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“Mom, I’m doing boy’s stuff with Dad. You just go hang clothes.” A Complementary Hegelian and Psychoanalytic Analysis of the Acquisition of Gender in Childhood and its Societal Repercussions.

Sarah Ahearn

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**University of Limerick
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**“Mom, I’m doing boy’s stuff with Dad. You just go hang clothes.”
A Complementary Hegelian and Psychoanalytic Analysis of the
Acquisition of Gender in Childhood and its Societal
Repercussions.**

Sarah Ahearn

MA in Sociology (Gender, Culture and Society)

University of Limerick

Gender is so pervasive in our lives that until we encounter a situation which is not the “norm” we hardly question it at all. However, gender constructs carry with them a power which determines the roles of men and women in society. This paper will examine the psychoanalytic work on gender acquisition and complement this with Hegel’s master/slave dialectic which shows how even without gender, any two self-conscious beings will engage with each other with force. Both the work of Nancy Chodorow and Sigmund Freud offer a psychoanalysis of early childhood notions of recognition and separation and the tension between the two. This essay will argue how infant relationships with their parents subconsciously influence the child’s construction of gender, which they carry through to adulthood permeating through all aspects of adult life. It will also offer suggestions of how the sexes can break free, in some respects, of the bonds of gender.

Introduction

According to Chodorow the mother’s role as primary caregiver leads to women being located within the home when a child is determining gender and all that it entails with what little information he or she has gained both consciously and subconsciously during early childhood. Childrearing in today’s society is still regarded as ‘women’s work’ despite the fact that more and more women are entering the workplace. The title of this essay was inspired by my young son.

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One afternoon, I tried to join himself and his Dad who were building a dog kennel. He responded to my attempt to get involved in manual labour by saying, “Mom I’m doing *boy’s* stuff with Dad. You just go hang clothes”. He was just three and a half at this time but after his comment and his patronising attitude, the issue of children’s acquisition of gender and the roles which men and women play became something that I needed to explore.

Gender is so pervasive in our lives that we take it for granted. Gender however, is acted out in society and it is performed as such. From a cultural and societal perspective it is acted out through the clothes we wear, our hairstyles, the latest fashions. If someone is ambiguous in their display of gender, perhaps a woman with short hair, no make-up, dressed in dark baggy casual clothes onlookers are uncomfortable until they are able to place the person successfully into a gender category. Right from birth, parents generally dress boys in blue and girls in pink in order that others will be able to determine the baby’s sex. As soon as children begin to talk they identify themselves as members of their sex (Lorber 1994, p. 55). It can be argued that the reason as to why this is so important is that ones sex predestines in some respects the path of their lives, what is expected from them and where they are situated in society.

Western societies claim that gender evolves from male and female physiological differences (Lorber 1994, p. 56). However, gender and sex cannot be linked together based on biology. Lorber claims that ‘social statuses are carefully constructed through prescribed processes of teaching, learning, emulation, and enforcement’ (Lorber 1994, p.57). Culture and social practices transform the material foundation of social institutions into something with qualitatively different guides and restrictions. One is born with a sex but gender is a learned behaviour. Simone de Beauvoir stated that ‘one is not born, but rather becomes,

a woman (Beauvoir 1953, p. 267). Children through their interaction with peers, parents, institutions such as school and the media conduct their behaviour according to gender scripts. Therefore, gender is clearly both ascribed and achieved (West & Zimmerman 1987, p. 135). As a social institution, gender is a process which determines the rights and responsibilities of the sexes. It is also the main component of social structures which allow for unequal statuses (Lorber 1994, p. 60). However, despite what is expected of us all who perform gender, we neither imitate exactly that which has gone before nor do we make it up as we go along. Gender shifts and changes slightly, through rebellion and resistance but never so much so to corrode the statuses.

Gender constructs carry with them a power that determines the roles of men and women in society. Both feminism and men's studies have well documented the different methods through which gender evokes power. Power is achieved through three methods which permeate throughout our society. It is achieved institutionally (through patriarchal institutions), socially (through socialisation) and symbolically and culturally (through dress, hairstyles and current fashion trends). Psychoanalysts such as Sigmund Freud and Nancy Chodorow believe that the acquisition of gender occurs in early childhood allowing impressionable children to carry these constructs into adulthood without much consideration and thereby reinforcing the cycle (Freud 1958; Chodorow 1999). However outside of psychoanalysis there are also two other prevailing schools of thought on the acquisition of gender. The cognitive developmental theory which was constructed by Lawrence Kohlberg states that children's gender typing occurs after they themselves have developed a notion of gender. After aligning themselves by sex with their gender, children begin to organise their world on the basis of gender but only after gender consistency has occurred (Kohlberg 1966). Another theory is offered by Jean Piaget. His Gender Schema Theory states that a child organises the world in terms of male or female. The child's

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attention and behaviours are determined by an internal stimulus to conform to gender-based socio-cultural principles and stereotypes (Santrock 2002, p. 384). For the purpose of this paper only the psychoanalytic work on gender acquisition will be examined complemented by the work of Hegel which shows how even without gender, any two self-conscious beings will engage with each other with force (Hegel 1979). Hegel describes this force as their own power over themselves, or being-for-itself, which each intends on extending to the other. Jessica Benjamin shows how this power relationship occurs between the sexes on a sociological level (Benjamin 1988).

The objective of this paper, therefore, is twofold. Firstly, to establish how children acquire an understanding of gender constructs through psychoanalytic means and secondly to determine how these gender constructs have gained the power, mentioned above, by viewing them through the lens of Hegel’s master/slave dialectic. To demonstrate how these two ideas complement one another, a definition of phenomenology is outlined and a description of what Hegel tries to address through the phenomena of two self-conscious beings meeting for the first time and what this entails is subsequently developed. Hegel’s dialectic will then be offset against Benjamin’s psychoanalytic theories on adult relationships while giving clear empirical examples of how these theories of recognition apply to real world situations. Finally, this paper argues that the psychoanalytic theories of Sigmund Freud and Nancy Chodorow in relation to infant relationships with their parents subconsciously influence the child’s construction of gender and are carried through to adulthood and permeate through all aspects of adult life.

Hegel's master/slave dialectic

Phenomenology is most commonly understood as a descriptive philosophy that attempts to describe how things appear in world without placing upon them extraneous points of view and opinions. Husserl describes it best as having the courage to accept and document what is given to us in the phenomena strictly as it presents itself (Husserl 1931, p. 101). To Husserl therefore, phenomenology is a methodological suspension of both the common sense and historical acceptance of what is given in mundane experience. However, what Hegel is attempting to accomplish when he describes the meeting of two conscious beings in his book, *Phenomenology of Spirit* is distinctly different. For Hegel, phenomenology means the history of the manifestation of spirit [*geist*] in history, in other words, how spirit, as consciousness, comes to know itself or realise itself in history. His existentialist master/slave dialectic is recorded in his chapter titled 'The Truth of Self Certainty' under the subheading Lordship and Bondage.

He begins by describing what a being is in two caveats, the first being that 'it exists in and for itself', the second caveat being that it is then acknowledged by another (Hegel 1979, p.111). For Hegel, these are the two prerequisites of a self-conscious being. So the question this poses is how does self-consciousness exist in and for itself for another? Hegel explains, when a self-conscious being meets another self-conscious being both attempt to understand the other in terms of their own essential certainty. They are aware of their own consciousness and ability but not of the others. Hegel believes that it is essential then for one to try and gain authority over the other so that the self can affirm its own self-certainty through domination. So, a 'life-and-death struggle' ensues as each strives to see the other as an essential being for itself and to bring their certainty of being for themselves into truth (Hegel 1979, p.114). Later, this struggle will be seen

through the psychoanalytic lens of Freud and Chodorow’s work on the parent and infant relationship.

Benjamin’s interpretation of Hegel’s dialectic in relation to gender

Benjamin in her book, *The Bonds of Love* also addresses the master/slave dialectic of Hegel in her psychoanalytical analysis of the fantasy of erotic domination where the struggle for independence and recognition takes place. In both books, this struggle must not end in the death of either of the two consciousnesses as if this occurs nothing will be achieved (Benjamin 1988, p.52). The desired result of the struggle is that each stakes his own life, until one fears his own death so much that he retreats from the struggle. Heidegger also takes up this argument in his book, *Being and Time* when he speaks of *dasein* as being-towards-death (Heidegger 1978, p. 306). He explains that ‘they’ [society] forces this instinct within *dasein* to flee from death as ‘they’ translate anxiety in the face of death to mean fear in the face of death. This experience of being-toward-death is not one which Heidegger feels should be consciously and constantly imposed upon *dasein* but rather be seen as *dasein* being in a constant state of this ontological possibility [*Vorlaufen in die Möglichkeit*].

It is from this experience of being-towards-death that pure fear emerges for Hegel. The outcome of this struggle leaves two opposed self-conscious beings, ‘one is the independent consciousness whose essential nature is to be for itself, the other is the dependent consciousness whose essential nature is simply to live or to be for the other’ (Hegel 1979, p.115). The former is the lord, the latter is the bondsman. The lord achieves recognition of himself as he is not the other who is inessential therefore, he must be essential. Benjamin proclaims that ‘a condition of our own independent existence is recognizing the other... true independence means sustaining the essential tension of these contradictory

impulses; that is, both asserting the self and recognizing the other' (1988, p.53). However, slavery or submission reduces subject to object that in itself creates problems for mutual recognition - an issue that will be addressed in the course of this paper.

Benjamin attempts to explain the objectification of woman in her master/slave chapter in the extreme through, *The Story of O*. The inability to recognise the other as essential is inevitable when both parties are not held in mutual esteem. This form of recognition, where one party is master [greater] and the other, slave [lesser] is seen in the post-colonial theory of Said and his chapter on 'Orientalism' in *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader* where through the eyes of the western civilised societies the orient or the 'other' is seen as something savage, in need of order and civilisation through domination and control (Said 2006, p.24).

Another more intimate example is in adult relationships, where the woman is being physically abused by the man, he is often seen as condoning his violence or excusing his physical abuse because he is using it as a method of "curtailing" or "controlling" his wife's own voice when she expresses thoughts which are outside of what he wants for her to be. So here are two examples of how throughout society issues constantly arise from society's constant need for this binary opposition of master and slave and so emphasising the importance of the issues this essay is attempting to bring to our awareness. This binary opposition which is so intrinsically and subconsciously set into our schemas is critical to the relationships we have, how we engage with others and the power relations which occur between the most intimate to the most professional or political of relationships.

Woman as bondsman with the world

Returning to Hegel, we see the bondsman is inessential because of his labour and his dependence on the lord. In the struggle the bondsman gives up his being-for-itself. It can be argued that this is what a mother does when she internalises her mothering and forms her identity not in-and-for-herself but rather in terms of being mother to her child. Just as the relationship between the lord and bondsman is unequal in Hegel’s dialectic so is the relationship between the mother and child. The relationship on a sociological level between the mother and the father of the child is also unequal. The problem that arises for the lord, and also for the husband or child, is that he is faced with a dependent consciousness not an independent one and therefore reciprocal recognition is not possible (Kojève 1969, p.49). In the case of the mother and child relationship this master/slave relationship is two-fold. She, as mother, is now faced with another dependant – that being her child - but also the mother is a bondsman within the world.

The woman here occupies two spaces, as both lord and bondsman. That is not to advocate solely that the woman is bondsman to her male partner in the case of a heterosexual relationship but rather, an understanding such as that of Bordo and Foucault, it is intended as an abandonment of the idea of power as being something possessed by one group (in this case men) against women but rather a complex network of practices and institutions which support and help to normalise and sustain positions of subordination and dominance in a particular sphere (Bordo 1997, p. 92). Hegel believes that the worst possibility for the lord comes to fruition then when he realises recognition due to his lordship is not mutual but also when he becomes aware that the truth of himself as being-for-self is not certain (Hegel 1979, p.117). This has inevitable consequences for the bondsman.

The bondsman receives his essential reality from the lord. Just like the lord ‘the truth for it [the bondsman] is the independent consciousness that it is for-itself’ (Hegel 1979, p.117). However, the bondsman is not aware as yet of this truth and its application to itself but it should be aware of its own essential being as ‘its whole being has been seized with dread’ when it experienced the fear of death (Hegel 1979, p.117). However, it is not the fear of the lord but rather the fear of death that Hegel describes as the ‘absolute lord’ (Hegel 1979, p.117) and it is in this moment that a consciousness is pure being-for-itself. One could argue that similarly in a violent adult heterosexual relationship the woman while fearful of her abusive partner is actually dominated not by him but by fear of her own death should she betray him to the police or by leaving. Feminists would argue that one of the main reasons why women are continually subjugated by social arrangements is because they are not aware of their oppression. Similar to the bondsman, the strategies in place for their oppression are so deeply woven within their culture that they are unable to see them. Christine Kulke states ‘the domination of one sex over the other, male over female, is indeed an essential element both of the social structures and of the symbolic systems of Western structure’ (Kulke 1993, p. 138). The underlying current of all societies works, as has already been explained, by way of all practices and institutions working in the favour of men. Feminists have labelled this type of power as ‘Patriarchy’ leading from this, ultimately, is a male dominated world. Within the context of gender then, the man is the lord and the woman is the slave in Hegel’s master/slave relationship.

This can be seen in all aspects of human life such as in the workplace which is dominated by men. The home, while supposedly the woman’s sphere is, nonetheless, dominated by the man as he has the ability to move between the two spheres with fluidity. Kojève expresses man’s attempt to dominate the private sphere or home in the same way that he dominates the world outside, ‘he

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tends to transform the State [family] into his *private* property, into a family patrimony, and to make the *citizens* [other family members] of the state his own *subjects*’ (Kojève 1969, p. 62). One cannot avoid asking at this stage where this innate desire of man to become the dominant sex has come from?

Psychoanalytic interpretation of parent/child relationship

Psychoanalysts are certain that this has come from the first relationship of dependency, between child and parent thereby identifying childhood as the formative point of gender acquisition. To explore the phenomena of the child/parent relationship the psychoanalytic work of both Sigmund Freud and Nancy Chodorow must be explored (Freud 1958; Chodorow 1999). Both these psychoanalysts have invested much time in their work to understanding by way of analysis of how the parent/child relationship works. They both explain their theories in terms of the interdependence and separation involved in the acquisition of gender for both the girl and boy child. Freud in his controversial psychoanalytic theories suggests new ways of understanding that which we, more often than not, take for granted particularly in the case of this essay on childhood and family relations. Freud is generally associated on a basic level with sex and in particular perverse sexual relationships between children and their parents (Freud 1953, p.22). It was his insistence on the sexual nature of children which seemed to most outrage society. It is his work on the oedipal complex which will be investigated here, alongside the Electra complex which stems from it.

A child who is becoming aware of itself as being an individual entity from its caregiver must learn to detach from that caregiver. It is during this detachment phase that Freud psychoanalytically suggests, by means of explanation, the Oedipus and Electra complexes to account for what subconsciously occurs

during this period for the child (Freud 1953, p.36). Young infants live in a world that satisfies all of their desires instantaneously. Mothers believe that this is what they are expected to do, especially for the first couple of months of a baby's life. This reinforces for the child that whenever they have a desire which they need met all they need to do is cry and mother will fix it. Through the eyes of the child the child is master and the mother is slave. However, rather than seeing mother as 'other' at this age they merely experience mother as an extension of themselves who tends to their needs upon their realisation that there is something they want. The mother is 'every infant's first love, first witness, and first boss, the person who presides over the infant's first encounters with the natural surround and who exists for the infant as the first representative of the flesh' (Dinnerstein 1987, p. 29).

As the child gets slightly older he begins to realise that not only are his parents interested in him but that they are also interested in each other. The child begins to realise that his egocentricity is not universal and that his position in relation to the family is not as all-encompassing as he thought. This is the beginning of the oedipal complex for Freud, where the child encounters a crisis of sexual desire and jealousy. The child becomes sexually obsessed with the parent of the opposite sex, in the case of the boy the mother, in the case of the girl the father. Rivalry and hatred for the other parent of the same sex fills the child on account of the same sex adult monopolising the desired parent (Thurschwell 2000, p.46).

This theory is firstly presented for the boy child who sets himself up in opposition to the father who is the object of the mother's desire. The child and father engage in a battle of wills, both consciousness being-toward-death. Freud believes that aggression and the desire of mastery are merely part of our nature which derives from the 'death instinct' (Benjamin 1988, p.54). The father having more control and power over the child and mother and the child's own

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castration anxiety forces the child to become subservient to his father’s will. The struggle that ensues here is similar to that which is seen in Hegel’s master/slave dialectic. While Freud initially only deals with the boy child’s engagement with the mother he inverts the relationships when posing his theory about the daughter. While the Electra complex works off the same yet opposite premise, that is to say the girl child’s experience of her relationship to her father as opposed to boy’s relationship with his mother in the oedipal complex there is, however, a further dimension to the oedipal complex.

This additional dimension, which is not a concern for the boy child, is that the girl child sees herself as inferior to the father and desires the father on account of his penis. The girl child rejects the mother and hates her not because she consumes the father’s time and affection but rather that she has not provided her with a penis (Freud 1958, p.298). The penis is seen as a symbol of power. The girl child is envious of this power which Freud believes comes from the biological addition of a penis and so the lack of penis/power leads the girl child to her rejection of the mother (Oakley 2005, p. 34). This is one of the major reasons as to why the feminist movement of the 1960’s and 1970’s rejected psychoanalysis on the grounds that it upheld the oppression of women. To view women as inferior merely on the basis of lacking the biological organ of the penis is clearly problematic.

The reproduction of gender constructs through mothering

Freud in concerning himself with psycho-sexuality in infancy does not explore the mother’s role in the relationship. The mother’s role for Chodorow is of vital importance not necessarily for the child’s sake but rather for what this role imprints and permeates through the lives of women. Her concern is that the child internalises early childhood experiences, and this continues independently of the

mother/child relationship and takes precedence as a permanent feature of their personality. Like Freud, Chodorow believes that the child experiences a sense of oneness with the mother and does not see her as a separate entity at the beginning of the relationship. I would argue that this may be because of the mother and child being both bondsmen to each other leave them in the reciprocal state which allows them to see their interdependence. Also, the child feels greatest connection to the mother on account of their literal connection in the womb but mostly because the woman is usually the primary caregiver (Benjamin 1988, p.8). Chodorow gives a greater account of the effects of individuation and gender acquisition on boys and girls than what Freud allows.

Chodorow suggests that for women who become mothers, there is a case of double identification. The role of mother invokes in her feelings of a time when she herself was cared for as a child. A chain effect occurs then within all women where the effects of them themselves being mothered is re-experienced every-time a woman becomes a mother. It has been well documented that women who mother daughters tend to repeat the mothering which they themselves have received. Where there are cases of psychopathology within families there is a trend that daughters are bound into mutually dependant 'hyper symbiotic' relationships with their mothers which in turn they pass on to their own daughters creating a cyclical problem (Chodorow 1999, p.102). It is clear however, that Chodorow takes for granted that the first relationship between mother and daughter is a good, happy and healthy relationship. It can be argued that regardless of whether the mother/daughter relationship whether it is good or bad, the daughter will inevitably use her own initial mother/daughter relationship as a moral compass for mothering her own child based on her own experiences.

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The major concerns of Chodorow are her worries of what is brought from the experiences of mothering in early infancy and the gender constructs this embeds into an impressionable child’s belief system, what a child carries through to adulthood and the notions which adults assign to the various components of society due to this very first relationship.

The essential reciprocity of recognition

Hegel resolves the desire of recognition for the lord and bondsman in his dialectic in following manner. The bondsman through his work for the lord projects himself into the world making his worth realised through production (Hegel 1979, p.118). The bondsman rises above the initial fear that is, ‘his first reaction to absolute otherness as embodied in the lord’ (Hegel 1979, p. 522). Benjamin states that ‘the recognition a child seeks is something the mother is able to give only by virtue of her independent identity’ differentiation then ‘requires, ideally, the reciprocity of self and other, the balance of assertion and recognition’ (Benjamin 1988, p.25). The mother also through the fruits of her labour in mothering the child, for example on hearing his/her first words, seeing them take their first steps or conquering the ability to feed his/herself also realises her own worth which sees her free herself from the role of bondsman to the child’s needs. She is now able to see the child, although still in its infancy as being a full yet interdependent being. Service and obedience is also critical to self-consciousness not merely mastery. This is clear in the child/parent relationship in that children require discipline in order to feel loved (Benjamin 1988, p. 5). The relationship of master and slave long outlasts childhood however and carries through to adult relationships. This essay has attempted to show the effects of the master/slave relationship between men and women in the home and will now attempt to do so in the workplace.

The woman as primary caregiver enables the whole foundation of patriarchal society to remain stable due to the psychological benefits it gives to individual men (Bartky 1990, p.106). Patriarchy leads to unequal access to power. While this has dire consequences for the woman, it also has dire consequences for the man. He is unable to show vulnerability or fear to his peers without suffering the consequences of being devoured by their predator instincts, resulting in a game of the survival of the fittest. For those families who try to obtain the “bourgeoisie” family appearance the pressure is on the man to be breadwinner, providing all money for household bills on top of a mortgage, food and clothe bills. Much work has been done on the pressures which men are under in their roles which society forces them to by men’s studies. Alongside this, are the luxuries of extra-curricular activities for the average family with two to three children (Central Statistics Office 2006). This pressure on men must be enormous. All the ideals which men have for women to achieve have also been internalised into what the ideal husband must be, and men likewise in most cases have unattainably high expectations of not just their wives but also of themselves.

So just as in the case of the master/slave in Hegel’s *Phenomenology of Spirit* a realisation must surface that the master is in need of the slave as the slave is in need of the master both being held in mutual respect. While it is the slave’s work that emancipates him from his slavery so too must women work for their freedom. They must break through the public sphere in order to shed the patriarchal system which children grow up with, women need to resist the convention of belonging in the home due to their role as primary caregivers and also to show men by taking up their position of autonomy in all aspects of life so that they are not inferior but equal to men. On reflection of the slaves emancipation Kojève comments that ‘thanks to his work, he [the slave] can be become other; and, thanks to his work, the world can become other’ (Kojève

1969, p.53). I would like to believe that this is possible for both men and women. Likewise, it is not enough for women to know freedom as an abstract. That is to say, ‘I must be free, because I know that I am free’ as this is stoicism. Their freedom must be acted upon. Action is driving force behind feminism. Kojève emphasises, ‘the true being of man [or woman] is in his action’ and women can affirm their agency by acting on the world (Kojève 1959, p.54).

Conclusion

In conclusion, while gender constructs may be created in early childhood it is clear that the impressionable child carries these through to adulthood without necessarily questioning their origins or whether or not they are an accurate portrayal of what men and women are expected to live by. It is gender differences and not sex differences which have created a male dominated society both in the public and private spheres. Hegel has shown us that even without sex being an issue, two self-conscious beings will inevitably engage in a struggle for domination and Benjamin has shown how this applies to adults. Janet Siltanen states that ‘full-time childrearing, although taking up less of a woman(‘s’) lifetime, is still primarily women’s work’ (Siltanen 1994, p. 13). The realities of the lives of women, despite their supposed quality preclude them from any significant involvement in the collective endeavours of public life.

I propose then for men to see their position as father as one of care-giver, not just as financial supporter of the family. Perhaps now in the current economic climate in which we find ourselves, as men return to the home due to recession and redundancies, this may begin to occur. Men should begin to value themselves as an individual who is giving himself as an instrument to his child’s needs. Perhaps he should ask himself if there is a greater need to stand by his commitment to his family in the workplace by insisting on the reduction or

flexibility of his hours in order to care for his family? Dinnerstein argues that ‘both the rulers and the ruled enjoy familiar privileges, and feel committed to familiar responsibilities, on which their sense of worth, safety, and competence rests’ (Dinnerstein 1987, p. 160). I call for both men and women to de-stabilise these social structures. Men and women need to realise that women who allow their children to go to a child-minder while they work are no less feminine and men who help out their wives with child-rearing are not emasculated. There is a dire need to stop the polarity of breadwinner and child-carer in today’s society.

Acknowledging that this in terms of the huge patriarchal infrastructure which is in place to secure male dominance, is asking a small change, but it is an accumulation of these small changes which will over time change both men and women’s position in the world. During an interview about her book *The Second Sex*, John Gerassi asked Simone de Beauvoir if him paying attention to women during a group discussion about cooking, cleaning and shopping made him any less sexist? Her reply was astonishing, ‘you mean inside you? To be blunt, who cares?’ (Gerassi 1979). What she meant by this is, ‘if you can check your habits, make it so that it’s “natural” to have counterhabits, that’s a big step. If you wash dishes, clean the house, and take the attitude that you don’t feel any less “a man” for doing it, you’re helping to set up new habits’ (Gerassi 1979). She concludes that two generations later will believe that they are not sexist and in fact the third generation will not even consider sexism. She calls for men to think of it as a game. One may consider himself superior to women but as long as you play convincingly that is cook, clean, shop, taking care of the children – you are setting precedents. These precedents can have an effect on the macho ideal of men which is portrayed by society.

There is also a need for a greater awareness of gender being located within social processes. By using Freud’s psychoanalytic theories we have seen how

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this struggle occurs as early as infancy and through Chodorow we see how the mother’s participation in care-giving leads to gender location within the public and private sphere. This essay was intended to highlight how the use of philosophical Hegelian phenomenology complements psychoanalytic theory in the understanding of gender formation and its unfortunate consequences for both sexes but particularly that of women. Its goal was to provide women in particular but also men a way of freeing themselves from bondship within the private and public spheres.

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