties, its destructive toll on the psychic wellbeing of generations to come.

Whilst maternal deprivation theories of the fifties provided the scientific justification for the blackmailing of guilt-ridden 'working' mothers (Janssen-Jurreit 1976:203), their retreat from the public space and return to dependent wife-and-motherhood created as many problems as solutions. Under the microscope of Freudian surveillance, pathological mother absence and pathological mother presence revealed their potential as equally destructive forces. Pathogenic mother presence, as a vital presumption of sexual politics, which has increased its significance in the context of the current fatherhood debate transforms the most fundamental prerequisites of the "good enough mother" (her exclusive existence for and in her family) into her apparently inert limitations .

Gilligan (1982:18) observes that "the very traits that traditionally have defined the 'goodness' of women, their care for and sensitivity to the needs of others, are those that mark them as deficient in moral development". Ehrenreich and English (1979:192) explain that one of the consequences of the separation between the public and private spheres and the mother's confinement to the latter was the growing conviction that she

is ill-equipped to contribute to her children's success outside the home and that women, in general, are unsuitable to raise men. This view became a point of central importance to the mythopoetic men's movement's politics of fatherhood in the eighties and nineties.

The shadow world of the mother has a long history as the phenomenal world of Enlightenment thought. Flax (1990:229) outlines Kant's distinction between the phenomenal sphere of the embodied self and the noumenal, rational world of disembodied transcendence as the world of women and men respectively. The noumenal self and its freedom from empirical contingency presupposes a sexual division of labour and the availability of women to "take responsibility for and represent bodily processes, leaving the [male] philosophers 'free' to contemplate the noumenal world". Flax not only critiques the association between femaleness and the phenomenal or maleness and the noumenal but, in contrast to Beauvoir (see above), asks why philosophy should so arduously and persistently defend its presumption that the contingent must necessarily be a source of unfreedom.

But the Hegelian and Sartrean netherworld of women⁸² is the space outside culture and the symbolic where both Freud and Lacan deposited maternal nurturing, the steamy realm of the Oedipal or of the engulfingly powerful pre-Oedipal mother; the world of floods, oozing swampiness and uncontainable fluidity which Klaus Theweleit (1987) described in his *Male Fantasies* or the morassy orbit of the earth mother and her birth-giving, nurturing and devouring omnipotence. According to Jungian therapist Peter

⁸² See Lloyd (1984:100-101) for Hegel's and Sartre's netherworld of women signified by the female body as the realm of holes and slime and as the epitome of all that has to be transcended.

O'Connor (1993:230-231), this is the world of darkness, waiting to be enlightened by the paternal light of logos. In Bly's definition it transmutes into "the mother's womb world" (1990:89), no longer the other to the disembodied realm of rationality and male transcendence but rather to a mythically inspired 'swampy' and 'moisturizing', nurturing 'Father-World'.

The dark side of the lost paradise of childhood is thus the realm of the dangerous mother, where the child is said to encounter a compulsively, exclusively, permanently and oppressively nurturing mother, in her perceived irrevocable immanence. It is the metaphoric space which the mother, according to the psychological and psychoanalytical fathers, can never leave and from which the concrete father or, in his absence, the symbolic father has to rescue the male child into the otherness of the 'Father-World' ⁸³

Both versions of the 'Mother-World', in which either the absence or the presence of the mother is potentially pathogenic, hypothesize at their center a woman yet unalienated from her instinct nature. As a third version of not only potentially but positively destructive motherhood, science and sexual ideology of the post war period produced the mother who has either taken leave of or violated her instinct nature through her transgression into the 'Father-World'. Paradoxically however, the violation of her instinct nature is a selective process. Whilst she loses the halo of the mother with the sacred calling, the dark shadow of her instinct nature trails at her heels wherever and

⁸³ Psychoanalytical child-development theory does not limit the father's separating function exclusively to the Oedipal mother-son relationship. Object relation theory, in particular, calls upon the father to intervene in the pre-Oedipal mother-child symbiosis on behalf of both sexes. Since the men's movement's focus is on the father-son

however she may care for her children. The image of the 'emancipated' or 'masculinized' mother adds an extra dimension to the notion of motherhood as an explanation "for every conceivable personal and social problem" (Segal 1990:10), for alcoholism, suicide, schizophrenia, psychopathology, impotence and promiscuity (Friedan 1963:165). Too much mother and too little mother are equally fateful (Janssen-Jurreit 1976:219). The over-protective mother who emotionally suffocates her child co-exists with the image of the selfish, emancipated woman, "masculinized by her education" and her "insistence on equality and independence" (Friedan 1963:166). As the mother's own "wants and needs are interpreted as destructive toxins" (Ehrenreich and English 1978:228), maternal 'neediness' and defective maternal instincts produce masked or unmasked hostility, rejection and aggression. Women's 'natural' emotional availability and their culturally induced unavailability both reveal their devastating potential as motherhood itself turns into a social and psycho- pathology⁸⁴.

relationship and on the father's Oedipal intervention, his pre-Oedipal interference into the mother-child symbiosis is of less significance here.

⁸⁴ The images of the masochist and self sacrificing mother in her socially desirable 'neediness' as much as the toxicity of any attempt to shed the need to be needed, are in stark contrast with claims in the current fatherhood debates that men have not been 'in touch with' their own needs. (See Chapter IV parts X and XI). They clearly question the implied assumptions, that women have been allowed to live their natural and unalienated emotions and needs. They also point to the usefulness of untheorized male needs which, although they have set the agenda in sexual politics until the advent of second wave feminism, can never be toxic or pathological because they did not exist.

PART IX: FATHER IMAGES IN MATRIFOCAI CHILD-DEVELOPMENT THEORY

In the middle of the twentieth century, rigid descriptions of and prescriptions for adequate maternal care have inevitably been constructed as the 'other' to an equally rigid concept of a paternal 'role'. It is the limited content of this very role which has, during the reinvention of motherhood, deflected scientific curiosity from the father-child relationship up to the middle of the nineteen seventies. The social history of fathers' interactions with their children in early childhood allows, at best, for speculative assessments of their possible scope and degrees of intensity, intimacy or developmental significance. In contrast to the rich and frequently unfortunate language which covers 'the' mother-child relationship or the fantasies about this relationship, the culture of paternity neither shares the language of maternal care nor has it, until its recent reinvention, developed its own strong symbolisms or traditions. Flax argued in 1990 that the image of a nurturing father is still "extrinsic to men's and children's consciousness" (1990:181), and difficult to isolate from either the cultural representation of masculinity or from child-development theories predating the seventies. And whilst the father-son relationship has produced a significant body of literature from the Old Testament to the writing of Freud, the actual interaction between fathers and their infant children has remained unexplored until the early seventies. Since we know very little of what men did in the home and how they interacted with their children in the fifties (Segal 1990:10)⁸⁵ and since early childcare manuals offered no suggestions for adequate paternal infant care to the extent that the word 'father' did not

⁸⁵ Lamb (1981a:4, 13) gives useful references which point to the lack of scientific interest in the early father-child relationship until the late sixties and seventies. See also Lamb's (1976a:1) concern that the father has for a long time been treated as an "almost irrelevant entity in the infant's social world".

even appear in their indexes,⁸⁶ it comes as no surprise that, as late as 1995, British Jungian analyst Andrew Samuels would pose the most elementary questions about paternal involvement: "What is it, that fathers really do"? and "What are the criteria of the "good enough father?" (Samuels 1995)⁸⁷. If the "good enough father" is an elusive persona so is the "not good enough father", since no specific expectations have been attached to his performance outside his function as a breadwinner. In psychoanalysis, the pathogenic father is a decidedly less prominent figure than the pathogenic mother (Badinter 1980:288). Socially and culturally, female and male parenthood are still being judged according to different standards. Flowing from mainstream child-development theory into ideology, political philosophy and subsequently into the conceptualization of social and family politics, these judgements make sure that "bad mothers are judged to fail more seriously than bad fathers" (Komter 1987:28).

Taking into account the unrealistic representation of maternal love, the implied emotional distance between father and child as normative may, of course, have individual and group specific, undetected variants, not in congruence with cultural stereotypes. Lewis and O'Brien suggest that "involved fatherhood may always have existed, but only have become a fashionable research topic in recent years". Amongst the many contradictions which surround fatherhood *as a social institution* is the phenomenon of the male power of dominance in the family which does not prevent

⁸⁶ It might be argued, that childcare manuals which direct the mother towards normatively all-inclusive and all-encompassing care, are in fact as much 'about' fathers and their needs as they are about the needs of the child.

⁸⁷ Samuels (1995), in his Essay *The Good Enough Father of Whatever Sex* poses his provocative questions in the context of extreme public resentment of single mothers and their support through the social security system in Great Britain in the middle of the nineties. Although his indication that certain (undefined) nurturing tasks performed by mothers might in fact be "fathering" is not without its own problematic, Samuels suggests that women should think about what functions in the lives of their children fathers have, should or could have and whether women feel they could or would like to fulfil those functions themselves.

individual men from being able to "show and develop close and reciprocal relationships with women (Lewis and O'Brien 1987:2-4). Lamb (1981:19,20,23,24), in particular, hypothesizes that warm and intimate relationships between fathers and their children may have been more frequent in the past than the relevant literature reveals, although these authors agree in their caution that more research is needed. Regardless of possible new findings, the fact that closeness and warmth as part of the father-child relationship remained unexplored or were even viewed with deep suspicion (Stein-Hilbers 1994:130), cannot - as the fatherhood literature suggests- (Rutter 1972, 1979; Lamb 1976, 1981,1997; Fthenakis 1988, Vol. I:41) be adequately explained in terms of the methodologically questionable research methods in the forties and fifties which produced the mother as the sole occupant of the child's emotional space. Neither can the elevation of the emotional connection between father and child to a fashionable research topic, at a specific point in time be analyzed within the framework of child-development theory itself. Both phenomena need to be reconnected to the extended nexus of meanings and modalities in which a politics of infantile needs conceal the much more powerful politics of unacknowledged paternal needs.

It is the representation of paternal functions as strictly separated from maternal care which, in the middle of the twentieth century, comes to the rescue of masculinity, paternity, the nuclear family and the gendered division of labour. Although social theory and cultural representations are always grounded in social reality and social practice, or at least in the perception and interpretation of both, psychoanalysis and child-development theories resonate with the androcentric bias of unreflected assumptions about the naturalness of the existing organization of childcare (Rumpf 1989:103).

Invading⁸⁸ what had been, "for better or worse", a female monopoly on experience and knowledge (Janssen-Jurreit 1976:205), child-development theorists in the middle of the twentieth century, neither as scientists nor from their experience as fathers, could find any reason to hypothesize father absences from early childhood development as potentially problematic. Both Spitz (1949)⁸⁹ and Bowlby in their empirical work with institutionalized children fail to assign any significance to the fact that orphans and foundlings are not only motherless but also fatherless (Rumpf 1989:102, see also Janssen-Jurreit 1976:216)⁹⁰.

Cultural expectations about masculinity⁹¹ and scientific expertise on the best interest of the child reinforced orthodox notions about the appropriate organization of family life and male and female functions. The father's function, according to Winnicott, is that of a "remote and distant visitor from the outside world" (Segal 1990:11). He represents law and order and carries into the family those values which the mother instills in the life of her child. His prime function is to protect mother and child from all external influences which might interfere with their intimate relation. The father-holds-mother-holds-baby doctrine advances to the epitome of childcare (Winnicott 1957). Surprisingly, Winnicott

⁸⁸ Everingham (1994:17) finds a more positive and less invasive interpretation of professional expertise in the work of Reiger (1985) who argues, that the professionalization of maternal care undermines the bourgeois fantasies of women's nurturing and domestic functions as 'natural'.

⁸⁹ In the second half of the forties, Spitz conducted research on the physical, emotional and intellectual development of institutionalized children. He concluded an overwhelmingly strong cause-effect relationship between the child's wellbeing and the quality and quantity of its emotional interchange with the mother. His findings were later confirmed by Bowlby.

⁹⁰ Whilst the missing father in deprivation theories of the mid-twentieth century reflects a definite patriarchal bias towards the 'naturalness' of the gendered division of labour, its feminist critique which calls for the missing father to be brought into the picture is not without its own problems, since it presupposes the availability of one female and one male parent as normative.

⁹¹ Segal (1990, Chapter I) demonstrates, that initially women and in particular working class women with few professional expectations, capacities and ambitions, defended the prevailing ideology of 'men's work' and women's work' and went to considerable length to support their partners who were no longer able to fulfil their traditional functions, by protecting and defending their masculine identity.

attests to fathers the capacity to be "good mothers for limited periods of time" but fails to elucidate how, within the logic of his own argument, the father gets to be a good enough mother. Nor does Winnicott explain why there is a time limit on the father's mothering capacities, once he has acquired them.

Bowlby formulated his maternal deprivation theory without contemplating the possibility of an even temporarily nurturing father. The father is "of no direct significance for the small child, but is of indirect value through his economic and emotional support of the mother" (Bowlby 1951, quoted in Janssen-Jurreit 1976:216). According to Segal (1990:11), the British psychoanalytical literature of the time insisted on two distinctly separate spheres for the child's psychic health. A dissolution of the strictly segregated maternal and paternal functions was seen not only as inopportune and unnecessary but as positively dangerous for both the father and the child. The very notion of a nurturing father or a father involved in childcare was disapproved of, in a range of sanctions which extended from ridicule in childcare manuals (Segal 1990:11) to the potential loss of masculine identity. It signaled danger to the psychic development of the child, including possible schizophrenic consequences (Stein-Hilbers 1994:130). The development of the male child's sexual identity constituted the only convincing argument against the father's total absence from the domestic sphere (Segal 1990:34).

Psychoanalysis, with its emphasis on the necessity for Oedipal paternal intervention, had already insisted on the indispensability of the sexual division of labour. In addition, arguments introduced from system theory, ethnology and evolutionary biology into child- development theory contributed further to the 'natural' dichotomization of parental tasks. The definition of strictly differentiated maternal and paternal

contributions *does* stabilize and re- validate specific male duties but these duties are understood to be independent of direct father-child interaction and "much of the father's importance" according to Lamb, "accrues from his role within the family system" (Lamb 1981:8; Mächtlinger 1981, see also Lewis, Feiring & Weinraub 1981:265; Fthenakis 1988, Vol. I:40). "The father", Lamb continues (in congruence with Winnicott 1957 and Parsons and Bales 1958), "represents to the child an executive, action-orientated approach and serves as a primary link between the family system and the social system beyond the family". Responsible for adequate sex role imprinting,⁹² he also introduces his children to the moral values of society (Lamb 1981a:10).

Child-development theory, perhaps understandably, limits its inquiry to a fractional aspect of the interdependent systems and subsystems on which the father-child relationship relies for its elementary support. Since the father is the mediator between the private and the civic sphere, the indisputable separation of these spheres as symbolic, cultural and economic entities is reaffirmed as the ardently defended prerequisite for the image of a father whose moral and symbolic presence are compatible with, or even contingent on, his physical and emotional absence from the 'Mother-World'.

Paternal involvement in the child's life is thus secured through the construction of a pyramid of needs. This pyramid starts at its peak with the needs of the child as the prime concern and positions the father at its base. In the middle stratum, the needs of the child

⁹² Fathers as gatekeepers of traditionally male functions, have a stronger interest in "sex typing" their children than mothers, Chodorow (1978:138) argues and simultaneously points to "sex typing" as an oversimplified concept. Phillips (n.d.:13) also sees fathers as more ardently involved in sex stereotyping and this stereotyping is, in its

potentiate the needs of the mother. At the bottom of the pyramid, the need-creation at the two prior levels remains unmatched by any paternal needs of whatever description. The father's availability for his function is frequently represented in rational terms as responsibility, with overtones of a laudable cultural and moral achievement⁹³ but distinctly not an inclination or as a set of intrinsic, instinctual needs⁹⁴ which psychoanalysis and evolutionary biology see as the prerequisites of maternal caregiving.

Consequently, there is no suggestion that distinct male or paternal needs, at the bottom of the pyramid, might in fact motivate the social construction of specific needs of mother and child at the two upper levels, or that the father who holds mother and baby might in turn be held exclusively by what he is believed to support.

Contingent on a multitude of prerequisites theorized into the nature, conduct and needs of others, the father-child relationship (as the last link in a chain of interrelated systems) is extremely vulnerable to any ideological, theoretical and economic changes which effect either the power structures within the family or the dynamics between the family and the cultural and civic space, of which it is but one element. Its survival relies on the precarious male privilege to reinvent fathers and the 'Father-World' as well as on the right to reinvent or fantasize the mother, maternal practices and the 'Mother-World' in terms of complementary otherness.

ultimate effect, the main source of the lacking autonomy for women. See also Lamb (1981a) and Lewis, Feiring & Weinraub (1981:270), both with further references.

⁹³ See Blankenhorn (1995:280 and elsewhere) for a recent account on the significance of cultural pressure in the production of social fatherhood.

⁹⁴ Kant (1959:30) in his elucidation of the categorical imperative summarizes the discrepancies between 'need' and 'interest': "The dependence of the faculty of desire on sensation is called inclination and inclination always indicates a need. The dependence of a contingently determinable will on principles of reason, however, is called interest."

CHAPTER FOUR THEORIES OF LOSS; THE RATIONAL COMPONENTS OF EMOTIONS

PART X: THEORIZING FROM THE RUINS OF LOGOS

Enlightenment philosophies and their emphasis on reason and rationality as the sole sources of freedom, Victor Seidler argues, have impoverished masculinity and alienated men from their bodies, emotions, needs and nurturing functions (Seidler 1992:253). The sense of loss and emotional deprivation expressed by Seidler in this particular essay reflects important aspects of the contemporary men's literature and they support the representation of men as victims of modernity. Although other influences are clearly identifiable in the experiences of the men who contributed to this thesis, many aspects of their reflections about contemporary masculinity make sense in the light of Seidler's work.

Seidler's argument can be summarized as follows: from the beginning of the Enlightenment period until the early seventies, when feminism and gay politics challenged the postulates of pure rationality as social desiderata, men identified with and functioned according to the *dicta* of disembodied reason. The rationalist structure of modernity estranges men from their emotional lives (1992:236) and masculinity is constituted primarily through processes of exclusion and repression. Isolated from their bodies and incapable of identifying or satisfying their needs and emotions, men were ousted from the world of nurturing and caring, prevented from nourishing the self or others (1992:238, 239). Only if men recognize and respect their own emotional needs will they competently father their children and work towards "a vision of the ways in which the world can be transformed and people empowered" (1992:262).

The point argued in this chapter is that Seidler's position represents the continuation of a discourse on male deprivation which manifests the potential of gender studies to "help the stereotypes as much as they disassemble them" (Holter 1994, see also Segal 1994:288-289). Despite a clearly identifiable need for and commitment to a more emotionally focussed masculinity, neither the concepts of emotions or reason are subjected to the rigorous reinterpretation they have experienced in feminist and postmodernist theories. The radical potential of emotions remains theoretically grounded in the most orthodox dualisms of Western philosophy. Seidler's text does not reflect Flax's (1990:62) insight that

it is increasingly difficult to locate any aspect of the mind capable of engaging in or sustaining autonomous "pure" thought (i.e. thought not affected by bodily experiences, libidinal wishes, authority relations, or cultural conventions).

Pure reason, instrumentality and the public sphere remain the domain of the masculine, uncontaminated by emotions which now imprison an underprivileged male subject⁹⁵. Salvation lies in the realm of "the feminine"⁹⁶; in bodies, emotions and nurturing as ideology-free 'pure' phenomena which men can get "in touch with". Paradoxically, the very phenomena which have excluded women from a masculinist vision of what it means to be fully human will now exert their humanizing impact on Enlightenment's generic human being. It is ultimately the elevation of traditional philosophical and gender political assumptions about male 'passionlessness' to the status of 'truth' about men's lives which supports the claim to a possible future non-sexist and reformed

⁹⁵ The issue of male oppression was first raised in the men's literature of the seventies. Farrell (1993) offers a more recent and detailed account. See also 'Men' magazine No. 4 with special section on men's oppression.

⁹⁶ Seidler, in contrast to other writers, does not refer to the 'feminine' but the context of his argument implies this connotation.

masculinity. This truth claim rests on the resurrection of (rather than a challenge to) the Man of Reason. It lacks any suggestion that the Man of Reason is a mere ideal of male perfection in philosophical thought, a utopian project in Freudian psychoanalysis⁹⁷ or an epistemological impossibility in feminist and postmodernist theories. Instead, Seidler embodies the phantasmic figure in a generalized category of contemporary men who now join, to use Thompson's term, the "army of redressers" of sexual oppression (Thompson 1986 quoted in Connell 1985:260).

Seidler assumes a continuity between an Enlightenment ideal of manhood and contemporary masculinity as a lived experience. The representation of men as victims of compulsory rationality first postulates Enlightenment *dicta* as static and immune to socio-cultural change and then assumes a strict coherence between inflexible social expectations and male behavior patterns perceived as normative.

But in contrast to psychoanalysis with its emphasis on forceful, unconscious and drive-orientated motivations or in contrast to sociobiology and its even more rigidly defined biological determinisms, the impact of Enlightenment *dicta* on social action and agency needs different criteria for its assessment. Any account of men as victims of Enlightenment philosophies would require an explanation of their changing victim status according to a multitude of criteria. Details of individual life biographies such as class, race, education, place and date of birth would need as much consideration as

⁹⁷ Freud was convinced that, after Copernicus and Darwin, psychoanalysis was the third insult to mankind's megalomania since it had demonstrated, "that reason is not master in its own house" (Gay 1995:XVII) The contradiction, between this claim and his total commitment to science as the only reliable source of true knowledge which upheld his belief in the ultimate victory of reason have been extensively analyzed in Flax (1990) and Whitebook (1996).

changes within the philosophical discourses of different periods from Enlightenment to modernity and up to the present crisis in masculinity and fatherhood. Seidler's analysis, however, relies on

the normalizing claims of Enlightenment thinking [which] frequently rests on a frozen image of seventeenth century rationalism, overlooking the progressive turn away from this interpretation of Enlightenment which occurred throughout the eighteenth century" (Johnson 1993:5)⁹⁸

The interpretation of Enlightenment philosophies as unitary and solely disciplining discourses has been prominently challenged by Habermas who emphasizes the expansion of judicial liberties and of the individual's scope of action (Habermas 1987, specifically Chapter 5). This scope of action remains elusive in Seidler's argument, both on a macro- political and on a micro-political level. Although men are actively involved in the current reinventing of the now negatively defined aspects of masculinity, they remain inexplicably removed from its past conceptualization. This conflict is reflected in Kamuf's concern about the notion, that discursive practices which produce a specific kind of masculine subject "cannot be also understood as originating in the subject it only produces" (1988:155). Wearing elaborates on this issue and maintains that the myth of disembodied masculinity and its association with reason rests on the power of patriarchal societies to define "human essence, language and discourse in the image and interest of males" (Wearing 1996:72).

The focus on men as victims of modernity, endemic in the men's literature, tends to "concentrate on the unproductive aspects of masculinity for men, such as the stunting of

⁹⁸ This statement in Johnson does not refer to Seidler in particular but to unreflective critique of Enlightenment philosophies in general, including the work of some feminist theorists.

the ability to express emotions, rather than masculinity as a route to privilege and power" (Wallaby 1990:92, see also Ehrenreich 1983; Collier 1996:13; Carrigan, Connell & Lee 1985:552). It fails to grasp the agency and the self-interest of many men in the construction and defense of the multiple cultural, political, ideological and economic and sexual sites where gendered subjects and gendered meanings are produced and reproduced. Feminism, post- modernism and men's studies have directed their focus towards those multiple sites and analyzed the impact of competing discourses on their construction. But even if these influences produce guidelines for appropriate masculine conduct, for responsibilities and entitlements this does not mean that they inevitably lead to rigidly defined social action.

Foucauldian-inspired feminist scholars in particular reflect on the need to integrate compliance and resistance, disciplining discursive and social practices into an analysis of gender acquisition and reproduction. Both the danger in overemphasizing women as victims and "empty containers of male sexual ideology" (Sawicki 1988:181) and the warning against "too virulent a critique of the notion of oppression" (Martin 1988:16) are balanced against the necessity to examine women's complicity with gender ideology. An act of compliance may entail as commonplace a social action as the self-representation or the unresisted representation by others as either female or male. Once drawn into the symbolic order of gender as its representation, the subject of this definition inherits a conglomerate of significations with diffuse origins and distinct political implications (Lauretis 1981:11-12).

The same complex causalities between discourse and social practice and between gender production and reproduction can be isolated in theories of masculinities.

Connell's critique of the new men's movement (1995:210) and Donaldson's (1994) reassessment of hegemonic masculinity raise the point that men do not have to display overtly misogynist behavior to still benefit from an ideology of gender which privileges male priorities and needs. But, argues Connell, "one cannot be masculine in a particular way (which is to say, engage in a particular practices constructing a given form of masculinity) without affecting the conditions in which that form of masculinity arose; whether to reproduce them, intensify them, or subvert them" (1993:602).

Despite repeated references to class, race and ethnicity, Seidler draws all men within the orbit of Western culture together in their common experience of being restrained by compulsory rationality. The missing sensitivity to differences between individual men and groups of men reflects a tendency to unacceptable generalization which feminisms have long been forced to address. Whether or not the category 'women' constitutes an adequate subject matter for their own discourses has engaged feminist theorists in one of their most involved projects (Flax 1990; Butler 1993; Grosz 1994). Black feminists in particular have challenged white feminists and their definition of women "as a singular group on the basis of their shared oppression" (Jones 1993:14).

Connell raises the issue of unitary categories on behalf of men and rejects the notion that one group of human beings can, because of their maleness or their biology, be classified as oppressors. This tension between 'all men as victims' in Seidler and 'not all men as oppressors' signifies the different approaches between the two theorists. Connell's distinction between hegemonic, complicit, marginalized and subordinated masculinities (1995:76) discourages rigid classifications of either groups or individual men as victims or villains. His focus is directed toward the different positions individual

men may occupy within diverse relationships of power and/or attachment. Connell's Man of Reason can only *lay claim* to embody the power of reason and, according to Connell, hegemonic masculinity always remains the embodiment of this successful *claim* (1995:164). Whilst hegemonic masculinity provides a script for normative male gender performance in which deviance is routinely penalized, the writing of the script involves distinct historical processes produced by and producing a multitude of differentiated masculinities (Connell 1995:186-191).

The defining element in Connell's work is his emphasis on agency and on multiple sites of gender production. The social operates in and through body images, bodily responses, bodily relationships (1991a:8). Whilst Seidler's men are agents primarily in their own oppression, masculinities in Connell are subverted, undermined, redefined, challenged, configured, renounced, affirmed and motivated. Dominant and subordinate discourses, as well as social practice (either accepted or transformed), compete in the construction of diverse masculinities, and the multitude of masculinizing processes "should warn us against mechanical interpretations of 'socialization' into masculinity" (1991:10).

When Connell maintains that "the reason/masculinity coupling for a politics of reform is highly debatable" or that there is a "striking absence of concrete evidence about the linkage of masculinity and rationality" (1991:5-6), he undermines Seidler's generalized claim to male victimization within the context of Western cultural *dicta*. There remains, however, an unresolved conflict between Connell's assertion that hegemonic masculinity can only lay claim to rationality and a different narrative where it becomes the actual bearer of instrumentality, rationality, authority and power. In this reading, a

new category is created: hegemonic masculinity becomes the “bad other” against which alternate masculinities define themselves or are defined by Connell as marginalized, complicit, non- or counter hegemonic.

In Connell’s analysis of contemporary male work-force participation, a clear demarcation emerges between two representations of employment. One category centers around “professions”, “organized knowledge”, “masculinized work” (or “institutionalized masculinity”) and authority with little emotional content (19991:6-7). The second group contains “new occupations” which are “emotionally engaging and intended” (1991:17). Connell’s case study of “Charles” (1991) offers a definition of emotional engagement sustained by “a rhetoric of ‘relationships’, ‘openness’ and self development”. These concepts create a new analogy between masculinity, the public sphere, positively connoted emotions, progress, change and different male experiences, which suggests new priorities and new options for men in the future.

However, this emphasis on dissent from hegemonic masculinity suggests discontent only with its rational and not with its emotional components. It supports two theoretical positions in need of further exploration; first the traditional view of a normatively rational public sphere now in a process of slow transformation and second, a categorization which admits only the new and ‘humanizing’ aspects of occupational performance or involvement into the definition of what is emotionally engaging and intended.

It is theoretically coherent to demand the re-humanization of work processes or the entire work force, as social theorists from Horkheimer to Donaldson have done, and to

simultaneously point to the multitude of needs and emotions which structure the civic space and its social organization. Ambition, pride in achievement, fear of failure, jealousy, envy, competitiveness, disappointment, the need to be needed, the need for identification and to bond with other men are but a few examples.

Male identification does not focus exclusively on the public sphere. Donaldson (1991) has pointed to the close interconnection between family and paid work as sites where working class masculinity is organized and reproduced. The involvement of women in and the desire for their exclusion from traditionally male occupations has elicited passionate male reactions in the protection of gender identities and sex-segregated functions. Labouring men as breadwinners are distinctly subject to motivations which challenge pure rationality as the ordering principle of their working lives (Cockburn 1983; Walby 1986; Williams 1992).

The rationality of the corporate world has been challenged within two different theoretical frameworks. The first approach rehabilitates emotions from their debilitating association with unruly passions or 'the feminine' and instrumentalizes them into the new concept "emotional intelligence". Decision- making processes, human interaction, human resources and communications on all levels demand emotional skills which can be learned and incorporated into management skills as essential qualifications. "Emotional intelligence" argues Goleman, "can matter more than IQ" (Goleman 1996)⁹⁹. The second approach to the presumed rationality of the corporate world questions the very basic assumptions about the public world as the realm of

⁹⁹ This statement reflects the subtitle of his book.

dispassionate reason and emphasizes the “gendered, emotionalized and sexualized” nature of organizations. Parkin argues that men dominate the sexual and emotional agenda most profoundly “by not perceiving that they have one and that the sexual agenda is that of women” (1994:69). In research on organizational performance, the general absence of the male emotional narrative or its restriction to job satisfaction reflects the way power is exercised to uphold stereotypes of male rationality. It is women who carry irrationalism into corporate life and the public space, potentially threatening their orderly procedures: “To locate emotions and emotionality, it is necessary to discover the discourses in which they are marginalized, controlled and overlooked” (Parkin1994:181).

Emotionally informed motivations and experiences may vary considerably between working class and ‘professional’ males. It is however the second group, identified by Donaldson as the most influential producers of hegemony, who “regulate and manage gender regimes, articulate experiences, fantasies and perspectives” (Donaldson 1993:646). To dismiss their emotional engagement, as Connell suggests, would empty hegemonic masculinity and ultimately gender politics and ideologies of their emotional content. It would credit the fantasies of the producers of hegemony with the status of objectivity, conceal the deeply gendered nature of academic knowledge production and the multifocal subjectivities, relationally determined needs and emotions¹⁰⁰ informing intellectualized decision making processes.

¹⁰⁰ Averill (1980:326) suggests that the English language contains “over 550 concepts” which denote primary emotions and their derivations.

Emotions in the public sphere arise out of the politics of the private sphere (Parkin 1994:170) and a clear distinction between 'personal' and 'occupational' motivations becomes indefensible. Thus, when Connell admits only the positively connoted new elements into the category "emotionally motivated and engaging" some of the most deeply rooted anxieties, the fear of losing authority (Williams 1992:60), the fear of women (Horney 1932; Theweleit 1987) and homophobia (Donaldson 1993:648), as defining elements of hegemonic masculinity are rendered invisible. Even the most pronounced exigency - "to transcend or overcome the threat of a supposed feminine state in which the mere facticity or 'given' character of the body engulfs the self" (Johnson 1993:1) - remains excluded from the category of emotional needs which motivate the segregation of the 'public' world of men from the 'private' world of women¹⁰¹. Although Connell's work contains all the necessary theoretical arguments to challenge the "successful claim" to rationally determined male gender performance, there remains a discursive space where rational hegemonic masculinity and the "masculine irrationalism", introduced by Robert Bly into the fatherhood debate (Connell 1991:6), can co-exist as gender- political myths. What remains unexplored is the emotional content of reason, as well as the rational component of irrationalism or emotions. Sexual politics¹⁰², masculinity¹⁰³, patriarchy¹⁰⁴ and fatherhood are infinitely

¹⁰¹ The tension between hegemonic masculinity and emotions, within the civic space of supposedly dispassionate reason has been explored by Hearn and Parkin (1987), Pringle (1989), Parkin (1994) amongst others.

¹⁰² Laqueur (1990, Chapter I) argues that since antiquity, philosophical and scientific discourse have been committed to the battle over gender and power. Before the period of Enlightenment, gender was considered to be a natural category and the "one body two sexes" theory disguised rather than emphasized anatomical differences between men and women. Only during the Enlightenment period, when the old social order collapsed and a new concept of gender relations became politically important, did science turn to the body to legitimize sexual difference. Reproductive biology in particular became instrumental in valorizing the claim of the patriarchal father over those of the mother.

¹⁰³ Connell (1995:77) defines hegemonic masculinity "as the configuration of gender practice which embodies the currently accepted answer to the problem of the legitimacy of patriarchy, which guarantees (or is taken to guarantee) the dominant position of men and the subordination of women" Connell (p.21) further points out, that the invention of innate sex difference, in the late nineteenth century was a reaction against women's emancipation.

accessible to redefinition in the light of changing socio-cultural modalities. This capacity for change invites the suggestion that the conventional claim to male rationality and the new claim to irrationalism or emotionality may be employed in the service of shared gender political objectives. One missing link between the emotional content of reason and the rational component of emotions is the search for an ultimate goal. Plumwood traces this search back to Aristotle and Kant. Both philosophers were aware that a purely instrumental theory is incoherent (Plumwood 1993:211). At some point, social actions must be driven by the satisfaction of an emotional need. If this need is denied and the search for an ultimate goal is referred back to instrumentality, the argument turns into an infinite regress. If, however, emotional content is attached to the action, instrumental theory is refuted and collapses into itself.

Connell and Seidler offer different contributions towards identifying representations of masculinity, either rationally or emotionally determined and motivated, as culturally and socio-politically adapted technologies of fatherhood. Carrigan, Connell and Lee (1995:308) include the gendered division of labour in the defining aspects of hegemonic masculinity. A vital connection is thus established between the claim to reason and the father's power to delegate the care of her children back to the mother. What remains opaque is the emotional content of male dominance and conventional fathering practices. Male hegemony has been decoded, particularly in gynocentric discourses, as the exercise of power to partially accommodate frequently unacknowledged male needs (Daly 1978; O'Brien 1981). Hegemonic masculinity makes no reference to the fact that

¹⁰⁴ Chapman (1989) argues that "men change, but only in order to hold on to power, not to eliminate it" and that "one of the features of patriarchy is its resilience, its ability to mutate and change in order to survive, undermining threats to the symbolic order by incorporating its critique and adjusting its ideology."

“Patriarchy (sic) has provided the deepest emotional foundation for the construction of traditional masculinity” (Tacy (1997:2), nor does it reflect Rorty’s observation that Western rationalist tradition has always been informed by the imperatives of emotional needs and contributed to their satisfaction (1995:37). It upholds the myths of male rationality and instrumentality which have not only instigated the father’s absence from the nursery but also established and perpetuated the very ideology and politics of gender which have secured his presence in the lives of women and their children as part of a ‘natural order’.

Hegemonic masculinity instrumentalizes the claim to pure reason into the father's power to be freed from childcare. Seidler uses the same implied reason/emotions dichotomy for his antithetic claim that men will adequately nurture their children when in contact with their own needs and emotions. Read together with his incompatible statements that men are angry over their loss of power or that they are willing to surrender their power (1992:240), his argument suggests a new model of paternal involvement based on pure emotions, uncontaminated by reason and power. This assumption postulates emotions as generally benevolent and conducive to socially desirable behavior. It carries the implied claim that emotionally motivated fatherhood might be intrinsically counter-hegemonic and as such fails to acknowledge, that the power men have lost, the power they may end up losing and the power they may offer to relinquish are not identical. The phantom of paternal redundancy signifies the vital discrepancy between orthodox paternal power and the one offered on the altar of alternative fatherhood. An emotionally motivated nurturing function as antidote to redundancy does not justify unqualified acceptance as a progressive element in sexual politics. As a new, defining element of fatherhood, emotions may be instrumental in the restoration of the complex

nexus of privileges, responsibilities and need satisfaction, which were originally secured under the protective shield of male rationality. Seidler acknowledges men's loss of power and maintains that women have withdrawn their support from their male partners (1992:244) Whilst these statements imply a connection between the loss of power and male needs, the changing nature of those needs is not adequately reflected. The vacuum left by the loss of power, the phantom of paternal redundancy and the loosening grip on control over women changes those needs beyond the damage control offered by consciousness raising and changing awareness. Undesirable aspects of gender relations cannot be explained by a false male consciousness. They are firmly grounded in deeply rooted ideologies, every-day social practices and in material inequalities between men and women.

Seidler's treatment of male needs, either as frustrated in the past or as goal-directed motivations in the future, provides few insights into their dynamic nature, continuously readapted to a climate of significant social and gender-political change. Gathered into one undifferentiated category since the period of Enlightenment, they assume an essentialized and ahistorical quality, uniting men from the sixteenth to the outgoing twentieth century in a common victim status. The retrospective elevation of negated or frustrated male needs to a gender-political argument in support of male victimization from a subject position informed by late twentieth century individual or collective feelings of loss, is highly problematic.

The very notion of what constitutes a need might be hidden in linguistics, in non-linguistic communication and modes of representation, in silences and power relations or in the priorities set by the scientific inquiry itself. Seidler's definition of needs,

limited to the categories frustrated by a claim to disembodied reason and without reference to those satisfied under its proclaimed rule, points to such priorities. The element of repression and negation dominant in his argument fails to distinguish between those male needs which may or may not have been acted upon. They may be latent because they do not rise to the consciousness of the self, they may be conscious and not be given permission to emerge, unacknowledged (p.239), unrecognized (p.257), remain unexpressed (p.241) or may not be communicated (p.236). They can be appropriated (p.249) or concealed to protect male vulnerability, be denied either in their very existence, in their satisfaction or their impact on gender and family politics. They may be “dumped on others” (p.245), left to women to be interpreted and met (p.237) or be successfully subjected to the control of the rational male subject (p.236). Once erased from the scale of active motivations, it becomes difficult to trace those exigencies which have found their way into moral and ethical codes and from there into political and social theory, organizing appropriate gender specific conduct according to a presumed ahistorical “human nature”.

However, when Seidler claims that “men have learned to live through their heads” (p.253) that they “did not allow their needs to get a grip on their lives” (p.240) or that men have to learn that it is all right for them to have needs too” (p.244), he succumbs to the myth of disembodied reason he set out to challenge. The “Achilles Heel” of the Man of Reason lies in his embodiment, his needs and emotions or precisely in those sites Seidler excludes from the motivational determinants of traditional masculine performance.

But bodies, emotions and needs are not only dubious in their invisibility or negation. If their introduction into the motivational spectrum of the fathers supports the claim to male nurturing competence, this argument problematizes not only each of its supporting elements in isolation but also their presumed natural coherence. Needs, emotions, bodies and nurturing, disentangled from their consolidated “otherness” to reason, autonomy and agency in post- modernist and particularly in feminist mothering theories, are reunited in their common support for a utopian paternal nurturance. The redefinition of masculinity in terms of its exclusionary categories takes refuge in the resurrection of the ‘feminine’ of classic gendered dichotomies as its coherent other.

The father’s nurturing potential now depends on this assumed coherence and on his capacity to rationally access what is, symbolically and metaphorically, linked to ‘the feminine’. According to those dichotomizing ideologies which have proclaimed the Man of Reason, the emotion-body-nurturing nexus is encoded in women’s nature and explained in terms of masochism, self- sacrifice and altruism as the reliable natural sources from which society can reproduce itself.

The representation of maternal love as an unsocialized and culturally unmediated emotion has contributed significantly to the myth that women have historically been ‘allowed’ to indulge their ‘natural’ feelings and advanced an understanding of female or maternal ‘neediness’ which keeps the son engulfed in the ‘Mother-World’. However, emotions do not reliably produce either a motivation or a capacity to nurture and, *vice versa*, nurturing capacities and practices cannot be adequately explained in terms of emotions in their orthodox interpretation. Neither do nurturing capacities arise out of

empathy for the self, as Seidler's vision of a progressive new fatherhood suggests. Feminist theorists, amongst others Ruddick (1980); Benhabib (1987); Benhabib and Cornell (1987); Gilligan (1993) and Everingham (1994) have convincingly demonstrated that maternal practice presupposes the willingness to empathize with and take the position of the other, interpretative action and a strong ethics of care. The suggested change in consciousness is not a reliable source of competent fathering either. Mothering, as Segal has pointed out, is not determined by consciousness but maternal consciousness is determined by mothering. It is the child's vulnerability and dependence which change women's consciousness, even if they may not do so with absolute certainty (Segal 1991:149). The experience of fathers who are the main nurturers of children appears to confirm that their consciousness and their nurturing capacities too develop in parallel with each other, in the actual process of caregiving.

To summarize, the concept of the progressive potential of emotionally expressive fatherhood places a high burden of proof on the benevolence of emotions and on the presumed absence of those emotions from past paternal involvement, hegemonic masculinity and gender ideologies. Without those presumptions, the theories of vilification, victimization and salvation, self-accusation and self absolution would lose their main theoretical support. These theories further rely on a limited concept of conflict, a depoliticized vision of father-child relationships separated from the ideological and material aspects of gender relations. Reductionist perceptions of conflict become evident when the focus changes from the perspective of Seidler's father who has failed to nourish the self and others to the needs of the sons speaking through the voices of middle aged fathers. Paternal redundancy mutates into an essential need of the

son as the other for the paternal self. Uwe clearly articulates the experience of the 'under-fathered' son:

I did not get any affirmation in my masculinity from my father. He was a man who went to work and fulfilled his obligations and, in a traditional sense was a very, very good father. He was a good provider, I went to a good school, I had as much as he could possibly give me, except any sign of affection or love or caring or beat me.

Uwe, in his late forties, applies a model of masculinity which has emerged out of the new men's movement to retrospectively assess his father's missing contribution to his own gendering process. The father's failure rests on the son's interpretation of emotional involvement which excludes materially providing for the family from its definition of demonstrated affection, love and care. Judged from a specific ideological perspective of the nineties, the father of the fifties and sixties is isolated from his own socio-cultural period and transported into a new era, where the way he may have made sense of his own life is discredited. Deprived of a valid incentive, his fathering is emptied of its emotional content and his motivational spectrum reduced to an abstract sense of responsibility¹⁰⁵.

But altruism, as setting aside the needs of the self for the needs of others, does not qualify as an explanatory category for this listless responsibility either. According to Plumwood's critique of instrumental reason, altruism, although viewed as a possible supererogation for men, implies strong elements of irrationalism, conventionally associated with women and the private sphere. It carries the very connotation of care which Uwe misses in his father. As an alternative to altruism, Plumwood suggests a second reading, which would explain the father's involvement in his family's life as the

¹⁰⁵ This sense of listless responsibility is one of the pronounced features in the respondent's descriptions of their fathers. It is frequently in stark contrast to their own claims that the family was the single most important aspect in their father's lives.

victory of universal reason over egoism (Plumwood 1993:143). Theoretically, this hypothesis would re-establish the link between the classic reason-emotion dualism emphasized by Parsons instrumental and expressive functions. It would make sense of Uwe's experience of deprivation as grounded in the "male sex role" critique which inspires Seidler's work and support a position which defines men as victims of compulsory rationality and instrumentality. This victim status, enshrined as a prime *dogma* in the fatherhood debate suggests that any further questions about the acquisition of paternal power and its exercise may now be superfluous, since it has been employed against the interests of men and left some of their most elementary needs unsatisfied.

Uwe's assessment of his father exceeds emotional inexpressiveness or unavailability; their relationship is devoid of any emotional content. As a "very, very good father", according to orthodox notions of sex specific parental capacities and functions and according to still prevalent cultural norms (particularly in the context of the 'family values' debate), Uwe's father is represented as the archetype of the men's movement's "not good enough" father, against whom the son defines himself as other. When Uwe, after his own long "spiritual journey" finally musters his courage to "honestly" tell his father how excessively dull and uninspiring he had been as a role model, the old man bursts into tears:

..... and so there is that inheritance that was passed on from father to son in the Industrial Revolution. It was so restricting , diminutive to the spirit that there was, it was as if a man could not show what was inside here, [points to his heart] that a man could not be fully human. There is nothing you can bloody do rather than weep for those poor bastards.

Uwe draws on almost the full spectrum of the new men's movement's canon of beliefs but, interestingly, his father's crying is not seen as being "in touch with the feminine" and remains in strange conflict with his representation as emotionally unmotivated and unresponsive.

Presupposing a distant moment of bliss with a strong and intact emotional father-son relationship as normative, a true masculine and paternal self is lost through specific historical developments and individual men are absolved from any responsibility for their own conduct¹⁰⁶. Ineffectual as a father, deprived of his spirituality, humanity and emotions, he turns into the object of his son's compassion or, as frequently in other interviews, into the target of his anger. There is no room for ambivalence, different subject positions, dissent or agency in the representation of the "not good enough" father. It does not reflect Connell's perception of masculinity as a richness, a plenitude (1983:22)¹⁰⁷ or Donaldson's exasperation at the frequent insinuation that being a man might not be enjoyable, enriching or satisfying (Donaldson (1993:646).

Rejecting what in his perception constitutes an outdated model of traditional fatherhood, Uwe isolates paternity from its gender-political context and reduces the debate to the father-son relationship. His vision for social change carries a depoliticized concept of paternity into the future of an emotionally determined father-child relationship. This

¹⁰⁶ Carrigan, Connell & Lee (1985:565) have perceived this mode of self-absolution in the early men's literature as a trend to analyze masculinity in a "simplified social learning theory" which no longer saw the male role as expressing "the true nature of men". Whilst this interpretation avoids essentialist positions, it allowed individuals to assume, that "the trouble was not in himself but in his role."

¹⁰⁷ Connell: "I disagree profoundly with the idea that masculinity is an impoverishing character structure. It is a richness, a plenitude. The trouble is that the specific richness of hegemonic masculinity is oppressive, being founded on, and enforcing, the subordination of women."

vision does not invite further questions about the complex power structures supporting fatherhood as a public and domestic institution. Separated from their rational content, emotions operate in a political vacuum, upholding their radical otherness to reason.

PART XI: THE POLITICS OF EMOTIONS

Seidler's (1992) focus on men as victims of normatively disciplined emotional and corporal needs creates not only a false unity between different groups of men but also a false polarity between women and men. The new emphasis on and 'rehabilitation' or 'depathologizing' of emotions, the legitimization of acknowledged needs as social desiderata, the recent inclusion of embodiment into the theorizing of autonomous selfhood and moral agency validates those aspects of human existence and experience originally denigrated as intrinsic attributes of 'femininity'. This shift away from the supremacy of reason appears to warrant an analytical position which conveys to women a privileged status as a direct consequence of their original exclusion from the project of Enlightenment. In contrast to men's frustrated needs and emotions, there remains an underlying assumption that women, unrestrained by Enlightenment *dicta*, have been allowed to live out their natural, unsocialized, frequently debilitating, uncontrollable and often desirable or useful emotions and needs. Since women are considered to be the 'natural' guardians and interpreters of those emotions and needs which men themselves have no connection to, find shameful to express or simply disown, neither their capacity nor their availability for these functions are in need of further exploration.

These representations of women's emotional debilities and capacities have been translated into two different visions which link 'the feminine' to emotions. One interpretation retains "femininity" (the 'feminine' lived through a female body) as the absolute other to masculinity and as inherently problematic in its 'emotionality'. It is an intrinsic, constituent element of maternal caregiving and as such guarantees the repressiveness of the "Mother-World" and the father's separating function. If

uncontained and allowed to ooze out from the 'private' into the civic sphere, it leads to one of the fatherhood debate's most lamented social phenomena: the 'feminization' of the 'Father-World'. The second imago fantasizes 'the feminine' as the repository of positively connoted emotions, from which men have been excluded. Both of these unrealistic portrayals of emotions, regardless of their dialectical paradox, constitute the theoretical background of the new politics of emotions in the fatherhood literature.

But despite their rehabilitation and desirability, emotions are still presented as something both tangible and existing in a cultural, relational vacuum - unsocialized and unmitigated, inactively resting at the bottom of the psyche. The linguistic terms used in this context are self-explanatory and revealing:

to get in touch with
to connect with
to acknowledge
to deal with.

The mere act of "getting in touch with" creates a theoretical distance between a cognitive, rational and *active* agent who does the touching and a *passive* element being touched- the emotions. This interpretation of emotions reaffirms their association with biology, nature, passivity and femininity and thus their symbolic meaning which has a long history in Western philosophical thought.

Thus, the new battle in the men's literature for men's right to embrace their emotions bases the potential for a future non-hegemonic masculinity on questionable theoretical grounds, as long as the claimed enriching and humanizing effect of dissolved Enlightenment dichotomies remains deeply indebted to the very principles responsible for the now contested gendered sanctions and prescriptions. Even in the politics of those

theorists who attempt to challenge the gendering of emotions, the cultural and powerpolitical genesis of their symbolisms survives as an apparently irrelevant aspect of the social sanctions which regulate sex-specific display or suppression of emotional responses. It is the restricted analysis of the social history, ideology and politics of emotions which fails to confront the strictly gendered interpretation of what constitutes an emotion.

The silences that are thus created deflect attention from some pertinent questions: What is the nature of those emotions men have decided to get in touch with? How do emotions, represented in their conventional, passive and non-cognitive interpretation, acquire their radical potential for social transformation in the process of being touched by a new subject?

Two orthodox readings of emotions and their gender-specific expressions can help to illuminate the problematic adherence to those dichotomized categories which survive in the rhetoric of current male victimization theories. The first of these readings suggests that men can get in touch with the feminine as the epitome of emotions, with the right to cry as its symbolic action. The second understanding of emotions polarizes the femininity of crying against being angry and unemotional as stereotypical male behavior. This typically masculine conduct is epitomized in the 'Angry White Male Syndrome'. It is represented as a plausible reaction to a challenged 'moment of bliss', as the experience of loss turned into aggression and violence. Anger and aggression, however, are interpreted not as emotions but as the consequence of their absence.

The full scale of the gendered understanding of emotions and their resilience to epistemological transformation becomes apparent in the following account from Oscar:

Emotionally men have learned and were told to shut down their emotions, their feelings, they don't have pain around it, so it becomes - these things that should be a human right and all that really human stuff should be felt and dealt with, it is just pushed out and pushed away, because we don't have any emotions. We walk around, we men have grown up without any emotions. And there we were, we were told not to cry. So our emotions have been shut down, we never learned to have emotions. ... When men have no outlet for their anger, when they store all their frustrations in their bodies, they come home and kick the cat or hit the wife, or they belt the kids, or something.

Oscar verbalizes Seidler's ambivalence about existing emotions being 'shut down' by gendered necessities and their successful elimination. The experience of deeply rooted victimization does not extend to the cat, the wife and the kids.

Uwe has moved beyond the point from which Oscar told his story. He argued from the conviction that men have not been conditioned into being victims. Having realized their own deprivation, they have proceeded to the next stage and reclaimed their emotional lives. He says:

I mean I don't feel that I need to be an assertive aggressive man, I feel I'm quite able to be warm and be emotive. I feel that I am in contact with my feminine qualities, but no longer denying any of my masculine qualities. So I feel a lot more balanced in that sense. . . . Actually the thing that happens in men's groups is, guys start contacting their emotions and they do cry and they shake, and mostly they laugh. They sit down and have a really good chuckle because that's the safest thing to do. The two things that is safe for a man to do is get angry or laugh. Because they are allowed to do that. Your conditioning allows you to do that. You are not allowed to cry, you are not allowed to feel sad. There are places where you can feel sad, like when your wife dies you're allowed to feel sad. The rest of the time you are not allowed to feel sad. When men start contacting all those things, it just releases a lot of the shit of being a man¹⁰⁸.

¹⁰⁸ A recurring feature in the data is the respondents' reference to their 'feminine qualities' or, more persistently, their 'feminine aspects'. The term 'femininity' remains strictly reserved for the attributes of women. In reference to women, 'the feminine' does not signify the state of 'being in touch with' one's emotions but an all-encompassing state of being emotional.

Oscar and Uwe base their perceptions of victimization through exclusion and their subsequent vision of salvation on an uncritical and limited interpretation of what constitutes an emotion. Both men are, on one level, aware of the hierarchical ordering of emotions which determines gendered sanctions and permission. However the origin of this hierarchical ordering remains isolated from gender- and power-politics or from the social field in which emotions are constructed, classified and legitimized. Having controlled, uncompromising access to 'the feminine' as an intra-psychic *novum* bears no traces of the devastating effects which the traditional association of femininity with emotionality has had on the lives of women. It further implies that whatever motivated and stimulated male social action in the past is automatically excluded from the category of emotions.

The new politics of emotions, which projects men as victims of gendered sanctions against 'feminine' behavior, fails to provide a heuristically convincing argument, even within the logic of its own understanding of emotions. Seidler (1992) repeatedly points to the protective function of overtly masculine and 'unemotional' behavior but fails to acknowledge the highly political nature of the refusal to cry. Rather than being a signifier of unemotional conduct, it is the expression of an emotional need par excellence. Its significance includes and extends far beyond the protection of intra-psychic sensitivities.

That crying is a forbidden response to emotions, denied in their very existence, is not only incomprehensible but constitutes a restriction to the level of symbolic action of

very realistic power relations. Crying indeed marks one form of expression from which men as a group are discouraged through cultural presentations of masculinity¹⁰⁹.

The point here is not to deny that men too, are, to some extent, "prisoners of gender" (Flax 1990:138, see also Connell 1994:24-25) but to emphasize the use of one particular restriction, isolated from the full range of gendered sanctions and prohibitions, to theorize a generalized male victim status. Crying as a symbolic behavior signifies passivity and the feminine principle. It is linked to vulnerability, helplessness, powerlessness and the sense of being overcome¹¹⁰. The focus on cultural sanctions against specific modes of emotional behavior easily obscures the more important multiple sites, discourses and practices which encourage, foster, perpetuate, reward and empower masculinity as negation, as not woman, not homosexual, not docile, not dependent, not feminine and not impotent (Badinter 1980 quoted in Stein-Hilbers 1994). The sanctions against crying first of all protect those negations. They function as a protection of the claim to reason and thus of the status and privileges attached to this claim. Until recently, the natural and unchallenged control of men over women has been the control of those human beings who are allowed to be angry but do not cry over those who are 'allowed' to cry but not to be angry.

Feminist theory, since Friedan (1963) and Rich (1979), has emphasized the inhibiting prohibitions against anger in women. Rich's own account of her battle with and against

¹⁰⁹ In contrast to the claim that male sanctions on crying are socially induced, Moir and Jessel (1989:126) insist that the 'big boys don't cry' syndrome is biologically rooted, since "the emotional centers of the male brain are located far more discreetly than in the woman".

¹¹⁰ Even in its conventional reading, the total passivity of crying disregards its manipulative potential to induce social action.

this emotion suggests that the right to anger is contingent on the right to define and to assert one's own rights against the claims made by the concrete other. The symbolism of the maleness of anger may indeed signify the entitlement to this assertion and its inappropriateness in women the reciprocal denial. An institutionalized sanction of anger turned into aggression was the husband's previous legal privilege, to react to his wife's insubordination or her challenge to his authority with corporal punishment (Allen 1990:46). It attested to anger and domestic violence the status of a rational and even an educational intervention, as Ehrenreich and English (1988) have demonstrated in their Chapter on "Motherhood as Pathology". Both Rich and Ehrenreich emphasize the feeling of guilt women attach to their anger and their subsequent self-definition as perpetrators is far removed from the victim status the men's movement attests to angry men.

The political, ideological, material and psychological consequences of the definition and hierarchical ordering of emotions, their constituent influence on the gendering of capacities, potential, limitations, duties and 'natural' functions is only *reflected* in the gendered sanctions against crying and anger. Thus, the transformation of crying from the previously 'feminine' expression of powerlessness and helplessness into a humanizing masculine privilege may, in Uwe's words, be experienced on an individual level as something that "removes the shit of being a man." But 'degendering' specific emotions does not effect the power relations built on the dichotomized categories for which anger and crying are symbolic expressions. Paradoxically, masculinity now embraces its own negations, symbolized by the permission to cry as the derogated

prerogative of 'femininity' but, being united with its absolute 'other', has no apparent impact on its own signification.

The argument advanced in this chapter is that the men's movement's attempt to overcome Enlightenment dichotomies, such as emotions versus reason, feminine versus masculine and active versus passive, remains deeply rooted within the very dogmata it claims to challenge. It will argue, that rather than belonging to two distinctly different categories, crying and anger or rather, crying and anger acted out in violence, are the results of identical mental processes, evaluated, monitored, assessed and labeled within a specific historical and gender-political context.

Contemporary Theories of Emotions.

Contemporary theories of emotions which analyze and rethink their traditional interpretation, both in the relevant disciplines and in "everyday discourses and everyday language", have contributed to the better understanding of a subject matter frequently "vague and confusing" (Averill 1980:306). New hypotheses and theories of human motivations are, to a significant extent, defined against resilient philosophical, psychoanalytical and sociobiological canons.

The interpretation of what constitutes an emotion has, as one of its significant elements a conceptual, if not necessarily experiential, connection to passivity and an association with biologically primitive non-cognitive and irrational responses (Averill 309-311). In congruence with feminist theory,¹¹¹ Averill traces the origin of an "older and now somewhat archaic" view of emotions as passion or loss of control back to early Greek philosophy. Their 'otherness' to action as self-initiated 'non-emotional' performance is reflected in the Latin word 'pati ' which, related to the Greek concept of 'pathos', shares a common root with 'passivity', 'patient' and 'pathology' (1980:311). Aristotle's hierarchy between matter and form distinguishes between lower order responses providing the matter for higher order responses. In this hierarchy, emotions can be read as motivating social action without being themselves motivated, (Averill 1980:310) so that the agency of the emoting subject remains unexplored. A similar hierarchical ordering of responses informs the Platonic "distinction between the appetitive and the spirited elements of the soul" (Averill 1980:332) which suggests a chasm between involuntary bodily stimulations and self-originated, purely abstract thought.

Excluded from the category of conduct, "emotions are conditions provoked and aroused in us" (Warner 1986:136). They interfere with the human capacity for judgment (Peters 1970:190) and the polarized association between 'emotion' and 'passivity' on the one hand and 'motive' and 'action' on the other has, according to Peters, frequently prevented philosophers and psychologists from even contemplating the conceptual connection between 'emotion' and 'action' (1970: 191). This discrepancy between active and passive behaviors and the separation of presumed tendencies or personal traits from capacities has habitually impeded the conceptualization of emotional behavior on an analogous footing with intellectual behavior.

Instrumentality, motivation, self-initiated and competent social action, symbolically linked to masculinity and the male supremacy based on the capacity for reason, found new 'scientific' support and ahistorical, universalized validity in the nineteenth century through Darwin's theory of evolution. In *The Expression of Emotions in Men and Animals* (1892), emotions as a unified category have lost their instrumental functions as survival strategies and are clearly "vestiges of our infantile and bestial past" (Oatley (1989:19). Darwin's *The Origin of the Species and The Descent of Man* gives an account of gendered emotions which credits women with a nurturing instinct, greater tenderness and less selfishness as sex-specifically laudable remnants of lower races and a past state of civilization (1859:326). Female emotional and nurturing labour is consequently explained in terms of tendencies and personality traits, as the dichotomized other to capacities and self-motivated actions which signal (male) intellectual behavior (Averill 1980:322).

¹¹¹ See Chapter II of this thesis.

Typically "male" emotions such as anger and aggression, in contrast, have, from Darwin (1859, 1892) to Tiger (1969); Fox and Tiger (1971); Dawkins (1976); Goldberg (1977, 1993) and Moir and Jessle, to name only a few examples¹¹², been distinguished clearly from debilitating female inclinations, explained as the evolutionary consequences of women's nurturing and domesticity¹¹³. Motivating and being motivated by warfare and communal hunting meant that anger and aggression have fostered in man the development of "a higher eminence in what he takes up, whether requiring deep thought, reason or imagination, or merely the use of the senses and the hands" (Darwin 1950:326).

This account suggests a strong link between male aggression, the capacity for cognition and the exercise of reason. Now anchored firmly in male anatomy, the "need for dominance" as well as anger are the consequences of high testosterone levels or a "male bias of the brain". Male biology has immediate access to reason, so that anger and violence can be attributed to "a more abstract and impersonal view of the world" which depersonalizes and objectifies its victims (Moir & Jessel 1989:138-139). Male entitlement to sexual dominance becomes teleologically linked to an anatomically grounded nexus between anger and reason, whilst aggression and violence function as the defense of 'natural' conjugal and paternal rights¹¹⁴

¹¹² Darwin (1859, 1892), Wilson (1975, 1978), Tiger (1969), Tiger and Fox (1971), Dawkins (1976), Goldberg (1977, 1993) Moir and Jessle (1989).

¹¹³ Fthenakis (1988, Vol.I :51), in contrast expresses the hope, that the re-evaluation of competing sociobiological and evolutionary theories will bring new evidence of 'ignored' natural paternal nurturing capacities in primates and human beings See also Colman and Colman (1988:143).

¹¹⁴ Masculinist theorists, in particular Tiger (1969), Tiger and Fox 1971) and Goldberg (1977), have used the nexus biology/aggression/reason to claim the naturalness and inevitability of male intellectual leadership and sexual dominance.

The Darwinian influence on Freud is acknowledged in his own work (1913:185-186, 202, 203; 1915:81; 1921:154; 1925a:4) and has survived in his adaptation of the horde theory, according to which women's nurturing functions are the origin of their exclusion from the creation of civilization. In Freud's *Civilization and its Discontent* (1929), the mother in the primal horde submits to the stronger male to assure the safety of her children (p. 288) but the same women "who laid the foundations of civilization by the claim of her love", "soon display their retarding and restraining influence" and "come into opposition to civilization" (p.293)¹¹⁵.

The creation of civilization and the invention of religion are the outcome of male jealousy, aggression and anger which lead to the murder of the primordial father. Freud's association of masculinity with the active and femininity with the passive principle¹¹⁶ has produced two strong images for male sexuality. Male sexual passion as an emotion has the connotation of "overwhelming and uncontrollable impulses" (Grosz 1994:200). Acted out in intercourse, the same emotion takes on a decidedly active function - the perpetuation of the species itself¹¹⁷. Thus, ultimately, the creation of

¹¹⁵ Horkheimer, who avoided the horde theory in his materialist account of the origin of religion and paternal authority nevertheless took on the Darwinist-Freudian vision of women as hostile to civilization.

¹¹⁶ Freud at one stage was decidedly skeptical about the appropriateness of this categorization but this skepticism had no impact on his subsequent theory building.

¹¹⁷ In *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality* (1905:71) Freud maintains, that "The sexuality of most male human beings contains an element of aggressiveness - a desire to subjugate; the biological significance of it seems to lie in the need for overcoming the resistance of the sexual object by means other than the process of wooing." See also Millet (1977:193) who quotes two different versions of Freud's euphemism for rape in two different versions of his essay *Femininity* (1932). The first version appeared in the 1933 translation entitled *The Psychology of Women* by Scott (1933) and asserts that "the achievements of the biological aim is entrusted to the aggressiveness of the male, and to some extent independent of the cooperation of the female". In Strachey's later translation, male access to female bodies is "independent of the woman's consent". The recent remarks of two Australian judges, that humanity would have died out if men had always waited for their wife's consent or that the wife's refusal to consent might justify a "rougher than usual handling" suggest that the Darwinist-Freudian thought on male aggression has not yet lost its relevance.

civilization, culture and religion and the physical survival of humanity become unimaginable without male aggression¹¹⁸.

One of the contradictory aspects of anger and its representation in the new politics of emotion is its implied cognitive core reflected in "Plato, Shakespeare and Freud [who] all compared anger to a high-spirited horse, ridden by reason" (Tavis 1989:21). The "Angry White Male Syndrome" is made plausible as *justified* rage which sanctions even extensive violence and brutality¹¹⁹ and this justification presupposes a common set of moral values and social norms, a threat to elementary male rights and consequently a complex process of rational analysis, assessment and judgement. Simultaneously, the anger turned into violence constitutes the aggressor as the victim whose emotional agitation absolves him from responsibility for his action.

The contradictions which arise when anger and aggression are defended by alternate but separate appeals to rationality and emotions, are the focal point of Warner's theory on "Anger and Other Delusions" (1986). Warner's work is based on the hypothesis that anger as a social action depends on a presumed but indefensible judgment/feeling or cognition/affect dichotomy: The self explanatory character of anger is assigned to a

¹¹⁸ The uncritical acceptance of male aggression as monocausal, teleological argument has found unfortunate representations in both feminist and masculinist writing. Some radical feminists, amongst them Brownmiller (1976) and Dworkin (1981), see male aggression as the universal source of women's oppression. Positively connoted, male aggression as explanation for *The Inevitability of Patriarchy* has found its strongest defense in Goldberg' (1977, 1993).

¹¹⁹ Segal (1994:272) describes the reaction to the film "Falling Down", the story of an angry white male who does on an indiscriminate killing rampage. She points out that the male audience in the USA applauded each brutal murder.

judgement component of emotion. "It is this judgement that is corrigible and accordingly separated from the feeling component" (Warner 1986:138).

An angry person has judged the object of his anger and the object's conduct as unfair within the prevailing cultural notions about rights, status and appropriateness (Warner 1986:135-136). He may concede that the judgement might have been wrong. Independent of the righteousness or moral justification of the judgement however, the angry person maintains that the object of his frustration and not he himself is responsible for the genesis of his emotion. The key to this misunderstanding of emotions lies in the perception that the angry person is a victim of his feelings or that he has been victimized by somebody else's conduct. His emoting and his own construction of his emotions are excluded from the category of social actions.

Here, Warner has introduced elements of judgement and personal agency into the debate not only in order to free emotions from their biological determinism, but also to problematize Freud's account of emotions as "internal, unconscious processes" arising from a "stratum unavailable to introspection" (1986:137). He argues that "as an explanation of social behavior, the unconscious is radically individualistic rather than social" (1986:136) and that emotions cannot be treated as remnants of a phylogenetic past. As social constructions, they can "be fully understood only on a social level of analysis" (Averill 1980:309) and, although individuals are the emoting subjects "acting in and on their world", this action can only be achieved in communicative and social interaction (Kippax 1980:13).

Biological factors retain some of their significance. Oatley (1989) maintains a guarded commitment to a view of emotions which 'happen' and 'arise' and are not the result of cognitive processes. They fill in the gaps in human behavior which cannot be explained in rational terms and become nevertheless important tools of communication "necessary for any intelligent being capable of planning action in an imperfectly knowable world." (p.22) A social constructivist view sees organic feedback as subject to second order monitoring and consequently, as not independent of the processes of appraisal. (Averill 1980, specifically p. 317).

Averill further describes emotions as produced by the tension between personal agency and social prescriptions (1980:313). Socially acceptable norms function as guidelines for the interpretation of subjective feelings and experiences. These experiences are not only classified as either an action or a passion but also as specific emotions. One single arousal might therefore be labeled as anger, love, joy, fear, guilt or a variety of other emotions. The process of interpretation or the labeling of feelings and experiences occurs in a minimum of three distinct sequences of monitoring or appraisal. The experience of an initiating event - the 'lived' experience - constitutes the first stage of the emoting process but even at this stage, a certain degree of monitoring is inevitable and a "completely prereflective experience is a myth" (Averill 1980:313). At the second level, the person reflects on the experience of the first stage within the context of the socio-cultural system. The criteria applied at this moment may be an assessment of the rewards and sanctions which regulate appropriate gender specific conduct. In the third stage, the initial feeling of being hurt is either labeled as anger or as one of a variety of emotions which can theoretically be accredited to the experience of the initiating event.

A significant feature of the social constructivist approach is its insistence that all levels of monitoring have the status of logical appraisal and that this appraisal contributes as much to the experience of anger as does the feeling of being hurt or powerless. However, this sequence of evaluation, judgement, interpretation, appraisal and re-appraisal is not the prerogative of one specific emotion. It requires no hierarchical ordering of behaviors into intrinsically masculine or feminine conduct, nor does it justify the special status for anger which sets it apart from those emotions traditionally labeled as 'feminine'.

The Functions of Anger

Shifting the focus from anger as an emotion to its social function can help to explore, though not to resolve, its many contradictions. A quotation from a men's magazine offers an adequate example

Australian men are raised to be violent and aggressive and cannot express their natural feelings. . . and when they are angry, they have no outlet but to get drunk or hit someone. (West quoted in Raethel n.d.).

In this text, aggression and violence are placed in their appropriate though limited social context; they occur within a culture which still condones or at least tolerates individual or institutionalized violence, frequently without questioning their status as acceptable or even desirable kinds of male behavior¹²⁰ Denaturalized and freed from their original biological and evolutionary context, anger and aggression are now represented as generalized and almost inevitable outcomes of 'sex role stereotyping'. As a social action, anger turned into violence appears to be neither self-initiated nor instrumental and it claims for the aggressor the status of a victim ("they have no other outlet") rather than that of a perpetrator. It exists in a theoretical space where neither the orthodox criteria of rational or emotional conduct offer appropriate tools to assess the degree of the emoting subject's agency and responsibility.

In contrast, 'natural' or implicitly positive and benevolent feelings are represented in the quote as an unmediated essence of a "true self". They cannot be accommodated within traditional masculinity which produces only those emotions now labeled 'undesirable'.

¹²⁰ Gilder (1981) refers to "the male's superior aggression" as the greatest of all social and economic values" (quoted in Eisler: 1993:163).

Relegated to the realm of the pre-social (the feminine) from which anger has been rescued, 'natural' feelings can be retrieved in a state of 'innocence' which denies their rational components, their politics and their grounding in concrete social relations and interactions.

The second part of the above statement suggests that angry men, out of touch with their natural feelings have no outlet but violence. This argument enlists reason and emotions and their ambivalent status in two incompatible but accepted disclaimer actions. The claim that "men had no outlet but" emphasizes the impulsiveness of the aggressive attack and replaces the cognitive elements of the emoting process with a sense of being overcome. It thus signals the expectation that the act of violence should be judged by "standards that apply to emotions and not to deliberate rational acts" (Averill 1980:318).

Averill explains this expectation as a symbolic transformation which resolves the tension between the sanction against violence and the felt need for retribution. Anger can now be used as defense for an action, for which the man does not want to take responsibility, "thus preserving the strictures against *deliberately*¹²¹ hurting someone" (Averill 1980:133). However, the "no outlet but" also reflects the men's movement's assertion that aggression and violence are the direct result of the absence of emotions or of the sanctions against their expression. This assertion contradicts the first argument which appeals to the reading of anger as an emotion or passion to plead diminished

¹²¹ Emphasis in original.

responsibility for an act of violence. Anger (an apparently natural feeling) cannot be expressed but it is expressed, even though there is no outlet for it.

This muddle occurs because the rational components of emotions, their cognitive core, their underlying moral, ethical and political judgement or assessment are missing. This omission conceals the complexity of the appraisal process, including the angry man's motivation to attach to his feeling the specific label, 'anger' (followed by aggression), rather than 'helplessness' (expressed through crying). The missing elements in this account of emotions and their labeling create a silence around anger as an assertion of authority, with aggression as its instrument of control (see Connell 1995;76)¹²²

Anger turned into violence not only presumes violated rights, victimization or lost privileges, but also presupposes the ability to retaliate. A person who lacks the specific capacity for retaliation will not be effective, "no matter how emotional he may become in a more general sense" (Averill 1980:322). The availability of the other as a target for the act of aggression is implied, but not theorized as a constituent element of gender politics. In any specific encounter, anger turned into violence is effected through and against bodies whose status as perpetrator or victim is determined by physical and structural power relations. The 'right to male dominance', substantiated by the claim to reason, is, paradoxically, defended by aggression and the perpetrator's loss of control over his own emotions reasserts control over the other.

¹²² An additional hidden subject in this context is domestic violence and its devastating effects. A reading of anger as an unreflective response would absolve the aggressor of most of his accountability.

The angry white male, who has no other option but to lash out, thus presupposes the availability of "the cat, the wife, the kids", or that of a physically weaker, mentally unprepared, simply fearful or socially subordinated other man. In contrast, crying might be the result of a cognitive process which induces the inhabitant of a weaker body or the occupant of a subordinated social position to label her or his experience of injustice and feeling of pain as powerlessness, which is then expressed through crying. This labeling of emotions may be a very rational decision in the face of threatened violence.

However, the status of victim does not exclude a reversal under different circumstances. The same woman (or man) who initially used crying as a defensive action may react differently, even to the same initiating event, if power relations are altered and a feasible object for her aggression becomes available. She might either lash out at her child out of helplessness or relabel her emotion as anger, using either emotion to deny responsibility for her action. The capacity to cry and the capacity to express anger in the form of aggression says nothing about intrinsically female or male behavior patterns and everything about power relations.

Whilst the unrealistic disavowal of emotions has never offered a reliable protection against violence, neither will their avowal, or the claim to be in touch with "the feminine". It is rather the rational components of clearly demonstrated emotions - the feeling of diminishing control over women and children and the moral judgement which defines this loss as a violation of male rights - which deserves the attention now focussed on crying as a forbidden symbolic action. Seidler's contention that men must have a right to their anger and that group work and analysis can only be concerned with

the processes of inner psychic life, (1992;248-249) reflect precisely the incapacity of the debate on male emotional deprivation and on the "Angry White Male Syndrome" to "shift the level of analysis from the individualistic or the inter-individualistic to the genuinely social" (Kippax 1988:20). Only if anger is theorized as a motivated and motivating force, or as a social action influenced by power relations, a sense of righteousness, judgement, ethical and moral norms, or when the cognitive and affective elements of this emotion are reunited, may a useful new debate emerge from the present state of conceptual confusion.

The emotion of anger would not simply disappear through these kinds of shifts but the debate would be focussed on the justification of, or the right to, this emotion¹²³. Both would then be contingent on the successful defense of the initiating event - the experience of loss - appraised as social injustice and victimization. This would restore anger and male aggression to their appropriate context in sexual politics, from which they have been separated by the discourse emphasizing intra-psychic and individualistic developmental processes and male victimization.

An analysis which questions the acquisition of those rights, whose loss produces the "Angry White Male Syndrome" is missing in the male deprivation debates. Far removed from reflections on this subject, the men interviewed for this thesis and, to a substantial extent, the media representation of this topic, base their utopian hopes for the transformative power of emotions on a new philosophy which scarcely challenges the conventional definition of emotions as the 'other' to reason. The questions about how

¹²³ The question of whether anger has only destructive functions or whether it can also be a positive initiator for social action is beyond the scope of this thesis.

emotions attain their potential for radical social transformation, their humanizing functions and their capacity to elevate male consciousness to the level of spirituality, ultimately rest on their idealized interpretation as intrinsically benevolent and 'natural' and on their presumed absence from conventional masculine motivations and behavior patterns. Theoretically, the need to get in touch with one's emotions or one's 'feminine aspects' constructs a lack in the masculine principle - a rupture in the image of "The Man of Reason" as the generic human. Oscar feels strongly about the humanizing effects of emotions:

So, men have been running around, being only half human. I think what men are starting to do now is finding emotional areas, trying to find some spirituality or that sort of thing.

This quote depicts men as only half human. The restoration of the masculine principle to full humanity is achieved through the usurpation of the feminine principle which now represents emotions as the gateway to spirituality. Nature and culture are finally united. Lived through a male body, emotions and "the feminine" lose their potentially destructive and limiting forces since reason, always taken for granted in the masculine principle, maintains some of its controlling functions, a point raised by Collin in his carefully guarded approach to emotions:

And in a way I see it now, I was allowing myself a few of them¹²⁴.

Collin's experience of emotions reflects the general tendency which emerged from the interview data. Emotions are still excluded as cognitive, evaluative, motivated and

¹²⁴ Collin's clearly articulated and almost overwhelming love for his two young children remains in a strong tension with his supposed control over emotions.

motivating forces from everyday social actions. In their shifting association with 'the masculine', however, emotions lose the debilitating characteristics as involuntary and impulsive responses which mark their association with 'the feminine'. If summoned by the selective command of reason, they take on the function of 'special purpose instrumentalities', useful, available, humanizing but decidedly not overpowering. Without exception, the sense of being 'empowered', 'enriched', 'freed' and 'fully human' marked the respondents' own descriptions of their new 'relationship to' emotions.

Chapman (1998:242) gives an illuminating account of the "stance of moral superiority which is deemed to be the feminine" in men. The "militant moralism" of men who take on female subject positions morally disqualifies women who take on traditionally male functions and subject positions. Chapman's account confirms my view, that 'the feminine' lived through the male body assumes a humanizing effect, inaccessible to masculinity lived through the female body.

In a dialectical paradox, the Man of Reason 'returns' to a safe world of emotions, no longer plagued by the stigmata of irrationalism. The political, ideological and emotional male motivations which have created the gender specific understanding of what constitutes an emotion fade into oblivion and with them the need to reflect upon the male privileges accumulated under the reign of the Man of Reason.

PART XII THE INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION

The most widely popularized account of presumed paternal loss theorizes the Industrial Revolution as the beginning of a period of continuous, dramatic male deprivation. Horkheimer's by now classic account of the demise of paternal authority has, since its first publication in 1936, survived as one of the most persistent and most adaptable theories of devalued paternal functions. Contemporary fatherhood literature (Horkheimer 1936; Mitscherlich 1963; Lasch 1977; Burgess 1997; Dye 1998), child development theory (Lamb (1981; Bloom Feshbach 1981; Giveance and Robinson 1985), Jungian psychology (Bly 1990; Biddulph 1994), sociology of the family (Bittman & Pixley 1997; Morgan 1990) and the family values debate of the New Right (Blankenhorn 1995) are remarkable both in their adherence to some of the basic theoretical positions advanced by Horkheimer, as well as by their radical redefinition of his concepts of loss.

The persistent utility of the Industrial Revolution as the moment of loss lies in the ability of fatherhood discourses to adapt the definition of what precisely it is that has been lost to changing social and political exigencies and perceptions of crisis. Partly subtle and partly radical shifts in signification and interpretation alter the original concerns of critical theory, until the image of Horkheimer's authoritarian father is no longer recognizable in the figure of the idolized lost father fantasized in the nineties. What remains is only a collective skeleton of deprivation.

Horkheimer's account of the Industrial Revolution already reflects a substantial transformation in the substance of the presumed loss. His fusion of Marxist and Freudian categories undermined some promising aspects of the Marxist position on this subject matter and provided, perhaps inadvertently, some invaluable support for the more reactionary positions within the current fatherhood debate.

Engels, in the middle of the nineteenth century had a clear vision of unacceptable male domestic authority and this authority was primarily conjugal rather than paternal. Women were historically oppressed whenever and wherever private property accumulated under the control of the head of the household who in turn derived his authority from this control (1884:81). During the Industrial Revolution, the household lost its function as a production unit of public concern and mutated into the private sphere in which women became domestic slaves and dependent on the male breadwinner who occupied an unchallenged position of power within his family. Thus, for Engels, the authority of the head of the household and the sexual division of labour are intrinsically problematic and in need of abrogation¹²⁵

In Horkheimer's reading of the same period, the emphasis shifts from conjugal to paternal authority and issues of sexual politics are relegated to the background and eventually fall into oblivion. In contrast to Engels, whose 'moment of bliss' lies before the development of agriculture and husbandry¹²⁶, Horkheimer sees the origin of

¹²⁵ One problematic aspect of Engels' theory, his belief that only "public and social labour [are] the basis for social adulthood" (Bloom-Feshbach, 1981:79) reflects a vital element of the domestic labour debate. See Oakley (1974), Dalla Costa (1978), Hartman (1981) Sargent (1981) Game and Pringle (1983).

¹²⁶ This agricultural production, according to Engels acquires its oppressive potentials with the acquisition of more land and animals than required to provide for the household's needs and the subsequent production of surplus.

authentic paternal authority as originating in the father's expertise in agricultural production.

Although Horkheimer (1936:60-62) sees paternal authority as contingent, his account of its acquisition has strong overtones of universalism and is voiced not only in uncritical but explicitly positive terms. His nostalgic look into the past finds an authentic paternal power in early Chinese agricultural societies. The cult of ancestor worship as the bedrock of the father's position as the head of his household is based on his superior knowledge of food production and thus of the means of subsistence. This statement - which offers only the emergence of Confucianism in the fourth century BC as a clue to its historical and no specific geographic identification beyond the general term of China, assumes a pre-existing division of labour which takes no account of the possibility that women might have performed most of the agricultural work. It also privileges a questionable male knowledge of agricultural production over other household productions, considered to be female and over specific female knowledges of human reproduction. Horkheimer fails to explain how the hierarchical ordering of knowledges considered to be either male or female could have been taken for granted without the ideological backing of some symbolic order assigning this meaning to a gendered division of labour. Confucianism thus presupposes its own power of symbolic signification and representation or that of another patriarchal order for its very development.

Both Engels and Horkheimer hence predicate access to or control over the family's economic resources as the prerequisite for their respective visions of desirable authority or unjustified dominance. For Horkheimer however, private property as the

objectionable Marxist origin of power and dominance transmutes into the command over specific knowledges as the 'means of sustenance'. Fused with the Freudian *dictum* of the male child's inevitable struggle with an authoritarian father, the father's position as head of the household converts into a socially indispensable, gender specific function. Horkheimer's account of the benign acquisition and benevolent exercise of paternal authority engages a plethora of patriarchal presumptions in its defense¹²⁷, until Engels' gendered division of labour as a source of inequality and social injustice has all but lost its impact and given way to Freudian imperatives. The genesis of the son's masculine subjectivity, his successful identification with an *authentic* paternal authority was the only safeguard against the moral disintegration of the social fabric and turned into a justification for strictly separated maternal and paternal functions, acted out in two separate spheres.

In the next stage of reinventing, images projected by Horkheimer and by the contemporary fatherhood debates are even more difficult to fuse into an approximation of historical congruence. In contrast to the current politics of fatherhood which emphasizes the loss of an emotionally competent nurturing father, Horkheimer did not regard the father's capacity to inspire the family with humane elements as a prerequisite of paternal practice and his negative image does not invite "the anticipation of a father who loves his children's childhood" (Rumpf 1989:29). Monadic, emotionally irrelevant, incompetent, and "stripped of even the last traces of the humane" (Rumpf 1989:29)¹²⁸,

¹²⁷ For a critique of Horkheimer's account of paternal authority and its underlying presumptions see Benjamin (1978, 1990), Benjamin and Rabinbach (1989) Theweleit (1989).

¹²⁸ Rumpf (1989) challenges the feminist claim, that Horkheimer limited the development of the masculine self to "a fixation on the father as the guarantor of autonomy and the power of resistance". In the context of Horkheimer's work in the thirties, the pathologized lack of resistance refers to the submission of large parts of the German population to the authoritarian leadership of the fascist regime. Rumpf (p.9) reads Horkheimer's work in search of

the strongest emotion Horkheimer's father appears to have evoked in his children is 'awe'. One generation later, Mitscherlich could still bemoan "a progressive loss of substance of the father's authority and a diminution of his power in the family and over the family". In the late nineteen nineties Mitscherlich in turn is being called upon to corroborate the restitution of traditional, gender specific parental functions by the extreme right ¹²⁹.

The discrepancies between the radically different paternal images and the radically different accounts of loss reflect the historical context of their emergence and the very diverse challenges to the social institution of fatherhood in the thirties and the nineties. For Horkheimer, paternal authority becomes problematic only in its demise or in its loss of authenticity. But the challenges to this authority at the end of the twentieth century are no longer confined to the infringements of the capitalist mode of production and its alienation of the male head of the household from his means of sustenance. Rather, social theory as much as social practice, have undermined and redefined the very concept of authority. Conjugal and paternal authority, with their underlying presumptions, their 'natural' righteousness and social desirability, have been problematized in their modes of acquisition rather than in their modes of loss. Feminism, gender studies and postmodernist thought have questioned the traditional nuclear family in terms of the functions of both biological parents, as an economic unit and as an ideological construct. Simultaneously, social practice has demonstrated that

the *Spuren des Mütterlichen* (Traces of the Maternal), of idolized maternal love and its function, to compensate for the dehumanized figure of the father. The maternal represents hope, protection and belonging, vanishing principles within rationally determined social structures. Rationally legitimized and simultaneously beyond rationality, maternal love constitutes the precondition for masculine socialization but also inevitably calls for its own transcendence. For an abbreviated English version of the mother's *Mythical Aura* in Horkheimer see Rumpf (1993).

¹²⁹ Mitscherlich (1993:147) quoted in Blankenhorn (1996:13).

the capacity to economically support a family has no natural grounding in maleness and that the supposedly natural division of labour has a firmer basis in ideology than in biological propensities or even necessities. Economics have lost none of their relevance to the survival of the family or for the survival of individual family members. However, once drawn into the orbit of sexual politics, they are no longer self-explanatory within the terms and dynamics of impersonal market forces but form part of a much wider scope of needs, motivations and strategies.

It is not surprising that, in a social climate which sees the traditional sources of male authority as questionable ideological and political constructs, foundations of father right which may no longer be taken for granted are retrospectively declared irrelevant. In this process of resignification, the father and his relationship to a son who bows to, revolts against and ultimately identifies with an authentic paternal authority undergoes a dramatic metamorphosis. It transmutes into a father-son bond as "the love unit most damaged by the Industrial Revolution" (Bly 1990:19) which in turn "dealt a death blow to the father-child connection" (Biddulph 1995a:1A). Industrial man, so the argument goes, laboured in mills and mines for a sixty hour week and, drained of energy and initiative "became a kind of shadow figure in the corner of the kitchen", with neither time or energy to devote to his children (Biddulph 1995a:1A).

This brief narrative, which has to stand here symptomatically for others with very similar messages, draws on an extraordinary array of assumptions and silences. It creates a set of new mythologies, which, in conjunction with each other rewrite the history and attempt to shape the future of fatherhood within the framework of male victimization and paternal deprivation. The nature of father-child interaction even in the

fifties is still the subject matter of intense research and available historical accounts suggest that parental love, both maternal and paternal, in its present interpretation might be a historically recent¹³⁰ and even, at certain periods, a class specific phenomenon.

Stein-Hilbers (1994:36) points out that surviving historical and literary documents on people who could afford the "luxury" of parental love were usually those on affluent classes. For many others, the energy needed for the pure act of survival frequently left no space for caring attention towards others, not even towards children. Badinter (1980), in particular, has emphasized the strong economic pressure on impoverished women to hand over their infants to poorly paid wet nurses and that only a small percentage of these children survived this ordeal. Von Henting (1960:10) argues that sentiments of parental love were initially a privilege of the emerging bourgeois family of the eighteenth century. Wetterer and Walterspiel (1983:48-49) point to the direct connection between the lost function of the household as a production unit in the eighteenth to nineteenth century and the subsequent dedication of middle class women to the newly prescribed sentiments of maternal love, whilst the great majority of women were incapable of providing adequately for their children and Europe saw millions of haggard and hungry small human beings roaming the cities, begging for food.

In contrast, the men's literature tends to represent the pre-industrial father-child relationships as normatively existent, intimate and loving. The invention of the new,

¹³⁰ Bloom Feshbach (1981:89) points to the "generally harsh socialization practices in pre-industrial Europe". Aries (1960), Shorter (1975), deMaus (1977), and Badinter (1980) find in the history of childhood little evidence of parent-child relationships worthy of idealization. DeMaus however keeps a critical distance from Aries's historical account in significant aspects of his analysis and Arnold (1980) finds that warm and loving parental care was part of the lived experience during historical periods which, for the above theorist, amounted to dark ages of childhood.

strongly idealized and romanticized father figure superimposes contemporary desirable features onto a unified or generalized father image of pre-industrial, feudal society. However, both the suggested quantitative as well as the qualitative extent of the father-child interaction is historically questionable. According to Goldthorpe (1988:20), in pre-industrial England young family members were expected to leave home early during a stage we would now call childhood; the children of the wealthy to be educated and the children of the poor to go into service. Cohabitation between children and their biological parents habitually ceased at around the age of seven¹³¹. In contrast to the contemporary notion of the child as an emotionally gratifying project for both mother and father or of a parental duty of care and its increasingly complex financial and emotional responsibilities, parents regarded their children and their children's earning capacity as personal possessions (von Hentig 1978:16) and frequently relied on their contribution to the family budget for economic survival. Brown (1981) maintains that fathers, as presumed breadwinners and financial supporters, were also entitled to the child's income and hence were regularly awarded custody of their children on demand. According to Fthenakis (1988, Vol. I:43), the father child connection was seen as the relationship between an owner and his possession until well into the nineteenth century. Contemplations of the child's needs and experiences are historically recent phenomena (Shorter 1975:275 quoted in Stein-Hilbers 1994:36).

But regardless of the lack of empirical support, the fatherhood literature, with a few sketched and indefensibly generalizing outlines, produces the image of the omnipresent

¹³¹ Von Hentig (1978:16) contemplates the Oedipal constellation, its development and resolution in the absence of both biological parents from this crucial age.

and emotionally embracing lost father, whose idolized care is retrospectively embellished with elements of maternal caregiving, even women were not unreservedly credited with before the Industrial Revolution (Rich 1976:32; Badinter 1980, Chapter IV, 'In Defense of the Child'; Wetterer and Walterspiel 1983:15-57; Stein-Hilbers 1994: 36-37). Stein-Hilbers argues that all those human emotions which Western culture of the outgoing twentieth century has come to regard as natural, spontaneous and interest free, trace their sociogenesis back to a matrix of social relations, subjective investments, cultural norms and economic necessities (1994:74-75)¹³². Whilst loving relationships between parents and their children can be deduced from historical records, the available evidence of either the social desirability or the lived experience of parental love does not suggest unambiguous visions of familial bliss as normative.

Few theorists during the Enlightenment period had a stronger or a more persistent influence on the invention of motherhood as an institution than Rousseau. Altruistic maternal and conjugal love were to determine the entire justification for a woman's existence. His theoretical position advocated the mother's return to 'nature', to mandatory breastfeeding and undivided domesticity. The father's involvement in the family was motivated by "the sweetest sentiments known to man, conjugal and paternal love." (Rousseau 1755\1984:122 quoted in Green 1995:68) Despite Rousseau's theoretical commitment to the elementary significance of parental love, his own five children were abandoned to the public wet nurses of the *enfants trouvés*, the notorious foundling homes of eighteenth century France. (See also Badinter 1980, Miles 1991:175

¹³² For a skeptical view about the recency of those emotions see Phillips (n.d.: 6).

and Green 1995:71). However sweet parental love may have been in individual life biographies, it was not an ahistorical phenomenon, grounded in a lost human nature and waiting to be retrieved from underneath layers of economic and cultural socializations.

Nevertheless, the redefinition of the concept of loss from Horkheimer's authentic paternal authority to a bond of love does more than idolize the 'lost' father-child relationship. It is also more than mere rhetoric, since it arises out of a social reality which not only calls for a new paternal utopia but also for a reinvented social history of fatherhood. Significant to this new social history is the strong emphasis on assumed changes in the nature of fatherhood which detracts attention from the reinvention of motherhood as a powerfully determinant factor in the current crisis. The updated narrative establishes the father as victim and functions as support for the moral claim to a 'reasserted' or 'reclaimed' paternity, even if the blueprint for this new model of paternity is more heavily indebted to the exigencies of sexual politics than to history, even in its most generous pliancy. Rationally constructed and argued in its theory, the subject matter of the debate is rhetorically removed from the rational and relegated to the emotions. This line of argumentation lays claim to the dichotomy between reason and emotions and declares the latter are apolitical. Having invented the father-son relationship as an independent sub-system within the family, with its own history, mythology and utopia, the debate withdraws from feminist theories of acquisition and from the feminist critique of the power relations which have traditionally guaranteed the father's involvement in the lives of mothers and their children.

Conceptional Confusion

At this point it is necessary to return to the incoherence of 'the father as victim of economic processes' debate and its silences. As epitome of male disenfranchisement, the above kitchen scene offers a valuable insight into the function of these silences in the methodology and politics of transformation, renaming and reinventing. The kitchen as locus of demonstrated paternal demise owes its strongly symbolic function not to economics but to the most rigid *dicta* of sexual politics. On one level of interpretation, the kitchen transmutes from being part of the "Kinder Küche Kirche"¹³³ metaphor for female domestic subordination into a symbolic space which attracts only those male beings whose humanity and masculinity have all but expired. According to this narrative, capitalist exploitation destroys the 'Father-World' and victimized men crouch in the shadows of the 'inside'- or 'Mother-World'. A second, more subtle meaning, (which will be explored in full later) suggests that the kitchen, as the space of maternal and female action, is an unsuitable locus for all but sporadic male appearances, a meaning which adds to the scene an indicative rebuke of the feminist demand for equally shared domestic labour.

This line of argumentation collapses dramatically variant historical periods since the middle of the seventeenth century into one undifferentiated continuity of male deprivation, and gathers all fathers into one category of working-class men as victims. The father as potential oppressor, member of a potentially oppressive group or occupant of a privileged position in gender relations dissolves into politically opportune

¹³³ Kinder, Küche, Kirche" is German for "Children, Kitchen, Church" as the traditional and denigrated realm of permissible female activity. See Weisstein (1970).

invisibility. Paradoxically however, whilst all fathers are classified as disenfranchised working-class men, all mothers are represented as middle-class women. Their suggested normative absence from the labour market and confinement to the domestic sphere creates the symbolism of the 'Mother-World', which marks the father's presence in the kitchen as a sign of degraded masculinity. Thus, whilst determinants and manifestations of male deprivation condense into the fatherhood literature's theories of loss, it is no longer Engels' dependent housewife but rather the father as breadwinner who figures as the casualty of the sexual division of labour.

Most significantly the one-dimensional economic determinism of this particular victimization theory leaves the territory of psychological and psychoanalytical arguments, currently enlisted in support of the myth of father absence as inevitable social pathology. This shift distracts attention from paternal and conjugal objectives and priorities. Consequently, male needs and desires do not register as currency in sexual politics, in the evaluation of needs, or in the exchange of need satisfaction, values and services. Neither are they acknowledged as strongly motivating forces which have shaped the interdependent socio-economic and cultural systems whose disintegration has contributed significantly to the current fatherhood crisis.

If however, the fragmented, essential details of the history of fatherhood are reintegrated into the new father's stories of loss, a vital strategic flaw of the deprivation theory becomes apparent. The argument here is that rather than limiting paternal involvement, as the fatherhood literature suggests, the era in question and its social, philosophical, economic and legal developments have protected and safeguarded men's involvement in the lives of women and their children. The theories of loss and the subsequent moral and

legal claims made on their behalf clearly rest their case on the reversed causality between the division of labour and diminished paternal involvement.

This diminished involvement is presented as a recent, debilitating social phenomenon and effectively masks the tension between at least three elementary myths. First, the myth of inevitable, purely economic necessities which have supposedly created the gendered division of labour. The second myth defends the same phenomenon with naturalist arguments and maintains that biologically encoded sexed propensities have channeled economic energies into 'natural' social strata. The third indispensable myth of the fatherhood debate postulates separate parental functions as either generated by the needs of the child or as maintained in the child's best interest. Blankenhorn (1995:101) vocalizes the fatherhood literature's elementary claim that "gendered parental roles derive precisely from children's needs", without reflecting upon the question to what extent these needs are historical, cultural and economic gender-political constructs.

The father's Oedipal or pre-Oedipal separating function in Freudian, post-Freudian and Jungian thought, and the development of the son's masculine selfhood, are prominent amongst the child's essentialized needs. At this point, psychoanalytical categories naturalize and legitimize economic categories without impeding on the assumed validity of the first myth. Ultimately, the vehement opposition against the abolition of the sexual division of labour in defense of the Oedipal structure invites the vital question: "To what extent might the Oedipal structure be a vehement defense of the gendered division of labour" (Rumpf 1989:150), and thus of an explicitly and exclusively male parental function?

One way of problematizing the economic monism of the 'father as victim of the gendered division of labour' debate is to remember that the social ferment of that historical period was created not only by the Industrial Revolution but also by the challenge of Enlightenment philosophies. With local variations, the Industrial Revolution is generally held to begin in the middle of the eighteenth century, whilst the Enlightenment covers the time from the seventeenth into the nineteenth century. Both periods are thus roughly concurrent and have reformed each other's dynamics, belief systems, morals, philosophies and politics. The social and economic system which emerged from this historical period, in an ongoing process of continuous changes, has produced not only capitalist structures but also recreated and renewed patriarchal power relations, a development which finds little reflection in the fatherhood literature.

From a feminist perspective, any attempt to extrapolate a monocausal connection between contemporary paternal redundancy and eighteenth century industrialization loses credibility within its own terms of reference if it fails to account for all the elements which have contributed to an ideology of mandatory father presence. Only in the complex and unified interaction of all contributing elements may we find the key to the deeply power-political and emotional investment of men in the 'otherness' of women, mothers and the 'Mother-World'.

Without this extended focus, both the Enlightenment and the Industrial Revolution remain radically unfathered. Most cultural, moral, intellectual and technological and scientific advances have eager 'fathers' to lay claim to their 'birth', to the extent that even

the future can effortlessly be and is in need of being 'fathered'¹³⁴. In contrast, the now negatively assessed aspects of the past - for instance those summarized by the fatherhood literature's critique of Enlightenment dualities and their impoverishing consequences to all men - have not been claimed by any fathers or groups of fathers and thus appear strangely orphaned.

The exclusive focus on victimization and the minimalist, unanalyzed and inconsistent references to materialism and early capitalism thus conceal a further missing element in the narrative about the father between coalmine and kitchen. It fails to account for the agency of the fathers in the boardrooms of the new centers of economic power; the father-(figure) at the head of religious organizations; the father in political, educational or judicial leadership positions or in the centers of the rapidly expanding sciences and technologies. This is a world in which men, though not all men, have to be acknowledged as social actors who are "Fathering the Unthinkable" (Easlea 1983) in the illusion of almost unlimited power and an unrestricted radius of exploration and action. These images of fathers in the 'Father- World' sit uneasily with the notion of deprived fathers as helpless victims, crashing against the glass ceiling of a nursery, guarded by gate-keeping mothers or "conspiring" social forces (Bly 1990:18). The story of the fathers in the 'Father-World' may also help to explain why the division of labour becomes a male concern only at the moment of its potential dissolution.

¹³⁴ *Dads Incorporated: Fathering the Future* was the title of a paper presented at the Men and Family Relationship Forum, Canberra 1998 (Treloar 1998).

A Feminist View of the Industrialized Revolution.

A masculinist reading of the Industrial Revolution not only conceals a substantial part of the history of fatherhood, it also silences important aspects of the history of women and children whose experiences as members of the working-class in particular, conform neither to the fatherhood literature's pre-industrial moment of bliss, nor to the account of subsequent loss.

In contrast to the masculinist vision of the Industrial Revolution, its feminist counter-argument suggests that this historical period saw a strengthening rather than weakening of the father's position of authority (Summers (1975:168-172). In addition to the feminist critique of Enlightenment philosophies and their impact on the symbolic and cultural life of the last 250 years, a high degree of awareness and concern about the material impact of combined patriarchal and capitalist ideologies has produced an important body of literature.

Using biographies, personal letters and other writings of and about women, Dale Spender (1983) has researched a period from the middle of the seventeenth century to the early nineteenth century. The focus of her work lies on the systematic attempts by men, predominantly of the middle and upper classes, to undermine women's demands "to enter paid work which men have reserved for themselves". Women's financial dependence on men is one of the prerequisites for male dominance (Spender 1983:86). The justification for male gate keeping, for ridicule, contempt and violence which confronted women who overstepped their mark or "placed themselves beyond the pale of men's protection," (Spender 1983:463) lies in the Enlightenment notions of women's

nature. The blueprint for this sexual politics of exclusion was Rousseau's *Emile* and the ideal of the 'angel in the house'; the idealized mother and wife "who never raised her voice, who was sweet, gentle, submissive and happy in self sacrifice" (French 1988:205)¹³⁵. Upper class ideology produced its own fantasies of 'the feminine' to exclude women from vocational training and education beyond the capacities which would complement those of men¹³⁶.

Whilst middle-class ideology may still have used the reason-emotion dichotomy to justify the disqualification of women, working class sexual politics found an additional criterion for the protection of new labour markets as the civic space or the 'Father-World'. Physical strength and resilience or their presumed absence determine the inclusion of women into or their exclusion from paid work. The fact that workforce participation was not only a right but also, for women, children and men alike, a source of physical, emotional and economic misery belongs to the class aspect of the Industrial Revolution and its persistent and unresolved social issues. The changing modalities and motivations of working class and also of middle class women and men are beyond the scope of this chapter. For the construction of male gender identities through work force participation see *XY-Magazine* Spring 1993, special edition on 'Men and Class' and in particular contribution by Mike Leach (1993:14-17). For working class masculinities see Donaldson (1991); for new, post-industrial categories of expertise as masculinized and exclusionary see Connell (1995).

¹³⁵ French also points out that middle and upper class women, excluded from the civic space, embellished on the importance of their remaining tasks and contributed to the "cult of domesticity".

¹³⁶ This is the basic idea which informed Rousseau's *Emile* (1762) and later Durkheim's defence of the division of labour in *Suicide* (1951) and *The Division of Labour in Society* (1964).

But the ideal of the delicate, helpless woman slowly seeped into working-class thought and, in addition to presumed moral and intellectual inadequacies, imposed an unachievable ideal on women who could ill afford to be either idle or fragile. An unresolved contradiction between class related visions of femininity is Sydnie's suggestion that despite the ideal of the delicate woman as politically opportune for all women, working class-women, when needed, were nevertheless considered to be "animalistically" predisposed to physical and emotional exertion. Sydnie (1987:207). The consequences of these categorizations have been explored in Clark's early feminist account of the *Working Life of Women in the Seventeenth Century* (1919). Her research offers valuable insights into women's participation in professions, agriculture, crafts, trades and guilds as well as their gradual disappearance from those increasingly masculinized domains.

Marxist and socialist feminists in the seventies and eighties have explored the impact of the Industrial Revolution on the lives of women and children in greater detail. They have drawn together data from a large variety of disciplines and discourses, including class struggle, the emergent discipline of women's history (Curthoys 1970, 1993, 1997), the family wage and the domestic labour debates, all of which problematized diverging aspects of mothering within the confines of a male-dominated nuclear family¹³⁷.

Important theoretical questions were asked of the interaction between capitalism and patriarchy and, in a second step, between private and public patriarchy. Elementary to

¹³⁷ Sargent (1981) offers an early, important summary of Marxist and socialist feminist writings, grouped around Heidi Hartmann's influential essay *The Unhappy Marriage of Marxism and Feminism*.

these debates was the recognition that neither capitalist nor patriarchal power relations alone explain why and how women were oppressed as women, or shed light on the "vested interests men had in women's continued subordination" (Hartman 1981:5, see also Riddiough 1981:73) A substantial part of this debate was the question, whether women are more profoundly oppressed by class or by sex. The possible positions taken on this issue determined whether men were seen primarily as co-victims of capitalism or as both victims of capitalism and oppressive in their identification with and participation in an ideology of hegemonic masculinity (see Hartmann 1981:31)¹³⁸. What emerged from this inquiry was a complex analysis of interacting philosophical presumptions and material modalities which constituted a spiral of mutually reinforcing myths, norms, stereotypes, social politics and social realities, frequently unresolved in their explosive contradictions.

This subject matter has been extensively documented and acknowledged in its lasting influence by subsequent feminist theorists. Even if its focus has shifted to more specific concerns, this scholarship offers a particularly illuminating insight into the concerted efforts of individual men or groups of men to establish and defend their involvement in and control over the lives of women and children through a sexual politics of segregation and exclusions far beyond the symbolic. Strictly gendered parental, domestic and civic tasks conceptualized as normative maintained power structures built on the notion of women as 'naturally' dependent on male financial support although this support was little more than a *mirage* for the large majority of women and their children

¹³⁸ Simultaneously, this debate has also been critical of radical feminism and its focus on psychoanalysis and the symbolic at the expense of the material conditions of women's lives. But in turn, socialist feminism has been critiqued for its minimalist concern about the strong emotional content and deeply satisfying aspects of parenting.

In contrast to the imagery of the fatherhood literature and its victimization of the male breadwinner, it was not only men who were drawn into the factories and away from their homes. Initially, whole families were hired. Women worked 15-18 hour days, for half the male wage in some industries, and children were included in a gruesome labour process from the age of five or six. According to Hartmann, in some industries during the mid-nineteenth century, women constituted more than half of the wage-earners and frequently supported not only their children but their unemployed husbands (Hartmann 1981:39; French 1988:193-199). But increasingly, even if entrepreneurs were interested in employing women at lower wages, it was men of their own class who laid claim to industrial labour, formed unions and frequently forced women out of apprenticeships and consequently out of skilled and more lucrative employment (French 1988-199)¹³⁹

It was ultimately middle class male control over what is appropriately feminine which allowed working-class men to exclude women from their unions and to insist on protective legislation which barred women from specific industries or from specific work in those industries. Men, so Spender claims, "were trying to make women unacceptable as workers and thereby ensure their own monopoly on employment" (Spender 1981:461)¹⁴⁰. With the increased pressure to reserve the available work for men, growing expectations of a male breadwinner institutionalized women's economic

¹³⁹ See Lamb (1981:2) for the counter-argument, that "brawn and endurance" rather than "facility and skill" were the needs of the new industries which consequently favoured men as the more suitable labour.

¹⁴⁰ Spender argues this point in her review of the life of Emma Paterson (1848-1886) who fought against the strongest resistance of exclusively male unions for the right of women to form their own organizations.

dependence. Whilst the dependent housewife became a new middle class ideal, the social reality of the working-class in nineteenth century Western Europe saw 42% of women between twenty and forty without husbands (French 1986:199, Ross 1982:576).

Unmarried or deserted ¹⁴¹ with or without children and, as a rule, without financial support from their families of origin, a large proportion of women relied on their considerably lower wages for their own and their children's survival. Their sole battle against abhorrent poverty, frequently in competition with male breadwinners and sacrificed on the altar of men's solidifying social status in this function, gave a meaning to normative father presence and consequently a significance to father absence which is far removed from its current understanding as psycho-pathology.

The family wage debate at the end of the nineteenth century eventually formalized the position of the male breadwinner and the normativity of gendered divisions between paid and unpaid labour (Hartmann 1981:21). This debate took for granted that a male participant in the work force would have the financial responsibility for a dependent wife and two or three children. Working women were assumed to be without financial responsibility for dependent partners and children and this assumption justified considerably reduced wages for women, regardless of the nature of their labour. It was entirely based on presumptions about the nature of women and about their appropriate functions within the divided spheres¹⁴². The ideal of women's seclusion or the fantasy of

¹⁴¹ Brown (1981:249) refers to "working class divorce" as euphemism for desertion of mothers and children, recognized as a serious social problem at the late nineteenth century.

¹⁴² In Australia, until the late sixties, women were expected to resign from the Public Service, including schools, on marriage (Wearing 1986:74).

the private wife who "did not work" (Oakley 1975:25)¹⁴³ became the center of the *Heaven in the Heartless World* (Lasch 1977), a concept which, with some positive connotations, denotes precisely the segregated public and private spheres as the 'Mother'- and 'Father'-Worlds.

As women were transformed into an undesirable but sometimes necessary sexed subclass within the newly emerging labour markets, the male breadwinner ethos fused the new economic function with pre-existing notions of masculinity, instrumentality, rationality, moral and intellectual agency. Conjugal and paternal authority, epitomized in the notion of the 'head of the household', appeared to flow naturally from a set of privileges, attributes, capacities and functions, united in their association with masculinity or in the regalia of the 'Man of Reason'.

The combined economic, philosophical, political, ideological and emotional energies (best, if not perfectly described as patriarchal power dynamics), deprived women not only of their right to education and equal access to the labour market, but also their right to own property, their right to earn and administer their own wages (Brown 1981:249) or their right to citizenship (Allan 1979). It also withheld from women the most fundamental ownership of their own bodies (Radi 1979:119) and the right to the children they had given birth to. Even after her husband's death, a mother could not take

¹⁴³ Givens and Robinson (1985:120) argue that "the Industrial Revolution firmly entrenched the breadwinning role of the father and relegated child rearing and household maintenance to the mother". At the end of the nineteenth century, "no wife of mine shall ever have to work" became the signifying phrase of the economically successful man. According to the authors, this development also signified the end of active, involved, participatory fathering.

their legal guardianship for granted¹⁴⁴. The father was entitled to will his children to any person according to his own wishes and, even without a formal will, his family could intervene in their upbringing (Radi 1979:120). In New South Wales, widows became automatically the guardians of their children as late as in 1916 (Summers 1975:358) and the superiority of the father's right was not formally removed from custody legislation until 1934 (Radi 1979:120).

Whether or not individual fathers loved their children, and whether or not a normative father- son soul connection is more than an invention in the name of twentieth century sexual politics, is beside the point. The question as to whether or not mothers loved their children is not of great political consequence either. On the contrary, in a period when maternal love and maternal instinct began to be the guiding principles in women's lives and justified their 'natural' confinement to the domestic sphere, these 'natural' feelings conveyed neither the moral competency, nor the legal and moral right, nor the economic independence to mother outside the boundaries of patriarchal control or protection. Paternal love and affection, retrospectively introduced into the social history of fatherhood as prime motivating forces, are not immediately convincing substitutes for the diminution of paternal and conjugal authority and their extensive and intricate web of supporting assumptions.

¹⁴⁴ A widow's or divorced woman's right to legal guardianship of her children did not develop parallel to each other and show significant local differentiations. For a comprehensive account on custody and guardianship in Australia see Radi (1979) and Scutt' (1990:277-287).

CHAPTER FIVE POLITICS OF REASSERTION

PART XIII: COLLECTIVE FANTASY AND SOCIAL REALITY

Within the relevant discourses of child-development and social theories, a considerable skepticism about the discrepancy between a "collective fantasy" and the social reality of the 'New Father' (Manne 1999:21) has raised its head almost from the original announcement of his advent. In 1981, Lamb's research into fatherhood refers to the sixties and to the fact that employed women had no more support from their husbands in domestic labour and childcare than full-time mothers. In the seventies, when the SNAG (Sensitive New Age Guy) emerged as a media persona, paternal participation in domestic labour and infant care remained negligible, although a 'tendency' towards greater involvement became noticeable (Lamb 1981a:5). In 1986 however, this trend had not gained momentum and while "rhetoric exchanges concerning the new father abounded; unfortunately, rhetoric continues to outpace serious analysis" (Lamb 1986:3). As Lewis and O'Brien (1987:1) observe, "discussion about the 'new father' far outweighs evidence to demonstrate his existence". The ideology of change has remained unsupported by reliable data, first because fathers are notoriously unavailable to researchers over an extended period of time and second, because "theoreticians are so influenced by the 'new father' image" (Lewis & O'Brien 1987:2-3).

In 1990 Segal saw few encouraging changes in the amount of practical work men actually do even when unemployed, despite Russel's findings that 80% of male university students would welcome a social politics which would at least give them the option to be the full-time caregiver of a child, if they had one (Segal 1990:31 with

reference to Russel 1987) .Stein Hilbers in 1994 pointed to the discrepancy between an increased interest by fathers in a closer relationship with their children and their simultaneous adherence to a hierarchized sexual division of labour. Younger and well-educated men declared their commitment to a reorganization of domestic tasks but reality questions the seriousness of those intentions (Segal 1990:33-42. A similar link between educational level and commitment without practice was pointed out by Bittmann and Pixley (1997:150) who, in their survey of time use between 1987 and 1992, concluded that "all the breathless talk about revolutionary changes" does not stand up to rigorous scrutiny (Bittman & Pixley 1997:133). Stein-Hilbers points out that, in Germany, up to 47% of young couples with high levels of education show a verbal commitment to a model of parenting which would allow both partners to share equally in domestic and paid labour. In reality, however, 70% of all women with infant children reduce their work force participation to part time work with little security or protection. In contrast, only 1.2% of young fathers have made use of the legally available paternal leave and the majority of men who are available for infant care are those who were already unemployed when their children were born (1994:136-137). Proportional improvements in the distribution of domestic labour are more likely to be the result of women reducing the extent of household chores rather than men increasing their contribution (Bittman & Pixley (1993:134; Parke 1987:64), although Donaldson (1991:114) quotes more encouraging trends amongst Swedish fathers.

This discrepancy between men's verbalized commitment and their simultaneous failure to take on equal responsibility for domestic labour and childcare allows for a new mode of voluntarism supposedly governing conventional parenting functions. "What has

changed", Bittman and Pixley argue, "is the normative context of the exercise of power, so that the subordination of women in the family occurs in the moral framework of an *apparent*¹⁴⁵ commitment to equality, that is, within the framework of pseudo-mutuality" (Bittman & Pixley 1997:151). This "faked or false complementarity" maintains a sense of reciprocal fulfillment through the denial of discord or through the suppression of evidence of non-mutuality (Bittman & Pixley 1997:146).

Whilst the above theorists leave some space for the reconceptualizing of fatherhood as an 'unfinished project',¹⁴⁶ Chapman sees the process of transformation as arrested in a new, comfortable complacency. The new man does not rebel against traditional models of masculinity but has settled into a new mode of convenient adaptation. Changes have occurred only to the extent which allows men to "reinforce the existing power structure by producing a hybrid masculinity which is better able and more suited to retain control" (Chapman 1998:235). At the very end of the twentieth century, Anne Mann compares "the enthusiastic focus on highly involved fathers" "greeted with cymbals, clashing and trumpets" to the "excited sighting of a rare and delicate species" (Manne 1999:21).

Not unsympathetic to the challenges men face in a rapidly changing redefinition of their paternal and occupational functions, Manne draws on recent media representations and their glorification of men who either combine even minimal parental duties with

¹⁴⁵ Emphasis in original.

¹⁴⁶ The notion of an 'unfinished project' is Habermas's evaluation of the current status of Enlightenment philosophies and their humanist potential. It was first introduced by the author in 1981.

professional commitments or reduce those commitments in favor of their children. This glorification remains in stark contrast to the evaluation of mothers who retreat from work commitments. Whilst the involved father transmutes into a hero, the involved mother may be seen as a "gender traitor" or failure. At least implied in this article is a critique of feminist theory which has, in search of gender equality, attached to female work-force participation an overrated *intrinsic and symbolic* value which validates traditionally masculine and devalues feminine domestic and emotional labour. This issue remains potentially explosive, since any sign of female preferences for childcare over industrial labour or professional work activates reactionary presumptions about women's nature.

One way of approaching the discrepancies between individual or group specific assessments of paternal performance is to ask whether these groups, discourses or individuals share a common concept or even a common language in which to communicate their respective aspirations, needs and politics. The concept of the new 'good enough' father in women's and men's studies and, to some extent, in family studies, rests on a utopian vision of justice; on a reliable, durable and mutual acknowledgment of the needs of two caregivers, a basic agreement about the nature of and priorities amongst all needs of individual family members, and the commitment, capacity, availability and willingness of both parents to cooperate in their satisfaction. Despite other diverging theoretical positions, three vital factors unite these discourses, as well as separate their visions from those dominant in the men's movement's fatherhood debate.

The first of the uniting elements is a concept of struggle and resistance, necessitated by power structures which have disadvantaged women as mothers and as participants in the work force. The analysis which precedes all visions of utopian parenthood tends to bring female subjugation into focus. The perhaps strongest emphasis lies on an element of change which positions women as initiators and as sources of energy at the center of a significant social transformation. Traditionally androcentric sexual politics are now challenged on different levels. At the discursive level, women's presumed passivity; their hostility and nonexistent contribution to civilization and culture, metamorphoses into a vital historical impetus. At the level of sexual politics, it is suddenly women who have taken the initiative in the conceptualization of new modalities, conditions and rules which men are expected to comply with. Applied to the politics of fatherhood, this novel female initiative leads an ardently defended patriarchal privilege *ad absurdum*. The feminist movement's demand for co-parenting reverses the father's traditional power to delegate childcare to the mother, into a maternal mandate for paternal care. The subversiveness of this reversal is difficult to over-estimate, once the full extent of patriarchal politics to involve men in the lives of women and children has been appreciated.

The second uniting element is the concern about theoretical positions which defend the gendered division of labour as natural and desirable and about empirical evidence which suggests that fathers are reluctant participants in the reorganization of nurturing and primary caregiving, unwilling to comply with demands made upon them by interests

other than their own¹⁴⁷. Implied in this reluctance is the defense of male or paternal privileges. In contrast to the deeply ingrained conventional notion of mothers who "cling" to domestic tasks and childcare, (Lamb 1981a:3) men act as gatekeepers of a vanishing 'Father-World'. They still hold considerable power over the distribution of parental and domestic tasks (Bittman and Lovejoy 1993; Bittman and Pixley 1997) and thus exercise control over women's access to paid work, as well as over the organization of the labour market in terms of male availability, unimpeded by childcare and domestic responsibilities.

Third, according to the utopian vision of shared parenting, individual arrangements of domestic and emotional labour gain a flexibility, unperturbed by gendered and hierarchized social norms. The father's functions expand; his relationship with his children and his partner theoretically open a new range of quantitatively and qualitatively differentiated interactions. The mother no longer holds a monopoly on nurturing potential¹⁴⁸ and there are no inherent obstructions to competent and effective fathering, including primary caregiving and infant care. Within the family, the father's interaction with his child would no longer rely on the mother as mediator and the 'father holds mother holds baby doctrine' could transmute into the father holding the baby. At least as a utopian model, women and men would occupy, shape and nurture within a sphere which at present is distinctly the domain of the mother. The co-parenting model and its presumption of gender independent capacities and competencies thus offers a

¹⁴⁷ This reluctance is rarely theorized in monocausal terms. Uncompromising demands of the labour market feature, to varying degrees, in many theories of the father's absence from child-care.

¹⁴⁸ This is not to say, that a mother who has been the consistent primary caregiver does not hold a monopoly on expertise but this expertise is entirely contingent and theoretically accessible to men as well as to women.

new language and symbolism of paternal care. It provides a new mode of identification for men as equal participants in primary caregiving or as sole parents.

Whilst academics are preoccupied with their own visions of the new father, the fatherhood lobby (and its representation in the mass media through popular psychology) reinvent the father according to different priorities, ideologies and needs. Despite its possible gratification and advantages, co-parenting as the equal distribution of labour between two almost¹⁴⁹ identically competent parents¹⁵⁰ also constitutes the potential threat of losing a distinctly male parental 'role'¹⁵¹ and thus a distinct gender political dilemma. If the co-parenting debate is mainly concerned with the redistribution of gendered tasks, the various discourses around masculinity and fatherhood frequently shift their focus from specific tasks or sets of tasks to their symbolic meaning and function in the construction of gender identities, as well as to the uncertain status of the father within the modern family.

In the experience of individual, men the 'New Man' or the 'New Father' is possibly rather an undefined persona with amorphous characteristics. Andrew Samuels has asked men in therapy groups to assess their own level of performance or identity in terms of either the notion of the 'Old Man' or the 'New Man' on a scale of zero to ten, with the 'Old Man' counting as zero. The participants in Samuels' survey tended to assess their

¹⁴⁹ The 'almost' refers to the obviously biological function of lactation.

¹⁵⁰ These parents do not even have to be one female and one male but, in the contemporary definition of possible families, may well be two women or two men as competent carers.

¹⁵¹ This fear of losing strictly gendered functions is not an exclusively male prerogative. In Australia, women's groups like "Women Who Want to be Women" or the "Magdalene Foundation" which endorses Christian concepts of women's lives centered around wifehood and motherhood are only the most articulate female defenders of the gendered division of labour. Faludi (1991:241, 247, 252-256, 350, 455) explores the return to traditional maternal functions advocated by the 'Concerned Women for America'.

own identity according to two models of masculinity, one of which did not appear to be right any longer and the other one which was not yet comfortable either. Whether termed as confusion or fluidity (both concepts were positively assessed by Samuels), men were quite capable of oscillating between different layers of an extended identity. In the words of one group member: "When I'm with a woman, I'm more likely to be a 9, right at the new man end, but when I'm with a man, I find myself a 2 or 3" (Samuels 1996:86).

This ambivalence on the level of individual experience reflects the contradictory and conflicting positions advanced and defended in the fatherhood lobby's politics of need construction. The father as a 'natural' and unquestioned occupant of the 'Mother-World' would challenge more than the mother's suggested 'gate-keeping'. A theory and practice of maternal and paternal tasks no longer determined by a sexual division of labour implies a mother whose care can no longer be theorized in terms of 'complementarity' or in terms of natural deficiencies or neurosis. The moment female and male parental functions are interchangeable, both the 'Father'- and the 'Mother'- World have at least a potential to lose their symbolic and material significance¹⁵². The effect of this transformation would, in its political implication, far exceed the changing quality of the relationship between the concrete father and his child. It would rather undermine the ideological foundations of a patriarchal edifice whose collapse would deprive men of a

¹⁵² The possibility, that co-parenting might not necessarily lead to a greater balance of power between women and men or mothers and fathers has been voiced in feminist theory since Adrienne Rich's influential analysis of motherhood as a social institution (Rich 1976). At the two ends of the spectrum of sexual politics, radical feminist Mary O'Brien (1981) suspected that men might very well perform caregiving functions without relinquishing power in the public sphere and possibly increase their power in the family. O'Brien's suspicion was preceded by Goldberg's (1977:42) threat that if women follow the feminist call, de-emphasize their maternal functions and venture into supra familial roles, the male "might use his aggression in the familial area", not to ease women's access to the paid workforce but "only to increase the degree of male dominance at home".

range of monopolies for which, in terms of sexual politics, the mother's relinquished monopoly on infant care might be an inappropriate compensation. Thus, paradoxically, the father who equally shares in or takes the full responsibility for caregiving and who might, consequently, experience his relationship with his child as particularly intimate, affectionate and close, occupies a potentially hazardous position. He may, in fact, be a collaborator in his own redundancy, in the abolition of a gender specific parental function or of the father's 'traditional role'.

The extent to which contradictions have become acceptable in the defense of a "separate and important role" for the father becomes apparent in the work of Dye (1998:10) The author criticizes the "politically correct expectations of role sharing" (1998a) and, whilst fatherhood has been 'feminized' (1998:171), there is a suggestion that fathers might be better "mums" than women (1998:172). Nevertheless, dads remain "travelers in the outside world" whilst "mums are custodians of the inside world" (1998:169). Dye sums up his theories on parenthood in the claim that mothers and fathers are and must remain "equal but different" (1998:166). Similar concerns have been voiced by Bopp 1984, who argued strongly against the new trend of men to compete with women for their maternal functions thus contributing to the "abolition of the father's role". Blankenhorn (1995) offers a religiously inspired, radically New Right defense of strictly segregated parental tasks and the mythopoetic men's movement advocates a very distinct 'paternal role' to accommodate the ahistorical psychic needs of the (male) child.

PART XIV: MIXED METAPHORS AND SYMBOLISMS

Despite the men's movement's explicit emphasis on the irrational components of the father-child, or, more precisely, the father-son interaction, their design of the emotionally involved and competent nurturing father is highly rational. Emotionality and nurturing, as supposedly revived elements of paternal care, project a father image that has lost the sharp contours of Freudianism and critical theory. The visual, as well as the discursive representation of now possible father-child interactions stretches from an iconography of - preferably naked - men¹⁵³, often in close bodily contact with infants¹⁵⁴, via masculine pursuits of men and boys in places 'where the mother is nowhere near', to mentoring as the male-to-male nurturing through the male body.

These competing images show considerable flexibility in their propensity to fragment the nexus of meanings in which fatherhood as an institution has been and still is embedded. In its relentless coherence and indisputable opposition to motherhood and the 'Mother-World', this nexus has created social fatherhood and the 'Father-World'. The individual elements of the two latter concepts are now rearranged according to new emotional and political priorities without any apparent connection to their genesis or genealogy.

The resulting range of new interconnections fuses traditionally dichotomized, gendered functions and competencies into new mythologies and symbolisms. Men are life-giving

¹⁵³ See book covers to Seidler (1992); O'Connor (1993); Tacy (1997).

¹⁵⁴ In Biddulph (1994:10) a newly born infant rests against an almost voluptuously curved naked chest of a man whose long, wet looking curls fall into a proudly smiling face. This image carries the visual appropriation of birth giving to the utter limits of the symbolic.

and life-sustaining, pregnant and birth-giving, emotional and nurturing and simultaneously retain their innately male leadership qualities and their distinctly male authority as father figures. On one level of popularized representation, these contradictory and incompatible elements have solidified into the monolithic entity of the 'New Father' with an immediately accessible emotional and political significance, epitomized in the concepts of the 'involved' or the 'nurturing' father. The homogeneity and persuasiveness of this image is deeply indebted to a conceptual or semantic confusion which blurs the vital distinctions between 'caring about', 'care-giving', 'nurturing' and 'involvement', and between 'being in touch with one's emotions' as a state of consciousness and 'emotional labour' as social activity. This confusion may help to explain the contradictory claims that men have either 'always nurtured' or have 'never been allowed to nurture'. Male nurturing traditions¹⁵⁵ and female nurturing traditions lose their definition in amorphous collective categories and effectively avoid the elementary question of who will take on the main responsibility for the child and its day to day care.

On the next level of analysis, the icon of the new father reveals at least two distinct *imagos* superimposed upon each other, which are supported by different, though related discourses and created to address two different exigencies. The tension between the new, strong focus on the father's emotional attachment to their children and the diminished prospects for men to be part of their children's childhood or adolescence has polarized not only maternal and paternal priorities but also motivated different gender-

¹⁵⁵ The long tradition of male to male nurturing in the public sphere has been epitomized by Konrad Adenauer, first Chancellor of the German Federal Republic (1949-1963) in a much quoted statement: "We know each other and we help each other" (Voelger and Welck, 1990:XVIII).

political strategies aimed at different needs of different groups of fathers, at different times during their own or their children's lives¹⁵⁶. As part of a nuclear family, as single parents or as non-custodial parents, as fathers of infant daughters or teenage sons, men need different theoretical positions to argue their right to be involved in their children's life, to claim different competencies or to defend the individual child's presumed need for and right to a genetically anchored psycho-social relationship with its father. These changing needs of fathers are reflected in the changing concepts of the child's needs for different modes of paternal nurturing.

¹⁵⁶ Stein Hilbers (1994:90-91) points out that for women as well as for men expectations of happiness and emotional continuity are increasingly directed at the child.

PART XV; THE WOMAN OF EMOTION

The two paternal images, united in the mirage of the 'New Father', trace their origin back to the new patrifocal child-development theories which began to emerge during the early seventies. Theorized in conjunction with each other, they respectively challenge and reaffirm almost the entire received wisdom on traditional fatherhood and motherhood, as well as feminist utopian visions of caregiving and domestic tasks shared on the basis of a degendered organization of labour.

To explore the magnitude of the subsequent resignification, the focus must be diverted from the "Man of Reason" and the prominent position he occupies in the current construction of male deprivation. The myth of the "Man of Reason", as well as its carefully guarded critique within the fatherhood debates, effectively deflects attention from the fact that it was a different aspect of the reason versus emotion dichotomy that initially dominated child-development theories and their exploration of paternal influence on the child's maturation process. The definition of loss articulated in early patrifocal child-development theory no longer privileged the demise of paternal authority in social and critical theory or orthodox psychoanalysis but foreshadowed the advent of the emotionally competent and available father of the late eighties and nineties. This father gradually emerged out of the fatherhood lobby's need to compensate for the threat to paternal authority by the "upgrading of the 'female' world of emotions" (Verheyen 1987:38) and by the fading reliability of the 'Woman of Emotion' to be containable in her prescribed, disqualifying otherness to reason. As the claims made on her behalf by previous generations of theorists progressively ceased to inform or reflect the social reality of contemporary women and as new visions of

maternity and of its feasible rejection threatened to erode male or paternal entitlements, the 'Mother with the Sacred Calling', indispensable and intolerable, gradually lost her halo and became the subject matter of critical reassessment.

The question which social phenomena inform new scientific research at specific historical moments is, of course a vital aspect of sociological inquiry and child development theorists volunteer occasional glimpses into the impetus behind the "virtual explosion of interest in fathers " and their "discovery" by social scientists in the seventies (Bloom Feshbach 1981:71). According to Lamb, this interest was borne out of the threatening recognition that "the traditional family structure itself appeared to be in mortal danger of displacement" (1981a:4). Giveance and Robinson see the sixties and seventies as a period of social upheaval in which the feminist movement challenged the reciprocity or complementarity of sex roles (1985:122-123)¹⁵⁷. Fthenakis holds single motherhood, through divorce, through relationships not formalized in marriage or through childbirth outside of formal or stable relationships, responsible for the new, uncertain status of the father. Evaluated retrospectively, the "science of fatherhood" received its impetus not from within scientific disciplines but from the changing modalities of social life. (1988 Vol. I:20). These theorists do acknowledge a gender political motivation for new directions in child development research but also produce their own silences at a crucial moment of analysis. They avoid the question what politics might have informed the excessive focus on the mother in the middle of the twentieth century and thus never proceed to the next question: who precisely advocated the father's subsequent 'natural' and desirable absence from the nursery?

¹⁵⁷ The authors uncritically accept the normativity or naturalness of this complementarity.

Even if the research into emotional deprivation by Spitz, Harlow, Bowlby and later by Klaus and Kennedy was instigated by the plight of institutionalized children, the solutions, as has been suggested within feminist discourses, were inspired by a social arrangement of parenting which saw the mother as the natural caregiver. Without an antecedent ideology of the family with a firm view of the functions of a mother, different questions would have had to be asked about the needs of her child, which might not have led to a diagnosis of maternal deprivation. But, as Flax (1990:121) points out, even object relations theory has been, to a significant extent, gender blind and did not challenge the vision of the gendered division of labour as 'natural'.

Thus, when Lamb argues that "cultural presumptions and cultural changes" are most likely to account for the devaluation as well as the subsequent resurrection of the father,¹⁵⁸ he succumbs to the lure of creative omissions or to the persistent *dictum* of the politics of fatherhood to stop asking "why" at precisely the right moment. As explanation, cultural presumptions and cultural changes are not necessarily incorrect but are nevertheless gender political euphemisms. They do not reflect the struggle between women and men in the transformation of a begetter into a social and legal father, or in the construction of traditional father right¹⁵⁹. Nor do they adequately reflect the different investments of women and men in either the devaluation or the resurrection of different visions of fatherhood and motherhood.

¹⁵⁸ This proclaimed resurrection stands in stark contrast to Lamb's own observation that virtually all findings of the new fatherhood research are "extraordinarily inconclusive and contradictory (1981:17, 24,25, 26).

¹⁵⁹ As an interesting pendant to the missing reference to fathers in the childcare literature, the fatherhood literature is strangely depleted of almost all references to father right. The index of Lamb (1981a) contains only one reference to paternal rights from an anthropological perspective (Maxwell-Katz and Konner 1981:174) and this reference remains strangely removed from the sexual politics of current fatherhood debates. In terms of sexual politics this means that 'gender- complementarily' and the gendered division of labour are challenged as to their exclusion of the father from

Thus, the family in decline appears only as a systemic whole, deserving an irrefutable rescuing mission, without revealing the different subsystems and their diverging interests and needs - in this case the father-child relationship - which warrants revival of the *status quo ante* in the assumed 'best interest of the child'. As long as maternal work was "done according to the Law of the Symbolic Father under His Watchful Eye" (Ruddick (1980:356), as long as it could be theorized within the framework of gender complementarity and as the radical other to paternal tasks, an exclusive emotional mother-child symbiosis remained not only unchallenged but ardently defended in child development theory and in sexual politics. It was this symbiosis which constructed the mother as secure initiator of the need for marital support and paternal intervention. Only when mothers failed to inevitably, reliably and demonstrably collapse under the weight of the burden, theoretically beyond their designated capacities and potentials, did mother-love and its vital impact on child- development turned into a political liability.

The "Murphy Brown Syndrome" demonstrates the patriarchal horror of the single mother who refuses to either experience herself or allow for her representation by others as a problem. In an eponymous US television series, the main character, Murphy Brown is a successful, attractive and deliberately single mother. During the 1992 US election campaign, Vice President Dan Quayle, in a moral crusade for family values complained that it "does not help matters" when prime time television characters, such as Murphy Brown, who supposedly epitomizes today's intelligent, highly paid, professional women are "mocking the importance of fathers, in bearing a child alone and calling it just

the child's emotional orbit but not as to the vital prerequisites for his general inclusion into the lives of mothers and children.

another life style choice." Defending Quayle against a storm of protest, Blankenhorn (1995:69-70, 229 and elsewhere) advocates the withdrawal of all public support from single mothers. Thus, paradoxically, the strongest crusaders for family values and against 'pathogenic' single motherhood, both in the 'best interest of the child', direct their energies and support towards social policies detrimental to 'good enough mothering'. The resulting social realities of unsupported mothering help to transform the prognosis of impending doom into a self-fulfilling prophecy. Should the mother 'fail' in her child rearing practice, this 'failure' can then be attributed to the mother's 'natural' inadequacy and to single motherhood as intrinsically problematic, whilst the ideologically informed endeavors to produce the politically desirable evidence of 'not good enough mothering' remain obscured behind the presumed defense of the 'best interest of the child'.

Consequently, when Richards maintains that the recent focus on fathers among development psychologists "arose from the dissatisfaction with a view of development which concentrated on mothers to the exclusion of all others in the child's life" (1987:23), he focuses his critique on a symptom rather than on the possible genesis or core of the crisis. The subsequent suggestion that inflated maternal significance might be attributable to previous, inadequate research methods in child development theory lacks conviction.

Fthenakis (1988. Vol. I:41) reflects on the question, to what extent research data from the forties and fifties and their inflated significance of the mother-child dyad might be artifacts, originating in inappropriate research methods, applied to inappropriate theoretical research questions. He refers to Lamb (1981) as the prototype of a new

approach which hypothesizes that the "neglect and de-emphasis of the father-child relationship (Lamb 1981:1) might in fact be grounded in inadequate discursive rather than social practice". In the most apologetic explanation for the untheorized significance of the father, Lamb (1981:8) suggests that within psychoanalysis, "unfortunately, the need to be concise, has led many researchers to present overly simplistic conceptualizations of the father's role." Lamb does not explain how the experts reconciled the inflated maternal significance with the same need to be concise. Methodological inadequacy alone can not explain the magnitude of a change of paradigms which transforms Bowlby's monotropist matricentrism into biologically grounded and universal father hunger.¹⁶⁰

¹⁶⁰ The methodologies of the research into attachment, maternal deprivation and bonding theories have accrued strong criticism within a multitude of disciplines and from within diverging ideological positions. See Rutter (1972, 979), Lamb et al (1982, 1983). For a comprehensive overview of this critique see Eyer (1992).

PART XVI; FATHERS IN THE 'MOTHER-WORLD'

The shift from the 'Mother with the Sacred Calling' to the emerging image of the 'Father with the Sacred Calling' is evidence of a formidable achievement in theory building, if viewed from the perspective of mid-century child development theory and parenting practice. In stark contrast to the fatherhood debate of the late nineties and its elaborate representation of father absence as *the* social pathology par excellence, early child development theorists, in their attempts to document paternal significance, were confronted with an almost absolute theoretical vacuum surrounding their own subject matter (Lamb 1981a; Maxwell-Katz & Konner 1997a:1). According to Bloom-Feshbach (1981:102), no empirical research into the father's influence in early child development was available until the early seventies. The "entire course of human history" and biologically grounded maternal sensitivity (Bloom Feshbach 1981:102 with reference to Rossi 1977) have mitigated against paternal involvement in early infant care, and unchallenged assumptions about "the mother's preeminence" have prevented empirical research into the father-infant relationship until the last few years (Lamb 1981a:13). Giveance and Robinson point to the "almost nonexistent status" of the father within behavioral science before the seventies (1985:124) and Lamb summarizes the dilemma of the omnipresent and omnipotent mother and her eclipse of the father. In his evaluation, the focus on maternal care "became so extreme and imbalanced" as to justify the concern "whether or not the father could legitimately be seen as a significant contributor to his child's development" (1981a:4)¹⁶¹. Thus, the presumptions of the

¹⁶¹ Lamb further maintains that since Freud, the mother-child relationship has been assigned a "disproportionately significant impact on psychological development." (1981a:7 with further references).

fifties and sixties which helped to stabilize family values, the survival of the nuclear family and the ominous 'paternal role' transmute from a feminist into a masculinist concern the moment the Woman of Emotion steps out of the orbit of patriarchal fantasizing and, for the time being, exhausts the continuous but historically variable chain of rationalizations for significant aspects of the orthodox paternal and conjugal male 'role'. In other words, if the family is in mortal danger of dissolution, the pyramid of needs implied in the 'father-holds-mother-holds-baby' doctrine disintegrates into meaninglessness the moment the father no longer holds mother but the mother is still holding the baby.

The subsequent "pioneering effort to systematically compile psychological evidence of the father's influence in almost every aspect of child development" (Bloom-Feshbach (1981:102)¹⁶² approaches the redefinition of the paternal 'role' with a carefully weighed critique of maternal deprivation theory. In awkward congruity with the early feminist movement, the fatherhood literature of the seventies and early eighties directed its most determined critique against Bowlby's monotropism and its impact on attachment theory¹⁶³. Both disciplines agree that the presumption of biologically anchored infantile needs for maternal love and caregiving, in conjunction with the hypothesized biological anchoring of the mother's capacity and competency to satisfy her child's needs, have invested the mother with the sole responsibility for her child's wellbeing and development.

¹⁶² Bloom-Feshbach here refers to the first edition of *The Role of the Father in Child Development* (Lamb 1976).

¹⁶³ Lamb (1981: 9) points to the predominance of this issue in the research on father-infant relations during the seventies. This critique is however directed only against maternal deprivation theory and both Rutter (1972:13) and

At this point however, feminist theory and the fatherhood debate part company. With few exceptions¹⁶⁴ feminist theorists have thoroughly documented the utility of monotropism to patriarchal sexual politics in the past, emphasizing its impact on the social reality of women's nurturing practices, as well as its frustrating impact on female work force participation and economic independence.

The patrifocal child development debate of the seventies and eighties, in contrast, attributed to Bowlbyism the prime responsibility for a gradual depreciation of paternal significance and for a new version of - now paternal - loss. Maternal deprivation theory thus emerged as a subversive social influence, which challenged the supposed orthodox incompatibility between maternal love and the attainment of reason and morality and led to the 'feminization' of an important paternal function. Within the framework of patrifocal child development theory, it was ultimately the shift of the child's vital development stages from Freud's Oedipal phase, from father time, the 'Father-World', the Law of the Father into orbit, space and time of the mother which constitute the fathers as *The Forgotten Contributors to Child Development* (Lamb 1975). Although the theories of loss in the fatherhood literature attribute the current crisis to changes in the nature of fatherhood, the upgrading of paternal significance nevertheless relies on the redefinition of maternal care as its most prominent feature. Far removed from the more recent feminist contention that mothering as a social practice has been radically

Lamb et al. (1985:27) insist that even early critics of some aspects of Bowlby's ethnological theory of attachment have come to acknowledge its "validity and usefulness"..

¹⁶⁴ Rossi (1977, 1985) argues for a biologically facilitated maternal nurturing competence. Co-parenting is counter productive since it works against women's best interest and the solution to the mothering question is the strongest possible support for women as mothers. For a critique of Rossi see Chodorow (1978:18-22), Eyer (1992:177-78), Sydie (1987:197).

underestimated in its complexity and impact,¹⁶⁵ it is the mother's contribution which is downgraded to provide a space for the father's developmentally significant involvement.

Lewis *et al.* take issue not only with Bowlby's elevation of maternal love to an "imperative of growth" or a "biological necessity" of early infant development but also with the notion that this love grows out of the biological unit of mother and child (1981:261)¹⁶⁶. Attachment theorists have credited the mother-child relationship with having a "central or primal role in effecting and determining subsequent intellectual and social development". The reinventing of the father thus begins to provide the vital evidence that the mother is not "the single central factor in socialization", even if the paternal 'role' excludes men from primary caregiving (Lewis et al. 1981:260). The subsequent struggle over the redefinition of the best interest of the child introduces new phenomena, still unthinkable in the fifties. No longer do fathers defend only the complementarity of parental functions but simultaneously and gradually enter into competition with the 'Woman of Emotion' as potentially competent caregivers and as appropriate attachment figures for their infant children. However, the restricted and depoliticized focus on the devaluation of the father's position, supposedly brought about by Bowlby's monotropist matricentrism, is not the only pressing issue of patrifocal child development theory. From a feminist position, it also constitutes an inappropriate limitation of the debate. This limitation was pre-programmed into the research the moment it selected as its subject matter features isolated from the phantasmic object of its own creation. The stringent critique of maternal preeminence in Bowlby's attachment

¹⁶⁵ The non-essentialized revalidation of maternal competence in feminist theory will be discussed in Chapter V, part XVII.

¹⁶⁶ Bowlby (1951, 1969); Spitz (1945) and Harlow and Harlow (1965) are quoted as important influences.

theory is directed against the *theory* of mandatory mother presence as the prerequisite for the child's psychic health and its developing socio-emotional competence and relationships (Rutter 1979:283). More specifically, this critique focuses on the presumed origin of maternal competence and of the mother's suitability as the child's sole attachment object in the biological and phylogenetic makeup of mother and child and thus as grounded in an incorruptible law of nature¹⁶⁷.

This restricted focus had two distinct strategic advantages for a new politics of fatherhood: first, the emphasis on development theory and its early, methodologically questionable interpretations deflected attention away from child-rearing as a social action and from the vast array of ideological positions and vested patriarchal interests which are responsible for earlier 'misrepresentations'. The debate on the challenge to the significance of the father could thus be contained within manageable proportions and allowed for hypothetical solutions within existing power structures and within the sexual division of labour. Second, the theoretical grounding of maternal competence in phylogenetic, ethological and biological determinants not only poses the central problem but simultaneously introduces into the debate the key to its solution. As will be argued below, fathers are not only represented as victims of the myth of biologically encoded maternal preeminence but simultaneously transmute into the silent heirs and usurpers of the offending theoretical constructs and mythologies.

¹⁶⁷ In the second edition of *Attachment and Loss*, (1985:Vol.I) Bowlby modifies the absolutism of the claim to biological determinism. In every case, Bowlby argues, where the term "mother" is used, a mother figure can be substituted without distorting the context (p.29). In the same edition (p.306) Bowlby elaborates on this issue and points out that a mother substitute can be a primary attachment figure as long as she "behaves in a motherly way" and responds appropriately and sensitively to the infant's signals. However, missing post-partum hormonal flow and "stimuli emanating from the newborn" put the substitute mother at a disadvantage.

The subsequent selective corrections of patriarchal fantasies about the 'Mother-World' and maternal practice work on the implicit assumption that past theoretical misjudgments can be corrected on the level of discourse one or two generations later. However social myths, grounded in and reproducing social realities as well as fantasies about them, do not lend themselves to quiet dissipation if they develop into a political liability. Whilst the dogma of maternal deprivation has changed mothering, the reality of maternal practices cannot be reduced to the effect of methodological inadequacies and the abolition of the dogma will not lead back to an unmitigated 'truth' about the mother-child or, subsequently, about the father-child relationship. As long as their correction remains as distinctly inspired by - historically variant - male exigencies as the now offending methodological inadequacies have been, the shift from matricentric to patricentric child development theories promises no optimistic prognosis for a more equitable model of parenthood. The more likely outcome is the defense of the *status quo ante* and the creation of a new fantasy about it which will help to obscure not only the masculinist priorities which have informed the creation of the "Mother with the Sacred Calling" but also the needs which call for her demythologization.

Thus the claim that the fatherhood research of this period moved in "a progressive shift from viewing the female as the exclusive caretaker" (Redican & Taub 1981:203) might suggest interests shared between feminist and masculinist politics. The question as to whether a particular argument in favor of 'degendered' tasks supports greater equity, in either the symbolization of caregiving or the division of labour, needs to be carefully assessed in each individual case according to its context. The moment men compete with women for traditionally female competence and expertise, every subject position or every argument in this debate, whether it alludes to denied difference or to assumed

complementarity should be treated with caution, since it can drastically change meaning, colored by either gynocentric, masculinist matrifocal or masculinist patrifocal sexual politics¹⁶⁸. And perhaps it is not even the oscillation between sameness and difference which should cause the deepest concern to feminist observers but rather the assumption that the absence of sameness must in any possible theoretical framework have complementarity as its inescapable 'other'.

¹⁶⁸ A good example for an argument which might have easily passed as pro-feminist evolved in one of the interviews for this thesis. Damien, a thirty four year old married executive without children expressed his ardent support for childcare centers. When asked whether this meant that he supported the mother's work force participation, the answer was "no", he was rather anxious to reduce her overall influence on the child.

PART XVII: THE FEMINIST DEMYSTIFICATION OF THE MOTHER

While the fatherhood debate of the seventies and eighties insisted on Bowlbyism as *the* nucleus of a fateful misrepresentation of parental functions, feminist theorists tend to see matricentric monotropism as the symptom of the political philosophy, social theory and gender ideology from which the early fatherhood literature isolated its restorative critique on the path from maternal to paternal deprivation. A brief overview of recent feminist mothering theory, will illuminate the elementary differences between the feminist and masculinist demystification of the "Woman of Emotion."

By the late nineties, two distinct approaches in feminist mothering theory had become clearly discernible.¹⁶⁹ One position defines nurturing, as long as it is done exclusively by women, as *intrinsically* problematic and supports co-parenting as the solution to a multitude of psychic, developmental and gender political dilemmas (Dinnerstein 1976; Chodorow 1978; Eichenbaum and Orbach 1984)¹⁷⁰. A second analytical approach works towards a concept of nurturing no longer *inherently* problematic or contingent on the heterosexual couple and 'complementary' child-rearing practices. Feminist theorists within this tradition engage the increasingly sophisticated critique of Enlightenment's hierarchized dichotomies as a collective analytic tool to work within a plethora of disciplines and theoretical positions. They build on and combine insights from feminist

¹⁶⁹ This division of feminist theory into two distinct categories is a special purpose arbitrary limitation which neither acknowledges shared priorities and positions between the different groups nor different theoretical presuppositions within one group. It is however a helpful tool in search of a mothering theory which wants to move beyond sex complementarity as a fixed feature of parental functions.

¹⁷⁰ For a critical review see Katz Rothman (1989:211). A distinction is necessary between feminist positions which cite psychoanalytical necessities in support of a sometimes hesitantly and sometimes enthusiastically expressed need for co-parenting and those who reject intrinsically conflict laden modalities. In socialist feminism the need for coparenting does not arise out of the very nature of the mother child relationship but rather out of the social, economic and cultural restraints imposed on women as sole carers.

philosophy, sociology, postmodernism and psychoanalysis into a new mothering theory which extends from the macro- to the micro-analysis of nurturing; from caregiving within the traditional nuclear family as a subsystem within the cultural, economic and political sphere to the detailed investigation of the interaction between mother and child.

The new understanding of authority, autonomy and rationality as no longer indebted to the Cartesian polarities between body and mind, emotion and reason and divided civic and private spheres (Ruddick 1980; Flax 1990; Jones 1993; Everingham 1994) means that maternal practices lose their grounding in instinctual or intuitive modes of knowing and reveal their rational components, without having to abdicate the "unique and extraordinary physical intimacy" of the mother-child relationship (Ruddick 1980:343). Having lost its presumed compulsiveness and repressiveness, mother-love re-emerges as a powerful experience in the lives of contemporary women, fraught with conflicting emotions, ranging from "intense, confusing, ambivalent, and poignantly sweet", to "grim" or "satisfying" moments (Ruddick 1980:123).

Both feminist theory and the fatherhood literature have linked their respective visions of restrictive parenting practices to a critique of Enlightenment philosophies. In both discourses nurturing, emotions, authority and autonomy, their origin, function and effect remain the most contested, the most ardently defended and reinvented categories. Their integration into a unified 'parental' function is not necessarily a less problematic position in sexual politics than their orthodox understanding as mutually exclusive and complementary practices.

The argument here is that, regardless of the fact that both masculinist and feminist discourses attempt to demystify the 'Mother with the Sacred Calling', they produce maternal and paternal images remarkable in their mutual incompatibility. The discrepancies between patrifocal child development theory and gynocentric, feminist discourses can be traced by the extent to which specific parental functions are 'degendered' or allowed to survive in the selective dissolution, usurpation and protection of orthodox capacities and tasks.

The Feminist Degendering of Authority.

The new focus on the radical potential of paternal emotions, as something that fathers must demonstrate to 'have', attempts to build a new ideological position and new paternal entitlements on those categories, men have supposedly been excluded from. As 'natural' attributes of 'the masculine', autonomy and authority are usually regarded as unproblematic and theorized in their loss rather than in their acquisition. In contrast, the feminist motherhood literature constructs a vision of maternity out of a philosophical heritage which defines female parenting as insufficient or inadequate, not only in terms what women 'lack', namely authority, but also in terms of what they 'have' - emotions. In search of new visions of maternal practice, feminist scholars have started to conceptualize authority, autonomy, emotions, nurturing and mothering in conjunction with each other.

Kathleen Jones defines authority as a specific mode of social control and influence, sometimes bordering on force, but always as the power to secure obedience and the surrender of private judgement, without a case by case assessment of the command's moral or ethical merits. It is authority *per se* which demands submission to its prescriptions, rules and regulations and, as Jones shows with particular clarity, once established, it develops into an almost self-perpetuating phenomenon:

But the particular act of recognition that establishes authority in the first place can neither originally nor over time be dissociated from the network of common beliefs that constitutes the identity of those in authority and those subject to it (1988:123).

In this interpretation, paternal, conjugal or masculinized authority attains a considerable amount of flexibility in its content and direction without jeopardizing or even

questioning the entitlement of the authorizing subject. Jones (1988:123) argues that the exploration of the supporting nexus of deeply entrenched common beliefs and their mutual reinforcement unites feminist philosophy and the latest strand of feminist mothering theory. The analysis of earlier feminist theorists who identified the separation of public and political life from the private life of the passions as the origin of the masculinization of authority, was necessary and useful.¹⁷¹ Nevertheless, it does stop at a crucial moment, since it not only leaves the very limited concept of authority unchallenged but normalizes androcentric definitions of its meaning¹⁷² and inadvertently supports a discourse which produces and protects authority as the other to connectedness and compassion (1988:120-122).

With reference to Foucault's 'project of genealogy,' Jones explores the hidden or disqualified meanings and knowledges which become apparent in the process of deconstruction. Amongst the more uncomfortable revelations are the "ambiguous and contentious grounds from which obedience springs" (1988:123). Analogous to Lloyd's argument (that the very definition of reason depends for its authentication on the exclusion of the feminine), Jones maintains that Western political theory has created a system of institutionalized social hierarchies, built on an understanding of authority which, by definition, excludes females and values associated with the feminine from the basic process of "authorizing". The close association with and excessive emphasis on

¹⁷¹ See also Jones (1993), in particular Chapter III on the androcentrism of Western philosophy and the Platonian masculinization of reason and authority.

¹⁷² This limited concept of authority has created contradictory positions within feminist theory. Whilst feminists have strongly criticized masculinist visions of authority and been actively involved in its deconstruction, they nevertheless want authority and demand "the status of the authoritative" for their "own context bound epistemologies". The latent danger of a total rejection of authority in the name of a utopian reconciliation, of a perfect consensual harmony, in the name of some "higher, purer, 'eternally feminine' mission", is a notion that women, if they 'had' authority, would make more benevolent and democratic use of it. (Jones 1993:2-5).

the 'rationality' of authority, its affiliation with cognition and radical separation from emotions, beliefs and feelings has silenced those voices which are "metaphorically and symbolically linked to 'female' speech" and has assigned to the owners of these voices obedience as a natural propensity (Jones 1988:120).

With the introduction of "Compassionate Authority", Jones (1988) contributes to feminist attempts to dissolve the dichotomization of authority as rational and nurturing as grounded in natural impulses and emotionality¹⁷³ Central to this project is the critique of the autonomous, moral individual who is entitled to and capable of dispensing justice according to universal and abstract rules to abstract persons. With reference to Benhabib (1982), Jones argues that the claim to impartiality which justifies the exercise of authority rests on the ideal that the moral agent judges others according to the "same rights and duties we would want to ascribe to ourselves" (1993:146). Feminist theorists have problematized both the subject and object of this understanding of authority. First, the implicitly male authorizing agent is issued with his own set of needs, ideological commitments, idiosyncrasies and fears which undermine the illusion of objectivity and abstract justice. Second, the person subjected to his rule is elevated from the status of abstract anonymity into a concrete, distinct individual who is entitled to have her or his very specific needs, talents and potentials recognized and confirmed. Elementary to this recognition is the capacity to empathize with and take the position of the other. This process, in turn, requires intimate contact with and explicit knowledge of the distinctiveness and the history of the concrete other. Drawing on and extending the

¹⁷³ For a critical evaluation of compassion as a feminist project see Jones (1993:177-183).

work of Ruddick (1980); Gilligan (1982) and Benhabib (1987), Jones develops a concept of authority arising out of and practiced as nurturing care-taking and sustained connectedness. The setting of moral standards consequently shifts its emphasis from the attainment and exercise of reason and objectivity to "how to engage responsively and with care."

The Rational Component of Maternal Practice

The new conceptual connection between authority and caregiving has, within feminist theory, isolated a question which is also of vital importance to patrifocal child development theorists in their attempt to dissolve Bowlby's monotropist matricentrism; how can the needs of the child be 'known'? Or, in the terminology of the fatherhood debate: how can the infant's cues be communicated to an appropriately sensitive carer for decoding and satisfaction?

If Jones centralizes her deconstruction of the nurturing-authority dichotomy on authority, this dichotomy is next challenged through the exploration and redefinition of nurturing.¹⁷⁴ In congruence with Jones, Everingham critiques Enlightenment philosophies and their relegation of women and nurturing to the realm of nature as powerfully supporting the social superstructure. Central to Everingham's work is her challenge to the assumption, that "the child's emotional and physical needs are an objective reality, given in their biological and physiological makeup" (1994:20), and to the subsequent conclusion that they can be "directly known and therefore directly satisfied" (Everingham 1994:39). Within this theoretical framework, Everingham argues that maternal love, compassion and nurturing competence are represented as timeless, instinctive and unsocialized¹⁷⁵ - part of the natural process of mothering and carried out

¹⁷⁴ Neither Jones nor Everingham extend their critique of Enlightenment thought to the point of rejection but rather, with Habermas (1984, 1987) suggest an unfinished project with a potential worth pursuing. See also Flax (1990) and Johnson (1993, 1994).

¹⁷⁵ The relevance of this issue can hardly be underestimated within the context of this thesis, since mothering as a natural, unsocialized function has contributed to a significant extent to the new masculinist myth that men, stereotyped into masculinity, have been excluded from their 'true' emotions. Implicit in this claim is always the assumption, that women have been allowed to live out their 'natural' feelings, particularly in mothering.

as an isolated activity within the private sphere. In contrast, autonomy and human agency are measured and conceptualized according to the laws of rationality which is the prerogative of the legitimate occupants of the 'public' sphere. These beliefs have persistently deflected scholastic curiosity from nurturing as social action (Everingham 1994:21) and, even within the disciplines of psychology, anthropology and sociology, the rational, cognitive and interpretive dimensions of mothering, the notion of the mother as rational or critical whilst nurturing, have found no recognition (Everingham 1994:7). These omissions imply that neither she nor her child are either effected by the cultural sphere in which they interact, nor do they contribute to its value system.

Everingham not only breaks with a developmental but also with a philosophical and sociological tradition when she rejects the vision of mothering as the decoding and satisfaction of static or predictable infantile needs. This conventional understanding of caregiving, Everingham argues, leaves no room for the agency of either mother or child engaged in the process of nurturing.

Everingham's empirical work has not only powerfully supported her hypothesis that mothers do not have an unmediated access to easily decodable infantile needs but has also demonstrated the latent danger of unrealistic expectations about 'natural' maternal ways of knowing. The mother's inability to console a crying child or to 'know' how to prevent or control anti-social behavior can produce intense to intolerable feelings of helplessness, guilt, embarrassment and inadequacy. Simultaneously however, situations which initially were dominated by negative feelings provided insights into the way

groups of mothers and individual mothers structured individual needs of a concrete infant at a specific moment, grounded in individual or group specific cultural expectations as socially acceptable or unacceptable behavior.

But once the needs of the child can no longer be accessed through intrinsic ways of knowing, different explanations have to be found for the attainment of mothering skills. Empathizing with or taking the position of the other evolve in a gradual process of intimate interaction. The scope of variables on which 'good enough' mothering hinges now extends from the interpretative, rational, cognitive and affective dimensions of mothering to the wider social context in which women mother (Everingham 1994:115). This wider social field can either frustrate or foster good mothering, to the extent that it supports the mother's self-confidence and self assertiveness and her own potential to achieve autonomy. Far removed from the transcendence guaranteed by control over nature and the body suggested in the philosophies of modernity, this autonomy is rather a subjectivity constructed out of the social action of nurturing a concrete child in a concrete situation. The child's developing autonomous subjectivity defines itself against the mother's autonomy (p.132), in an act of mutual recognition (p.122). Everingham is very clear in her insistence that, although maternal attitudes, a specific mothering culture and ethics of care are essential to the way in which the mother structures the child's impulses as needs, the production of autonomy is inseparable from and arises out of nurturing as a *concrete* social action, involving the child and a *particular* (m)other (p.133) ¹⁷⁶.

¹⁷⁶ Emphasis in original. Everingham frequently uses the term (m)other to indicate that, whilst the caregiver needs to establish a distinct and complex relationship with the child, this carer can, theoretically be a significant and responsible 'other' rather than the biological mother .

This demystification of the mother leaves no theoretical space for her sacred or biological 'calling' but affirms her potential for autonomous selfhood and agency, provided the socio-cultural climate acknowledges and supports her competence and her complex contribution to the development of her child. Although the needs of and restraints on the mother become integrated into a realistic assessment of "good enough mothering", the needs of the child remain central and are, at the same time, de-essentialized (p.5). But, although Everingham de-essentializes the needs of the child, she warns against a "pluralist anything goes" position which no longer acknowledges a value system which could provide acceptable standards for childcare. The interpretation, definition, structuring and satisfaction of the child's needs depend on a complex, interdependent range of social, economic and psychological factors which cannot be separated from the specificity of a concrete mother in her particular social and cultural world.

In feminist theory, neither the needs of the mother nor those of the child are recognizable as those prescribed by patriarchal ideology or patrifocal child development theories. The consequence of this is a radical redefinition of the pivotal conjugal and paternal male 'role'. If authority no longer originates in the civic space, in rationality or in the claim to objectivity, if it ceases to be the privileged category of a gendered duality and the bequest from the father bestowed on male children upon their entry into the 'Father-World', then the paternal function is as much in need of redefinition as maternal nurturing and the needs of the child. In particular, the father's Oedipal or even the pre-

Oedipal separating tasks¹⁷⁷ lose much of their persuasiveness if the "sensual and emotional closeness" (Flax 1990:114) between mother and child can no longer be pathologized as an inevitably claustrophobic and potentially regressive merger. The gradual processes of separation and individuation start at about six months, Flax argues, and are completed by the end of the third year. During this period, the child learns to move away from the mother¹⁷⁸ without having to sever its relationship with her. In terms of paternal functions, this means that the child's motivation for separation is "generated by its own impulses". No longer a symbol of frustration or a "castrated, lacking, empty set," (Flax 1990:117)¹⁷⁹ the mother can support the child in a separation process which would be obstructed rather than supported by impingements from the outside. Undue intervention may lead to the development of a "false self", likely to be plagued by "feelings of deadness, futility, unreality, rigidity and an inability to enter into and enjoy reciprocal relations with others" (Flax 1990:113). Mother and child thus move together through a vital stage of development, obliterating the need for paternal authority (Flax 1990:17) or the Law of the Father as "a purely external and coercive force" which instigates either the phylogenetic and ontological access to culture or to superior moral and intellectual strata (p.115).

¹⁷⁷ Object relation theory has not univocally abandoned the need for the father's separating function with its emphasis on the pre-Oedipal development phase. Following Mahler (1968) and Maechtinger (1981), Lamb (1981:8) points to the toddler's need to be enticed away from the mother. See Lamb for further references.

¹⁷⁸ This moving away has a metaphorical as well as a literal meaning. Increasing locomotive capacities give the child a feeling of added independence and perhaps also the security not only to move away from the mother but also to approach her.

¹⁷⁹ Flax here refers to Freud's reversal of the power relations between mother and son, when he conceptualises the woman as castrated and pathologically committed to the birth of a male child in search of her missing penis (1990:79).

In this process of redefinition, the father loses his distinctive 'paternal role' but at the same time the mother no longer holds a naturally or biologically predetermined monopoly on nurturing competence. Whilst the mother acquires and depends on specific knowledges, these arise out of the nurturing process, aided by a mothering culture and as part of the fusion of empathy and rationality which Ruddick has termed *Maternal Thinking* (Ruddick 1980). No longer dependent on female biology, this mode of thinking ceases to be sex-specific and becomes as accessible to men as rationality and authority are to women, provided the father invests in the acquisition of 'compassionate authority', through the laborious process of actual primary caregiving or through a comparatively intensive and consistent form of positive interaction. The political consequences of those no longer gender specific parenting tasks evoke responses of relief and frustration amongst fatherhood activists. Whilst the father may now expect to be a potentially competent primary caregiver, fatherhood as an institution is no longer the solution to a long list of social pathologies "because motherhood is not the problem" (Katz-Rothman 1989:211)¹⁸⁰.

¹⁸⁰ Katz Rothman here refers to motherhood as intrinsically problematic in Dinnerstein and Chodorow.

PART XVIII: FROM MATERNAL TO PATERNAL DEPRIVATION

Although united in their attempts to demystify the "Mother with the Sacred Calling", feminist mothering theories and masculinist theories of fatherhood approach this project from radically different theoretical positions and with vitally differentiating political ambitions. The potentially autonomous mother of feminist utopia,¹⁸¹ who exchanges her sacred calling for a parental competence grounded in and either fostered or frustrated by the social, cultural and economic modalities of her caregiving, changes her contours and meanings when she re-emerges in the fatherhood debates. In various shades of condemnation, she is either directly or indirectly represented as the incarnation of evil, threatening not only the survival of the 'paternal role' as moral and legal entitlement but also the psychic development of the next generation, the social fabric protected in the family values ideology and, ultimately, the survival of the planet¹⁸².

As an antidote to autonomous motherhood, masculinist fatherhood theory engages a complex array of contradictory arguments, based respectively on claims to selective 'sameness' or radical 'otherness'. The aim of this theoretical expenditure is the construction of two different forms of potentially autonomous fatherhood, manifest in the two personae of the 'New Father'. First, the father as competent primary caregiver is conceptualized as a potentially autonomous single parent. Second, the mentoring father

¹⁸¹ The term 'autonomous', as it is understood in either feminist theory as a positive vision or in the masculinist theory as a threat to paternal entitlements, pertains to both mothering as a social action no longer 'complementary' to orthodox notions of fathering and to the possibility of single motherhood.

¹⁸² These contentions, although they sound unjustifiably polemic, are nevertheless only the consequences of father absence as it is represented in the fatherhood literature.

secures his sex-specific function through the relationship rights of the son and his essentialized need for male nurturing. The father-son relationship or even the relationship between a male mentor and the "paternally deprived" (Biller 1979: 101, 102) son of a single mother exist outside and independent of the mother-son or the mother-father relationships. As autonomous forms of fathering, neither of the two models of paternal care attract, even by approximation, the rebuke measured out to autonomous motherhood. Parenting of any description as a 'male matter'¹⁸³ is far more likely to signify the 'humanizing' return from an alienating world of instrumental rationality into a sphere of liberating emotions, corporeality and nurturing connectedness (see Chapman 1989). Paradoxically however, the construction of sameness as much as the construction of difference return to the ideological belief systems feminist analysts have attempted to deconstruct in their critiques of patriarchal fantasies about the 'Mother-World'.

The visibility of the extent to which orthodox notions of parenting inform and survive in the gradual shift from maternal to paternal deprivation loses its traces in a third phenomenon, that of 'parental deprivation'. Although the demarcation between these three categories is frequently amorphous, the grey zone in which 'parenting' exists as a non-specific or de-gendered terminus fulfils a significant function in the metamorphosis of pathogenic mother absence into pathogenic father absence which started to take shape in the early seventies. Like many later contributors to developmental theory, Rutter (1972, 1979) conceptualized his critique of Bowlbyism from within ethology and

¹⁸³ Biddulph (1994:109) gives expression to the raising of boys as a 'male matter' when he emphasizes the inability of one father to raise his son alone and the need to involve other men in this project. Collier (1996) has convincingly demonstrated the mythopoetic men's movement's attempts to create a father-son world without mothers.

attachment theory. This means that the focus remained on the early infant period and that the child's need for secure attachment remained vital to its physical, intellectual and emotional development. Rutter's work addressed the core of the maternal deprivation debate when he took issue with Bowlby's contention that "mother love is as important for mental health as are vitamins and proteins for physical health", a misconception which has resulted in the "almost mythical importance of the mother" (Rutter 1972:123).

Rutter thus noticed what feminist theorists had missed in early attachment theory. Under his critical review, maternal deprivation turns from an unfortunate dogma into a "misnomer" (Lamb et al. 1985:10 with reference to Rutter). Although institutionalized children suffer from the absence of consistent affection (Rutter 1972:121), the origin of countless psychic disorders can no longer be attributed to missing maternal love and the failed capacity to bond but to a multiplicity of causes (Rutter 1972:14), prominent amongst them the lack of warm, intimate, continuous and reliable relationships in general, including that with the father, siblings, other family members and outsiders. The child will not necessarily form its strongest bond with either a biological parent, the main carer or necessarily with a woman. Calling for a "less exclusive focus on the mother", Rutter reminds his reader that children also have fathers (1972:125). Any further research, Rutter suggests, should be directed at privations of *parental* care.

This dispersion of sole maternal responsibility, though laudable has significant shortcomings when transformed into the social practice of caregiving. In his dissection of maternal deprivation, Rutter transports the child with unmet attachment needs from detrimental institutional care into the fold of an idealized family, where father, siblings

and other members of an extended family are available as attachment figures. In a subtle shift, the essentialized needs of the child can now be reconceptualized in terms of parental deprivation, without specifying how each parent or other hypothetical members of the family may or must contribute to the satisfaction of the infant's needs, including the need for attachment. In other words, precisely who will be responsible for and available to secure the child's welfare?

In many of the subsequent texts which continue the critique of maternal deprivation theory, vital attachment figures, including, retrospectively, Harlow's wire-framed and towel covered surrogate "mothers" turn into "parents", even if the 'parent' engages in tasks distinctly gendered within a socio-political context¹⁸⁴. Eyer comes to a similar conclusion in her analysis of Klaus and Kennell's bonding theory of the seventies:

The meaning of bonding is stretched even further by the continual emendation of "mother" to read "parent" even when the actual referent is based on research regarding the relationships of human and non-human *females*¹⁸⁵ with their offspring. No mentioning of animal research on paternal behavior is ever made (1972:128)¹⁸⁶.

In a gradual process, vital aspects of traditionally maternal tasks are *theoretically* degendered whilst the social practice of maternal caregiving evokes no similar attention. Simultaneously, Rutter suggests that the child's attachment capacity surpasses the

¹⁸⁴ Lamb et al (1985:11) offer an illuminating example for this tendency. They refer, for example to Dollard and Miller (1950), transforming their hypothesized mother child relationship as organized in secondary drive theory into an infant-adult relationship. Harlow's surrogate mother transmutes into an "*adult*" who satisfies the infant's need for contact comfort (pp.11-12) and with reference to Bowlby, it is again the "*adult*" who can call upon a scale of caretaking responses which are, as the infant's signals, phylogenetically encoded. Lamb (1981a:9) points out that the child's security is based on the *adult's* "propensity to respond sensitively and appropriately to the infant's signals".

¹⁸⁵ Emphasis in original.

¹⁸⁶ Crouch and Menderson (1993) highlight the sensitively timed renaming of Klaus and Kennell's *Maternal-Infant Bonding* (1976) into *Parent-Infant Bonding* (1982)

limitations of Bowlby's monotropic matricentrism and gravitates towards the family as the proper locus for the satisfaction of attachment needs. Maternal deprivation has outlived its initially useful function, which was to point to the "sometimes grave consequences of deficient or disturbed care in early life" and should now be abandoned. (Rutter 1972:128)¹⁸⁷. With the release of the mother as the single source of the child's need satisfaction, Rutter opens the door to the creation of new needs outside and independent of this symbiosis which will, in only a few years, lead to paternal deprivation as a social pathology.

From the beginning this new direction is bound in a paradox, since it fails to adequately acknowledge the historicity of the needs of the child. This omission is particularly difficult to justify when the redefinition of those needs constitutes an absolutely vital element in the new politics of fatherhood. Thus, when Lewis, Feiring and Weinraub (1981:262) declare that the child's social network centers around the child's "multiple and differential social needs" and around the "culturally determined methods of meeting those needs", they effectively ignore their own or their discipline's contribution to the cultural readjustment of those needs and their satisfaction in support of an ailing network or system.

The successful demystification of the mother and the redefinition of needs and capacities of the child still leave the father's contribution to child development untheorized. In searching for a solution theoretically and practically compatible with existing child-rearing arrangements, theorists of the seventies turned to systems theory

¹⁸⁷ Lamb (1981a:13) comes to the same conclusion.

or social network theory to integrate the father into the emotional and intellectual maturation processes of early childhood.

With special reference to psychoanalysis and Parsonian sex role theory, Lamb argues that "much of the father's importance accrues from his role within the family" (Lamb 1981a:8-10). Orthodox Freudian theory and the father's separating Oedipal function (the internalization of the superego as the precondition for the attainment of morality and reason Lamb 1981a:8, quoting Freud 1900, 1905) are particularly clear examples of applied systems theory. Parsons' subsequent "elaboration of Freud's theory of identification" which argues for the father's function of introducing his children to the demands of culturally approved social roles (Lamb 1981a: 8-10) and into the moral code of the wider social system, establishes the father as the link between two supposedly separate spheres. It documents paternal functions within the family as a subsystem in which the gendered division of labour and a patriarchal understanding of women's and men's 'nature' still provide the necessary notion of complementarity in support of the traditional paternal 'role'.

Qualitative and Quantitative Evaluation of Paternal Contributions

The most important aspect systems theory can offer to patrifocal child development, is the hypothesis that maternal and paternal contributions to the child's maturation process can not be differentiated qualitatively according to the quantity of availability, contact or interaction. Consequently, the significance of the father defies measurement in terms of his physical presence, and the frequency of "biologically necessitated" mother-child interaction does not permit conclusions about a correspondingly reduced paternal importance (Fthenakis 1988 Vol.I:40)¹⁸⁸. Child-development theory, according to Lamb, tends to over-emphasize direct paternal involvement - or what fathers do *with* their children - without accounting for "what fathers do *for*" their children by way of economic and emotional support (Lamb 1997a:5-6)¹⁸⁹. The father's effect is direct as well as indirect and even if he rarely interacts with his child (Lamb 1981a:6,13).

The systems approach thus provided child development theorists with a strategy to separate and reorganize the hierarchically ordered sequence of presuppositions which was previously thought to explain the cause and effect of maternal practice in accordance with new paternal exigencies. This reorganization and redefinition was implemented to the extent that the mother's emotional, intellectual and domestic labour was 'neutralized' into a vision of qualitatively undifferentiated 'good enough' *parental* contributions which no longer distinguished between the mother as primary caregiver and the father as occasional visitor to the nursery. Simultaneously however, systems

¹⁸⁸ The author does not explain extent and nature of the 'biologically necessitated' interaction.

¹⁸⁹ Emphasis in original.

theory hypothesized the mother as the carrier or the instrument of the father's indirect influence, a view which constitutes the uniting theoretical framework of Lamb's 1981 edition of *The Role of the Father in Child Development* (Lamb 1981a, 1981b; Lewis, Feiring and Weinraub 1981; Pedersen 1981; Parke and Tinsley 1981.)

If the separation of 'influence' from physical presence is the basic theoretical premise of the systems approach, other divisions have demonstrated their lasting utility to a patrifocal redefinition of attachment theory's chain of causation. Parental tasks are segregated into those which appear to be primarily functional, pertaining to *merely* bodily or survival functions, and those which produce the necessary emotional basis for attachment to occur.

The split between nurturing and caregiving as parental functions which was to become a vital element in the fatherhood debate of the nineteen nineties¹⁹⁰, can be traced back to the early stages of the fatherhood debate when Lamb splits mothering into nurturance and physical childcare (Lamb 1981a:16). Lewis, Feiring and Weinraub (1981:272) define 'care-giving' as the satisfaction of the other's physical needs, whilst 'nurturance' refers to the verbal or nonverbal communication of warmth and positive emotions. Parke combines childcare and housekeeping into the "physical aspects of parenting" (1987:60) and Biller further illuminates the division between maternal and paternal nurturance when he refers to the father's "affectionate and attentive encouragement" which is not necessarily linked to activities defined as maternal care-taking or protection

¹⁹⁰ This distinction is vital to those strands of the fatherhood debate, particularly within the mythopoetic men's movement and the extreme right (see Blankenhorn 1996) since both are committed to distinct and separate parental functions.

(1981:329). By 1997 Pleck contemplates that breadwinning as the father's most essential contribution to the child's wellbeing, might have to be included in the definition of paternal involvement. To exclude breadwinning from this category would be permissible under the condition that "involvement is not the only important paternal behavior." (Pleck 1997:70). Chris, a father of two young children and the sole breadwinner in the family insisted that his contribution should be acknowledged as 'paternal nurturing'.

These distinctions as *generalized categories* are difficult to uphold and defend. Whilst nurturing and caregiving may be usefully separated under some circumstances, they are unsatisfactory as general classifications, since they have little relevance to the child's experience of being cared for and cannot account for the diverse social and affective motivations of the caregiver.

Breastfeeding, seen from the perspective of the child as "the prototype of every relation of love" (Freud, 1905:144-145) is only one example which demonstrates the impossibility of categorically distinguishing between providing for physical and emotional needs. Simultaneously however, the example of breastfeeding also suggests why, in the given context, it might be desirable to theorize such a distinction if the intensity of the mother-child relationship needs to be challenged. What gets eliminated in this distinction is the complex process of physical and psychic exchanges which Chodorow (1979:65) has termed the "social relations of feeding." To complicate matters further, a father who bottle feeds does, in fact, improve his emotional relationship with the infant (Park and Tinsley 1981:438). Further, any suggestion that a mother who attends to her infant's physical needs could habitually or normatively touch the child's

body without touching her or his soul, constitutes a return to the Platonic dichotomization of care for the body and care for the soul¹⁹¹, minimizing the mother's or caregiver's influence on the latter. More significantly however, nurturing has been effectively divided into two categories. The first one reflects the communication of an attitude, emotion or sentiment and does not demand regular and continuous availability according to a schedule determined by the child's needs. The second reading denotes nurturing as primary caregiving. It involves labour, reliable availability, as well as considerable time expenditure and its ensuing social cost to the carer. Despite the usefulness of 'nurturing' as a theoretical, degendered conceptual alternative to 'mothering', it can draw a semantic veil over the differences between maternal and paternal involvement in the child's upbringing¹⁹². It may, depending on the context, bring distinctive advantages to the politics of fatherhood without enhancing the social realities of maternal caregiving.

¹⁹¹ See Chapter II.

¹⁹² The same lack of definition frequently surrounds the term 'parenting'.

Competing for the Right to Absence;
The Absent Father as the 'Good Enough' Father.

The theoretical deconstruction of the subtle connection between (maternal) caregiving and developmental significance continues on a more specific level when the quantity of paternal involvement is measured against mothering time. The previous strategy of separation and isolation and the shift between different categories of assessment make it difficult to ascertain precisely what gets measured in studies of comparative maternal and paternal contributions.

Lamb points out that research results may vary depending on whether the individual researcher "defines availability in terms of interaction or accessibility" (Lamb 1981a:14) and Pleck (1997:66) comments on the continuing difficulties in adequately evaluating paternal involvement, due to the persistent lack of a unified methodology of assessment. Thus, bearing in mind that within the systems approach neither interaction nor accessibility are indispensable to the father's developmental contribution, it is not immediately clear why the measuring of father time against mother time should be of great empirical relevance. Biller (1976:105) gives a more differentiated account which contrasts "high paternal nurturance with at least moderate paternal availability and high paternal availability with at least moderate paternal nurturance." Although the time factor gains in significance, nurturance in itself is not contingent on regular availability and physical presence.

But, as Lewis et al. indicated, the majority of young children are in the care of their mothers (1981:260)¹⁹³ and the available data suggest that fathers interact with their infants very infrequently and "assume only minimal responsibility for their care" (1981:271). According to Lamb, the mother spends 9 waking hours in the house with her infant, against two different assessments of 3.1/2 hours (1981a:14 quoting Kotelchuck 1976) and 20 minutes (Lamb 1981a:14 quoting Lewis & Weinraub 1974) respectively for the father. At the very low end of the scale the average time fathers spend with their children per day is 37 seconds (Rebelski and Hank 1971 quoted in Pleck 1997:71)¹⁹⁴. The utility of these statistics does not improve when a mother, who carries her child on her back all day and thus fulfils the child's contact needs for proximity, continuity and comfort, is reported as interacting only to a minimal extent (Lamb 1981a:5), whilst paternal "son-caregiving" includes watching television together (Lewis, Feiring & Weinraub 1981:271).

The child's initial need for proximity and its gradual fading into the need for availability, as the child develops a stronger sense of security, has been elaborated in Bowlby (1969, Chapter 13). For the early stages of infancy, Bowlby (1969:165) however endorses Harlow's observation that "there is no adequate substitute for monkey mothers early in the socialization process". (Personal communication between Bowlby and Harlow). Kennedy (1971: 509) also comments on Harlow's work, supporting his finding that "body contact between infant and mother is of overpowering importance".

¹⁹³ This observation does not prevent the authors from critically commenting on the strong focus on mothers in child-development theory.

¹⁹⁴ Pleck voices his skepticism as to the validity of those data and offers a comprehensive literature review on quantitative and qualitative paternal involvement in the late eighties and nineties.

Systems theory and the strategy of splitting and dividing help to overcome the difference between both parents in 'time-expenditure'. They support the father's claim to being a significant contributor to his child's development, even if he does not increase quantity or quality of contact and interaction. Interactions and relationships, Lewis et al. argued, are not synonymous (1981:266)¹⁹⁵ and the tension between the almost negligible time of actual father-child contact and the need to find evidence for his undervalued significance leads to an extraordinary competition for the mother's right to absence, supported by a line of argumentation feminist theorists have employed against Bowlby's need for 24 hour maternal availability¹⁹⁶. According to Lamb, the mother's separation from her infant has for some time been an acceptable practice and this practice suggests that the father's absence does not necessarily have to be more disruptive (Lamb 1976a:4, 1981a:5-6).

The debate on permissible father absence and the question of how much father the child may need at various stages of its growth have lost none of their relevance or relativity. In 1983, Skynner and Cleese declared that the father's function as a "loving, supporting" role model requires him to "engage sometimes in the day to day care of his children". For his main task however, to guide his son away from the mother and into full masculinity, his presence is "vital at times " but not "essential to the extent that he has to be available as regularly as the mother." (p.247-248). West (1994) suggests that for a trial period of six weeks, fathers should take one hour per week off work to have a

¹⁹⁵ Fathenakis (1988 Vol. I:272) also models permissible father absence on the 'quality time' principle and on permissible mother absence.

¹⁹⁶ Lamb's plea for the father's equal right to absence assumes that there is or was in the early eighties, a univocal consent to mother absence as an accepted practice.

really meaningful interaction with his *sons* and Biddulph (1995a) advocates that "Fathers need to get home in time to play, laugh, teach and tickle their children." In the 1997 edition of *The Role of the Father in Child Development*, a noticeable shift in assessment of paternal involvement has taken place. In particular Pleck (1997) points to the omission in earlier research of an evaluation of both the qualitative and quantitative dimensions of paternal involvement and their effectiveness and influence. The concept of 'involvement', according to Pleck, is in itself content free and needs to be assessed in the light of specific components. 1. paternal engagement or interaction with the child, such as caretaking, play or leisure 2. the amount of accessibility and availability to the child and 3. responsibility for the care of the child, as distinct from the performance of care.

But during the seventies and eighties, in a subtle process of resignification, the fatherhood research retrieves, from the uncontainable Woman of Emotion, the aspect of parenting which had been, theoretically, the prerogative of the father¹⁹⁷. A revival of the patriarchal and psychoanalytical dogma of permissible father absence with moral and developmental presence transforms the current men's movement's 'bad father' of the fifties into the 'good enough' father of the seventies.

¹⁹⁷ According to Lamb (1997:2) the traditional role of the father was that of a moral teacher. "By popular consensus, fathers were responsible for ensuring that children grew up with an appropriate sense of values, acquired from the study of the Bible." Whether the 'popular consensus' refers to the paternal monopoly on moral teaching or to the current acknowledgment of this monopoly as a historical fact, is not clear. In either case, the monumental implications of the claim to this male monopoly and its genesis in the religiously sanctioned, profoundest degeneration of women makes the uncritically reiterated communication of this loss highly problematic. For a feminist critique of divinely sanctioned degeneration of women see Daly (1973, 1978, 1991) The current debate on women's ordination also raises many significant questions surrounding the exclusion of women from the ranks of authoritative religious teachers. In June 2001, the newly appointed Anglican Archbishop of Sydney defends his decision to bar women from priesthood with the argument that it is against biblical teaching and that "the Church is more like a family than a firm...and, within the family, men are the spiritual guides. It is not misogyny. It puts me in touch with the vast majority of Christians who have ever lived and the majority of Christians who live now" (McGillon 2001).

But whilst the systems approach and its insistence on defensible father absence operates to neutralize the mother's influence on the child's intellectual and moral development, it leaves vital issues of sexual politics unresolved. The use of systems theory to document the father's indirect *influence* on the child's development constitutes a revival of the mother-holds-father-holds-baby theory. It emphasizes the complementarity of parental functions and supports the claim that "Families Need Fathers".

Its inherent limitation, however, is its failure to provide a model for two vital exigencies of the politics of fatherhood. Lamb summarizes the essential necessities of attachment theory when he points to the significance of the question whether or not fathers "are appropriately responsive to their infants." Without this paternal sensitivity, a father-child relationship would be unlikely to form, with the result that a significant and direct influence on child development becomes questionable (Lamb 1981b:461-463).

But paternal sensitivity, together with warmth and affection, as new and important phenomena introduced into child development theory during this period (Lamb 1981a:18, 20 , 23 ,24, 25; Biller 1981:329, 349), are not only the prerequisites for the father's contribution to the child's intellectual maturation. They are also vital elements in the development of a father-child relationship independent of the mother. In terms of sexual politics, they support the increasingly salient claim that whilst families need fathers, fathers and their children do not necessarily need 'families'¹⁹⁸ and thus provide the theoretical platform for autonomous paternity.

¹⁹⁸ Lamb (1997a:5) points out that in the United States and in many of the industrialized countries, more than 50% of all children spend part of their childhood in single parent families. These statistics indicate two different dimensions of the need to conceptualize fatherhood as a relationship independent of the father- mother and the mother-child relationships. The first dimension is the father as single parent and primary care-giver and the family he does not

To refute attachment theory's monotropist and epigenetic models of development, the child's as well as the father's capacity to form a relationship independent of and comparable in intensity to the mother-child symbiosis are both politically vital and in need of explanation. But system theory's hypothesis of permissible physical absence cannot answer the question of how both father and child may contribute to the now indispensable intimacy. Neither does Lamb's deductive contention - that the very fact that infants do form attachments to their fathers demonstrates that fathers spend enough time with their children for this attachment to form (Lamb 1981a:14) - offer a satisfactory explanation, appropriate to the vital issue it addresses.

Thus, the new politics of fatherhood inspired patrifocal child development theory to provide a theoretical grounding for the father's nurturing capacities which was compatible with even minimal father-child contact. This priority explains the search for a potential which may be activated or called upon independent of prior experience in caregiving, unconditionally and without the acquisition of specific knowledges, skills or traditions. It had to be reliably accessible without prior contact to either children in general or even to a specific child with a specific need at a specific time. Returning to the process of splitting and separation, Lewis et al. argued that competence and performance "are not necessarily, or in the case of fathers and caregiving, frequently related" (Lewis, Feiring & Weinraub 1981:260).

need is the traditional nuclear family. No claim is being made, that father and child cannot form a 'family'. The second dimension of fatherhood independent of the family is the men's movement's insistence on the adolescent boy's need for a father figure, 'role-model' or mentor available to every 'father deprived' male child, to complement normatively and intrinsically insufficient maternal nurturing.

Parke, in collaboration with various colleagues has contributed perhaps the most important research into the theorizing of paternal competence as independent of experience and performance. (Parke & Swain, 1976, Parke 1981, 1981a). His main argument can be summarized in the claim that just because fathers (or rather "males") do not display nurturing or caregiving behavior, this does not justify the assumption that they are incapable of those activities. Translated into popular psychology, an article *Frankly for Fathers: "Real Men" Respond to Infants*" (Spangler 1984), reports on Park's research (Park 1981a) which proves that even childless male students can identify the "right" signal of a crying baby they have never met from a tape recorder. An elementary prerequisite of attachment theory, the father's unfailing ability to react appropriately and sensitively to the child's needs would thus be confirmed as an unquestionable capacity not only of fathers but of all men. It seems unlikely that many first or even second time mothers would make such a claim about their own skills. Everingham (1994 Chapter V) describes the frequently agonizing insecurity mothers feel if they fail in the general expectation that they should 'know' what their infants need. A sometimes profound experience of failure can be traced back to the fact that young women may embark upon motherhood in the "belief that the needs of their infant would be self evident" (p.71). Fathers, as Everingham convincingly demonstrates, often benefit from the initial experience the mother as the primary caregiver of the early infant period has gathered.

No stage in the structuring, communication, identification and satisfaction of the infant's needs follows the logic of anything vaguely reminiscent of "a law of nature". Even the discrepancies between a child's 'needs', 'wants' and 'demands' can require a high degree of observation, interpretive action and subsequent consideration as to the appropriate response of an individual mother, within the specific context not only of her unique

cultural and economic and emotional affiliations but more pointedly, within the context of the very unique history of the prior mother-child relationship.

Ultimately, and in a paradoxical twist, it is the patriarchal imagining of maternal nurturing, or, to paraphrase Flax (1990:125), the "deeply ingrained social fantasies about women" which are called upon to create the image of the nurturing, warm and proficient father.

The Masculinist 'Degendering' of Maternal Competencies.

Early patrifocal child development theory clearly attempted to 'neutralize' the mother's monopoly on emotional and developmental significance at the level of discourse. Since the first publication of Lamb's *The Role of the Father in Child Development* in 1976, maternal instinct, maternal love and competence, as phenomena genetically encoded in women's nature, began to be as emphatically rejected as the child's presumed deprivation in their absence.

These attempts to 'degender' the groundedness of nurturing in (female) nature, coincided with the emergence of an increasingly complex understanding of the very concept of 'nature'. Endocrinology, ethology, anthropology, evolutionary psychology and evolutionary biology provided the arguments for different interpretations of 'human nature', supporting different ideological and political commitments. The debates fuelled by and reaffirming variant truth claims about human or female nature have lost little of their relevance at the end of the second millennium. The deep and consistent belief in evolutionary, biological and instinctual determinants of maternal care-giving and bonding behavior become apparent in different attempts to explain the parenting experiments of the Israeli kibbutz system. In 1975, Tiger and Shepher argued that original models of communal child rearing had to be amended because women, against explicit agreements and against the interest of the community, returned to more traditional patterns of caregiving. This finding is supposed to support the gendered division of labour as natural which would accommodate, amongst other social phenomena, the mother's instinctual need to care for her child. Implied is the

assumption that no sensible human being, given a realistic option between 'male' and 'female' life projects, would possibly chose childcare unless this choice was a pre-programmed biological imperative or compulsion. In 1978, Wilson advanced the same argument with only slight interpretative variations and in 1989 Moir and Jessle returned to the kibbutzim as "forcing houses of social engineering which violates women's "fundamental, innate bio-grammar and threatens to "tear up the blueprint of biology" (1989:147). Fathers who gravitate towards the nursery, driven by compatible urges, are missing in either account.

Matrifocal and patrifocal child development theorists¹⁹⁹ of the seventies and eighties engaged various understandings of 'nature' in their distinctly contradictory descriptive and prescriptive analyses of need identification and satisfaction and in their respective definitions of the "best interest of the child."

The matrifocal strand of child development theory still insisted on the endocrinological and sociobiological predestination of the mother as primary caregiver (Klaus & Kennell 1976), and this argument served as justification of a distinct paternal 'role', according to the principles of gender complementarity and 'otherness'. It still accommodates a patriarchal concern which unites the radical masculinism of Tiger (1969); Tiger and Fox (1971); Goldberg (1977, 1993); Bly (1990); Biddulph (1994, 1995a, 1995b, 1997); West (1994, 1995, 1996, 1998); Blankenhorn (1995) and Arndt (1995, 2000, 2001) and

¹⁹⁹ 'Matrifocal' theories of development and their very explicit emphasis on sexed or gendered parenting tasks diverge distinctly from 'gynocentric' positions which reject all masculinist definitions of complementarity and the construction of mothering as *intrinsically* problematic and in need of mandatory male augmentation.

their vision of an inert and ahistorical maleness, with a broad conservative anxiety about the disintegrating social fabric brought about, *inter alia*, by the feminization of paternal functions and the subsequent loss of family values. At the same time, the selective degendering of the different components which define the 'nature' of maternal care allows the patrifocal strand of child development theory to engage the above disciplines and their variant readings of 'nature' in search of a 'natural' male nurturing potential, thus supporting a goal-directed and limited claim to the father's 'sameness'.

In a first important step, those aspects traditionally seen as supporting the mother's predisposition as carer and socializer are dissected into two categories: those which offer themselves to "degendering" and those which are resistant to this process. The extent to which this process can be taken becomes apparent in Fthenakis (1988, Vol. I:31) and his contention that biological and genetic factors should not necessarily be disregarded as determinants of parental behavior, unless they find a narrow interpretation which excludes the father as phylogenetically empowered, competent primary caregiver. At the same time Fthenakis (1988, Vol.II:195) expresses strong indignation about research by Russell (1982) which indicates that Australian men believe in a natural mother instinct and are thus willing to *delegate* the nurturing of infant children to their wives.

In the process of 'degendering', testosterone and oestrogen - almost epitomous for male aggression and the fusion of female passivity and nurturing respectively - are the most difficult of all the hypothetical origins of parental behavior or of its absence to neutralize'. Thus, the theoretical energy invested in the repudiation of a causal connection between female hormones and maternal behavior may be justified by the

fact that endocrinologically encoded maternal competence would constitute a major obstacle to a theory of sexually undifferentiated parenting potentials.

Prior theories of parental motivations needed revisiting. Hormonally manipulated rats, in particular, have long been used to test the impact of oestrogen and testosterone on parenting behavior (Rosenblatt 1970; Terkel & Rosenblatt 1972; Quadagno & Rockwell 1972). Maxwell-Katz and Konner attach guarded significance to endocrinological determination (1981:164) and Lamb has been an early and vocal critic of their introduction into child development theory, arguing that they have contributed notably to the perpetuation of existing stereotypes (1976a:3-4). The fact that only females give birth and lactate and that mammalian males show no substantial involvement in infant care (Lamb 1981a:3; Maxwell-Katz & Konner 1981:159)²⁰⁰ has led to the scientific prejudice that "females are biologically designed (except for lactation) to be primary socializers, or indeed that they perform this task more competently" (Lamb 1981a:3 with reference to Hoffman 1974 and Park & Swain 1977). As human beings ascend the evolutionary scale, the unmediated influence of hormones on sexual behavior decreases, whilst cultural influences and learning increase in significance and hormones are neither "necessary nor sufficient" to induce parental behavior in human beings (Lamb 1981a:3-4 with reference to Ford & Beach 1951). This rejection of hormones as determinant factors in parenting behavior removes two important obstacles to the father's credentials as competent nurturer and appropriate attachment figure, first by eliminating the positively connoted, dangerous

²⁰⁰ In contrast, Redican and Taub (1981) give an extensive overview of research data which suggest male, if not necessarily paternal involvement in primates.

impact of female sex hormones on nurturing competence and second, by alleviating suspicion that male sex hormones might limit paternal caregiving and could, in fact, constitute a risk to the infant's life and limb (Maxwell-West and Konner 1976:20).

But whilst this argument removes vexatious obstacles on the father's path into the infant's emotional space, it can not in itself construct the sensitively responding, proficient caregiver. This ultimately relies on a synthesis of anthropological sociobiology, evolutionary psychology, ethology and on those disciplines which have contributed the most durable and still authoritative arguments for natural maternal caregiving.

Patrifocal child development theorists thus started to re-read sociobiology, from Darwin to Wilson, Dawkins and Trivers, in their attempts to find an antithesis to the presumed antagonistic tension between maternal and paternal reproductive needs. Evolutionary biology had long claimed that it is the female who attempts to secure social fatherhood and that this contravenes basic male interests since it frustrates the stronger male biological imperative to inseminate as many females as possible and to maximize reproductive success (see Dawkins 1976, Chapter IX; Trivers 1971, 1972). According to Wilson (1975:327), the female's contribution to conception, the ovum or egg, constitutes a higher expenditure in comparison to the male sperm. It is in the female's interest to stay with her offspring to protect her higher investment. The subsequent conclusion was that the male's minimal investment in an individual mating effort explains the reduced paternal effort invested in the care for an individual child, as well as the relative predictability of female and the relative unpredictability of male social

parenthood.²⁰¹ The same narratives on the previously *natural* absence of the social father are now being scrutinized in search of evidence for a politically convenient *natural* paternal nurturing impetus.

Attempts to redefine parental behavior shifted the focus from the concept of expenditure to Triver's parental investment theory. This theory, although it does not dispense with the concept of expenditure, nevertheless allows for the adaptation of animal or human parenting behavior according to ecological settings and the variable needs of the infant. The overburdening of the mother due to closely spaced pregnancies, the infant's prolonged need for care and scarcity of food are amongst those factors which can, in some species, lead to 'paternal' investment (Maxwell-Katz & Konner 1981:157). Different grades of male nurturing *within* a species, Maxwell-Katz and Konner argue, points to a plasticity of male parental behavior (1981:163) which "does not follow phylogenetic trends and may be more related to ecology" (Maxwell-Katz & Konner 1981:161).

The concept of plasticity establishes the father's vital capacity to "respond adequately and sensitively" to changing infant needs. If necessary, the father can take over as a full substitute for the mother (Redican & Taub 1981:219-220). Implicitly however, the plasticity of male parental behavior assumes a split between parenting potential and availability; the potential to care is no longer in need of explanation and can be assumed as a natural given, whilst his availability is limited to that of a "flexible reserve

²⁰¹ See also Wilson (1975:224-25) and Dawkins (1976:102) who argues that maternal uncles and aunts should have a greater 'altruistic' investment in the child than the father.

resource" (Redican & Taub 1981:219-220). The normative investment of the father floats effortlessly into breadwinning and remains compatible with the gendered division of labour, whilst he remains available, when needed, for parenting.

From the vantage point of sexual politics, the plasticity of paternal behavior establishes the father's theoretical *potential* as nurturer without imposing a moral duty to care and the subsequent feelings of guilt still evoked in mothers who are not permanently available to their infant children²⁰². Neither does the father inherit, together with his effortlessly acquired potential, any of the opprobrious attributes, compulsions, needs, inclinations and limitations which hallmark maternal motivations and availability. He thus avoids the suspicion of acting under the sway of an inherently dangerous obstacle to adequate care. As a sanitized version of an orthodox essence of femaleness, the capacity to 'mother' and nurture is simply superimposed onto maleness, without impairment to its symbolic and political meaning or to the 'male role' in parenting.

In addition to the safely established "sameness" of parental competencies, this research attempts to alleviate the continuing fear which has plagued sections of the fatherhood literature from its very beginning: the dread of androgyny or the abolition of sexually differentiated parental 'roles'. Attempts to maintain a precarious balance between the two most contested categories in gender politics were cautiously articulated in the suggestion that, although it is essential to look at difference, it is also important not to

²⁰² In 2000, Australia saw a passionate defense of the guilt-provoking maternal deprivation doctrine when a well known cartoonist (Leunig 2000) portrayed pathogenic mother absence from the perspective of a deprived and anguished infant, left at a daycare center by a ruthless 'working' mother. Taken up immediately by the extreme right in support of family values and the sexual division of labour, (Arndt 2000) the cartoon initiated a debate in which the theorists of the fifties and sixties - Winnicott and Bowlby - were still or again enlisted to document the mother's special gift for and obligation to be the primary caregiver. The 'working' father's absence from the nursery is yet to produce compatible images of distressingly deprived infants.

"forget sameness" (Lamb 1981a:16)²⁰³. Reversing the privileged referent, fathers can not be reduced to the status of substitute mothers or providers of emotional support for mothers (Lamb 1981a:31).

Early fatherhood theorists in their deconstruction of the maternal deprivation doctrine attempted to create a space in the child's social experience which could be treated as a vacuum in its emotional, moral, sexual and intellectual development. In breathless eagerness to create a new understanding of paternal significance and in peaceful coexistence with considerable uncertainties about the validity of available research data (Lamb 1981a:20, 33), the paling dogma of maternal deprivation made room for the new paternal deprivation doctrine. Even in the earliest edition of Lamb's *The Role of the Father in Child Development* in 1976, the range of negative or potentially pathological consequences of father absence successfully competes with the prior list of detrimental outcomes attached to either mother absence or mother presence. Parallel to the newly asserted 'natural' male potential to 'mother', the insistence on a specific 'male role' emerges as a preoccupation of compatible urgency.

Whilst fathers are now seen to be as deeply attached to their infant children as mothers are, with impeccable credentials as competent primary caregivers, there are nevertheless strong indications that the male parent may satisfy gender specific needs (Hall,

²⁰³ This statement loses some of its cautious ambivalence when Lamb (1981:10) proclaims his "guarded endorsement" of Parsons' (1954) and Parsons and Bales' (1958) concept of sex difference as a useful dimension to distinguish between maternal and paternal functions. Fthenakis (1988, Vol. I:100) warns that the emphasis on substitutive paternal functions, or those orthodox maternal functions a father is able to fulfil, tends to underestimate the value of complementary contributions. Parke (1981) offers an explicit account of the father's natural capacity as primary caregiver and his subsequent claim to 'sameness', whilst simultaneously parental functions are described as "distinctive but complementary" (p.451).

Perlmutter & Lamb 1982:354). Lamb sums up the available research saying "there is every reason to believe that children raised in single parent families will be at risk" should the father as primary socializing agent be unavailable (Lamb 1976a:28). The reference to single parent families and father absence makes it very obvious that the single parent endangering the child's development must be the mother. Absent from the debate are all references to the possible danger of fathers as single parents.

The assumed equilibrium between, or conflict free coexistence of, difference and sameness leave the tension between both categories untheorized. This omission effectively conceals the prior influence of strictly dichotomous parenting capacities on the orthodox politics of fatherhood and on the now violated sense of 'natural' paternal entitlements. The newly flexible definitions of sameness and difference have become politically indispensable, since they have facilitated the uncritically accepted creation of the two radically different paternal images and their simultaneous merger into the persona of the "New Father". Although the two contradictory father images gain their definite contours in the early nineties, theorists of the seventies and early eighties (whilst preparing the discursive foundation for their emergence) avoided to theorize the conflicting claims in conjunction with each other. Instead, data in support of pathological father absence gained acceptance as validating criteria across a wide spectrum²⁰⁴. They informed and reformed subsequent research projects, regardless of possible incompatibilities in their underlying theoretical assumptions.

²⁰⁴ Biller (1971, 1974, 1974a, 1974b, 1976, 1981) in particular has contributed to the emerging paternal deprivation literature. His strong emphasis on the male child's 'sex-role' development supports the demand for a specifically and indispensably masculine parenting task.

PART XLIX: FATHERS IN THE 'FATHER-WORLD'

If the first father image was inspired by the need to create a suitable subject for a concrete function, the invention of the second image accommodates a concrete subject with a suitable function. The father as a latently qualified mother substitute depends on the dissolution of inertly female and male dispositions. It is his potential to transcend the boundaries of sexual complementarity and his ability to move unscathed into and out of the 'Mother World', which supports his credentials as a nurturer and early socializer with unlimited capacities. Thus, the first father image concentrates on the father as the suitable subject of infantile *need satisfaction*, assuming those needs to be ahistorical and pregiven. In contrast, the imagining of the father in the 'Father-World' is preoccupied with a politics of *need construction*. Father absence or universal father hunger, as carefully crafted social pathologies, fashion paternal deprivation as an affliction, in order to accommodate the need for a pregiven cure or solution; a mandatory father or male mentor in the life of every child.

One vital shift which marks the difference between the first and second persona of the New Father is the return from pre-Oedipal to Oedipal family dynamics and development phases²⁰⁵. In this process, the mother loses her formative influence on the psychic birth of the self²⁰⁶, whilst maintaining her traditional function as primary caregiver and first

²⁰⁵ The return to the Oedipal phase has its theoretical limitations, at least in the mythopoetic men's movement. Whilst the 'problem' of the male child, the need to be separated from the mother, is indebted to Freudian drive theory, the solution or the invention of the 'swampy, moisturizing father', the 'male mother' or the male body to body nurturing of the adolescent masculine spirit (See Bly 1990) trace their origin back to Jungian archetypes, mythologies and fairytales.

²⁰⁶ It is particularly the birth of the male child's psyche which has, since Bly (1990) been declared the domain of the 'male mother' (pp. 16, 182, 190).

love object. This change of paradigms refocuses the emphasis from the father's potential as proficient primary caregiver to his maleness as the prioritized category. It calls for theoretical positions which are no longer compatible with the claim to 'sameness', defended to establish and uphold the nurturing potentials of the father in the 'Mother-World'. Bopp argues, in his influential essay, that the abolition of the maternal monopoly on primary caregiving and the father's identification with the maternal nurturing tradition have significantly contributed to the abolition of the 'paternal role'. The child no longer has a father and a mother but one and a half mothers (Bopp 1984:71).

The rethinking, renaming and reinventing involved in the claim to sameness could have challenged some of the most elementary and deeply entrenched beliefs about the nature of femininity and masculinity and questioned the designation of sex specific parenting tasks to women and men. Instead, the construction of the second image relies on strictly segregated sex specific parental functions and on a new mode of nurturing, which still relies on maternal care as its inadequate other. The insistence on rigid complementarity resurrects some of the theoretical positions patrifocal child development theorists so arduously attempted to undermine in their rejection of the mother's assumed prominence as primary socializer of the child.

Under the shield of a revived, natural gendered division of parenting tasks and protected by the mother's restituted innate limitations, her position as the child's first love object as much as the powerful mother-child bond during early childhood, are no longer subjected to extensive critique. In a vital paradox, the need for an exclusively male function or the restitution of an inalienable 'paternal role' is now fundamentally

dependent on the intensity of the mother-child relationship, on the mother as primary caregiver and dominant occupant of the infant's emotional life. Maternal love as an all powerful instinctual source of *infantile* need satisfaction, reverts from being a social myth or the product of a methodological inadequacy, to the status of a sociopolitical and ideological *desideratum*. Simultaneously, the infant's capacities to overcome its monotropic matricentrism, emphatically insisted upon in support of the first father image, is now as emphatically rejected in defense of the vital bond to be broken through paternal intervention. This rescuing mission is, as Peter O'Connor has pointed out, the basic thought behind the work of Robert Bly and the American men's movement (O'Connor 1993:222). It rests, for its very justification, on three major presumptions: first, the existence of a person and a place the child must be enticed away from in order to attain autonomous selfhood or mother and 'Mother World', both seen as inherently repressive. The second vital presumption is the motivation of the child to leave the orbit of the mother or universal father hunger and third, the existence of a place, the child will inevitably turn to, the world of the now embodied and nurturing fathers.

The father of the early fatherhood debate retreats from the 'Mother- World' and begins to rebuild a male or paternal sanctum on the ruins of a 'feminized' 'Father-World'. Gradually, the almost mythical importance of the mother, which Rutter rightly critiqued in the dogma of maternal deprivation theory, transmutes into the mythical exaltation of the father.

PART XX: THE 'GOOD ENOUGH' MOTHER OF RADICAL MASCULINISM

The renewed emphasis on the complementarity of parental functions makes the plausibility of the second father image contingent on the definition of maternal nurturing as substantially flawed and inadequate. This project requires work on par with the exaltation of paternal theoretical potentials. In fact, the Bible of the mythopoetic men's movement, Bly's *Iron John*, is not exclusively or even predominantly, 'A Book About Men', as the author suggests in the subtitle but rather, to a substantial extent, a book about mothers. The phenomenon of comparative potentials has been a feature in the construction of the father in the 'Mother-World' and the persistently repeated assertion that "the father can be just as..."²⁰⁷ a measure of paternal competence. However the degendering of maternal tasks does not grant to the mother compatible potentials in those domains considered to be male or 'paternal'. It is rather the resolutely repeated emphasis on the intrinsic inadequacy of maternal child rearing practices that validates the notion of father absence as social pathology.

Proponents of pathological father absence have developed sophisticated methods to produce the image of the inadequate mother as the ideal mother who, in her mere being, and regardless of her mothering skills or the social field in which she mothers, initiates the need for paternal intervention²⁰⁸. Mass media and popular psychology do not

²⁰⁷ Lamb (1987:115) asserts that "men can perform parenting tasks just as well as women can." Parke (1981:431) with reference to further research and publications, finds that fathers "were just as nurturant as mothers". See also Parke (1981a)

²⁰⁸ Badinter (1980:282) raises the point that, in psychoanalytical theory, the father must intrude into the mother child dyad, regardless of whether or not the mother is pathogenic. It is ultimately the Law of the Father, not necessarily of the concrete but frequently of the symbolic father, which the child has to internalize on the path to independent subjecthood.

however rely on the voices of the fathers to reassert maternal inadequacy and the need for a sex specific male 'role'. Women are enlisted, in a multitude of strategic uses, to contribute to the construction of their own limitations as profound, reliable, and demonstrable. To be politically effective and useful, these limitations need to be re-infused into the sense of normality which blends the emotional and the rational, the mythical and the analytical, the individual and the structural, ready to be activated in the spontaneous defense of the presumed 'best interest of the child'. Actively or passively consenting, compliant mothers play a vital part in the authentication of maternal childrearing practices as substantially flawed and insufficient.

A return to the kitchen scene which last saw the father as victim crouched in a dark corner²⁰⁹ can help to demonstrate the complex and subversive engagement of women in the construction of their own limitations. In a different sequence, where the father has implicitly regained his 'rightful' position and changed his status from victim to an icon of salvation, where the world has regained its gendered equilibrium, the kitchen becomes the place where mother and son are "squaring off" (Biddulph 1994:108 with unacknowledged reference to Bly 1990:188). It is the place where the father is only seen intermittently and not in pursuit of domestic tasks but on a mission to rescue the mother, the son and most importantly, his own claim to authority.

The father appears from "behind his paper in the lounge room" or from a space symbolically separated from the 'Mother-World' to protect the mother from the potentially menacing behavior of her son. This intervention is not motivated by a

²⁰⁹ See Chapter IV, part XII.

tangible need of the mother who may in fact "know how to take care of herself, only, she shouldn't, in balance, need to." (Biddulph 1994:108). The need accommodated here is that of the father - to demonstrate an imaginary maternal helplessness instrumentalized into the need for conjugal protection and paternal intervention. In addition to the mother's desirable helplessness, the son's aggressive attempt to assert his developing masculine selfhood signals that he has outgrown the domain of maternal competence. Thus, the combined needs of the mother and her son transform the father's exercise of authority into an act of conjugal and paternal benevolence.

Two different levels of this narrative mark its ideological relevance. First, the scene in itself displays a considerable amount of misogynist thought, particularly since it does not give a voice to the mother to protest against a patronizing *Exercise in Unnecessary Chivalry*²¹⁰, against her own presumed lack of authority or against those ideologies and social practices which undermine her authority. Thus, when "the father *allows*"²¹¹ the pair to continue their discussion" the son's subsequently anticipated respectful behavior does not originate in the mother-son relationship but is bestowed upon the mother by the grace of the father. Second, its inclusion in a book on father son relationships eliminates all doubts about a possibly naive or even benign interpretation of this scenario.

In the battle over the signification and representation of maternal and paternal potentials and limitations which dominates the transformation from maternal to paternal

²¹⁰ This expression has been borrowed from Golder (1979).

²¹¹ My emphasis.

deprivation, there is limited room for genuine political and ideological 'innocence'. Therefore, one level of representation creates the illusion of an alliance between mother and father²¹², whilst a different level reveals all the necessary elements of something presumed lost and painfully missed in contemporary Western cultures: a male initiation ritual and the conveyance of vital knowledge from father to son. If men use rituals to represent their own vision of reality to each other and in this process, reaffirm and recreate the reality and the social structures represented by the ritual, then the kitchen scene changes from a portrayal of restored domestic harmony into a contribution to the collective representation in which its underlying basic assumptions originate (Jay 1991:90; Durkheim 1915)²¹³. This ritual not only aids the son's acquisition of masculinity, according to orthodox sex-role theory, but functions to produce and reaffirm the very content of gender according to an equally orthodox model²¹⁴.

The subtext of this scene supports a process which Lamb sees as the prerogative of the fathers²¹⁵ but which is also, according to the men's movement's literature, the source of a high degree of injustice and oppression suffered by contemporary men²¹⁶. It demonstrates gender stereotyping at its most subversive since it shrouds male self-interest behind a screen of benevolence and engages the woman in the construction of

²¹² This scene has more implications, which can not be explored here. It is however important to note, that the mother's suggested need to be protected against a potentially violent son sits uneasily with statistics on domestic violence which clearly indicate that the greatest threat to her physical safety comes from her sexual partners, either past or present. (See Australian Bureau of Statistics 1996, 1999).

²¹³ Wilson (1978, Vol . II: 560) observes that rituals "have more than just an immediate signal value. As Durkheim stressed, they not only label but reaffirm and rejuvenate the moral values of the community".

²¹⁴ For a critique of sex role theory from different perspectives see Connell (1995:21-27), Walby (1990:91-94) and Segal (1987:118-121), who describes the early feminist use of sex role theory.

²¹⁵ On sex-stereotyping as paternal prerogative see footnote 92.

²¹⁶ Exemplary for this position is Farrell (1994).

her own, male defined otherness. The mother's function in the scene is that of a passive model for the display of authority as male, conjugal, paternal and ultimately indispensable.

Biller (1976:90-91) provides clear theoretical support for this assumption. The boy's sex development Biller argues, depends on the father's display of masculine behavior in the presence of his son. The father's visibly demonstrated dominance over his wife sets the necessary signals for the son's 'sex role' orientation. (p.91) The mother who competes with the father for dominance and decision making in the family, undermines her husband's function as a 'role model' and "boys are often very restricted" (p.92). In particular the strong belief in the significance of paternal limit setting to the son's attainment of "leadership responsibility and social maturity" (p.93-94) suggests itself as a possible blueprint for Biddulph's kitchen scene.

This suggestion in turn, makes the mother's voiceless participation in it particularly objectionable since she implicitly models her own lack of authority which, in the absence of other disqualifying criteria, can only be attributed to her femaleness. The portrayal of her helplessness infuses as much meaning into gender as the display of the father's authority. Representative of all female parents, she demonstrates a generalized maternal incapacity to be responsible for the care and growth of a male child.

Since this scene is narrated entirely from the father's perspective, not only the mother but also the son is left without a voice. The reader thus does not know what either

initiated the son's aggressive conduct nor how he might feel about his father's intervention. According to Bly (1990:187-188) his "talking ugly to his mother in the kitchen" can be understood as a classical symptom of missing male initiation and when his anger flares up in an inexplicable rage, he acts out of fear to be "pulled over to the mother's side". On the other hand, he might feel some of the "rageful disappointment" which Ruddick (1980:343) attests to children who see the mother, powerful in their own perception and experience, become powerless in front of the father and other male authority figures. If this disappointment contributes, as Ruddick suggests, to the widespread matrophobia in Western culture, it is worth considering it not as an unfortunate by-product of paternal authority but rather as a strategic weapon in the politics of fatherhood. The gender political message of this scene is grounded in and extends beyond the dynamics of the family since it releases a young boy into the civic space with the authoritatively confirmed knowledge that women do not 'have' authority and, whilst they may deserve 'respect', they rely for their 'respectful' treatment on the physical and moral presence of a supportive and intervening male. Applied to the education system it might produce symptoms in the boy's conduct towards girls or female teachers which would then justify the call for the authority of fathers, male teachers and mentors.

It is not even necessary to add an imaginary daughter to this narrative in order to argue its potentially destructive effect on young women. The stereotyping intervention of the father can take its toll on daughters in general or on a concrete daughter even in her absence, since it contributes to the 'sense of normality' or to the cultural assumptions about appropriate female and male conduct. From a feminist position, the nurturing of

male children cannot be allowed to be transformed into a 'male matter' and Rich's early concern about the dangers of handing over the sons to patriarchal fathers (Rich 1976) could be extended to include the daughters as potential casualties of paternal 'sex-role' stereotyping.

In a strategy which calls for what Mary Daly (1978:90) has described as "double think," (and subsequent double decoding), paternal voices on various levels create a strictly hierarchized otherness, without being accountable for their actions or even expecting to have their actions identified as active contributions to the reproduction of drastically sexist concepts. They might not even reflect on the moral righteousness of their own condemnation of stereotyping as the source of wide ranging male deprivations.

Peter West in the *Sydney Morning Herald* (1994) provides an excellent example for the logically challenged moral outrage which partly sustains the male victimization literature. West describes how a chaplain at a girl's school was stamped out of the assembly hall when he proclaimed that the girls' place was in the home. West combines this event with a hypothetical scenario: "But sport masters can still say to boys: "Son, if you don't kick that ball properly, you'd better go home and put on your mother's dress." Pitched against each other, these two scenarios carry the gender political message of unequal support for girls and boys within the education system. "Radical feminists", West continues "are accepted as legitimate spokeswomen for girls, but who speaks for the boys?" How can the fact that both the chaplain and the sports master have done precisely that, evade the attention of a social scientist? The chaplain's attempt at moral education remains unidentified as a relentless, radical masculinism vocalized to secure for the future generation of husbands and fathers young women who will happily accept

their divinely ordained functions as dependent housewives and mothers. In the derogatory remark of the hypothetical sport master and particularly in his equation of an inadequate male with his mother, West recognizes only the insult to the male child and not the unfortunate, deeply misogynist choice of metaphor and its reinforcing portrayal of mothers or of women in general as incompetent and falling short of masculine standards. He thus lends his voice to a male supremacist ideology which, according to Frye, allows "athletics coaches and military drill sergeants [to] express their disgust when their charges perform inadequately, by calling them 'women', 'ladies' and 'girls' and other, more derogatory names for females" (Frye 1983:136).

Biddulph and West show how women and mothers can be made to model politically convenient stereotypes about their needs and nature. But their contribution to an ideology built on their own selective and sex specific disqualifications is not restricted to their populist representation as passively supporting masculinist visions of motherhood. A further category of women who have securely internalized their inadequacy are regularly granted a more than actively supporting voice in the fatherhood debate. They represent the ideal mother, a mother whose powerful and now unthreatening love for her son (West 1994) inspires her to seek expert advice, either with tears in her eyes (Biddulph 1994:4)²¹⁷ or tearlessly composed (West quoted in Zuel 1995)²¹⁸. Tears and crying, still powerful metaphors for helplessness and defeat (at least if they emanate from women), can be employed as politically useful validations of masculinist subject positions. However, the mothers' pleading for male mentors for their sons barely conceals a different set of voices; the voices of the fathers which Elizabeth

²¹⁷ Biddulph (1994:4) "Mothers of teenage sons come to me, with tears in their eyes..."

Harvey has recognized as speaking through female bodies, successfully and powerfully ventriloquizing their speech (Harvey 1992 quoted in Gilligan 1982:XVII). The ventriloquized voices honor an established tradition within patriarchal society, whereby women exonerate, internalize and authenticate male subject positions, even if those positions insist on female inadequacy as irrevocable (Spender 1983:144-145). Meanwhile the fatherhood literature has declared the fluidity and boundlessness of latent paternal nurturing potentials. The mothers, as initiators of male supplementation to their own parenting, create the illusion of a consensual and unconditional determination of 'the best interest of the child'. This illusion allows no suggestion of the very realistic possibility that father presence as mandatory, either as an integral part of social politics or in individual disputes, may be employed against the best interest of the mother or against *her* definition of the best interest of her child.

In a series of articles on male mentoring which are, significantly, all written by women, a repetitive narrative follows a basic pattern of cause, effect and solution in congruence with the prime *dogmata* behind the ideology of pathogenic father absence (Legge 1997:1; Cameron 1999:19; Walker 2000:5). The absence of a biological father (Walker 2000:5), the "whiteanting of men's monopoly at work in an age of feminism" and the "sisters doing it for themselves" (Legge 1997:1) define single motherhood as 'The Problem'. The consequences are those which have become the familiar arguments of the fatherhood lobby. Missing role models, in the home and within the education system lead to socially unacceptable behavior and may send young boys on the "steep downhill path" to "drug and alcohol abuse, homelessness, crime, unemployment, physical violence" (Legge 1997:1).

²¹⁸ West quoted in Zuel (1995:13): "Single mothers say to me, what can I do, my children need a father figure".

The mother's "cry for help" (Legge 1997:1) is emphasized in all three articles, and effectively changes the positive idea of child-rearing as a communal effort into the notion that the upbringing of male children is a 'male matter'. This view pathologizes single motherhood and father absence without one reflection upon the many social, economic, moral and philosophical factors which make single motherhood a difficult enterprise. The simplistic condensation into father absence of those cultural influences which might interfere with growing up and being integrated into the community as accepted and valued members, makes this pattern of representation potentially dangerous, since it stands in the way of the appropriate questions being asked about all the issues involved. Instead, these articles, prominently placed in mainstream newspapers, contribute to the common sense 'knowledge' that single motherhood is intrinsically detrimental to childrearing and that only male intervention can avoid an unfolding adolescent drama. Translated into sexual and social politics, this 'knowledge' may lead to the withdrawal of public funds from single mothers, channel these funds into 'fatherhood projects'²¹⁹ and transform the apocalyptic vision of pathogenic father absence into a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Thus, the mothers who call for male support as a necessary supplement to female parenting are not expected even to contemplate the possibility of being stereotyped into a male fantasy of 'femininity'. The question as to why men and fathers 'have' authority and which social factors might produce and protect their own perceived lack of it fails to arise as a valid concern.

²¹⁹ The strong fatherhood lobby in the United States had exerted enough pressure on president Bush to commit 200 million dollars to the restitution of the fathers to their head of the household positions before the the 2000 presidential election.(See Callaghan 2000:17).

On the contrary, women who internalize patriarchal stereotypes about their inherent inadequacy fulfil the criteria of the 'good woman' and women who fail to identify with the image of 'man-made-mother' easily attracts the label of 'bad' in varying shades of intensity. But the 'bad' woman or mother is no longer simply insubordinate or incompetent. She is the mother who not only challenges masculinist visions of 'femininity' but also opposes the natural order of things with her own, subversive ideology. Dissenting female voices, once labeled 'radical feminist', evoke an easily communicable set of destabilizing dangers, threatening the defended paternal and conjugal *status quo ante*. Since neither the term 'radical feminist' nor the justification of paternal entitlements invite questions about their content or validity respectively, the dissenting radicalized women "who trumpet their views in the media" are those who fail to recognize the compatibility of masculinist and feminist positions, in the ongoing battle over the definition of the best interest of the child and call upon themselves their righteous disciplining by the fathers²²⁰.

They are 'other', not only to the good mothers with the ventriloquized voices but also to the unmodified voices of the fathers claiming to speak a language untainted by emotionally and ideologically committed subject positions. Notably, even the most extreme family values literature of the American New Right (Blankenhorn 1996) inspires the Australian fatherhood debate to unqualified praise (Arndt 1995:4)²²¹ and to

²²⁰ West (1995) "I have to confront the radical feminists who trumpet their views in the media. I think many of them are not really feminists: they are women waging war on men".

²²¹ Arndt endorses Blankenhorn's view, that "the spreading risk of childhood sexual abuse is directly linked to the decline of married fatherhood." (Blankenhorn 1995:39) Significantly however, it is the sexuality of the single mother or of the post-divorce mother and not the sexual misconduct of the live in boyfriend which Blankenhorn, Biddulph and Arndt represent as problematic.

congratulatory comments on its unbiased exposition²²². The condemnation of radical feminism stands in no apparent contradiction to the unimpeded capacity of radical masculinism to masquerade as objectivity²²³.

²²² Biddulph (1995a) feels that Blankenhorn's book "deals not in ideology but in facts".

²²³ Even the term 'masculinism' is rejected as non-existent by the thesaurus of Microsoft Word 1997.

PART XXI; THE SEPARATE HISTORIES AND FUTURES OF MATERNAL AND PATERNAL INADEQUACIES AND COMPETENCIES

The representation of maternal and paternal inadequacies and competencies in the fatherhood literature suggest that they have distinctly separate histories, functions and futures. The radical potential of paternal nurturing and the persistently problematic nature of maternal childrearing owe much of their support to the strategy of dissecting sex specific features into desirable and undesirable categories. The traditionally female task of mothering can be split into nurturing competence, on the one hand, which is desexed and transformed into a selectively interchangeable, generalized human capacity and, on the other, into the undesirable, repressive and oppressive aspects of the swampy mother which persist as ahistorical elements of biological femaleness. They have the status of natural 'facts' and are neither product of, nor subject to, future social and cultural change. They may even be entirely removed from the context of contemporary culture and relegated to the realm of Jungian archetypes and thus to mythologies supposedly beyond the reach of the fathers. In its most extreme form, the permanence of the oppressive embrace of the mother can be found in Bly's emphatic insistence, that it is not the personal mother who clings to her son and refuses to release him into the 'Father-World' but rather the "possessive and primitive Great Mother that keeps him locked up" (Bly 1990:183). Bly thus avails himself of an established patriarchal tradition to praise the mother into insignificance. Effectively incorporated into the sexual politics of the 'New Fathers', this strategy has lost none of its attractiveness to the next generation of masculinist activists: "A clean break from the mother is crucial, but it's simply not happening. *This does not mean that the women are doing something*

wrong. I think the problem is that the older men who are not really doing their job" (Biddulph 1994:108 quoting Bly 1990:15).

The benevolently vindicated mother acquires the dubious status of guiltlessness or innocence, of perfected incompetence. In this process she loses the vital agency to effect, together with her child the necessary individuation and separation which object relations- and feminist theories regard as the backbone of the early mother-child relationship. Locked permanently into emotional incontinence and unable to realistically assess her parental limitations, Everingham's autonomous mother shrinks into a 'feminist' mirage of obsessive megalomania²²⁴. She is the men's movement's dangerous over-achiever who, under the pretence of natural gender complementarity, is guided back into the fold of patriarchal myth- making. When she re-emerges in her androcentric interpretation, she provides the necessary evidence for the mythopoetic men's movement's essential claim that a mother, by definition, is incapable of being a 'good enough' parent to her male child. Even the "best mother", Bly insists, cannot bring up a boy (1990:179)²²⁵ and it is the male mentor who must eventually guide the male child into full humanity (Bly 1990:38).

²²⁴ Bopp (1984:58) in his stringent critique of single motherhood and in defense of a strictly gendered paternal 'role' focuses on the feminist and, in his view, "androgynous" mother who believes that she can raise her child without a male partner, thus representing and taking on the parental functions of both sexes. This mother is blinded by "monstrous fantasies of omnipotence" (monströse Allmachtsphantasien) reminiscent of "infantile megalomania" (infantiler Größenwahn).

²²⁵ Bly (1990:17). See also Biddulph (1994:12): "A single mother can not raise a son alone, however hard she tries", or (1994:14): " a woman doesn't have all the ingredients needed". This is however not the only feasible version of the mother-son relationship in Jungian theory . Andrew Samuels (1996a:307) sees the paternal function to intervene the mother child dyad as an "appalling insult" for both the mother and the child because it implies, that they have "no commitment and no capacities in themselves to become separate".

If the two paternal images of the fatherhood literature are analyzed in conjunction with each other, the inconsistencies in their theoretical structuring become apparent. The imagining of the father in the 'Mother-World' rests on the degendering of maternal competence, of those positive features of mothering which then become 'natural' foundations of a paternal nurturing potential. In contrast, the theorizing of the father in the 'Father- World' relies on the sex specific, negative aspects of "The Mother", on the irreducible and ahistorical limitations of biological femaleness.

Competitive Victim and Villain Syndromes.

The dissection of paternal limitations and potentials follows a reverse logic: the male functions of father, father figure, mentor and male role model are represented in the fatherhood literature as lost and elementary features of the 'deep male' or 'deep masculine'. The negative aspects of masculinity, attributed to the not good enough father of the immediate past, are culturally induced and culturally reversible²²⁶ and their imminent reversal will lead to a truly benevolent, politically and ideologically uncompromized paternity.

Strangely, it is the magnitude of paternal incompetence which gives rise to the new father idol whose emotional presence will now take on the function of saving the universe from all those evils previously attributed to mother absence or mother presence. This re-invention of the father builds on the tradition of the fatherhood research of the seventies and its clear recognition that whilst "blaming mothers for all psychic defects, deviancies and delinquencies" (Schmerl 1989:46) constituted her as the prime villain, it also lifted her onto the Oedipal throne (Bopp 1984:54-55)²²⁷. and attested to her influence on the development of psycho-social competence, the acquisition of reason and morality. In a simple reversal of the feminist finding that fatherhood is not the solution to a wide range of unacceptable social phenomena, since

²²⁶ Spender (1983:144-145), using Rousseau's views on women's education as her term of reference, points to a circular argument with a long tradition of differentiating between female and male inadequacies. A patriarchal monopoly on explanation, labeling and definition has 'naturalized' male fantasies of female intellectual inferiority which in turn justified women's exclusion from education beyond the skills required to satisfy the express needs of men. Whilst deficiencies in men call for "remedial action" (p.144) to achieve more positive results, the same deficiencies in women have been persistently treated as irrevocable and worthy of protection.

²²⁷ In contrast to the view that the idolization of the mother has undermined the appropriate recognition of paternal significance to child development, Bopp sees the vilification or condemnation of the mother as the dangerous origin and as a symptom of the father's exclusion from the responsibility for the child's psychic wellbeing.

motherhood is not the problem, the men's movement now insists that fatherhood is the problem, in order to claim that it is also the only solution. In what might be called a 'competitive villain syndrome', the fathers claim responsibility for every conceivable social and psychosocial disaster, including a formidable trail of devastation: addiction, violence, artificial and mechanistic lives driven by economics and marriage breakdown, teenagers prone to murder and physical assault, high suicide rates amongst men, the destruction of the planet (Biddulph 1995a) and the changing balance between girl's and boy's educational achievements. These are only some of the phenomena enlisted to create father absence as social pathology. However, running concurrent to the emphatic accumulation of blame are the equally emphatic complaints about the 'denigration' of fatherhood' (West quoted in Zuel 1995:13) or the "diminishment and belittlement of the father" (Bly 1990:102). The reconciliation of those contradictory claims and the construction of a workable ideological argument for mandatory father presence is achieved through the introduction of the "competing victim syndrome". The present generation of "permanently soul dead" fathers are "deeply unhappy, deeply lost" (Biddulph 1995b:5A).

Despite the father's claim to a history of phenomenal destruction, the missing element in this argument is a thorough analysis of domination, incompetence, accountability and the misuse of power. Without even a contemplative hint of a possible disqualification and, according to an alien logic, the need for paternal involvement, mentoring, authority and leadership increases in direct proportion to the expanding list of male inadequacies. The bemoaned devaluation of fatherhood, its denigration or misrepresentation appear to

discourage any suggestion that the twentieth century might, in fact, have been profoundly 'over-fathered'²²⁸

In a remarkable rhetorical exploit, the breast-beating *mea culpa* pretends to offer a critical evaluation of fatherhood as social institution but in fact transforms the progressive shift away from the mother as the sole carer and socializer (Redican & Taub (1981:203) into a regressive claim to paternal omnipotence. The elementary question posed by Lamb in the first and second editions of *The Role of the Father in Child Development* as to whether or not the father might be "an almost irrelevant entity in the infant's social world" (Lamb 1976a:1) has now changed into the certainty of the father as savior of the universe.

²²⁸ In the rhetoric of the paternal deprivation debate, the oppressive symptoms of conjugal and paternal authority are unceremoniously and categorically transformed from being symptoms of 'father presence' to those of 'father absence' or 'fatherlessness'. See Blankenhorn (1995:95).

The Enigmatic Survival of Binary Opposites

How many aspects of orthodox 'feminine' and 'masculine' qualities can be isolated from the overarching theoretical framework of binary opposites without challenging the basic concepts involved? It is not only the new emotional competence and availability of the father which challenges the dichotomous dualities which have traditionally supported conjugal and paternal authority. In its most fundamental understanding, the male monopoly on the attainment of reason and the understanding of reason as masculine is being empirically challenged with every instance of women breaking through the 'glass ceiling' of male monopolies. The new visibility of girls' academic achievements and intellectual capacities is but one example for a possible gender free *attainment* of reason, whilst the 'demasculinization' or 'whiteanting' of the breadwinner function²²⁹ challenges one of modernity's paling sources and symbols of *exercised* conjugal and paternal authority. Whilst both phenomena are being critiqued and lamented in their very existence and consequences²³⁰ they have not, within the paternal deprivation debate, initiated a rigorous analysis of the basic concept of authority as something that fathers 'have' and mothers, either *qua* femaleness or in their 'role' as mothers, are barred from almost by definition.

²²⁹ West (1998:3) reflects on his research data: "...fathers were powerful people. They were head of the household and given the honored name of breadwinner. They were feared, respected and loved by the women who spoke to us".

²³⁰ It would be inappropriate to reduce the passionate debate on girl's improved educational performance to the lamented loss of the privileges conveyed by the claim to the 'maleness of reason' or to male intellectual superiority. However, with a sex specific paternal function still based on paternal authority and within the context of the philosophical and psychoanalytical understanding of authority and reason as prerogatives bestowed on the male child upon his entry into the 'Father-World', the education debate can not be totally separated from the wider issues of the challenged functions of the father.

PART XXII : THE RETURN OF THE MYTHICAL FATHERS

The lacking analysis of orthodox sources of authority, combined with a deep commitment to its preservation, leads fatherhood activists to first withdraw the debate from the reach of political philosophy and social theory and second, to combine the demystification of the mother with a re- mystification of the father. Following Freud's observation, that God the Father and the earthly father reinforce each other,²³¹ it is not only the extreme right²³² who evokes the Name of the Father²³³, to divinely endorse conjugal and paternal positions which social science finds increasingly hard to support.

A pantheon of mythical fathers, including the Judeo-Christian God, Zeus as patriarch of the Greek celestial hierarchy and the Jungian sky father²³⁴ as the latest addition, is indiscriminately enlisted by fatherhood activists to re-validate the masculinization of authority. This return to mythologies in search of authentic paternal authority is only

²³¹ In Freud's *Totem and Taboo* (1913, in particular pp.504-505) the sons of the murdered primordial father create god in the image of the father who 'has' authority from the earliest dawn of time, so that "God is nothing other than an exalted father". Thus, the symbolic father and the concrete father re-enforce each other and derive their authority from the father God analogy. God is infused with paternity and the concrete father derives, from the product of male creative fantasizing, an almost god-like authority, unattainable by any non-male human being. But whilst Freud's atheist creation of the heavenly father through the sons suggests an early version of 'father hunger', it eliminates the Judeo Christian claim to divinely ordained conjugal and paternal supremacy. See also Mitcherlich (1969) on the significance of mythical thought and the God-father analogy in the construction and support of a patriarchal social order.

²³² The American all-male religious organization "Promise Keepers" attempts to establish a family structure based on a literal reading of the Bible which requires the wife to unconditionally submit to her husband's authority. It revives the notion that "God is the father of all children and that He appointed earthly fathers as "His" children's custodians"(Chesler 1992). For further accounts of the celestial or mythical genesis of paternal authority, capacities and functions see Bly (1990) and Abramovitch (1997).

²³³ West (1998) endorses the father-God analogy as unproblematic: "Just as the whole family prayed to the Heavenly Father, so the earthly father was the guide and philosopher for the children".

²³⁴ The 'sky father', first introduced as a Jungian paternal archetype by Colman and Colman (1988) represents the creative spirits of the celestial father who has erroneously delegated the care of 'his' children to the mother, negating his own earth father qualities. These two archetypal paternal images are the latest male fantasies created out of political and emotional necessity. They offer politically convenient transformation of 'timeless' myths into social history which then authenticates the 'maternal' and the 'paternal' potentials and capacities of the 'New Father' as natural, but historically neglected, aspects of an idealized paternal 'true self'.

one strategy in a sexual politics which emphasizes the changing content of the paternal 'role', while simultaneously calling upon the most orthodox support against the loss of the most orthodox paternal entitlements. Amongst these entitlements are the discredited masculinity of parenthood implied in the vision of the father as the "true parent" (West 1998)²³⁵, the lost paternal right to automatically be granted custody of children after the dissolution of a marriage, (Blankenhorn 1995:13; West 1998) and the father's lost claim to be the spiritual, moral and intellectual guardian of the whole family and, in particular, for male children (Blankenhorn 1995:13). The basic assumptions which have established those entitlements and which constitute the main subject matter of feminist analysis and critique, reappear as essentially uncompromised legitimate claims, to be righteously defended against feminist intrusion and appropriation.

Whilst the construction of the first paternal image predominantly, but not exclusively, serves to support the father's right to a relationship with the child, the second image no longer privileges the deprivation of the father, paternal loss or father right. Instead, the fathers, speaking in the voices of the sons, transform father right into the rights of the sons and paternal redundancy into an essentialized need of the child for a psycho-social relationship with even "a half decent biological father" (Biddulph 1995a)²³⁶. This need, via the notion of 'the best interest of the child', easily translates into a relationship right of the child and a relationship duty of the father:

This discussion renegotiates interests, makes them politically viable, and attempts to implement them in the form of moral principles, and legal claims. Interests and ideas influence each other reciprocally; the promotion of interests accompanied by the

²³⁵ When West laments the loss of this concept he may either be unaware or assume that his readers are unaware of the genesis of the notion of the father as 'true parent' in the ensouled seed or preformed foetus theories. (See Chapter II, part II.)

²³⁶ Biddulph's statement supports Blankenhorn's claim that it is the mother's live-in boyfriend who endangers the safety of her children.

formation of ideologies provides these interests with justification, meaning and legitimacy (Stein-Hilbers (1994a:2)²³⁷.

This set of rights and duties, although it supports the presence of a normatively prescribed male as a psychological and economic support in every mother's and every child's life²³⁸, can only be claimed by the father either as being 'in the best interest of the child' on behalf of his child or on his own behalf with reference to his own rights. That is, provided the father is interested in maintaining the contact, as Lamb points out²³⁹. This reading of social fatherhood as voluntary and discretionary is difficult to reconcile with the rigid new dogma of paternal deprivation as social pathology and its insistence on mandatory father presence as its antidote. The extent to which masculinist sexual politics can maintain the doctrine of heterosexual dual parenthood becomes clear in the fathered utopia of the New Right author David Blankenhorn. Blankenhorn's vision of parenting has room for motherhood only under the protection of a new generation of paternal leaders. This protection would entail "identifying the father of every child born." It would aim to provide "surrogate fathers to fatherless children" and "encourage unmarried mothers to give up their babies for adoption by married couples". The (male) child's need for male guidance extends beyond the family into the education system and

²³⁷ See also Segal (1990:52) and her claim that the stress on the child's need for two biological parents has been a powerful tool in the politics of father right groups. A strong confirmation of feminist concerns about mandatory father presence was the recent debate on the Australian Federal Government's attempt to restrict access to IVF programs to married women and women living in stable heterosexual relationships with 'male' partners. Prime Minister John Howard's emphatic insistence, that this restriction only serves to protect "the rights of the child" (Whelan 2000) and on "the right of children in our society to have the reasonable expectation, other things being equal, of the affection and care of both a mother and a father", (Metherell 2000) has unleashed a passionate media debate which, in its diversity and intensity, illuminates the political explosiveness of the masculinist construction of the 'best interest of the child'.

²³⁸ For a critique of this position see Segal, (1990), Baldock and Cass (1983), Campbell (1984).

²³⁹ Lamb et al. (1987: 109) give a critical evaluation of the changing role of the father and suggest that it would "be misguided to see increased paternal involvement as a universal goal." Instead of setting fixed norms, the authors propose to increase the options for those fathers, who are genuinely interested in an intensified relationship with their children.

decommissioned military officers should be employed to teach in all boys schools
(Blankenhorn 1995:229).

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION: THE SEARCH FOR NEW QUESTIONS

In this thesis, I have created a dialogue between feminist and masculinist visions of parenting, using the critique of Enlightenment philosophies within both strands of sexual politics as the analytical tool in the conceptualization of different versions of utopian motherhood and fatherhood. The direct and most immediate rationale for choosing this theoretical approach was the fatherhood lobby's emphasis on emotional competence and availability as shaping the profile of the idealized "New Father". Even more important than the invention of the 'New Father', however, was the invention of the child's essentialized needs in terms of a new mode of paternal nurturing, initiated by the fathers, speaking in the voices of the sons. According to the fatherhood literature, paternal deprivation, as the needs of the 'paternally deprived' child, precedes and informs the remaking of the father. This strategy deflects from the needs of 'deprived' fathers, notably the need to compensate for the loss of traditional conjugal and paternal authority.

Feminist scholars have traced the public-private, reason-emotion and mind-body dichotomizations back to the earliest beginnings of Western philosophy. The vital distinction between reason as male and emotions as female was shown to carry implications far beyond philosophical deliberations and has, in the course of the first and second Enlightenment, shaped the understanding of 'human nature', femininity and masculinity and, in historically adaptable interpretations, informed the organization of social structures and super structures according to essentialized binary opposites. Reason, as the faculty of the masculine and as the prerequisite for authority was cause and effect of the knowledges and modes of knowing produced and associated with, and

acquired within, the civic sphere. By definition an assumed imperative of full humanity, reason constructed emotions and femininity as the morally and intellectually lacking 'other'. An understanding of the strategies of patriarchal discourses to transform unacknowledged male needs, exigencies and priorities into the needs and nature of women was an important component of the feminist analysis of Enlightenment thought. This transformation effectively concealed the emotional content of the claim to reason and the impossibility of Kant's categorical imperative to judge only if the objective principle of reason has full command over all subjective motives (Kant 1959:38).

Authority, conjugal and paternal, was shown to have arisen out of a succession of theories which have, since early Greek philosophy, continuously reorganized new scientific data and belief systems to secure philosophies and social realities in which mothers appeared to be 'naturally' dependent on conjugal support. This politics of need creation and satisfaction changed its focus during the last three decades of the twentieth century, when the 'father-holds-mother-holds-baby doctrine' became politically untenable and fathers began to be theorized directly into the needs of children.

Whilst feminists have analyzed the chain of hierarchized binary opposites as one of the most important tools in the acquisition of male power over women and children, the masculinist critique of the 'Man of Reason' follows a logic which is, in significant aspects, diametrically opposed to feminist theories of acquisition. The men's movement's theories of loss, I have argued, contrast women's exclusion from the civic space, the attainment of reason and the simultaneous denigration and appropriation of women's reproductive powers, with men's exclusion from the 'realm of emotions', from connectedness, from intimate relationships with women, children, other men and in

particular with their own fathers. Emotions, bodies and corporealities slowly transmute into potentially liberating categories. Two important issues emerge as problematic and unresolved in the masculinist attempts to redefine the reason- emotions split. First, in order to constitute men as victims of Enlightenment dogmata, masculinist theory has to reconfirm the validity of what it wants to deconstruct; male deprivation arises out of the very claim to the dispassionate and disembodied exercise of authority which, within feminism, postmodernism and gender studies, has been exposed as a component intrinsic to patriarchal myth-making. Second, emotions are still conceptualized as the 'other' to reason and as essentially benevolent aspects of a true and unsocialized self, to be retrieved from underneath layers of restrictive and limiting socialization. Men are now represented as victims of those presumptions of political philosophy and social theory which feminist theorists have identified as the indispensable bedrock of conjugal rights and authority and thus as the foundation of paternal rights and authority.

Moving the focus from more abstract philosophical concepts to sexual politics, I have uncovered the gradual shaping of the 'New Father' from his first manifestation in the seventies. A new strand of patrifocal child development theory began to challenge the mother's monopoly as the sole occupant of the child's emotional space. The orthodox and passionately defended power of the fathers to delegate the care of 'their' children back to the mothers transmutes into a passionately defended right to withdraw consent to maternal care, if necessary. As justification for this withdrawal serves the newly acquired capacities of men to nurture, which, as features of the 'feminine', have disqualified women from moral development and authoritative participation in the civic sphere. This drastic redefinition of father right happened precisely at the very historical moment when the 'Woman of Emotion' (as morally and intellectually impeded) ceased

to be containable in her onerously constructed incompetence and helplessness. The loss of both conjugal and paternal authority gives rise to a new politics of fatherhood, which aims to secure a male function in the life of women and their children or in the lives of children, independent of their mothers, by transforming one of the pillars of mid-twentieth century patriarchal sexual politics - the maternal deprivation doctrine - into a new dogma of paternal deprivation. From the early seventies, the struggle over the redefinition of the best interest of the child emerges and solidifies as the central and most ardently contested arena in sexual politics. The political and emotional exigencies of a generation of fathers who saw their involvement in the lives of their children as no longer secured, provided a vital impulse for the alternative insistence on 'sameness' and 'difference' in the evaluation of maternal and paternal competencies and functions.

These contradictory claims commenced their carefully and precariously balanced coexistence in the fatherhood research of the seventies, when the critique of Bowlby's monotropist matricentrism molded the image of the father with impeccable credentials as a potential primary caregiver, socializer and attachment figure. These potentials emanate from phylogenetically transmitted capacities of the father to decode and satisfy the phylogenetically encoded ahistorical signals of the child. They re-establish, in a new, male version, the very image of nurturing that feminist theorists have demonstrated to be the product of patriarchal fantasies about women. The revival of those fantasies renders opaque the mother's intellectual and emotional labour, invested into the relationship with her child. And whilst the mother's labour and its social cost become invisible, her nurturing capacity, which has, in historically variant versions, been the providence of 'the feminine' or 'the maternal', is abstracted from female bodies, degendered and 'humanized', into a 'natural' general parental category. The positive

aspects of the maternal now enrich the paternal and support, (as a 'natural' *potential* rather than as social practice), the father's claim to a post-separation relationship right with his children, including the demand to be awarded custody.

Although the emphasis on specifically male functions, even to the extent of assumed paternal deprivation in early infancy, has accompanied the deconstruction of maternal deprivation from its early beginnings in the seventies, it is the rising mythopoetic men's movement, in a shared concern with the New Right, which cultivates and lobbies for the return to distinctly separate 'Mother'- and 'Father'- Worlds. If the first image of the father as competent participant in the 'Mother-World' relies on the claim to 'sameness' to overcome supposedly sexed or gendered potentials and to bestow on the fathers the positive aspects of maternal caregiving, there is no indication that paternal functions and parenting skills are being either degendered or 'humanized'. On the contrary, the revived androcentric definition of 'difference' protects sex-specific paternal functions, a sex-specific 'male role' in child development and safeguards against the 'feminization' of the 'Father-World'.

With the return from pre-Oedipal to Oedipal dynamics, the contested maternal monopoly of the child's emotional world ceases to be the product of questionable methodologies. It is now safe again to 'delegate' primary caregiving to the mother and the intensity of the mother-child bond safeguards the vital need for paternal intervention. The renewed emphasis on the mother as 'other' or the return to uncompromisingly sex-specific paternal 'role' transforms the father's right to a relationship with his child into the son's inalienable right to be nurtured by a male parent. As the lament about 'fatherhood in crisis' almost imperceptibly transmutes into

'sonhood in crisis', the politics of fatherhood have transformed not only maternal into paternal deprivation but paternal redundancy into universal father hunger.

As vocal advocates of the best interest of the child, the fathers lay claim to a superior moral position in a voice which appears to come from a theoretical space uncluttered by male or paternal exigencies. Even the needs of the mothers, for centuries a shield which has protected the unacknowledged needs of the fathers and functioned as justification for male dominance of women and their children, have partially lost their political utility and are replaced by the hypothetical needs of the child as a direct concern. Withdrawn from the arena of sexual politics and gender relations, fathering can again be represented as an exercise in benevolence but now deeply grounded in a fusion of novel paternal emotional competence and orthodox paternal authority even if, or sometimes specifically if, the androcentric interpretation of the needs of the child collide with the interests of the mother. Both personae of the "New Father" can stake their claim independent of any concessions to feminist visions of non-patriarchal parenting, without significant changes to the gendered division of labour, whilst reclaiming in the name of a new paternal emotional competence those paternal rights and entitlements accumulated under the claimed monopoly to reason.

The contradictions, incompatibilities and tensions between feminist and masculinist discourses²⁴⁰, their conflicting readings of basic philosophical or psychosocial phenomena, discourage any attempt to deny or prematurely resolve the conflicts (Flax 1990:10) between different groups with incongruous emotional, ideological and

²⁴⁰ The differences within these discourses are significant and substantial, even if they could not be sufficiently explored in this thesis.

economic commitments. Since in this thesis I have attempted to theorize the "New Father" within the widest possible framework of sexual politics and their supporting power structures and belief systems, the magnitude of the issues involved suggests that any attempts to find solutions must be preceded by the search for appropriate questions.

The process of isolating vital questions or identifying problems within different discourses and their diverging claims to relevance is as much part of sexual politics as the suggestion of solutions. Pointing to inconsistencies and unresolved issues within one debate or ideological concern may be futile, unless the resolution of those contradictory positions moves the debate to a new plane of analysis where a different hypothesis may initiate subsequent, more promising approaches. But since wrong questions lead to wrong answers, feminist theorists can ill afford not to engage in a debate which redefines vital aspects of women's lives: their experience of motherhood as well as their experience of rejecting maternity.

Assessed from within the framework of recent feminist mothering theory, the two contradictory personae united in the image of the 'New Father' owe their apparent coherence to the failure of the fatherhood literature to theorize the inconsistent claims made on their behalf in conjunction with each other. If fathers compete with mothers for 'natural' instinct-based nurturing capacities, it remains unclear what happens to all the theoretical positions which have legitimized and continue to legitimize gender relations as naturally complementary. Amongst the fundamental issues which need urgent consideration in this context is the compatibility or otherwise of the father's degendered involvement as proficient primary caregiver with his Oedipal or pre-Oedipal duties, or with the significance still attributed to his distinctly gendered function in sex-role

theory. The very fate of the Oedipus complex and its possible resolutions for either girl or boy would require a basic theoretical revision, and this revision should include the question as to whether there will still be a need for the intervention of a significant other, either in infancy or during an Oedipal phase. This would bring up the vital issue whether or not the father as primary caregiver should or could nurture his daughter into whatever vision of femininity and who would lead the son or, should it now be the daughter, from the repressive embrace of the main caregiver and first love object into exactly what other world? What happens to the repressive 'Mother-World' if it is inhabited by a male carer? Would the father's biology or his nurturing role create problems similar to those of the possessive and repressive Freudian or mythopoetic mother? The 'outside world' might change its symbolic meaning if it is no longer the 'Father-World'. If culture and morality shift their genesis from the maleness of reason to the maleness of emotionality they could be carried into the domestic sphere by the male parent who continues to hold his imaginary but nevertheless politically potent monopoly on both humanizing emotions and privileged access to reason. This strategy would call for a redefinition of the two separate spheres but it would not necessarily bring about their dissolution in the sense advocated in feminist theory. If this dissolution cannot be achieved, it remains unclear in what sphere women might be perceived to be living, either as mothers or as participants in the 'public' sphere. At present, the politics of fatherhood show little tendency to accommodate and foster a new model of parenting which no longer legitimizes female or male functions, either in terms of sameness or difference. And, from a feminist point of view, what would be the advantages and potential dangers of either hypothetical position?

These and other unanswered questions suggest that both the claim to sameness and the claim to difference can be co-opted into masculinist priorities, as long as both categories remain defined in androcentric terms. The men's movement's selective and limited challenge to the reason-emotion dichotomy points to the pliability of abstract concepts and to the necessity to interpolate into the debate some of the vital questions which might arrest the flow of a patricentric logic and which have up to now been successfully avoided: "Why can men mother but women can not father? Why can the 'feminine', emotions and nurturing be separated from the female body as their traditional locus, whilst authority, an essential mode of mentoring and spiritual guidance remains linked to the male body and inaccessible to women? Whilst 'parenting' emerges as a supposedly degendered version of orthodox, sex-specific tasks and functions, a closer look reveals that it is only maternal *competence* which loses its supposed anchoring in female biology. Absorbed into a re-gendered mode of paternal 'nurturing' it poses no obstacle to the ultimate return to a conventional model of strictly gendered parenting tasks, with one significant difference. Paternal care now incorporates 'masculine' authority and the traditionally 'feminine' elements of nurturing. In the same process maternal nurturing makes its reappearance as parental care minus paternal authority or as the other, complementary and ultimately deficient mode of care.

Posing these questions challenges the discourses which fail to address them within the logic of their own paradigms as part of the adaptable, self-perpetuating and rejuvenating power of patriarchal structures. Feminist theorists might remain locked in the dialectics of androcentric discourses if they fail to move beyond their boundaries, not only with their own challenges but also with visions beyond a merely reactive response to priorities not their own. As part of a search for new questions, feminists may want to

critically revisit their own theoretical positions and the theoretical spaces left for the patrifocal redefinition of the best interest of the child.

Feminist mothering theory is still recovering from a cultural heritage which has induced in its proponents a justified fear of biological determinisms and their association of maternal care with instinctual impulses, a private sphere outside culture and labeled as emotional and 'other' to reason. For a considerable period, the need to free mothering from its patriarchal denominations, symbolic meanings, moral prescriptions, denigration, idealization, legal restrictions and financial dependence, has channeled feminist analytical efforts into the necessary demythologizing of "The Mother", in patriarchal and in some feminist theories²⁴¹. It has eloquently refuted the myth of maternal love as an unsocialized, biological impulse and refocused the motherhood debate from the vantage point of the child to the perspective of the mother. The image of the naturally self-sacrificing mother paled in the face of discussion of women's sometimes 'un-maternal' needs, priorities and emotions. It has pointed to the crucial distinction between supposedly natural obstacles to adequate and autonomous female parenting and those which are ideologically inspired social and structural barriers to maternal child-rearing practices. And whilst oppressive external circumstances, in particular poverty and economic dependence, frequently impinge on 'good enough' mothering, they do not sum up the experience of maternity and, as Ruddick suggests, "an account that describes only exploitation and pain is in itself oppressive to women" (Ruddick 1980:344). The very necessary critique of the social field in which women

²⁴¹ Some radical feminists and some, but not all eco-feminists, have contributed to an essentialized, glorified interpretation of 'the feminine' or 'the maternal'. For essentialized views see Rich, (1976) Daly (1978) Griffin (1984). For a non-essentialist eco-feminism see Plumwood (1993) For critical evaluation of glorified femininity in various strands of feminism see Segal (1987:4-11), Benjamin (1990:91-92).

mother thus coexists with the search for more positive, gynocentric or women-identified visions of motherhood. This revalidation is, according to Everingham, not without potential dangers. Even after forty years of second wave feminism, it is still difficult to represent women as mothers and to value their experience without reverting to essentialist notions of womanhood, without undermining "women's efforts to achieve some measure of autonomy" (Everingham 1994:4) or without exposing mothering theory to the danger of being "co-opted by conservative interests, wanting to confine women to the domestic sphere" (Everingham 1994:4).

The need to disengage the notion of being a woman from that of being a mother has expanded the range of options for women, creating new ways to positively inhabit their voluntarily or involuntarily non-reproductive or non-maternal bodies. It has, however, dimmed the voices of women who may want to strongly defend their own decisions to be mothers, who want to see their own experience as a mother and their contribution to society in this function validated and who want to protect their strong emotional bonds to their children, not necessarily but possibly outside the boundaries of the traditional nuclear family.

Although the image of the father in the 'Mother-World' has created a new language and new symbolisms for men who want to be more closely involved in the lives of their children, both of the two personae united in the image of the 'New Father' have the potential to undermine advances towards a more women-centered definition of motherhood during the last four decades. Feminist mothering theory is confronted with the necessity to revisit its definition of elementary problems as well as the range of its privileged solutions. The challenge of patrifocal child development theory to the

mother's presumed biologically encoded nurturing preeminence can contribute as much to the defense of paternal entitlements and priorities as the insistence on strictly segregated paternal functions in some strands of the men's movement. These masculinist politics of reassertion raise the question whether or not the abolition of the sexual division of labour can still pave the road to greater autonomy for women as mothers. Most importantly, the current feminist support for co-parenting deserves careful reassessment to ensure that it does not become part of a range of new problems rather than being part of their solution.

Feminist theories in their different contributions to the motherhood debate now have the theoretical tools to decisively reject new androcentric definitions of maternity or of the 'best interest of the child'. They can resolutely object to a re- conceptualizing of fatherhood which is isolated from the extended nexus of its historical construction and which does not thoroughly reassess all of its constituent elements. The fundamental question of how much father a child needs can not be separated from an analysis of the philosophical, cultural, moral, economic and legal prescriptions which define those needs and subsequently defend and recreate the social realities presumed to be adequate to their satisfaction. Reductionist views of "fatherhood in crisis" or, even more pointedly, "sonhood in crisis", both limit the debate to the father-child relationship and can not reflect the radical political implications of the control over the 'best interest of the child'. Uncritically renaming the problem, leads to the wrong research questions and subsequently to the wrong answers.

Feminist theory faces the task to intervene exactly at this point and to insist upon a clear distinction between the patrifocal, androcentric definition of the 'best interest of the

child' and the 'best interest of the fathers' in the resurrection of a paternal 'role' as moral and legal entitlement. Once these distinctions have been clearly marked, once arguments in support of ideologically and structurally enforced fatherhood as an institution have been isolated, identified and referred back from child-development theory to sexual, social and party politics, the invaluable contributions of concrete fathers, their love, warmth and their support of both women and children can be validated, appreciated and incorporated into a new philosophy as well as a new social reality of parenting.

ANNEX

The Changing Content of Needs and Silences.

This thesis has undergone radical changes since its initial stages. The early hypothesis, as well as the finally defended theoretical positions, center around different modes of father absence and the ways in which this absence has functioned as an instrument in a masculinist politics of either need negation or need creation. Both the silencing of the needs of fathers and definitions of the needs of others, have played and still play a significant part in the construction of the sense of normality or normativity which informs the defense of traditional models of social fatherhood as well as the invention of the 'new' father.

In the initial phase of my research, the concept of the absent father signified his invisibility in the abortion debate. Men have, from the earliest beginnings of this debate figured prominently as 'knowers' or as producers of related discourses and ideologies. Their influence, via legislative processes, moral theology, secular ethics, psychoanalytical prescriptions, sociobiological assumptions, medical pseudo-certainties, and their subsequent contributions to the socio-political and economic realities still define the experiences of motherhood in the lives of most women. While men have been active and powerful subjects of the abortion debate in many capacities, their possible positions as fathers or objects of this debate have not been subjected to a corresponding rigorous cultural and scientific investigation.

At least within the parameter of the orthodox anti-abortion rhetoric, the absent or invisible father appears to have no mandate or interest, authority or motivation to intervene in a pregnant woman's decision-making process. Whilst androcentric ideologies abound in narratives which position the need *for* the father prominently amongst the most vital needs of others²⁴², the needs *of* the father, or rather, the different needs of different fathers in different historical periods and in different periods of individual life histories, have been shrouded in silence. The President of the International Right to Life Organization had no difficulty in pronouncing, that he just did not find the time until now, to "deal with the male".²⁴³

As objects of the abortion debate, men as fathers or potential fathers could occupy a number of possible positions:

1. As victims, defending their threatened right to biological, social and legal fatherhood.
2. As defenders of the fetal 'right to life'.
3. As perpetrators who withdraw from their socially prescribed responsibilities and thus may contribute considerably to women's decisions to discontinue their pregnancies.

This omission of possible male or paternal subject positions creates vital theoretical and ideological silences in a debate which has privileged the fetal right to life and problematized women's rejection of pregnancy and motherhood, regardless of the

²⁴² See for instance Freud's claim that the struggle with an authoritarian father is the prerequisite for the development of the super ego (Freud 1931) and the explicitly formulated need *for* the Father as the origin of religion (Freud 1913).

²⁴³ Dr. John Wilke in personal conversation at the International Right to Life Congress in Sydney, April 1994.

extenuating circumstances. It thus stands in stark contrast to the impressive body of literature which dissects female reproductive conduct into women's needs, desires, wishes, interests, capacities, limitations, agency, mandate, duty and 'natural' availability. Male parental involvement, with its overtones of taking responsibility for, having an interest in, or even wanting a child²⁴⁴, projects a group of motivations which are quite distinct from the supposedly innate or 'natural' aspects of female reproductive behavior.

My first step towards a theoretical framework which might explain the meaning of father absence in the orthodox anti-abortion debate, was an attempt to explore which aspects of human reproduction²⁴⁵ have been theorized in which contexts. Vital to this project was the need to isolate those discourses, which produce the politically most relevant knowledges or silences.

Against the background of psychoanalytical, sociobiological, religious and feminist discourses, the final design of my research centered around the possible content of the silences which surround paternal reproductive needs and motivations or, more concretely, around the possible meanings of children in the lives of men. How do individual men or specific groups of men explain their own paternal involvement (or its absence)? How do they construct the 'sense of normality' which determines their reproductive decision making processes and perceptions of paternal rights, duties and pleasures? Beyond the individual experience of paternity or beyond its individual

²⁴⁴ The most frequent articulation of the respondent's (voluntary) entry into fatherhood was "to build a family unit":

²⁴⁵ The term-'human reproduction' is here used in its widest sense, extending from pre- or extra reproductive sexuality to the moment an offspring becomes independent.

rejection, how does contemporary fatherhood as an institution shape male consciousness and individual or group identities?

Although my interest was initially limited to fatherhood, it soon became evident that fatherhood as an institution is impossible to theorize in isolation. It depends for its definition and justification on the culturally and historically relevant understanding of maternity. This recognition, in turn, made it paramount to explore how fatherhood as an institution shapes motherhood, as either a personal experience or as a social institution, and how it impacts on the socioeconomic, moral, legal and cultural field in which the idealized nuclear family attains the assumed normativity which, in turn, safeguards the need for and justification of social fatherhood.

The silence of the fathers about their own needs, motivations and desires magnifies the significance of the masculinist struggle to determine, define and name women's needs, potentials and limitations. The tendency to cast socially desirable maternal characteristics (capacities and deficiencies) in ideological and biological cement has long been part of a strategy to safeguard social stability and paternal rights through its reaffirmation of sex specific parenting 'roles'.

I worked from the hypothesis that the progressively unreliable and implausible presumed biologically programmed maternal conduct had, in particular during the fifties to sixties of the last century, resulted in a stabilizing motherhood theory which relied on and contributed much to the confusion between social history and human nature. Under the heading of 'maternal deprivation theory' (Bowlby 1951, 1958, 1969; Ainsworth 1967, 1969, 1972, 1973, 1974), the synchronization of the needs of the child with the

needs and nature of women was supplemented by a strong moral imperative to care. This combination of synchronized needs and moral imperative was expected to function as the emotional, social, and finally as the economic glue, designed to safeguard the survival not only of the nuclear family but of a wide array of other social arrangements, based on the sexual division of labour.

The naturalized needs of mother and child created two sets of silences which were to become vital issues in early second wave feminism. First, these needs inspired and justified the social field in which women mother whilst the effect of those social arrangements, on cultural and material restrictions imposed upon women and maternal practice, remained irrelevant to social theory. The second silence concealed the agency or interests of fathers in the construction and perpetuation of the supposedly 'natural' child rearing arrangements, organized in accordance with the 'father-holds-mother-holds-baby' doctrine (Winnicott 1957).

During 1994 and 1995, I interviewed 39 men from three different groups. The first group was selected from the Right to Life movement. By definition, members of this movement are united in the most uncompromising anti-abortion stance. Their defense of the 'best interest of the (unborn) child' can be seen as the most thoroughly theorized negation of the self-interest of fathers as part of the motivating energy behind their shared commitments. I became a member of this organization, attended their meetings, always with the express understanding of the purpose of my presence. I approached individual men during those meetings and was generously offered cooperation without exception.

The next group of men was recruited from within the men's movements through advertisements in the relevant publications. Since fathering and fatherhood dominate the discourses of this ideological alliance, the assumption that the interests and motivations of men as fathers might be less opaque, appeared to be justified. The advocacy of a nurturing and emotionally engaged paternity also fostered my initial expectation of finding notably contrasting perspectives between the Right to Life and the men's movements. The number of responses surpassed all my expectations and initially suggested a greater transparency and willingness to explore the meaning of fathering.

The final group which, for lack of a unifying category, I shall call 'unaligned' came together through personal contacts, gaining momentum through the snowball system technique. This does of course not mean that these men had no political and ideological commitments but rather that these commitments had no bearing on their selection for my project. I hoped that this group would allow insights into a variety of additional opinions to either the Right to Life or the men's movement which I saw as operating from the opposing extreme ends of masculinist sexual politics.

The men's ages ranged from 23 to 69 years, all were of Caucasian origin and with few exceptions (5 out of 39), broadly definable as middle class. The interviews were semi-structured and took place in a location chosen by the individual respondents, either in their house, in mine, or in a public space (university library, church, office building, coffee house). They were tape recorded and lasted between 1 1/2 hours and four hours with a median length of approximately 2 1/2 hours.

After the first 5 interviews were transcribed and subjected to a preliminary analysis (using the 'Qualitan' data base system), I began to notice that the emerging data moved away from my original subject matter without my being able to comprehend the meaning and significance of the emerging shift of paradigms. During the next 34 interviews I considerably reduced the number of questions I had initially considered to be essential, in order to make more space for the respondents to self-direct their contributions.

The subsequent analysis of the research data suggested an entirely new dimension to my project. I had anticipated my interview partners to tell me what fathering and consequently abortion meant to them. Instead, the dominant issue, particularly in the narratives of the men's movements group, was a strongly and passionately articulated need and desire to be fathered.

The unexpected declaration of father absence as the epitome of male emotional deprivation contributed little towards an exploration of possible male reproductive motivations but shifted the focus from the original inquiry into the needs and desires of the fathers to a redefinition of the fundamental and inalienable needs and rights of the child. Translated into the abortion debate, the child's right to life, still paramount in anti-abortion-politics was, in the rhetoric of the new men's movements, superceded by the right to be fathered. The mother's duty to give birth was secondary to her duty to provide her child with a biological, live-in social father.

Extended back into a wider framework, the control over defining the 'best interest of the child' emerged as the perhaps most powerful tool in sexual politics. At the same

time, the new discourses in popular psychology and child development theory which refunction the needs of the child in support of a new form of paternal deprivation, derive their validity through their presumed ideological and theoretical distance from sexual politics.

The 'truth' about the devastating effects of maternal deprivation has, for a long time, effectively camouflaged the best interest of the fathers. It also helped to elevate community awareness of the 'needs' of children to a genuine concern: The present urgency to arrive at a novel 'truth' about the perils of father absence can utilize this existing concern as a propellant for the shifts in focus from maternal to paternal deprivation, from a theory of needs which is matrifocal but distinctly not women centered in its value system or motivations, to a patrifocal perspective which is again explicitly androcentric in its emotional genesis as well as its political rationalization and function: In contrast to the synchronization of the needs of mother and child in matrifocal deprivation theories, their patrifocal equivalents claim validity without analyzing and naming the needs of the fathers.

The change from a matrifocal to a patrifocal politics of need construction and satisfaction added in itself an unexpected set of contradictions to my project. These contradictions were magnified through a debate which, beyond the new intensity of the father child relationship, also insisted on a radical change in the elementary quality of this relationship.

The 'new' father who materialized out of the mist of the son's ideologically inspired imagining, is the product of a sexual politics which can no longer rely on the validity of

what had for an extended period derived its rationalization and justification in 'sex-role' theory or in the dogma of either sex- or gender complementarity. He is, rather, an apparition with two persona, credited with two sets of competencies, capacities and motivations. As the nurturing and emotionally competent potential primary caregiver, the father competes with the mother for traditionally 'feminine' functions, whilst as the emotionally competent mentor for boys and as a restraining authority figure, his parenting tasks remain firmly grounded in his biological maleness.

A father who is, at least theoretically, a competent primary caregiver transgresses all those boundaries which patriarchal ideologies and social practices have established to organize and justify sexually specific parenting tasks and their social organization. This transgression in itself, is not an insurmountable obstacle to a new model of parental care-giving. It could comfortably be explained within the terms of feminist mothering theory which has located the origin of the (m)other's agency in a social and psychic space, where culture and nature together with the interaction between child and carer actively produce care giving behavior, adaptable to the fluctuating needs of parents and children (Everingham 1994).

This acknowledgement however would open a Pandora's box of uncertainties and contested sites of struggle. It would first of all introduce the vital element of historicity into the very concept of fatherhood (and of motherhood) and necessitate an engagement with the highly emotional, political and ideological motivations involved in the conceptualization and defense of fatherhood as an institution. At the same time, it would inevitably undermine the validity of the second father image which is rigidly bound to an ahistorical vision of the 'naturalness' of specific male parental functions.

In contrast to my initial hypothesis which saw parental access to the child as secured by the intensity of the mother-child relationship and through the insistence on sexual difference, the analysis of my data pointed to a new politics of parenthood, designed to establish a father-child relationship which no longer necessarily operates through the mother. The rhetoric of sexual difference as the safeguard of paternal access to women and their children is replaced by a new discourse which struggles with the sameness-difference debate on two distinct but very closely related fronts; first, the claims made on behalf of two mutually exclusive paternal persona and their equally mutually exclusive parental functions and second the reinterpretation and redefinition of maternal versus paternal functions. The precarious theoretical balancing act between the exigencies to alternately contest and reaffirm received wisdoms on the 'natural' family and its functions depends not only on the imaginative reinventing of fatherhood, but also decidedly on the continued control of the fatherhood lobby over the definition of both the needs of the child and the possible meanings of motherhood.

The reassignment of parental potentials and limitations is marked by a highly significant shift in priorities. It is no longer the control over the definition and specification of women's natural competencies to mother which safeguards social fatherhood. Instead it is now the father's mandate, agency, potential and competence to care which attracts the theorizing endeavors of the fatherhood literature. On the road to paternal omnipotence, the 'natural' mother child symbiosis and the normativity of maternal care-giving transmute into a legacy. They are seen to be socially constructed through sets of exclusions which interfere with the 'natural' father-child relationship and function as the theoretical support for the declaration of father absence as social pathology.

The subsequent shift from maternal to paternal deprivation and its implicit contradictory claims set question marks behind some of the most elementary social, ethical, moral and philosophical questions which shape social lives and open up a new and exciting field of inquiry with a new theoretical latitude of awesome dimensions and a new set of significant silences.

Two main issues influenced the subject matter and methodology of the final draft of my thesis. First, the emerging novel discourses and their implications for sexual and social politics extended far beyond the parameter of my original project. Whilst the interviews raised a plethora of additional and very important questions, they did not provide an adequate empirical basis for their exploration. The abortion debate as the initial field of inquiry proved to be too confined a theoretical platform and I decided to modify the originally planned qualitative research method to discourse analysis. Consequently, the contributions of my interview partners ceased to be the primary research material and instead assumed a mere illustrative function. Second, the magnitude of the theoretical implications of a new politics of contested and reaffirmed sexed or gendered certainties had to be explored. On the one hand this needed to be done in the widest possible context in order to illuminate the vast range of theoretical positions and social relations which have informed the sense of normality and entitlement endemic in the defense of fatherhood as an institution. On the other hand, the limitation of a thesis and my priority to return to specific concerns of current sexual politics called for a tightened focus on a limited number of relevant issues.

My final analytical approach began with a comparative reading of feminist and masculinist theories of victimization through hierarchized dichotomous polarities.

Rhetorically, the new fatherhood literature joins feminist theory in its critique of conventional parenting arrangements, organized through the sexual division of labour. Although both disciplines either explicitly or implicitly situate their concerns within the critique of Enlightenment philosophies, their objectives are radically incompatible.

The masculinist lament about the emotionally absent and incompetent father mirrors and appropriates feminist analyses of those sets of exclusions which either victimize or privilege individuals or groups of individuals. I have argued, that the qualified anti-humanism which supports the son's demands for the 'resurrection' of the now romanticized and idealized 'lost' father, owes its claim to credibility to the refusal of the fatherhood lobby to theorize both paternal images and their functions in conjunction with each other. Both images ground their validity in theories of loss. Enlightenment philosophies and the Industrial Revolution figure as the historical periods of drastic social changes which have ousted men from the 'realm of emotions' or from 'the feminine' and curtailed their potential to either receive or dispense nurturing and caring. These theories of loss articulate, in an almost Foulcauldian manner, a struggle against restrictive, limiting and disciplining classifications, usurping a forceful argument of feminist discourse analysis into the passionately defended male right for self-definition.

The core of this argument insists on the historical and cultural specificity of gendered victimization and looks for a solution to the 'degendering' or 're-humanization' of emotions unjustifiably classified as 'feminine'. It borrows from postmodernism the conviction that "the perception of the world is mediated through discourse and a socially constructed subjectivity" (Best and Keller 1991:83) and creates the male victim status by calling upon the totalizing power of metanarratives which became dominant during a

specific historical period. Simultaneously however, an ahistorical, essential sexual difference comes to the salvation of a specifically male parental mandate and monopoly. Although this "essentialist core of masculinity" constitutes the most powerful argument in the apocalyptic prognosis for a fatherless society (Horkheimer 1936, Lasch 1969; Mitscherlich 1973, Biddulph 1995a, Blankenhorn 1996), its proponents, as Connell (1995:68) points out, "do not feel obliged to agree on the nature of this essence". At the same time however, the implied reference to an unchangeable (male) human nature leaves intact some of the root assumptions of those metaphysics employed in the theoretical underpinning of the male victim status and thus undermines the plausibility of their critique.

I have analyzed the fatherhood literature's qualified critique of humanism in terms of the new claims made on behalf of an assumed prior victim status. A close focus on these new claims suggests that, beyond the shared grievance over the humanist legacy of binary opposites, gynocentric and androcentric analyses of origins, instruments and consequences of discriminatory exclusions are marked by irreconcilable discrepancies.

One of the possible points of departure from the masculinist to a feminist assessment of the new politics of fatherhood and need construction is the fatherhood literature's representation of humanist dichotomies as a set of gendering dogma which appear to have generated not only from a specific historical period but from an ideologically, politically and culturally empty space. While in this debate the content of gender and the modes of its acquisition carry the strongest theoretical burden, the all-powerful and emotionally crippling metanarrative of humanism remains unauthored. The agency of generations of fathers (and men who are not fathers) in the very production of the

content of gender, of sexual identities, subjectivities or difference fails to be included in the subject matter of a supposedly critical engagement with this vital philosophical and social system of thought.

Feminist critics of humanism do not speak in one voice and there are substantial discrepancies, for instance between liberal feminism, advocating women's equality on the principle of their 'sameness', as against radical feminism, new French feminism or postmodern feminism, arguing for a politics of difference. The issue on which the diverse strands of feminism do agree is that women's theorized 'otherness' as much as their theorized 'sameness' reflect the androcentric knowledge production of humanist metaphysics. These knowledges may be seen to reflect a "legitimizing ideology, bearer of a universalizing ambition of a particular (masculine) subjectivity" (Johnson 1998:213) or "a particular perspective for some particular purpose" (Gatens, 1998:475).

The arguments reflected here pointedly address the fatherhood literature's claim to male victimization and challenge the subsequently elaborated utopian visions of father-child relationships, based, in principle, on the transformation of the needs of the fathers and father-right into the needs and rights of the child. They allow for an extended perspective which includes a critical assessment of authorship of and the motivations behind humanism's totalizing theories of truth and human nature. One significant aspect of this critique is the clarity with which it returns the masculinist claim to victimizing exclusions to its appropriate context in sexual politics. It balances male exclusions against crucially neglected male monopolies which have assigned the capacity for reason and the access to socially relevant truths and knowledges to men.

These monopolies created, under the banner of objectivity, "a far from innocent hierarchy of values which attempts not only to guarantee truth but also serve to exclude and devalue allegedly inferior terms or positions" (Best and Keller 1991:21). They are inextricably tied to and a consequence of humanism's understanding of the (male) subject as "a unified, self-legislating and self-motivating human being" (Walby 1990:91). Paradoxically, the theory of male emotional deprivation relies on defense and resurrection of this understanding of the subject. The theoretical implications of this resurrection however, leave little room for a universal category of "men" to first, affirm the validity and effectiveness of this discourse in the name of a shared victim status and then, demand that this same category *in toto* be exculpated from the responsibility for its authorship.²⁴⁶

Feminist theory as well as gender studies, critical men's studies and postmodernist philosophies have developed a sophisticated critique of the discourses emanating from a supposedly disembodied and universalized 'human being', as much in terms of their explicit claims as in terms of their implicit silences²⁴⁷. The fatherhood debate however consistently ignores the male and paternal privileges acquired under assumed "maleness of reason" (Lloyd, 1984) and through the denomination of the public sphere as the presumed locus for the attainment of socially relevant forms of knowledge.

²⁴⁶The significant differences between general categories which indiscriminately assign the status of either victim or villain to all men have been explored in critical men's or gender studies. Race, ethnicity, class, sexual preference, age allow for discrepancies between hegemonial and subjected masculinities or for changing subjectivities and fluctuating power relations, within individual life histories and relationships.

²⁴⁷ Martin (1988:14) explores the specific power relations which operate "at the moment at which woman is made the object of knowledge" and she finds Foucault's methodological work particularly useful since it allows us "to question every text not so much in terms of what it represents but in terms of what it does to obscure its own political bases."

The phenomena which are not accounted for are first, the recognition, that the authoritative 'knower's struggle for control over representation, is always intrinsically linked to the struggle for control over social practices (Martin 1988:17). Second, the claim to male emotional deprivation conceals the vital link between reason, knowledge, power, paternal authority and precisely the kind of parental agency which determines the father image, notably in Freud (1923), the Frankfurt School (Horkheimer 1936) and in their footsteps, Lasch (1969) and Mitscherlich (1973). It is ultimately the residue of this male monopoly which, in a modified but unsatisfactorily theorized or even acknowledged mode, supports the essential male agency which has survived in the mentoring and limit-setting persona of the new father. What remains constant in the inventing of the 'new' father is the 'old' father's claimed privilege to define nature and needs of others and in particular, the needs of children, adapted to accommodate the unspoken needs of the (paternal) self. A vital prerequisite for this process however remains the authority to decide not only what specific groups of individuals need but to determine what exactly constitutes the general categories of either reason, emotion or needs.

Different strands of feminism, in particular radical feminism and new French feminism, have in their decoding of phallogentric truth claims contributed significantly to a better understanding of the technologies of knowledge as power and instrument of domination. Specifically the work of Daly (1978), O'Brien (1981) and Stonehouse (1994) has allowed important insights into male motivations and needs and into the way knowledge and power have been instrumentalized into the definition of women as deficient 'non-males'. Postmodernist feminist theory has been highly critical of the frequent assumptions of an essential femaleness violated in the definition and classification of women by interests

and voices other than their own²⁴⁸. It has nevertheless supported and developed, rather than contradicted, their demands not only for a self-defined sexual difference but for a multitude of differences withdrawn from the aura of androcentric determinations. Irigaray's *This Sex Which Is Not One* (1985a) appears to anticipate Sawicki's (1988:27) observation, that "freedom, does not basically lie in discovering or being able to determine who we are but in rebelling against those ways in which we are already defined, categorized and classified".

Postmodernist feminism also proved to offer the base for a critical assessment of the fatherhood literature's interpretation of humanist dichotomies as the totalizing explanation for male emotional deprivation, the sexual division of labor and thus for the current 'crisis in fatherhood'. A Foucauldian reading of power as dispersed and decentralized opens a window onto the heterogeneous array of discourses, power relations, institutional mediations, ideologies, needs, social practices, sites, struggles and aspects of personal lives which have perpetually and mutually reinforced each other. In their dynamic totality, they have created not only gendered meanings but the sense of justice and paternal entitlements which inform the fatherhood literature's theories of loss as an apparently unproblematic *status quo ante*.

The postmodernist challenge to the truth claims of Western metaphysics thus helps to decode humanism as a barely camouflaged ideology and to illuminate the discursive organization of even the most dynamic processes of social history into the certainties of an assumed human nature. Further, the work of feminist philosophers, amongst others

²⁴⁸ See for instance Martin (1988:14-15) who critiques radical feminism's tendency to ontologize women terms of an essential superiority and a privileged relationship to nature and truth".

Beauvoir (1949), Lloyd (1984), Sydnie (1987) Pateman (1988), Flax (1990) and Grosz (1994), have eloquently supported the critique of androcentric objectivism. They have traced the eventful history of the now lamented dichotomizing pluralities to the earliest records of Western metaphysics and helped to bring into focus the silences produced in both the genesis of orthodox fatherhood as an institution and again in the current fatherhood debates.

The feminist analysis and decoding of humanist pretensions offers keys not only to the genesis of traditional models of fatherhood, grounded in ancient, though colorful, narratives of sexual complementarity. Although this analysis has up to now focussed on that aspect of fatherhood which survives in the sex specific functions of the mentoring and limit setting paternal persona, it proved to be equally applicable to a critique of the emotionally competent male primary caregiver or, rather, to a critique of the peaceful coexistence of the two paternal images.

It is not without irony that at precisely the historical moment when feminist theory retrieves the agency of both mother and child from the clutches of an instinct based biological determinism, into the arena of cognitive and affective influences which transgress the boundaries between what is culture or nature, private or public (Everingham 1994), fathers call on their own biology and nature to establish their proficiency and agency as potential primary caregivers. This claim to sameness with the mother is unperturbed by the suggestion that this mother might be first of all the product of "men's fantasies about women" (Flax 1990:214). The "progressive shift away from viewing the female as the exclusive caretaker" (Redican and Taub 1981:203) comes,

significantly, from patricentric child development theory, articulated in the best interest of the child. It makes a half-hearted step towards a critique of the sexual division of labour in as far as it questions the mothers 'natural' monopoly. The subsequent return to evolutionary biology and psychology, to endocrinology and primatology, aimed at documenting the father's potential agency as proficient primary caregiver, is a revival of those scientific presumptions from which feminism has laboriously rescued the agency of the nurturing mother.

Neither the father's mandate as a mentoring authority figure constructed out of the assumed needs of the child, nor his potential nurturing agency constitute acceptable entries into a debate between feminism and masculinism about the future of parenthood. In contrast to the fatherhood debate, feminist scholars from a wide variety of disciplines and feminist struggles, in a plethora of single social issues have demonstrated the consequences of dichotomizing hierarchies for the lives of women and, in particular, to women's experiences as mothers. Their theoretical work and their political demands, have illuminated, at a micro level of social theory, the myriads of issues in everyday life which have been legitimized by the macro-theories of human nature and a natural social order. Discourses advocating male access to emotions and 'the feminine' as a solution to the fatherhood crisis cannot and do not even try to disentangle all those issues and their impact on the strong sense of normativity which, despite vital changes to the contemporary understanding of 'The Family', informs the defense of social fatherhood.

My attempt to explore the differentiating positions of feminist and masculinist mothering and fathering theories and to evaluate their significance for future sexual and social politics necessarily creates its own silences. These silences are partly the

inevitable consequence of a giant array of relevant issues in need of selective omission or inclusion and partly the result of my own subjectivities. These subjectivities do not allow for the claim to be a neutral arbitrator between extreme positions of ideological struggle and the danger to replicates some of the phenomena critiqued in the fatherhood debate and thus to succumb to the temptation of producing a competing truth claim, remains realistic. Unresolved contradictions are part of a process in which new questions are more important than rigid answers. These questions are still rapidly accumulating in the struggle over the best interest of the child and a useful dialogue between feminist and masculinist positions is unlikely to emerge out of the fatherhood literature's attempt to ground a utopian vision of paternity in an inadequate analysis of its history.

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